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Curriculum and Compassion: An Inquiry into the Relevance of the Charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in a Post-Modern World

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CURRICULUM AND COMPASSION: AN INQUIRY INTO THE
RELEVANCE OF THE CHARISM OF THE BROTHERS OF THE SACRED
HEART IN A POST-MODERN WORLD

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The College of Education

by

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done and will do for their fellow brothers, lay colleagues, and especially the young people, fortunate enough to have encountered these committed, loving men.

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As for what follows, we will keep it simple. If any of it has any value or meaning to the reader, there are multiple people who deserve the credit, some mentioned above, others mentioned in the text. The errors, misstatements, unartful renderings, or any other problems—that’s on me.

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A NOTE ON CHAPTER TITLES

The titles of the chapters in this work are taken from the poem “Prophets of a Future Not Our Own” written by Bishop Ken Untener in honor of the martyr Oscar Romero, Archbishop of El Salvador at the time of his murder in 1980. The themes captured in the poem reflects an awareness of the deepest desires of the human heart while at the same time acknowledging the limitations of our humanity. I have used the Romero Prayer, as Untener’s work is often known, countless times in my work as a religious educator with the Brothers of the Sacred Heart so it feels fitting to use it here as well.

For context, I am providing the full text of Untener’s prayer here:

Prophets of a Future Not our Own

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church’s mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

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

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own. (Untener, 1979, 2009)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the relevance of a curriculum that embodies the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in a post-modern world. The project will investigate the understanding of the charism both by the researcher and by selected brothers who are in unique positions to articulate and explicate just what the charism entails. A variety of formational and foundational documents will also be subjected to philosophical analysis so a deep picture of the charism is available to the reader. Literature surrounding post-modernist curriculum theory serves as the theoretical framework for this investigation of the charism of the brothers. Insights from a variety of post-modern educational researchers will be placed in dialogue with the charism in order to consider the driving research question: “What relevance does the educational Charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart have in a post-modern society?”

The study uses methods consistent with the post-modern framework: philosophical analysis; interviews, primarily oral histories, with selected Brothers of the Sacred Heart whose experience puts them in a position to offer insights into the charism; and narrative inquiry on those interviews collected from selected brothers.

Students graduating from a Brothers of the Sacred Heart school like that in which this researcher works enter a world whose driving paradigm is a post-modern one. The curriculum which they have experienced is, however, in many ways, modern, and even pre-modern. Nevertheless, this study concludes that the written and oral descriptions of the charism of the brothers, as well as the ways that it is in fact found to be practiced in their schools, is consistent with broad characteristics of the post-modern perspective. Especially as the brothers emphasize an openness to student growth, and as they seek to embody a curriculum based on hope, trust, compassion and love, they represent an

approach to education that is implicitly post-modern. If education in the charism is to remain relevant, a curriculum must be envisioned that nurtures and ever more deeply embodies those post-modern characteristics.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: “IT HELPS, NOW AND THEN, TO SIT BACK AND TAKE THE LONG VIEW”

The purpose of this study is to examine the relevance of a curriculum that embodies the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in a post-modern world. The Brothers of the Sacred Heart is a relatively small Catholic order of religious men whose community is a young (in Catholic terms) 113 years old, and I have practiced education in their tradition for my entire professional life. Taking the “long view” here means stepping back to afford a vision of the bigger picture in which this inquiry exists. This introduction to the study will begin with a contextualization of the project as a way of presenting how I came to focus on this subject.

The word “contextualization” is particularly apt for this inquiry, as will become clear soon enough. Suffice it to say at this point that the inclusion of the word “text” is particularly significant, coming as it does from the Latin *texere*, meaning “weave.” What follows immediately are the major influences that have been woven together in my own life and work. Later in the dissertation we shall investigate other notions of weaving and the role of that metaphor for the questions at hand, but for now taken together they help to frame how I came to want to study this topic. The contextualization here is inspired by the Loyola Institute for Ministry (New Orleans) Masters of Religious Education Program. As part of the completion of that degree, participants are taught and expected to practice a “shared Christian praxis” in which one’s faith is put into regular reflective dialogue with one’s ministry and lived experience. Students are expected to analyze their ministry experience from personal, institutional, sociocultural and theological perspectives.

Not counting a brief period of intense doubt as a young man, I have been a Catholic all of my life. Born in the Midwest, my family moved to the coast of Mississippi when I was seven. I attended Catholic elementary school, public middle and high school, was active as a high school student in my church parish Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), through which I received most of what I would call my religious formation until I entered a Catholic college seminary as a college sophomore. My freshman year was spent at Mississippi State University, where for no reason I can remember I enrolled in a philosophy course in ethics. Philosophy has remained a favorite subject ever since and became my major subject in the seminary.

In the seminary I was privileged to encounter Benedictine monks whose approach to education was open, inclusive, historical and reasonable¹. The monks, as a group, were progressive and took a philosophical approach to most subjects. Particularly valuable for me were courses which led to my bachelor's degree in philosophy. Each course was taught in such a way that its insights held some promise for a reinterpretation of faith and religious observance that spoke more to me than what I previously had taken to be the more standard reasons² for being a practicing Catholic.

After the bachelor's degree, I decided not to pursue priesthood and entered graduate school in pursuit of a master's degree in philosophy. I married, had the first of two daughters, and began teaching religion at St. Stanislaus, an all-boys Catholic school in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. I moved to Baton Rouge after four years at St. Stanislaus, and began teaching at another all-boys Catholic high school in Baton Rouge (run by the

¹ Here "reasonable" simply means open to the use of "reason" as generally understood in the western philosophical tradition. It includes but is not limited to openness to scientific study, and especially historical, archaeological, and anthropological analysis of scripture.

² E.g. because one was raised that way, obligation, fear of hell, it is the "One True Church."

same religious order of men as the school in Bay St. Louis), again teaching religion, and working in campus ministry. I completed the Master's degree in philosophy, focusing on the philosophy of religion and theology of Charles Peirce, after my first year in Baton Rouge. In one form or another, my job has always been about moral, spiritual and character education. When I began that work I did so from an intellectual perspective rooted in a classic Western intellectual tradition that was otherwise ignorant of adolescent development. I believed that rational argument and philosophical debate were the best ways to educate students about morality, religion and justice. Over the course of the last 25 years, my understanding about the nature of morality and how best to address that subject through high school education has changed in fits and starts, and it is still changing.

In the late 1990's and early 2000's, I pursued a Master's degree in religious education from Loyola University in New Orleans. It was the beginning of my formal education introduction into a more hermeneutical³ and post-modern approach to my faith tradition from the perspective of an educator. It was in that program that I was led to grapple with the variety of contexts in which ministry—which for me was education—takes place. It was in that program that I was introduced to the thought of William Doll, Timothy Lines and Thomas Berry, and first encountered attempts at fully integrating more post-modern and contemporary thought into educational practice. My own personal curiosity had drawn me prior to that to Fritjof Capra's work, and another Catholic seminarian friend had shared with me some of the work of Ken Wilber. So began

³ I was of course introduced to hermeneutics through biblical studies in the seminary—the desire being to understand the historical contexts in which scriptural texts were created by human authors. Loyola's program expanded the idea to include allowing the reader to encounter the text—whether it be scripture, Tradition, or a given context in which the reader lives—and interpret it for himself.

my encounters with the influence of post-modernism on ideas about education, religious education, and philosophy.

I am an assistant principal and teach a single senior religion class in an all-boys Catholic High school in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It is a prominent school in the city, having been here since 1894, and boasts many civic and business leaders among its alumni. It is owned and operated by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, a religious order of men (not priests) founded in France in 1821. The school's current mission statement was articulated in the 1980's, and while occasionally revisited, has been left intact for 30 years: "The mission of Catholic High School is to teach Gospel values, in an environment of academic excellence, according to Catholic tradition and the spirit of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart" (Catholic High School, 2013). It is, of course, in the context of this particular school that I think about, understand, wonder, struggle with and practice education.

Baton Rouge remains a largely segregated city in the Deep South of the United States. Louisiana is a conservative state in a conservative region of the country, and in general the students, families and faculty of Catholic High would identify themselves as such. While my school consistently makes efforts to increase the diversity of our student body and faculty, we remain significantly predominantly white. Our all-male student body is served by a fairly gender balanced faculty that includes dozens of our alumni. In many ways the school is representative of sociocultural realities of its geographic setting, but it is also the case that the mission of the school can put the institution at odds with the surrounding culture as well. The larger issue for this study is that all of the social and political forces that shape the conversation about education in the United States and the

South are also always at work at Catholic High, and as such place constraints on considerations of curriculum.

The Catholic context is also intensely personal, and includes any number of ambivalences I have about dogmatic and doctrinal issues, particularly as articulated by the more conservative members of the Church's hierarchy. That reality notwithstanding, there are philosophical aspects of the tradition that are inextricably woven into this study and I would like to conclude this contextualization with those.

I am a Catholic and have been my entire life. I would not say I am dogmatic, but that I have faith in the midst of doubt. The general truths and practices of the Church ground me, and provide me with a basic metaphysical perspective from which I interpret the world, my place in it, and my responsibilities to it and those with whom I share it. I would not say I am an overly orthodox or scrupulous Catholic, but I am a liberal one. On the other hand, no doubt there are many who would find my being a practicing Catholic a very conservative, even naïve, circumstance.

Given the faith I profess, and the fact that generally it makes broad sense to me, I have to say that I am a realist of some sort. I freely admit to sympathy with the post-modern point of view with respect to there being many perspectives, many truths, and that no discipline should be the model for all the others. No one point of view can capture the richness that is the world in which we live. That is not to say, however, that there is no truth. Indeed, the claim that the world is richer than any one person's point of view can capture is itself a truth claim. So, with my own theological assumptions, I have metaphysical assumptions about assertions as such—that in many cases they make truth claims, and that those are to be evaluated with at least one of the basic theories of truth:

correspondence, coherence, or pragmatic.⁴ I admit that the establishment of the truth of the claims about narrative inquiry, or the concept of responsibility as it is practiced, is notoriously difficult. Nevertheless, my own qualified realism (I accept that the post-modern loss of certainty is a “real” loss—but one that brings real opportunity as well) is one that believes that moral claims can be true in some sense—they really can describe obligations that should hold for how people are to act toward the world and toward one another. I believe those moral obligations—provisional and subject to impossibility as they may be—will have a strong impact on the area of research on which I most want to focus: education in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

I come to this study through years of the practice of religious education in Brothers’ schools—as a teacher, campus minister and now teacher-administrator. It is my daily work with adolescents, the questions they raise about faith, and the questions they have about how best to live that have all led me to inquire in 4 different decades about the nature of education in general and catholic education in particular. The students I encounter are often struggling with doubt, and are quiet skeptical about traditional answers. Those doubts of students’ center around two areas, and both will get attention in this work: morality, and the relationship of faith and reason. Since I myself have similar struggles and questions, I find my work challenging, but often rewarding.

In the Loyola Master’s of religious education program I was introduced formally to post-modern perspectives of religious education. There I found support for ideas that had been fomenting ever since my exposure to Whitehead and process theology in the

⁴ I make this assertion to acknowledge a tension. The post-modern, with which I am generally comfortable, in at least some versions problematizes truth, especially the naïve correspondence theory of truth where it is thought that our minds mirror on the inside what is outside us. While recognizing the problem, I find that I cannot help but hold what I describe here—a sense of truth that resists the relativism that can emerge from certain descriptions of post-modernism.

seminary. The Loyola program also called for a praxis approach that challenged my tendency to leave education as an intellectual exercise that did not have to be engaged with actual experience.

About a decade later I began doctoral studies at LSU in the educational technology program. There I encountered an approach that emphasized quantitative study of the effects technology on education, and though I do not reject quantitative study as such, it did not speak to the larger issues with which my students grapple, or the questions they raised about religious belief, faith and religious practice. Those issues seemed more at home in curriculum theory, so when I discovered that field, I immediately realized that was here I needed to be. Readings in the Traditions of Inquiry course at LSU included texts that I had gravitated to on my own. Those texts dealt with issues of ultimate meaning and purpose, which for me and others are inseparable from education (Doll, 1993; Huebner, 1995; Purpel & McLaurin, 2004), and were once again available for inquiry.

Situating the problem

As a Catholic school we have in our genealogy religious texts deeply rooted in the pre-modern era of ancient Hebrews and Greeks. The moral imperatives of some of our texts (Morris, 1999; O'Malley, 1992), fit Doll's description of the pre-modern: "a cosmological harmony that included an ecological, epistemological, and metaphysical sense of balance or proportion" (Doll, 1993, p. 19). The pre-modern ontology of essences, helping "students discover known truths, truths teachers already possess" (Doll, Jr., 1993, p. 25) particularly when those are religious truths, is clearly still a part of our curriculum.

The modernist paradigm is also present in contemporary education and therefore in my school as well. That worldview is described succinctly by Doll's as

cause-effect determinism measured mathematically, [dependent] on a closed, nontransformative, linearly developed universe. Stability was assumed, nature was in all ways ‘conformable to Herself and simple,’ and the disciplines were organized in a reductionist hierarchy from mathematics and physics through sociology and psychology (Doll, 1993, p. 21).

The presence of that paradigm is visible in Catholic religious education in moral dogmatism, and in efforts to use reason to “prove” God, to name two examples. The science taught in my school is generally consistent with a modernist, reductionist, “Newtonian physics is the ideal for knowledge” paradigm, but that paradigm is generally hostile to religion and religious faith. It is the modernist paradigm that has given rise to what many perceive to be the incommensurability of science and religion, or, more broadly speaking, faith and reason. Many of my students experience that incommensurability and so it is that one of the necessary subjects of this project will be to envision a curriculum that embraces and then transcends that apparent conflict. Along with those realities, Catholic education is subject to the modernist paradigm through imposed curricula from government education departments that emphasize test scores, standardization, one-size-fits all, industrial models of education.

Finally, though, the issue is made clear by William Doll as he quotes Stephen Toulmin “We must reconcile ourselves to...the thought that we no longer live in the ‘modern’ world. The ‘modern’ world is now a thing of the past”(Doll, Jr., 1993, p. 4). The world into which my students emerge after graduation is a post-modern world, but the education they receive, and the forces that shape it, remain rooted in paradigms that still have more in common with the pre-modern and modern worldviews. How can we reconcile the paradigm of the curriculum in which I teach with the paradigm my students will enter and live in long after graduation?

Research Questions

This project will undertake an analysis of curriculum that is consistent with, indeed grows organically from, the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart as it is presently understood. Since curricula evolve in complex political, cultural, economic, religious, and moral contexts, an effort will be made to identify those pressures but then highlight the ways that the charism is challenged by, and challenges, those contexts. In particular this research will consider a charism-informed curriculum in light of the context of post-modernism⁵ and the challenges it presents to the ontological and epistemological commitments inherent in a Catholic education. The driving question for this inquiry is “What relevance does the educational Charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart have in a post-modern society?” The following sub-questions will support this inquiry:

1. What are the characteristics of the curriculum embodied within the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart?
2. How does post-modernism inform an understanding of the charism of the Brothers?
3. How should we conceive of education within the charism and post-modernism?

Purpose and significance of the study

The hope for this study is that it contributes to the conversation about larger questions concerning secondary education through the fruitful interaction of a Catholic

⁵ “Post-modernism” will be used throughout the paper with a dash rather than as one word--because modernism is a more agreed upon term and postmodernism, if the dash is removed, seems to be more a single movement, idea, or wave than it is. Whether it is structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, complexity or chaos theory, “post-modernism” with a dash keeps the temporal relationship between such notions and the modernism that is being challenged: after modernism, but not a univocal movement. We are not yet in the space where there is an approach to *what is* that is unified and deserving of a single term (and may never be again—and all to the good some may say). Post-modernism with a dash preserves the transitional nature of the time we are in, even as we await the arrival of something that is no longer “post” but instead “trans” (Quinn, 2001, p. 117).

religious order's spirit with the broad field of post-modern curriculum theory. The hope is grounded, in part, because of the author's deep belief that there is a spiritual and religious⁶ dimension to the work of education no matter the context (Huebner, 1995; Purpel & McLaurin, 2004). This dimension of education is obviously attended to in a Catholic context (with widely varying levels of success), but it is also noted explicitly by curriculum theorists who consider the "theological context" of education (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2008). One of the purposes of considering curriculum as theological text is to explore a curriculum that embraces a way of living that is fully human, respectful of creation and more likely to contribute to the health of human beings and the entire planet that we all call home. The great hope is that people can learn to make meaning and come to understandings with one another that serve the common good without the level of acrimony and judgment that characterizes much of our public discourse on education, especially when education is considered as theological text. The ultimate goal then is to present a curriculum that is not just realistic for the school in which I work, but one that may bear resemblances to curricula that will work in many schools with populations and histories that are different from my own.

This research will also contribute, I hope, to the work already done by others concerned with the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. David (1997) did research on the characteristics of an ideal teacher in the charism, while Brandao (1993) did research on faculty perceptions of the charism in community owned schools. Hilton (1998) focused on transmission of the charism to lay faculty, and considered charism as

⁶ "Spiritual" and "religious" are not synonymous, and will not be use as though they were. The ways in which those terms are used in this research will be made clearer later on.

“shared story.” The role of charism in the “story” that should be our curriculum is the focus of this work and so adds another perspective to the work already done.

Post-modern Theoretical Framework

As noted above, while there is no easily agreed upon definition of “post-modern” there are nevertheless several basic ideas associated with that paradigm that provide the theoretical framework for this research. More will be said about each later, but it will be enough for now to give the reader some sense of the key notions, as I understand them, that are being woven together. William Doll's (Doll, 1993; 2003; 2008; 2012) work of integrating post-modern sensibilities into curriculum theory and pedagogy has and will continue to exert a profound influence on my own understanding of education. Post-modernism can be very difficult to nail down as a single perspective, but my general understanding at play in this work is grounded in William Doll's work.

For Doll, post-modernism has a number of pedagogical implications: “All are imminent, and all carry pedagogic corollaries. These are: (1) a vision built on doubt not certainty, (2) centrality of the dialogic process, (3) reinterpretation of the practical, (4) adopting an overall ecological frame or orientation” (Doll, 2012, loc. 3781). Each of these implications will inform this study, and I offer a short sketch of them here.

The first implication, “a vision based on doubt not certainty” is one that is close to my heart. As I struggle with religious education and the doubts of my students, one of the main issues has been the increase in religious fundamentalism—and for many of my students it is the certainty in religious proclamations which they find most distasteful. In my own reflections about intolerance inspired by religion, I was led to the belief that the modern quest for certainty is its own kind of “idol worship,” a violation of Moses's first

commandment if you will, and that quest is the ultimate source of much of the world's trouble.⁷ It is not that certainty is gone, however, but rather that

...certainty is always temporary, contingent on the situations in which we find ourselves. One might say that certainty with a large "C" does not exist, only certainty with a small "c," and that small "c" is always problematic--heavily dependent upon an existent situation and always open to further exploration and questioning (Doll, 2012, loc. 3950).

The second implication, the "centrality of the dialogic process" points to Doll's own ontological commitments—that the world is not composed of isolated entities with static essences, but rather "the essence of our being, if I may borrow the metaphysician's concept, is to be dialogical—to have interaction with others in a community" (2012, loc. 3831). I would argue that the dialogic process Doll envisions for a post-modern pedagogy is present in his 4 R's of a post-modern curriculum.

Doll's efforts at crafting a post-modern curriculum led him to assert that such a curriculum should be marked not by the memorization of facts that the current curriculum still values, but instead by four factors: richness, recursion, relations, and rigor—the "4 R's" (Doll, 2012; 1993). Richness in curriculum is most succinctly described by Doll, with alliterative allure, as "one filed [sic] with just the right amount of problematics, perturbations, and paradoxes that prod" (Doll, 2012, loc. 950). Recursion for Doll is a way of seeing, to go back over again and "see again for the first time" (Doll, 2012, loc. 950). Relationality as a characteristic is ultimately a description of the ontology that should inform a curriculum. Doll admits: "it took me years to understand that it was

⁷ I write this paragraph one day removed from the terror attacks in Paris in January 2015. There is no shortage of examples of the violence associated with religious certainty, just as there is no shortage of violence associated with modernist scientific certainty—though it certainly takes other forms: technological dominance, medical experiments that violate ethics, pollution, war, etc. If religion is to survive and continue to offer anything to humanity, it must reject the idol of certainty and embrace a humility born of something like the doubt Doll describes.

not solid, massy, hard atoms that were really real, but the relations themselves” (2012, loc. 987). Finally, rigor for Doll is a way of thoroughly playing and exploring the possibilities associated with any set of relationships (Doll, 2012, loc. 987).

The third pedagogical implication of post-modernism, the “reinterpretation of the practical” grows from the conviction that “The practical and daily problems of teaching are not well-served by the application of theoretical modes” (2012, loc. 3850). For the purposes of this inquiry, the brother’s approach to education will be investigated for this aspect in particular. As I hope will become clear, there is a deep sense of the practical that permeates the educational charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Especially relevant is Doll’s identification of the practical with a serious engagement with the daily realities of students and teachers:

Here the practitioner/teacher needs to work with the client/student in an interactive manner; each needs the other, each must help articulate the nature of the problem being posed. Often the problem, be it personal or professional, lies hidden, enmeshed in the vagaries of the situation. Both teacher and student need to work together, each trying to understand the other’s point-of-view, each respecting the other’s “right to be understood” (2012, loc. 3868).

Doll’s post-modern curricular and pedagogical integration find further expression in his “3 S” motif: “science, story, and spirit” (Doll, 2003). For Doll, science and story represent the necessary components of a curriculum that embraces what is best in reason (science) and the humanities (story). As these two “play” with each other, discover relationships, engage in rigor and recursion, a new space emerges: “in the space produced by the feedback loops, the dance, or the play—this space of ‘the third’—there exists, I believe, ‘spirit.’ And it is spirit which education needs and sorely lacks. For in spirit, there exists—in all its awesome mystery—a vitality and in that vitality resides creativity” (Doll, 2003, p. 8). Pedagogically, that creative spirit is called for in the fourth implication of

post-modernism “adopting an ecological frame.” The ecological paradigm embraces the best of the modern sciences of ecology and complexity, while at the same time, I suggest, calling for stories that capture the interrelationships between human beings and the rest of the natural world.

The ecological perspective is also connected to Doll’s need for a way around the hard and fast subject/object split that characterizes the modernist paradigm. Hermeneutics, already noted above with respect to biblical interpretation, is a way around that binary

by arguing that meaning is created by personal and public dialogic transactions: with ourselves, confreres, texts, histories. To create *transformative transactions*—where we change as do the transactions—it is imperative we question the assumptions and prejudgments we hold so dear, particularly those supporting our own historical situations (Doll, 1993, p. 136).

These aspects of Doll’s work—post-modern pedagogical implications, hermeneutical reflections, 4R’s and 3 S’s-- form the core of the study’s post-modern framework. These aspects will find their way into the discussion of a curriculum and pedagogy that recognizes the opportunity that post-modernism offers and weaves it with the wisdom within the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

One of the distinguishing features of the post-modern perspective from the modern paradigm is its evolutionary character. Darwin’s theory of evolution ushered in a different worldview, to say the least, and any post-modern curriculum must engage evolutionary ideas. In my college years in the seminary, two philosophy courses stand out as central influences on my own developing philosophical approach to “what is.” The first was Pragmatism, where I was introduced to the American philosophers Charles Peirce, William James and John Dewey. Peirce has remained integral to my overall perspective, particularly his theology of evolutionary love which has resonances for this

project. The second course was Process Philosophy, where I encountered Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, John Cobb and David Ray Griffin. The critical aspect of both courses was the dynamic nature of reality that an evolutionary understanding of the universe described. Both courses provided ways of critiquing the static, triumphant dogmatism and doctrinal bullying that I encountered in the Catholic Church. Any curriculum that I would recommend must find ways to embrace such an evolutionary perspective.

Among the scholars in the Catholic world who do just that is theologian John Haught. His concept of "explanatory monism" (2008) will be useful when issues of the alleged conflict of faith and reason are addressed. Briefly, the notion is that many of those on either side of that conflict are guilty of only allowing singular explanations for any given phenomenon, whether it be why water boils or the existence of the universe, hence "explanatory monism." Haught would allow, consistent with some expressions of post-modernism, that multiple explanations can function to describe what is happening in any given observation.

Jordan Peterson's (Peterson, 1999, 2007, 2013) understanding of the significance of story for structuring human experience will be central to the ultimate focus of this work. There are multiple stories that are intertwined here: the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, post-modernism, the conflict of faith and reason. This work is about those stories, how to look at them through a post-modern lens, how to tell a story throughout a curriculum so that students are invited to enter the story and deepen their understanding of the meaning of being human. Story being one kind of narrative, Hendry's perspective (Hendry, 2010) on "narrative as inquiry" plays an important role.

Of course, charism is central to this work. It is the educational context in which I have lived and worked for 30 years, and is itself a small part of much larger networks: Christianity, Catholicism, France, the United States, Louisiana, and personal relationships with Brothers who have been bosses, supervisors, principals, school presidents, gurus, mentors and friends. The ultimate aim of this work is properly understood as a form of moral education, and so just how to articulate a post-modern charism informed kind of moral education is a natural aspect of this project.

Overview of the study

The post-modern musings of Doll will find their way into the structure of the study itself. As I have struggled to fit this work into traditional dissertation chapters I have continuously encountered frustration. The subject is naturally recursive, I would argue because in some sense the nature of the phenomena under consideration are so structured, so the following chapters themselves will be recursive as well. Themes will repeat themselves under slightly different perspectives and recombine I hope in such a way that they are recognizable to the reader as expressing something of the reality of our subject. Given that, this work will not simply proceed in a linear fashion from questions to literature to methodology to data to conclusions. All of those aspects will be present, some more explicitly than others, but they will also be recursively present throughout. Post-modernism will not be the focus of a single chapter, but will be woven throughout.

Chapter 2 will describe the narrative inquiry methodology that the research requires. The project will include ethnography and autoethnography, analysis of story narrative, and narrative analysis of interviews with selected individuals who practice education within the Brothers' tradition. In so far as philosophical inquiry is a method, it

will also be brought to bear on the issues. The ontological and metaphysical commitments necessary for this work, and implicit in the methodology, will be addressed in this chapter.

Chapter 3 of the project will begin with the story of the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart beginning with an overview of their history. Woven into that story will be contemporary understandings of the charism: my own as I understand foundational texts in light of my own practice of education within the charism; and understandings of the charism by two leaders within the order. The story of the reinterpretation of the charism, as well as narratives from key Brother leaders, will provide the additional pieces to an understanding of the charism that can inform a curriculum in Brothers' schools.

Chapter 4 of the project will take up the aforementioned philosophical analysis of the ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies found within post-modernism and the Brothers' charism. Necessarily broad in scope, this portion of the project will address the differing conceptions of reason in the sciences and the humanities (religion in particular), how those conceptions structure the relationship between those two broad discourses, and how that relationship is a manifestation of a deeper tension between faith and reason. Any curriculum in a Catholic secondary school needs a theoretical framework for understanding and allowing for dynamic creative dialogue between these two approaches to reality, because the education called for by the Brothers' charism is meant to be holistic. Post-modernism will be featured in this chapter insofar as it manifests this tension, and as it provides hope for a better understanding of both faith and reason.

Chapter 5 will address the research questions directly in a philosophical analysis of moral education, post-modern thought and the charism. Included here will be material from the brothers' formation literature, specifically the Coindré Leadership Program, a three year series of readings and experiences designed to immerse an educator in the

charism more deeply into its implications for education. The long term purpose of the program is to train mentors for other educators so that the charism of the Brothers can survive the extinction of the order.

Chapters 6-8 will present the data gathered from interviews with selected Brothers, with some analysis of the themes present in those conversations.

Chapter 9 will present the findings from the interviews as well as a curriculum informed and shaped by a dialogue between a charism informed education and the paradigm altering insights of the many manifestations of post-modernism. Working with the notion that inquiry is narrative (Hendry, 2010), this inquiry will present a curriculum understood as a story into which students can be invited so that they live a fully human life.

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY—“NOTHING WE DO IS COMPLETE.”

As I worked toward completion of this degree, I received a lot of advice, and almost none of it encourages a qualitative dissertation:

- Work like that takes too long, demands too much, and is difficult.
- Do a quantitative analysis, plug your numbers into the formula, and get it over with.
- Once the dissertation is done, go do the research that really sparks your interest—meanwhile, navigate the system in the most efficient manner possible.

There is something missing in such advice. The nature of the inquiry should drive the methodology (Hendry, 2010). The subject in which I am interested, an analysis of the charism of the brothers in light of post-modern curriculum theory is such that a quantitative analysis will obscure at least as much as it purports to reveal, and would be a modernist approach to research that has a post-modern theoretical perspective. The title above points in that direction—this subject is not characterized by definitive answers. Given that, this study will require a variety of qualitative methodologies to adequately address the subject at hand. Aspects of the inquiry, especially those having to do with the relationship between a science curriculum and a humanities curriculum, will necessarily fall within the general area of the philosophy, especially epistemology and ontology. As such, the methodology will be philosophical analysis with a focus to weaving a satisfactory understanding of the various ontologies and epistemologies that are associated with a given curriculum. The consideration of moral education within the contexts of the charism and post-modern insights falls again into the area of philosophy, particularly the philosophy of education. As such, the method once again will be philosophical analysis of the attendant issues and how they are informed by the research.

The work of understanding the charism is best pursued with a narrative methodology. There are several reasons narrative recommends itself. I find myself in general agreement with Broch-Due's description of the purpose of qualitative research: "In general, when doing qualitative research, the main purpose is to learn how individuals create meaning in their lives, how they create and interpret their lives given the material conditions in which they live" (Broch-Due, 1992, p. 94). Ellis and Bochner (2000) capture something of what I have to accept as legitimate and guiding: "Evocative stories activate subjectivity and compel emotional response. They long to be used rather than analyzed; to be told and retold rather than theorized and settled; to offer lessons for further conversation rather than undebatable conclusions; and to substitute the companionship of intimate detail for the loneliness of abstracted facts" (p. 744). Finally, Polkinghorne (2007) posits a point I believe has been central to my own interests: "Narrative researchers undertake their inquiries to have something to say to their readers about the human condition" (p. 477). Education in the charism is about nothing if it is not about the human condition, and I want the research that I do to speak to that. I want the research to be useful to those who practice education, particularly religious education especially as it happens in schools run by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

Clandinin and Murphy (2009) remind us that among the relationships in which researchers are entangled are those relationships to the professional research community who want to know why what we are studying matters. In other words, how am I going to answer the questions "so what?" and "who cares?" The short answer to the second question with respect to religious education is "everyone," and that implies a serious response to the first question. In their overview of the curriculum field, Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman (2008) include a section on curriculum and theology where they

persuasively argue that theological ideas and perspectives pervade schools—because the people in them and the people concerned about them, have deep beliefs about theology and religious faith. Making some of those ideas explicit, from the point of view of educators, is very important.

As I approached the project, I anticipated having to travel some important ethical and relational terrain. Because each of these men were individuals with which I had a prior relationship, I wondered to what extent entering into a research relationship changed how we were for one another. At some level, I would consider each of them a friend, and certainly more than just a colleague. Regardless, I wanted to approach the interview with each of them from a particular perspective, something akin to an offer of friendship (Conle & deBeyer, 2009). I wondered, “Can I construct my research as an offer of friendship, and is that the best way to frame it? Is it a genuine offer, or is it simply an offer that goes no further than completing a project?” There is much left to negotiate. Will our research relationship continue? How will I share my work with them? Will I, and if so, how, incorporate their reactions to this effort in some further project?

In their discussion about the “ethos of the narrative company we keep.” Conle and deBeyer (2009, p. 47) offer another perspective that informed this work. By undertaking narrative research into religious education with colleagues, I am “keeping company” with them. We are changing our relationship, and I believe in fact that Conle and deBeyer’s use of Booth’s framework to analyze experiential narratives as offers of friendship applies to both the relationship we may be forming and could also be adapted to describe what happens in religious education itself. I hope that my approach to each of the men with whom I spoke was as the establishment of a kind of friendship and shared inquiry into the questions that I have.

As I hope will be clear, the educators with whom I worked find a deep connection between what they do and the people their students become. As such, they are not simply worried about student's "souls," but also about how they live in the world. Politics and social justice are therefore part of the religion curriculum at schools in the brothers' charism. Given that, I find a connection to the work of Denzin and Lincoln (2008) where the role of the researcher is that of the "*political bricoleur*" who "knows that science is power, for all research findings have political implications. There is no value-free science. This researcher seeks a civic social science based on a politics of hope" (2008, p. 8). My work can have an impact on the politics of my school, and I hope ultimately on politics in a larger arena. Within the last couple of years I engaged in some political activity with my own students as I introduced them to the issue of the Capital Area Transit System (CATS) bus tax in Baton Rouge. I found myself called to political activity, recommended an activist to speak to our teachers, and recently discovered that one of my interviewees opposed the tax while I worked to have it passed. The basis of my support for the tax was religious, and about giving hope to those for whom lack of transportation is an impediment to holding a job, but regardless of one's perspective on the issue, hope is central to the practice of religious education in the charism of the brothers, and I hope (!) to find more opportunities to explore that idea with religious educators of all political leanings.

Finally, I want to look at the data that I have, and religious education in general,, through the lens of Clandinin and Murphy's understanding of a "transactional ontology" (2009, p. 599). In that article and elsewhere (Clandinin & Connely, 2000) Dewey's understanding of education plays a significant role, and the authors highlight his unique ontology and the effects this has on epistemology, how to understand research, and

naturally how to understand education. For Clandinin and Murphy (2009) Dewey's understanding of reality, his ontology, holds that reality is "relational, temporal and continuous" (2009, p. 599) and that consequently how we come to know, and what can be known, is thereby affected.

It is clear from the narrative data below that the educators with whom I spoke hold to some sort of relational perspective about their work. The temporal character of reality is also at play, in that the ages of students, and the times in which we live, remain variables that will always call for adjustment. There is no time, as it were, in which one can ignore the temporal character of reality and hope to be an effective educator, or educational researcher.

The continuous nature of reality is also on display in the interview material. For Clandinin and Murphy (2009), the continuity has to do with the realities surrounding researchers—there are no bright lines of demarcation where researcher begins and ends, where a subject begins and ends, where one variable can be isolated and its influence evaluated. In that case, they argue, narrative inquiry is uniquely suited to express the ontological situation. If that is true of research, I suggest it is also true of the activity being researched. None of the subjects hold to a deep distinction between life and work, rather some explicitly say that in some fashion the educator is the message—that it is the life, and the story of the life, of the educator that is ultimately the content of a class.

Autoethnography makes sense for this project, too, because as a method it eschews the modernist notion of objectivity and refuses to treat the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart as a static entity which can simply be researched and "re-presented" to the readers. The charism is a lived reality, and for better or worse, I am trying to live it. There are texts, to be sure, and stories, of course, each deserving attention, but at the end of the

day it is the dialogue of that charism with those who encounter it that makes it a living reality. Aspects of this effort will move between autoethnography and ethnography, as the charism of the Brothers which guides the school within which the author works is put into conversation with the author's own experiences and growth, as well as the school culture in which the charism is experienced, and the wider culture whose effects also permeate the curriculum.

"Knowing" the charism takes many forms, and that knowing has come to this researcher over the course of decades, and especially in the last three years. That knowing has in particular developed through a series of relationships and conversations with individuals whose own knowledge of the charism is deep, particular, and if not unique, nevertheless precious. The charism will be presented both through textual analysis of foundational and influential documents produced by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, through the story of their order and the reinterpretation of their charism in the 1960's and through the stories of selected Brothers whose roles in the life of the order make them especially suited to interpret the charism. Finally, narrative research methods will be brought to bear on the idea of curriculum as a story. It is the curricular story that should characterize the education in a Brothers of the Sacred Heart school that is the ultimate purpose of this research.

Interviews

One of the approaches for understanding the charism, for me at least, is to ask those who have lived it longer than I, and more intimately, and had a much greater influence over its contemporary manifestations. For this project, I have conducted interviews with 3 brothers: Br. Bernard Couvillion, Br. Ivy Leblanc, and Br. Noel Lemmon.

Br. Bernard (Bernie to his friends and colleagues) was born in the mid 1940's⁸ in Plaquemine, Louisiana to Cajun French Catholic parents. The family moved to Baton Rouge after WWII ended so that his father could work on building up LSU. Bernie went to Catholic elementary school at Sacred Heart in Baton Rouge, and for a short time to Catholic High School before entering the juniorate in Mobile, Alabama, a high school program for boys interested in becoming brothers. Bernie would graduate from the juniorate, enter the novitiate, and one year later, in 1965, take his first vows as a brother. Over the last 50 years in the order he has been a teacher, a campus minister, a provincial⁹, and from 1994 to 2006 he was based in Rome while he served as Superior General of the order. Since his return he has been based at St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, a day and boarding school for boys. There he has served as president and currently serves as campus minister.

Br. Ivy was my mentor in the Coindré Leadership Program for 3 years. He joined the order in 1968 at the age of 22 after graduating college from LSU. Ivy is an alum of Catholic High School, where he first encountered the brothers. Once he completed his training he was placed at Stanislaus one day before Hurricane Camille hit in 1969. Shortly thereafter he was working in Mobile at the Catholic Boys Home. After that institution closed soon thereafter, Ivy moved back to Stanislaus, then to McGill-Toolan in Mobile, and finally to Br. Martin in New Orleans. He served as a religion teacher, but quickly moved into the role of disciplinarian and from there to principal and president of Br.

⁸ I've never asked Bernie his birthdate, but simple math from his interview makes his birth year probably 1946. Bernie graduated high school in 1964, and entered the brothers' novitiate one year later at the age of 19.

⁹ The elected leader of a province of the order.

Martin. He too has served as provincial, and is the only brother in the New Orleans province to serve non-consecutive terms as provincial.

Br. Noel was born in 1928 in Lafayette, but grew up in Alexandria. He encountered the brothers at Menard High school in Alexandria. He worked as a teacher in several of the New Orleans province schools, first in English and social studies, but ultimately as a math teacher for most of his teaching career. He spent over 40 years as a teacher and summer camp director at Stanislaus, and near the end of his professional life was called upon to be the disciplinarian at Stanislaus. I met him there in my first year of teaching in 1986.

The interviews with Br. Bernie and Br. Ivy were conducted for two separate projects: Bernie's first interview was part of a narrative inquiry project for a doctoral course and focused on his understanding of religious education; Ivy's first interview was part of the completion of my general exams and dealt with the story of the recovery of the charism in the post-Vatican II church. The focus of the interview with Br. Noel was on his understanding of the charism, particularly as disciplinarian in a transitional moment for the Brothers of the New Orleans Province.

With the exception of the one interview with Br. Noel there was no pre-determined list of questions, just a desire to have a conversation about the agreed upon topic. Even in Br. Noel's case, the list of questions was purposefully brief. Br. Noel is now a retired Brother, and his health is not the best. To be fair to him, I provided him with a verbal description of what it is I am interested in, and why I chose to speak with him. I also provided the list of questions (see appendix A) for him to review.

The interviews were conducted with the notion that the interview is a dynamic reality, with both interviewer and interviewee involved in creating something that would

not exist were either participant different, or even if the interview were simply conducted on another day. Br. Bernie was interviewed twice, each time in Bay St. Louis, once in his office at St. Stanislaus, and once in the brothers' residence next door to the school. Each of those interviews was recorded, and transcribed either by me or by a transcription service. Two separate services were used with varying levels of satisfaction. Regardless of the transcription method, interviews were listened to multiple times. All transcripts were treated to thematic narrative analysis in order to glean as much insight into contemporary understandings and experiences of the charism as possible. I asked for an IRB exemption for the three interviews, and on January 13, 2015 received notification that my request was approved.

Each of these brothers was chosen for a number of reasons, but first and foremost because I have a direct experience with each of them. Br. Bernie was a mentor of mine for a short 2 week period during my first year as a religion teacher, 1 year removed from the college seminary. Retreats and reflections he provided to faculty throughout my time with the Brothers revealed him to be a man of enormous theological insight, great pastoral sensitivity and a leader. His tenure at the head of the order, and the leadership he provided make him clearly an authority on the nature of the charism.

Br. Ivy was my mentor in the Coindré Leadership Program, which meant that we met approximately once a month during the school year for three years. At each of those meetings, lasting from 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours each time, we allowed our conversation to flow freely across our experiences of working in and leading Brothers of the Sacred Heart schools. Each meeting was designed to focus on a set of readings from the 3 year cycle of the Coindré Leadership Program—and they often did—but more often than not the

meetings were also times of sharing stories and perspectives of those, including ourselves, who struggled to live and teach in the Brothers' tradition.

Finally, there are interviews that I did not conduct, but which are available to me. As part of a class at my high school devoted to the Charism and history of the brothers, student small groups conducted interviews with quite a number of brothers who live in Baton Rouge (Sacre Coeur, 2014). The purpose of the interviews was to learn about the brothers' work, their experience of the call to the order, and to otherwise listen to and preserve their experiences before they are gone. I will select two of the interviews from this student project, and I will make the selection based on my experience of the brothers involved while considering which two among those interviewed by students do I find to be most in touch with the Charism and who has affected my understanding the most?

A number of issues surround narrative research and I would like to examine some of them before proceeding further. I am especially concerned with the broad questions of ontology and responsibility, and wish to make as explicit as possible the perspectives and positions with which I approach this research.

Metaphysical responsibility

I am not sure how I came to see the video I will reference in a moment, but it fits nicely with the course I teach to high school seniors at my all-boys Catholic high school. The video is one of the Ted.com "Ted Talks" (Seymour, 2011) and addresses the feelings that beauty creates in the human body. As the speaker relates different aspects of beauty, he asks the audience to stop thinking for a moment and just feel what he reveals to them. Not long into his brief talk, he shows a childish picture, a shaky line drawing of a flower and a butterfly. He asked the audience to just feel the picture. Then, he told the audience that the picture was in fact the last act on earth of a 5 year old girl who died of spinal

cancer. Many participants then had a completely different emotional-physical experience. Some cried.

One's experience of this child's drawing is dependent upon a deep worldview. I can imagine that some people could still find the drawing ugly, remarkable in no way, since lots of little girls draw flowers and butterflies and it is coincidental that this particular drawing just happened to be by a dying little girl. I would not frame the picture like that, but there are worldviews—more objective, modernist, quantitative approaches—that would remove the human feeling of the event. My perspective is this: that frame is a decision, one is responsible for the frame one uses, and those frames are related in the broadest possible way to some kind of ontological responsibility—each of us must choose how we are going to interpret the world, the experiences we have. This responsibility is unavoidable and will necessarily shape one's work, attitude and approach to research. Thus, the first responsibility of research is a metaphysical one: to decide, and make explicit, one's understanding of reality (or Being) as such and to elaborate as much as possible one's awareness of the ways in which it affects one's approach to research, meaning and knowing.

Sheurich (1997) indicates near the end of his work that narrative researchers (I hold that this is true of any researcher) indeed have a philosophical frame, ontology or metaphysic, but that their limited training in philosophy means that many of them do not understand the metaphysical assumptions that they carry around: "To say, however, that social science researchers are not trained to do philosophy, however, does not mean they are not operating out of a philosophical position. They are operating out of a philosophy, a taken-for-granted philosophy that I label 'realism'" (p. 160). Words like "valid" and "authentic" are used, even as "objective" and "truth" are set aside (Moen, 2006). Sheurich

himself recognizes that realism is in fact such a deep idea that even those explicitly rejecting a realist perspective (himself included), or at least trying to work past one, are subject to it. Whereas Sheurich is attempting to articulate what a post realism might look like, the perspective here is in some sense a realist one-- because like Sheurich I am unable to do otherwise.

Responsibility for a responsible approach to truth

As I worked toward this project's goal, I worked with an understanding of terms like "truth," "valid" and "authentic." While recognizing the problems associated with such terms and the correspondence or representational issues surrounding them, I have to acknowledge that my use of such terms is an evaluative one. I do not think that I am alone in this. These terms are evaluative terms, and as such they are applied to some claims and not to others. I maintain that researchers have a responsibility to articulate some philosophical approach to truth so that there is a context from which to evaluate research, so that research can be identified as in some fashion rendering experience so that it is of use, has some value, to those who avail themselves of it. I remain sensitive to the charge of relativism, and am concerned that an uncritical relativism will slide into full-blown relativism such that no claims or research can be distinguished from any other, and all perspectives have equal validity. In my own context, moral relativism is particularly problematic.

Clandinin and Connely (2000) name the possibility of what Dewey calls a "*miseducative experience*" (p. 85). Their understanding is that while there are many truths, many perspectives that shed light on a phenomenon, there is the possibility that some perspectives are not true, are not valid, or in some way inadequate renderings of what happened. I think I can live with this epistemological understanding of relativism;

it is the metaphysical/ontological version of it that I oppose. The research I am trying to do lives somewhere between the certainty of modern reductionism and the “wild pluralism” of the formalists (Clandinin & Connely, 2000, p. 39). Other researchers in this field use evaluative terms like “sound, persuasive, and logical” to describe narrative research, indicating thereby some sort of metaphysical stance toward truth (Maynes, Pierce, & Laslett, 2008, p. 128)

But what approach to truth ought this research to employ? How are we to articulate a metaphysical understanding of the truth that is available in this project? William Doll’s efforts to construct a post-modern curriculum (1993) can be useful here. As the modernist paradigm has been replaced by the post-modern, the loss of certainty and the realization that all knowing is so colored by context that what we are left with is more like faith: “If we have a faith, and I hope we do, it is a faith based on doubt, not certainty. What we do--and we must do--we do with the realization that it may be wrong...an absolute truth (or right) does not exist” (Doll, Jr., 1993, p. 60). What we are left with, it seems, is not actually a rampant relativism, but a sense of truth as negotiated. The loss of certainty should encourage us to be

better negotiators... such a vision recognizes the rights of others and eschews the concept of 'one best' or 'one right' way. It accepts indeterminacy inherent in complexity and multiple perspectives. At the same time post-modernism strives for an eclectic yet local integration of subject/object, mind/body, curriculum/person, teacher/student, us/others (Doll, Jr., 1993, p. 61).

Like reality itself in the post-modern paradigm, truth is a function of relationship. But there is no way around it, when I speak of truth, I am still working within a modernist/realist framework. As complicated as a post-modern idea of truth may be, I am nevertheless asserting that the post-modern notion still is a better representation of a reality that human beings encounter. In this respect, I have to hold that as much as I am

attempting a post-modern analysis of curriculum, it is not a post-modernism that rejects the deep unavoidable realism of which Sheurich (1997) writes.

Responsibility for negotiating the webs of responsibility

Jean Clandinin was charming. Her visit to LSU was valuable for the academic community, for the graduate students who listened to her on consecutive evenings, for the class of EDCI 7930, and for me personally. Certainly her work is important, and her gentleness and thoughtfulness were evident. As she spoke to our class that Thursday evening, I was intrigued by her stories of working with Canadian First Nation young people who either had left school early or were at risk for doing so. I deeply believe that narrative inquiry uncovers important insights that other more quantitative research ignores. As I listened to her talk, I was drawn to ask a question related to the problem of the truth of what her subjects were telling her. I imagined that at least some of the time, the subjects' interpretations must sound implausible; I wondered what a researcher was to do if the narrative that emerged from the subject did not fit the researcher's understanding, or if what was revealed in the narrative was felt to be inauthentic, or worse, morally compromising. What would a researcher do if he or she learned that the subject had done something awful? After all, one of the subjects Clandinin worked with was, she thought, involved in the drug trade—a notoriously destructive activity.

I sensed in her response some concern that I was missing the point, that I was making some judgment that I ought not to make. As I recall her answer, her primary point was that it is an oversimplification to say that a subject's narrative is simply a series of claims about his or her experience which can be checked or verified. Rather, the narrative that emerges is negotiated between the researcher and the subject, and that negotiation takes place in a relationship of trust. Clandinin indicated that the trust she

was working to develop with the young people in her project would be harmed if she were to simply challenge the veracity of their narrative. Instead, she preferred to nurture the relationship with the limited time each week her project allowed for interaction with her subjects.

Given that perspective from Clandinin, I have chosen to use extensive sections of the interviews as part of this text. They are for the most part collaboratively produced¹⁰ oral histories and as such I wish for their production to be as transparently present as possible. I have certainly edited them for inclusion here, but acknowledge that what I take to be the pertinent content is found throughout the conversations, which for the most part proceeded naturally with no pre-determined goal. What one finds, I think, are examples of what Chase (2011) calls “big stories” and “small stories” (pp424-425). Each serves its own function in an inquiry: big stories provide the speaker some distance from the narrative that allows for interpretation; small stories are more everyday occurrences that also reveal or hide realities depending on particular circumstance (Chase, 2011). All in all it is an open-ended, complex, relational process, a good example of the post-modern approach Doll describes, and best demonstrated by using extensive transcriptions.

The process raises issues that need attention. First of all, narrative understood as negotiation requires a way of being with another that engenders trust such that what emerges will have a sense of validity and authenticity that will make it persuasive to those who will encounter the narrative. That way of being is the first responsibility of the narrative researcher, it seems to me. The other issue that creates some problems is simply the reality that the post-modern paradigm emphasizes: we live in a web of relationships,

¹⁰ As opposed to controlled by the interviewer or participants. See Clandinin & Connely (2000, p. 111).

and some of those may impinge upon the relationship between the researcher and the subject. My concern with respect to Clandinin's research has to do with how to understand her responsibility to those in the community who might be affected by her subject's connection to the drug trade. I have no good answer, but I do think that the insights of Jacques Derrida¹¹ into the idea of responsibility to the other can help explore responsibility in general, and therefore offer something worthwhile to narrative researchers in particular.

Impossible Responsibility

My school continues to have issues surrounding student drug use, and student distribution of drugs. Generally, if a student is involved in distribution, he is dismissed. Recently, we have had a zero tolerance for that situation, and our disciplinarian had been fine with implementing the policy in a very rigid way. It was not long before an otherwise good student had been found to fit the criteria for dismissal. Because we had dismissed an unusually high number of students lately, and because some of us had begun to question our policy, the administration had to struggle with the notion of our responsibility for implementation of our policy. Our disciplinarian wanted to bring the student in question before the dismissal committee. If he did that the student would be dismissed almost certainly. He did not believe he had a choice, given our previous practice. He shared with me that he was desperately torn, but that he wanted to deviate from our policy in this instance, making it possible for the student to stay in our school, where we believed he would be well served. Our disciplinarian could not tell his wife about his decision—as he believed she would not respect him as much because he was not

¹¹ See Biesta and Eg  a-Kuenhe (2005), especially chapters 2 and 10.

enforcing a principle as he previously had. He worried that if he did bring the student's case before the committee, he might lose some respect from me and another administrator who did not believe our policy should remain as it was.

Which brings us to Derrida's intriguing exploration of responsibility, how it expresses my own experience of the binding character of responsibility, the fact that easy answers about how to act responsibly are hard to come by, that one is always pulled in more than one direction. For Derrida "there is no responsibility that is not the experience and the experiment of the impossible" (quoted in Egéa-Kuehne, 2005). Furthermore, the webs in which we find ourselves always mean that some responsibility will be left unfulfilled. Fenwick (2009) makes this point rather well:

This is why, according to Derrida, our enactments of responsibility must unfold in secrecy, and involve sacrifice. We always sacrifice others to respond to the immediate, and our action of response is far too complex to withstand the judgment of community standards and universal laws, which are always more simplistic than everyday dilemmas... Responsibility is enduring this trial of the undecidable decision, this interminable experience, where attending to the call of a particular other will inevitably demand an estrangement from the 'other others' and their communal needs, and where closure to the problem is never reached (p. 115).

Responsibility and Context: To whom am I responsible?

As I consider the more direct notion of responsibility in the context of research with my school community, I find the simple community of which I am a part to be surprisingly full of webs of obligations. I have responsibilities to my colleagues in the administration, as well as to colleagues with whom I teach. I have responsibilities to the students I teach, and to the students who are affected by administrative decisions. I have responsibilities to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart themselves, as I owe them my professional career, and their generosity defrays my graduate school expenses. Finally, I feel a growing responsibility to contribute some kind of research to Catholic education

and public education. The responsibilities of a narrative researcher in all these contexts will be difficult to negotiate. I will touch briefly on some of them. Space and time preclude dealing adequately with them all.

I am left to wonder more and more how I am going to navigate my responsibility to my students with respect to Catholic education. My faith has changed over the course of my life, and is marked by significant doubt now. I have to struggle with my own integrity as I teach the faith as the Church would like it taught—with altogether too much certainty for it to be credible. I am careful not to use religious faith in a manipulative way, but it is a challenge to share a faith perspective without imposing a guilt trip on those who may be unready to embrace a Catholic way of living. Still I believe that there is deep truth in the Catholic Christian revelation and I have a responsibility to present that in a persuasive but non-coercive way. I am persuaded that human beings are shaped by stories they tell themselves, that identity is in fact constructed, but I also believe that some stories are better than others, some have more potential to enrich human life, to facilitate a fuller human experience, to move individuals and groups to justice. I want students and colleagues to have the opportunity to reflect on the faith and choose for themselves.

And I want the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart to continue. I have been shaped by their work, faith, training and philosophy of education. It is a privilege and responsibility to have completed their “Coindré Leadership Program.” The program was developed to allow lay leaders to understand and internalize the brothers’ charism so that it could be passed on to generations who may not know a single brother. I have a responsibility to be the sort of person who can help share that which I have so benefitted from.

I believe education needs a narrative that can serve both Catholic schools, and public education. The work of Thomas Berry (Berry, 1988; Scharper, 2001), Fritjof Capra (1996), Ilya Delio (2013), William Doll (1993), Haught (2012), Timothy Lines (1987) and many others holds the promise of telling a story about human beings and the universe that could provide a way for humans to share a common story. I feel a responsibility to do research, narrative and otherwise, that helps tell that story in such a way that we can choose constructive healthy ways of living together on this earth.

Responsibility is a complicated notion, much more so than this work could begin to elucidate, but I hope I have at least explored a possible answer to the “So what, who cares” questions raised by Clandinin. I would say, in conclusion, that responsibility in narrative research is multi-faceted, and irreducibly so. I hope that I have made some contribution to the point that researchers ought to explore and express their metaphysical presuppositions. Researchers need to negotiate truths that contribute to knowing, and have a responsibility to understand and face the impossible task of meeting every felt obligation. Simple answers are to be eschewed, and responsibility to the persons with whom we collaborate must be lived in such a way that research serves health—of people, and the planet as a whole.

Limitations of this study

Only three brothers were interviewed for this project, two of which entered the order in the midst of what can fairly be called a post-modern approach to Catholicism that lay beneath the reforms of Vatican II. They were selected for reasons noted above, not the least of which, given my role in administration of a high school, is time. By no means do I wish to suggest that each individual brother is living a post-modern approach to the charism, or that any given brother would be comfortable with some of the versions of

post-modernism that go by the name. I don't know how many current brothers of the sacred heart would even use the term. All that being said, the limited number of interviews done leaves open the question of how other brothers might articulate the charism, and how those articulations would or would not be consistent with the post-modern reflections included in this study. The good news is that students at Catholic High School are interviewing brothers about their vocation and life stories, so that body of work continues to grow. The recordings are done by students, and are preserved, and the books that students are producing (one so far) themselves provide texts for any researcher who would like to use them to delve into the self-understanding that the brothers' own reflections reveal. I suggest there is fertile soil there for years to come.

All that being said, I still maintain that the roles and leadership that Bernie and Ivy have served in over their careers render them each uniquely qualified to articulate the charism. Br. Noel's generational difference from the other two, puts him in a different category vis a vis articulating the charism's curricular implication, but his position as disciplinarian, coming when it did, serves to highlight some of those implications nevertheless.

There are no student perspectives in this study, and it seems that another logical step toward understanding the curricular implications of the charism would be to hear from those who have experienced it from that perspective. Yet another group whose experiences might prove valuable to a narrative inquiry are those students of the brothers who have found their way to being faculty members in brothers' schools. Their dual perspective would certainly serve as one more facet of a multifaceted approach at deepening our understanding of the charism and the explicit and implicit curriculum to which it lends expression.

There is no quantitative analysis in this study. Still, such work provides a perspective that can certainly inform a grasp of community members' understanding of the charism, how much it is appreciated, how those affected by it evaluate its presence and influence in their lives. Surveys of stakeholders have been administered as part of accreditation processes of course, but a more thorough and robust set of questions would be another interesting way to come at the charism and its curricular implications and effects.

While there has been engagement with Catholic thinkers in so far as they reflect post-modern approaches to theology, there is a body of literature on Catholic religious education which has not been engaged with in this study. Personally, I dealt with that as part of the degree I completed at Loyola, and given the scope of this study, proper attention to it would have expanded this work to an unwieldy size. It would be valuable, I think, to inquire into how Catholic educators have engaged in handling the question "What is a Catholic post-modern curriculum, and what would Catholic schools look like if such a curriculum were fully embraced?" I think some hints at answering that question have surfaced in this work, but deeper engagement with Delio, Doll, Teilhard de Chardin, Haight, and Lonergan, and in particular with respect to elementary and secondary education would be fruitful. Post-modern curriculum theory must reach to the beginning of education—too much religious education of our youngest students is still either pre-modern or modern so that when students encounter the uncertainty that characterizes a post-modern perspective on religious issues, they throw the proverbial baby out with the theological bathwater and then choose a shallow atheism as the only viable option.

Brothers' schools, including my own, are embracing more technology, so yet another area for study surrounds the way that technology impacts the explicit and implicit

spiritual/religious curriculum that is the central focus of the charism. Petifils (2012) has addressed this issue in light of Jesuit education; approaching it in light of the Brothers' charism would be worthwhile as well.

CHAPTER 3. THE CHARISM OF THE BROTHERS OF THE SACRED HEART: “WE LAY FOUNDATIONS THAT WILL NEED FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.”

What a service to religion will give those whom we send you and whom you will train in the religious life. Don't measure everything in the narrow boundaries of your house in Lyon. The snowball is building up; in a short time it will become a mountain. I won't mention those young boys that you train and who when grown up will forget neither your lessons nor your virtues, although today they are not all that you desire. They will retain more than you think. If they become fathers of families, their children will be that much better brought up. No matter what you say, good is being done through your apostolate.

--Letter from Fr. André Coindré to Br. Borgia, 1823¹²

Introduction

The priest is walking during an evening in the winter of 1815-1816 in Lyon, France. Passing the entrance of a church, he notices two young girls huddled together in the doorway, hoping to stay warm overnight. Moved by the sight, he picks up the smaller one, takes the other by the hand, and brings them to a Catholic woman who provides them with shelter.¹³ The priest is Father André Coindré, and this simple act is often mentioned during Foundation Day¹⁴ liturgies at Catholic High School when the community celebrates the beginning of his work to found groups of religious men and women who will care for the orphans and forgotten youth in and around Lyon. Among the groups he founded is the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, the religious order of men who own my school, Catholic High School, in operation in Baton Rouge, Louisiana since 1894.¹⁵ Their mission now ostensibly remains the same as it was then, to provide children with

¹² (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1981)

¹³ (Roure, 1987) This work, according to the foreword, is meant “to bring under one cover every known date of an activity of Father André Coindré.” The compilation is the result of extensive archival work by Br. Jean and will prove to be an invaluable resource to any researcher wishing to delve deeper into the history and charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

¹⁴ Foundation Day for the Brothers of the Sacred Heart is September 30, 1821. On the school day closest to that date, schools administered by the order typically celebrate a mass recalling events related to the beginning of the order.

¹⁵ When it began, the school was known as St. Vincent's Academy, in part because of a relationship to the local Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

sanctuary from cultural forces that would do them harm, provide them with the means to make a living, and form them in the faith.

At Catholic High School and other brothers' schools in the New Orleans province this simple story has been told over and over as the brothers are endeavoring to keep it alive and relevant as a means to having it shape present day stories about the purpose of their schools and work. As I continued PhD studies in curriculum theory, my own analysis of this founding story focused on understanding the spirit or charism that shaped and continued to shape it in order inform the curriculum that is offered by a school operated in continuity with the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Crucial to this understanding was the philosophical presuppositions that are inherent in the Brothers' tradition, as well as those that may be incorporated into it as the tradition continually encounters new circumstances. The production of the story is itself a story, as is the history of the brothers in general, and this inquiry attended to both in an effort to contextualize the effort to articulate a holistic curriculum for students in the Brothers' schools. The significance of all these sorts of stories, for my research anyway, lies in the way they shape the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and so the curriculum and culture of the institution in which I practice education.

But the story as it is often told is floating alone, detached from the context of the time in France, other than the oft mentioned fact that the time is around that of the French Revolution. As such, the story is limited in its ability to offer instruction into the charism of the brothers at the time, as well as its ability to provide food for reflection on the charism as practiced in the present, throughout the world. The story of the order's arrival in America in the mid-19th century is similarly unencumbered by many details on the ground at the time. That is not to say that the details are not there, but rather to say that

they are not readily told, and their inclusion in the telling of the story of the Brothers is limited. While the longer term purpose of my research is to consider a curriculum that is Catholic, humanistic, holistic, able to embrace reason and faith, and consistent with the larger educational goals that grow out of the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, this inquiry was limited to sketching the story of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Inside that story is the story of what prompted its discovery, and how its discovery continues to shape that practice of education in the Brothers' tradition.

The nested character of the story of the brothers is consistent with an analysis and perspective of psychologist Jordan Peterson (1999) whose work insists that narrative structure is how human beings create meaning, and the meaning of the stories we tell is best understood as a reality in which we live: stories within stories. Peterson (2013) argues, effectively, that we *inhabit* a given story so completely that the world is transformed. Peterson's perspective informs my own work, because in many ways, the charism of the brothers is in reality a story that I inhabit every day and which has shaped both my life and the lives of thousands of students and educators.

Charism

Within the past few decades, the Brothers have made a concerted effort to investigate and understand their charism. The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes the nature of a charism as:

Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men (sic), and to the needs of the world. Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well. They are a wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ, provided they really are genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit and are used in full conformity with authentic promptings of this same Spirit, that is, in keeping with charity, the true measure of all charisms. (United States Catholic Conference, 2012, p. 231)

More recently, the current superior general of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart wrote about the nature of charism as it relates to the Institute of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart:

In point of fact our mission of today flows directly from the one that Father Andre Coindré initiated almost two centuries ago now. It is an integral part of the grace or the charism that the Spirit granted to our founder and which we, his followers, have in turn never ceased to receive and to cause to bear fruit. Mission is a service, and is integral to this all-encompassing gift that we call charism. A charism is, therefore, a grace that breathes life into the mission and includes the mission itself.

Another reason for spending these initial pages delving into the topic of charism is that our own experience of that gift and its development teaches us the importance of an ongoing updating of our understanding of the mission of religious life, which is to serve the Church and the world. This adaptation, which is so essential for assuring the future of religious life, consists in constantly finding new and authentic responses to the needs of every time and place. (Carmona, 2010)

There is a lot that is said in both of these excerpts, but for this inquiry what is important is the way the story of Vatican II is woven into the story of the Brothers' recovery of their charism, how individual brothers' stories are then woven into the larger story of the Brothers' charism today, and of course the way that the charism has now come to be understood. Elsewhere I have dealt with the notion of weaving stories, and of weaving in general, but there is no escaping that metaphor in this inquiry as well, as I hope to make clear.

What follows proceeds according to a scheme that I also hope makes some sense to the reader. I will begin the story with the relatively recent past, and then go on to explore how those events surrounding Vatican II led to a search and then a discovery of the beginnings of the Institute. Events in the United States will get some attention in so far as they played a role in bringing the Brothers to America. The story will proceed again to our starting point as the inquiry of the Brothers into the spirit of their founder became

woven into the lives of the brothers, their schools, their students, and those lay partners who joined them in their work, among whom, of course, I count myself.

The Call of Vatican II

Opening in the early 1960's, Vatican II, called by newly canonized St. John XXIII, ushered in a vast reform movement in the Catholic Church. Known as "aggiornamento" or "updating," the goal was to put the Church much more into direct contact and dialogue with the rapidly changing modern world of the 20th century. Growing out of the council, and implicit in it, was a desire for the renewal of the lives and work of religious orders (Leblanc, 2014). A number of church documents, some post-council, made an explicit call for religious orders to look at and reconsider their founding charism (Carmona, 2010; Leblanc, 2014).

The Founder: André Coindré

Coindré was born in 1787, on the eve of the French Revolution (Bardol, 1888,1987). In very short order, Coindré was living in an environment that was very hostile to Catholicism. What we know of the Brothers' understanding of the time and events is contained in a number of works. These works provide some perspective into the time surrounding the formation of the Brothers, and into the circumstances culminating in their arrival to the United States. One of the works was made possible in part because of the work done by those brothers who have devoted significant time and effort into going through what archival materials there are and making them available in summary publications. To give the reader some idea of what is available I offer the brief descriptions that follow.¹⁶

¹⁶ While not exactly primary source material, these works are the result of research done by the Brothers and reflect either an attempt to tell their story, or an attempt to reconnect with selected foundational texts in order to promote a deeper understanding of the mission and spirit of their order.

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart is a work focused on the order from its foundation in France in 1821, with some attention paid to the Founder prior to that year, through to 1960. The work was published in Italy in 1961, and is a Catholic document, holding both an *imprimatur* and a *nihil obstat*, and displaying the language and style of a confessional document. By its own admission the work offers “only the essentials, temperately sketched and presented with all the methodical care capable of aiding the memory and the understanding as well as of facilitating the documentation of the various facts and data so as to enable the student to make comprehensive reviews or to further more exhaustive studies” (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1961, p. vii). It is a book designed to chronicle accomplishments, and to do so from the perspective of faithful men who are devoted to restoring the Catholic Church to its proper place in France, and bringing a proper faith to the United States. Its introduction provides a solid insight into the religious worldview of the order as it reflects on its founding, at least as that spirit is understood from the perspective of a writer or writers whose work was done just a few years before the opening of the Second Vatican Council.

The Life of Father Andre Coindré written in French by a brother of the Sacred Heart, Eugene Bardol, in 1888 and later translated into English, is, like the other sources mentioned, a sort of hagiography. Again, the very beginning of the work betrays the tone. The foreword places Fr. Coindré in the post-revolutionary French context and identifies Coindré as one of “the men raised by God to work with much zeal to destroy the empire of evil and regenerate France” (Bardol, 1888, 1987, p. vii). The text can provide a valuable insight into the way Coindré envisioned faith, its relation to education and the general

These works were available in the Catholic High School library, having been donated by the Brothers in an effort to promote knowledge of their charism through units taught in the religion classes of their schools.

spirit that moved throughout the revival of French Catholicism after the revolution. Br. Eugene laments in the forward about the materials that he did not have access to, writing as he did 60 or so year's after Coindré's death:

During the years that followed his death it would have been an easy task to gather interesting details on the life of the untiring preacher of the Word of God. How many precious documents could have been furnished by those who were the witnesses of his life as a pupil, seminarian, and missionary? The years have passed, the witnesses have disappeared, and with them have gone to the tomb so many memories which could have interested and instructed us (Bardol, 1888,1987, p. vii).

Interestingly, the introduction of this text, written by then provincial of the New Orleans province Br. Xavier Werneth (and current colleague of mine at Catholic High School) in 1987 (well after Vatican II) contextualizes the contents very succinctly:

I remind you of Brother Rene Sanctorum's caution about this biography in Workbook 5 Monsieur Coindré: "This book is to be used with care, for it excels in mitigating things, even avoiding to mention points that might be too controversial, in making corrections to texts, in grouping material together...and in errors of date" (Bardol, 1888,1987, p. v).

More fruitful for the historian's job is Br. Jean Roure's *Father Andre Coindré 1787—1826, A Chronology* (1987). Br. Jean's work is the result of significant archival work throughout France, and includes a variety of pictures, photocopied documents, sketches and other evidence that serve to provide a more detailed picture of the life and movement of Andre Coindré. Roure's work provides a number of details that help to flesh out the theological backdrop for the founding charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

Coindré and 19th century French Catholicism

Though the brothers are not a clerical order, their founder certainly was a cleric, and by all accounts, an exemplary one. Andre Coindré was a French missionary priest who did not leave France, and he was a product of his time. The details in Roure's work help to establish at some basic level the extent to which Coindré is connected to the larger

story of the revival and missionary fervor of post-revolution French Catholicism. His education in the Catholic faith had to proceed for a period of time in secret, and when he was a child the concern for safety was such that homes were devoid of religious symbol, and some even advocated “hiding or burning of spiritual books and objects rather than letting them be exposed to profanation.” (Roure, 1987, p. 17)

Coindré attended minor seminary at Our Lady of L’Argentiere, where he was educated by a French manifestation of a Jesuit-inspired clandestine order known as the “Fathers of the Faith.” (Roure, 1987). Members of that group were also part of the establishment of

the Congregation of Lyon, a secret lay association, the center of a network that will have ramifications in Paris, Chambéry (Savoie), Grenoble (Isere) and northern Italy. Its apostolic goal is to inspire Catholic and royalist fervor. Its members are divided according to age, sex, and social condition; the tasks are instruction, catechism (sic), and visits to the sick, the prisoners, and the poor (Roure, 1987, p. 25).

The revival of the Church after the persecution of the French revolution was well under way when Andre Coindré entered the minor seminary in 1804 (Roure, 1987), but resistance from Napoleon would slow the return of the Church. Coindré progressed to the major seminary in 1809, St. Irenaeus, run by the Sulpicians and was ordained in 1813 so that when the Bourbons returned in 1815, he was in position to make his contribution to the reinvigoration and restoration of French Catholicism (Roure, 1987). In fact, Roure comments that the major seminary Coindré attended in Lyon was marked by a particular focus:

It seems safe to say that the spirit at Saint Irenaeus Major Seminary was open to facing the needs of the society of the time and to creating new institutions, especially in the field of education and religious instruction. The alumni appear to have been obsessed by the thought of apostolate among the masses and service to children (Roure, 1987, p. 43).

Further evidence of Coindré's being steeped in the French Catholic spirit of the time is found in the centrality of a particular church in Lyon. The short story that began this inquiry--of Fr. Coindré's finding and caring for the young girls in the church doorway--happened at St. Nicetius church which was itself the center of much of French Catholic restorational energy (Roure, 1987). Fr. Coindré was baptized at that church, as was St. Claudine Thevenet who was inspired by Coindré to found the women's religious order of the Religious of Jesus-Mary. In fact, it was to Thevenet that Coindré brought the girls. St. Nicetius was also the home parish of Pauline Jaricot, founder of the group what would eventually be the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.¹⁷

Coindré's work and the story of the brothers

In keeping with the spirit of the major seminary from which he emerged a priest, Coindré's work included a strong focus on the plight of children in post-revolutionary France. His association with St. Claudine Thevenet, his senior by more than a decade, led to the establishment in 1816 of a lay women's association, the *Pieuse Union* of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, one of whose foci was "almsgiving to the poor and to children" (Sanctorum, 1987, p. 31). Pauline Jaricot and Coindré's sister Martha, would join this group in 1817 (Roure, 1987). This group would also form *providences*, organizations focused on caring for poor children, educating them in the faith, and teaching them a trade (Sanctorum, 1987). Coindré's first boys' providence was called the *Pieux-Secour*, and the trade upon which it focused was silk weaving. In order to raise money for this group, a prospectus was sent out along with a request for monetary support. Suggesting once again the Coindré connection to the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon is the presence

¹⁷ The Society was formed in France in 1822 for the purpose of supporting foreign missions with prayer and money (Fréri, 1911).

of the name of a Mr. Jaricot as one to whom the support can be given on behalf of the *Pieux-Secour* (Brothers of the Sacred Heart). The beginning of the brief prospectus makes clear the initial spirit that will become the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart:

There exists in this city a recently established charitable institution which ought to be of interest to all friends of religion and good order. Its goal is to foster a love of virtue and work among young boys who find themselves without shelter or means. It consists of two separate workshops where the children are grouped according to the pattern of behavior they demonstrate. The first is termed the emulation workshop and the other is the probationers' workshop.

The emulation workshop is intended for poor children from good backgrounds, whose character and morality are carefully attested. These are more often than not young orphans kept out of harm's way in their early years, but who, lacking in appropriate supervision or pecuniary means, are unable to find an establishment willing to admit them. They are exposed to being led astray either through idleness or to the example of bad teachers. Any child who is of previously questionable conduct is rejected unless a lengthy trial period has provided convincing evidence that there has been a significant improvement in his behavior.

The probationers' workshop is intended for children who have in the past given their parents serious cause for concern due to their intransigence or the gravity of their offense. Some of them, free-spirited and independent, are reluctant to give themselves over to any sedentary occupations; they often wander on the docks and public squares, a prey to all the evils of vagrancy and to the wiles of unsavory characters. Others have recently been victims of the behaviors from which it is our aim to shelter them. They are young prisoners who, having been incarcerated for a more or less lengthy period, find that no one will give them work. However, they are deserving of the special concern and of individual attention which has for some time been exercised on their behalf in an effort to set them on the path of goodness. Guilty at an age when boys tend to be reckless rather than wicked, impetuous rather than incorrigible, hope for their transformation must never be lost. They must be surrounded with every possible help in order to form them to good habits (CLP, 3.1).¹⁸

¹⁸ This document is found in a variety of places throughout the Brothers' publications about their founding. I have used the text as it is found on the Coindré Leadership Program (CLP) website, accessible now to anyone, at <http://Coindré.brothersofthesacredheart.org/Component.cfm?ComponentID=1> . For simplicity's sake, the site is listed just once in the bibliography. It consists, however of 3 major components, each divided into 24 to 27 separate readings on the history and charism of the Brothers. Parenthetical references to the site will be in the form (CLP, x.y) where the first number indicates the component, and the second number the actual reading.

The need for a stable group of men to work in the boys' providence eventually gave birth to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in 1821.

Another aspect of Coindré's priestly work directly led to the change in the Brothers' work in providences. A gifted preacher, Coindré delivered sermons all over the region, endeavoring to return to the faith all those who had fallen away from the Church during the persecutions of the revolution (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1961). While he was reputedly quite effective in the sermons, retreats and missions at which he preached, he nevertheless noted that the lack of education among his listeners limited his effectiveness (Sanctorum, 1987). Sanctorum (1987) notes that though there were schools in the urban areas

even that much was far from existing in the rural settings, where Andre Coindré, during his missions, could not help but see the extent of the ignorance that prevented his preaching from having its proper effect and that locked out the young from a bright and dignified future.

That was why he decided, in January 1822..., that if another foundation were to be made, it would be "to teach children how to read and write, like the Christian Brothers do.... Consequently, I would like you, on the sly, to learn for yourself the method of the Christian Brothers by going one day with my brother (Father Francis Vincent Coindré) to see their school and by questioning them about everything and then to transmit to our good brothers all that you will have learned." (from a letter from Coindré to Br. Borgia)....

It is true that until that moment, the few country teachers were given a bad press. Their profession was, in a way, one for losers--scorned and badly paid. Schoolteachers, rightly or wrongly (often rightly), were reputed dirty, greedy, brutal, and--yes--ignorant! It was the congregations of teaching religious who regilded the escutcheon of the teaching profession. Jules Ferry's brave new public school teachers owed not a little to the religious teaching orders (pp. 45-46).

Once the brothers began to establish schools, the order grew for a few years, until in May, 1826, Andre Coindré's life ended suddenly.

It is not entirely clear what happened, but the story is a simple one. Fr. Coindré had continued to keep a demanding schedule, and had even become appointed rector of a seminary, when he took ill in May of 1826 (Roure, 1987; Sanctorum, 1987). The illness

appeared as a kind of madness that caused “appalling scenes” (Roure, 1987, p 165). Peppered with moments of lucidity over the next two or three weeks, during one of which Coindré appears to be aware of his affliction before the dementia returns, Coindré’s situation remained dire. On the night of May 30, 1826, after another moment of lucidity, Coindré

asks for the lights to be extinguished, and makes out to fall asleep. Four guards are in the room. [At] 1:30 a.m. Father Coindré quietly slips out of bed, walks to the casement window, opens it, thus awakening one of the guards, but too late. He falls to his death (Roure, 1987, p.165).

How to understand his death created problems for the faithful of the time. The day of his death a Father Paul Lyonnet, in a letter to the diocese of Lyon, speculated about medical causes of the delirium, and a day later another priest expressed confidence in Coindré’s salvation, but Sanctorum (1987) notes that whispers of suicide began soon. Coindré, a wildly popular priest and integral part of the religious awakening of Lyon after the revolution, was mentioned in an 1825 book about the religious history of Lyon, but in the second edition of the book a decade later, his name was gone (Sanctorum, 1987). No mention is made of the circumstances of his death in several accounts of his life and the history of the Brothers (Bardol, 1888, 1987; Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1948, 1961). It is not wild speculation to imagine that the circumstances of his death played a role in his invisibility to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in the 20th century United States.

Decline

Upon Andre’s death, the role of Superior General of the order fell to Andre Coindré’s brother Francis Vincent (traditionally called Vincent). Every history of the Brothers concurs on the account of his abilities in that role:

Father Francis Coindré was an excellent priest, animated with the best of intentions and entirely devoted to his work. However, he lacked to an appreciable

degree the virtue of prudence which is the essential quality of a good leader and administrator.

Still young, as he was only twenty-seven years old, with little experience in life and no talent for business, he had been, all of a sudden, raised to the superiorship. If, like Father André, he had limited himself to acting as moderator, spiritual guide, recruiter and promoter of the cause of the Institute with the clergy, he could have rendered valuable service, as he was eminently qualified for these various offices. However, instead of sharing his authority with his associates as provided by the Chapter of 1824, he gradually concentrated in his own hands all powers, even the temporal administration for which he had no aptitude at all, and he thus brought the Institute to within a hair's breadth of its ruin (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1961, p. 25).

When Vincent finally left his role in 1841, the order was not in good shape. The histories also agree, that if not for the continued work of Br. Xavier, the first recruit to the order by Andre Coindré, things could have gone far worse (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1961).

The Second Founder and mission to the United States

Upon the resignation of Fr. Vincent Coindré, the Brothers held a General Chapter¹⁹ at which they elected Br. Polycarp Superior General. Referred to as the second founder, Polycarp was everything and more that Fr. Vincent Coindré was not. The first Brother Superior General, Polycarp fulfilled the vision of Andre Coindré expressed in 1824 that the leadership of the order eventually be assumed by a Brother (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1961). An able administrator, Br. Polycarp used the rules Andre Coindré had fashioned both for the women's order, the Religious of Jesus-Mary, and the Brothers of the Sacred Heart to create his own version of a rule of life for the Brothers. Coindré's rule had been based on that of St. Augustine, along with the governing Constitutions of Ignatius, founder of the Jesuits. Polycarp used the rule he created to restore the order than had been lost during Vincent Coindré's tenure (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1948).

¹⁹ A general chapter is a meeting of the Brothers General Council—the elected Superior General, and several other elected councilors—along with delegates from provinces all over the world.

The chapter that elected Polycarp elected him for a five year term. At the conclusion of that period, Polycarp's work was so much to the satisfaction of his brothers that he was elected the position for life during the chapter of 1846 (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1948). Much more could be said of the work of Br. Polycarp, but for the purposes of this inquiry, it will be enough to summarize his accomplishments over the 18 years he led the order: "When he took over the reins of the government, there were only sixty Brothers, and near a dozen establishments; at his death he left four hundred Brothers and about seventy schools" (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1948). Among the most significant of his efforts was the decision to send Brothers of the Sacred Heart to the United States in 1847.

Louisiana Connection

The threads in the United States church, particularly in Louisiana, that are woven together with those of the Brothers' story deserve brief mention because they establish once again the influence of French Catholicism in the United States, and of course because they play a role in the eventual invitation from the Bishop Portier of Mobile for the Brothers to cross the Atlantic. The bishop had sent his Vicar General to France to find an order to run Springhill College, and one to take over the diocesan orphanage in Mobile. The Vicar stayed in Lyon, where the reputation of the Brothers was well known and held in some esteem, so he wrote Polycarp and asked them him to help with the orphanage. Polycarp was thrilled to be asked, even wishing to be among the first missionaries. He was not, but on January 11, 1847, after an arduous sea journey, 5 Brothers of the Sacred Heart, along with Jesuits recruited by Bishop Portier to run Springhill, arrived in Mobile.

Portier had previous experience in Catholic schooling as a priest in New Orleans, where he had administered for a period of time a school for boys in the old Ursuline

convent, for which he was praised by his bishop of the time, Bishop DuBourg (Baudier, 1939, 1972). Bishop DuBourg, a native of Santo Domingo, was also quite connected to the French church, having attended seminary in France, and having made the acquaintance of the founder of the Marists (Baudier, 1939, 1972). In addition, DuBourg also played a role in the formation of the Propagation of the Faith, when his emissary persuaded two similar lay associations, one led by Pauline Jaricot, to merge (Baudier, 1939, 1972).

Clearly then, the French church was interwoven into the American Catholic experience, particularly in the South. The story of the complications that attend a French missionary Catholic priesthood in the United States is well documented by Pasquier (2010) in *Fathers on the Frontier*, but what is less clear is the extent to which those same complications attend the work of religious brothers who are not ordained. In some respects, it would make sense to assume that at least some of the same issues would emerge for Brothers as would for priests. As part of the story of the recovery of the charism of the Brothers, I will attend briefly to some of the insights of Pasquier's work assuming that they at least shed some light on how it came to pass that the story of the charism came to need to be recovered.

Pasquier's (2010) work points to the pressures of being a French Catholic priest in America. Those missionaries, and it must have been the case for the Brothers as well, were influenced by the missionary accounts that made their way back to Europe, accounts that were eventually revealed to be incomplete when the missionaries actually arrived in America. Pasquier (2010) describes some of the complications priests would have encountered:

Indeed, there is much to be learned from the inevitable collision of interests in a nineteenth-century American missionary context. For example, one has to wonder what happened in a small wooden church named after the Immaculate Conception

in rural Charenton, Louisiana, where the local parish priest speculated like so many other French missionaries about rumors of the pope's plan to define the Immaculate Conception dogma and the American episcopal Hierarchy's debate on the matter. And then there were the problems of following diocesan guidelines for celebrating the feast...decorating...without a budget, expecting lay people to make the trip to mass in inclement weather, convincing husbands to join their wives...all the while having to decide how best to handle the latest Protestant polemic against another papist measure thought to oppress ignorant Catholics and undermined the basis of good American government (Pasquier, 2010, pp. 136-137).

In their role as religious educators, brothers coming to the United States would have had to live and breathe some of the same complications albeit later than the period that is the focus of Pasquier's work. In the same section of his work, Pasquier (2010) also notes a perspective of the priest missionaries that more than likely was shared by the Brothers, given their origins described above: "French missionary priests often considered those lay people they met in the United States as deficient believers and practitioners of the one true faith who required either conversion in the case of Protestants or reform in the case of Catholics" (Pasquier, 2010, p. 137).

At a minimum, I believe it is safe to say that the Brothers emphasis on Catholic education harbors this basic perspective. What is less clear to me is how much overlap there is between the experiences Pasquier documents and what the Brothers encountered. In some ways that question holds less interest for me, predisposed as I am to philosophical questions rather than historical ones. I recognize, however, the value of understanding the many threads that weave together to produce a philosophical perspective, and those that are woven together to produce an understanding of the Brothers' charism. Though they fall outside the scope and limitations of this inquiry, a number of questions are inspired by Pasquier's work.

At this point in my research I do not know to what extent the pressures Pasquier documents are felt by French Catholic *brothers*. How does the fact that the brothers are

a “non-clerical”²⁰ order whose primary work was with school age children--not wielding the same power or authority as priests, and with a different kind of evangelical responsibility—change the way that their French culture interacts with that of the missionary territory in which they find themselves? How does the fact that their primary charism is with the young and usually through education, make their experience different from those French missionary priests who had to minister to adults in frontier and urban church parishes? What was the role of the Catholic institutional environment, and how did the fact that the brothers were not priests affect their ability to obtain the resources necessary for their work? How did the spirit of the brothers affect, and how was it affected by, American culture, Southern culture, slavery, race, gender? How did the theology of their founder, a French domestic missionary priest formed during the French Revolution, play out once the order found its way to a more Protestant United States? How are those forces still present and acknowledged today?

However it comes to be understood, the Brothers did over a period of time come to be transformed in the United States, and their understanding of their charism changed to such an extent that its rediscovery in the late 20th century proved to be a challenge for some brothers (Leblanc, 2014). The story of that transformation will have to be told somewhere else, and I think , by someone else, but the following note from *The Brothers of the Sacred Heart in North America* (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1993) at least acknowledges the change in mission, if not charism (though the two are inextricably intertwined):

²⁰ Non-clerical simply means that the order is focused on priesthood. While today there are ordained brothers, they are not allowed to hold administrative positions. It was the expectation of the Founder that once he and his brother completed their respective roles as leaders of the Brothers that leadership would emerge from the ranks of the Brothers themselves.

After a generation, American immigrant families began to lose interest in European cultural ties. They came to the schools to be brought into the mainstream of America. As new generations of Catholic immigrants came--St. Aloysius in New Orleans was called 'Italian High' during part of this period--they began to see education as a way out of Catholic isolation. The Brothers' mission became one of Americanizing the Church. Catholic schools demonstrated how to be both Roman Catholic and American.

The Brothers began by presenting a Catholic system of education as an alternative to the increasingly secular public schools, but ended inculturating Catholicism into America. In Madawaska, Maine, and across the river in Edmundston, Canada, Brothers of New England were teaching in the public schools, whose charism seemed to be, in essence, Catholic. The Brothers were successful in their efforts by being very protective of their French Catholicism. American law, however, separated the Church and State; the Brothers became the bridge between them. Symbolic of this was the Brothers' school in Baton Rouge: the school was poised between the state capitol and St. Joseph Church, now the cathedral. A great friend of then Louisiana's Governor Leche was Brother Peter." (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1993, p. 16).

The book quickly skips to post WWII America and notes that the European enculturation was done and the mission changed. It does not say really what the new mission was--but lists the presence of Catholic leaders in government and society, some educated by Brothers, as noteworthy. At this early stage of my grasp of the historical contingencies that affected the understanding of the charism in 19th and 20th century America, I find the insights of Pasquier (2010) intriguing. What he discovered, if I may summarize in the extreme, is found early in his work. As the priest missionaries encountered the unexpected pressures of the frontier

They set in motion a Catholic tradition in the nineteenth-century that was more amenable to southern concepts of social conservatism, paternalism, and white supremacy, which, as a consequence, reinforced an anti-liberal strain in American Catholicism that persisted through the Americanist crisis of late nineteenth century and socially conservative movements of the 20th century (Pasquier, 2010, p. 19).

I have noted for some time, in my own experience of the Brothers' schools in which I have worked, a very strong socially conservative thread. That is to be found more so in the alumni, students and parents, maybe in older Brothers, but less so in younger brothers

and much less so in their leadership. Nevertheless, what Pasquier notes also seems consistent with the following passage, in which I hear a tone of Confederate sympathy, from one of the histories of the Brothers. Writing about the tenure of the first Brother Director in the U.S., Br. Alphonse, the book notes: “The fratricidal strife of Civil War ravaged the land for four years. The South was devastated by the Federal troops, and its best blood flowed on the battlefields. At its close, the South was left prostrate, and ruined, and its once proud families were beggared” (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 1948, p. 30).

To be fair, though, the same history notes that the Brothers helped care for Northern wounded, and in general had good relationships with Northern occupying troops.

Coming full circle

While the complete story of the charism and its interaction with the United States is yet to be told, it is the case that there was a shift that occurred over the 140 years from the Brothers arrival in Mobile to my own experience at St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis from 1986-1990. While at the school, I became aware of two different philosophies about the treatment of students, particularly where discipline for misbehavior was concerned. There was the instruction I was getting from administration, that students were to be respected, and at a minimum not struck by teachers (the disciplinarian could still “strap” students—strike them with a large leather strap). On the other hand, there were teachers, parents, and even students who indicated that the refusal to strike students was some sort of dramatic loss of integrity for the institution, it having been acceptable until only the very recent past. As I have come to understand the story of the charism, it is clear now that I was hired at St. Stanislaus as a major transition was underway, as several threads concerning the Brothers’ understanding of their charism and ministry were

simultaneously being recognized and efforts were being undertaken to communicate that new understanding to faculties in their schools.

That new understanding grew out of the story of Andre Coindré, uncovered because of the call of Vatican II to go back to the founder. At very nearly the same time, in the later 1960's a number of young scholastics in the New Orleans Province of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart were at Springhill University undertaking their college coursework in preparation for teaching and prior to taking their final vows (Leblanc, 2014)²¹. Among those brothers were a number of men with whom I have become acquainted and two of whom I consider to be mentors—and one of them is my formal mentor in Brothers of the Sacred Heart Coindré Leadership Program (CLP). In the late 1960's those brothers at Springhill were immersed in the Jesuit university's formation program, and exposed to new thinking about theology, ministry, ecclesiology, and the nature of religious life. Two brothers with whom I have spoken about this time have said clearly that it was a powerful time and that there was a passion and energy at Springhill that would be transformative (Couvillion S.C., 2012; Leblanc, 2014).

Several threads of the brothers' story were being woven together at Springhill— younger brothers were finding the spiritual life of the pre-Vatican II church dry and unfulfilling, while they themselves were full of passion and energy for the vocation they had chosen. At the general chapter²² of 1968, efforts began to re-write the Brothers' Rule

²¹ This aspect of the story of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart is still incomplete. This portion of the story comes almost exclusively from an extended conversation which I recorded with my mentor Br. Ivy Leblanc, a former, as well as current and last, provincial of the New Orleans Brothers of Sacred Heart. The New Orleans Province will soon join 3 other U.S. provinces in creating a single province of the United States. Ivy and I spoke for over 30 minutes about his recollections prompted by this general question. I have paraphrased his comments somewhat, but where appropriate have quoted him directly.

²² Br. Ivy Leblanc, from whom I learned this story, was not at the 1968 council, and was relying on his memory of stories told by other brothers.

of Life so that it could better serve Brothers living 100 years after the last revision of the rule. The first real rule of life had been written by Brother Polycarp, and had depended very much on the rule of the Christian Brothers. It was approved by the general chapter of 1846. A revision of the rule a generation later by Brother Adrian in 1867 had made changes based on Adrian's use of the Marist brothers' rule. That rule, still so much rooted in the French church and theology of the time, governed the Brothers' life in the late 20th century.

As Brother Ivy Leblanc tells the story, the general chapter did not complete a new rule in 1968, and instead invited the delegates to share the work back home in their provinces. The provincial in New Orleans at the time, Br. Hubert, recognized the energy of the young brothers at Springhill, and despite being from a different generation, entrusted to those young brothers the re-writing of the Brothers' Rule of Life. It is Ivy's considered opinion that the resulting rule of 1970, drastically different from those that went before it, was largely written by the young scholastics of the New Orleans province. In the work undertaken to grasp their identity and their founder, those young scholastics were on fire. It was that fire that eventually led to the uncovering of the story and person of Andre Coindré.

Added to the "Vatican II," "young brothers" and "new rule" threads we must add the work begun in the early 1980's in the New Orleans province to produce a document that articulated the Brothers' experience and understanding of their particular practice of education (Leblanc, 2014). The impetus for that effort was yet another thread: the post-Vatican II decline in vocations. There was a recognition on the part of the brothers of the reality of their dwindling numbers, and a corresponding need to hire more and more lay faculty who did not have the benefit of the brothers' religious formation or their lived

understanding of the charism. There was a need to form faculty in some way that would provide the lay teachers a sense of what the Brothers' schools were really all about. The document that emerged was *Educational Mission and Ministry (EMM)* (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 2007),²³ a booklet that provides a concise but thorough expression of the educational charism of the Brothers.

The story of the recovery of the charism now included all the efforts in the New Orleans province schools to use EMM to form faculty. As Br. Ivy Leblanc (2014) relates it, prior to the existence of EMM, the regular meetings of the province's school's principals were little more than chances to swap war stories, but with EMM in hand, and the work that was being done discovering Coindré, school leadership was beginning to have a body of work upon which to build a lay faculty formation program. The province school leadership meetings were then transformed, and efforts to communicate the charism as expressed in EMM began in earnest.

Meanwhile, spurred by the needs of the committee working on the Rule of Life, other brothers in France had begun discovering the story of Andre Coindré in archives scattered throughout Lyon and the surrounding area. Based at the location of the original *Pieux-Secour* in Lyon, now the Centre International Andre Coindré (CIAC) there were brothers who according to Br. Ivy (2014) "just loved to hunt." Despite the fact that many older brothers did not value their work—it was not practical enough in their eyes—they nevertheless kept at it (Leblanc, 2014). Their archival work began to create a picture of Coindré that would allow Br. Charles Daigneault, Superior General in the 1980's, to speak during a general chapter about the man Coindré that he was coming to know, about "the

²³ The first edition of the work was in 1984—it has since been revised, hence the reference date of 2007.

relationship I have formed with Andre Coindré” (Leblanc, 2014). Br. Ivy was himself personally moved by Br. Charles presentation, and recalled that there was a “depth and profundity there that was really telling” (Leblanc, 2014).

Another critical thread in the story of the recovery of the charism had to do with CIAC. In 1994, on Br. Ivy’s 25th anniversary as a Brother of the Sacred Heart, his friend, colleague and provincial at the time, Br. Bernie Couvillion, knowing that Ivy would not take the vacation that he was due, asked him go to Lyon to visit CIAC. While there, he had the opportunity to visit places crucial to the founding of the order, and coupled with the story of Coindré that was emerging, he understood that there was a treasure there. Rather than the youth center that was going to be opened in the building, plans began to make CIAC a place to re-introduce the charism, first to brothers, then eventually to their lay partners. Since that time, 100’s of lay partners in Brothers’ institutions around the world have visited CIAC in Lyon for two and a half week workshops where they are introduced to the Andre Coindré and the order’s foundation story. There they have encountered yet another powerful thread in this story, namely the work of Br. Rene Sanctorum, whose theological engagement with Coindré’s story has been the impetus for a more compassionate and socially justice oriented expression of the charism.

Finally, the story of the recovering of the charism has to include the more formal work of mentoring lay partners in the charism through the Coindré Leadership Program. That program, whose documents and website have contributed most of the charism textual material for this study, pairs school leaders now steeped in Coindré’s vision and the modern understanding of the charism with up and coming school leaders so that they will be so steeped. It is a three year process of monthly readings and mentoring sessions, and includes the expectation that participants will experience the charism in a context

vastly different from their own. This Alternate Charism Experience (ACE) can include work in a Navajo reservation, the Philippines, Haiti, Zambia or Mozambique. The culmination of the program is a two and a half week program in Rome where participants are encouraged to synthesize their experiences of the charism in preparation for becoming mentors themselves.

It should be clear that much of my understanding of the story of the recovering of the charism is due to a conversation with my CLP mentor Br. Ivy Leblanc, S.C. As inspiring as it was to hear his recollections and passion for his order's work, there was something profoundly sad for me at the conclusion of the conversation. Ivy was clear, there are no cohorts behind them, no "great churchmen" to be found who could do what he and his brothers did over the course of the last 4 decades or so. There is a sense of loss there, for me, and I think for him and those like him. Those young scholastics were on fire to build something that would shape their order on the assumption that men would keep joining it as they did. Clearly, men have not, and barring a drastic change, the Brothers days are numbered.

As clear as that stark reality seems to be, I am left considering what the Spirit was doing inspiring these young men. They were energized, and that energy is still visible when I watch Ivy talk about this, to create something for the Church—ostensibly for their order, for themselves, for young people, and the life they felt called to live. What appears to have taken place is something else—their inspiration is carrying over to the lay partners, their desire that the energy which moved them not dissipate into nothing but instead be transformed for a new time in a different Church. The term I hear some of the leaders of the order use, and which finds its way into the documents they use to train lay partners, is "dynamic fidelity." In the following passage that notion is described:

In the course of history, we regularly witness the blockage or crystallization of the initial charism into a still institution where the thrust has been dulled, as we recalled above. In such a case, the intuition of the Founder to become a source of light and life, must be reassumed today by the whole Institute and by each member. To reassume does not mean only to rediscover something through historical research; but also to reactivate it in a spiritual experience; not only the head, nor only the hands, but also the heart. We have to accept, in prayer and in submission to the Spirit, the impulse received by the founder, which will drive us constantly to creativity, to new initiatives. We have to be, in our hearts, other Father Coindré's today; we have to receive our charism in the present.

Then, it may be that our charism, which is always current, always present, will be revealed to us as richer than we ever knew it before. It will uncover treasures for us that have not yet been brought to light. I have mentioned before, for example, that we have in the recent past somewhat better examined the spirituality of the Heart of Jesus. But how much remains to be done! It is up to each one of us, whoever and wherever he may be, to understand our charism even more and to share the results with all. We have to be "dynamically faithful" to the charism, according to the expression in the Formation Guide. For the charism is a tree whose branches have not yet all grown and that is perhaps holding more than one surprise for us. Maybe some branches, recently grown, will not last; it is because the sap of the charism is not flowing in them. But many buds have yet to appear; the springtime lies ahead of us! (Sanctorum, No date).

This notion of dynamic fidelity is rooted in a deep hope, and also captures movement, change, transformation and a carrying forward of something of value, something worthy of placing one's faith in. As I continue my work with the order, I find myself asking this question: Is the recovering of the charism ultimately a doomed enterprise, or did it occur just in time so that structures are in place precisely so that when the day comes that brothers are absent, the charism will live, albeit differently, in the schools that have become 'the lasting way the brothers share God's love with the world' (Leblanc, 2013)?

Recovering the charism has to also mean more than the story of the discovery of the founding charism of the brothers, and the discovery of the founder. It also has to include recovering the charism as a lived reality in the schools that are the primary ministry of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Because the number of brothers continues

to dwindle, and their leaders are aging, the lived charism, if it is to continue and even perhaps flourish again, will have to be embraced by lay people who have not, at least to this point, taken formal religious vows. The leaders of the order have seen this reality, and determined that the charism had to be shared with the lay people whose presence and influence in their schools continues to grow. As my conversation with Br. Ivy wound to a conclusion, he seemed to experience a moment of clarity about his own work over the course of his vocation:

For me personally, my life work has been first an organization builder and second succession planning and developing leadership outside the brothers. I think I inherited that—it's nothing in me, it's living out of Hubert's inspiration and Marcel's inspiration and all those guys who trusted me and I'm trying to say "who do we have to trust next?" Now until this very second I have never said that in my life, okay? It's just in this conversation that it's come to light, but I really believe that's where it comes from" (Leblanc, 2014).

As an educator in the Brothers' tradition, and as a participant in the Coindré Leadership Program, I find myself among those who are "trusted next." My own work is directed in part to keeping the charism relevant and being sure it finds its way deep into the curriculum of the Brothers' schools.

Thinking about the story

The simple analysis I want to offer here is indebted to the work of Scott (2004), who in turn relies on perspectives of, among others, "Hayden White (his idea that the forms of historical narrative themselves have determinate contents), and Quentin Skinner (his idea that historical texts are best understood as moves within an argument)" (Scott, 2004, p. 57). Very briefly, I want to take up each of these perspectives if only as a signpost for future inquiry.

Content of the Form

One of the more potent ways to think about the story of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart is through what Hayden White (1973) calls its emplotment. Emplotment has to do with the “content of the form” and as such White maintains that we learn from the way the story is emplotted perhaps as much as we learn from the content of the story itself. If the story is emplotted as a romance, it will have a certain structure, another if it is a tragedy, or a comedy (White, 1973). So what is the emplotment of the story of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart?

To begin with, it seems that the creation story, if you will, is a Romance: the priest on a cold winter evening, finding and rescuing young children; the dire circumstances faced by many of the children in post-revolution and Napoleonic France; the call of committed men and women to rescue and nurture those children; the eventual mission to America. These and other aspects of the story, in particular the tenuous early circumstances which nearly led to the dissolution of the order less than a generation after it began, set a stage for overcoming adversity, for heroism, albeit of a quiet churchy kind, a sense of self-sacrifice in pursuit of a worthy, lofty, spiritual goal. A number of questions suggests themselves for future inquiry. What is the significance of emplotting this story as a Romance, for the charism, for the future of the Brothers, and for the curriculum that should be lived and taught in their schools? And what, if anything, happens if we emplot that story as a tragedy, rather than a romance? What then for the charism, for the life of the school, for the curriculum?

The Romantic or the Tragic

When reading the history of the brothers as it is currently written, one is engaged in a straightforward, I would say modernist, telling of the story of what has happened

since Andre Coindré encountered the young girls. With Scott's (2004) influence, though, one can begin to see a number of intersecting stories creating the narrative of the Brothers that we currently have. In part, the story of the recovering of the charism is a story of the writing of Coindré's story from the perspective of the 1960's renewal of the Catholic Church through the influence of Vatican II. That time, and the decade immediately following exerted, I would argue, as much influence on the writing of the story of the Brothers as the 1930's global geo-political situation influenced James' telling of the story of the Haitian revolution. And this, I think, is Scott's point when he writes, using Koselleck's idea of the relationship between experience and expectation:

it seems to me useful and justifiable to mobilize Koselleck's relational couple for a discussion of a transformation within the modern, from one rhythm of modern time to another: from a moment, for example, when the future appears guaranteed by the present to one in which it seems undermined by it. Here what is crucial is less the proximate distance between the "space of experience" and "horizon of expectation" than the reorganization of the relation between their ideological contents (p. 44).

There is a sense that the story as it has been told and as it was experienced by those involved in the re-writing of the rule, in the production of *Educational Mission and Ministry*, in the creation of CIAC and the Coindré Leadership Program, is a romance. When CIAC participants are brought to places critical to the founding of the order, the emotions evoked are full of hope and heroism, and expectations that one should go forth and do likewise. Simply observing Br. Ivy remember his involvement in all the work to rediscover and transmit the charism, and reading his final remarks during our interview, I was caught up in the sense of purpose and mission that is characteristic of Romance. But there is tragedy, here, too, and it is instructive. As Scott (2004) writes:

...to reinvolve Raymond Williams's deeply poignant phrase, we are living with the "slowly settling loss of any acceptable future." It seems to me, therefore, that a tragic sensibility is a particularly apt and timely one because, not driven by the

confident hubris of teleologies that extract the future seamlessly from the past, and more attuned at the same time to the intricacies, ambiguities, and paradoxes of the relation between actions and their consequences, and intentions and the chance contingencies that sometimes undo them, it recasts our historical temporalities in significant ways (p. 210).

This sense of the tragic is described by Scott as that kind of tragedy that attends those caught between differing world forces from which there is no escape. To read the brothers' story as a tragedy, and I think it is a legitimate reading,

is to read it as honoring the simple but often obscured fact that as human beings we never begin in conditions of our own choosing. And being the mortals that we are, fettered, limited, partial, never fully transparent to ourselves, never fully self-present to our rational consciousnesses, never fully self-determined in our behaviors, we cannot ever totally overcome these circumstances. Nor do the virtues of character and intellect bring us any nearer the complete mastery of our conditions (Scott, 2004, pp. 164-165).

In ways not entirely understood, the decline of vocations among the brothers is an intricate reality that is woven together with a changing society, post-modern sensibilities about spirituality and meaning, and modernist perspectives that devalue the spiritual. A changing church that embraced the importance of the laity may have unwittingly influenced the decline of non-clerical vocations. As the brothers simultaneously strive to invite men into their order, they are also working to bequeath to their lay partners the charism that they cherish. It appears that whatever the future may hold for those lay people who embrace and carry the charism forward, that same future will inevitably be marked by a loss.

The argument of this story is a simple one—it doesn't have to end. In "dynamic fidelity," what has been done by those who have committed themselves to the educational ministry for young people in the name of the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart may change, but it should not stop. The entire purpose of relating the story to students, faculty and school leaders is to allow each person who encounters the story to find his or

her place in that story, and to invite him or her to help find ways to live it faithfully into the future.

Curricular connections

The larger project in which this question falls is within the realm of curriculum theory. The goal is to bring together an adequate understanding of the charism of the brothers as one expression of a Catholic worldview, and with a focus on moral education conceive of a curriculum for secondary education that holistically integrates ways of knowing commonly thought to be incommensurable, e.g. science and religion, reason and faith, science and humanities. The curriculum that is envisioned will address the incommensurability in light of theories of education informed by various post-modern thinkers. To conclude this chapter, I offer a few thoughts in that thread.

The story of the recovery of the charism was described as an organic process, first by me as I listened to Ivy recollect his experiences, but he concurred whole-heartedly. There were simultaneous happenings all over the Institute, and throughout the Church, that worked together to amplify the charism of the brothers. Rene Sanctorum's theological reflection on Andre Coindré's work, the historical work of the brothers at CIAC, the writing of the new rule, the energy of Vatican II, the production in the New Orleans province of *Educational Mission and Ministry* were woven together in a dynamic give and take that displays the 4 R's of Doll (2004). Richness is found in the problems the brothers encountered and continued to encounter over the course of their lives, problems that led to programs and missions that responded to real needs of youth at a given time. Rigor is found in the Coindré Leadership Program itself, as current brothers play with a number of ways of communicating the charism to their lay partners, and creatively work to discover structures that will preserve the essence of their charism, even

if they disappear. Recursion is happening in the CLP as well, as mentors and their charges review again and again over the years the primary themes of the charism and their manifestation in the practical realities of running Catholic schools in the 21st century. Finally, the relational character of the charism is the center of the Brothers' spirit. Recognizing the passion in their founder, in the way he addressed people so that they could encounter God's compassion and passion for each of us, especially those "abandoned and without hope," the Brothers' clearly recognize and promote a relational ontology in their schools and other work. Furthermore, it is the Spirit of the charism, the Spirit of the Brothers, finally, that will unite the aspect of the brothers' life that is less intellectual, more focused on practical realities (science), with its more relational compassionate character (story).

That spirit is on display in the document *Educational Mission and Ministry*, where the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in the former New Orleans province capture what they take to be the spirit that characterizes their educational philosophy and practice. The document explicitly identifies four particular marks of their schools: religious values, personal attention, friendly discipline, and academic excellence. Each makes a necessary contribution to the holistic education that they endeavor to offer. That desire for holism is present late in the document in the section "Hopes for our Graduates":

As a result of our emphasis on holistic education, we hope our graduates are well-rounded young people who:

- are aware of their own gifts, talents, and limitations;
- recognize the need to continue their own spiritual, psychological, emotional, social, intellectual, and physical growth;
- respond to God's call to be balanced, compassionate adults.

Because of our emphasis on spiritual growth and religious values, we hope that our students graduate with:

- a strong belief that God loves them;
- a willingness to respond to Jesus' directive to love one another;

- a commitment to compassion, justice, and service;
- a desire for a deeper relationship with God through prayer;
- an intentional integration of faith and daily life;
- an understanding of the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church;
- a willingness to become active members in their local church communities.

Because of our efforts at firm and friendly discipline, we hope that our graduates:

- have developed self-discipline that guides their actions;
- are sensitive and respond with compassion to the limitations of others;
- have respect for authority and for persons for whom they are responsible;
- approach relationships with fairness, mutual trust, and cooperation.

Because of the caring nature and personal attention given to our students, we hope our graduates:

- genuinely care for others;
- value themselves and others as unique children of God;
- nurture positive relationships and build community.

As a result of our commitment to academic excellence, we hope our graduates:

- are intellectually curious;
- are prepared to meet the academic demands of college;
- strive to reach their intellectual potential;
- use their intellectual gifts to serve others more effectively and generously (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 2007).

Words like “balanced,” “integration,” “fairness,” “mutual,” “cooperation,” all underscore a sense that education is a multifaceted process, requiring give and take and sensitivity to multiple perspectives. The first and final sections, on holistic education and academic excellence, respectively, emphasize intellectual curiosity, but not at the expense of other aspects of student growth. This study is about the experience of so many students that ways of knowing associated with faith, especially religious faith, are incompatible with ways of knowing otherwise identified as rational and reasonable, especially that way of knowing called science. If the hopes the brothers have for their students are to have a fair chance to come to pass, then the experienced incommensurability of these ways of

knowing must be addressed, and a curriculum must be developed that better encourages students to find an integration between those broad ways of encountering the world. That subject is the one to which we now turn.

CHAPTER 4. POST-MODERNISM AND SPIRITUALITY: “THE KINGDOM IS NOT ONLY BEYOND OUR EFFORTS, IT IS EVEN BEYOND OUR VISION.”

The title of this chapter points to a simple but important reality. For those of us in religious education the spirituality we wish to share with our students is ultimately elusive. Our vision of education, of what it means to be fully human and how to share that with succeeding generations, cannot ever hope to fully capture something so sublime. Nevertheless I want to sketch a curriculum that has the potential to bridge some of the contentions that mark our broader social discourse, especially about education. The general idea of this project is that education is necessarily best conceived of as a holistic and ultimately moral and spiritual activity, as attested to by the charism of the brothers. That holism has at its center a spirituality, and only a curriculum that accounts for that and embraces some form of spirituality will ultimately succeed in providing students with a perspective which will enable them to venture forth into the world prepared to live in it in healthy and sustainable ways. Issues that need to be addressed arise from a variety of areas, including my own experience, and cultural and intellectual problems that remain sources of contention. Throughout, the ways in which post-modern perspectives can inform this curricular conversation will be front and center. Along with the chapter above on the story of the charism, this chapter functions in part as a review of the literature that addresses questions about the holistic nature of what we as humans can know, and what then we should teach students, specifically with respect to the alleged incommensurability of reason and faith. The chapter will require encounters with thinkers from multiple perspectives: the American pragmatist Charles S. Peirce; post-modern reflections articulated by, among others, Fritjof Capra (1996), William Doll (Doll, 1993, 2003, 2008, 2012; Doll, Fleener, Jayne M., St. Julien, John, 2005; Doll, Jr., 1993), Egéa-Kuehne

(2010), Molly Quinn (2001), James Smith (2006) and Ken Wilber (2006, 2011); Catholic and Christian thinkers such as Karen Armstrong (2010), Thomas Berry (1998), Teilhard de Chardin (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959, 2011), John Haught (2000), Bernard Lonergan (The Fellows of the Woodstock Theological Center, 2011), and John Polkinghorne (2003, 2005); and the breed of “New Atheists” whose work continues to grow in popularity among adolescents I encounter in my work in a Catholic secondary school. I hope to open a space for a conversation between the insights of “hard” science, the humanities, and theological texts that can create a curriculum that is coherent and life giving for the young people who would move through it. Those general goals must find particular expression in the particular circumstance in which I practice education, that is, in a school run by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. The brothers have considered their special charism and any curriculum I consider must be consistent with the spirit of their order.

Throughout this chapter I will be using a variety of terms that are often placed in a binary opposition to each another: reason/faith, science/religion, science/humanities, quantitative/qualitative. These oppositional relationships suggest the incommensurability of the terms, and that incommensurability is at the center of our question. One way of conceiving of the relationship between the first and second terms in each of the binaries is to consider them to be aspects of external human experience and internal human experience. While I do not wish to say that the first terms all denote the same reality, any more than the second terms do, for the purpose of this chapter the general meaning of the first term has to do with human reason, especially as it finds expression in logic and quantifiable measurement. The second terms refer to the human experience

of meaning-making. I note here that this simple scheme is an over-simplification, as I expect will become clearer below.²⁴

This incommensurability mentioned above has been noted by a wide range of individuals, some of whom find it necessary, while others recognize it as troubling but ultimately illusory. In my 30 years as a Catholic religious educator in secondary schools, not a year has gone by when I have not encountered students and adults who experience the aforementioned incommensurability. The fact that I have not, from as far back as elementary school, experienced this tension, has always driven me to attempt to understand why others do, and to hopefully provide some way for them to understand why I do not. I can recall as early as third grade learning about the Genesis creation stories and also being fascinated with dinosaurs, and still remember recognizing the discrepancy. I unhesitatingly even at that age quickly concluded that the scripture story was ultimately “about” something more than an account of events, and the failure to include any mention of dinosaurs was experienced by me as a clue to that reality.

Authors like Dawkins (2008), Harris (2005), Hitchens and Dennet, (the so-called “New Atheists mentioned earlier), opt for a conflicting relationship. Other scientists like Stephen Pinker and Richard Feynmann have made their atheism a vocal part of their public pronouncements. There is no shortage of those who practice science at high levels who see religious faith as at least dispensable, if not outright evil and worthy of extinction. Critics of these writers often refer to their position as *scientism* rather than science as such. Where *science* is one form of inquiry that uses particular methods of analysis and measurement, *scientism* is a philosophical and metaphysical perspective that

²⁴ This external/internal distinction is addressed by a number of scholars whose work informs this question, notably Wilber (2006, 2011), Quinn (2001), Haught (2011), and the Woodstock Theological Center (2011)

categorically denies the reality of inner human experience, and restricts all-knowing to the empirical, evidentialist and quantitative methods (J. F. Haught, 2012).

But the incommensurability is not left to the scientific community alone, of course. The rise of religious fundamentalism around the world means the rejection of scientific knowing as a legitimate way of encountering and understanding the world in favor of a scriptural literalism. Examples of the problems associated with that perspective abound:

- Pat Robertson suggests that Haitians suffered an earthquake because in a previous century they made a deal with the devil, and Hurricane Katrina was punishment from God (R. Smith, 2010).
- A Christian group known as The Call holds a prayer rally in Detroit because they believe the city and our nation is under the influence of demons fueled by Islam (Caron, 2011).
- Islamic fundamentalists fly planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, supported by a worldview that forces one to choose between Satan or fighting Satan on behalf of Islam (Kean & Hamilton, 2004)
- The Westboro Baptist Church believes God is sanctioning the deaths of American soldiers because the United States tolerates homosexuality ("Extremism in America - Westboro Baptist Church: About WBC," 2011)
- A devout Catholic woman came to my school to complain that we were teaching her son that Adam and Eve were not historical figures.

In addition, in the halls of academia these days, scientific endeavors and departments are extolled, while the humanities are significantly less funded, and slammed as unmarketable. In the social sciences themselves, particularly educational research displays a bias in favor of “scientific” quantitative inquiry over and above the

“softer” qualitative methods like narrative (Hendry, 2010). While not exactly a sign of incommensurability, the relative status of science and the humanities points to a divide that needs, at least in the opinion of this writer, closing.

One interpretation of the origin of the incommensurability effects listed above has to do with the *effect* of a modernist paradigm *on* theological issues, rather than their absolute omission. I would submit that some of the problems listed above stem from reified theological ideas, what Whitehead calls “misplaced concreteness” (Doll, 2003). One could look at the problematic instances, particularly the anti-religion stance of the new atheists and the anti-science attitude of fundamentalism, and see that in each case, some idea or perspective is being taken rigidly, without context or nuance. Again using Whitehead, Doll indicates that the effects of such thinking “have been devastating in the educational, social, and political arenas” (2003, p. 5).

Finally, the alleged incommensurability is not limited to science and religion; more broadly defined, the question is about the relationship between reason and faith. When considered this way, those who fall into the “at odds” camp above also include those who embrace a life of rationality in the humanities or social sciences, and believe that life precludes any sort of faith perspective or God. Post-modernism’s “incredulity to metanarratives” (Lyotard, 1979, p. xxiv) calls into question modernism’s approach to reason as such, and can be considered an attack on any big story, religious, scientific or otherwise. The post-modern critique on metanarratives, the subject, and the rise of the awareness of an historical and cultural effect on individual understanding has left more traditional, pre-modern spiritualities without a leg to stand on in academic intellectual circles (Wilber, 2006, 2011, loc. 5405). While researchers like Quinn (2001) and Wilber (2006, 2011) acknowledge the post-modern critique is an essential insight into human

knowing, both recognize that there is something missing. As Quinn writes, for many of the post-modern ilk “reason is still...the ultimate culprit,” and can never be more than the ugliness it is responsible for in some of its nastier manifestations: “Westernism, scientism, materialism, capitalism;” it is “post” but never “trans.” (Quinn, 2001, p. 117). The faith in reason that inspired the birth of philosophy seems gone, and according to Quinn reason itself faces a “crisis” (Quinn, 2001, p. 87). Absent some way forward, it would seem that inquiry is dead, and all that we are left with are the language games in which we are trapped. In fact, for thinkers like Ken Wilber (Wilber, 2006, 2011), while both modernist scientism and post-modernists have rejected any sort of faith perspective, or any mention of God for those who would be rational, educated, or intellectual, the more vehement of these two attacks is from inside the humanities, from those he calls the “Intersubjectivists” (Wilber, 2006, 2011, loc. 5405).²⁵

But all is not lost. Both from the scientific front, as well as from within the humanist post-modern scholarly community itself, there are those who find ways to decry this alleged incommensurability, its more general form of conflict between the “hard” sciences and the humanities, as well as the conflict within the humanities between those post-modernists who reject religion and/or faith, and those who hold to some kind of transcendental faith.

Scientists espousing a perspective that is welcoming of faith or spirituality are not difficult to find. Fritjof Capra’s *Tao of Physics* (1975) and *Web of Life* (1996) have popularized the notion that at least science and spirituality may inform one another.

²⁵ Whenever possible, I use electronic versions of books, and those are almost all Kindle editions. When the Kindle edition provides page numbers like a typical printed book, I will provide those after direct quotes. When the Kindle edition does not, I provide the location number in the place that the page number would otherwise occupy.

More of Capra's work in particular will be mentioned later. Efforts like those of the Templeton Foundation to foster the relationship and dialogue between science and religion have borne fruit in my own classroom. Work from the foundation's "Big Questions"²⁶ series has found its way to my students, and provoked a number of good discussions. Work by well-known scientists like geneticist Francis Collins (2006), director of the Human Genome Project, and Templeton Prize²⁷ winners such as physicist and Anglican clergyman John Polkinghorne (Polkinghorne, 2003, 2005), and Catholic priest and cosmologist Michael Heller have explicitly addressed the alleged incommensurability between science and faith and have all rejected it.

Just how effective such efforts are for the big picture of the relationship between reason and faith, at least in the academic circles, is an open question. In terms of my own work with adolescents, an awareness of credible scientists who also approach the world as people of faith serves as a sign that there are intellectual options for those who value both reason and faith.

While Wilber (2006, 2011) and Quinn (2001) both chronicle the post-modern attack on faith, both are also among those who see in the post-modern turn a new chance at faith. That new chance is recognized by some to come from within Lyotard's philosophy. For Smith (2006), "By calling into question into question the idea of a universal autonomous reason... Lyotard relativizes (secular) philosophy's claim to

²⁶ See the website for the collection of pamphlets featuring brief reflections on pertinent issues regarding cosmology, ontology, morality, etc. <http://www.templeton.org/signature-programs/big-questions-essay-series>

²⁷ For 40 years the Templeton Prize has honored those who have "made an exceptional contribution to affirming life's spiritual dimension, whether through insight, discovery, or practical works." Many accomplished scientists have received the award, valued at 1.1 million pounds sterling. See the prize website: www.templetonprize.org

autonomy and so grants the legitimacy of a philosophy that grounds itself in Christian faith." Quinn's (2001) work uncovers the missing element in the post-modern, and it is clearly a sense of faith in a kind of reason. Wilber's attempt is to provide an evolutionary framework in which all phenomena are capable of being seen from multiple perspectives, because they are in fact always participating in a reality that is at once introspective, quantitative, qualitative, and social. Wilber's work, it seems to me, provides a way to articulate why the incommensurability that appears to exist is in fact a matter of appearance only when one persists in seeing what is real from only one of the perspectives from which human beings encounter phenomena.

Part of the rift between within reason (between the humanities and science) is due, according to Michel Serres, to an understanding of time that privileges the present over the past (Eg  a-Kuehne, 2010). By its nature, at least in the west, theology in particular has tended to be rooted in a revelation from some place in the distant past. In the modernist paradigm, that which is old is relegated to a secondary position and "humanities have lost credibility and status while much emphasis and support is placed on 'scientific intelligence,' in its content, and in, and by, institutions. Serres insists that knowledge should not be considered the privilege of one field or one discipline only" (Eg  a-Kuehne, 2010, p. 13). Eg  a-Kuehne (2010) goes on to show that Serres challenges the modern linear understanding of time insisting instead that time is "non-linear, creased, and chaotic" so that it can no longer serve to privilege the scientific knowledge of the present over the knowledge of the humanities that are often mischaracterized as "pass  , archaic, obsolete" (p. 9). Interestingly, there has been serious theorizing in the physics community that indicates that our perception of time as linear and passing may

be faulty, that all moments exist simultaneously in an “eternal present.”²⁸ Such an understanding may reinforce Serres's perspective that the contemporary need not be privileged over the old. Ironically, it is the insight of modern cosmologists about the relativity of time that will displace scientific knowing as necessarily better than other “older” forms. In fact, researchers like William Doll (Doll, 2003, 2008; Doll, Fleener, Jayne M., St. Julien, John, 2005; Doll, Jr., 1993) and Timothy Lines (1987) seek to use the paradigm-shifting insights of modern science in such a way as to bring those shifts to both the practice and the content of education, and in doing so, make space for a theologically informed curriculum.

Doll in particular explicitly seeks a post-modern curriculum informed by scientific insights, much as the modernist curriculum was rooted in science with a modernist paradigm:

The history of the American school curriculum has been shaped by its modernist view of science more than by any other factor. What led us into a modernist curriculum may well lead us out. ...it will be a new version of science—more complex, indeterminate, and interactive than the classical version—that will dominate and be generative in this new paradigm (Doll, Jr., 1993, p. 12).

This new curriculum is inspired by biological sciences, whereas the previous curriculum was grounded in physics (Doll, Jr., 1993). Exemplary of the science Doll draws upon is the work of Fritjof Capra (1996) whose work mines the deep structures of biological sciences for an understanding of reality that can inform curriculum.

Capra's (1996) work delves into a variety of disciplines whose research has started to change our understanding of the world in which we live. The modernist paradigm of

²⁸ I share a portion of that viewpoint with my students in the context of a unit on free will. See the video “Fabric of the Cosmos,” based on the Brian Greene book of the same title at <http://video.pbs.org/video/2163057527/>

certainty, discrete parts, and determinism has given way to chaos theory, complexity theory, auto-poiesis, self-organization, and conceptions of reality that insist that reality is not a collection of parts but instead an integrated web of relationships. Considering this web and the role of humans in it makes the study of ecology the center of any curriculum that wants to take seriously the state of human knowing and wants to address the situation in which the world, and us with it, finds itself. For Capra, the promise of complexity theory and deep ecology must be explored, and their insights implemented, if education is to be transformed in such a way that it teaches how to live sustainably on the earth (1996). Doll also finds in complexity theory the impetus for a different method of education, one that is

livelier...based on seeing more and seeing from multiple perspectives.... Combined with my personal metaphysical views, also developed while I have been studying complexity theory, I now begin to envision education as:

*A fascinating imaginative realm,
Born of the echo of God's laughter,
Where no one owns the truth,
And everyone has the right to be understood. (Milan Kundera, 1988) (Doll, 2008, p. 205).*

Interestingly, though, Wilber (2006, 2011) questions the extent to which the post-modern turn toward different sciences is actually going to help reduce or even end the “war” between faith and reason, at least as that is manifest by certain post-modern humanists. Wilber asserts that the use of sciences, even those that purport to be paradigm shifting like recent biology, ecology or complexity, are unable to resolve the incommensurability between reason and faith. Wilber questions whether the efforts of those like Capra will ever be of real use in helping those who want to bring faith perspectives back into favor in academic circles--because for Wilber what Capra and his ilk share is ultimately a modernist perspective on systems (rather than individual

particles), and it is the modernist perspective to which the post-modernist humanists object. Neither modernist science, nor its post-modern manifestations will be much help in bringing faith and reason closer together:

Of course science can find no evidence for the Absolute; nor can it find evidence disproving an Absolute. When science is honest, it is thoroughly agnostic and thoroughly quiet on those ultimate questions.

But the human heart is not. And spiritual intelligence, meant to answer or at least address those issues, is not so easily quieted, either. Men and women need an Ultimate because in truth they intuit an Ultimate, and simple honesty requests acknowledging the yearning in your own heart. Yet if the mythic God is dead, and spiritual intelligence frozen at its childhood stage, the only thing left that appears to give answers to those questions of ultimate concern is science. There is a well-known term for what science becomes when it is absolutized: scientism. And the liberal Enlightenment, for all its enormous good and all its extraordinary intelligence in other lines, began with science and ended with scientism (Wilber, 2006, 2011 loc. 3636-3643).

Karen Armstrong (2010) shares this notion, at least where the idea of God is concerned. She notes that when using science to make a case for God, God gets reduced to a fact, and atheism is an inevitable result. Whatever the case may be for the inclusion of newer paradigm science might or might not be, the work of those using it as a way of healing the split that is the focus of this chapter should not be neglected. At the very least, such work is driven by a deeper faith in the relational nature of our knowing, and that faith is what I propose should guide our discourse about curriculum.

Catholic and Christian perspectives

There is a long tradition in Catholic Christianity, and at least some versions of Protestant Christianity, in which faith and reason are not considered opposing forces, but instead mutually enriching. Caputo (2006) offers a fine short survey of that relationship in his *Philosophy and Theology*, noting that it is really only since the 18th century that many of those who practice reason (philosophy) have rejected the rational investigation

of faith (theology).²⁹ Pope John Paul II (1998) wrote his next to last encyclical on this very question, insisting that these ways of knowing go hand in hand. In fact, his successor, Benedict XVI and immediate predecessor of the current Pope Francis, has articulated the necessary connection between Greek reason and Christian faith, finding in it a balance of different ways of knowing (Benedict XVI, 2006). His understanding of reason is an expanded one, and one that does not exclude the humanities: “For philosophy and, albeit in a different way, for theology, listening to the great experiences and insights of the religious traditions of humanity, and those of the Christian faith in particular, is a source of knowledge, and to ignore it would be an unacceptable restriction of our listening and responding” (Benedict XVI, 2006). Clearly Benedict wants to invigorate the tradition’s belief that theology and philosophy can inform our understanding, and that reason as such, including scientific reason, is not in conflict with faith. In that respect at least, the overall tradition of the church can generally be said to be in the same ballpark as Doll and Serres as they seek a way beyond the dichotomy that afflicts human knowing and that finds its way into uncritical approaches to curriculum.

Few contemporary writers have spent more time addressing this incommensurability than Catholic theologian John F. Haught (2000, 2008, 2012). Haught notes three possible relationships between science and faith: conflict, contrast and convergence—opting for the third, wherein the ways of knowing mutually inform one another (J. F. Haught, 2008). Ironically, atheistic scientists and religious fundamentalists often share the position that the two must be in conflict. The “contrast”

²⁹ Caputo’s second to last chapter is a delightful dance through the many parallels and differences between the pre-modern Augustine and the post-modern Derrida. Space here precludes delving into that discussion, but suffice it to say that there is fruit to be picked there for anyone who wants to inquire into the relationship between faith and reason.

position is held by those who insist that the two approaches to knowing are simply too different to engage one another at all, and should each keep to their domain. Finally, the position of Haught, and myself, and what I contend is the proper stance for any holistic curriculum, is that these two ways of knowing can inform one another, and their constructive engagement is a necessary part of addressing the great problems human beings are facing in our world today.

Haught draws on the work of two recent Jesuit theologians: Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Bernard Lonergan. In his work *The Phenomenon of Man*, Teilhard de Chardin (1959, 2011) deals with the seeming disparate realities of matter and spirit, even as he recognizes that science as such has no need of such reflection. His goal there is “to avoid a fundamental dualism, at once impossible and anti-scientific, and at the same time to safeguard the natural complexity of the stuff of the universe” (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959, 2011, loc. 1111-1112). In spite of that, though, he argues that we cannot not engage in that reflection:

To connect the two energies, of the body and the soul, in a coherent manner: science has provisionally decided to ignore the question, and it would be very convenient for us to do the same. Unfortunately, or fortunately, caught up as we are here in the logic of a system where the 'within' of things has just as much or even more value than their 'without', we collide with the difficulty head on. It is impossible to avoid the clash: we must advance (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959, 2011, loc. 1066-1069).

It is this “within” of our lives that Lonergan addresses.³⁰ While some expressions of post-modernism have pronounced the death of the subject, for Lonergan it is subjectivity encountered in our experience of desire that does in fact allow the necessary trust in our sense of reason, in an epistemology that provides a grasp of the world that

³⁰ This “within” is also prevalent in Wilber’s (2006, 2011) work, and is mentioned as an irreducible reality in Polkinghorne’s *Belief in God in an Age of Science* (2003).

describes it in such a way that it is intelligible and meaningful. Despite being largely unfamiliar with Lonergan's work, my minimal exposure to it³¹ has left me convinced that his understanding of how we understand the world provides a path toward unifying the different ways of knowing.

Of particular importance for our subject here is the thorough embrace of an evolutionary paradigm by Haught, Teilhard de Chardin, and Lonergan. Each in his own way displays great comfort in embracing Darwin's observations and at least some version of his conclusions. All three in some way appropriate the reality of evolution at all levels of existence and use it to reinterpret the Catholic Christian theological tradition. It is the evolutionary perspective, coupled with an understanding of curriculum as narrative, that I think holds promise for a holistic curriculum that can function in the context in which I practice education.

Curriculum, Theology, Spirituality

Helen Hayes writes that a person involved in education must by necessity be "concerned about the 'goodness' or 'rightness' of his enterprise...whether he must spend his days contributing to the development of young human beings, or whether his is the task of planning what shall be taught, when, to whom, and with what aims" (1977, p. 239). That goodness and rightness does not exist in a vacuum. At the start of his chapter on curriculum as theological text, Pinar (2008) includes a quotation from T. S. Eliot: "Education is a subject that cannot be discussed in a void.... ...to know what we want in education we must know what we want in general.... The problem turns out to be a

³¹ I am indebted to the theologians, including John F. Haught, of the now disbanded Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University for bringing Lonergan to my attention. Their work, *The Realms of Desire: an introduction to the thought of Bernard Lonergan* (2011), strongly suggests to me that a holistic Catholic school curriculum should include Lonergan's insights and in so doing would go some distance to addressing the incommensurability that is the focus of the question here.

religious problem” (p. 606). The religious character of schooling is felt by stakeholders from a variety of points of view, and their differences can create some of the tension inherent in the bulleted scenarios above as well as those surrounding textbooks, religion in public schools, and how the relationship between faith and reason is or is not represented in the curriculum.

The alleged incommensurability between faith and reason provides an opportunity for reflection on the nature of morality, truth, and what constitutes knowledge. The actual conflicts that are listed at the start of this chapter represent circumstances where competing interpretations can create great conflicts among people. More importantly here, each of the above instances is an instance of theological text and its impact on our society. Those impacts are clearly found in education (Pinar et al., 2008), so it is necessary to consider curriculum through a theological lens.

The question is of particular significance for me simply because the religious tradition in which I work calls for students in my high school to receive a holistic education, but I annually encounter students for whom that holism is elusive. In particular, students who profess atheism as high school students have commonly pointed to the advances of science, and the work of scientists like Richard Dawkins, as reasons for their rejection of faith or religious tradition outright. The hope for my inquiry is that there is a way of framing what for many people seems incommensurable, namely faith and reason, both broadly defined, so that a curriculum can emerge that allows young people a way to engage multiple discourses as they strive to make meaning and come to understandings with one another that serve the common good--all without the level of acrimony and judgment that characterizes much of our public discourse, especially in education.

Integral theological analysis of curriculum is a conception of what it means to be human³² and the failure to address issues regarding theology and spirituality can have dire consequences (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004). Attempts to describe the forces at work in the relationship between different ways of knowing cannot proceed without using the “language of meaning” which ultimately requires moral and religious language (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004, p. 41). Work like that of Doll and Purpel has begun to address the deep concern of many researchers about the lack of any vocabulary or perspective that would allow educators some foothold for addressing aesthetic, moral or spiritual education. In their chapter about Curriculum as Theological Text, Pinar et al. (2008) make it clear that the failure to include spirituality in the curriculum may be a common practice but is contradictory to the human experience. Where the modernist curriculum emphasizes knowledge as certainty, “curriculum as a post-modern theological text invites us to search for truth where the destination remains unknown” (p. 659). For many students and educators that very “unknown” is part of the problem, stuck as they are in a modernist paradigm. Also unknown is an obvious path toward a coherent curriculum, but for many, this unknown is part of the excitement, and an irreducible reality that can drive curricular reform as schools allow themselves the freedom to play with the many perspectives a post-modern paradigm presents.

There are a number of practical realities in play in the “problem”: an education system that is not willing to risk the unknown, craving instead a certainty based in a modernist mindset; a public that does not trust modernist science, rejecting it instead for a certainty based in uncritical religious faith, otherwise known as fundamentalism; and

³² Ssee Pinar et al.’s reference to Hamblen, p. 568, and Purpel, p. 631.

an academic culture rooted in the post-modernist turn that rejects both modern science and any form of religious faith. One of the consequences of these realities is noted by Purpel—American culture has a tendency to be to be anti-intellectual (Pinar, 2008). Creating a unified or at least coherent curriculum in that climate is more than a challenge.

Curricular Characteristics

If there is going to be a curriculum that holistically embraces science and religion, reason and faith, what characteristics will it have? Whose ideas can provide a perspective that offers hope of making sense, and answering the need for a curriculum that “can facilitate a world of love, justice, and joy” (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004, p. 26), a curriculum that is comfortable with the language of physical and social science and the language of meaning found in religion, theology and spirituality?

What we have at the moment is not the answer. The current system of public education has offered answers that come out of the modernist paradigm, and have to do with notions of economic viability, nationalism, and global competition, as well as the certainty associated with Newtonian physics. Those same realities are at work in the Catholic system of which I have long been a part. The Tyler and Bobbit curriculum paradigms³³ are still with us in many respects, but discussion of broader theological or spiritual issues is not a part of that paradigm. As noted at some length above, certain aspects of the modernist paradigm are hostile to theology in particular, and the humanities in general.

In fact that binary, between the objective/sciences and subjective/humanities is a rift that must be addressed if curriculum theory is going to have anything to offer

³³ See Doll (1993) pp. 47ff for a discussion of the modernist curriculum.

education as it moves forward. As Egéa-Kuehne points out, curriculum in general is missing a well thought out “coherent, and well balanced, ‘harmonious’ program of instruction and education, equally open to all” (Egéa-Kuehne, 2010, p. 15). A number of scholars have turned their attention to the assumptions and consequences of the modernist paradigm, as well as to what may replace that paradigm in the field of education. We will examine the insights of a few scholars before considering some of the more concrete ways their work may play out in a school setting.

In addition to William Doll’s 4 R’s and 3 S’s mentioned in the introduction above, I am drawing on some of my own work some time ago on the theology and philosophy of religion of C.S. Peirce, and putting that into dialogue with the work of thinkers like Doll and Wilber (2006, 2011), I find that there are resonances that will require more attention than they can receive here, but nevertheless deserve mention. The use of Peirce is attractive to me for a couple of reasons. Peirce is more than the pragmatism³⁴ for which he is known, (Wilber considers him to be among the first post-modernists) and in his phenomenology, semiotics and theology Peirce represents a thinker for whom the science religion conflict did not necessarily exist. In particular his theological writings provide an evolutionary perspective grounded in the transformational power of love that resonates with that of Teilhard de Chardin.

Integral to an understanding of Peirce’s theology is a sense of his phenomenology made up of intentionally vague categories of firstness, secondness and thirdness. These terms describe aspects of all phenomena: “Firstness is the category of pure quality, pure possibility, pure feeling, tychism [chance], immediateness; Secondness is the category of

³⁴ The purposefully ugly term Peirce chose to distinguish himself from James’ hijacking of Peirce’s original pragmatism.

brute force, will, actual fact, dyadic relation; Thirdness is the category of mediation, triadic relation, continuity, law as a tendency to bring about order, thought, generality" (Eldringhoff, 1991). With respect to Doll, the Peircean categories have a loose correspondence: Doll's curricular goal of richness is a kind of first, a quality of feeling that encounters reality in such a way to value it for itself, to find the value in depth; Doll's curricular goals of rigor and recursion are kinds of seconds, in which will is brought to bear on a subject such that effort is required to understand in the fullest possible way; the goals of recursion and relation are obvious thirds as the category of thirdness is best described as relational, in particular relations beyond those of a simple dyadic nature. Any relation that is more complex than that, and it is fair to ask if any are as simple as that, represents an aspect of thirdness. Thirdness is the place of meaning, and characterizes each of Doll's curricular characteristics.

In addition, Doll's more recent focus on spirit, science and story is an even more obvious fit with Peirce's phenomenology, though there is no easy one to one correspondence. Story is easily understood to be what Peirce would call a "third" as it involves the use of symbol, which for Peirce is always a triadic relation. Science, at least in its more reductionist and materialist manifestations is concerned with secondness, and spirit, as an overall quality of feeling that should pervade a curriculum is a kind of Peircean "first."³⁵

Wilber's work is informed by a kind of holistic perspective that endeavors to describe human experience and reality in such a way that the incommensurability with

³⁵ Of course, one could spend a good deal of time, with some fruitfulness, contemplating the relationship between Doll's curricular characteristics and Peirce's categories, if only to better understand each. I don't intend to suggest that this simple juxtaposition is in any way writ in stone or exhaustive, only to suggest that playing with these ideas, as Doll would recommend, can open insights into ways to address the incommensurability that is the focus of this chapter.

which this work is concerned is more the result of seeing "what is" only from a limited point of view. In essence Wilber divides the real into a subjective and objective realm, each of which appears in both individual and plural manifestations. The interior world so long associated with mystics of all traditions is individual and subjective, but real nonetheless. What has been missing is the understanding of the extent to which that interior reality is affected by the cultural influence on said interior realm. The world of science allows for phenomena to be understood both as unrelated objects with their own characteristics, and as relational phenomena (e.g. complexity science). For Wilber, then, the incommensurability between science and faith comes from those who only allow an external materialistic reality and thus reject the interior world of human experience (Enlightenment modernism for example), but also from some of the post-modernists whose commitment to Enlightenment reason has led them to conclude that since mystics are influenced by their cultures and languages what they experience has no reality whatsoever.³⁶ What Wilber is suggesting, if I may be utterly inappropriately summative of what is an extensive effort, is that there is an integrative way of approaching what is. Reality, again, is always relational and problems arise when it is described otherwise. In fact, Wilber recognizes that Peirce was well ahead of his time who "maintained that all perception is already an interpretation, and interpretation is triadic in structure: it demands a sign, an object [referent], and an interpretant" (2006, 2011, loc. 5504).

These three perspectives indicate something that must become true of our curricula--they must be marked by an excitement and wonder that comes from encountering the Real. We must find a way to enliven our schools with the joy that comes

³⁶ For a particularly excellent treatment of Wilber and his analysis of our problem see Quinn (2001, p. 111), also in notes

from meeting a dynamic, evolving world that both changes us and is changed by us, such that when we go back to encounter it again neither of us is the same. Doll, Peirce and Wilber all acknowledge and revel in a dynamic and evolving ontology that must become more integral in schools in general, and in Catholic education in particular.

The dynamic nature of the world that our theorists write about means that any curriculum which emerges from our interaction with that world will look a lot less certain than the curriculum currently in place. There will still be a place for quantitative analysis, traditional conceptions of reason, but those will be tempered by a humility that recognizes that an evolving world cannot ever be known in any absolute sense. The surrender of certainty opens up a space for faith, and ameliorates the conflict generated by those who would claim certainty either for a fundamentalist religious position or a modernist scientific reductionism.

There is at the moment some reason to hope that the Catholic Church has a leader for whom certainty is not a goal, but for whom it is a warning sign. In a recent interview with a well-known Italian atheist/socialist, Eugenio Scalfari, Pope Francis responded to Scalfari's jest that the pope may be trying to convert him during the interview:

Proselytism is solemn nonsense, it makes no sense. We need to get to know each other, listen to each other and improve our knowledge of the world around us. Sometimes after a meeting I want to arrange another one because new ideas are born and I discover new needs. This is important: to get to know people, listen, expand the circle of ideas. The world is crisscrossed by roads that come closer together and move apart, but the important thing is that they lead towards the Good (Scalfari, 2013).

Openness to dialogue and mutual discernment is not possible if one side lays claim to all the knowledge, to the only path to understanding, and Pope Francis's caution here with respect to those who claim religious knowledge is desperately important:

Yes, in this quest to seek and find God in all things there is still an area of uncertainty. There must be. If a person says that he met God with total certainty and is not touched by a margin of uncertainty, then this is not good. For me, this is an important key. If one has the answers to all the questions—that is the proof that God is not with him. It means that he is a false prophet using religion for himself. The great leaders of the people of God, like Moses, have always left room for doubt. You must leave room for the Lord, not for our certainties; we must be humble. Uncertainty is in every true discernment that is open to finding confirmation in spiritual consolation.

The risk in seeking and finding God in all things, then, is the willingness to explain too much, to say with human certainty and arrogance: ‘God is here.’ We will find only a god that fits our measure (Spadaro, 2013).

Finding the Story

The alleged incommensurability of the different ways of knowing can be addressed in a variety of ways, clearly. Another such way, owing much to Doll’s (2003) “Science, Story and Spirit,” is Hendry’s (2010) assertion that all inquiry is narrative driven by doubt, by “the asking of questions” (Hendry, 2010, p. 73). Conceived of this way, any knowing will come about by a kind of inquiry that is determined by the questions that are asked. Those questions fall into three interpenetrating categories: “Narrative as inquiry is not a method, but rather a process of meaning making that encompasses what I suggest are three major spheres of inquiry: the scientific (physical), the symbolic (human experience), and the sacred (metaphysical)” (Hendry, 2010, p. 73). Questions asked in the context of a Catholic school will always include all three sorts of questions, and in the case of my own, and I would argue all others, a way of understanding the relationship between the three as mutually enriching is the goal.

While Hendry (2010) distinguishes her perspective on narrative from those who would make narrative and story synonymous, I find the idea that all inquiry is narrative provocative, precisely because of the way it opens the door for the conception of the product of any inquiry as a story. For Berry (1988) “It is all a question of story. We are in

trouble now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories” (p. 123). In another interview Pope Francis noted that narrative is a critical piece of Jesuit discernment—its own form of inquiry (Spadaro, 2013). Healing the binary that afflicts curricular reflection is going to require a good story, both a big one and small ones. As Richardson (1990) points out

If we wish to understand the deepest and most universal of human experiences, if we wish our work to be faithful to the lived experiences of people, if we wish for a union between poetics and science, if we wish to reach a variety of readers, or if we wish to use our privileges and skills to empower the people we study, then we need to foreground, not suppress, the narrative within the human sciences (loc. 787-789).

I find that much of the contention in surrounding curriculum is due in part to competing stories. Are our schools going to tell a secular story about the power of reason and quantification (classic Enlightenment modernism), are they going to tell a secular story of the flaws in that reason and raise the specter of relativism (post-modernism), or is there some third way, as suggested by the researchers above.

I would like to approach this work with a framework that I have come to value for its simplicity, one rooted in a basic notion of the reality of narrative in human experience. The framework is Jordan Peterson’s (2007), and I first encountered it through a serendipitous link I discovered, I think, through my involvement with a group at LSU whose work was sponsored by the Templeton Foundation. Peterson, a psychologist, notes that most of what people talk about are stories, and that those stories are of a particular structure, namely as a journey from what is, through the unknown, to what ought to be. Stories are nested, as well, within larger stories that have the same structure. Stories convey a viewpoint and provide a both a way to make meaning in the world, and a way through the world. The stories we tell shape us, and we shape the stories (Bruner, 1987).

In educational settings, this is particularly true. The stories we choose, how we try to affect lives, which visions we communicate because of the stories we choose--this is the essence of education. What story or stories can serve to address the incommensurability that is the subject of this inquiry?

At this point in human history, we have access to a broad story that may begin to serve such a purpose. Insights from the biological, ecological, and cosmological worlds inform the work of scholars like that of Angela Lydon and Thomas Berry (Pinar et al., 2008) and can help to create such a story. While the story originates from the result of a scientific investigation of the origins of the universe, it does not stop there. Berry (1988), a Catholic priest, takes the universe as a whole, and the characteristics of it that scientific investigation reveals, to be the fundamental revelation of the divine (Scharper, 2001). The story of the universe can function then as a unifying story in which human beings find themselves as products of the universe itself, united in their common origin³⁷. We are the universe grown conscious of itself. That story, that revelation, needs to inform how humans live on the earth, how we approach political and ethical problems, so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the recent past (Scharper, 2001). In his work *The Dream of the Earth* Berry (1988) even goes so far as to sketch a curriculum framework for how to introduce college students to that story. Berry claims that such a course is too much for elementary or high school students, but my own opinion is that aspects of his curriculum are in fact demonstrable to younger students so that the unity of the story is

³⁷ See also Sr. Ilya Delio (2013) for an extensive treatment of this issue as well. She writes, "The impasse in which we find ourselves in today, the inability of ecclesial and cultural systems to cooperate for the welfare of humankind, bears the lack of a fundamental meta-narrative. We have no overarching story that unites us and instills hope and courage" (loc. 121). She does not, however, want a totalizing story: "We need a larger story that can include diversity and difference, and in which our local stories can thrive." (loc. 126).

experienced early, and further exploration of the narrative of the universe would be about the depth of that study. Other more recent attempts to tell this story are beginning to gain some popularity as well. A longtime collaborator with Berry is Brian Swimme, who with a number of other scholars from a variety of fields has produced the film “Journey of the Universe” (Swimme & Tucker, 2012) and its accompanying website: <http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org>. The film is another way of telling this story and is inspired by Berry, who was himself inspired by Teilhard de Chardin. Also, the Big History project, <https://www.bighistoryproject.com/bhplive>, (The Big History Project LLC, 2014) whose contributors overlap somewhat with Swimme’s work, and include the Catholic theologian John Haught, offers a free online course that traces the history of the universe in broad strokes, to tell “the story of our Universe and humanity.”³⁸

As that story unfolds, what one finds is a single scientific narrative that moves from the big bang and the fundamental laws of physics, through the creation of atoms, and then stars. Heavier elements come into existence when those stars die and explode, and the results of those explosions allow for the creation of our own solar system, and the planet we call home. The story of earth and the evolution of life proceeds to the emergence of humanity and the inner world from which language and culture emerge. Lest one worry that such a story is too totalizing or hegemonic, I would argue that once language and culture emerge, that single story explodes so that a vast diversity of experience and storying becomes available. My longer argument, and larger goal, is that we must find a way to tell a unifying human story that nevertheless values and celebrates the wide array of human experience and meaning making.

³⁸ Both of these projects include a variety of curricular materials, and while not a curriculum as such, provide a basic narrative structure in which I believe a holistic curriculum can grow.

Two realities are implicit in any such effort: first, a deep faith that, however motivated by doubt, the world we encounter makes sense, or that we can make sense of the world we encounter; second, the givenness of subjectivity,³⁹ that “inside” of us that is irreducible to the material of which the scientific story says we are made. In practice, science always starts with a trust that the universe makes sense. Faith, at least here, is primary. What any curriculum must make clear is the unavoidable implications of the observer in every observation, whether it be an observation of the sacred, the symbolic or the scientific. Those observations, of course, are always situated in a particular context, in a time, a place, a culture, a unique moment in history—but that is no reason to denigrate subjectivity as less real than objectivity, in fact it is the precondition for any “objective” science whatsoever. Subjectivity is primary in any given stance toward what is manifest.

One of the issues I have encountered is among students whose exposure to the evolutionary character of the universe has undermined the pre-modern literalism⁴⁰ that characterizes elementary, and some secondary, Catholic education. Now, that undermining is entirely appropriate at one level, but the net effect has been to create a cynicism to any religious understanding whatsoever, thereby contributing to the impoverishing of the students’ ability to appreciate the multifaceted ways of knowing that are available to human beings. What this new story offers is a way of nesting human knowing within a continually evolving universe, and continually evolving human efforts at understanding. The evolutionary, narrative perspective provides a way to value the past, appreciate the present, and with faith and hope, aim at the future.

³⁹ I distinguish here between “subjectivity”—the persistent inside of any experience—and “subject”—the often essentialized notion of a static individual soul.

⁴⁰ See Davis.....for an excellent description of such a perspective.

This new story is consistent with the evolving understanding of the nature of knowing and teaching as described in Davis's (2009) *Inventions of Teaching: a Genealogy*. Where the traditional Catholic curriculum and pedagogy is heavily weighted toward the metaphysical, a curriculum which embraces the fullness of an evolutionary worldview would find ways to better embrace the physical as well. In doing so, it would become even more properly incarnational, recognizing the divine in the material world and all its complexity and chaos.

Big History, a journeying universe, Teilhardian and Peircean evolutionary theologies all grow out of a hope for a kind of integration of the human community and that same hope is present in the educational charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. What is missing in my school, and in most secondary schools, is a pervasive sense of this hoped for integration, as well as a way to bring it about. Nevertheless, there are Catholic voices and institutions, some alluded to above, who have made it their business to create holistic curricula, and expose Catholic educators to it so that the groundwork is in place for a shift.

Explicit Catholic Curricula

It is impossible to listen to debates or conversations about curriculum without hearing moral injunctions about the implications of teaching this or that, or the morality of the pursuit of this or that goal through the practice of education. In searching for what we "ought" to teach, many, and this certainly includes the Catholic Church, turn to the Bible. In terms of the big narrative of scripture, the Catholic curriculum embraces the perspective that the Bible is not about scientific facts of the physical world, but is better understood to be the story of a people and their relationship to God (The Second Vatican

Council, 1966)⁴¹. In so far as one recognizes the authority of the Bible to speak about what it means to be human, one must come to grips with the unequivocal message of the prophets, and Jesus, in the area of social justice. Recent scriptural reflection on Genesis and the prophets has given rise to liberation and creation theologies that serve as sources of “meaning, purpose and ultimacy” (Purpel, in Pinar, 2008, p. 631). Both of those traditions have shaped Catholic education and Catholic education of Catholic educators.

The social justice tradition of the Catholic Church is clear, and continually growing. Its basic principles represent a coherent point of view for how people can live together on the earth, respecting one another and the environment that supports us (Office of Social Justice, 2011). The Church’s efforts at education, especially of the poor, indicate a real concern with healthy human development, and its hospital system makes it a major force in caring for the sick, especially the needy. The most recent social justice principle, “Care for Creation,” adopts an explicitly environmentalist point of view, recognizing the deep relationship between humans and the earth, and our need to preserve its riches both for their own sake as well as for our children’s (Office of Social Justice, 2011). This Catholic theme is particularly bolstered by the efforts discussed above to tell a natural history of the universe.

In the Loyola of New Orleans’s (a Catholic University) Masters in Religious Education program both liberation theology and creation theology are featured. Both are meant to lead Catholic educators to a consciousness of the many contexts in which educators find themselves, and to then enable them to act as agents for change in institutional, social, political and cultural contexts. The ultimate goal of such education is

⁴¹ See commentator’s note 31 of *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* in *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter Abbot, S.J. (Ed.). (Kindle Ed.).

in fact the “making real” of the Kingdom that was the focus of the message of Jesus Christ. That kingdom could be simply characterized by a society that is marked by “love, justice, community and joy’ with compassion” (Pinar, 2008). It was, in fact, in this program that I first came to learn of William Doll, though I admit much of his insight was lost on me 13 years ago.

It is a tall order, isn’t it? The challenge is to create a truly systemic approach to education, with an inclusive worldview that values all forms of knowing, with a focus on purpose and evolution, where the theological can be valued and voiced and contribute to dialogue across cultures. It is a challenge in part because so many people see religion as a set of ideas, practices, and a worldview that is static and is to be handed down en masse. So much of religion is preservation, looking backward to a golden age that must be recovered, that it can create a mindset that is resistant to change. In my own experience, Catholicism has a bit of a split personality. One can find a church that embraces modernist science in a misguided attempt to “prove” God, and one can still find a fear of modernism, even though that paradigm may already be on the wane, at least in some circles. There are those, especially in the progressive Jesuit tradition of Teilhard de Chardin, Lonergan, Haught and the creators of the Loyola program I completed, who seriously engage in the intellectual work toward a holistic understanding of human being in light of both the long monotheistic tradition and current intellectual insight. Creating a curriculum that takes seriously the post-modernist reflections of the researchers whose work is mentioned here means letting go of some of the control that having a set-in-stone curriculum might offer, and letting go of control in general. That “letting go” is not the strong suit of typical religious faith, nor of the tradition of Catholic education in the United States.

Brothers of the Sacred Heart

A variety of Catholic institutions have articulated some form of curriculum, but the one with which I am most familiar is that of The Brothers of the Sacred Heart, in whose secondary schools I have worked for 30 years. No doubt the curriculum in their schools is influenced by the cultural forces that have shaped curriculum in the United States, but their overarching curriculum is primarily religious and cognizant of the importance of relationship. Their schools are to educate graduates who are just, whose faith and life are integrated, who nurture and form healthy relationships, who are compassionate and concerned with justice (The Brothers of the Sacred Heart, New Orleans Province, 2007). By and large, the mission of the Brothers is one that is easy to integrate into a curriculum that meets the criteria set by Doll for a post-modern and spiritually healthy curriculum. Creating such a course of study within a Catholic institution will be a challenge, but one that this writer thinks is more feasible in a religiously oriented school than in a public school, given the current state of theological discourse and education in the United States as a whole. The real challenge is not the integration of the subject matter, but in method—to allow the insights of complexity and chaos theory to inform the process of education, to allow for the right amount of play so that newer and deeper forms of learning will emerge.

The reconception of a curriculum at a Catholic high school in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart faces a number of difficulties, not the least of which is the context in which a secondary school must operate. Just like any secondary school is faced with obligations from the communities it serves, Catholic High School must answer to parents, the civil community in which it finds itself, students who want to be prepared for whatever future awaits them. Legal obligations exist as well, as the state requires a certain

curriculum. As such, CHS faces constraints on its curriculum, but not only those, as the local Catholic diocese, and the national Bishop's conference also put forward obligations and expectations regarding the religion curriculum taught in high school. Reconception, then, is left in many ways to be just that—reconceived, and not re-enacted, not transformed in practice, and that is a constant frustration. Nevertheless, students deserve what there is to offer in terms of the bringing together of what appear to be disparate perspectives, and while that problem cannot be solved in this project (and calling it a problem in need of solving is questionable itself) some idea of the direction in which to move can certainly be anticipated. As we have seen, a variety of perspectives and researchers address the disconnect between different ways of knowing, and an exploration of that variety is an integral part of any progress that is going to be made toward a more holistic conception of a secondary Catholic high school curriculum.

What of the faith/reason and science/religion problems at the beginning of this chapter? How real is the hope is that a new, theologically informed curriculum paradigm can emerge from a post-modern paradigm that in some respects is itself marked by a hostility to a faith perspective? I suggest that there remains a great deal of room, and therefore real hope that there is an approach to curriculum that will release the rigidity and reification of religious belief and theological ideas, so that the depth of meaning can be “played” with in a way that awakens students to the mystery of the world around them. Post-modernism, especially of the sort that values science while not diminishing story or spirit, allows for knowledge without arrogance and the violence that grows from it. The problematics above are rooted, it seems, in the failure of those who insist on the incommensurability of faith/reason to understand that both faith and reason rest in an

irreducible trust, call it its own kind of faith, that the Real, however one names it, is available to us as we go about living and loving in the world.

That deep trust is present in a particular way in the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. The trust is present in the Catholic faith of course, and it is explicitly present in the expressions of the brothers' charism, especially in two key ideas: the pedagogy of trust, and the spirituality of compassion (The Brothers of the Sacred Heart).⁴² A holistic curriculum in a secondary school must find a way to have that deep trust permeate the school community. If we are between stories as Berry asserts, I hope it is a bit clearer after this project that there is real hope for a stories that are both big and small enough to encompass diverse perspectives while supporting the human flourishing that is the ultimate goal of both education broadly understood, and as it is understood in the very particular tradition in which I have learned and practiced for the majority of my life as both a student and educator.

Having looked at the broader themes of reason and faith and their place in curriculum, it is time now to take a more practical focus and consider what it means for education if it is to foster trust, human flourishing, or otherwise tell stories of "what ought to be" (Peterson, 2007). Such a focus turns to questions that have to do with what is otherwise called moral education, but can also be understood as a form of religious education as is made clear at the beginning of the next chapter. Post-modern thinkers have much to contribute here, too, so it is that we approach that subject through a dialogue between those men and women and the practical, lived spirituality of relationship that is characteristic of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

⁴² These two ideas rest in the center of the Brothers contemporary understanding of their work, and, I will argue someplace else, can be unpacked in such a way to help restructure a holistic curriculum that also embraces the ideas of at least some of the scholars whose work is referenced here.

CHAPTER 5. PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY: “WE PLANT THE SEEDS THAT ONE DAY WILL GROW”

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to move from a more general consideration of curriculum in light of post-modern insights to the more practical reality of life in a school: the day to day, implicit and explicit instruction, about what sort of person a student in the school ought to be. In short it is about moral education. Considered from the perspective of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, whose founding mission was ultimately religious, thinking about this aspect of education leads one toward a curriculum that is a practical spirituality. By “practical spirituality,” a phrase that I prefer to “morality,” I am trying to capture a sense of education as oriented to something ultimate, but also grounded in the practical, particular and individual. Nevertheless, “morality” or “moral education” are still common terms and will be used in this chapter.

Before moving forward with the narrative methodology of interviews with the selected brothers, it makes sense to provide a review of this aspect of education as a context for the brothers’ narratives and the reflections that make up the last chapter of this inquiry. The chapter is partly a review of literature about moral education, in no way exhaustive, partly a reflection on the multiple ontologies and methodologies implicit in education conceived in terms of morality, and finally a consideration of the practical realities of such an education in a Brothers of the Sacred Heart school.

Moral education is a manifestation of a particular understanding of what it means to be human, which itself is in part understood by attending to the circumstances of human existence—circumstances which include physical, biological, cultural, symbolic and even cosmological factors. Being able to inquire into the meaning of being human

presupposes the possibility of that inquiry from a variety of perspectives using a number of methods—and those perspectives and methods are sometimes held to be incommensurable. In particular, and in my own experience of teaching in a secondary Catholic school, ideas about the relationship of science and religion, or the relationship of reason and faith, have profound effects on the answers to questions about the meaning of human existence, and therefore on the nature of moral education. All of the research questions that guide this inquiry are taken up in a consideration of the nature of moral education, and so this chapter is an integral part of considering charism, curriculum and compassion through post-modern perspectives. That conversation will proceed to developing a holistic curriculum that can help students in our school understand and live a fully human existence.

The subject of moral education is vast, so it will be necessary to find a focus that will provide a bounded space that still addresses the pertinent issues: What is the role of moral education in schooling? What does moral education mean? What is the place of a moral education in a post-modern world? Whose morals are going to get taught? Are there perspectives that can guide our practice of education such that we avoid the ideological character of the examples above? Each of those questions will be answered in the only way I can answer them: in light of my own actual practice of moral education in Catholic secondary school, with all the influences that are part of my own personal and institutional history, along with the reflection called for by my exposure in the last decade or so to a variety of theorists.

Catholic schools—and the ones in which I have worked are not exceptions—have inherited a long, complex moral tradition that exerts a profound influence over all that happens in those schools. It is only over the last 15 years or so that I have come to

appreciate an analysis of that tradition, the forces that have shaped it from the inside and outside, and have been able to put it into dialogue with other traditions and perspectives. That dialogue continues even more intently now, as the curriculum theory courses that I have experienced at LSU come into contact with my own understanding of Catholic education in general, as well as my direct experiences of Catholic education.

A vision of education

In *Reflections on the Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education* Purpel and McLaurin (2004) insist that

The questions of what our vision is and should be are in fact the most crucial and most basic questions... ..Fundamentally the language of this vision belongs to the moral and religious family of language, for it is the function of moral and religious language to provide the essential dimension of education--the language of meaning (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004, p. 41)

Hayes (1977) makes a similar point in this passage in which she quotes significantly from Dewey's *Democracy and Education*:

It seems reasonable to assume that the educational practitioner would claim to be pursuing certain "ideals" in his endeavors, that he is concerned about the persons involved, that he considers the activities he plans or imposes to be valuable ones, that he has certain overarching goals which make sense of and give meaning to what he is doing. In other words, he is concerned about the "goodness" or "rightness" of his enterprise, whether he has the responsibility for seeing to the smooth and orderly running of the school institution, whether he must spend his days contributing to the development of young human beings, or whether his is the task of planning what shall be taught, when, to whom, and with what aims.

Questions of "goodness" and "rightness" belong in that realm of philosophy called "ethics," where the concern is with choices for action and with the reasons for those choices. To quote R. S. Peters (1966):

Words like "ought," "wrong," "good," and "bad" typically feature in a form of discourse which has not only the practical function of determining action but also the function of doing this by the production of reasons [p. 99].

For John Dewey (1944), it is a matter not only of determining action and producing reasons, but also of the formation of attitudes. "Morals," he claims, are as broad as acts which concern our relationships with others. And potentially this includes all our acts, even though their social bearing may not be thought of at the time of performance. For every act, by the principle

of habit, modifies disposition. . . . The moral and social quality of conduct are, in the last analysis, identical with each other. [pp. 357-58].
Relating this to education, he goes on to say: “The measure of the worth of the administration, curriculum, and methods of instruction of the school is the extent to which they are animated by a social spirit. [p. 358] (Hayes, 1977, p. 229).

What I find to be significant about the extended quotes above is the clear way the authors express my own intuition about moral education. *All* education is in some sense *moral* education. Educators cannot escape the “ought’s” and “should’s” that attend their work every day. What is important is that the moral context of what we do be made as explicit as possible so that it can be critiqued by the wider community and so hopefully undergo changes which benefit our students.

Weaving

As I go about considering the nature of moral education, I find I am swept up in two particular metaphors for education: story and fabric. It is no coincidence that text and textiles share the Latin root, as both stories and fabrics are woven of various threads, and both provide insightful ways of considering moral education. We will begin with the physical metaphor of fabric, as it is connected directly to the beginnings of the Institute of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

At the time of the founding of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, Lyon was the center of the silk trade, due in part to the creation of an automated loom by Joseph Marie Jacquard in 1801. Fr. Coindré worked, in part, to teach youth to work the looms so as to have a trade with which to support themselves and eventually their families. The Jacquard loom is unique because of its use of punch cards to control the pattern of the silk fabric. Each punch card contained instructions about which threads should be raised or lowered for a given pass of the bobbin or shuttle through the already situated threads

in the loom. The cards themselves were connected together into a sort of belt that moved through the machine, changing the instructions to the loom as the pattern required.

In 19th century Lyon, a loom was often inside a single family dwelling and provided the family with the necessary income for survival. All members of a family would learn to work with the loom to produce silk fabric. At the loom many different relationships intersected: silk thread imported from great distances, social demand for certain types of fabric, the desire of families to live and care for one another, an opportunity to create patterns that might appeal to buyers. Looms often ran non-stop, always producing fabric to meet the demand.

Recognizing that all metaphors have limits, I nevertheless suggest that we consider the loom to stand for the student in the school—the home in which a loom dwells is the school itself. The curriculum is represented by the chains of punch cards that automate the pattern of the woven cloth. The cloth itself is the product that students wear out into the world—that curriculum that we hope provides for the students a way to live in the world. That way of living includes a consideration of economic realities, but one hopes there is much more to it than that. Living in the world means knowing how to be, how to act, how to relate to those with whom one shares the world, how to be in ever-widening circles of relationship—it is, as Hayes quotes from Dewey suggest, a social phenomenon. As such, a curriculum represents a moral vision of what it means to be a person. Moral education can be thought of as the weaving of a fabric—no one thread, idea or perspective can account for the complexity, theoretically or practically, that characterizes education in general, or moral education in particular. If one’s understanding of moral education is to be adequate or even grow, then some grasp of the “color” of each thread is necessary, as well as the ways each thread finds expression in the theory and practice of moral

education. Any given educational context or theory can be thought of as a “punch card” that includes a set of instructions about how the school and eventually the student will weave the threads in its curriculum. As far as morality and education are concerned, those threads include the “should’s” and “ought’s” that are the implicit or explicit moral education that a given educational institution provides.

The Jacquard loom is an apt metaphor for moral education for another reason: its automation. Early in a young person’s life, schools/families/communities create the rules represented by the punch cards that decide for the student what morality he or she will live by. Students follow that program and weave a fabric that can become the clothes they wear in the roles they inhabit, clothes whose patterns and characteristics vary by circumstances that at first they do not, but later can, control. To the extent that the punch cards are a pre-formed pattern, not one chosen by the, family, community or worker tending the machine, they represent the imposed curriculum that teachers and schools must follow because of historical or social factors external rather than the local school community. There will always be such factors, of course, but to the extent that the curriculum is uncritically accepted by those who teach or learn it, the automated character of the Jacquard loom is illustrative.

One reason for choosing the fabric metaphor for describing moral education is because as I consider its practice in my own circumstances, I immediately become aware that no single vision or understanding of moral education is at work in my school or in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. While it is possible to see, describe and categorize much of what happens with respect to moral education, each instance of description is an abstraction from an actual circumstance that admits of much more ambiguity and indefiniteness than what I am able to write about.

The loom is an apt metaphor for another reason as well, one alluded to above. Even as fabrics are woven, so are stories, and just as we live inside the clothes we wear, so do we live within multiple stories, stories which are themselves woven together in ways coherent and incoherent as human beings work to make meaning. In fact the metaphor of the story as a reality in which a person lives is in many ways the more powerful of our two metaphors, so it is to that idea that we now turn.

Weaving a Story to Inhabit

Rejecting the ontological materialism of modern scientism⁴³ because of the essential meaninglessness such a worldview requires, Jordan Peterson (2007) instead suggests that reality as it is experienced by humans makes much more sense when it is considered as a story. We tell stories of mishaps, successes, what happened in class when that guy talked back to a teacher, when the boss found out why you missed work, the incredible catch in the game. Peterson (2007) says all stories have a basic outline—they tell how someone journeys from how things *are* (and imply that it is somehow unsatisfactory) to how things *ought to be*, and often include what happens when someone encounters something new and unexpected. Because stories so often imply an “ought” of some sort, they convey a moral viewpoint and provide both a way to make meaning in the world, and a way through the world. The condensed wisdom of the best stories humans can tell are for Peterson the great myths that guide human culture, and of course form the basis for religious communities’ scriptures. For our purpose here, those stories are often already woven into the fabric of our lives. The stories we tell shape us, and we shape the stories (Bruner, 1987). At a recent conference Peterson (2013) put it even more forcefully

⁴³ Scientism has been described in a variety of ways. Combining Haught (2012) and Peterson one would say that scientism insists that science is the only path to knowledge, and that the world is composed only of material objects and they are what science is to study and know.

by entitling his presentation “How the Stories We Inhabit Shape the Destiny of the World.” In educational settings, this is particularly true. Which stories we choose, how we try to affect lives, which moral visions we communicate because of the stories we choose all contribute to moral education.

The notion of story is integral to the work of two other scholars whose insight inform my thinking on this issue. Both William F. Doll (2003) and Petra Hendry (2010) address the concept of story⁴⁴ in their efforts to conceive of ways to integrate forms of inquiry that are otherwise thought of as in opposition, or as in a relationship of superiority/inferiority⁴⁵. Hendry’s argument that all inquiry is a form of narrative is consistent with Peterson’s ideas about the ubiquity and irreducibility of story for understanding the world, and so lends support to the contention here that the weaving of a story in which one can live is a provocative way to think of moral education. For Doll (2003), story occupies one of the ways that humans make meaning and understand the world, while science and quantitative inquiry make up the other. Mediating between the two is a third reality, for which Doll (2003) has chosen the term “spirit.” Whether one prefers Doll’s “science, story, spirit” or Hendry’s “scientific, symbolic, sacred” each understands that the three experiences or forms of inquiry are intertwined, and are all always implicated in one another. Allowing for the insights of Peterson, Doll and Hendry to inform this inquiry, I suggest that broadly speaking moral education is always the weaving of three fundamental threads, each corresponding to the realities Doll and Hendry describe. Moral education weaves together a narrative of our experiences of

⁴⁴ Hendry in fact distinguishes “story” from her preferred term “narrative” noting that “narrative” is the broader term and includes all forms of inquiry, not simply those associated with the “narrative inquiry” of qualitative research.

⁴⁵ Hendry in particular addresses the notion that in educational research the “scientific” study currently is thought to be the dominant, and in fact, best approach.

material reality (science), our encounters with ultimate meaning (sacred, spirit) and our efforts to give expression to both (symbolic, story).

Various threads

Ontological

What are the types of the three threads that are woven together to create the moral fabric/story of education? Sticking with our metaphor, imagine for a moment that ontological and temporal threads are the warp and weft of a moral fabric. Ontological threads display a wide variety and account for subsets of threads that correspond to varying epistemologies and methodologies. They are the warp, the threads suspended under tension that are raised and lowered to allow passage of the shuttle. The threads chosen for the warp give rise to the various methodologies and epistemologies of a given curriculum.

Perhaps no one more explicitly identifies the essential nature of ontology for understanding and reflection on education than Dwayne Huebner. His recognition that human beings "[dwell] in the transcendent, or more appropriately, the transcendent dwells in the human being" (1995, p. 18) is for me a critical insight. For Huebner, much of education suffers because "Educators and students are blinded by social and cultural systems and do not recognize their participation in the transcendent, in their ever open future. The journey of the self is short circuited or derailed by those who define the ends of life and education in less than ultimate terms"(1995, p. 19). I am fortunate to work in an educational system where this situation is at least in part not the case. Certainly there are teachers and students in my school who do not share the ontological awareness to which Huebner refers, but Catholic education in general, and the charism of the Brothers

of the Sacred Heart, could not be more explicitly intentional about the eternal destiny of students and how education serves that end.

Huebner's notion of a transcendent reality is but one kind of ontology; there are others. Davis's (2009) analysis takes account of this reality, noting how a given worldview (ontology) yields certain educational practices and methods, and even how after a transformative change or break has emerged, the language of education, and even its practice, may lag. In Davis's *Inventions of Teaching* (2009) he importantly notes that his work is a genealogy, and even uses a thread metaphor: "a genealogy is usually used to trace out several strands of simultaneous happenings" (2009, p. 3). That simultaneity of strands is very much like what I am suggesting is the case in the practice of moral education. I find that education as I have experienced and practiced it appears to be composed of strands that display a number of ontological assumptions, some of which preclude one another or are at least in tension. The same could be said of the epistemologies and methodologies that emerge from the given ontology. As I look at Davis's primary metaphor (see figure 2), a tree whose different branches represent bifurcations (rather than the mutually exclusive term "dichotomization") of the ways of knowing, I find that I can identify nearly every perspective, epistemology and pedagogy in my own experience of Catholic education. The two main ontological perspectives of the metaphysical and physical are present in the Catholic conception of truth as both something encountered in an internal, subjective way through prayer, liturgy and religious training (metaphysical) and as a reality that emerges from an encounter with the complexity of the natural world, especially as revealed by Darwin, which is an evolving,

dynamic reality.⁴⁶ I hope in what follows it will become clearer just how Davis's ontological bifurcation (see Figure 1), and Hendry's and Doll's schemes (which I believe broadly fit Davis's) are present in the moral education with which I am most familiar—Catholic education in the tradition of the Brothers.

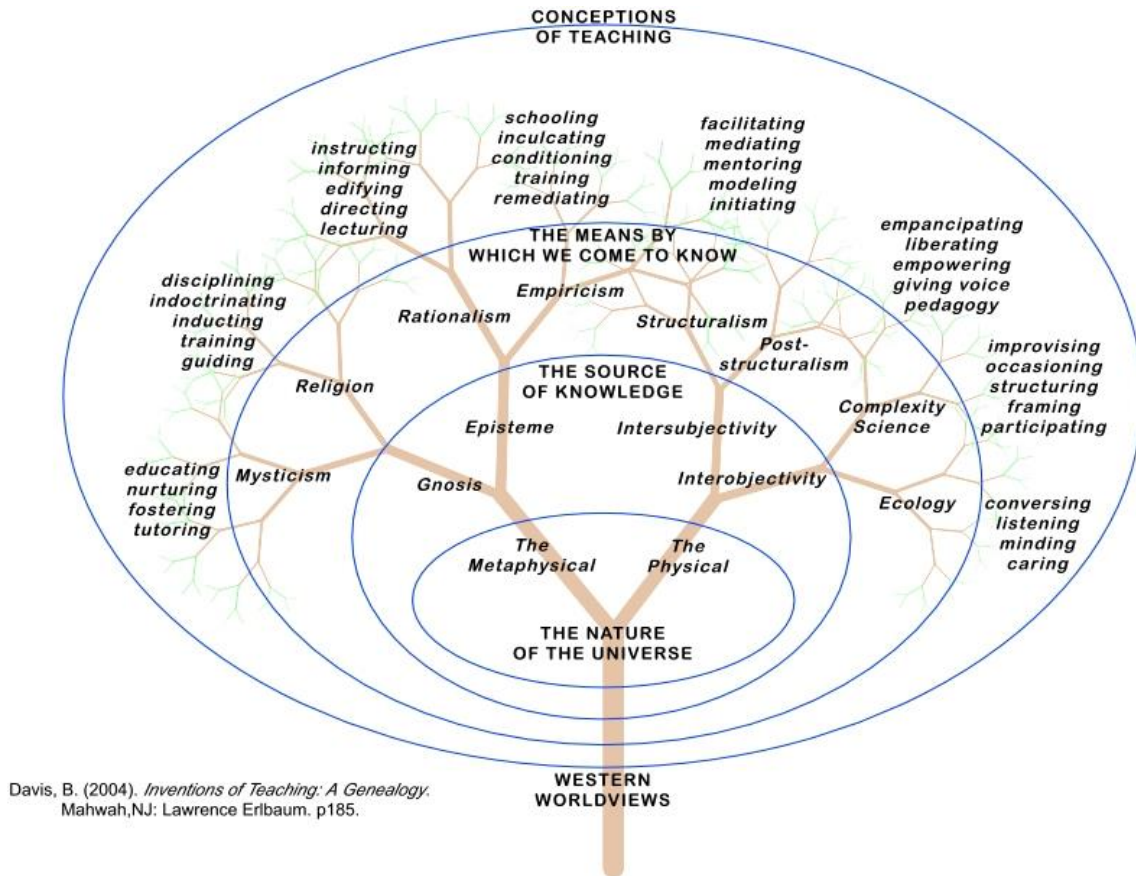


Figure 1. Davis's ontological bifurcation

Temporal

The temporal thread seems at this point to be less complex, in that there are three basic foci for the temporal nature of morality in education: past, present, and future. The relationship to time, whether the curriculum is oriented to look backward or forward, or

⁴⁶ The “physical” as construed by Davis (2009) is not as prominent in a traditional Catholic curriculum, certainly not in the secondary curriculum, but I will argue more forcefully at another time that there are hints of it already, especially as Catholic schools more explicitly embrace and encounter the influence of Darwin—whose influence Davis notes created a bifurcation moment which cannot be avoided.

to be present to the present, is the weft—the fibers that move in and out of the warp and bind them together. How a given curriculum weaves those temporal threads together will of course help to determine the nature of the moral fabric, whether the moral education is accommodating, allowing movement and personal growth, or whether it is binding, too tight, unable to allow a student to develop with a sense of freedom.

Huebner (1986) addresses the temporal character of education and using his own thread metaphor, insists that educators search for a thread of continuity toward the future: "the educator looks forward. He, too, seeks to identify threads of continuity to unite diverse moments in time, but these are moments of yesterday and tomorrow, not of two yesterdays. It might be said that an educator is an historian in reverse" (p. 325). While Huebner is certainly correct with respect to educators looking toward the future as it relates to their students' transformation, it is also the case that much of moral education can be oriented to the past, to asking students to conform to a previously set standard—say for example a biblical exhortation or prohibition. Moral education may also be in some sense atemporal, if one were to adopt a view like Davis's description of the metaphysical ontology: "the universe is seen to be complete and unchanging—and hence understood in terms of other-worldly ideals and essences" (Davis, 2009, p. 185).

Despite the very simple categories of ontology and temporality, I suggest that the varieties of each provide many different kinds of threads from which to weave a story or fabric. Threads may include the utilitarianism of Bentham, the deontology of Kant or the virtues of Aristotle. There are temporal threads that point toward the past and find guidance in religious texts like the Old and New Testaments, and of course there are corresponding ontological threads that rest inside the idea of God. As threads are woven together, patterns emerge that reflect foci such as individualism, relativism, citizenship,

obedience and many more besides. Some of the threads which form the pattern we see can be otherwise invisible. One can imagine that there are patterns that weave in temporal threads that bind a moral education to an economic agenda of a previous age, one that asks education to only produce “good” workers for factories, and that those threads often go unnoticed.

Of course there are ontological threads that reject the idea of God outright. Pinker (2008), avowed atheist, offers an analysis of morality that is informed by neuroscience and evolutionary biology in which moral differences between people and cultures are the result of the different ways that five moral perspectives are woven together: the requirement that people not physically harm one another, community loyalty, purity, authority, and fairness. Writing from a materialist and atheistic ontology, Pinker (2008) considers morality to be an instinct developed by evolutionary pressure, rejects any sort of role for God or theology in determining morality, but nevertheless recognizes a sort of moral reality that the human moral instinct has developed to perceive. While his ontology, at least in so far as it requires rejection of God, is inconsistent with a Catholic moral education, his evolutionary emphasis may provide insight to those religious educators, of whom I am one, who seek to provide students with scientifically informed perspectives on the nature and practice of morality.

In her investigation into moral discussions in secondary school classrooms, Simon (2001) identifies four main schools of thought about moral education (character education, values clarification, cognitive developmentalism, an ethic of care), with her own, in which moral and existential questions serve as powerful motivation for the entire curriculum, as a fifth. Each of those approaches is its own combination of threads or stories, and harbors assumptions or rationales that are not always laid bare. Chazan’s

(1985) nine parameter, three category approach is helpful here, as his breakdown is applicable to many approaches to moral education, and is one I would like to engage with as this inquiry moves forward. Briefly, Chazan offers this framework for investigating and understanding the nature of moral education:

Moral Philosophy

1. The social and the individual
2. Principles
3. Reason in ethics
4. Content and form
5. Action

Philosophy of Moral Education

1. The conception of the morally educated person
2. Indoctrination and moral education

The Practice of Moral Education

1. The role of the teacher
2. Pedagogy (methods, procedures, materials) (Chazan, 1985)

Using this framework, Chazan goes on to consider the work of particular selected researchers who espouse positions ranging from moral socialization (Durkheim), to utilitarianism, cognitive developmentalism (Kohlberg), and values clarification. The work ends with a chapter on those who oppose moral education, and a chapter that puts the lot in dialogue with Dewey. What is missing from Chazan's description of the components of his framework is any sense of the ontological underpinnings of his nine parameters. In one form or another, the remainder of this inquiry will touch on Chazan's framework, but with a particular eye to ways that various positions are interwoven throughout the school's community.

These schools of thought represent examples of ontological and temporal threads of a vast variety, all available to be woven into a school, all potentially informing one's educational ethics. Virtue ethics owe much to Aristotle and his ontology, as well as that of Aquinas (MacIntyre, 1984) and often represent a conservative approach to moral

education that locates what is best in some idealized past. Cognitive developmentalism is closer to modernist science in its ontology, tending to a materialist perspective, while values clarification is quite relativistic and might deny the reality of the virtues. Whereas some versions of moral education are explicitly religious, some, like Noddings, are explicitly not (Noddings, 1984, 2003; Simon, 2001).

The threads of moral education mentioned above are but a sample of what is available to be woven together by our metaphorical Jacquard loom or incorporated into the story we hope our students live. Since there is clearly significant disparity between some of the perspectives available, it is natural for tensions to exist in the practice of moral education. Those tensions, created by differing ontologies or epistemologies, are inevitable. Is there a way to address them so that the moral education of our students is holistic, as the Brothers of the Sacred Heart (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 2007) call for their students' education to be?

The Spirit of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart

Parker Palmer (2012) notes that tensions always attend the practice of education, and the work of Doll, Davis and Hendry all go some distance toward noting and ameliorating some of the tensions. The perspective I am adopting here is closest to Doll's (2003), in so far as he notes that Spirit is the way that the Story/Science tension is best handled:⁴⁷

In theological terms, spirit is considered as "the active essence or essential power of the Deity, conceived as a creative, animating, or inspiring influence" (II:6a). The non-theological notion of spirit plays off that of this last "definition" in the sense of infusing a situation or entity (team, school, organization, movement) with an animating power, essentially a power to do that shapes the quality or mode of that situation or entity. (p. 8)

⁴⁷ Doll's in text citations are from the Oxford English Dictionary Online (2003).

The spirit of the brothers is no simple thing to describe, but in their own reflections on their unique contributions, they have identified at least two underlying realities that guide their work today, and which they maintain have consistently been present in their work since their founding: a spirituality of compassion and a pedagogy of trust. These two threads are among the most important to the story we hope our students choose to inhabit.

Spirituality of Compassion and a Pedagogy of Trust⁴⁸

In his “The Option for Compassion” (CLP 1.18), Br. Bernard Couvillion articulates a theological perspective that can animate the kind of concern that Noddings (Noddings, 1984, 2003) may find resonant with her perspective. Beginning with a devil’s advocate motif, Couvillion clearly admits that many formative scriptural texts describe a jealous, angry God--a theology of which could justify something as awful as terrorism. What Couvillion immediately points out, however that there is a scriptural pattern which favors and extols much more highly God’s compassion. In fact, Couvillion claims that far from God’s omnipotence being manifest in powerful natural acts, whether they be constructive or destructive, God’s real “all-powerfulness” is most on display in compassion, in vulnerability, and in God’s own experience of suffering:

Some of us might find it hard to conceive of God suffering, especially those of us whose formation gave us an engraved image of God as omnipotent. God is almighty, yet the Vatican theological commission asks us to temper that statement. In one of its catechetical texts for the jubilee year it quotes Thomas Aquinas' Summa: "God's omnipotence is chiefly manifested through compassion."

⁴⁸ The readings from which much of the following material is taken, and indeed most of the material on the charism of the Brothers, are from the 3 year sequence of readings that are part of the Coindré Leadership Program, (CLP) a formation program for lay leaders in Brothers schools. Rather than reference every reading individually in the works cited section, the works are referred to corporately. Parenthetical references will be in the format CLP 1.18, that is Coindré Leadership Program, year one, reading 18. The reading program consists of 25-30 readings per year, varying in length from a few to a few dozen pages. Each reading is separately titled, and when illustrative, the titles will be referenced.

St. Thomas' statement rings true to my human experience, and probably yours too. Most of us have experienced how much strength is required to endure suffering and how much mastery is needed to control our feelings. We also know what great force of character we must have to pardon those who have wronged us. Far from being weakness, God's suffering is a sovereign act of omnipotence. The opening prayer of the 26th Sunday of Ordinary Time confirms that truth: "Father, you show your almighty power in your mercy and forgiveness." (CLP 1.18).

This "option for compassion" is a thread of formation that should run through any educator practicing in the brothers' tradition, and as we will see shortly, finds concrete expression in explicit practices.

The pedagogy of trust has a similar spirit, and is based on the trust necessary in any educational endeavor: trust of administrators by teachers, teachers by administrators, students by teachers, and teachers by students, to list the most basic relationships. More than anything though the trust spoken of is about the trust an educator must have in the goodness of student. As the brothers have reflected more and more explicitly on their practice and unearthed stories about the beginnings of their order, this notion of pedagogical trust has taken shape. A few excerpts from one of the CLP readings should serve to illustrate:

Education consists therefore in making known to another his or her potential and helping to develop it. Everyone is full of extraordinary promises. In how many cases, alas! will these promises remain sterile for lack of true educators. Thus we will trust the child and the young person in order that he or she might in return learn to have confidence in himself or herself. It is possible to have confidence in oneself only if someone has confidence in us. Oh! how important is the way we look on them! If we consider them capable, they can then believe themselves capable.

The best text that we have on the trust that André showed for the young seems to be the Prospectus of the Pieux-Secours of 1818. In *Annuaire* no. 91 (1996-1997), Brother Jean-Pierre Ribaut wrote an excellent article on it. Assistant of the Parish of St. Bruno of the Chartreux in Lyon since the end of 1815, and devoted to preaching, to retreats and missions - all of which added up to a huge task - André Coindré still finds time to visit the prisons of Lyon. He gets involved in a remarkable project that a large number of dedicated persons had begun several years before to provide the prisoners with greater dignity. In particular, a priority was given to the conditions of the children and the young, mixed until then with

the adults, often older delinquents or hardened criminals. [This horrible promiscuity still exists in many countries of the world, even in the so-called democratic countries, like France.]

André Coindré describes the situation of these young prisoners who, after having been locked up for a more or less lengthy time, can find no place to stay. However they are worthy of the special attention and the special care given to them for some time now to help them in their work. “Guilty at an age when boys tend to be foolhardy rather than wicked, impetuous rather than incorrigible, they must be considered able to change.” They should be afforded every possible help in order to form them to good habits, and they must be isolated, even while in prison, from exposure to the criminal contagion of the inmates (CLP 1.20).

The quotation above which begins “guilty at an age...” has now become so ubiquitous in my own institution that when teachers are speaking about a mistake that a student has made, and perhaps some are becoming discouraged about the worth or our efforts with a young person, one need simply speak the first four words of the quote and those present are reminded of the pedagogy of trust that must characterize our work. How our work is shaped by these ideas, in the more concrete areas of day to day school life, is the subject to which we now turn.

Catholic High School’s moral curriculum

Perhaps it makes sense to begin with the direct moral instruction that is offered at my own school, Catholic High School (CHS) in Baton Rouge: the explicit moral curriculum as it exists within the school’s religion department. Moral education, that is, education about morality is found in the freshman scripture course, the sophomore course on sacraments and sexual morality, the junior course with its focus on the objectivity of morals, by which is basically meant that morality isn’t simply what one wants it to be. That topic is dealt with more formally in a philosophy class available to seniors, but is also woven throughout the religion curriculum. Social justice and world religions round out the high school religion curriculum, and both of those contain explicit

moral education content. The first provides basic instruction on the Catholic Social Teaching (CST) the fruit of over 100 years of explicit reflection by church leaders on the gospel message and how it is or is not affecting institutional and social structures. The world religions curriculum also provides instruction on the basic moral codes of the world's great religious traditions.

Our teachers get excited about the morality curriculum in religion, in part because so many students find the material engaging. Simon (2001) reflects on that reality in her work and documents how ready young people are to engage with moral questions, and how that is an “in” to effective educational practice. All of us who handle direct moral education have experience the effect that Simon reports.

Of the material that forms part of the teaching about morality as a reality is the developmental work of Lawrence Kohlberg. His theory of moral development informs the basic outlook of the junior morality course on moral decision making, and it ultimately takes the form of a moral exhortation: you should strive to be like those Kohlberg designates as stage six. The developmental perspective is also implicit in the quote above “Guilty at an age...”

Other influences of that particular moral curriculum are rooted in the Jesuit tradition, in large part because the course remains deeply influenced by a text from a Jesuit secondary educator, William O'Malley (1992) The purpose of the text, and moral education in this interpretation of the Catholic tradition, is to slowly introduce students to the objective reality (understood as independent of any given individual's interpretation) of morality as a personal choice that defines one's character, through the very real webs of relationships in which students do and will live, into the ultimate meaning of love understood in a Catholic Christian context.

In my own practice of moral education, the emphasis in the classroom has been on what we generally call “objective morality.” (Catholic Church, 1994, 2011) Over time, I have become increasingly unhappy with the term, and have instead preferred the phrase also used by Pinker (2008), “moral realism,” to describe the same general idea. Textbooks used in Catholic secondary religious education employ the term as well. The idea is an old one and has taken various forms in the thought of such influential thinkers as Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, and corresponds at some level to the idea of Pinker quoted above—that there is a moral reality that human beings have the capacity to perceive and then follow. Moral education in that perspective is somehow the communication of that reality, often codified as rules or commandments one should obey. That communication often takes the form of the banking model of education, whereby knowledge is thought to be “stuff” that can be transferred from the teacher’s mind and deposited into the student’s (Freire, 1970/2011). But that is only one thread of moral education in a Catholic school, only one ontological perspective.

Another particular perspective on the ontological nature of the moral education at Catholic is represented by statements we often make to our students about our larger purpose—something along the lines of “to help you become the man God created you to be.” Implicit in that statement is a teleological ontology, a notion that perhaps what you will become is somehow already present. Lately, though the ontology has begun to change, as we don’t speak so much about the student’s nature as in isolation from the rest of reality, but in deep relationship with it—so that the student grows within and with the web of relationships within which he lives. In fact, a student this year, on the last day of class asked me very directly something along the lines of “Is it true that CHS really

measures its success as a school on whether or not we leave here believing God loves us? I mean, is it that simple, and isn't a little cliché?"

With respect to this question, the young man was almost directly quoting from one of the Brothers foundational documents about their educational charism where it says quite clearly:

We see our schools as successful if students graduate with a strong belief that God loves them. Students develop this belief in proportion to two factors: how much their teachers love them and the extent to which students sense teachers' love through the interest shown them in the classroom and extracurricular activities. Therefore, teachers establish a student-centered classroom characterized by mutual respect, reasonable yet challenging expectations, and friendly encouragement. Also, teachers attend as many extracurricular activities as possible. Through these efforts, both in and out of the classroom, students experience their teachers' interest in them. Teachers can more effectively demonstrate God's love through a deeper understanding of and appreciation for different aspects of students' personalities. (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 2007, p. 30)

The students' question was a good one, and one I have wrestled with, but I have come to believe that if "God's love" is understood in the most liberating sense, and not unlike that transcendent context Heubner speaks about, then this quote is a powerful summary of what it is we hope to do. In my own understanding, a student who understands God's love feels confident, but humble, is moved to compassion, is free from the fear and anxiety that drive people to seek shallow meaning, and desires to share that love through acts of service and justice.

The quote also points toward the foundation of the Brothers' educational ethics as it provides not only the goal, but the means by which teachers participate in the school's mission—that it is the teacher's job to communicate love to students, and that that is done through practical engagement in the students' school lives.

That moral formation which evidences a more relational ontology takes place implicitly in the lived life of the school. It is codified in our Student Handbook (Catholic High School, 2013) as several pages of do's and don't's, but running through all of it is the general philosophy found throughout the Brothers formation documents.⁴⁹ More than any explicit curriculum in religion class, a number of regular practices communicate just what makes a good person, and what an adult person should be about. From liturgies that focus on social justice themes to retreats that insist on the sacredness of all the relationships in which we find ourselves; from mission trips to impoverished areas both foreign and domestic to collections that have raised enough money for the school to sponsor its own Habitat for Humanity home; from a faculty "Day of Experience" that focuses on understanding social issues more than it does short term charity to the 100 hours of community service a student must complete to graduate—all of these form part of the holistic approach to moral education that is in the spirit of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

Critiques

Of course, our students are not perfect, and neither are the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, the Catholic Church, Catholic High School, or its faculty. Any of a number of important critiques can be made of the moral education offered at my school and others in our tradition. Perhaps the most striking reflection for me, at least as far as my school goes, is the obvious emphasis on a male perspective. Not that there is anything wrong with that perspective as such, but there is certainly the opportunity to raise the issue of

⁴⁹ For faculty members two of these documents are essential: an expression of the charism written by those familiar with it as practiced in the New Orleans Province *Educational Mission and Ministry* (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 2007); and *Beyond Methodology* (New England, New Orleans, & New York Provinces of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, n.d.) a small spiral booklet containing narrative descriptions of the lived reality of teachers in the Brothers' schools.

imbalance. The Catholic Church only allows men to hold ecclesiastical leadership, the Brothers are a male order, I am educated by a male monastic order and the students I teach are all male. As it happens, the moral curriculum featuring as it does the research of Kohlberg is also in that respect missing a feminine perspective. Now, the explicit moral curriculum in the junior class raises the question of gender, and calls for all people to develop a balance of characteristics traditionally associated with the masculine and feminine. Better than that would be to include the research of Gilligan (1977) in the explicit curriculum, in part because from my perspective her understanding of the way women approach moral decision making is closer to my school's institutional practice than it is to Kohlberg's.

Gilligan (1977), a student of Kohlberg, investigated the moral decision making of women in order to better understand why it seemed that women's moral decision making typically seemed not to rise to the highest level on Kohlberg's scale. What she found, simply, was that preserving relationships seemed to be the higher priority for women, while preserving principles was higher for men. The example of a children's baseball game helped to explain the distinction: a boy strikes out and begins to cry, so the girls in the game push for giving him just one more try, worried about his suffering, while the boys in the game shrug their shoulders and explain that those are the rules.

This example of inclusion in a game has a powerful correlate when it comes to the question of whether or not a student can remain a student at Catholic High School. When has a student "struck out" as it were, and when is he supposed to be given another chance? Such decisions are full of moral questions, about the actions of the student, the efforts of the school through teachers, coaches and counselors, the support of parents, and the morality of ending a student's relationship with the institution. There is a sense in which

Gilligan's work reinforces the morality of the educational charism of the brothers. Gilligan's work showed that women in general tended to make moral decisions with a different set of principles from that of those men who were the subject of Kohlberg's study. In Gilligan's research women focused on relationship more than abstract principle, and on the feelings of those affected by a moral decision. In the brothers' charism students are typically offered multiple chances to make mistakes and learn from the consequences. The document *Educational Mission and Ministry* (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 2007) indicates that a hallmark of the Brothers' educational tradition is personal attention. That emphasis on personal attention makes the forming of a relationship with students an essential part of educating a young person, and I would argue, teaching him or her about how to act. It is an implicit recognition of what Gilligan's research showed—that there is a relational component to moral—and I would say educational—decision making that is irreducible. The cliché is apt: “students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

By moving from the academic approach to moral education in a classroom to the educational charism of the brothers, we are approaching moral education from a more holistic approach, one that focuses on personal formation of students' characters. Such a holistic approach is an explicit goal of education as the brothers practice it:

We believe in a holistic approach to education. We believe that a young person learns from his or her total experience of the school setting. We attempt to address the religious, academic, social, psychological, physical, and cultural development of the young person through the school's programs, courses, and policies. (Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 2007, p. 4).

One of the most difficult of moral lessons to impart occurs when a student has made a moral choice which damages his or her relationship with the school community in such a way that it may be necessary to recommend that the student withdraw from the

school. The discipline process itself becomes an opportunity to instruct the student on the relational nature of moral decision making and the place of personal responsibility in the moral life. It is responsibility for the other that is at the core of morality⁵⁰ and this understanding forms the frame in which brothers schools evaluate the consequences best suited for a given infraction.

If a student has done something egregious that in the estimation of the school may warrant the possibility of dismissal, the Brothers' school follows a process that involves several components:

- A meeting between the principal, the disciplinarian, the student and his or her parents. The student is afforded the opportunity to take responsibility for what he or she has done, to listen to the school's perspective on the effects of the behavior on the student and on the wider school community. Parents can offer their perspective on the relationship between them, the school, and their son. The student is able to express how he values, or doesn't, his relationship to the school and those in it.
- The principal and disciplinarian then take the information from that meeting and share it with the faculty members on the discipline committee.
- The discipline committee makes a recommendation to the principal about whether the student be dismissed.
- The principal makes a final decision.

⁵⁰ See Egea-Kuehne (2007) for a treatment of Derrida's implications for education and moral responsibility.

Throughout the process it is the relational aspect of the behavior that is in the forefront of the conversation. For schools in the charism of the brothers, one of the goals is the creation of “sanctuary.” The schools should be, as far as possible, free of those unhealthy influences that detract from the educational aim of the community. When a student’s behavior significantly detracts from the sanctuary of the environment, he is often asked to leave. Still if the student is able to demonstrate that he or she understands the broader ramifications of his or her actions and clearly expresses a sense of the value of the relationship with the school community, and if the parents indicate the same the student may find he or she has an opportunity to remain in the school.

The consideration of the dismissal of a student illustrates one of the moral realities of school life—the near impossible responsibility of really doing what is right. Which brings us to Derrida’s intriguing exploration of responsibility, how it expresses my own experience of the binding character of responsibility, the fact that easy answers about how to act responsibly are hard to come by, that one is always pulled in more than one direction. I have never been privy to a dismissal decision where things were simple, where For Derrida “there is no responsibility that is not the experience and the experiment of the impossible” (quoted in Egéa-Kuehne, p. 201, 2005). Furthermore, the webs in which we find ourselves always mean that some responsibility will be left unfulfilled. Fenwick (2009) makes this point rather well:

This is why, according to Derrida, our enactments of responsibility must unfold in secrecy, and involve sacrifice. We always sacrifice others to respond to the immediate, and our action of response is far too complex to withstand the judgment of community standards and universal laws, which are always more simplistic than everyday dilemmas... Responsibility is enduring this trial of the undecidable decision, this interminable experience, where attending to the call of a particular other will inevitably demand an estrangement from the ‘other others’ and their communal needs, and where closure to the problem is never reached. (p. 115)

Just as Gilligan's work provides a way of seeing moral education that adds to what is explicit in the school in which I practice, so do two other researchers insights inform and critique the moral education, both explicit and implicit, in the Brothers' tradition. Nel Noddings' work in particular has parallels,⁵¹ some alluded to above, but there is a simple critique of education as overly masculine:

So many of the practices embedded in the masculine curriculum masquerade as essential to the maintenance of standards. I suggest that they accomplish quite a different purpose: the systematic dehumanization of both female and male children through the loss of the feminine. (Noddings, 1984, 2003, loc. 2865)

Now, the masculinity of my educational setting notwithstanding, there is no doubt that there is a real risk, and in some cases a realized risk, of a loss of the feminine in an all-male school run by an all-male religious order. I will say this, however—that the spirit of the Brothers, with its emphasis on compassion, relationship, and trust, is more feminine than people would generally acknowledge. There was a time when this was not the case, and Noddings' concern was much more in evidence in Brothers' schools, but it is no longer so.

Another critique from Noddings has to do with what she sees as an inherent issue with moral education that focuses on the virtues. It is in fact the case that both Catholic morality in general, and moral education as it is practiced in the tradition of the Brothers emphasizes virtues. While I would not argue that "virtue ethics" have no place in moral education, Noddings at least complicates the issue by showing the potential for elitism in Aristotle's virtue ethics--those in a position to learn and practice the virtues praised by a

⁵¹ I find much of what Noddings considers to be consistent with the general philosophy and approach of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Time and space preclude a sufficient treatment of that consistency, so I focus here, albeit briefly, on one of the ways her insights challenge what is the case in my school.

given society are raised up and treated as though they deserve the many benefits that have come their way by the practice of said virtues.

Virtues and excellences arise in the diligent pursuit of certain practices. These practices or complex tasks are instituted and recognized by the society, and they require a continuity of thought and action through planning, executing, monitoring, and evaluating. Different practices demand different excellences and even different virtues. Some people, because of the positions they hold, have opportunities to develop virtues and excellences that are highly prized; others do not. A hierarchy of virtues tends to induce and maintain a hierarchy of status and privilege. (Noddings, 2012, locs. 3055-3057).

It is the case now, that education in Brothers' schools, at least in the United States, has in some cases moved toward elitism, as our students are often now from the middle to upper middle classes, and the tuition requirements of a largely lay run school make a Brothers' education harder to obtain. Being able to question the virtues, to recognize that different sets of virtues are praised and promoted by different groups at different times, is arguably an important part of good moral education—and not simply the imparting of one set of virtues over another.

Conclusion

We have come a long way from the initial metaphors of fabric and story. What cloth are we trying to weave when we attempt to offer a moral education to our students? What story would we like them to weave and inhabit? Certainly it is the case that we provide patterns for our students when they arrive, we tell the stories we want them to inhabit—stories about the beginning of the Brothers' order, stories about God, Christ, heroes. Before they leave us, what we really hope is that they are able to select from the threads that have been offered, and weave their own story to inhabit, a story that helps them live compassionately, lovingly, in the world.

Parker Palmer (2012) identifies tensions in any kind of education that is created by six inescapable paradoxes, the fourth of which calls for honoring both the “little stories of our lives and the big stories of the disciplines” (p. 271). Palmer suggests that all the tensions are “held together in the teacher’s heart” (p. 274). It is love that holds the tensions together, but “our own love is never enough. ...we must endure with whatever love we can muster until that very tension draws a larger love into the scene” (p. 275).

In the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, that larger love, that big story, can be none other than the Christian story when it is all said and done. Br. Bernard Couvillion, former Superior General of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, and Louisiana native, in a presentation to the Catholic High faculty about the charism of the brothers articulated something of the sort as he described the hunger he sensed in students for love, for understanding, for compassion, for relationship. He believes that hunger from the perspective of the Catholic Christian faith, is finally a hunger for the infinite love that is Christ, and it is part of the educator’s responsibility to find ways to help students have that encounter, to, if you will, find their way into that story. If they come to our schools looking for that, Br. Bernard said, “what a shame if they met only me.”

I am left to wonder more and more how I am going to navigate my responsibility to my students with respect to Catholic education. My faith has changed over the course of my life, and is marked by significant doubt now. I have to struggle with my own integrity as I teach the faith as the Church would like it taught—with altogether too much certainty for it to be credible. I am careful not to use religious faith in a manipulative way, but it is a challenge to share a faith perspective without imposing a guilt trip on those who may be unready to embrace a Catholic way of living. Still I believe that there is deep truth in the Catholic Christian revelation and I have a responsibility to present that in a

persuasive but non-coercive way. I am persuaded that human beings are shaped by stories they tell themselves, that identity is in fact constructed, but I also believe that some stories are better than others, some have more potential to enrich human life, to facilitate a fuller human experience, to move individuals and groups to justice. I want students and colleagues to have the opportunity to reflect on the faith and choose for themselves.

And I want the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart to continue. I have been shaped by their work, faith, training and philosophy of education. It is a privilege and responsibility to have been invited into their “Coindré Leadership Training” program. The program was developed to allow lay leaders to understand and internalize the brothers’ charism so that it could be passed on to generations who may not know a single brother. I have a responsibility to be the sort of person who can help share that which I have so benefitted from.

I believe education needs a narrative that can serve both Catholic schools, and public education. The work of William Doll (1993), Timothy Lines (1987), Thomas Berry (Berry, 1988), Fritjof Capra (1996) , and many others holds the promise of telling a story about human beings and the universe that could provide a way for humans to share a common story. I feel a responsibility to do research, that helps tell that story in such a way that we can choose constructive healthy ways of living together on this earth.

That research must for me take place in the context in which I have spent my professional life. That context, of course, is in Brothers of the Sacred Heart schools, so it is that we now focus on the data gathered about the brothers and their charism through a narrative investigation with three Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

CHAPTER 6. BR. NOEL LEMMON: “WE ARE WORKERS, NOT MASTER BUILDERS”

I couldn’t tell you if my high school had a disciplinarian. I’m sure we must have. Perhaps he did not go by the title disciplinarian; I just know that I don’t remember his name, nor do I recall any interactions with him. Students at my current school, and students at my previous school, St. Stanislaus, cannot say the same. The disciplinarian in schools run by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart has a prominent place. I simply cannot imagine that students from years past wouldn’t recall who was doing that job when they were in school. For good or ill, it is a public position, and one most principals will tell you sets the tone for the entire school. For that reason alone, this chapter makes some sense at this place in the dissertation.

Br. Noel was the first Brother of the Sacred Heart disciplinarian I ever experienced as an educator, and as it happens, the only one who was a brother. I have known a number of brothers who have been disciplinarians, but I was never an educator with them in the school where they did the job. Br. Noel’s predecessor was still present at St. Stanislaus when I arrived there in 1986, and is mentioned in the interview below. I did know Noel’s predecessor, Br. Joseph, and I did see him “in action” as it were, as he disciplined boarding students for whom he was responsible as their prefect. His style was different, to be sure. It is the extent to which Br. Noel’s approach to the role, and his approach to his vocation as a Brother in general, informs an understanding of a curriculum and pedagogy that are consistent with the charism of the brothers that is the subject of this chapter. That informed understanding comes primarily in the form of a backdrop for more contemporary expressions of that charism, as I argue what can be gleaned from this data is exemplary of much of what Br. Ivy’s interviews indicate was the reality for Brothers of the Sacred Heart for decades leading up to the changes Ivy describes in the interviews

I have conducted with him. Some of those reflections are found in an earlier chapter of this dissertation, but they will be revisited. Before that, however, this chapter will present the results of the interview with Br. Noel Lemmon, S.C.

Tom: How long have you been a brother? When did you enter?

Br. Noel: 1945

Tom: ok, where did you grow up?

Br. Noel: Alexandria

Tom: ok, so

Br. Noel: I was born in Lafayette but uh

Tom: alright

Br. Noel: my dad was with Texaco and they transferred him to Alexandria and I went to school at Menard at the Brothers school there.

Like many men who joined orders or began studies for the priesthood in the middle 20th century, Br. Noel entered the order as a young man. As alluded to by Br. Ivy⁵², and as recognized in the early history of the order, there was a time when brothers tended to focus more on the concrete, practical, down to earth particulars of daily life, and were less concerned with intellectual pursuits, philosophical issues, theology, or even personal spirituality beyond whatever it was that had always been the observed practice of the order. Some of that reality comes through in this exchange:

Tom: and so you joined right out of high school?

Br. Noel: after I finished high school yeah

Tom: ok, so what was your education like after high school then what did you do with the Brothers?

⁵² See elsewhere in this work, p. xxx

Br. Noel: I went to Metuchen, ok, and actually we kind of repeated the senior year because a lot of the guys entered in high school and they were doing their senior year and we had to, we had to make a six month canonical postulancy before we entered the novitiate. So our senior year involved that k? And at the end of that year, that would be '46 we entered the novitiate k? And (unclear) the usual studies spiritual things. Metuchen was a change for us because down here it was like this (indicating the weather) and up there we had snow. I guess what impressed me was the changes in the leaves and things like that. We had a farm, and the vineyards, and the apple trees, and the farm raised corn tomatoes, and things like that. And that was part of our training for three years. I enjoyed that part of it really did.

Early Brothers of the Sacred Heart, distinct from other orders like the Christian Brothers who were more focused on urban areas, tended to come from more rural areas of France—the needs of rural youth being a focus of Fr. Coindré. In the above selection, I hear some of Br. Noel's attraction to the natural world, to those things associated with a more rural lifestyle.⁵³ His reference to the more theologically oriented part of his experience was limited to “spiritual things,” but his brief description of the lifestyle was even in that brief portion more descriptive, and in the interview itself he was more animated discussing the farm and weather than he was any other part of his spiritual formation. When given more of an opportunity to articulate that aspect of his education in the order, Br. Noel was not particularly more forthcoming.

Tom: ...so what was the academic portion of it like? What did y'all read and what did y'all have to do?

Br. Noel: Well of course we studied the Rule of Life a lot ok? And then the, I'm trying to think of the name of it, a lot of spiritual books. We had a novice master, Br. Gilbert, and then Br. Nicholas swapped in the middle of the year and, uh, I'm trying to think of the name of those books and I can't think.

This description of a year's worth of training is relatively brief, and, at least at this point in Br. Noel's recollection, not particularly noteworthy. When the subject turns to

⁵³ Br. Noel lives in a Brothers' retirement home on the Catholic High School Campus. Despite limited mobility requiring the frequent use of a walker, he tends a fairly large vegetable garden, carrying on to this day a love of and engagement with the natural world.

training for the job a Brother would do—generally teaching—he has considerably more to say, and recalls it better. This fact points, I think, to the simple reality that most brothers of Noel’s generation are not particularly inclined to introspection, and are much more engaged in the realities of a ministry lived out in the particulars of school life.

In the extended passage below, Br. Noel goes on to give an overview, at my request, of his training for his vocation. There are a few aspects of his recollections to which I would like to draw the reader’s attention. First, there is the very business-like and practical orientation to the brothers’ preparation. It is efficient, streamlined, and designed to get a brother into a classroom as soon as possible, sometimes before a degree is awarded—and sometimes a brother may be asked to teach a subject for which he is unprepared. One may, and I do, see in this efficiency an echo of a more modernist paradigm, but hidden in the desire to have a brother in a classroom—content ready or not—is the overarching goal to have a man who is committed to the formation of young people with those young people as soon as possible. One can argue about the readiness for the classroom of a young man whose education was incomplete, and whose development in the relatively insular confines of religious order training was still in its early stages. Nevertheless, Br. Noel’s love for what he was doing and continually preparing to do comes through. For the purposes of this project, it is that love, and the hope in young people it represents, that ought to be the focus.

Also worthy of attention, and related to the point immediately above, is the way Br. Noel is attached to Stanislaus. When asked about his time there, Br. Noel indicated he was there 40 years, almost skipping over some of his other placements until asked. Now, he was at Stanislaus much longer than he was anywhere so perhaps his response simply indicates that reality. One interpretation, though, is that one way or another, he finds

Stanislaus and the work done there, and of course the work he did there, to be at the heart of his vocation as a Brother of the Sacred Heart.

Finally, as Br. Noel recalls the math curriculum that he used for years at Stanislaus, he uses the word “beautiful.” As he recalled teaching that subject with that series, he appeared to be remembering it very fondly, and I do not take the use of the word beautiful to be accidental or metaphorical. For Br. Noel, there was clearly an aesthetic experience to what he did, in the math classroom, but also in his work at the camp at Stanislaus, and beauty was at the center of it. In that respect, and in others that should become clearer as this project proceeds, another perspective besides the practical modernist paradigm is evident. In the experience of beauty, whether in the math curriculum, in the work at Camp Stanislaus, or the work that Stanislaus did with young people at risk, one can discern characteristics of a post-modern paradigm that would become more evident in the later years of Br. Noel’s work.

Br. Noel: now in the next year we were scholastics and we had an arrangement with Springhill College that they could teach us there in Metuchen and get credit when we went to Springhill so that first year of scholasticate we took 60 credits.

Tom: Holy mackerel! That’s incredible!

Br. Noel: well we went to school all day long and we were taught mainly by Br. Alexis who, a brilliant person and he taught us just about all of this, you know math, history, the whole works.

Tom: so it was college curriculum in Metuchen

Br. Noel: beginning of college, yeah

Tom: and then you went back down to Springhill to finish? Or

Br. Noel: ok, then uh we went to Daphne Alabama ok, we moved down there for a year and we’d commute to Springhill and some of the professors would come over to...one was a priest, and one of the lay teachers would come over and teach the courses in Daphne. And then three times a week we’d go to

Springhill classes and that didn't get us finished though and at the end of that year, most of us went out to teaching somewhere. I went to Brooklyn.

Tom: before a Bachelor's Degree

Br. Noel: hmm?

Tom: before you had a degree

Br. Noel: yeah

Tom: ok

Br. Noel: and uh, (clears throat) in Brooklyn, and I stayed up to Brooklyn for that year, for the summer, did summer camp in Huntington and back to Brooklyn (New York). I had 73 kids.

Tom: in one section?

Br. Noel: well it was actually two sections, 3a and 3b that up there and started in the beginning of the year with one section and in the middle of the year they'd start another one 3a would start in September, ok? Well they were both there at the same time ok? So you'd teach over there for a little bit and then you'd go teach to the other half.

Tom: what ages were these?

Br. Noel: 3rd grade

Tom: 3rd grade!

Br. Noel: and 4th grade, yeah, the second year

Tom: ok, alright.

Br. Noel: ok and at the end of that year, I came down as a sophomore at Springhill, summer school over the course I guess of the next 3 or 4 summers I finally got my degree.

Tom: alright and it was in education

Br. Noel: hmm?

Tom: the degree was in education, or?

Br. Noel: no it was in social studies and English, I ended up teaching math

(Mixed laughter)

Tom: and how'd that happen?

Br. Noel: oh, I didn't like teaching English and Social Studies, we kind of had to had to take what they allotted for us at the...as soon as I could get out of that I got into math, so

Tom: so where was your first teaching post after the Brooklyn one?

Br. Noel: Stanislaus

Tom: and how long were you there?

Br. Noel: 40 something years

Tom: so you were at Stanislaus the whole time, you didn't move around the province?

Br. Noel: a little bit, I um I was at Stanislaus from, from 51 to 57 and I went to Mobile to our house of studies, we had the juniorate there in Daphne and I was there for 5 years, then I went to...

Tom: are you in training that whole time, are you going to school are you working?

Br. Noel: no no I was teaching, teaching and then uh, then after that I went to Cor Jesu for a year, came here for a year then went back to Bay St. Louis and stayed there until Katrina

Tom: and that was all math?

Br. Noel: not really, when I was teaching at the Juniorate, you know, we had 20 something students we had all four, well there weren't many freshmen, we had all four levels of high school.

Tom: ...so Juniorate tell me what that means I don't think I understand

Br. Noel: Juniorate was a house of studies for kids in high school

Tom: interested in the brothers?

Br. Noel: kids interested in the brothers

Tom: oh ok

Br. Noel: Br. Bernie Couvillion was there, he went through it, Br. Eduardo, Br. Raymond

Tom: oh, wow!

Br. Noel: Br. Xavier uh, uh but then that (laughter) we didn't have a chemistry teacher so they said "you teach chemistry" I nearly blew up the place

(laughter)

Br. Noel: but those were interesting years because we had them during the day and then after we would, there was either sports or couple of times a week we'd have to maintain the grounds and paint stuff like that... ok so that was 5 years then I went to Cor Jesu. Cor Jesu I was still in English and Social Studies, came here I was still in English and Social Studies, and then I went to the Bay again in English and Social Studies for a year or so and then I went to a, went to Santa Fe, went to the college of Santa Fe and updated my math and from then on it was in Math and Religion.

Tom: how long were you in Santa Fe?

Br. Noel: (sound that indicates didn't hear the question)?

Tom: how long were you in Santa Fe?

Br. Noel: Just summer, two summers

Tom: alright now how high how high could you teach in math?

Br. Noel: at one time I had 7th grade, 8th grade, 9th grade, 10th grade, 11th grade and 12th grade

Tom: you had 5,

Br. Noel: Dolciani series

Tom: that's 6 preps

Br. Noel: I enjoyed that I really did

Tom: math?

Br. Noel: well in particular that series, that Dolciani series of math you know just one followed the other

Tom: oh really ok

Br. Noel: just really beautiful

Tom: alright, well that's terrific. Um, well I, I've, one of my questions was tell me about the various assignments and you've kind of done that and you've also answered the next one, which one was your favorite, so um, I'm just gonna uh kind of ask you the larger questions, um you know, I don't know, one of the things I've been fascinated with is you know in talking to Ivy about, kind of the understanding of the charism and especially after Vatican II uh and I guess you're someone who's lived in, in both those worlds right, and just an understanding of what it meant to be a brother before Vatican II and after Vatican II and maybe the, you can see the changes in the Rule of Life that have happened over, you know, over your time so, if, forcing you to put that into words, what would you describe as the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, how would you articulate that? I know that is a, an enormous question but

Br. Noel: you know, I, I never thought of it as a charism, you know I saw what the brothers were doing you know and like that and that became a part of it, you know?

Tom: well just say what was that then? What did you see? What did you see that the brothers did that you liked?

Br. Noel: ok well I'm going to start with Alexandria, that's why I joined.

Notice that Br. Noel doesn't use the word "charism," and even after learning the word much later in his vocation, as he reflects on his life and work does not "think" of it like that. In a recent conversation with one of Br. Noel's students, Br. Xavier Werneth, a colleague of mine and former principal, former provincial, historian of the order and Br. "just-about-everything," the topic of charism came up in the context of a conversation about my research. As it happens I am going to be on a committee that is going to try to write a unifying charism document for the schools in the newly formed United States province. I mentioned that to Br. Xavier, who commented that there is discussion among some brothers about getting rid of the word charism altogether, prone as it is, in their opinion, to a variety of interpretations to which individuals are so attached that the process of provincial unification is made more difficult.

There is a sense in all this that “charism,” as one would expect in a post-modern context, is a moving target, hard to nail down, fluid—but nevertheless an enlivening reality. The desire not to use the term is an implicit recognition that definitions can be trouble when living out something as indefinable as the “spirit” of a community. That is not to say that writing and talking about the charism ought not to happen—only to recognize that neither is the same as living, and that what we write and say does not capture or exhaust what we live. In that sense, charism is a dynamic identity, to which we must be “dynamically faithful.” For Br. Noel though, such reflections are perhaps beside the point—the attraction to the life was personal, not intellectual or theological, it was focused on the relationships one formed with those among whom one lived and learned.

Br. Noel: the brothers, ok? Uh, there were about 9 brothers there I guess at Alexandria and uh, they took such an interest in us, you know, I went hunting and fishing with them, you know if they were going to a football game I’d go with them. They made me feel comfortable in the community room uh, and I saw the good points and the bad points you know and just um

Tom: what were those, the good and the bad points?

Br. Noel: well, every now and then there was some friction, k? But the good points were uh the comradery the uh you know, I used to go to mass every day. (Gesturing) Menard was here, Providence Academy was here, and I lived over here but anyway they had mass every day at Providence Academy the priest (?) the brothers attended mass there, so uh, I got to know them real well.

Tom: ok, so that charism question doesn’t make, doesn’t make as much sense to you, or that’s just not a word that you

Br. Noel: well

Tom: grew up using or

Br. Noel: the charism part just started after Vatican II, I mean I, you know, we never even considered, I just liked what I saw but uh, uh Stanislaus was the one school in our whole province that more closely identified with Coindré,

I mean the type of students we had, these were students that really needed help, um and, and we were able to do it.

This theme occurred in more than one place in the interview—the idea that Stanislaus is a place where Coindré might be most comfortable, and the pride that goes with doing what was and is perceived as doing the harder work with more difficult students.

Tom: well tell me about that, I mean tell me about what your experience at Stanislaus was, kind of, what kind of kids, I don't know if you've got stories of kids in particular you think are, you know exemplify what it was that Coindré wanted y'all to do or that you thought that Stanislaus was particularly helpful, you know what I mean? Sort of experiences from your time as a teacher even um where you felt like you really reached somebody in a way that it was consistent with kind of how the brothers were founded.

Br. Noel: you know, when I first went there the students were divided A, B, C.

Tom: yeah, they were when I was there as well.

Br. Noel: and there was a lot of criticism about that, but at the time it worked at Stanislaus because, you know, some kids were so slow you couldn't expect these guys up here to hold them back you know so the program was adapted so that these guys could do something you know whereas the one's up in the A class...I had mostly the A class so I couldn't complain but um, uh, you had, even in the top class, the A class you really did not have an advanced class, I don't know if you remember that, it was, they were brighter, but they still had to be pushed, I mean that they... and then the slower kids had to be pushed all the time and that's why they were sent there, you know they were not doing well in school somewhere.

What seems clear in the interview is that Br. Noel has deeply identified with St. Stanislaus, at least in part because of its explicit connection with the identified founding vision of André Coindré. For Br. Noel, and for other brothers with whom I have had occasion to speak over the years, Stanislaus is a unique case because of the history of having boarding students, many of whom were sent to Stanislaus because of some sort of trouble at home—academic or otherwise. There is a great deal of pride among those who

have served many years at Stanislaus, pride that comes from taking students at some increased risk for struggle and problems and setting them on a different path.

Some of that pride comes through in this short exchange:

Tom: are there any particular uh students, that you can recall that you thought were really helped by Stanislaus, anybody that I mean, even names of students that you or stories of students that you can remember really having made a difference for?

Br. Noel: well, if you if you go to these alumni reunions, we have one coming up in January uh and you see the kids there that you know were really difficult to deal with they're here and they're the ones that come back you know, they appreciate what was done so they're, you I think, there I was prefect a couple of years uh I had the little dormitory which was I guess freshmen 8th grade and freshmen and uh some of 'em were real tough to deal with (chuckle)

Tom: right

Br. Noel: well wait a minute uh a couple of 'em you know that they're constantly at these reunions and they're always "remember this" about you know the times at Stanislaus or (chuckling) you know even to the extent you know they had the uh football team well the brothers drove the bus down to the stadium...one of these kids actually got the bus, loaded it up with kids and drove them down to the Dairy Queen (laughter). That didn't (sic) happen too often at schools.

Tom: I wouldn't think, how old was the student that drove the bus?

Br. Noel: he was probably Junior Senior I guess

It is remarkable to me that in a conversation about curriculum and pedagogy—and let's face it, Br. Noel doesn't really use those terms—the stories that he brings to mind prompt laughter, and have little to do with classroom instruction, the next excerpt notwithstanding:

Tom: tell me what your classroom was like—you know I one of the, one of the questions that I wanna kinda really investigate is what is uh I mean, what's unique about the way the brothers approach teaching, you know what's their pedagogy like what was, what was, would you say, how would you describe what you were about in a classroom and how you taught

Br. Noel: in math I used the board, a lot, and I tried to mix in humor with it, one time, like like if you have a 500 pound girl on this side (chuckling sounds)

Tom: (laughter)

Br. Noel: you know how would you balance this equation I mean that's uh, those are the things the kids remember. I really enjoyed teaching math I was, maybe I gave it up too soon but I kinda got burned out and I just uh

Tom: when did you stop teaching math?

Br. Noel: I think year before I became dean of students

Pertinent to the brothers' pedagogy here is that Br. Noel wanted his class to be fun.

Br. Noel loved teaching math and loved having fun with students as he taught math, and loved some of the shenanigans that students in the dorm at Stanislaus perpetrated.

Tom: oh really, so all the way into the 80's though?

Br. Noel: hmm?

Tom: all the way into the 80's then

Br. Noel: 86, when did you go there?

Tom: I got there in '86, that was I think that was your first year as dean of students, uh you were the only dean of students that I knew

Br. Noel: you didn't experience Joe?

Tom: no I don't think so, I mean he was there but I think I got there as, the year after he retired.

Br. Noel: and how long were you there?

Tom: till '90

Br. Noel: till '90

Tom: so four years, yeah 86-87, then 87-88, 88-89, 89-90

Br. Noel: I lasted I think another year, and then Joe came back

Tom: did he? I didn't, that's what happened?

Br. Noel: well Paul Montero moved up to president, he was no longer principal, Mike Ryan moved up to principal

Tom: yeah that only lasted a year though, huh?

Br. Noel: no, it was more than a year

Tom: was it?

Br. Noel: I would say 2, 3 years at least (can't make out)

Tom: and so when Mike Ryan became principal he

Br. Noel: he got Joe to come back as Dean of Students and probably a good thing, too, Joe was a lot stronger than I was

Tom: yeah?

Br. Noel: (mumbles) yeah

Tom: well tell me about that...I mean because this is one of the things that I, I've just kind of, this is complete speculation on my part but you know after having talked to Ivy, I mentioned this to you, before I think, you know, just about Vatican II, kind of, that sort of started the story of kind of looking harder at Andre Coindré and to kinda understanding his role in the order and a lot of the brothers not, not knowing about those kind of founding times

Br. Noel: you probably know more about it than I do, I never made the CIAC⁵⁴, you know, so

Tom: yeah, yeah, that to me is just interesting you know how that came about and he talks a lot about Bernie having a role in shaping the Rule and those kinds of things and as I kind of understand the timeline, you know so '68 the rule is getting re-written and there is a lot more reflection on Coindré as a founder and then they eventually start writing *Educational Mission and Ministry* and then that gets published I guess in '85 I think for the first time you know and... let me just tell you what I remember, and then you can maybe talk about this, I remember teachers remembering fondly, you know Joseph Donovan being much more physical with students in terms of discipline.

⁵⁴ CIAC is the French Acronym for the center in Lyon, France at which faculty and brothers learn the history and charism of André Coindré.

It is at this point in the interview that my primary interest in Br. Noel's experience is being addressed directly. It is clear, I think, that the Br. Noel does not approach what he did from a philosophical perspective; the language of curriculum and pedagogy is not particularly his area of interest. Nevertheless, there is discernible in what he remembers and what still moves him something of the core of the most recent expression of the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Nascent in his recollection that "you can't just beat them all the time," along with the way he chuckles about those students who were rambunctious, and the fact that it seems to be those students who have the strongest connection to the brothers like Br. Noel is where one can find the original charism of Fr. Andre Coindré. Fr. Coindré sought to find the students abandoned and without hope, and in his famous Prospectus of 1818, wrote specifically about boys who because of their behavior on the streets of Lyon had landed in jail.

In the following portion of the interview, some of the tension between the earlier understanding of the charism (admittedly not a word that was used at the time) and the newer vision for the order begins to find expression. As Br. Noel recounts it, several changes took place, and each in its own way is a movement away from "business as usual" toward a new tone that is more consistent with the founder and the direction that the order undertook after the initiatives of Vatican Council II. There are several areas of contrast—the location where discipline took place, the greater presence of Br. Noel to the teachers and the student body, a willingness to make the place where students awaited disciplinary consequences not necessarily unpleasant, and a new assistant to the disciplinarian whose general attitude appears to be quite different from the previous disciplinarian's assistant.

Br. Noel: that's how I got involved because when Paul Montero came in, the year you...we came in together and Paul wanted to kinda change that, you know it was it was Joe Donovan who would handle discipline through Beverly Zimmerman down in the office you know, and she would take care of a lot of the discipline Joe would be backing her up and so, (clears throat) Paul came in and he wanted to change that. So we moved upstairs, Beverly and Joe were down stairs ok, where none of the classrooms were so I got an office upstairs because I was kind of feeling my way because, you know, fortunately I had Dolores Richmond. I would punish the kids and she would be at the counter there and give a piece of candy (laughter), and was uh, you know...

Tom: that was a real difference. You know I remember teachers saying, you know, uh, I figured, because I think it was, it hadn't been too long that teachers were allowed to physically discipline students, I don't know how long that, or when that stopped. My impression was that Paul was really changing that whole kind of philosophy of how we are going to discipline students and it didn't seem like it was sitting well with a lot of the teachers.

Br. Noel: uh, yeah, well I would discipline 'em that way sometimes, you know. So it didn't completely discontinue.

Tom: no, I remember you had the strap

Br. Noel: it didn't discontinue until, well Joe came back and it continued ok? And I guess after Joe, was when uh, when Ronnie Talbot, Ronnie Hingle came in as President and Principal. Ronnie was principal, Ronnie Talbot was principal and Hingle was disciplinarian, ok, uh, I think that's when that changed.

Tom: ok. So Ronnie Hingle was the first disciplinarian to kind of stop the corporal punishment you think?

Br. Noel: yeah I don't remember him using it ok?

Tom: yeah. And that...I just... In reflecting on it now what I think is that Stanislaus is in the middle of this change that was going on in the brothers themselves and it just kind of was, kind of bubbling to the surface about wanting to have a different approach about how to handle young people and I think finally figuring out that Coindré didn't want kids you know corporally punished I think from what I, from what I gather

Br. Noel: I don't know

Tom: and so they were trying to make that adjustment so can you talk about what it was like being that transition person? I mean going from a kind of a Joseph Donovan philosophy and you're the guy in between that and you know Ronnie Hingle getting rid of you know corporal punishment

altogether. You know, what was, how were you received? And how was it at Stanislaus when you were obviously replacing somebody that

Br. Noel: well you kind of hit it on the nail, some of the teachers you know, didn't, resented the fact that Joe was not, because I guess he backed them up a little bit stronger than I did I would imagine.

Tom: well, how did that manifest itself, do you have examples? How did that happen how did you back them up differently than he might have?

Br. Noel: uh, well I thought I was backing them up pretty good, in fact I used to visit the classrooms constantly, I was upstairs all the time but Joe, Joe was not present upstairs at all. I don't remember him being up there too much you know unless there was a serious problem.

Tom: right

Br. Noel: and uh, I used Saturday school a lot, Joe didn't do that.

Tom: and why did you do that?

Br. Noel: heh?

Tom: why did you do that? Why did you use Saturday school?

Br. Noel: Why wouldn't I use it, I mean

Tom: yeah well I'm just curi, I mean if you, if he didn't and you chose to, you know what motivated you to make that decision?

Br. Noel: I guess it, well if a kid did something wrong I had to do something, you know and I couldn't beat them all the time

Tom: (laughter)

Br. Noel: uh, I uh,

(Interruption by another brother living in the house where the interview was conducted—he found his phone and wanted to let Noel know)

Br. Noel: where were we?

Tom: we were talking about Saturday school, couldn't just beat 'em all the time.

Br. Noel: I saw that as an effective way, you know kids hated Saturday school so we had that every Saturday, every Saturday, and a lot of times I'd give the kids a choice, you want a spanking or you want Saturday school, well they would take the spanking generally.

Tom: so how many students, I mean..., what was it like in Saturday school? Did you have interaction with the kids, did you end up forming a relationship with them, was it just punitive and they

Br. Noel: um, they had to bring books to study or whatever they had to do and I just sat there and minded them you know (chuckle) it was sort of like a classroom on Saturday so uh (talked over each other) we had detention, also, after school

Tom: Do you feel like you made any connections with those kids that were in trouble at Stanislaus

Br. Noel: oh absolutely, absolutely

Tom: anybody leap to mind or

Br. Noel: by name?

Tom: or just by story

Br. Noel: I'm going to give you an example, I was at a Christmas gathering with my cousins over in Mandeville this past Saturday and he said, my cousin said, Br. Noel, you know, we went to the Saints game and he's pretty, he's got some money ok, and they had some nice seats and he said this guy sits behind us all the time and his name is Scott and he could, (can't understand) and said do you know Br. Noel? (laughing) and from what I got, he was saying I made quite an impression on him, now I don't know if it was a good impression or not but...ok? (laughter) But I guess I related more to the kids with summer camp than I did with anything else. I've got counselors who are constantly like Ted Smith, that crew that are coming up after Christmas to take me and Raymond out. I have Dr. Lazare out in Idaho I'll go out there and visit him every year.

Tom: talk to me about summer camp and what that was like, that was your favorite part of being a brother you think?

Br. Noel: well I enjoyed a lot of it, I enjoyed taking care of the buses and stuff but summer camp uh at Stanislaus started in 1928 in fact, one of the kids, it was written on the shirts, Camp Stanislaus established 1928. Kids asked me how was it back then. That's the year I was born. (laughter) but it was discontinued in 1962 I think it was because it was run by all the brothers, the young brothers, and they had to go get qualified in the summer, you know, summer school, so it was discontinued until I started it in 1969 and, we did some great things. I was fortunate I was teaching at the time and I knew students at Stanislaus who would make good counselors you know. And I got them started early, some of them as early as freshmen you know some junior counselors. They grew up in the program. They knew what I was

gonna say even before I said it really. So we ended up with 180 campers there at one time, towards the end.

Tom: is it still going on, the camp is still active?

Br. Noel: It got postponed you for a couple years after Katrina but it's back and they had a good summer last summer. In fact the camp director just got married this past November.

Tom: Did you and Joseph talk about being disciplinarian

Br. Noel: did what?

Tom: Did you and Joseph Donovan talk about being disciplinarian, did you share experiences or swap stories or talk about how you do it differently?

Br. Noel: No. I think Joe was kind of hurt, you know, because I don't think he was consulted at all, you know just Paul Montero came in and got my name and uh, however when it changed back to where he was gonna take it again he did come and tell me and said would I be hurt. And it did hurt a little bit, but I, it was time.

Tom: yeah?

Br. Noel: Yeah I didn't need to keep that up.

Tom: why do you believe it was time? What was happening to you if you don't mind my asking, I know that is kind of personal but

Br. Noel: Well mike Ryan was would be principal ok? And I was not enthused too much about that, you know, so I would not have

Tom: Right. Can you say why? I mean I know that's not, I mean if that's a confidentiality issue I understand

Br. Noel: Mike was a very brilliant person you know uh, but he's, his personality I guess, you know

Tom: That hand motion that you made—does that mean rigid or just too

Br. Noel: well, you go by the book you know but he was good at that you know, he could take all these regulations that came down from the state and always fill out the forms

Tom: he was a good paperwork guy?

Br. Noel: yeah

Tom: and so you weren't you weren't overly excited about that

Br. Noel: now he was good to me ... when they were doing this program from Georgia, I forget what they called it, AIM it required all kind of paperwork and stuff like that and Mike would help me with that a lot because I did not know how to do that

Tom: Paperwork for discipline you mean?

Br. Noel: No no this was paperwork for filling out class preparations and

Tom: oh lesson plans and that sort of thing

Br. Noel: yeah yeah

Tom: oh ok alright, so...how did Paul articulate to you what he wanted from you as disciplinarian when he came in as principal.

Br. Noel: he wanted to change the tone, I think

Tom: And how would, what was the tone, how would you describe what it was and what he was hoping to turn it into?

Br. Noel: Well the tone that I described with Joe D and Beverly that that type of arrangement, Celestine was the principal and again Celestine was kind of cut and dry, and of course he backed Joe completely. So, and then he was changed and Paul came in and Paul wanted I guess more warmth I guess or something I guess.

Tom: Did you and he talk about how you did your job? Did he give you guidance in that respect or at least did y'all reflect together?

Br. Noel: we had to and he backed me, he supported me

Tom: so what...can you talk a little bit about your interaction with teachers...if there were some that appreciated what you were trying to do and if there were some that didn't and if you can recall stories of each.

Br. Noel: well they were all good to me ...nice... it was a real change, uh (exhale) I'm not sure that some of them thought I was strict enough you know, so, (chuckle) in house suspension would take place in front of the counter, ok? And there Dolores would come in she was...at Easter time she was dressed like an Easter bunny, you know, but here's the discipline thing right there and at Christmas time, Br. John Hotstream put a Christmas tree right in front (laughter) and I think he had a train running around it you know but here they are sitting, we had nowhere else to put 'em, so they are sitting there

in chairs in front of the counter, [with] this entertainment so I'm sure that didn't sit too well

Tom: did anybody say anything to you or did teachers complain or

Br. Noel: not to me

Tom: ok, did they complain to somebody and you heard about it or

Br. Noel: I'd get mumblings you know but Paul was in charge and he never told me to quit it

Tom: yeah right, ok well let me, I'll just tell ya I thought the direction was the right direction but there was really an atmosphere or at least I thought so of teachers wishing they could be more physical with students and I felt that you know? And I felt that I was weak at times for not you know wanting to grab a kid or hit a kid. One time I did, actually, got frustrated with a kid and I hit him I don't even remember where or how and I don't remember why, but I remember feeling terrible after it had happened and never wanting to do that again and really liking the direction that I thought that the Brothers were trying, or at least Paul and you were trying to take the school, and feeling really frustrated with a lot of the other faculty that seemed to wish they could go back to kind of the old school way when... I was coming out of the seminary you know so I was interested in ministry and I was teaching religion and I just didn't feel like that kind of overly, I thought overly hard-nosed tone was really the best way to go about it but you know I didn't know anything. I was 23 when I got there so it was my first experience of ever even being in a school so I...had no idea of what to expect so I remember thinking y'all were trying to do the right thing I mean I really do but I remember faculty, you're right, mumbling or grumbling and, and uh bemoaning you know it used to be like such and such and it was better when, you know, that kind of thing and as I've grown older and realized a little bit more about history, I really appreciated the difficult position that I think you must have been in.

Br. Noel: It was not an easy thing, but you know I'd go down to the uh PE classes you know a lot of times the coaches were like here's the ball go play that type of thing and they'd see me coming and they were trying to get it organized

Tom: because they didn't see Joseph, was that

Br. Noel: he didn't, he didn't mingle around

Tom: he wasn't up in the school so if a student got in trouble they just got sent downstairs to him?

Br. Noel: sent downstairs, yeah to Beverly and then Joe would take care of them after school because Joe...after lunch he had to take a nap because he was up all night with kids in the dormitory

Tom: oh ok

Br. Noel: so

Tom: right, so he was, yeah ok now did you have dormitory responsibilities when you were disciplinarian?

Br. Noel: no

Tom: Ok, and was that the first time that ever happened that the disciplinarian was just a disciplinarian, had Joseph always been a dorm guy and disciplinarian at the same time

Br. Noel: umhmm

Tom: ok

Br. Noel: from way back from uh 1964-65 you know when he started

Tom: really so he had done 20 years or so, in that job.

Br. Noel: yeah

Tom: alright

Br. Noel: So that's why it was difficult you know, people there had grown up seeing that

Tom: so did you get any kind of

Br. Noel: now Joe and I are the best friends

Tom: oh yeah, no, and I got nothing but respect for that guy I once I got over being scared of him, you know I was just a young man and he was an accomplished older man with all kinds of status in that community so did you get any sort of you already mentioned you haven't been to CIAC or any of that, did you get a hold of *Educational Mission and Ministry*? Did they did they show y'all that document or did you... was it ever part of your reflection as you went about doing your job or was that something they just gave to the lay people because I ...

Br. Noel: we had it, you know, I don't remember much about it now it has been a long time uh I I've been out of the classroom since the early 80's I guess. We

grew up with that and you had, you had what they called Master Teachers you know which we would kind of follow their guidelines.

Tom: So when you finished as disciplinarian what did you do next?

Br. Noel: then I had summer camp at the time k? So I did a lot of recruiting for summer camp in preparation, then I went into maintenance with the busses and cars well I had done that all along but uh I kind of had full time for that. We had 25 vehicles there

Tom: so about 91 until you were at camp and vehicle maintenance

Br. Noel: camp I quit in '98 ok and then I was sort of beginning toward the retirement age but I kept the vehicles all the way up until the...Katrina, that was my main focus

Tom: and where did you go after Katrina? You didn't come straight here?

Br. Noel: went to, to Mobile for two years almost 2 years. Until they renovated this place then when it was ready we came over here. That was, that was 2007 I believe

Tom: ok, well let me see

Br. Noel: on what I enjoyed most about Dean of Students was the fact that I was I had the whole slew of students, I got to know everybody before that it was uh the 9th grade or whatever, you know, and that was fun uh, you know dealing with all the students.

Tom: What would you say, I don't know if you thought about it like this or not I mean but this is kind of what I would think about... so I don't want to put words in your mouth but what was your goal going into a discipline situation? What were you trying to accomplish as the Dean of Students, what, you know I, that's one general question obviously, you know kind of how did you see your role and then when a kid came to you what were you really trying to do?

Br. Noel: I guess basically I was trying to help the teachers out because a lot teachers had trouble there you know with discipline so for that reason I visited the classrooms a lot (silence) what was the question?

Tom: It was how did you see your role, what were you trying to accomplish as Dean of Students and what happened when a student came to you, what was your goal when you had a particular student in front of you?

Br. Noel: Of course they'd come to the office I'd sit down and talk to them and find out what the situation was a lot of them would come and then you'd have to

calm them down. They had been in a contest with the teacher there or something, tried to convince them that “hey (chuckle), you can’t do this in the classroom.” And Dolores was a big help with me with this I mean she managed to calm these kids down. She was marvelous with them I was really fortunate in having her (noticing the weather) wow it is really blowing up out there.

Tom: yeah I think a big storm is coming actually tomorrow

Br. Noel: really?

Tom: yeah it’s supposed to rain pretty hard tomorrow...yeah

Br. Noel: ah

Tom: well, is there anything you wanna, throw in before we kind of wrap it up you know...

Br. Noel: well I hope I’ve answered some of your questions I’ve written a few notes down (pulling out some written responses).

Tom: no sure what have you got? Anything we haven’t talked about?

Br. Noel: I think we covered most of it that’s the thing...yeah I think I discussed all of this with you.

Tom: did you like being Dean of Students?

Br. Noel: yeah, and I was kind of disappointed when I was...but you know when Paul was not going to be principal, I really needed to change so, and although you know sometimes you get hurt when things happen you look back and it was for the best.

Tom: So is that a hindsight thing for you just that, you know, did you approach Mike and say I don’t want to do this? Or did he ask you?

Br. Noel: no Mike (short laugh) Mike fired me (more laughter).

Tom: alright, there it is

(Overlapping vocalizations—unclear)

Br. Noel: not in those words

Tom: basically I want to go in a different direction

Br. Noel: yeah yeah

Tom: Do you harbor any ill will in that regard?

Br. Noel: oh no not at all, not at all, I although I hardly ever see Mike and the thing is you know it turned on him in fact he made the comment to me once he said you know you were hurt when you were changed, he says well, I got fired too.

Tom: He didn't last too long in that particular job, and you know I don't know anything about all of that I just know that it wasn't kind of what people had wanted and I just wonder, I don't know this may be an awful question but it occurs to me so I'll just ask it: Did you feel, is vindicated the right word, maybe that's not even an appropriate thing to suggest but when Ronnie Hingle went in and started doing it kind of more the way you had.

Br. Noel: I don't know, it was time, it was time you know, it had to come, it was, now with all the litigation and stuff.

Tom: yeah did you ever find it, did you ever think there was tension about as physical as teachers or Br. Joseph were with students...did that ever bother you?

Br. Noel: Not really I'm not...it was what we did. I mean it was, it was part of the handbook there at Stanislaus forever, you know way back.

Tom: that's one of the things I'm actually interested in you know when 'cause, as I understand it Andre Coindré forbid corporal punishment apparently, early on that was something that the brothers didn't do and I'm curious, I don't know if I'm ever going to follow up on this research but I'm curious as to when it crept back or how it got in. I wonder if it was an American thing or something else, you know when did that start back up, or just start, because it certainly was an expectation at Stanislaus that we were gonna use corporal punishment to straighten kids out and it clearly had stopped being an expectation sometime, I guess prior to *Mission and Ministry* I think everybody was really struggling with that to make that happen you know what discipline will look like if you're not gonna, you know, do it that way and you were kind of caught in the middle of it seems to me.

Br. Noel: you would know more about when it started I don't know

Tom: I don't, I don't know when it started

Br. Noel: although you know in our other schools at Menard I don't remember you know it ever happening

Tom: really?

Br. Noel: (like at?) Stanislaus

Tom: and what about at other schools?

Br. Noel: at Brooklyn with the little kids we spanked them

Tom: but not at, not at high school?

Br. Noel: well I didn't teach at high school

Tom: ok

Br. Noel: I don't know

Tom: what about schools in this province do you have any idea? Do you recall any at Catholic High School when you were here for that short period of time?

Br. Noel: no I know Menard didn't

Tom: ok. Well that's interesting. That's a whole other subject I suppose. Well look

Br. Noel: But I think I think a lot of the religious communities, not just us...

Tom: oh yeah, yeah, no question yeah no I think that's for sure I think that was certainly something that happened across the board it wasn't a Brothers thing it was it was uh, it was an American, I think it was an American Catholic thing.

Br. Noel: hm

Tom: for a long time but that's just straight opinion on my part it's kind of a gut thing but you know maybe one day somebody'll look into that because I think it might be interesting just historically you and I just listen to what Coindré writes about spirituality and those vulnerable kids and all that stuff and it just seems so much more consistent to try to discipline with a firm hand, sure, but love them first I think you know is the ways it's being talked about now and that doesn't mean you don't, you know you aren't tough on kids and don't expect a lot of them but it just means that you don't have to do it through fear as much.

Br. Noel: but then you come across...with a kid that doesn't accept that.

Tom: yep

Br. Noel: and yet you don't want to kick him out then you have a choice ok? Either we'll get real strict with you or you go and to me it would be much better for him to stay at Stanislaus than to be kicked out and go somewhere else you know

Tom: So by real strict you mean in that case then maybe the corporal punishment is part of keeping him in the school

Br. Noel: Something like that, or you know Saturday school, whatever it took you know. It's hard to say love them and all that you know when they don't cooperate.

Tom: yeah yeah I know, no I hear ya, I didn't say what that love looked like I mean so, that could mean lots of Saturday school lots of conseq...

Br. Noel: it's so much different from here... They're much more well-behaved but you see Catholic High has a choice; Stanislaus doesn't have a choice.

Tom: how's that?

Br. Noel: I mean we almost had to take, you know to keep

Tom: to keep it open you mean

Br. Noel: to keep going, take difficult kids

Tom: Yeah, we have a waiting list. That's just the point that changes the dynamic for sure

Br. Noel: and that's you know that's where public schools have their problem you know they can't.

Tom: you know that's true, and that's one of the things that I think is I say an important qualifier for all this is that when you can decide who's coming to school as opposed to having to take everybody.

Tom: so you love you love Stanislaus hmm?

Br. Noel: oh yeah ...I had hopes of finishing my days there but this is fine here.

As I reflect on the interview with Br. Noel, a few basic things spring to mind. The first is how clear it is to me in retrospect that I am trying to come to grips with what the charism meant in the very beginning of my own experience as an educator in a Catholic school. I think I had hoped that in talking to Br. Noel, a lot would fall into place and I would find some kind of enlightenment moment that would somehow tie together the frayed threads of my own understanding of the dynamism of the charism and the ways it

shifted over time, particularly in a brief span of time from the mid 1980's to the early 1990's at St. Stanislaus. My interview with Br. Noel did not produce such an "aha" moment, but it did reveal a few themes to which I will draw the reader's attention.

First, Br. Noel offers a very different perspective on his work in contrast to the reflections of Br. Bernie and Br. Ivy. Noel makes reference more than once to his relative lack of familiarity with historical aspects of his order, its foundation, its founder, and to the fact that when such information was being made available to brothers and lay people alike, he was not among those chosen to attend the experiences like CIAC that would address such a deficit. I did not sense any hurt about that, but he is clearly from another generation, and temperament, than Ivy and Bernie. It is noteworthy, though, that Br. Noel was an instructor of Br. Bernie's when Bernie was a high school student interested in the Brothers.

There is regret, though, to be found in Br. Noel's reflections. He mentions regret at leaving the math classroom perhaps too soon to become disciplinarian, but notes that he was burned out. There is some regret, too, that his efforts at supporting teachers were not met with more appreciation, I think. Br. Noel clearly thought he was doing what was right, what was asked of him, and doing so in a way that was demonstrably more engaged with both teachers and students.

I am struck also by the way Br. Noel remembers his assistant, Dolores Richmond. He clearly regards her as important to the tone he was trying to set, and notes how helpful she was at reaching young men who were in trouble. One cannot help but be struck by the image of the disciplinarian's assistant dressed as an Easter Bunny, especially as that image contrasts with my own recollection of Br. Joseph's assistant, Beverly, whom Br. Noel also mentions. Br. Noel's tenure as disciplinarian clearly marked a turning point,

and his hurt when he was summarily displaced in a short-lived attempt to reinstitute the older pattern is an unfortunate side-effect of the tension the reinterpretation of the charism was undergoing at the time. It is also noteworthy how little Br. Noel wanted to talk about his emotional experiences, either at the time, or in retrospect. It is finally his humility that I found most striking as he recalled his life's work.

And that brings us to my last reflection upon the interview with Br. Noel. He was, and is, an embodiment of the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. In his work in the classroom, as disciplinarian, as director of Camp Stanislaus, he represented to students and adults a desire to serve them in the way that they needed. For students, especially those he trained as camp counselors, he worked closely enough with them that they eventually knew his mind, and themselves embodied the spirit of the Brothers to Stanislaus campers. Br. Noel's chuckles throughout the interview embody a sense of the value of young people whose failures are due more to immaturity than anything else, and a willingness to love them through their mistakes. His love for Stanislaus as a unique place that itself embodies the charism is manifest in many ways—and is perhaps the source of his regret—the place to which he gave the better part of his life told him “no thank you” after a short stint in a very important role, and left him, it appears, with some self-doubt about his effectiveness. In writing that last sentence, I recognize also that part of the reason I wanted to interview Br. Noel was to tell him I thought what he was doing was right, the way he went about trying to be a different kind of disciplinarian was admirable, and decidedly difficult. Nevertheless, he did it gracefully, and his recollections of the experience and the tensions surrounding it, were just as graceful. He embodied, however imperfectly, the charism of the brothers which holds to a basic trust in the goodness of young people, and a deep hope that loving them can lead to their

transformation into adults who themselves embody the “Hopes for our Graduates” written about in *Educational Mission and Ministry*.

CHAPTER 7. BR. BERNARD COUVILLION: “WE ARE...MINISTERS, NOT MESSIAHS”

A Beginning

I was only 23 years old, and as the first full-time lay religion teacher at the all-boys boarding and day school, I was struggling. So much so, that my principal, a Brother of the Sacred Heart (the order that owns and administers the school) had told me that I was going to get a break. Since I had no formal training as a classroom teacher, the principal had called another brother, a master teacher who was no longer in the classroom, to come to the school and teach my 8th grade religion class so I could watch. If you asked me about it, I would have said things had been going ok, oblivious as I was. Those who had observed the class would later tell me a different story, about students out of their seats, of students speaking out of turn, of moments of chaos, misbehavior. My work was supposed to be an instance of religious education according to the school's and order's tradition, and apparently it was missing the target by a big enough margin that more or less drastic measures had to be taken.

I continued to teach 4 other classes of seniors and juniors, and observed 2 weeks of instruction of my eighth graders, and tried to learn. The brother, a leader of the order, and a decade away from becoming the superior general of the entire organization, planned class and managed the room. He found creative ways to speak about God's relationship to creation, to capture the students' attention. There were visual aids, including a live bird in a cage, well-planned lessons, and a calm demeanor that generally kept the students' attention and created a well-managed classroom. Still there was a handful of students who tested the brother's discipline and technique. No matter though, the master teacher handled them patiently, demonstrating to me what it meant to be a teacher of religion, how to reach rambunctious middle schoolers.

As the 2 weeks came to an end, one of the more difficult students in the class tested the brother master teacher. Brother asked him, as is the custom, to stay after class for a moment in order to administer some sort of correction. The bell rang, the class cleared, and the student came to the teacher's desk, a rather tall piece of furniture at which one could stand and work. With the desk between them the 6'1" brother in his black pants, white shirt, and black tie began a short talk with the student, who responded with impudence, sarcasm, and obvious disrespect. Completely by surprise, and totally out of character for the brother (but not for the school in which this story is set), the brother reached across the desk, and grabbed the student's shirt, pulling him off the ground and partly on top of the desk. Face to face, the brother and student looked at one another and came to an understanding that the student's behavior was unacceptable, and would cease.

Introduction

The events described in the brief narrative above took place almost 26 years ago Br. Bernard Couvillion, the brother in the narrative above, has been a consistent force for transformation in the Brothers of the Sacred Heart since joining the order in the 1960's. He may dispute his level of influence in the early stages of his vocation, but it is hard to imagine that his heart and mind were not shaping changes in his community from the very beginning. Over the course of his vocation with the Brothers, he has served as a teacher of both English and Religion, as a director of a house of formation for men considering joining the brothers, as a mentor for teachers, as provincial⁵⁵ of the New Orleans province, as a campus minister, and as President of St. Stanislaus College.⁵⁶ His

⁵⁵ The provincial is the elected head of a province which consists of the Brothers and their ministries in a designated, Vatican recognized, geographic region.

⁵⁶ A secondary school—"College" is left over from a naming convention in the late 1800's in Mississippi.

influence would reach its greatest breadth when he was elected Superior General of the order in 1994. His service in that role lasted two six year terms, until 2006. This chapter will present the findings of two interviews with Br. Bernie, one which I conducted as part of a narrative inquiry course 2 years ago, and one I conducted more recently specifically as part of this project. The selections and reflections are intended to contribute to a better understanding of the relevance of a Brothers of the Sacred Heart school curriculum in a post-modern age.

The interviews total over two hours and forty minutes of conversation. Both were conducted at Br. Bernie's current assignment at St. Stanislaus, the location of the short narrative above, where he currently serves as the school's campus minister. To be as transparent as possible, I must confess that in some ways Bernie is a hero of mine, certainly one whose knowledge of the charism and theology will always far outstrip my own; he may be the leading expert in the world on the charism, and he is also a legitimate expert on religious life in general, having served during a portion of his tenure as Superior General of the brothers as the president of the Union of Superiors General of male religious, effectively the head of the heads of all Catholic male religious orders. Suffice it to say, it is humbling in the extreme to be allowed to sit with him and talk about the subject of my work, and to have him welcome it so generously.

The focus of this chapter is Bernie's experience and perspective of the charism of the brothers and how it is present in both the curriculum and pedagogy that does, or at least should, characterize their schools. I will present the data in the interviews more or less chronologically, as the initial interview focused on religious education which I take to be, broadly understood, the general mission of a Brothers' school. It is ultimately through that lens that a charism-inspired curriculum and pedagogy is to be understood, and then

considered post-modernally. The second interview was more or less directly concerned with curriculum and pedagogy, but it also delved into the history of some of the late 20 century changes to the order, changes Bernie played a large role in creating. The simple reality is that there is a great deal of overlap among these topics, and distinguishing which excerpts are from when is not particularly important, so chronologically, in the order in which we talked about the topics, makes as much sense as any other arrangement.

My first interview with Br. Bernie was the first one I conducted with a research agenda as part of a narrative inquiry class in 2012. It was easily the most free-flowing, and the most easily conducted of all the interviews that I conducted for that project. It is in fact hard to articulate the esteem in which Bernie is held in the order, in my region, in my school, and in my own estimation. He is, in fact, a creative leader, a theologian and researcher of his order's history and charism without peer, and being granted a chance to speak with him is an honor I do not take lightly. I would venture to say he is the foremost expert on his order living today. Despite being particularly erudite, and an expert in the subject, he has a gentle, humble nature that put me at ease immediately. The first interview was focused particularly on stories of his understanding of religious education and looking for narratives that provide an understanding his approach to religious education. The second interview was less focused but also to do with the charism, with broader ideas about curriculum and pedagogy—but as the reader will see, circled back to the spiritual and moral character of education.

Not long into our conversation, Br. Bernie related his own sense of call, and it's distinction from a call to priesthood, which to his mind had more to do with performing religious rituals:

Bernie: As my freshman year, I went to -- they did recruiting things so that -- and that's what - when you're after the eighth grade, you start at -- there was some feeding you into these high schools. High school programs and formation either the minor seminary, I never wanted to be a priest, but then never wanted to be on an altar, didn't want to wear habits - I didn't want to wear priestly garb, I didn't want to do it in Latin, I did not. I liked - more what the brothers did. The brothers used to come in and do the football after school, and that was closer - they ...seemed more - human with kids, I liked that.

Br. Bernie related a short narrative about a prayer experience, during the traditional Way of the Cross, when he got to the station where Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem:

Bernie: At the station where Jesus meets the women and, the words when Jesus said don't weep for me, don't cry for me but cry for your children, that was like spoken to me. Don't focus so much on adoring me as god. It's not adoration I'm looking for from you, I want you to join me in taking care with the women and the children. Say that's... I did..., yes. I'd say that's what I want to be. That's it. I agree with that. I mean, I took that as a call.

Shortly after relating that story, Br. Bernie went on to tell another that we had discussed once before during an informal conversation over lunch about a year earlier. The setting is the 1985 World's Fair in New Orleans, and the Catholic Archdiocese had wanted a symbol of the faith on display. The choice was a large monstrance, the ornate object that holds a consecrated host during benediction, a ritual focused on adoring the Eucharist, not on receiving the sacrament.

Bernie: ...what they wanted to do is recall the Eucharistic Congresses that were held in Louisiana and they brought out the monstrance that was made because the pastors and all collected gold rings and jewelry from all the people of the Louisiana I guess all the Catholics, I guess melted down, gave it all to jeweler. And they made this big monstrance for benediction ... that they processed through the streets with. And so there it was in a big glass case in the middle of the pavilion, in the church pavilion. And so I had the urge to write a placard and place it in front of it that says "don't stare at your food, stop staring at your food." Because it made the Eucharist an other-worldly event and not God's feeding us with himself and integrating himself into us as our part of our being.

Finally, I offer this section of our interview as particularly revealing of Br. Bernie's understanding of the purpose of religious education, and the religious purpose of education in general. The excerpt begins with a question I asked that tries to get at what is behind the story of his calling.

Tom: You spoke about earlier -- maybe to bring it a little bit around, the image from the Way of the Cross -- it was about taking care of those children. Could you speak to I don't know maybe is it an ethic of relationship or ethic of community as opposed to an ethic of a doctrine or something like that -- I don't know if that's an appropriate distinction to make in terms of what we try to do in a Brothers of Sacred Heart School or Catholic school in general besides what happens in a religion classroom like...

Bernie: Well, I guess I'm more passionate about that than you know. I think the religion class has to happen and there is that basic knowledge we need to have of the history of our -- and I personally had some very transforming experiences and studying scripture and saying oh, that's what the guy meant when he wrote that and that's how it was inspired. That all has to happen, but yeah I think if -- if religion is the integration of faith and life -- relationship is the main thing and everything in our oldest rule, I think I have the copy of it right here. If you look at it, this whole section.

Tom: What's -- when was that written?

Bernie: This is 1927, but this starts, relations of the Brothers with the clergy, relations of the Brothers with their superior, relations of the Brothers with each other, relations of the Brothers with the people, the relations of the Brothers with the outside persons and so on. It's all -- everything in terms of education, in terms of relational. How do we relate to one another and I think that's our vocation as Brother is if that's a relational word and to be -- so there's a whole spirituality or that kind of relation and it's very different from what's coming back as a hierarchical model of relationships in the church.

So that's the thing I agree about the most in the loss of the sense Vatican II which spoke of the church's communion and so right relationships and good and growing relationships and letting ourselves be challenged by relationships is a huge part of it. And I'll give you two good concrete samples.

I had boy in here crying in that chair right there. Because he acted out in religion class and he was disrespectful and he understood that he was, but part of thing is his religion teacher was talking about the evil of homosexuality and the sexual I guess kind of sexual Nazism and which would -- what might be covered the thing and what the church teaches -- and the church teaches this and the kids in the class have been rebelling and some of them have -- they have gay sisters, brothers or they have you know

they know adopt some of the kids in the school, in the school will have been adopted by lesbian couple. Or all of those things that -- their reality is that they don't see -- they don't want to demonize homosexuals and all that, and as part of his difficulty of controlling himself in a class like that when they're talking about things like that. Okay that's one -- that's one approach. And but the teacher insists that we have to teach what the Catholic church teaches about that and right now, okay but is not in terms of relationships and how do we get along with people and how do we accept -- learn to accept people who are not like us or who don't fit the ideal that I don't know what - not everybody fits the ideal of -- marital relationship, and marital fidelity and celibate life during adolescence.

Through the whole Vatican II renewal, that was always a matter for individual private forum where you go and that's kind of like the replacement for confession. I will talk to somebody and try to find a path in my life from a particular, in my particular issues.

Tom: Yeah, your own idea...

Bernie: This is not -- this is a kind like public reality. There is one black and white thing and you're so okay that's one approach.

Tom: Right.

Bernie: Yesterday, a teacher came to talk to me and sat in that chair right over there. So we're going to tell you something that's really sweet and she said well this boy has been coming -- talk to me and didn't know how to handle it, he wants to tell me. And I said, well you can come if you come with me and my husband, you can come to my house and we'll talk about this, as we see you have to. So he told that he was gay and he knew he's been knowing he's gay since he was in the 4th grade. And how a 4th grader knows that...I have no idea. But anyway and he -- boy is just and this is devastated and didn't know how to -- he needed to talk to somebody about this, and since he went to talk to her, with her husband. They had been at retreat together, Kairos retreat.

And so he has begun telling others of his friends that he trusts. And so the sweet thing was that a boy, a senior over that he -- who is kind of a jock - stud based football player and all that -- went to him and said -- just told him I understand and I really admire you and appreciate you and I don't want to you ever think badly of yourself, something like that.

Tom: Oh, my goodness, sure. Those are two different approaches.

Bernie: Which one do I like.

Tom: Well, that one.

Bernie: Sure. Now I'm absolutely positive, we can't go into the classroom and tell kids okay, gays, straight, now there's nothing to it, whatever happens, you just go with the flow that's not right. That is not the answer either, but that one built a relationship, the other one was anti-relational so to speak

Tom: In relation or prior relationship.

Bernie: That's what's here in the book –and here is that, and look what it says here in the Catholic Catechism, so and my training my formation and even on that very subject was that's handled in private – that's handled in one-on-one conversations and when you help to form somebody and help them to deal with their reality, I don't know if I've got off the topic.

In those very simple stories Bernie draws a comparison that I take to indicate that the movement of Vatican II, and renewal of the Brothers charism, share post-modern characteristics in so far as the Brothers' educational charism, at least as understood and expressed in the person of Br. Bernie, intends to focus on individuals rather than absolutes or rigid institutional plans. That perspective actually runs throughout both interviews, and can be found in both the stories he tells of his own dissatisfaction with the pre-Vatican II institutional prayer life of the Brothers, and the stories he tells brothers and students who have been affected by their experience of Brother's schools.

Brothers' Rule and Prayer changes

When Br. Ivy, in Chapter 2 above speaks of the transformation of the Brothers' Rule in the post Vatican Council II atmosphere, he mentions the younger brothers who were on fire with the energy to undertake such a project. One of those brothers was Br. Bernie. In our second conversation we had the opportunity to talk about his role in the process, as well as his personal experience of the spiritual and communal life which preceded it. In reflecting on both his private prayer experience, and his role in re-writing the Rule, Br. Bernie reveals in another way how the Brothers' charism shares in aspects

of the post-modern paradigm, and how that orientation plays a role in the curriculum and pedagogy that should grow from the charism.

When he entered the order Bernie did not find the prayer life of the Brothers particularly fulfilling. The brother's communal life in general, and communal prayer life in particular, were very regimented. As Bernie tells it, that rigid structure was a function of the time in which the Brothers' 1927 rule was approved by the Vatican at a time marked by the influence of Vatican Council I, whose emphasis, in perhaps oversimplified terms was authority and institutional uniformity, and both from the standpoint of religious life under a monastic style. In the excerpts below, he offers his perspective on what he calls the "big lines" (I would say big themes) that were present in the two Vatican Councils and the roles that those lines played in both the life of the brothers and how they think about and describe their educational perspective.

Bernie: the big picture I see as I've been doing work on writing the history of our superiors general during the 60's 70's and 80's and I guess big lines Vatican I established infallibility, that is it was authority that was needed and so everything was top down, hierarchical, passed down and when authority spoke it strengthened, it gave the pope's authority religious superiors authority, so eventually authority was running things and everybody else was like staffing, we staffed it and then Vatican II...Pope John XXIII wanted all the voices present, the conservative, the orthodox, the protestant ...so ecumenical dialogue so he wanted all that all that baby in the same room talking to each other so the whole notion of dialogue with not just the modernism and all that.

The authority and infallibility that were hallmarks of Vatican Council I had an effect on the way the brothers' life was structured, and how their prayer life would develop in the late 19th century and early 20th century. In order to be approved by the Vatican, the order had to submit a Rule of Life, and the expectation from the Vatican was that religious life would be standardized. Bernie offers that understanding in response to a prompt that

laid out some of my own perceptions of Vatican I and how its focus on authority, control and defense against modernism actually fall into a modernist paradigm.

Tom: yeah one of the ironies I find with Vatican I, especially as you phrase it is that it, as I understand it historically it is part of a response to I guess the secular aspects of modernism, you know, the scientific aspects, the challenges that I guess that even from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment posed to religion. That sort of atheistic movement that started to happen partially I think in France and...attempt to slam the door on that, lock things down which in itself is its own modernist paradigm: hierarchical, masculine, dominating sort of a way of approaching things and it's also a desire for certainty you know which I think was a very modernist paradigm approach and the thing that I'm dealing with that is a big part of LSU's work and their education department is trying to understand the post-modern paradigm that was ushered in in the mid-20th century and really has replaced the modernist paradigm in scientific areas, mathematical areas but also in social sciences and things like that and it is a multi-voice sort of perspective, it also tends, in some of its other forms it can be very relativistic and I think also hostile to religion and faith, but there are aspects of post-modernism which are very open and welcoming of religious faith--we probably talked about that a little bit--so the trick is to figure out how to see what aspects of the charism are consistent with that sort of post-modern thing and where the tensions are and what can be learned and how to maybe reinterpret it again in a way that makes it fit kind of this newer way of looking at things you know, so

Bernie: I think what that has to do with this and charism is that within the church and especially after Vatican I, I guess we were founded with a certain charism and a certain movement and a certain freedom to express that and then we sought pontifical approval alright...which is starting to line up with church authority and then once we did that, and many other congregations of our nature the lay congregations, apostolic congregations, then the church took that and squeezed all the original charismatic juice out of it and made everybody conform to the same model. and the same lifestyle and... it called them states of perfection so it made a model that everybody used the word "state of perfection" to embrace it all... and it made us monastic. It did things that we never had or wanted to be. We started having to do...

Tom: that's part of the whole modernist movement, just you know the whole industrialization model of education they talk about, kind of a one-size fits all

Bernie: right

Tom: sort of thing and that's one of the things that the post-modern paradigm wants to resist is this notion that there's one way to do education, there's one

curriculum that everyone should follow, every classroom should look like this and every methodology should be like this as if human beings or students were things you could just stamp out like you know Model T car parts

Bernie: and we were only going to get our rule approved which we did in 1927 which we did...right in the height of all that, if we put all that stuff in it,

Tom: right

Bernie: put all that standardizing stuff in and they all essentially had to look alike and so canon law was invented at that time and so all of that was in a whole authoritative, authoritarian, uniformity, so that the individual charism was minimally attended to or lost in the search to be officially approved.

Interestingly, then Br. Bernie identifies Vatican Council I as one of the influences that contributed to the loss of the original charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. In some sense, then modernism, both as an influence attacking the church and as a paradigm ironically embraced by the church, squashed the uniqueness of religious orders. That effect was present also in the lived experience of younger brothers in the 1960's like Bernie, whose introduction to religious life was according to the 1927 rule. Bernie offered his assessment of that life, and the transformation that happened after Vatican II. It is that transformation that represents one of the ways the post-modern paradigm begins to affect the understanding of the charism.

Bernie: ...when we finished the novitiate was in the old model of what we called...the religious life as a state of perfection where you had to acquire all the virtues in a ton of activities all day long and it was a very monastic model based on the rules of that so Latin mass and...all of that I found I did it but Vatican II was a huge liberation of just trying to say that essentially let me...let me make it too simple...we were saving ourselves by our good deeds and so all of the things, you had to do all of those things so that you would be saved alright so that you could go to heaven or get a higher place in heaven or please God, and the venial sins and the mortal sins and all of that would be, would set you back so you had to start all over.

In our earlier interview, Bernie said something very similar in relation to our discussion of his college education at Springhill, while still in formation with the Brothers of the Sacred Heart:

Bernie: Definitely I was very influenced by -- especially the theology professors and they were helping us to understand

Tom: All Jesuits?

Bernie: They were -- not all Jesuits but yeah, for the most part, helping us to understand Vatican II and the changes in the church and I became very wrapped in that, and that marked me a lot -- a whole new approach to whatever the church is supposed to be the -- whole notion of liturgy and prayer and - what how morality can be looked at - not as a series of do's and don't's but as an expression of love -- and so even still I hear them saying things that were very clarifying to me and very helpful to me.

Tom: Could you - this is an outrageous question, but could you distinguish at least in some sort of fundamental level or maybe a gross oversimplification, the difference between what you would take religious education to be prior to Vatican II and post Vatican II or at least your own sense of formation or your understanding of -- theology or ecclesiology or moral theology whatever from one to the other just way that kind of marks the distinction from before and after.

Bernie: The easiest way to do it is on the whole notion of merit, everything we had in formation and in school was that all religion depends on your behaviors, moral actions and what you do, and you merit heaven. I'll use the example we used to be and you can merit heaven for other people or salvation and the whole notion of a spiritual bouquet, that you would promise you would go this many masses, you'd go to -- you'd say this many rosaries, you go to - including how many ejaculations, which would mean ejaculatory prayer.

Tom: Right, no, I know.

Bernie: All of that is a notion of I am kind of building up a dossier for myself so that I can present that to the judge and so that when I enter -- the last judgment he would look at all that I accomplished and say enter. As compared to the whole theology of grace that, it's all a gift. God loves us -- God forgives us, God saves us, and we are saved before we do anything. And it's a very freeing -- very freeing I think that God will allow me - my life and I do not -- if not a series of jesters for instance, in our own religious life, -- you know there was -- how many visits to the Blessed Sacraments you made every day, how many we paid rosaries together, so it's just a series of, a series of religious practices to get everything done, and it just was not nourishing

to me, and so -- not it was just a chore, became a chore and dry and hollow and you said what is it what you've got to do and the whole twist of Vatican II was the great story of good news, of our salvation and then we were - we're holy baptism and all - it makes us holy, makes up part of Christ we're living the life of Christ within us. And something is happening in us through, through our education through our formation is God, actually transforming us...

So it is that Vatican Council II not only called for orders to find their founders, to investigate the original spirit of the order's beginning, but the Council also included theological renewal and reinterpretation of Scripture. That theological renewal, much of which was occurring prior to the Council, would find its way into the Brothers' prayer life and ultimately will shape Bernie's understanding of religious education and so also his understanding of the pedagogy and curriculum that should characterize Brothers' schools. Later in the second interview, when discussing his own role in re-writing the Rule, Bernie shared more about the spiritual life of the brothers prior to the Council, the impetus for changes (largely from Canadian brothers), and the contrasts between the older and new understandings of religious life.

Tom: well do you mind, because I don't want to monopolize all your time can we shift for a moment to talk about you know what Br. Ivy had shared about your role in the Rule and re-writing that because his recollection is that you were very instrumental in...taking...the 1927 Rule and then in light of Vatican II and your experience as a scholastic you know to...begin [in] the I guess the late 60's to mid-70's to start to work on that and it comes to fruition finally in what 1998 is that when it finally is? ...well you know the story so why don't you, if you don't mind talking about that for a little bit.

Bernie: right yeah, I was. I guess one of the big graces of my life was to live during Vatican II... I finished the novitiate in '65 and by that time that was right during the Vatican II years so it was a huge liberation-- I guess the good news that we are already saved, God saved us. We had our baptism, when we were baptized we didn't do anything to deserve it was a free gift. It's a free gift and that the idea that God actually... to try to do all those things to merit salvation was more of a sin than anything else (laughs). That's making God something God was not and not even understanding that salvation and God's will...so that was a huge liberation to me and that has all the colors of, ok, now anything that I do is my response. I got a nice Christmas present I tell people

thank you and I... and I treat them with so everything is, all those are the things we do, go to mass, they are all acts of thanksgiving in response. I look at it...people were saved from Egypt before the 10 commandments not because they were living the 10 commandments, they were actually pretty rowdy (laughs), so God loved them and saved them and brought them out of Egypt and then somebody put it to me very beautifully the 12 (sic) commandments were not given down from the mountain it was the people who actually brought them, were bringing them up to the mountain. Moses and the leaders were saying this is how we want to respond to the fact, we want to form a people, and we want to honor this God who saved us.

Tom: ahh

Bernie: looking at the 10 commandments that way is a different

Tom: is a bottom up rather than a top down

Bernie: that's right. So anyway yeah, that, and I...even in our house of studies promoted that kind of thinking. So we don't have to pray the beads every day which drove me nuts⁵⁷

Tom: (laughter)

Bernie: sometimes twice a day, we had this other practice at noon we said the beads of the Sacred Heart it sounded like every little bit was just an ejaculation⁵⁸ at each of the beads so it was, and if you would listen to it sounded...it was like... you were supposed to say one period after lunch we all go to the chapel and somebody would lead "sweet heart of Jesus" and everyone would respond "be my love" those were all the main beads and when you got to the Glory Be bead it was "sweet heart of Mary" and the answer was "be my salvation" and the Our Father was "Jesus meek and humble of heart make our hearts like unto thine." So we were going to school, going to class so we would (rapidly repeats the prayers of the Sacred Heart rosary) it was like it became like this race

Tom: so rote, yeah sure

Bernie: it was like what are we doing this for? And that was typical of all those things we had to do and get them done. And it wasn't called praying, it was

⁵⁷ In our earlier discussion, Bernie even went so far as to say with respect to the repetitiveness of the rosary "I remember you know just getting almost physically sick when we had to say the second rosary on Sunday night."

⁵⁸ For clarity's sake: in older Catholic parlance, an ejaculation was a short prayer, typically only a few words, meant to be repeated regularly. Such prayers, like all prayer in the *quid pro quo* days prior to the shift that Bernie is talking about, could earn grace, and were quick ways to do so. I suppose someone could write a dissertation about why the word for this type of prayer is the same as a word for the male orgasm, but that subject falls outside this effort, thank God.

called calling out prayers. So anyway...by 1968, we had a provincial chapter in which we were to propose a new way of doing the rule so it would give the gifts that God has given us, and then our response for each chapter [of the rule] the church, the community life and so forth which, I said that's a good way to do it, I was in favor, I mean. Many people were dead set against it

Tom: who was the provincial?

Bernie: That was Hubert Bonnette, He was the provincial when I was a novice and he led us into this period with positive...actually he was, he had been principal at Catholic High and was called away from that to become...

Tom: provincial

Bernie: he was principal long enough to integrate Catholic High, that was the year of integration and then he had to leave, because Carol, Br. Carol, did not want to integrate Catholic High. The previous principal couldn't see himself as the principal of (can't make out—perhaps a word Br. Carol used for African American?) people.

Tom: sorry we don't have the video so I could capture that eyebrow that just shot up for a second

(laughter)

Bernie: so anyway, I expressed a lot of interest in that, so eventually in Rome...all that work that every province did and suggested to

Tom: so did... the impetus for this started in Rome?

Bernie: what's that?

Tom: the impetus started in Rome, then so Vatican II asks for it

Bernie: no I think it started in Canada I think the Canadian brothers were ahead of the curve, were actually trying to make it lived...they were following Vatican II very closely they were at a time in their life when all that, all of the monastic activity and all that just did not jive, and the superior general of the time, Br. Josephat was insisting on perfect adherence and they were rebelling against him, he was one of them but he they were rebelling against... there were some, I just wrote the story of Br. Josephat's term of office and he was, he had these pages, checklists, back and front sheet on everything you were supposed to do, and how, when general councilors would go to visit they would check off...whether they were doing everything.

Tom: Josephat was the Superior General?

Bernie: He was Superior General, so, but it was like everything and the local superiors had to enforce all that he was they had to enforce so if they [the brothers] didn't want to do it you go enforce it.

Tom: and so Canada was rebelling against that?

Bernie: that top down authority, that authoritarian approach and the Canadians were saying this is not right and especially with the breath of all the pre-Vatican II theologians who were looking at a whole different way that spirituality is to be something, there's something to us that's carried that has a charism that just by doing all these rules we are not accomplishing anything and it's all focused on us and what about the kids? Anyway they were they were pretty much driving that so that there was still another Superior General after Joshephat who tried to hold the line. ...They called it muscular obedience...really muscular obedience a muscular authority That's the guys like Brother Martin you know, you bark orders and they follow and the superior they even said that if the house, if the brothers are not keeping the rule it's the superior who is going to be held accountable at the last judgement, it's gonna be his fault (laughs)

Tom: He's responsible for their souls

Bernie: so the whole notion of personal responsibility, personal response was awakening...in Canada, and in the U.S. in North America and in France, France was a big ferment of those pre-Vatican II theologians, Daniel Lou, and Congar and other people and the whole notion of the Holy Spirit works in every person, not just in the superior structure. Liberation so, anyway, so by 1970 we had a new provisional draft of the rule which we were following as an experiment, so it had eliminated a lot of that and it returned it into a theology of grace and our response to it in which the Sacred Heart is the symbol of that outpouring of grace.

Curriculum as Religious Education

That theology of grace which meant so much to Bernie has implications for curriculum and pedagogy in the broadest and deepest sense. The reader may recall that in chapter two, focused on the history of the charism, Bernie was quoted about his approach to religious education, again broadly speaking. In that section, he mentioned especially the idea of engendering hope as a primary act on the way to religious education, itself considered broadly and certainly not principally as an act of indoctrination. In the portions of our second interview highlighted below, I asked more directly about

curriculum, but the responses are quite consistent with Bernie's earlier reflections which also are sampled. This consistency should come as no surprise—the ideas with which we are concerned have been percolating through Bernie's mind and heart for decades now, and they have taken deep root.

When it comes to considering the charism from a post-modern perspective, one of the ideas that stands out first is the emphasis that the brothers place on holism over and against categorization and pigeon-holing religious education.

Tom: ...Can you tell me a little bit - how much have you spent a lot of time as a religious educator or -- is that how you would characterize yourself?

Bernie: Yes I would. I never have taught much in terms of religion classes. I've done that from time to time, but in terms of -- as a religious curriculum I guess I see the whole, the whole school, as a Catholic school being a form of a religious education. And from that point of view, yes I would consider myself a religious educator. One of the...moments for me in my formation was to understand that God created the world and any study of creation is therefore a study of God and that's the whole basis for Catholic education: that everything fits into it, everything is shaped by, everything we do in Catholic schools is shaped from a religious point of view..... a little model that I have you know, you say that in comparison to what I grew up with [there] was Sunday school...in the protestant tradition, and I learned about Yeshiva schools later on in Jewish tradition and I met in the world the Koranic schools in different parts of the world. And so the fact is that - those are schools - they teach faith or - faith development in a particular -- in a school which is only that. It specializes in that, so there's Koranic schools you study the Quran and then the evangelical schools you study the bible and -- then your other education is on the side. You go to whatever school you want to go to. So the idea of blending all materials, all what we could call secular or worldly actually are part of creation in with religious values and belief is the particular synthesis that I can make as Catholic education, and I think it's wonderful.

The notion that all of creation manifests God's spirit in one form or another is a hallmark of Catholic philosophy in general, and the brothers' holistic approach to education in particular. Any subject then, understood in its fullest context, becomes a kind of religious education, is always imbued with a significance that transcends its

secular aspects. When our conversation turned specifically to curriculum, Bernie shared a construct that helped him organize his thoughts about curriculum. The religious character of education in the brothers' charism was once again addressed.

Tom: if you could speak to maybe curriculum a little bit and what you see as the long term goals for what a school can do for a young person.

Bernie: I find very helpful a curriculum thing, I think this comes from, I don't know where it comes from, but I've even presented it in Rome in a Superior General meeting. ...a professor of education at Tulane...thinks...for him curriculum has 3 components: there's the explicit curriculum, the implicit curriculum and the null curriculum. I find that a useful way to answer that question so I think for us the explicit curriculum the course of study. And from the early times there's an emphasis on religious instruction from Andre Coindre's time...part of the reason for getting them out of prison is for them to learn enough so they could go to communion and go to mass and in those days save their souls, so they were all baptized of course. There had been no church life...it was just systematically stamped out during the French revolution. so part of what he was doing for these guys in prison or in the hospices or hospitals was to give them a way to re-integrate into religious life that was the parish life so the teaching of religion and the catechism to get them to be able to go to church, to in other words to "re-church" them so I think the explicit curriculum is very important because all of that has to do with a God who...in Andre Coindre's mind, saved the bad people. He talks in the Jubilee⁵⁹ year, he talked about indulgences in this way, God treats us with indulgence. There's the good thief, the guy on the cross, there's the Magdalene,

Tom: the prodigal son

Bernie: and he goes on that, the prodigal son and goes through a whole list of and just talk about the Jubilee year and God's indulgence and we see God's love not by the way he treats the good people but how he treats the sinner, the wayward. So...that is very important to him in terms of welcoming the kids. So he's trying to convince also the people of Lyon who say "I'm not going to spend money on riff-raff." you're gonna... begging money to run this institution I'm not gonna spend it on riff-raff, he has to convince them that there's more to it and that's where his famous statement is that they're not wicked they're impetuous all that and that

⁵⁹ A solid description of the Jubilee year as described in the Pentateuch (the inspiration for the modern observance of Jubilee years in the church) can be found at the Vatican website [here](#). The short description is that it occurred every 50 years, as a culmination of seven seven-year cycles of Sabbath years (every 7th year was to be a time of rest, especially for farmland) during which debts were forgiven, the land was rested, and slaves could be set free.

Tom: “guilty at an age”⁶⁰

Bernie: that’s right all that...so for us religion is not doctrinal but it’s an integration of faith and life so there’s not catechism for catechism’s sake. ...I see it in opposition to people who want to make religion programs into, what do you call those things, apologetics?

Tom: yes

Bernie: orthodoxy, where every truth has to...they criticize people who are cafeteria Catholics. Well, believing in angels...where’s that with respect to believing in God’s love? So...what do you spend your time on? The idea that if there’s a hierarchy of things that you want to focus on that have to do with their lives that’s very important and that Jesus is the central figure because he was on the cross to die for sinners, to die for kids, us, pardon, forgiveness.

The explicit curriculum then, for Bernie, of course includes the required course of study, but always with the understanding that all study of the world is the study of God’s creation, and so of God. More importantly, though, schools in the brothers’ tradition is to explicitly teach of God’s indulgence, God’s free gift of grace, forgiveness for all of us when we inevitably fall short. While traditional religious catechism may appear in brothers’ schools, Bernie holds that the fundamental teaching has got to be explicitly about God’s love. The conversation touched on stories that exemplify such indulgence and it seems appropriate at this point to offer a sample of those—space precludes using all of them. Having attended to those stories, we can return to the conversation immediately above for more of what the explicit curriculum means.

⁶⁰ I am referencing a portion of a quote from the Prospectus of 1818, written by Andre Coindré which he used as part of his fundraising efforts. The quote itself is becoming sacred text for those of us who work with the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, and the phrase I used is shorthand for referencing the quote: “They are young prisoners who, having been incarcerated for a more or

less lengthy period, find that no one will give them work. However, they are deserving of special concern and of the individual attention which has for some time been exercised on their behalf in an effort to set them on the path of goodness. Guilty at an age when boys tend to be reckless rather than wicked, impetuous rather than incorrigible, hope for their transformation must never be lost. They must be surrounded with every possible help in order to form them to good habits”

A Gift of Trust and Hope⁶¹

Bernie: ...I guess what I would like to talk about is I have a list of names of kids here. One is a prefect here, his name is Chris Davis and he's told his story many times in different settings. He was here at St. Stanislaus, good kid, good honor student, "A"⁶² class at the time. Very good in sports, baseball especially. He was a kid who had no father and whose mother beat him to discipline him. She was really pretty brutal apparently until she remarried and the man she remarried wouldn't let her do that anymore. His stepfather protected him. He grew out of that and sent him, they sent him to St. Stanislaus so in part of it he would be away from the mother, so he could start to start to develop and...I guess as he succeeded he also crossed the lines and went out of bounds and I think it was alcohol and drugs.

And there was a point at which his grades dropped and he was starting to fail out so even his stepfather was saying I'm not going to spend this kind of money if you are going to waste it so they were pulling him out. Well, he talks about the brothers went to see the father. [They say] no, you're not going to take this boy out of here. Yes he made mistakes and he's got some deep issues but the worst thing would be to take him out and to identify him with that because he is not those behaviors. There's a lot more to him, there's a lot of potential in him.

So they claimed him and in a way even against the family to say we want to forgive him and give him a second chance. Sort of a gift of hope in him. So he continues telling his story in that he ended up I think he started college but was pretty much of an entrepreneur kind of guy when he started college and he started making a lot of money selling, helping to sell and broker oil leases and things like that so he got pretty fast and furious, and so once again but the drug thing got up on him.

At the top of the world making a lot of money, and doing very well for himself he ended up in detox and as a matter of fact he called his dad after he'd taken some pills, he was going to commit suicide. He called his dad and so his dad showed up just from the tone of his voice, his dad showed up. He doesn't remember anything after that, but when he woke up in the hospital who did he see...three brothers came to see him. And that made all the difference to him, that they were being with him through his worst times, not letting him go. He always said he wanted to return that.

So he's back here as...he's the head, he's leading the dorm, he's very active in the retreat programs with the kids, he tells them his story. That's the investment I guess in the kid, and I think it's a vote of confidence in the kid despite his bad actions, a gift of trust and hope when nobody else is giving it. And I have a list of kids like that.

⁶¹ For these stories I have removed my vocalizations, and otherwise insubstantial interjections so that they read as narratives offered by Bernie.

⁶² "A" class refers to a grouping of students at Stanislaus according to academic ability. Students were tracked as "A," "B," or "C." A was the highest performing group, and students took all courses with their group—and knew which group they were in. The practice has since ended at Stanislaus.

It's not about me.

One is when I first came here there was a kid named Nick Lent. His mother was psychiatrically confused, she had no job he had no father. For maybe a whole year they lived in a car, New Orleans area, so he wasn't going to school. He was just wherever she would go. He would wander around and fend for himself, so he was a very streetwise, and very "gotta make this on my own" and arrogant and you know a big chip on his shoulder. Comes into a situation and takes charge of it even with adults. You know, telling adults what to do and how to go and when they would challenge him...a huge issue with him.

Well he got some foster parents all the way through 18 he never had par... he just had foster parents and they always would threaten him with "we're just foster parents, we can bring you right back to the institution," you know...so he came here.

Tom: how old was he when he came here?

Bernie: he probably was maybe a grade or two, a year or two behind in his grades, so he must have come as a freshman but he was already 16.

Tom: And who was paying for that?

Bernie: The foster home, they paid for it, for him to come

Tom: Where was the foster home?

Bernie: It's in the New Orleans area, the foster parents were New Orleans people, they were good to him, but he was also driving them, he was also trying to run that household. So [describing time at Stanislaus] anyway a lot of discipline a lot of correction a lot of follow through and then then at some point he stole an iPod. He didn't actually steal it, he told other people how to steal it and he helped them, he let them get into the room to steal some stuff from his roommate so he had to go, that's one of those things--you can't live in the dorm and be untrustworthy so he had to go and so they put him in public school in New Orleans and he had to pay for his way he had to run a snow ball stand so he could make some money so he could pay them his room and board. By now he was getting to be you know 17, 18 years old, graduation age. But he kept calling me, he said "I really want to come back is there anything I can do." Our policy is you have to be away a year, you have to show signs of improvement and you have to show you know you're changing your own ways and your attitude and your way of dealing with people and your respect for authority and all that stuff so he had to see somebody for that and we had to keep getting recommendations from him ... so he came back, he did come back after a year away and had a wonderful senior year andhe came around, he really came around with all of that kind of investment of

time in a sense not taking his insults and his disrespect personally. There were people big enough to say this is not about me...it's really a success story.

That last comment—"it's not about me" highlights some of the tension about the charism and its associated curriculum. In the second interview with Bernie, he referenced something he learned early in his career. The first of these has to do with a distinction he heard drawn between the Brothers' approach to education and that of the Jesuit order:

Bernie: I just want to say one thing I came across in in Rome...this would be more theoretical...but it will inform, give unity to the example I'm going to give. There was a brother named Brother Louis Regis Ross right in the 60's as Vatican II was coming along and the theme of charism and particular charisms he, we used to have these annual group of brothers would go for 9 months to Rome for theological, spiritual renewal and one of the questions was "What is our particular charism of teaching?" What do we, what makes us...he made a contrast study using our rule of life and the practices of education he had learned, I guess he's a guy who was born in the 30's so by the 60's he was in his vibrant apostolic life and he showed the Jesuit method and it's based very much on obedience and so it starts with respect for the teacher, for the teacher profession, for the teacher as the person through whom God's authority will be...God's wisdom and the teachings of the Church will be passed on and so it was a way of you know the starting point was the respect for the teacher and the words of the teacher and you didn't, they didn't have much interaction between teacher and student and then ours starts with respect for the student, so as he put it, it starts at a completely different starting point so what we are trying to do is look at kids who have specific needs so that's how we got started as a congregation these were kids in the streets, in the prisons and the hospitals and so...it starts with they have more potential than their actual circumstances would allow them to pursue and even if their behaviors or their way of acting out is not respectful we can overlook that and try to get at the gold inside so it's not that the teacher would take disrespect but the teacher would understand where that disrespect was coming from and either through structures or through correction forgive and move on so that was a revelation to me so he was struggling with that and he went to our rule and our pedagogical methods and he showed how that plays out.

One of the ways it plays out, quite simply is that students have to experience forgiveness...we have to eventually forgive and move on and let the healing grace of the Lord and compassion of God reach them some sort of way.

So that's one thing, religion, but integrated with life, so it has, there are certain moral values ...and then the second thing is I guess part of the explicit curriculum is a whole raft of instruction, instruction courses that are going but they have a test in that, again, it's integrated with life, what's going

to move this kid along what's going to give him hope in his life if it's going to be learning the silk trade, if that's what it takes or if he's going to have to learn readin' writin' 'rithmetic, if it's kids who have been as he found who were child laborers they should be getting out of the child labor and learning some skills but the I think for us it's instruction for readiness if it's for college if it's for a career.

Implicit, null, and common threads

Perhaps it would not seem so, but in the nearly three hours of conversation with Bernie there is more than can be presented here. This final section will conclude with Bernie's brief assertions about the other aspects of curriculum, that is, the implicit and null curricula, as well as his reflections about common threads of the brothers' experience of the charism he believes he has identified in his travels as Superior General. As will become obvious, both of his considerations in those areas have much to do with what has been presented already.

Bernie: then there's the implicit thing and I think it shows well in here in the prospectus of 1823⁶³ when Casati is speaking about the brothers, and it's the kind of example that they give of dedication: a group of brothers directs the workshop, a few of these operate the machinery themselves, the others either give lessons in handwriting, reading or arithmetic or maintain good order and tidiness keep the books or provide meals and clothing so that the brothers are there to make the whole thing go and he ...they talk about, how do they say it...I wanted to read that... (looking through a booklet) yeah. He said that previously the teacher, before the brothers were founded previously the teachers were there just to make money and they didn't live the life, they didn't live the same disciplined life that they were expecting, that the kids were expected to live, they were out of bounds so to speak, he said they were a "cause of concern both by the inadequacy of their lessons as well as by the dangers of their bad example" so the notion of the part of the implicit curriculum is having people who give the right example to the kids and who live their own religion and their own faith life.

Tom: the modeling aspect

Bernie: the modeling part of it because he talks about it that let me see "pressing need for upright laborers, men willing to dedicate their lives to the education

⁶³ This prospectus is not André Coindré's but is from a benefactor who was raising funds on his behalf, one M. Casati.

of young people” so there’s that element of dedication whose zeal would not be crushed despite the revulsion that kids produce, men who live a rule and privations, expecting not wages but what, the kind of compensation that only God can offer. So there’s a whole faith motive, he speaks about so that the teachers we hope is that the teachers, those who educators there will be, and that’s an implicit thing, we never say it, it’s the concept of witness, the personal witness of their lives and role models and actually in a sense representing God to these kids by dedication, zeal, going out of the way, patience and all those things, that’s how God acts to us and insisting that even the worst behaved aren’t as guilty of transformation (*this seems to be a misstatement—my assumption is he meant transgression*) but also with the notion of creating this sanctuary that if kids violate that and make it a place that is dangerous for other kids, well, they can’t stay.

There is much to be said about this modeling aspect that is the implicit curriculum. It has taken on a different dynamic these days, as is evident in these exchanges from the earlier interview that was more focused on religious education. The faith that is modeled may not be the traditionally explicit faith of doctrine. These excerpts could just as easily find their way into the portion of this chapter dealing with explicit education, but they flow well together here so I have chosen to keep them intact. The reader should recall the point made by Bernie on the relational and communal character of any education taught by someone using the relational title “Brother” or anyone who would be an educator in a school imbued with such a relational word.

Bernie: I think two things that we want to do is express our faith to them...– but we have to be believable people expressing our faith. Real people expressing our faith and real faith and sometimes we have to express our doubts to them because they want to know that okay you have asked yourself questions, and you've come through the question. We need to do that and all teachers need to do that in whatever area they teach in and to pray, so to pray with them as it is expression of our faith and say it's a demonstration of my relationship with God. If I say Lord come in to this room with us and help us to – to respect each other's opinions, help us to learn what you think is important for us to learn about to you. I'm talking to God and that's it, you know that's your relationship with your wife because I watch how you talk to each other and interact. So we need to have that... but if it's all staged and formularized, they don't see that, they don't see there's a relationship – and so I think that's one thing that the expression of our faith and teacher is expressing their faith. And in some cases, the teachers don't express their faith. They don't

have the same faith. I know some teachers who show them their compassion for the world, which is – but like the Good Samaritan he wouldn't have the same faith, but Jesus held him up because he had some compassion. So he still should be in a school as a person who would be showing compassion.

Bernie went on to give an example of such an educator:

Bernie: [He] created a nonprofit... he's gotten involved in Uganda, and helping school... and not just in school but in helping kids who dropped out of school and trying to get them into university because they dropped out of the system that permits them to go to university. [He] teaches kids about that and shows them how to get involved and bring them to Africa, and to Klagetoh⁶⁴ and things like that. Those are people who, they're not expressing their faith...someone put it this way, today's youth, how do you say it? We believe but we don't practice, they practice but they don't believe. And they will do, they will go for other, they will serve, they will go to missionary right, but they don't necessarily believe in all the creeds and such whereas we go to church. We profess the creeds, when we come out we don't get involved.

Tom: Is it Gutierrez that made the orthodoxy versus orthopraxis.

Bernie: Right, right, right.

Tom: I always found that was a fairly decent distinction and is it fair to say that... if we wanted to characterize Catholic education, and accordingly Charism with the brothers – it would weigh more heavily toward orthopraxis than orthodoxy?

Bernie: I think so, go back to that phrase the integration of faith and life.

The null curriculum as described by Bernie involves the rejection of two approaches in particular—the school teaches by NOT doing these things. Bernie acknowledges the reality that while his description is apt for his understanding of the charism, it is also the case that there have been moments in the brothers' story when both of these approaches were embraced.

Bernie: There's also a null curriculum and I think the things that are forbidden in a Brothers school, if you want to call it null and actually is not, no elitism that we don't want our schools to be for the elite, socially, wealth and so on

⁶⁴ Klagetoh is a village on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. The brothers staff the Catholic Church there, providing religious education, prayer services, charitable support, fellowship, etc. Students from brothers schools in the southeast United States regularly take mission trips to work at the church and with the local Navajo.

so there's an effort, there are some who are affluent but we don't tell them we don't tell that you are good because you are wealthy and you're rich and you're the powerful and you ... and there are schools that do that. That's one thing: the rejection of elitism. That's a null thing that education and culture are not here to make you better than anybody else. Violence a long history despite the fact that in some cultural groups, including here Irish Catholic immigrants and in Africa...no violence. And there's a strong thing, we don't hit, don't yell, don't scream. There's no, no drama that creates a violent confrontation. You correct kids in private. That is the null curriculum we teach them by not doing those things. Not that we've been perfect in that, and also the use of expulsion I don't know if that's a null curriculum, but there is a, it's not a system... I remember when Cor Jesu⁶⁵ was founded. Their idea was to take four freshmen classes, and gradually fail out one class so that as they go the lowest one quarter would not be retained as sophomores.

Tom: wow

Bernie: yeah (garbled) they would have to work real hard to get... and also is gonna make the school more elite that way.

Tom: yeah we'll weed them out.

Bernie: we'll weed them out so that would be that was it, and the following year there would be 3 sophomore classes so

Tom: cream of the crop as it were

Bernie: that's right, that's right, and create a competition between them.

Tom: So when was that founded?

Bernie: it was supposed to be kind of an experimental school and you know it was probably founded, ahh, in '58, '60 so up in there.

Tom: So I mean just in terms of you squaring that circle how does that just, I don't want to give a single answer so give me a second to phrase this... the charism that you describe is very different from what it seems to me the founding vision of that school.

Bernie: right

Tom: So how does how does the founding vision of Cor Jesu or that notion of failing out a fourth of the students come to

⁶⁵ Cor Jesu is a former Brothers' school in New Orleans which merged with St. Aloysius to form Br. Martin.

Bernie: how'd it come to pass?

Tom: come to pass when within 25 years there's an explicit rejection of that?

Bernie: Well I think at this at that period we had lost this was that period when we didn't have that notion of our charism you know and that's what this brother was getting at when you say respect for the student rather than respect for the teaching profession so you don't want...the teachers want better students. They put pressure to not have slow students in their classes. They want the best so in giving in to that—there are models of that in the country—I guess there was a group of brothers, Brother Flavian maybe Brother Jerome was part of that they wanted to create a new school, no athletics, the knocked off the holistic thing, and they knocked off the, you know in other words it was an experiment which fortunately didn't work and which, as we saw what our charism was, we said that's not model.

So that's the thing and I'll tell you I went to I went to Mali, Chad, I went to Chad and I sat down with a community of brothers, mixed, a missionary or two, African brothers and I said well tell me about tell me about your life here. We were sitting outside and in a school, you know the brothers' house and the school right over there and the... in the French version, the French system which is the *lycée* which is the after *college*, *college* is the middle through 9th grade more or less. *Lycée* goes on to pre-university so they're actually channeled into university from the *lycée* and the last year of *lycée* is the first year of university. So anyway they said we're suffering and I said what are you suffering and I expected them to tell me you know race relationships or whatever, and they said in this French system, in the *lycée* system, the teacher is only an instructor and they don't help the kids, they teach the class and they expect the kids to get it and to pass the test and they fail 'em out if they don't. So this teacher is powerful, so they don't want to have remedial help or the teachers don't want to stay behind to help the kid [the brothers] said we can't we can't live like this, and I said ok and they said also we're suffering because for instance they [the brothers] wanted to have music and a band and sports. *Lycée* it's academic, it is an academic institution and that's what we do. So the teachers just weren't, and the brother, an African brother who was the principal...the school was founded by the diocese and they imported these teachers and that was feeding the seminary so the seminarians were going there, so the seminarians I guess were getting their spiritual education on the other side, so... anyway it just that is the, to say that they were actually suffering through that because there was elitism, and there was not that holistic idea of education so

Tom: that that puts it in really

Bernie: so I just organized my curriculum thoughts along explicit, implicit and null curriculum.

As the second interview concluded, I offered Bernie a chance to just share some final thoughts. He immediately turned to Br. Josephat, whose rigid leadership sparked some rebellion in the pre-Vatican II period. The comments follow nicely on Bernie's reflection on the null curriculum.

Tom: ...is there anything else that you want to throw in? I mean we've been talking a lot

Bernie: ...I've been doing the writing of the superior generals' lives and I recall I gave, I just gave you Brother Josephat in a kind of a bad light in that he wanted, he was rigid, he was very rigid and very precise and he was always one to be wearing the cassock and silence in the hallways and the kind of model of religious life, monastic. One time in one of his reports to the general chapter he had made a point during his visits that he re-echoed at the chapter and he wrote we want the brothers, I'm talking about the teaching of religion and catechesis, he said they should not be concerned, so concerned with academic success, instructional success as with the formation of the kids, so the emphasis he was saying is that what we--and I think that's that was maybe a Canadian thing and a U.S. thing that's to get those grades up and be regarded as whatever kind of schools, culturally respected then that drove the boat and that was driving too much according to him and the formative element of the kids and their learning to love God and love religion and making that a part of their lives and not so much you know what did Luke say in the chapter and religious instruction and even academic instruction was he believed it's part of our mission but it's not, it should not exist to the detriment of the formation of the kids and the relationships we keep with the kids.

Tom: would it be fair to say that he was concerned that the explicit curriculum was taking over the implicit curriculum

Bernie: that's right that's right, and all the energy was going to that and the brothers were measuring their success by test grades.

Tom: and it's slightly ironic that given the way that he approached religious life that he would give that instruction to schools but

Bernie: that's right

Tom: but there it is

Bernie: that's it. Certainly that was something that's part of our charism he really believed.

Tom: Still there

Bernie: We couldn't, we couldn't, that was not negotiable.

Tom: Alright good that's a nice way to kind of come full-circle. Well thank you very much.

Bernie: ok good, thank you, thank you for your time.

Living in Grace

So perhaps we have come full circle as well. In the interviews with Br. Bernard Couvillion, former Superior General of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, we find an embodied expression of the curricular implications of the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. While not denying the explicit cultural pressures on a school, Bernie, and Superiors General before him, nevertheless find some thread that persists. It is a lived curriculum, a lived charism and one that has to resist a number of pressures: pressure from a culture that would put too much emphasis on success defined by a narrow understanding of academic achievement; pressure to neglect the more affective subjects; pressure to become elitist; pressure to focus on a rigid understanding of religious education as more akin to proper religious observance. Those pressures are resisted by a relational approach to education, and an incarnational spirituality that finds right relationship with God in embodying the compassion and indulgence of God to those with whom we live and work. Those pressures are resisted when we model for our students and our colleagues the deeper spirituality that Bernie finds at the heart of the charism.

Trying to get at the notion that Catholic education is not information transmission I asked Bernie directly what kind of Catholic he would say he is. His answer, I think, is yet another attempt at expressing the purpose of an education in the charism of the brothers of the Sacred Heart. The exchange also points to the fact that hard and fast definitions are

hard to come by here, and dealing with such issues is more the nature of a conversation than it is any sort of checklist of beliefs.

Bernie: So what kind of a Catholic am I now? I can't deny the cultural part of it, but I guess I'm a Catholic – I feel I'm attached to the church -- attached to the church and put -- in my mind I critique the church and I – I'm more developed in I guess a I'm prayerful, contemplative, contact with God I don't know how to say that – that means more to me. I've kind of gotten into relationship with God and being in the presence of God. So that's how would I put it so that God can take over me and put me to work both in the church and with people who are not in the church and those – maybe use a word incarnational that I'm – I don't know if that answers your question.

Tom: It does.

Bernie: I think I'll have to think of a specific way to answer it.

Tom: Well, Ivy said something like that too, when he and I were talking actually and he might even have been referencing you, I didn't record that so just my recollection but much more spirituality now is – what is God going to do with me or through me, rather than what am I going to do for God or how is God – how am I going to pray for God to manipulate the world. But instead how am I going to put myself in a position to be – maybe used isn't the best word, but cooperative maybe. I don't know.

Bernie: I think if I maybe say it this way: I guess there was a movement, a realization [while he was on a long retreat] that somehow God is within me, forming me and we are together doing something and I am not distant from God even with all my faults and failings. And I do believe that that comes ultimately from, where does that come from, it ultimately comes from baptism and Eucharist, I believe in those things, I believe that – ...something has been happening in my life that's of the order of grace and powerfully transforming me from within and through people.

Tom: ...would you say there's the other sacramental understanding of grace and somehow there's grace acting in those sort of practices of the church that – that's been part of the transformation.

Bernie: Yes, I agree with that, I mean that -- I have come to be aware that all of this going to mass, and baptism and saying some of those formula prayers that's had some, that's had some effect on me in uniting me. How I feel in union with God. And that's what I hope young people will experience some sense of God within the - I put it this way that -- that they will find that they have a sacred heart, I think I've found that I have - one. That somehow, God is there. And there's a sacred space there and that's what baptism is all about. If you read the catechesis of baptism it's very beautiful, very beautiful

that there's new life in us, divine life, partakers of divine nature and those kinds of words, and I think kids have to hear that good news despite their... ambiguities, they have a whole divine life. So I guess I'm a Catholic...I don't relate to a hierarchical Catholic and Pope John Paul II said something that I think is very beautiful about our vocation as brothers, he called us to be brothers for greater brotherhood in the church. That the church needs people who are not hierarchical only. To me it needs a communal -- so I would guess I would be part of the communion of the church and what kind of catholic am I? I believe in the communion and live there more than I live in that ordered, hierarchical structure....

Epilogue

This past June, Brother Bernard and I were at the Summer Faculty Formation Seminar conducted by the administrations of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart schools of the New Orleans province. We happened to be seated together at lunch, when he told me a story. A man had wandered on to the campus of St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis, where Bernard currently serves as president. The man was essentially homeless, and in need of assistance. He indicated that he had been a student of the school 25 years ago, and remembered it as a place where he was cared for and treated well. He wondered if there wasn't someone there who could help him. He happened to encounter Bernard, who soon discovered that the man was the 8th grade boy Bernard pulled across that teacher's desk during my first year as a lay religion teacher. He had met with a number of personal tragedies and those had combined with some poor choices of his own to leave him in his present circumstances. He and Bernard talked, and worked to reconnect him with his family. He got some emergency assistance and indicated that he would see about going home and trying to start again.

In a recent conversation, and then again in our interview, Br. Bernard indicated that he considered the true charism of the brothers to be about communicating the theological virtue of hope before all else. Traditional Catholicism considers the theological

virtues to be faith, hope and love—and as the passage from St. Paul goes, the greatest of these is love. For the brothers, though, born as they were in a desperate time in France and devoted to dechristianized youth, the founding charism, always interpreted in a new time, is finally about providing young people with hope. This is done first and foremost in an educational setting where students are treated with respect, and in healthy relationships with teachers who demonstrate concern for their growth and development. For Bernard, the recent encounter with his former student indicated that at some level, hope was communicated to this boy, and it persisted well into his adult years.

It is an incomplete story, but I submit that what happened for this man as a young boy was that a relationship was formed, enough that hope was communicated so that it persisted through time and so that it could lead him back to the place where he learned it. No doubt life is more complicated than that, and there is not a happy ending of which I am aware. Still it seems that there is a continuity present as well, one that was noticed by the man, Br. Bernard who recognized the story as indicative of some aspect of reality, and by me, who takes it also to be an example of religious education that is relational, temporal and continuous.

CHAPTER 8. BR. IVY LEBLANC: “WE LAY FOUNDATIONS THAT WILL NEED FURTHER DEVELOPMENT”

A microcontext for the conversation

My phone rang around dusk one Thursday evening in January. The caller ID said it was a former teacher at Catholic High to whom I had not spoken much since his career change a few years ago. It was odd that he would be calling, so I answered with some curiosity. He told me he was just driving through my neighborhood (as it happens it is now his neighborhood, too), a few blocks from my house, and was going by Greg Sollie’s house—a colleague and physics teacher at Catholic High. He told me there was an ambulance and fire truck outside, and asked if I knew anything. I didn’t. Just in case it was something serious, I hopped in my car—literally less than two minutes away—and also called another colleague and friend, Vic (also a physics teacher at CHS), who lived in our neighborhood, to see if he knew what was going on. He answered, but seemed not quite to be able to hear me, and I had trouble hearing him—by the time I knew we could understand one another, I was at Greg’s house. Vic was already there. He told me, “It’s not good.” When I got inside, the paramedics were hard at work trying to revive Greg, and having no luck. An ambulance ride ensued. Vic and his wife Holly and I waited with Greg’s wife Pattie in the emergency waiting room. It was not long before the doctors told Pattie that Greg had died.

It was a devastating loss for Pattie and their children, Christopher and Rachel. It was a terrible loss for Catholic High as well, but one that revealed that at least some of what Br. Bernie would call the implicit curriculum was in fact being embraced by at least some of our students. Mr. Sollie taught seniors, and a group of them, with the help of social media, organized a prayer service in our gym at 6:50 a.m. Without adult

supervision or guidance these students reached out to one another and the CHS community, secured the gym for the service, retained our choir director as a pianist, practiced and performed musical selections, and wrote a prayer service that helped begin the process of healing for our community, all within 12 hours of Greg's death.

Later that day, over 100 students and faculty of Catholic High gathered in a local neighborhood to dedicate a Habitat for Humanity Catholic High School sponsored home. Built mostly with Catholic High school student donations and student labor, a great deal of organization and leadership came from none other than Mr. Sollie. In the space of less than 24 hours our school community mourned the loss of a beloved friend, colleague and mentor, and then celebrated with a new homeowner, his sons, the Habitat for Humanity community, and Greg Sollie's widow and surviving children. It was, in fact the worst of times and the best of times, and our students rose to both occasions.

I share that story because it is stories that transmit the ultimate curriculum. It is finally in story that our curricula are embedded, and the story above is part of the context for my second interview with Br. Ivy. At the end of the day Ivy's reflections on curriculum and pedagogy take the form of stories about those who embody for him the charism of the brothers.

The first interview was conducted as I completed my general exam, and focused on the recovery of the story of the charism. Some of that conversation will find its way into this chapter as well. The second interview took place on February 10, only 3 weeks after Greg's death, and the experience was still fresh on my mind and without a doubt formed a backdrop for our conversation. I am convinced what unfolded would be significantly different had those events not occurred so close in proximity. The reader can judge for herself, but the fact that Sollie's passing and its attendant communal attempts at coming

to grips with it are explicitly referenced by me with Br. Ivy, in part seeking validation from him for my own assessment of its importance, should not go unmentioned.

Because Ivy and I had a mentor/mentee relationship over the course of the last 3 years, we had spoken a great deal about charism, and what it is that the brothers were trying to do with the Coindré Leadership Program, how it was that they hoped to form non-brother leaders in their schools so that the work to which they had given their lives would continue, even if there should come a time when there are no brothers. I have always taken this effort to have curricular ramifications, indeed it is leadership that is charged with seeing to it that the schools do what it is that Bernie indicates is both the explicit and implicit curriculum for schools in their tradition. Because Ivy and I had conversed as much as we had, there is much that is taken for granted in our conversation, and to my mind at least we seem to come at ideas about school, religious life, authority and curriculum from very similar places. The stated goal of my second interview with Ivy was to use the same questions I had for Br. Noel and Br. Bernie, and let the conversation go as I had with them, so as to allow Ivy's own understanding of curriculum and charism to be expressed.

The blending of the two conversations with Ivy in some ways serves as a bridge, or better yet, a binding thread, between the conversations with Br. Noel and Br. Bernie. As noted below, in our second discussion Ivy wanted to share some explicit insights about Br. Noel's work at Stanislaus, and I wanted to hear his own articulation of curriculum and pedagogy. As I weave both his earlier reflections on the recovery of the charism with his more explicit recollections of those played out in his observations of Br. Noel's work, as well as his own experience of the charism, one more pattern of the lived charism's

curriculum and pedagogy emerges. Ivy has lived a curriculum, that's what comes through in his interviews, and that is what I want to render here.

While not particularly original, I have chosen to share portions of each interview as near to Ivy's personal chronology as possible. There is overlap in the interviews, and it makes sense to put Ivy's personal experience in temporal proximity to his story of recovery of the charism.

Embodying curriculum

Since it is part of the argument that the curriculum in Brothers of the Sacred Heart schools is embodied by the people in a given school, I start this portion of the dissertation with the following exchange, prompted by a question that asks specifically about Ivy's own reaction and feelings as his order was transformed after the Second Vatican Council.⁶⁶

Tom: ...if you could just tell your own recollection of your own, I guess, stages of understanding what that was about, and then also...your own internal transformation of how the council did that and how it felt to find those things [about the origin of the order] and how it felt to try to bring that about [a change in the Rule that better reflects the founding charism], and then how you're gonna share that with the rest of the order and with the lay people. I mean it's obviously a huge thing, but as much of your own personal ...

Ivy: Sure

Tom: ...reflection and feelings would be really important, I think.

Ivy: Well, I was lucky. I entered the brothers right at the end of the Second Vatican Council and when I entered, I entered the scholasticate and I have never been in a more, intellectually challenging environment in my life than there.

Tom: This was in Mobile?

Ivy: In Mobile, and we had 48 guys in that residence when I entered and they, they were some of the most brilliant people I've ever been around. Bernie Couvillion, Doug Verette, Eddie Dolezane. I mean, I could go on and on with

⁶⁶ I have again, for the sake of easier reading, eliminated from the transcriptions the "mh-hmm's" that interrupt Ivy's train of thought.

guys that are what I would consider superior intellect. And on top of that, we all were, for the most part, I would say, highly motivated people that were achievers.

Tom: Right, okay. Type A guys?

Ivy: Uh, yeah, Type A to a point, but more wanted to make a difference in the world.

Ivy's first reaction then to the question about the recovery of the charism is of his own good fortune to be in an environment of men who for him embodied an approach to religious life, faith, being a human being, that "wanted to make a difference in the world." That simple phrase, pregnant as it is with all the Catholic, cultural, personal and charism history one can imagine, is the first hint at Ivy's own sense of curriculum. As he recounts the impetus for change, one other important note comes forward:

Ivy: ...so anyway, when the Second Vatican Council told religious life, go find your founder, our community, our institute, initiated, a general chapter, extraordinary general chapter, 1968. Okay, I entered in 1967 ... and we started, and the "find your founder" piece was part of a bigger piece of "this rule doesn't suit us anymore."

Tom: And had you, how had that conversation gotten started? I mean, that, is that something that you guys talked to one another about or how were you exposed to the rule that the question even got raised?

Ivy: Well, it got raised by the church. The Vatican Council raised the question largely through *Lumen Gentium* "What's the best way to live this life as a faithful person among the other people of God?" And at that extraordinary general chapter the fork in the road was, do we revise or do we put it aside and rewrite?

I find in this short exchange a parallel to curriculum and from whence it should come. Ivy's recollection is that the lived life of the brothers was just no longer nourishing for many of them, especially the youngest among them. Once prompted to consider their life, in a sense the curriculum in which they would live and pray and work, they had to decide both how to change and who would change it. I hear in Ivy's story two points that

echo post-modern perspectives. First, the change needed to be paradigm shifting. Second, for that to happen, it had to be bottom up. It had to emerge organically from those living the life. For Ivy, no one was more responsible for allowing that to happen than the provincial of the order at the time, Hubert Bonnette. There were older brothers who were feeling the dryness of the order's life and rule, and they were present at the chapter meeting, but

Ivy: ...the real difference was in Hubert Bonnette. He was provincial, a young guy at the time.

Tom: How young is young?

Ivy: Uh, I would say at the time he was probably late 30s, early 40s. He was our last appointed and first elected provincial. He was terrific, and he believed in young people and he believed in ...Hubert is the guy who took all the tough stands. He's the guy that told all these principals in the late '60s, I am not pulling young brothers out of the scholasticate and they're gonna finish their education. They're not gonna stop, 'cause when they, when they start going to school on the weekends and at nights, I want them earning master's degrees, not bachelor's degrees. Okay, that's Hubert. And he's the guy that, uh, decided we should live in smaller residences and try to establish relationships. He's the guy that ... I mean, almost any significant renovation to our life in the late '60s could be found in Hubert.

Hubert's trust of his young brothers, his vision that their hopes and dreams could guide the order, and his desire that a focus on relating as brothers could be a central focus of the life, was the embodiment of a new way of being a brother, and as such a new way of approaching students in their schools. Ivy's appreciation of his importance is present as Ivy tells the story of editing the old Rule:

Ivy: ...what happened was, uh, we got to chapter three of the rule. We tried, they were trying to make it, just renovate it ...do as little as possible on it, and Jules was the Superior General. Chapter three of the rule dealt ... well, the old rule dealt with ... aw, man, I can't remember. It doesn't matter. I mean, it, but anyway, it, it was about, if I'm not mistaken, it was about our relationships with one another in community, but I'm not, not sure of that. Well, what Hubert had done ... this was great ... what Hubert had done is he invol-he tried to involve the whole province, which is great ...but he came to

the scholasticate⁶⁷ and he said, "We have this project, and this life is about y'all." "I want you to help me rewrite this rule." Well, you had Bernie Couvillion whose turbines started turning and a number of these other really bright guys, and anyway ...

Tom: So, timeline, so the general chapter happens and then you're charged with relooking at the rule?

Ivy: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Tom: And so he comes back from the general chapter ...

Ivy: Yeah, and what we did is we had, we had a, a special chapter that, that general chapter was a special chapter in '68 and when they stopped in '68, they didn't adjourn that chapter. They said we'll come back whenever we're ready to come back. Well, they came back in '70. That intervening two years the New Orleans province scholastics wrote the rule of life. Okay, in effect. There's some massaging. I'm getting this information from Marcel Riviere who lives here in Baton Rouge now.

Tom: So I mean, your, your recollection of this story is from him and not from the part that you were present for.

Ivy: I'm present for some, but it's, at the time it's happening, I didn't realize all that was happening.

In the interviews we talked about some of his experiences of living as a brother at this time, and what it was that brought him into the order in 1968 at the age of 22. In these excerpts one hears his experience of the trust placed in him by his superiors, his early formative experiences with those who embodied the charism for him, as well as some of the disruption that occurred as the new rule came be lived out throughout the New Orleans province.

The following section is Ivy's own abbreviated version of his placements as a member of the order. Our conversations didn't follow much of a structure, but for this portion of the chapter I have broken up Ivy's discussion of his timeline with the order with

⁶⁷ The scholasticate is the group of brothers in training—not yet having taken their final vows, they were subject to a period of formation in spirituality as well as receiving their college education prior to entering teaching.

the stories and reflections he shared that happened at the place he was stationed. I have chosen to leave the chronology as normal text, but the stories associated with place and time are italicized. I have removed portions of our conversation that in my opinion did not bear upon the subject, and in certain places I have removed my audible but otherwise non-contributory responses that simply interrupt Ivy's recollections. I have, however, left some of those responses in those sections where I believe they lend themselves to the flow of the conversation.

Tom: ...can you talk a little bit about your own career? ...that's one of the things I am interested in terms of fleshing out your own reflections about all this is you know your history and coming to the brothers and then your own educational practice, what did you teach and that sort of stuff you know, back in the day.

Ivy: My fascination with the brothers started here.⁶⁸ And as a young kid and the fascination was not a very religious level, it was at a human level. I can remember being fascinated by how you did not have to merit the brothers' attention. You didn't have to be outstanding in anything, including misbehavior, you didn't have to be the best athlete, the best student the b...now we were we...we worked hard and we were encouraged to work hard and the motivation was provided to wor... all the...but if you fell short it didn't,...I almost said it didn't matter, and it really didn't in terms of the commitment of the brothers at that time to trying to get you past where you were to bust through your own lethargy or whatever it was, laziness. And that just fascinated me. That a guy like the brightest and the m...you know the big guy on campus was treated no differently than me or the guy that's somewhere else, and I have to say that if I had to trace my own interest in joining the community to one thing, it'd be that. It amazed me, it just amazed me, I don't think it was ever the motivation for me joining, but it was always sort of it was something very powerful in that, it was spiritual

Tom: that was the attraction, you think

Ivy: it was it was once I joined

Tom: how old were you?

Ivy: twenty-two

⁶⁸ Catholic High School. Ivy is an alum.

Tom: oh that's relatively late

Ivy: at that era, yeah, I had finished college and uh

Tom: where, where did you go?

Ivy: LSU

Tom: ok. In education or...

Ivy: no accounting

Tom: ok (laughter from both) some things carry through

Ivy: well I, you know, the way I usually put it is I realized when I was in college in this filthy school of commerce, as it was known then, that I wanted to run away to religious life and leave that filthy life, and I've been an accountant ever since

(laughter)

Tom: right

Ivy: but anyway

Tom: nowhere to run man

Ivy: no I joined and it was in that really tumultuous period right after the second Vatican council right in the midst of our extraordinary general chapter that changed everything so it w... everything was in complete flux there was nothing that we did that was certain it was all uncertain, when we left Mobile after our postulant year we flew to Coindré Hall on Long Island

Tom: What year are we talking about?

Ivy: 1968. And we were parked there for a week because they didn't know if we were going to Belvedere for the novitiate, or to Pascoag, Rhode Island for the novitiate. So while the Rhode Island, while the New England provincial chapter met we sat, they said no, New York and New Orleans went to Belvedere. But everything was like that it was all up in the air.

Tom: Did you like that?

Ivy: It didn't bother me, I didn't..., it never really threw me or anything...but I think it affected my formation and I think it affected, I'm the only one left, we started with 13 then by the time we got to Belvedere we were 9. At the end

of the first week we were 8, and then by vows we were like 5, and then by final vows we were two and then I'm the only one left.

Disruptions of the Rule

The absence of a rule of life during the time discussed above did not bother Ivy much, but its lack did in fact create tensions that played out in a number of ways. There were disruptions going on at this time, and their effect on the life of the brothers and on Ivy's own experience of the life of the order were candidly expressed in the first conversation. In this section, Ivy shares briefly about the struggle to live a vowed life when one does not quite know what one is committing to. For our curricular purposes, one may say that the curriculum for a while did not exist for the brothers, or that it was emerging—but in its absence it seems that the community of brothers struggled with how to live with one another. The section begins with Ivy speaking about the excitement that accompanied the efforts to re-write the Rule

Ivy: I knew this was really good.

Tom: I mean, I can see you get animated talking about it still.

Ivy: I do. I do.

Tom: And I can see you remembered it.

Ivy: Yeah, it was a special time. Even the guys who left, I mean, they were, it was a t-, it was hard time though. I mentioned ...the period of *ad experimentum*. That was a very difficult time because ...you had no ... I was in the novitiate 1968-69. We had no rule to study. And so the whole novitiate year was, we think this is going to happen. We think it'll probably go this way. It could do, this could happen, this might not.

Tom: Right. That's a hard place to live.

Ivy: It's a, it's a tough place to live and

Tom: They call it liminality, right? I mean, it's just

Ivy: I've lived there. I've now lived there my whole life.

Tom: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Ivy: I mean, so, I didn't have that, and then, that period of the '70s, it was a period when we elected our local directors. It was a period when there was no, I mean, it was a period of individualism. We kind of went through this adolescent rebellion in the early '70s before we re-conformed, and, there was a, it was a very difficult ... I mean, that was a period of time, for instance, to give you an idea, where I was not welcome at the residence in New Orleans. I couldn't go in the house. They wouldn't let me in the house.

Tom: Because you were messing with their rule or because ...

Ivy: Well, I was, I was in colored clothes, first of all ...and my hair was too long ...and that kinda threw you in a caste that you couldn't ...escape from and ...I remember telling Bernie one day, I said, "You know, one of these days, I'm going to tear this house down." And I did. One of my, one of my favorite things was to watch, watch those dump trucks after that big ol' machine just ate that house and hauled it right ... huh? (laughing) Where their science building is now, was the brothers'. It was wonderful. But yeah, I mean, it was really ...it was a tough time. And it was tough for every-, all the young people. And one of the, I thought, mistakes that the province made was, I don't think the leadership knew how to handle not just the young people who, who were engaged in abuses and needed to be corrected ...they didn't know how to handle us, but they didn't know how to handle the old as well. And so what happened is they created outposts. You had 4601 in New Orleans. You had the Mobile residence. You had the Stanislaus residence where it was run the old way. You had all the sat-, what we called satellite houses and the smaller residences were run another way and so

Tom: Wow.

Ivy: ... you couldn't, it was hard to cross lines. Some could, but, but some couldn't, and, so it wasn't until that process of rewriting the rule ran its course that we got to the point of saying no, this is how we're going to live and ...

Tom: So what's the date on the rule? What ...

Ivy: I think it was '80-, I want to say '85.

Ivy's Timeline

In spite of the lack of clear guidelines for how to live as a brother, Ivy still experienced aspects of the charism in the personal trust placed in him in the roles he

would come to play in the province. Speaking about his first year in the order and the formation, however unstructured it may have been:

Ivy: it also met my needs in terms of formation and now by the end of that year I wrote the provincial and said I can't take any more of this, I really would like you to consider sending me out teaching. I had my degree and I had put in an extra year and got all the education credits I needed and so forth and so on and , one of the most formative things that I've experienced was the provincial was up there within a week. Flew up, just to see me, which just blew me away.... ..we were in the kitchen together happened to run into each other in the kitchen. He looks around and says, let's step in here—it was a pantry—and he said what's the problem. I say there's no problem I just, you know, feel like I'm spinning my wheels da da da... He says ok I'm going to send you to Bay St. Louis. Just like that, and so went there, got there on August the 16th, Camille hit on the 17th. You know I, I still remember after Camille, we were working, Loyola, and a guy named John Gorst (sp?) and myself were working in the belly of the dining room area shoveling rotten stuff. We took a break and we came out, and when I looked to the right, towards the Bay, Lee was sitting in a student desk with a cardboard box next to him full of file folders, and I just without even thinking, what is that damn fool doing, and Loyola says, without blinking an eye "he's getting ready to open the school"

Tom: (laughter)

Ivy: well I mean it's like you know it's like Hiroshima, and I said you gotta be kidding Loyola and he said no, we're gonna open this school in 3, 4 weeks, he said we gotta have that well that sort of knowing what you are about, and sort of a hopefulness that transcends any kind of optimism ...that kind of grounded a lot of how we operated.

Ivy worked at St. Stanislaus just a few months:

Ivy: ...and then Hubert comes back and he says I really need to move you, I said ok, so I moved to Catholic Boys Home in June of that year.

Tom: where's that? Mobile?

Ivy: Mobile. That was in November. When it comes to the individual kids, I mean, I can remember, I can remember my first, at the end of my first week at the home in Mobile, we had a little boy, Alan, can't remember his last name, but he was really, I forget the name of that stuff, it was a terrible palsy, the umbilical cord got wrapped around his neck in the womb and cut off air to his brain and so forth, anyway he was having trouble one night, so Br. Aquinas asked me to come help him, so I went to the dorm and here was this kid was, oh he was a mess, he was in so much pain. Well doc Aquinas was

absolutely phenomenal with that little boy, I mean he calmed him down, he was, he was just a presence in his life, it was like what was communicated is if you can't count on anything else you will be able to count on me. Just, made me feel better (laughter) and, you know I wasn't even feeling bad.

Tom: right right right

Ivy: but I mean it was just that that strong, quiet confidence in what he communicated with that kid was just absolutely fabulous, you know that little, that's guided me for a long time. In June of the following year '70 we closed the home so he moved me to McGill and the best teaching I did was at McGill. Foster came to me he said... McGill at the time and probably still the same today was the school I was in that had the greatest divergence of talent. We had like a dozen or 14 National Merit Semi-Finalists, and we had kids that were just at the total other end of the spectrum. He said I got 30 kids can't read can't write, can't compute, I'd like you to teach 'em to write a simple sentence I'd like you teach them their multiplication tables, I'd like you... I mean he gave me some basic tasks which we worked on all year. Great kids. All Bayou La Batre type kids and that was my best teaching experience. I was never, I only taught 2 or 3 years. I was there [McGill] and then I got moved to Bay St. Louis.

...I was at Bay St. Louis and we had a doctor, there, Doc Wolf, and we had Sue Ryan's, Sue Estrade's younger brother Timmy, got, I mean, he was about 130 lbs. in uniform anyway got hurt in football, got his knee really torn up, anyway, swole up and all, so I was walking ... and Doc Wolf was in there treating the kid in the infirmary, and he says would you come here and help me with Timmy, I said sure, well he was going to drain his knee so he said you are going to have to hold him down 'cause this is gonna hurt well, I held him down and the kid was screaming and all that, and Doc was going about his business, but I looked up at one point and he was just crying, Doc Wolf was crying, I mean there was a sense of I'm hurting with you because I care, you know and it's those kind of things that for me, is sorta how it's really lived out, you know, but again it's not, most of that isn't in a classroom. Some of it is.

Tom: sure

Ivy: some of it is, most of it's not, it's more connecting with the kid beyond his level his ability to produce anything--including compliance in some cases, and so anyway that's, I mean, that's where I come from.

I interrupted Ivy's sharing of his timeline to try to direct the conversation more toward explicit curriculum and pedagogy:

Tom: you were teaching classes in these places?

Ivy: yeah, sort of you know, I was never, I didn't grow up as a teacher and I was actually doing more work in the dorms and in the orphanage and all that and then back in the dorm at Stanislaus, and then Mark moved me to New Orleans, and so I was there, forever.

Tom: and doing what in New Orleans?

Ivy: I was told when I left the Bay I'd be teaching religion, before I got there I was made the department chairman (laughter).

Tom: this was St. Aloysius then?

Ivy: no it was at Br. Martin

Tom: oh, ok

Ivy: 1972

Tom: ok

Ivy: and I, I didn't know anything. The first year was interesting, second year I got rid of almost the whole department.

Tom: Were you teaching religion?

Ivy: yeah.

Tom: full-time? I mean 5 classes.

Ivy: yeah (overlapping).

Ivy: Well in those days it was the three days a week, 5 days every two weeks kind of cycle. I had six preps.

Tom: And I would imagine no clear curriculum.

Ivy: oh, one of my courses was the greening of America, one of my courses was...so after about 3 weeks I told 'em I said guys, you get Br. Ivy religion from this point forward (laughter), we ain't doing any of this stuff so I got a, I found a textbook, but anyway I wasn't...I didn't really have an interest in teaching and after 2 years I was I made disciplinarian...that you know did that for 6 years then I was principal for 8 years and president for 12 years and then whatever I'm doin' now, and so, that that's kind of my career path, it's been, it's been terrific. When I was younger I had the opportunity to work very intensely with kids, particularly kids with problems which I really liked and past that, it's my version of what I do...is building organizations

A short summary of Ivy's career in the order may be of use to the reader, so I offer it here. Ivy entered the order in 1968 and went through a year of formation, though its structure was in flux. At the end of that year he was moved to Stanislaus on the eve of Hurricane Camille. Inside of a year he was in Mobile at a boys' home, then in Mobile as a teacher of students who academically struggled. That only lasted a year, and from there he was sent again to Stanislaus where he worked not primarily as a teacher but more in the dorms. His transfer in the early 70's to Br. Martin had him teaching religion for only a couple of years. Without a clear curriculum, Ivy nevertheless had a sense of what ought to happen because after a year he replaced most of the religion department. It was not long after that Ivy left the classroom for good. First as a disciplinarian from which point one sees students at their best and worst, then as a principal and president, Ivy became more and more involved in building an organization that could put into practice the spirit of the brothers that was emerging as part of the process of rediscovering the charism.

One of the ways to get at Ivy's perspective on curriculum and pedagogy is to listen to his recollections of the story of the charism's recovery. In that conversation, it becomes clear that the brothers, and Ivy in particular, are developing a curriculum for those who work in their schools, with the expectation that it will help to create the curriculum for the students who will be educated in those schools. In the conversation one can readily see how interwoven the understanding of the charism was, how it took shape as a variety of threads came together in the experience and reflection of influential brothers and lay people. The organic nature of the process is noted by me, with agreement from Ivy, but most interesting for me is the concluding memory Ivy shares at the end of this excerpt. This section begins in the context of how principals and presidents of Brothers' schools

were transformed by the creation of the document *Educational Mission and Ministry* in the mid 80's:

Ivy: It changed it to "how do we educate our faculties on this?" Once we educated, we, we developed an evaluation tool for our leadership that ...where the faculties evaluate the principal. ...what's the soft spots in, in our schools? What do we need based on what Mission and Ministry tell us ...What aren't we doing well? What do we need to build up? All that kinda stuff. ...and then once documentation started to become forthcoming about Coindré and the early history, then all of a sudden, we have something to link it to and ...then you had René saying, from out there, writing theology for all of that. And so what started to happen is you started to get a sort of a whole matrix here ...

Tom: But it sounds really organic, you know.

Ivy: It, it, it did ...

Tom: It's not linear by any stretch, right?

Ivy: No, I agree with you, it is, totally and, uh ...and then having the, having that staff of men in Lyon was a great, great benefit. Now they suffered a lot 'cause they kept wanting, like the people that you were talking to about Madagascar, they wanted to see the wall built. They wanted to ... and these guys are, they're basically getting to know Coindré. And, at one of the general chapters, Brother Jean Charles Degneaux was in Lyon for a number of years. He's a former superior general, and just a wonderful man. He gave a presentation at a general chapter. I don't remember the year, but basically it was the relationship I have formed with Andre Coindré, and it was one of the most personal things. I mean, it was inspirational because he obviously had a relationship with this man, this ... anyway, his grace, really ...and, I think that did a lot too, because there was a depth and a profundity there that was, was really, really telling. Now, I think we've done a lot in terms of our province. We've done, we're by far the leading edge in the institute or, relative to, relationships with our partners, just that use of that word. That's our word that we submitted. The, the whole issue of lay empowerment and the, and, and, as, if you read our documents from the last, the very last general chapter, that whole middle section, that's us. It's called shared formation. It's sharing our formation with partners. So we're a real leader there and we led, CIAC became ours. We never owned the building, but we created the program.

There is obviously great pride in Ivy about the role he and his group of Brothers in the New Orleans province has played in the creation of a curriculum that is meant to

educate leaders in their schools. While he is not definitive about the explicit curriculum in the schools, what is quite clear is that Ivy is creating a curriculum founded on both a relationship with Andre Coindré, and on the relationships of those who would seek to know him better as they live out his vision for young people. That central focus of relationship constitutes a core aspect of the charism and any curriculum that would take shape in Brothers' schools.

Ivy: And then, and then we expanded the program to our three provinces, two other U.S. provinces. Then we expanded it to our partners. Now it's exclusive, almost exclusively for our partners and now we've exported it. Spain is now starting to use, use it, uh, others, you know, so I think we're a real leader there. That, and that's only been to our benefit because I think we know the founder better than most. We've done more writing and research on him and now and... organic is a great word to use for it, but I think the fundamental, initiation came from the church. We had, as has been our history as long as I've been involved, we had the right provincial for the right time. It was a guy who was on the cutting edge himself. He knew the old way was, was dead. And what he did was he empowered the young and then the young that he empowered were not, they were, they were ... I believe the Lord assembled that group of kids. I mean, it was brilliant people, and not just brilliant from the standpoint of reading and writing and interpreting and analyzing, but brilliant from the standpoint of their commitment to what they were engaged in. They were, they were on fire. I mean, we were passionate about this life.

The meaning of that passion emerges when one understands and appreciates the symbol associated with the Brothers today. Ivy references it in this short exchange when he talks about part of the administrative process of having the new Rule of Life approved by the Vatican:

Ivy: ...we had to resubmit the rule and then we had additional issues with the Vatican. That's where this⁶⁹ (see Figure 2) came from. (Ivy indicates the

⁶⁹ This photo is of a cross that hangs on the wall of my office. I received it as a gift from the boys who live in the brothers' orphanage in Amatongas, Mozambique when I visited there in the summer of 2013 (each of the members of my travel group received one—handmade by the students who live and learn at the school). The cross is a reinterpretation of the Sacred Heart cross, with the open heart at the bottom representing the spear wound of Christ on the cross. The spirituality surrounding the symbol understands that Christ's wound is a call to embrace the Spirit that can only be known when we are vulnerable to our

cross he and the brothers wear around their neck, generally outside their clothes):



Figure 2. Brothers of the Sacred Heart Symbol. The open heart at the center of the cross has become a powerful symbol of the order.

Ivy: Okay, they said we had to have a distinctive sign, you know.

Tom: Okay.

Ivy: They didn't demand that it be any particular distinctive sign, but they're saying you need a distinctive sign. Well, that turned out to be a great thing. It's ...I love it. I mean I know I'm never without it and I'm one of the guys who opposed it.

Tom: Oh, really?

Ivy: You know, I frequently lapse into the '60s, okay?

Not much later in this conversation Ivy again touched on the aspect of trust, and his ultimate evaluation of his life's work:

Ivy: but I think the brilliance, for this province, is the provincial putting his faith in the young people. And that was, that was Hubert. That was Marcel. That was Pierre. That was Mark. Those guys, they trusted us.... They saw the potential in this group of guys, and of course, we're the last group. ... so, for me personally, you, you're saying what, that ... for me personally, what that's ... my life work has been largely, first of all, I'm an organization builder and secondly, within that, for me it's all about succession planning and the development of leadership beyond the province. And I think I go-, I think I inherited that. I don't think I, I don't think there's anything in me here. I think it's living out of Hubert's inspiration. I think it's living out of Marcel's inspiration and all those guys who trusted me and I'm trying to say, "Who do

own wounds so we can respond in compassion to the wounds of others, especially our students. The brothers obviously wear a smaller version.

we have to trust next?" Now until this very second, I never said that in my life. Okay, and it's just in this conversation that that's come to light, but I really believe that's where it comes from.

So then, if the development of a Rule of Life and the living of that rule can be likened to a curriculum, and I am certainly arguing that it can and should be, then the curriculum of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart emerges from a period of listening that lives alongside an entrustment. The Rule that currently governs the Institute grew out of the experience of Brothers, especially the young as they studied and trusted that the spirit which founded their order was alive and capable of discernment and reinterpretation. They were allowed to do that discerning by leadership that trusted the young with structuring the life they would live, and giving expression to its impetus from the life of Jesus Christ.

It is easy to see in Ivy's telling of the story of the recovery of the charism an anti-establishment sensibility "I frequently lapse into the 60's" even as he admits that his whole life has been devoted to organization building. What is less obvious, but nonetheless true, is that the organization that he has spent his life building is a curriculum that will provide a way for lay people to experience, live, and share a dynamic relationship with the spirit of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

Curriculum

Tom: So I'm curious I mean in terms of you know the dissertation subject and all that and the language that we are using is around pedagogy and curriculum you know, so it sounds like you have some experiences that... particularly with the kids maybe at McGill the lower functioning kids that...where you could talk maybe about the pedagogy or even from the administrative standpoint what you see as what really is the spirit of the charism with respect to how we teach and what that's supposed to look like and then you know we'll talk about that and then we'll go on to the curriculum angle a little bit later, I got plenty of opinions about that myself but I'm curious as to yours with respect to...your experience as an educator and then all the time that you have spent watching other people inside the charism in the schools do

education and who you think particularly embodied the pedagogy that you think ought to characterize you know schools in our tradition.

Ivy: yeah I think for me the distinction that really is drawn in the rule of life between instruction formation and witness to me is another way of saying explicit, implicit, and null curriculum

Tom: and Bernie spoke specifically about those things

Ivy: I mean it's really, that's really how I view it. There's always an intentional part that's a formal part that we have to put out there, and we have to do, but the way you do it and what you are an example of in doing it to me was always where I lived, more so than in the content area. And I don't think that's, I think that's why I wasn't a very good teacher because I could care less about the content. I mean somebody's got to, but it doesn't have to be me. But on the other hand, you know, to be in the dorm or in...to be in the midst of the worst part of a kid's life was to me much more challenging and beneficial in the long run both to me and to the kid and I was so lucky I had great mentors in that regard....

Hope beyond optimism, it's gonna work out.

Tom: You said something interesting a little while ago, you know, a hope that's beyond optimism, can you?...Cause I think that hope is a Bernie has talked about this, I think it's probably the thing that I'm focusing on, I think as a characteristic of the charism as sort of the grounding one you pick faith, hope, love whatever you want, but Bernie seems to pick hope and it seems like it keeps coming up.

Ivy: yes

Tom: And I ran across it I think actually in something that...an interview with the pope which is I think where I saw it and it, it's important, but, I...say what you mean by that, I mean hope that's greater than optimism and of course if you can share another anecdote like the others that's outstanding, but it's ok to philosophize, too.

Ivy: I think what that means is, and you realize this when you get old, but somehow it's gonna all work out ok? It is. It is gonna wor... Now it may be absolute dog shit from here to here

Tom: (laughter)

Ivy: but it's gonna work out and it's sort of looking beyond either the good or the bad of the moment and recognize the presence of something deeper, something that's sort of pulling us in a positive direction and, I mean you

know I can think of having to ask and to do... some really hard things after Katrina, and to a man they did them, to a man.⁷⁰

Tom: If you don't mind, I mean, for example?

Ivy: For example, we had we had evacuated a number of the guys from Stanislaus to McGill. I went to McGill and I knew I had to see four guys and move 'em. Brothers in Pascoag had agreed to take 'em. So I needed to see Albert Ledet, Nicholas, Roy Reineke, and Allen Drain. And, it wa... I was really intimidated by having to do it, not so much as anything other than I just knew how hard it was going to be for them. I went to... first one I went to was to Albert Ledet

Tom: You had to move them from?

Ivy: well they were at Bay St. Louis which was... no longer existed. We put them in a bus and got 'em to Mobile, but they were... I had no place to put them. We moved 48 men and Albert was in a wheelchair, Roy was in a wheelchair, Nicholas was on a walker, Allen was going blind, I, we had no facilities to give the assistance they needed. So up there they did and I went to Albert and I said I have to ask you to do a very hard thing. I'm going to ask you to move to Pascoag, Rhode Island until we can get all this sorted out. He said Brother, he said, I can't work anymore. He said "if this is the only way I can help you help the province," he said "I'll go gladly." Right? I mean...and he did. Nicholas was great. Nicholas he says... I said I need to ask you to do some... He says "Why" I said because brother I don't think we can take care of you here and he says "no no," he said "you're provincial you tell me to go I'll go."

Tom: sometimes that old school crap works just fine

Ivy: end of discussion, amazing. Roy was the same way, didn't want to go, gonna miss his family, worried about dying up there, if he died up there would he be buried up there, would he... I mean all of those very human things, you know? I said Roy I promise you I'll bring you home if you die up there but I said I don't think you will but I'll bring you home. Ok. Off they go. It was just spectacular, you know the generosity and I think that's all part of the hope 'cause that was a hard time, it wasn't a happy time, but they still I think they believed it was all gonna work out and so...it's sort of a God's in charge, we don't know which way it's going but let's give it our best shot.

⁷⁰ Ivy was the provincial of the New Orleans province when Hurricane Katrina struck and devastated Br. Martin in New Orleans, St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis, MS, and the associated brothers' residences in those cities.

Faculty exemplars

Tom: ...what do you think, in terms of lay faculty in particular, who do you think communicates that hope well, and you know, are there faculty members you have encountered over time in your role

Ivy: oh goodness

Tom: who communicate that to students in the way that in the way they do their job?

Ivy: yeah... the best group of faculty, for me, and I, you gotta understand my age and the era I came up in, but for me was a group of guys and women who got to our schools, oh Pete Boudreaux⁷¹ would be one, they got to our schools when they were dominated by brothers, and they picked up something that clearly is of us, and I don't know how it's communicated, but I've, oh my goodness I mean there have been so many and they couldn't use the word charism, they couldn't they couldn't define all this stuff or talk about it...

Tom: Noel doesn't use that word

Ivy: ...just what's in their gut is gold, it's gold, they understand it, and you could see it in the loyalty of the kids to them, there's a personal loyalty that develops and it's nothing but a connection that develops at a deep level, and I mean I, there are a lot of guys that just you know I think the world of and most of them are dead now, but I mean there were just tremendous examples for me. I, just incredible and they're guys I think of guys like Jack Schomer in New Orleans who, was kind of like Pete be a good way to think of him, and I've never worked with Pete so I only know the reputation of Pete, but Jack could be sort of a pain in the ass, he could be small at times, but he did every job he was ever asked to do and as perhaps as limited as he may be on a day to day basis, when it came to big things, he was 100% right. I mean he had it, he

Tom: what do you mean by the big things, what...?

Ivy: Well, when it came down to selling our soul for an ephemeral purpose, Jack would never let that happen

Tom: I don't, I don't know what you are talking about.

Ivy: Well, I mean cheating a kid, in any way hurting a kid, in any way using a kid as opposed to a more authentic relationship, just tremendous integrity, I mean it, that kind of guy. But they all grew up, they grew up with us in a way

⁷¹ An alumnus of Catholic High School, with 40+ years of experience at CHS as teacher, coach, guidance counselor and athletic director.

that I don't think can happen again. ...and the way I see it, there was that group of guys, and I think they existed in pretty much all of our schools. The next group after them that were the most important, former religious and former seminarians, because that was the group when we were transitioning, trying to articulate who we were they had a formation from which to understand it and promote it so you had this, this cadre and this group, really almost after them, though they were generally peers, but yeah those were folks that got it, they understood it and they lived it.

Ideal Curriculum

Tom: You spoke a little bit about you know the explicit implicit and null curriculum so if you don't mind just translation into the curriculum question I think curriculum gets set by all kinds of agendas and largely now, you've spoken a bit about this before, the state sets curriculum at least certainly the explicit curriculum gets set so maybe talk about what you think the ideal curriculum is for a brothers' school notwithstanding the explicit curriculum that's set by legal authorities that, you know we're subject to.

Ivy: Yeah, that's a great question. I think the curriculum within the explicit curriculum has to be having a kid come to know that he's loved in a whole variety of ways, it has to be you know the trust we place in him or her to grow, the sort of compact we make with them to grow, you know...and you see it, you really see it, more so, I don't know about anymore, I really saw it athletically. I, you know we had just a phenomenal football coach for many many years, guy I really admired and trusted,

Tom: Brother Martin?

Ivy: hm?

Tom: at Brother Martin?

Ivy: Yeah Bob Conlin. He never betrayed us, never betrayed the charism, never. But I still remember him telling me, and I was very young, and he said he said you know I hope you never judge me on wins and losses and I said well, you know I want to be successful, but that's not always a win and he said, judge me on my kids, and he said and the progress we make in the course of a season. Well, I saw a ton of his games and, over time as principal I learned that neither he nor the kids needed me when we won, but there were some really special things when we lost. I never ever, was not in that locker room for a loss because he was remarkable, and what he did for those kids in terms of, not sugar coating anything, and, but, but, even when he's really coming down hard on 'em building them up somehow simultaneously, and it was just, it was just phenomenal. And 1981 if I'm not mistaken, we started off 0 and 4, and I mean we were not a good football team. I don't know if you know Mark Wysnewski at Br. Martin

Tom: umum (indicating no)

Ivy: head baseball coach, his older brother John, who ended up going to the Air Force Academy and was a pilot for 20 years in the Air Force any way, John was a split end, could not have weighed 165 pounds. Bob takes that kid, and makes him a guard

Tom: (laugh)

Ivy: a guard. Fifth game, we win, we win, we win, we win out. We go 6 and 4, end up going, going to the playoffs. We didn't go too far, but it's a long way from 0 and 4. Anyway I asked him, I said Bob, why in the world would you put John at guard? He said Brother he's the toughest kid we got. And he said, you take your best athlete, and you make him your quarterback, but in this offense, what we were running, he says we needed our guards to be our toughest kids. He said that's the toughest kid I have. He said I watch him every week on film, he said I can't believe what he's doing. I said well how could you trust that that was going to happen, he said I couldn't it was a pure risk, but he said I just knew that that kid was going to give me the best he had, and the best he had was better than anything else we had. Well, that's the pedagogy of trust. I mean that's, it's that element of, call it curriculum if you will, if kids feel that they really rise above what you think they're capable, what they think they're capable of, and that's one of the things that I don't like in our schools right now is there's such a fear of failure, that I mean you never sort of call our kids past it, I mean there was a time when significant adults could get almost miraculous things out of kids because they convinced them that they could do it. (laughter) I mean it's just you know... the curriculum to me is all about building up the kid. I mean the rest is...the technicians can take care of that. ...it's getting a thoroughbred to run until he's willing to die I mean that's really all it is.

Tom: or getting a quarter horse to think he's a thoroughbred, you know whatever it is

Ivy: absolutely, absolutely

Tom: ok, well look I think that's, we could hem and haw about all sorts of other stuff, but I think that's finally it, in terms of all the other stuff we've talked about, it's sort of ephemeral, you know that whole idea of the curriculum and a lot of the research is out there about you know what oughta be covered and that sort of stuff, but insofar as the relationship with the student and what kind of person you want to become there's lots of other metaphysical positions about what a student is, is it inside them and to be brought out, is it something they create on their own and something you create with them together, there's lots of

Ivy: all of the above

Tom: yeah, right and like there's one answer to that question and I and honestly, that's the, that's really the value of the post-modern perspective with respect to all of this and that is that, the practicality of the brothers is such that it's not a, you used the word pragmatism pejoratively one time when we were talking, there's a philosophical version of pragmatism that just sort of eschews the metaphysical stuff and doesn't fool with it and just tries to figure out what gets the kid to grow, right, you know, reach them wherever they are and let's find something that works and that's the kind of pragmatism that I really sense in y'all, so we'll, if we need to have a philosophical perspective to make it work, that's fine, if we need to have just a kind of relationship with a kid to make it work, that's fine, but whatever is going to engage us with a young person to help them encounter what is possible for them and then to embrace it in some kind of way is what we are finally about

Ivy: yeah, and I think it's faithfulness, I think it is, when we got transported up here by Katrina, I still remember welcoming the Br. Martin people here, and Mark Benedetto, faculty member, 2 kids and a wife, 3 kids actually and a wife... he's deaf, came in and when he saw us, he lit up and he started crying, and all he kept saying was "I knew you'd be here, I knew you'd be here" yeah, yep we're here we're a known quan, you know what you're going to get and we're gonna be here, and I think that's really a big part of the faith people have in us and what we can do, it's not magical it's being there and it's you know, and I don't know how all that works in terms of curriculum, but it's...

Tom: I'm with you in that respect. A content is as determined by other people. There is a whole history of the curriculum that you were trying to teach, so the kids are citizens or workers or economically successful. I mean certainly that's part of the charism. You got to give them something that they can do in the world. That will always be the case. Whatever that happens to be, in these days, it tends to be college because of where we find ourselves the United States and at this point in history. I mean that's the explicit curriculum, but the larger one is a much more human and spiritual goal. I don't like that word as much as I used to, but that's what it is. It's a kind of hope that runs deeper than you said obviously optimism. It's grounded in something.

Ivy: It's so needed today. That's the thing, because the home is no longer a given that it once was. Our places are some of the really few, non-optional places that still exist in the culture. Now it's optional as to whether you come or not certainly. But if you're coming, there's not a whole lot that's optional here. We demand that you're respectful. We demand that you don't disrespect others, all those things. That's part of that faithfulness, knowing what we're going to be, what we're going to...

Tom: Then being it so the kids can count on it.

Ivy: Absolutely, absolutely.

Tom: I swear I saw some of that last whatever it was when Sollie died. I mean there are a lot of people that came back and there couldn't have been a better place for his send off than here because they weren't particularly religious themselves. At least practicing a particular tradition, but they certainly practice here and that was their faith community. It clearly was where everybody wanted to be. It's frankly the only place they probably could have fit, but it was perfect. Honestly it was the morning after that Friday morning at 6:50 when I was reassured all over again that we're doing something halfway right because seniors without adult supervision put together a prayer service and then held it 10 minutes to 7 in the morning.

It was as good as what we put on at 10:00 later that day. It had music. The student ministers got the choir director to play the piano. They had senior choir members sing 2 songs. They had readings selected. They had a short witness. They had prayers. They knocked it out. Three hundred people were there, mostly their class. As far as I'm concerned, you guys can graduate today. I'm done with you, go study whatever you want, but we're finished.

Ivy: Yeah. That's terrific. God. Yeah, that's the stuff that matters, you know? I still remembered being pulled up short once by Brother Nicholas. I forget where we were at. It was like Friday afternoon. We were having a drink over at the brother's house or whatever it was. I was disciplinarian. I was on my high horse and bitching about this and bitching about that and here's Nicholas who is a cantankerous little son of a bitch and he says, "All right. What kind of people?" He says "What do you think the job is?" He says, "That's where you get them. That's not where you leave them." I mean just this moment of truth. I said, "Oh wow. You're so right."

Tom: Yeah, the ones that come in smart and capable and ready to help first time, well I don't need to be here for you.

Ivy: But I mean that's what your kids did for Sollie.

Tom: Yeah, I didn't know. If you look at, there are couple of guys out there that are highly slappable and yet there they were.

Ivy: Absolutely.

Tom: It's a real question whether they're going to graduate with the explicit grades that they need in the explicit curriculum, but in terms of the formation that they've got and whether they believe that this place is valuable or whether they think they're cared for, I don't think they have a doubt about that.

Ivy: No.

Tom: At least I hope not.

Ivy: And you know, my experience through the years has been ... Those would be some of the most successful people that we graduated. They're gonna take a risk. They're gonna go out on their own. Yeah.

Conclusion: First and last topic: Br. Noel and transition at SSC

The excerpts which conclude this chapter come from the beginning and end of the second interview with Ivy. They recap, and restate, in condensed form, the transition that took place, that is still taking place, in understanding what the charism of the brothers is all about. These two short pieces of dialogue also provide a kind of window into how that transition is embodied in the persons of Brs. Noel and Joseph, but also how each of them is interpreted by Ivy and me in light of our own experiences and reflections.

Tom: You know what this is about, so, first of all you'd said you wanted, if I talked to Br. Noel you'd be willing to talk to me about that sort of point in the brothers' history where you know I feel like he is sort of at the crux of something, and I talked to him a little bit about what it was like trying to be in that transition period in the, I guess it was the mid-80's I think, his first year was '86, '87 that was my first year as I recall, and trying to transition from Joseph Donovan's form of being a disciplinarian into a different one that Paul Montero was trying to lead. I don't know how much you know about that but can you speak about that transition at Stanislaus or what that was like in terms of ... the role of the disciplinarian in education in the schools

Ivy: well I think...the transition was the culmination I think of the development of the unearthing of the founder, and I believe it was about everything that happened from 1968 forward in well into the 80's of who are we really and what are supposed to be as opposed the various accretions that had occurred over time in a pretty unreflective way. We were dealing you know when you think about it in the 30's back in 1930's we were really dealing with the immigrant church, we were dealing with trying to help people enter the mainstream and all of that and the whole issue of, I'll call it less than friendly type discipline, was pretty much the discipline of the home. It was the discipline of the culture, it was the discipline that was supported in a lot of ways and I think we felt that we were trapped in that. You go back to the earliest writings of the founder and it was always about kindness, gentleness, compassion, where correction was needed and it was often distinguished from punishment. Two different movements there and I think that what was taking hold was all of those learnings and research and all that that had gone forward and if you remember in 1985 is when *Educational Mission and Ministry* came out which attempted to codify some of that in terms of the

real life applications in the school uh I think the period you're discussing is around Br. Noel's time of being disciplinarian all of that was kind of coming together and so what was happening was things were changing and it was a difficult period because we were teaching lay faculties one thing and you had brothers steeped in a whole 'nother lore and so there were times when people couldn't, just couldn't make the transition, couldn't make the shift some had to honestly stop working in the schools.

Tom: yeah, you know one of the things that I thought was, this was just remarkable to me so this is just my own filtering of what Br. Noel talked about is that he and Br. Joseph didn't talk about disciplinarian or the role or the differences between them that he reflected that maybe Joseph was hurt by being you know by Paul going in a different direction but I just I just thought that the whole reticence of the whole thing was interesting I don't know, that's not a question, it's just

Ivy: well, part, one of the issues of religious life, not just the Brothers of the Sacred Heart but one of the issues of post Vatican religious life was the feminizing of the life. Uh, the not talking, the strong silent type, the sort of John Wayne approach to things, that was the way and some folks just could not make that transition certainly to talk about themselves about their feelings and even in this case about what should be a fairly nothing m...an intellectual kind of professional discussion on techniques, tactics and so forth even at that level couldn't happen.

Toward the end of the second interview, actually as I was concluding and thanking Br. Ivy, the topic returned rather naturally to Br. Noel and Br. Joseph, and I include it here as part of the larger conversation of post-modern perspectives on the lived charism of the brothers. The dialogue picks up immediately after Ivy questions whether he had spoken to the issues with which I am concerned:

Tom: I thought that you did, but part of it is just that's my responsibility for figuring out what all these has to do with the other stuff that I'm interested in. I've got all kinds of stuff from Bernie. It will be interesting just to work through the texts that I've got from Noel who I think is in some ways a transition figure, but in some ways the old guard.

Ivy: Oh he was, definitely.

Tom: But an old guard, he was asked to do a job according to the new guard and that put him in a difficult position. He's not going to articulate that in any kind of way because that's not the guy he is. I thought it was a difficult interview. There's plenty to work with in there. That's just my problem. Not

that I'm just trying to use it as a reflection, but it really is interesting. I mean if you run down the rabbit hole, you could be here forever. It's the next thing I would be interested in doing...it would be great to talk to Paul about what his experience with the Stanislaus and then triangulate, if that's the right word, with Noel. Get lucky enough to talk to Joe one day and see what he thought about all of that. I mean there's no end to the ways you can get people to talk about and reflect or just reflect on how they do or don't reflect about it because of how they were raised and that whole idea about the masculine "we're not talking about this. We're just doing this. I'm not here to share."

Ivy: It's interesting because I think a lot of our guys, Brother Martin first and foremost, he told me himself. He told me, he said, "I never wanted to do all the stuff I had to do as provincial." He said, "Rome demanded it." He says, "Just kill me to do that." The other one is Joe Donovan who I'm not sure Joe knew another way. I think he wanted another way, but I don't know he knew another way. We had a kid. He works at Stanislaus now and not a kid anymore, but he tried to commit suicide as a senior. He didn't just tell me, he told the whole group assembled at Lyon that when he woke up in the hospital, the one person there was Joe Donovan. He said his first impulse, the kid's first impulse was to apologize. "Oh brother, I'm sorry." Joe said, "Talk if you want." He said, "I'm just here to be with you." He said, "He never left my side."

Tom: Yeah, and that's the other way because you hear the stories about the strap and the toughness. I mean I'd seen him punch a kid on the top of the head

Ivy: Oh yeah

Tom: for saying "Jesus Christ!"

Ivy: yeah

Tom: or something like that, which is all old school and I think did little harm to most people and probably some harm to some people, but again you're right ...

Ivy: The point is which is the real one.

Tom: That's one of the post-modern issues because you can't really tell.

Ivy: No, you can't.

Tom: You just got to decide which one you want to look at for a moment and then you ask yourself which one is right. It's not even clear because was there really an option to be something else given how he's raised or what he was taught, there wasn't. How free is a person? That's some of the post-modern

questions. About how free is somebody to do something that's radically different from the environment in which they find themselves, and yet you've mentioned them I think. I think Bernie was referencing a similar story if not the same one.

What he's got is probably the same one because I guess he was a handful as a student at Stanislaus. Then he ended up going to work there if I'm remembering the same person, and then had some issues even as an adult. Joe was there for him through all of that. It eventually come through and now might be working in the dorm, I mean I think as an employee of some repute. At some level, Joe absolutely moved from whatever that physical discipline style was to a pedagogy of trust. You've asked the question I think any number of times who do I trust next, and he's obviously doing that at Stanislaus. He's imbued certain young men with this is how we care for kids.

Ivy: It's beautiful to watch him transition now that he's been in Mobile since the storm. All of that dedication to those kids he now deals with the elderly that way. Really, really neat. He doesn't have a paradigm to try to match up to, so he can just be himself with them.

Tom: Right, right. That's another thought too is that how much the...or the imposed external structure shapes. I don't know if the brothers have ... There is an imposed external structure now that has to do with the charism and the history and all that at the same time, but it seems like that new one is much more open to the individual being who they are

Ivy: Absolutely

Tom: in a way that it wasn't before

Ivy: No question, no question.

Tom: Not all paradigms are created equal either.

Ivy: Right

Tom: Some are oppressive and some are not. All are oppressive in some way I assume, but some less so than others.

Contemporary expression

While the interviews with Noel, Bernie and Ivy are the primary data for this study, I do have available other much briefer interviews from a previous project in a doctoral narrative inquiry course. I am appending them to Ivy's chapter because they are an

indication, albeit a small one, of the success of his efforts to answer his question about whom to trust next, about how effectively the organization he has worked to build is being built. The story of the charism of the brothers is an ongoing one, and the perspectives of these two religious educators in my school tells us something about whether or not the charism is being passed on. They tell us something about whether or not the charism is being lived faithfully, dynamically, by lay people who have been offered a role in carrying the charism into the future.

As part of a narrative inquiry course I set out to look for 3 religion teachers in at least 2 different brothers' schools, and especially to find one whose perspective was different from my own. I had anticipated some problems in that I expected at least one of the educators to have such a different perspective that the interview itself might become a point of contention. I consider myself to be a progressive Catholic, even liberal by some standards, and there are educators in the brothers' schools whose views on religious education eschew questioning, and instead focus on doctrinal orthodoxy over a more pastoral approach to high school students. I was unable to arrange the interview with the teacher whose perspective differed most radically from my own, and I later learned that his school decided not to offer him a contract for the coming year. The paradigmatic dissonance between his perspective and my own (which has been shaped by the brothers to a great extent) was such that a brothers' school decided it was better to part ways. Still I wanted a point of view different from mine, so I approached a younger colleague at my own school, just a few years into his religious education career, whose theological training was from a Catholic university in the mid-west known to be very traditional in methods and theology. Tim was very open to the idea of my project, and accommodated my schedule as we set a time to meet.

The other 2 subjects were men to whom I had a stronger personal connection, having known each for a long time. The first subject was Br. Bernie, but his data has already been presented above. The final subject is a colleague in his mid-30's, Scott, who as campus minister holds the job I did before I entered administration several years ago. Scott also happens to be a former student of mine, and for a short time lived as a Brother of the Sacred Heart before leaving the order as a young adult. He is now married with three young children.

The interviews ranged in length from 30 minutes with Tim, and 18 minutes with Scott. The conversations were guided by a loose set of questions I had composed. I used a simple digital recorder to obtain the interviews, listened to each recording, some sections multiple times, and had the interviews transcribed and then had to clean them up for they were often inaccurate. I have read the transcriptions, and read them while listening. I believe the material I have is worthy of analysis from a multiplicity of perspectives and have experienced the difficulty of selecting portions to represent in this work—knowing full well that each representation is incomplete. I take each of the interviews to be “co-constructed” (Phoenix, 2008) and as such recognize that what appears in my transcripts is the result of the interplay of my interests, the setting, the subjects’ varied backgrounds and a host of other particular factors, each of which contributed to the dialogues. The selected excerpts from the conversations follow, with minimal comment by me. My interview with Scott was the last, but I am starting with it because it surprised me that it was the most difficult. We met in his office, formerly mine. In many ways, we have the most in common. Of the people I interviewed, he and I have spent the most time working together, read similar material, and generally think of the church, our school, and the work we do similarly. So when I showed up in his office,

offered what had become my standard explanation for what I was working on, the ethical complications, the nature of narrative inquiry, and the limits of my promise of confidentiality, I expected the interview to proceed smoothly. It was, after all, the third, and last of the interviews I would conduct for this project, and I had reason to expect it to go well.

In many ways, it did. We had a good conversation, understood one another, I think, and Scott seemed to enjoy talking about what he does and how he thinks about it. What he did not do, however, was give me what I wanted—narratives that do what Ellis and Bochner (p. 744) describe above. On more than one occasion I asked for a story, but Scott's responses often fell more into the category of generalization. Parts of the interview reveal sections that have some narrative structure, but those have to be looked for and are not as prominent as I had expected. The following was a representative exchange:

Tom: Okay. Can you tell a story or a few, actually from your time in training to be a religious educator or the time of formation and that would really – particularly formative – in terms of how you approach it and what you do things that really shaped who you are?

Scott: A lot of the formation for being a religious educator has happened while I've been a religious educator and now I'm advance of – in fact I would say that my education at university had very little to do with the actual teaching aspect that was just sort of filling myself with knowledge that would eventually be used in the educational, but in terms of dealing with young people and the formative aspect it – there's a log of learning on the fly and trying to understand where young people are – trying to reach them where they are and try to speak in a language that makes sense to them. I remember early on in first couple of years there being a disconnect between me and my students in terms of what I thought was – was easy enough to understand and was easy enough to remember and what was reasonable to expect from them. And I actually 12 years in at that, I feel like I'm still learning that and I think they're changing.

Tom: Yeah, yeah – are there any concrete stories that you can tell where that's the case I know it's pretty on the spot can you remember a success or a failure in that respect that – that kind of shaped that idea?

Scott: Actually I think a lot of my successes and failures have been more related – less related to subject material and more related to relationships. I can remember very specifically that the first year that I taught seniors. There were several students in the class that I had already taught previously when they were younger and I didn't even realize that teaching seniors is different than teaching sophomores. And so sophomore is really like all the personal – all the attention that they get and so you tease them about the scholarship that they have on, they're not sensitive to that, they think that's funny and you do the same thing with the senior, you did two years before then and he gets very defensive about it. They're in whole different, place they are, and it took me a year to figure that out and so all these relationships that were good I mean I don't know if you want me to use names or not you know, but there were several students in that first year that that happened to the relationships went from being very cordial and playful to being very defensive, and somehow I didn't realize that when you teach seniors – you're in their way – in a way that you're not when you were younger, that you're helping them along the path and they get to be seniors and you're just one more step they have to -- the one more hurdle I have to climb over before I graduate. And that changes the dynamic and if you dig your heels in, and I do get more pushback and I think that's what I did early on and I've got learned to – not be that way with them to try to accept them where they are. Do not push against that but the sort of – I wouldn't say encourage them along that path but to – at least join them where they are and try to direct from their end and not from the top down.

Tom: What would you say is the purpose of religious education?

Scott: I think the purpose of religious education is to give young people the tools to develop their own faith and to have their own encounters with their spiritual development and there's a lot of elements that – there is a knowledge base that's really important but there is also trying to teach young people to recognize grace to recognize things that aren't concrete to have the understand the experiences that they have and they don't get through their senses or to even to make connections between experience that they have and their senses and through their senses and experiences that are transcendent that I guess you can say. And to prepare them for encounters that they're going to have later on in life, that there's a lot of ground work that's being laid and the point of religious education is – I guess the goals are further off into the future and it's harder to measure while it's happening.

Tom: Okay. What you think that's happened for you in your role whether in classroom or otherwise? When you think you've – can you recall a story or time or tell a story or time about, when you think that happened for a student or you feel like you've had that effect later on or something like that?

Scott: I've had students this year who have come after class to ask questions about things that are going in the world. I have students this year who asked me

during a lunch period how I felt about you know the way that – that the church handled an issue with – priest who wasn't very pastoral with a – funeral with a woman who was a lesbian. And the church had to deal with that in that particular diocese and he wanted to know more about it and I could tell that he was thinking about it and he wanted to know and he cared about what I thought about it and what you know he wanted to have that perspective. And I feel like just the fact that he wanted to pursue further was a success.

And I find that I've personally been fortunate enough to see that with graduates who have come back – they've had those conversations. I've talked about things that they learn in class and discussions that we had – that really genuinely prepared them. One of which came to teach back to catholic high and I appreciated his perspective in particular because I taught him in the early years of teaching seniors. And so the fact that he had a good experience made me happy because I always wondered what a screw up I was during that time and if any of those guys got anything at all from that.

We get -- have the chance to see a lot of guys come back and want to serve our school through the senior retreat and to share their spirituality there – that isn't to say that we are solely responsible for all their success, but certainly we can still be proud of it even if we weren't the one – the only ones responsible for it – at least get to see that it's happened.

Tim Loves Zombies

At the time of the interview with Tim he was in his 4th year as a religious educator. I had a role in interviewing and hiring him, and I have to admit I was initially reluctant to have him join our faculty because of the college from which he obtained his master's in theology. It is a conservative school, and I was concerned that he might bring a level of rigidity to the religion department that I did not think would benefit our students. He has been, by almost any measure, a successful teacher in our school. His students like him, he has been very effective with freshmen, and most of his students like his religion class. I have had the opportunity to observe him work in his classroom, and with students outside of the classroom, and it is clear he has established a solid rapport with his students. Our conversation took place during a school holiday, but on our campus. Tim was off, but as an administrator, I was not. We met in the Campus Ministry office where

I would also conduct the interview with Scott. We had been talking for about 7 minutes when the following emerged.

Tom: How do you understand what is that you do every day, and what is a good religious education?

Tim: Of course, when -- I mean, in graduate school in Steubenville that you're in a conservative you know, Catholic college. We learned is what the pope says religious education is all about which is -- and it's about faith, it's about understanding. Okay, so those are the two things that you're supposed to focus on is, helping students develop faith, and also an understanding for an appreciation for that faith. But moving forward like being in the classroom, I've seen really like how those two are very closely connected. It's not like a separate thing, like today we're going to talk about faith. And then tomorrow, we're going to talk about understanding. Like it kind of all coalesces into one thing.

What happened actually in the past couple of years, I got to teach mostly the freshmen is that when I first started here four years ago, it was freshmen, now seniors. And last year, a couple of them were getting confirmed. And one of those guys, who I taught couple of years. He wrote me a letter last year about how my class and the discussions that we had in our class not -- again, not just this is which we're supposed to believe, or this is exactly what the church teaches, not those kind of discussions, but just sort of who he saw me as in the classroom, kind of, changed the direction of his life. Like he has decided he wants to be a religious educator as well. And wants to go to Steubenville so and so, that's where he's headed next year and so for me, like that just blew me away. In my conference with our principal last year, I brought it up. I'd say -- it did -- I guess it took me this long, last year it was three years to see that this is why I do, what I do. That not just teaching a subject, teaching sort of who I'm and how I got to be there.

You know, the experiences that I've had and how my faith has shaped who I'm and if that in some way, like my witness in some way affects another kid to take a certain path in his life, that's awesome, that's incredible, that's kind of what I'm up to.

Tom: How do you do that?

Tim: How do I do that?

Tom: What did -- I mean, so you spoke a little bit about, it's not just content, it's not just you know teaching doctrine and having kids write it back somehow or another not that that's unimportant but that's not what's it's about. So how is that that you go about doing that religious education to have that kind of effect on somebody?

Tim: It's not as easy as I had hoped it would be. Coming out of school, I learned that I kind of got to be all things to all men, so that by all means some might be saved, that's St. Paul, right? You've got to do your research, so like, what is it that kids are up to, what is it that interests them? All right, and so you might come in to my classroom one day and like, man, [Tim] really loves zombies. Look at him talking about zombies with the kids.

Well, alright sure, maybe [I] once had an interest in zombies, but the kids like it. All right, and so when we compare the Assyrian Empire, which comes into Northern Israel and basically assimilates them into their empire, we compare them zombies. Because that's exactly like zombies, when they bite you, they turn you into one of them, and when Assyrians conquer you, eventually your culture disappears and you now are an Assyrian. So by finding out what the kids are interested in and not just kind of stuff.

They're interested in sports, like reaching out to them at the beginning of the year, I had every kid fill out, you know these little – just a very short sheet about what he's interested in and what he's involved in. And with the freshmen anyway, that is subject to change. All right, because they haven't had a chance to get involved in anything that. But you can still learn a little something about, what's their favorite TV show is, all right. It happens to be Jersey Shore, almost all the time and so I'm sorry but I can't just sit and watch Jersey Shore. But what I can do is, I can do some research and find out what Jersey Shore is about, who is on the Jersey Shore, and so if I make a reference in class then the kids see me as somebody relatable.

Reflections

I feel some pressure, and I reflect that it is silly in some respects to feel so, to find something profound, something generalizable, some revelation that will provide a transforming insight into the nature of religious education. I should find the golden nugget of wisdom that is contained in the interviews, in the selections I have shared, and relate it to the reader, render it intelligible and preserve it for posterity. I acknowledge those thoughts. But that is not what this project is about. It is about understanding these teachers' experiences of religious education, seeing it in the context of the larger perspective of the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. In some respects, their words can speak for themselves, but there are theories and constructs that inform my reflection upon their words, upon the narratives that emerged as we spoke about our work.

In many respects, the analysis or generalizations I would make about religious education are already present in the conversation with Br. Bernie. For the moment, it is his understanding of education in the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart that I hope to help to illuminate, or at least convey. I do find, though that Tim and Scott hold one thing to be a central characteristic of what it is they hope happens in religious education, namely, relationships with students are formed that facilitate a transformation within the student.

Scott indicates that his successes and failures have to do with the kind of relationships he forms with students, not with content. Tim says as much in his own words, knowing that ultimately his content, for lack of a better term, is the witness of his own journey. Br. Bernie and Ivy share the same notion—somehow the adult religious educator is giving an account of his or her own coming to grips with faith and religion and life. In another section of the interview with Br. Bernie, not included above, he answers an explicit question, namely, what would he want religious education in the charism of the brothers to look like? His answer is consistent with the narratives above, and is its own kind of generalization:

Bernie: I think formation of conscience, formation of faith...adults, expressing their faith in Jesus and the church in the proper ways and saying this is how I have come to believe this, I really believe this. This is from me. It's a genuine faith. This is how I arrived at it. Here are some experiences that led me to it. I don't think we are trying to create... a flock for the church. I don't think the brothers have ever believed that.

Tom: Right.

Bernie: But we are creating...helping create solid young people who have faith if you want that and I have often said in the brothers' way of, and this goes beyond teaching religion, this becomes being religious in a school. It's that we want them to have hope in their life. We want them to have hope in their life. And if we can give them hope, that is they can become competent and successful and succeeding in even mastering themselves. They can have,

they have hoped that will be as our founder said good men, fathers of family, good citizens, there is a certain promise. We can give them hope, then they will believe us. In other words, they have to take the faith we have and accept the faith, hope comes first. We give hope, human life and human relationships and human success and then the faith comes.

For Brother Bernie, then, it is not just about a religion class, it is about the entire school environment being imbued with a sense of religiosity, spirituality, and ultimate meaning. For none of the educators is the primary idea the transmission of doctrine, or the memorizing of content. That notion is best expressed by the stories of Br. Bernie, but that is no surprise. His career has spanned decades, and for long stretches of that career he has been responsible for articulating a contemporary understanding of the educational charism of the brothers. It is to be expected that his stories most effectively carry the story of religious education in their tradition. Four of his stories--his story of his own call, the story about the monstrance, and the two stories about the different approaches to dealing with the complexities of homosexuality in a Catholic school setting--taken together make explicit the relational paradigm that is the core of religious education for these educators. For me, Br. Bernard's monstrance story is perhaps the most important because it captures in a very short narrative the basic idea--one's relationship with Jesus has to do with sharing in his work, not in idolizing him either in person or in the Eucharist. For many Catholics, it may sound irreverent to put a sign by a monstrance that says "Don't stare at your food." They do in fact take the sacrament to be other-worldly. I take the lesson to be, though, that it is reverence for our humanity, reverence for God that is expressed in respect and reverence for one another, reverence that is rooted in a deep hope for a better life for each person--that is the worship that is called for, and that we desire to convey in our schools.

CHAPTER 9. PROPHETS OF A FUTURE NOT OUR OWN

Introduction

There are clearly aspects of post-modernism that speak to me as a human being, that provide answers, however tentative or provisional, to what it means to be a person. There are also clearly aspects of the lives and perspectives of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart whose spirit has informed my entire adult professional (and for that matter, personal) life. As I embarked on graduate studies at LSU it became clear to me that there was overlap between what I had learned through my educational praxis with the brothers, and the more theoretical reflections that I encountered at LSU, particularly when studying curriculum theory and narrative inquiry. Trained as I was at Loyola to never divorce theory from praxis, and still informed by the philosophical perspectives of American pragmatism, particularly Peirce, I have worked throughout my studies at LSU to make as much sense of post-modernism as I could in light of my daily educational experience. The sense I have made is simply this—in their writings, especially those designed to share their charism with lay colleagues, and in the words of the brothers whose interviews form the bulk of the data for this project, the brothers, their charism and the curriculum that grows from it have a significant affinity with some forms of post-modernism.

So What? Who cares?

The reader may recall that these were the questions Jean Clandinin raised when she visited with those of us in a narrative inquiry class a few years ago. In this final chapter, I submit that these are the actual research questions—because as Clandinin said they are always the research questions--that rest below the more formally stated questions in the first chapter. The “so what” of this final chapter are first the broad themes

that have emerged from the conversations with the interviewed brothers and from consideration of the material that forms the bulk of the program the brothers are using to teach their charism to their lay colleagues. The second “so what” has to do with the ways in which these broad themes echo and exemplify aspects of the post-modern paradigm, especially as that is articulated by William Doll. What I have come to understand through this process is that the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, especially now but in some ways throughout their history, have had an approach to the education of young people that is post-modern in its broadest sense.

The core themes that have emerged from speaking with the brothers are simple ones, but they exhibit a depth that cannot be quantified, and represent a commitment to a personal form of education that has been a hallmark of their spirit from the beginning. These themes, simply stated, are relationship, trust, hope, compassion and love. These are communal themes that grow out of the community of the brothers itself. They do not come in any particular order, they do not stand alone nor are they taught as separate units in a structured curriculum. Rather, each of these emerge from a practical approach to living and working with young people that places students in a dialogic relationship with educators in the charism. That dialogical perspective is manifest in the words we have from Noel, Bernie and Ivy and resonates with what Doll considers an essential characteristic of post-modernism because “The “essence” of our being, if I may borrow the metaphysician's concept, is to be dialogical--to have interactions with others in a community. Goals, plans, purposes, procedures, judgments, evaluations all come from this sense of community” (Doll, 2008, loc. 3829).

More importantly, though, their lived experience embodies these themes as well—that is something to which I can personally testify, and I hope it has come through in this work as well.

The purpose here is to draw attention to these themes in light of some of the larger post-modern threads that are generally understood to characterize the post-modern perspective. Consistent with a post-modern framework, there is no *one* way to organize the themes that have emerged in the interviews with Noel, Ivy and Bernie. Each man has his own way of expressing his way of being a brother. Each man has his own way of articulating his understanding of the charisma of the brothers, and how it is expressed in the curriculum of their schools. None of the three, I don't believe, are concerned to reconcile their experiences and understanding with post-modern perspectives. That reconciliation, or at least conversation, is of course what this project has been about. In this closing section I have chosen two ideas to help organize my thoughts.

First, William Doll's (2003) Science, Story and Spirit motif provides a way to think about the brothers' charisma and to connect our subjects' reflections to selected aspects⁷² of a post-modern paradigm. Second, a post-modern reinterpretation of the loom metaphor provides one more way of understanding the threads of the charisma's curriculum.

⁷²As there is no agreed upon definition of post-modernism, as there are many and sometimes diametrically opposed ways the paradigm has been employed in various disciplines, there simply must be, for the sake of space alone, some selection of which "post-modernism" is meant at the conclusion of this study. For a treat, the reader is directed to Rosenau (1992) for a concise overview of the multifaceted character of post-modernism's effect in social sciences, as well as the critique it offers to the natural sciences. For the purposes of this study, however, we are considering some of the insights of the natural sciences as contributing to the post-modern shake up that characterizes social science, including education. In this respect, the "selected" post-modernism is more aligned with Doll.

Science

The “science” of which Doll writes in *Modes of Thought* (2003) is embedded in modernism and includes reason as such, as well as the Enlightenment ideal of reason as that faculty of human beings that grasps the objectively real, knows the truth, is certain, measureable, and should be the dominant form, in fact the only, approach to what is. Science as such is present in the explicit curriculum of brothers’ schools, which are after all schools that are still part of the modernist standardization project. Nevertheless, in tension with this idea of modernist science is what Fleener (2005) and others call the “new sciences.”⁷³ These disciplines are of course instrumental in the arrival of the post-modern. I offer Table 1⁷⁴ to highlight the contrast between these two paradigms, and to facilitate our reflection on the post-modern character of the educational charism of the brothers:

Table 1. Contrast of Post-modern and Modernist Science.

Post-modern "new science"	Modernist science
relational	reductionist
open systems	closed systems
emergent	deterministic
alive	dead
ontology that allows for spirit	materialistic ontology
story	method
doubt	certainty
living systems	Newtonian physics
dynamic, evolving	static
allows for subjects	only objects

⁷³ See Fleener’s introduction in *Chaos, Complexity, Curriculum and Culture: A Conversation*, pp.2-6.

⁷⁴ This chart could be much off-puttingly longer, but hopefully serves its purpose here. It is composed from a number of sources, most notably Doll and Fleener (2005), but also by my own recollection from reading in this area for quite some time now, e.g. Wilber, Haught, Delio, Capra.

For Doll, the post-modern curriculum perspectives emerge from the scientific discoveries throughout the 20th century, especially in the biological, ecological, complexity and chaos realms. What has developed through the insights in these disciplines is among other things a paradigm shift from materialistic, deterministic reductionism, to one that recognizes that reality as such is much better understood as a dynamic, ever changing set of relationships that a reductionist paradigm cannot describe. To look for Doll's science thread in a curriculum that emerges from the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart one must first look for how the brothers embrace the relational in their charism. Simply put, for the brothers it is "all about relationships."⁷⁵

In each of the interviews, Noel, Bernie and Ivy spoke about their attraction to the order, about what drew them in. For Noel, it was the relationships he formed with the brothers as he visited their home, watched them interact, and was part of the work and recreation they shared. Bernie's story of his call, and his acknowledgement that he wanted to relate to young people as he saw the brothers doing parallels Noel's experience. Ivy too acknowledged that it was how the brothers treated students, finding a way to make each student feel important, that initially drew him in.

One of the themes that emerges from the conversations, and one that I think has post-modern implications, is the importance of brotherhood for the implicit curriculum of a school. The brotherhood of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart is part of both the implicit and explicit curriculum of the school and one that is present in a variety of ways as Noel, Ivy and Bernie speak. Brotherhood is important in a post-modern context for its obviously relational character and the role that it should play in schools' educational

⁷⁵ This quote is from the Coindré Leadership Program, and will appear in an extended quote later in this chapter where I will cite it more formally.

settings, and the not-so-hierarchical perspective that the brothers embrace. There are hierarchies at brothers' schools (it is the Roman Catholic Church), but there is an explicit acknowledgement that the relationships that should characterize all those involved in a community is one of brotherhood or sisterhood. One hears in Noel's movement of the discipline office upstairs an attempt to integrate what he was doing more into the center of school life, to make it more about community rather than authority. The relational character of Noel's attraction to the brothers is one thing, but it is also clear that his chief satisfaction as a brother was the relationships he was able to form, primarily as summer camp director, and as disciplinarian, with his students. The chuckles and gleam in his eye as he retold brief stories of students with whom he'd worked are evidence of his priority on relationship over any formal curriculum.

Both Ivy's anti-authoritarian streak which comes out when he recalls the rigidity of the pre-Vatican II brotherhood, and Bernie's resistance to the automation of the brothers' spiritual life when he joined emphasize a need for the lived charism to be relational and authentic. The rewriting of the Rule of Life with which Bernie was so engaged, if I may oversimplify somewhat, was a move away from a modernist method approach to religious life toward a focus on the relational character of the charism. Both of those pieces exemplify an openness to particular students and "the possible" that Davis (2009) identifies as aspects of education consistent with the new sciences:

Oriented by complexivist and ecological discourses, teaching and learning seem to be more about expanding the space of the possible and creating the conditions for the emergence of the as-yet unimagined, rather than about perpetuating entrenched habits of interpretation. Teaching and learning are not about convergence onto a pre-existent truth, but about divergence--about broadening what is knowable, doable and beable. The emphasis is not on what *is*, but on what might be brought forth. Thus learning comes to be understood as a recursively elaborative process of opening up new spaces of possibility by exploring new spaces (p. 184).

There is an egalitarianism in brotherhood that is not present in the concept of fatherhood, and the reluctance one can hear in Noel's voice as he speaks of his role as disciplinarian expresses that sense. Bernie's disinterest in priesthood, and Ivy's hesitancy to be anything but gentle and respectful (as opposed to simply invoking the vow of obedience) toward those brothers who would be displaced by Katrina are simply more examples of brotherhood and the role it plays in the charism and should play in a charism inspired curriculum. This brotherhood is a particular example of the post-modern perspective that holds community and relationship as fundamental to curricular concerns: "The 'essence' of our being, if I may borrow the metaphysician's concept, is to be dialogical--to have interactions with others in a community. Goals, plans, purposes, procedures, judgments, evaluations all come from this sense of community" (Doll, 2008, loc. 3829).

The relational post-modern perspective of the brothers is also manifest in the brothers' openness to the emergence of a student's potential rather than the imposition of a set of predetermined outcomes. In Noel's discomfort with the efficiencies of the principal who for all intents and purposes fired him, in Bernie's obvious preference for a relational approach to students who are struggling with moral issues, and in Ivy's almost dismissive attitude about the content of courses he taught during his brief classroom career, one sees a post-modern perspective that eschews the control that characterizes a more modernist approach. For each of the brothers, what one sees in this openness to the student's inherent potential is a desire for the student's transformation. The brothers recognize that each student is his or her own dynamic process, and they embrace the opportunity to accompany and guide students along their journeys. Given their focus on hope, the brothers recognize that "what is," is not "what ought to be" and so are consistent

with a post-modern paradigm that identifies change as fundamental reality: “With change as a fundamental comes the realization that our curriculum and methods of instruction need to accept that the learner develops not just incrementally over time but actually undergoes some sort of transformation” (Doll, 2008, 5624).

Such a transformative approach is in tension with the more modernist, rationalist paradigm, and that tension is evident in some of Ivy’s reflections. Throughout my interactions with Ivy in our mentor/mentee relationship, he more than once acknowledged an anti-intellectual, or at least anti-theoretical, bent to the brothers, at least as they lived in the early to mid-20th century. Historically, one can easily locate the curriculum of the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in an anti-enlightenment narrative. Recollections from Ivy about the rural identity of the brothers, his notion that one shouldn’t be seen carrying a book across campus if one wanted to be taken seriously as a brother all speak to an anti-intellectual streak that fits easily enough in a distrust of over-thinking, maybe even as a vestige of the Church’s distrust of reason in post-revolution in France, when the embrace of Reason as such led to the reign of terror. The anti-intellectual bent of the early and relatively recent brotherhood embraces a practicality that is consistent with a Peircean pragmaticist⁷⁶ perspective, and one which is also consistent with a post-modern distrust of meta-narratives. Br. Ivy’s recognition that “if it comes from Rome it is about control” is a post-modern resistance to top-down institutionalization. Ivy’s own admission that he “frequently lapses in to the 60’s” is one more demonstration of a tendency to the post-modern. This vague but nevertheless real

⁷⁶ Peirce eventually labeled his philosophy “pragmaticist” despite having developed the philosophy of pragmatism. “Pragmatism” as a term was co-opted by other thinkers and transformed into something other than Peirce intended, leading him to create a new, purposefully distasteful (so as to discourage its use by others) term (Peirce, 1955, p. 255).

sense, part of the history of the charism, makes it feasible for the charism to be consistent with a post-modern question of reason as such, at least that “one-eyed reason” spoken of by Doll (2003) and Quinn (2001).

This post-modern distrust of modernist reason is captured well by Caputo (2006):

The French phrase Lyotard used that got translated as "meta-narratives" was *grands récits* "big stories," that is, large overarching accounts, "totalizing stories" (he was thinking of Hegel) that claimed things like "history is nothing but the unfolding of the absolute spirit," or "nothing but the unfolding of the laws of dialectical materialism," or nothing but the displaced desire for your mommy, or nothing but the resentment of the weak against the strong, or nothing but this, that, or the other thing. Enough of these "nothing huts." When Lyotard said "incredulity," it was a brilliant choice of words. ... He was saying that these things are pretentious, that they have not proven themselves, and we just don't believe them anymore. They have become incredible and we have grown incredulous. Almost any careful look at the way things are done in science or the way they unfold in history reveals the shortcomings of such simplistic and overreaching stories. Post-modernism thus is not relativism or scepticism, as its uncomprehending critics almost daily charge, but minutely close attention to detail, a sense for the complexity and multiplicity of things, for close readings, for detailed histories, for sensitivity to differences.

It is important to note, as Caputo does, that the post-modern is not anti-reason—just agnostic of totalizing. In it the place of totalizing the post-modern would place something altogether more personal, particular and diverse. For the brothers, that means personal attention to the student and to those with whom they work.

Interestingly, for Fleener (2005) it is the approach of the new science that calls for a more meaningful approach to experience than the modernist metanarrative can provide: "Post-modernism recognizes that science, as a meaning system, is more aligned with spirituality, relationship, and interdependence than was previously thought. When science becomes reduced to its methods, as it has during the modern era, all meaning is lost" (p. 12). The scientific revelation of the evolutionary character of the universe is

another post-modern disruption of the modernist curriculum with consequences for the implicit religious and moral education of the charism. For Fleener

Post-modernism's attempt to reintroduce meaning, purpose, value, and understanding explores the "why?" and understands the answer comes us and our own way of seeing-as. By seeing dynamic holism, the unfolding of life, and interconnectedness of all, we can't help but to feel awe and inspiration in New Science inquiry. The modern existential angst and the accompanying feelings of smallness and insignificance are dissolved as we appreciate the infinite complexity and relationships that are the dance of life (2005, p. 14).

Haught (2012) and Delio (2013), both recognize the importance of an evolutionary curriculum that better captures our desire for a story that includes the health of human beings and the planet as a whole. The space in which such meaning can be experienced and talked about is what Doll would call Story, and makes up the second thread of this chapter's reflection.

Story

In Year One, Reading 20, of the Coindré Leadership Program it says:

In coming to better know the charism in action, it is important to see this idea of a pedagogy of trust as an essential manifestation of the charism throughout our history, and not just today. This continuity in the charism was affirmed by the Chapter of 2000, as explained in the General Council document, Lord, when did we see you?:

The Chapter recognized that a spirituality of compassion and a pedagogy based on trust formed part of the fundamental intuitions of our founder. These intuitions have always been present among us though we may not always have been aware of them. They express the educational values lived out by the vast majority of our brothers in their apostolic mission. It was the Chapter's intuition that they are at the heart of our heritage. (p.27)

Thus it is important to see how this concept of trust became manifest in the early history of the Institute, in the people and their ministry, in their dealings with each other and those they served, in the daily reality of their lives. It is about all our relationships. It is about the nature of leadership, about the nature of teaching. It informs all we do with our colleagues, students and parents. It is essentially an assumption about the other which we hold onto at all times. Once again the General Council summarized this pedagogy as:

The Brothers and their collaborators make use of a pedagogy of trust in their dealings with the young, particularly with those experiencing educational, behavioral or other difficulties. This pedagogy of trust is expressed mainly through the acceptance of the young, through fundamental respect for them as they are, and through faith in their capacity for change or growth. (ibid, p 27).

This pedagogy is not something that has been defined and then implemented. It is a description of the real fabric of the communities in which we serve. It is a premise from which all else flows, a premise that applies far more broadly than simply to the students in our care.

This portion of the final chapter will reflect on that deep trust of the charism as it relates to William Doll's notion of Story.

In the middle of his novel, *East of Eden*, Steinbeck (1992) writes, "We have only one story. All novels, all poetry, are built on the never-ending contest in ourselves of good and evil." It is a sweeping claim, and whether one takes the binary that Steinbeck sets up as necessarily true or not, the quote itself at least calls one to consider the power of story to evoke from the listener/reader reflection and experience, emotion and recognition. Story is no less central to a post-modern approach to curriculum, and in this section of our final chapter it will provide a way to answer more directly some of our research questions. For Doll (2003):

It is life and its complexity of personal experiences that story brings forth. Story proves nothing and attempts to prove nothing. Rather, it wants to subjectively draw the reader into its world and convince him or her of the validity of that world via the "lifelikeness," or "verisimilitude" of the experience the reader has in engaging the "text." Further, the openness of the text, its uncertainty, is what gives the story power. As Iser says, "It is the element of indeterminacy that evokes the text to "communicate" with the reader" (in Bruner, p. 24). Here the text induces (even seduces) the reader to participate in the story's unfolding, as the text "allows a spectrum of actualizations to emerge" (6).

As they communicate their understanding of their charism and the curriculum that grows from it, Noel, Bernie and Ivy clearly turn to story as the means of expression. Noel's enchantment with the students whose misbehavior brought them to his attention, the

playful way they were welcomed by his assistant, or his experience of the contrast between him and his predecessor are all relatable as personally meaningful stories which we are invited to hear and feel with him. The themes which emerge from these stories are the deep, broad and essential themes of the charism: hope and trust.

In Noel's stories, lacking in detail though they may be, one encounters a sincere hope and trust in the goodness of the young people with whom he worked. The paradigmatic stories of Bernie and Ivy reveal the heart of the charism as it is manifest in the pedagogy of trust, a trust given to and received from both students, colleagues, and fellow brothers. In his interviews Bernie came with several stories ready, stories which revealed a patience with students' imperfect development, but replete with a trust and confidence that being faithful to the charism meant believing that students are already inherently more than they currently demonstrate. Ivy's recognition of his football coach's grasp of the charism reflects the same theme.

It is fair to say that this is an inherent approach of the brothers whose reflections we have, and of the order in general. Bernie's recognition that it is "hope first" is consistent with Davis's perspective, and it is one that motivates each of the brothers. Hope, after all, points always forward and recognizes the gap between what is, and what ought⁷⁷ to be—the structure, Peterson says, of story in general. Ivy's recognition that this hope is deep, "beyond optimism," is for me an ontological claim that the world is such that hope is warranted regardless of passing appearance to the contrary. When encountering young people it is our hope that ultimately provides the space and support the students need to grow.

⁷⁷ The "ought" of course invokes a moral note, but it is a morality that recognizes relationship first, and not a rigid adherence to doctrinal pronouncements.

In their desire to instill hope, and ultimately help students to find faith and a meaningful human life, the brothers of the sacred heart hold to an implicit evolutionary paradigm best exemplified in stories of young people and educators who are open to one another. Like the process of evolution itself, the stories, whether it be of the founding of the order, older stories of brothers, or stories of faculty and students who are more contemporary, the goal has always been to communicate a dynamic reality. The themes of those stories emerged in the conversations with Noel, Ivy and Bernie all of whom had stories of students, faculty, or events that illustrated for them just what it is that they hope and believe their schools are about. I hope that it is clear for the interviewed brothers, especially Ivy and Bernie, that they in many ways capture this notion from Green (in Johnson and Reed, 2012)

Teachers, like their students, have to learn to love the questions, as they come to realize that there can be no final agreements or answers, no final commensurability. And we have been talking about stories that open perspectives on communities grounded in trust, flowering by means of dialogue, kept alive in open spaces (p. 162).

Hope, then, gives way to the practice of the pedagogy of trust. Students cannot be allowed to grow without the confidence we have that hope provides, but hope without trust is empty. The trust is manifest in a multiplicity of ways. First of all, the stories of the charism and the order as a whole, as well as the impact of particular practitioners on particular students and colleagues each support the conviction that deep meaning can be made by engaging and living the charism. The brothers are trusted with the education of young people, and in the interviews one can readily see the seriousness with which that trust is accepted and lived out. Bernie's story about his experience of being called is the paradigmatic example of that trust—it is a trust that emanates from a call by God to work in Jesus' name for the care of young people.

The brothers have now chosen to trust their lay colleagues with the charism itself, the patrimony of the order, and have given that trust generously. At the conclusion of the first interview with Br. Ivy, he made it abundantly clear that such trust is essentially his life's work. It is hard to put into words how daunting it is to hear him say something like that, since I count myself among those to whom this trust has been given, both personally by him, but also through efforts like his and Br. Bernie's to create programs and processes for engendering that trust.

The trust that is placed in educators in the charism's tradition is not a trust that teachers will simply pass on religious or moral doctrine. Rather, as Bernie puts it, it is a question of living in such a way that an educator is a "believable witness" because his or her lived example is faithful to the gospel call to love God and love our neighbor. Part of that lived example is a trust in the goodness of young people, a trust that God is at work in their lives and that it is the job of the educator to help students find the hope that comes with that realization. The story from Bernie of the young man who came out to a faculty member, as well as the stories both Bernie and Ivy told of Br. Joseph's deep trust in a young man who'd made a series of mistakes both attest to the trust in young people, and the way that an educator should approach a young person's mistakes.

Trust is also placed in the institutions that embody the charism. They are trusted to be what their communities need them to be, expect them to be, that the institutions will live up to their promises. That embodied trust is apparent in the story Ivy told about preparing to open Stanislaus after Camille, in his story about meeting faculty from Br. Martin at Catholic High School after Hurricane Katrina devastated both Br. Martin and St. Stanislaus, two of the three Brothers-owned schools in the former New Orleans Province. For Ivy, that trust also goes by the name faithfulness, and is palpable when he

related the reaction of the Br. Martin faculty member who showed up at Catholic High after Katrina's destruction: "I knew you would be here."

The trust that is inherent in the charism is exemplified too in the open-ended character of the work that they do. The future is uncertain both for the brothers, and the students in their schools. As all three brothers put it, there is more to a student—or a faculty or institution for that matter, than meets the eye. Br. Noel's notion that students need to be pushed, and Bernie's stories of students for whom brothers refused to surrender hope, as well as Ivy's story about the undersized football offensive lineman, all address the unfinished nature (nay, unfinishable) work of education as well as the uniqueness of each student. Such an approach is consistent with Greene (in Johnson & Reed, 2012):

To recognize the role of perspective and vantage point, to recognize at the same time that there are always multiple perspectives and multiple vantage points, is to recognize that no accounting, disciplinary or otherwise, can ever be finished or complete. There is always more. There is always possibility. And this is where the space opens for the pursuit of freedom (p. 158).

That open-ended character is consistent with an evolutionary, organic model of reality, an ontology not of essences but of processes.

Spirit

Spirit arises from the dance or "play" of recursiveness (Doll, 2003). As the realities of open-ended, evolving, dynamic persons and worlds interact, a spirit can emerge. That emergent spirit is present in the hope and trust inherent in Ivy's story of the undersized football player, and in nearly all the stories associated with the charism of the brothers, and it calls to mind Huebner's (1995) consideration of the idea of spirit:

Spirit is that which transcends the known, the expected, even the ego and the self. It is the source of hope. It is manifested through love and the waiting expectation that accompanies love. It overcomes us, as judgement, in our doubts, and in the

uncomfortable looks of those with whom we disagree, particularly those with whom we disagree religiously. One whose imagination acknowledges that "moreness" can be said to dwell faithfully in the world (16).

For our purposes here, that moreness is the charism itself, constantly recursive in Lyon as faculties from all over the world listen to the story of the brothers and embrace it. The story of the brothers is recursive⁷⁸ in the students learning it in classes, and in the interviews with brothers done in the BSH religion classes at CHS. The dance continues with new partners and dancers every school year. It is a dynamic telling and retelling of the story of the brothers, what they are doing here and what they hope to do. It is spirit, I think, that best captures the approach to moral education that has been part of this study. In spirit, we recognize that relational ontologies and storied methodologies are inextricably woven together. It is impossible in practice to disentangle moral education, education to compassion, and the curriculum inherent in the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

In schools run by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, what is it that "plays" and gives rise to spirit? The play occurs in the encounters between any and all members of a school community, especially between educators and students. The space for those encounters is set by all sorts of factors over which the players have little or no control⁷⁹, but the relationships that develop because of the activities that occur in a school setting give rise to the spirit that characterizes the school.

The open-endedness and trust that is inherent in all aspects of the charism's curriculum is not without form or purpose. While the post-modern aspects of religious

⁷⁸ That recursiveness is present in this section as well. Since "spirit" is about the dance between science and story, the themes of each appear here again.

⁷⁹ E.g. the explicit curriculum, and any and all historical factors that place the school in a given time, culture and place.

education should be evolutionary, it cannot be random or value free. There is a telos, however indeterminate it may be, that must go along with the charism. It is, after all, a curriculum that is rooted in a God who is best understood as love and compassion, exemplified broadly in the story of Jesus, and more specifically in the stories surrounding the founding of the order by Fr. Andre Coindré.

Love and compassion are relational words and as such embrace a relational ontology rather than one of essences. They recognize the interconnectedness of reality and that the proper way to live in the world is through a love and compassion that are embodied in Christ and Coindré, and should be embodied in those who follow them. Moral education then is not the communication of propositions about sin or black and white answers to moral questions, but rather an openness to accompany those whose stories we share, whose lives are woven together with our own. Moral education is about entering a story, being part of a web of stories, all of which in some way speak to the broad approaches to living: hope, faith and love. Whether it is Noel's work to make the discipline space at Stanislaus more welcoming (much credit given to his assistant), Bernie's stories of students who appeared to be beyond reach, or Ivy's reflections about the faithfulness of the brothers' lay partners in education, each of their reflections is about the moral boundaries of being in relationship. The deep sense of being responsible for students comes through quite clearly.

The spiritual nature of education is present in Br. Bernie's reflection that any subject can reveal the deeper truth of God's love and goodness, the religious meaning of life—hence his broader notion of the religious character of all education and the role the entire school plays in that effort. For Bernie the entire school community should be imbued with this awareness, should manifest this spirit. Such a notion is consistent with

Doll's approach, for when science is combined with a recognition that story and spirit are necessary approaches to what is—the education in a school has an opportunity to be deeper and more meaningful.

The play of spirit can be heard in Br. Noel's laughter about the student who took a joy ride on a school bus and when he talks about his time as the director of Camp Stanislaus. As much as Noel enjoyed math, it was the time he worked at Camp Stanislaus that I suggest is by far the most meaningful for him. The activities of a summer camp form the arena for the recursiveness of the charism as it is embodied by Noel and the young men who would become his counselors.

Ivy talks about spirit when he reflects on those with whom he has worked who best embody the charism, and his first story had to do with the coach who saw potential already present in a young person, and simply created the circumstances for his potential to be realized. There is an intangible aspect to living the spirit of the charism, the "moreness" of Huebner (1995), that comes through when Ivy spoke of those faculty who just understand in their guts what the charism is and when he spoke about the real curriculum of brothers' schools is to have "a kid come to know that he's loved in a whole variety of ways, it has to be you know the trust we place in him or her to grow, the sort of compact we make with them to grow." That quote from Ivy sums it up well, because its focus is on an actual student, not a category, a distinction that Huebner makes and that I think it is clear that the brothers live out:

Educators talk about the learner, the student, the 2-year-old, the 10-yearold, the adolescent, the Hispanic, the Asian, the African American. The subjects of these conversations are categories, not persons. Categories are necessary for planning educational activity. Teachers, however, do not see or meet categories; such classifications are stereotypes, a form of prejudice. Teachers meet persons. Teachers encounter a uniquely formed person different from any other person in the world, a person with his or her own particular story, which is both history and

promise. Talk about teaching is talk about the present and the past and the future of persons —of Ethan, Pedro, Marie, and Donna. It is also talk about a person who teaches; who, in spite of efforts to the contrary, is not a mere cog in a machine or someone who blindly follows the formulas of textbook writers, exam makers, or administrators (1996, p. 2 of 5).

Finally then, the spirit of the brothers is about love. In the same section of the essay quoted immediately above, Huebner identifies this essential character of education that so pervades the charism:

Teaching someone is a human response to another person and to the world. It is an act of love, a term most educators probably prefer not to use. The word disrupts the presumed habits of objectivity that accompany the prevailing behavioral language of education nevertheless, it is a prerequisite for moral discourse. The word implies a concern for the human being as a brother or sister human being, equal in worth (1996, p. 2 of 5).

Bernie identifies hope as the primary focus of the curriculum, but it is a hope that grows out of the deep sense that it is love that made the world, that God is love. It is love too, that I sensed in each of the men with whom I spoke—love for their brothers, love for the students entrusted to their care, and love for their colleagues. Love is found in the symbol (Figure 3) Doll uses to unite science story and spirit and the symbol (Figure 4) of the brothers:



Figure 3. Doll's Open Heart. Used in to illustrate the union of science, story and spirit (Doll, 2003, p.2).



Figure 4. The Symbol Adopted by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. The open, pierced heart symbolizes the vulnerability and openness that must characterize an educator in the Brothers' charism (Sacre Coeur, 2014, back cover).

I just want the reader to ponder the images above. It is no accident, I think, that the image Doll (2003) uses to illustrate his 3 S's, bears a resemblance to the image that represents the Brothers of the Sacred Heart that Ivy first opposed, and now loves. Both are open hearts, both indicate thereby that what must happen in education cannot be a closed system, but must continuously allow for flow, for change, for vulnerability. The Catholic open heart, of course, represents also a wounded heart, and a heart that because it is wounded can be present to others who are wounded. The spirit represented by both symbols will continue to be one to which I aspire, and toward which I hope all schools, in one form or another, will move.

Loom

Certainly the metaphor of the heart is one which properly evokes the spirit of the brothers, but the loom metaphor, embedded in the brothers' history, also serves as a vehicle to express the spirit of the charism. The Jacquard loom on which the first boys taken in by the brothers in France learned to work is best understood as a modernist device--a machine which controls an outcome, producing a cloth from pre-selected threads and making them into a pre-programmed pattern. The machine metaphor has to be replaced by a more organic weaving of a student's "cloth," one where his or her history

and perspective, agency and desires, are in dialogue and relationship with both the brothers, the charism and the school community.

A traditional Catholic/Christian metaphor for such activity is found in the image of God as a potter, and human beings as clay. Taken more or less literally, the image raises questions about the role of the person in his or her formation, the extent to which God the potter pre-determines our “shape” and abilities, or directs our futures. Reinterpreted post-modernally I suggest that God’s work is understood non-deterministically, with a paradigm that owes more to evolution and complexity theory.

For Haught's evolutionary theology, God is best understood then as a deep love which calls to us from the future. God "pots" through an evolutionary process that is a constant engagement of a given entity with the totality of its circumstances and the options that the future presents—all with a desire to open one to a deeper experience of love. The loom metaphor then must surrender the pre-programmed aspect that is the punch card, that vestige of modernist control over the weaving process. The post-modern perspective that the brothers in this study have given expression to has no such pre-determined goals other than the opening up of a student's "already--not-yet" potential. What will guide the process then? What takes the place of the punch card, what will “control” the pattern the loom must weave?

The short answer is that there will be no control in the modernist sense. In its place will be relationships the student values, hope, trust, love and compassion. The brothers’ curriculum embraces such a perspective when it trusts in the moreness of a given student, a moreness that is not yet present, but that is taken in faith to be there nonetheless. I believe what has emerged in this study is a consistent lived experience of the brothers who embrace just such a perspective.

While not a word that originates with any of the subjects (it is introduced by me into a conversation with Ivy, but he does concur) “organic” does capture the way that spirit emerges in Brothers’ schools, and the way that the charism has come to be recognized, expressed and incorporated into school communities. Any organic metaphor I take to be a post-modern approach to circumstances that in a modernist paradigm would have been expressed in a more deterministic machine metaphor. The organic metaphor makes it clear that the charism is a lived reality, one that adapts to changing circumstance and that can exhibit the dynamic fidelity that is necessary if it is to continue to be a viable way of life.

This organic, lived practice calls to mind the ontoepistemology of Barad as described by Jackson & Mazzei (2012). The term is used to break down traditional metaphysical distinctions between epistemology and ontology, as well the distinction between matter and discourse (p. 116). In this sense I find a resonance with Doll—though he makes a distinction between science (which in many of its instantiations is concerned with the material) and story (discourse), it is the interaction of the two which creates spirit, the actual lived reality, the charism that emerges from the weaving of the two. What we find in their expression is an ontoepistemology of the lived charism, their lived brotherhood. The lived charism is a *being-knowing-doing* that is inextricably woven together in a unique way by each brother’s life, it is his spirituality, his way of joining his life to the story of the order and the complex, particular and practical circumstances of each student.

Conclusion

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart have not had a long history, as history goes, or even as history goes for Catholic orders of religious men. They are relative newcomers,

having been born in the early 19th century and they flourished from the middle of that century to the late middle of the 20th. They are now, by any accounting, in decline. While hope always remains for new vocations, the real hope now is that their spirit, their educational charism will live on in the writings of their founder and their leaders throughout the order's existence, but more importantly in the practice of lay educators who intentionally embrace the order's charism in the schools the brothers currently own, and in those schools with which they have a tradition of service. That second hope is by no means certain, but so that it is viable the brothers and their partners have undertaken numerous intentional efforts designed to give that hope every chance to be realized.

One major obstacle to its realization, perhaps *the* obstacle, is the different circumstances in which education now exists as compared to the circumstances for the majority of the order's existence. The survey of the order's history presented in this study indicates that the order emerged and grew inside cultures that were living and thinking from within a primarily modernist paradigm. The expression of that paradigm differed as the dominant culture changed from French to Anglo-American, but the situation now is different.

This project is one that is intensely personal for me. I have had the good fortune to work with and for a group of Catholic men, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, for nearly 30 years now, virtually all of my adult life. It is the only career I have known, and it has not always felt like a fit. The summer of 2014, however, I had the extraordinary good fortune to be invited to Rome, Italy, to partake in the Rome International Synthesis Experience (R.I.S.E.) program. RISE is the culmination of the Coindré Leadership Program, a 3+ year program of readings, mentorship, retreats and formation experiences that are meant to immerse a participant in the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart

so that he or she can embody that charism even in the absence of members of the religious order.

It was at RISE that the hoped for synthesis happened for me, and in no small part due to the work I have done with the curriculum theory program at LSU. Many threads came together during the two weeks in Rome, but one that I could not ignore was that I am where I belong now. As stated above, it did not always feel like a fit—but now, at least for the moment, it does. My formation at the hands of the brothers follows my formation in the seminary with the Benedictines and my formation in the Jesuit tradition at Loyola in New Orleans. The Benedictines offered an almost other-worldly introduction into the aesthetics of Catholic liturgy, a strong sense of hospitality, and the monastic tradition suited my natural introversion. The Jesuit tradition is intellectual and certainly suited my inclination to deal with the world in that way—through study, scholarship and argument. The Brothers of the Sacred Heart though, have consistently asked more from me than my inclination—more organization, more practical, less theoretical or intellectual forms of love for the young people who attend our schools. It finally has fallen to the brothers to help me synthesize a more holistic approach to education, and to my service to the Church.

What I seek in this project is one more synthesis, a sense of curriculum that is in harmony with my lived experience of the brothers' schools, and what I have come to know about larger issues of ontology, epistemology and methodology. Exposed as I was to post-modern musings on curriculum theory by reading William Doll in the early 2000's in the Loyola program, it is only now that I have come to wonder more explicitly about theories of curriculum and what it is I do every day, and why I do it. One more time, I am hoping for some sense-making, hoping that what I have come to love and appreciate about the

spirit that should live in brothers' schools is not at odds, or even better is consistent with, a post-modern curricular framework.

While it may not be true to say that the brothers are post-modern, it is true to say that most if not all of who they want and care to be is not inconsistent with the post-modern paradigm. In some sense, one might be able to say that the post-modern is a distrust of permanence, a moving away from Platonic Forms and fundamental essences, moving away from stories that are absolutely true and as such require rigid adherence.

I am fresh from a homily I heard today focused on the readings from Genesis about the creation of woman from man's side, and from the Gospel where Jesus teaches that anyone who divorces and marries another commits adultery. The young very orthodox priest was doing his best to sound pastoral and caring as he nevertheless insisted that it says what it says and we need to live accordingly, difficult and off-putting though it may be. It occurs to me that such an interpretation is not a post-modern one, and one that post-modernism calls into question--not so that we can descend into relativism, but so that we can be free to live a dynamic faith that can respond to the needs of every age without asking any single age to rule the rest. Such an interpretation necessarily presupposes some always-beyond-the-horizon possible faith to which we unavoidably aspire, what Haught, Teilhard de Chardin, and Delio would understand to be the God who calls us to evolve toward that "not-yet" that is always more than we can imagine ourselves to be.

It seems to me that when we listen to the brothers in this study talk, what one doesn't hear is rigidity, absolutes, or a desire to impose anything on students. Rather the brothers seek ways to allow young people to discover themselves as capable and lovable, trustworthy and powerful enough to make a difference for others as they grow. That

pursuit extends from the order of the brothers itself outward to the students, faculty and all those who bond with the brothers and their schools.

The full fabric of the charism is not a static entity. The stories which educators and students are invited to inhabit (Peterson, 2013) continue to grow, and now include not only stories of young prisoners and ne'er-do-well boys of Coindré's time but also young people in our own schools who have experienced God's love and compassion in the work we are able to do with them. The books that have been written, the general chapters which have met since Vatican II, the programs of CIAC, and the readings and experiences of the Coindré Leadership Program now all contribute to a living reality that is the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. In my own school, there is now an effort to collect oral histories of the brothers—and the work is done by students so that they encounter those personal stories and experience the charism in that way. Whatever sort of story it is, it is not simply a story to be studied and understood, or characterized in a particular way, but rather a story to be understood so that it can be lived and dynamically reinterpreted for each new age. Certainly it is the case that there will always be young people who are abandoned and without hope, in need of an experience of God's unconditional love.

What emerged over the course of years of study and reflection was an articulation of the charism of the brothers that recognized in Coindré a deep compassion for the suffering of children, abandoned and without hope, with a deep trust in the goodness of young people and those people God would call to care for them, and a desire to help those children know the deep love of God for them. Those elements have come to be known throughout the schools of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart as a Spirituality of Compassion, a Pedagogy of Trust, a Theology of Hope, and the simple goal of having students leave our schools with the knowledge that God loves them. A dissertation could

be written on each of those, but for now it will be enough to see them manifest in opening statements of the Brothers' Rule of Life of 2007, a rule whose roots are in the late 1960's, but that is now informed by an organic matrix that grew over the course of several decades. That charism is dynamic enough that it can find expression in future circumstances, imaginable and unimaginable, and for this inquiry, it will have the last word (the verse style is found in the document):

11. Charism of the Founder

The Institute of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart
owes its origin to the apostolic zeal
of Father Andre Coindré
for instructing neglected youth
and bringing them
to the knowledge and love of God.
The founding of our Institute
was his response
to the missionary needs of his time.
Father Coindré and his first followers realized
that the religious life had value in itself
and that through it
the work of education
would be better assured.

12. Our Predecessors

Brother Polycarp, Brother Xavier,
and our other predecessors
followed in the footsteps of our founder,
in gentleness and humility,
growing in sanctity as they lived out
our motto and shared hope—

Ametur Cor Jesu!

They made love the center of their lives
and the inspiration
of their apostolic and missionary activity.

13. Brothers Today

To belong to the Institute today
is to believe in God's love,
to live it, and to spread it;
it is to contribute as religious educators
to the evangelization of the world,
particularly through the education
of children and youth.

EPILOGUE: NOW WHAT?

This epilogue is being written post-defense of the dissertation, in light of some of the ideas that surfaced during that discussion. My first thought harkens back to Clandinin's notion that researchers must ask "So what?" about their own research, but the question that emerges in light of the defense is "Now what?" It should not be a surprise to anyone that there are hanging questions, unexplored paths, and suggestions for paths to follow. The story continues in likely infinite ways, not that anyone could check if that is the case, but I would like choose a couple of subjects and for the last few minutes of the reader's time explore them. I want to play a bit (I hope Doll would approve) with post-modernism, and engage in what Peirce would call musement or abduction in a search for ideas that might answer the lingering "Now what?"

This study has been concerned with the post-modern, and has acknowledged the multifarious approaches to knowing and research that fall under its umbrella. The first "now what?" question that suggests itself is this—can we find a better term, or maybe a better practice surrounding the use of the term? I would like to offer a few ideas in this regard, especially in light of the focus of this inquiry.

I must acknowledge my own complicity in the unintentional binary that modernist v. post-modernist creates. While it is an attempt at demarcating a change in perspective or emphasis, it also creates a structure, for example in the table in the conclusion, that could be seen as an attempt to capture in a static way a reality that will not be captured. As for that, one could argue that the search for a new term for post-modernism is a very similar project, and one to be eschewed. Perhaps. Nevertheless, we proceed.

There are at least two ways to consider this search for another term, the first and more interesting one to me is to look for a way to do away with pre-modern, modern and

post-modern altogether, to end the modernist domination of the terminology. Such a search is clearly beyond this inquiry, and there are much more prepared scholars whose work provides possible answers, or at least point in that direction. Ken Wilber's Integral perspective leaps to mind, and does in fact encompass the three paradigms. Doll's work contains seeds for this search I am sure, and with some effort I think a term could emerge from his work. A possible contender from Doll is his idea of story, if it were expanded, and I believe that is where I would start. It is alluded to in this inquiry—we need a new story, and that could be taken to mean that it has always been about story. The we can end the centrality of modernism and find a name for the story each paradigm was telling—acknowledging the meta-narrative that characterized what is currently called the pre-modern and modern. But as Berry is quoted as saying above “we are between stories” and the post-modern is the age of distrust of meta-narratives. But if we cannot trust the story, we are back to a version of the question “Now what?”

Setting aside that search for an umbrella term, let's consider briefly another way of naming what we call for now “post'-modern.” I take note, as I did earlier in the dissertation, that Quinn laments that our reasoning is “post” but never “trans,” but I wonder if recasting this characterization may be useful. It may be true, and I think this is what I think, that our reasoning has always been “trans” and has never been “post.” The lines we may want to draw between paradigm shifts may themselves be abstractions, but the transitions we see from pre-modern, to modern, to post-modern don't entirely leave the past behind. There are major differences, to be sure, but the transitions from one paradigm to another may be better characterized as transformations that necessarily carry the past into the present, and the present into the future. Serres' notion of how a car is a comingling of the old and the new comes to mind. We will never really be

absolutely “post”-modern, but perhaps trans-modern, and there are aspects of the pre-modern that remain with us as well. Modernist reason provided a way out of pre-modern superstition, but it contributed to a rejection of a sense of a holistic sacred creation. That pre-modern sense of the oneness of creation, its sacred character, did not however disappear and has found, I have argued, a place in what we have called in this inquiry the post-modern critique of modernism. Enlightenment reason is still with us, in the quantifying, technical, precision-oriented technological realms that have successfully provided access to near immediate communication, to safe transportation, to a robust ability to mass produce food and provide clean water. Those abilities are not without their dark sides, as post-modernism properly notes: in the seductive aspects of the quantifying classifying reductionistic mindset, in its tendency to dehumanize, in its glorification of efficiencies—but to say that we are “post” modern is too much. Again, can “trans” modernism capture the critique of modernism, put modernist reason a more skeptical, humble gaze, while acknowledging its contribution to knowing and its daily presence in our lives?

Trans-modern isn’t perfect of course, largely because it remains defined in terms of a supposed period against which it must be placed in order to achieve some identity, just as post-modernism is. If the notion is that some aspects of every paradigm of human knowing are carried from past to present to future, then “trans” as a prefix to the receding paradigm does little to help because from one paradigm to the next we will simply have to keep adding “trans.” “Trans” may be better than “post” but it is a temporary placeholder and serves mostly as an admission that our ways of understanding our understanding are always in transition.

There are I think, distinguishable features of what for now we are calling pre-modern, modern and post-modern, and arguably the most important is the ontology associated with each. For the sake of simplicity and brevity, let us say that for the pre-modern mindset there was a trust in the order of the cosmos. That trust was undermined by the modernist rational mindset which questioned the truthfulness of the pre-modern conceptions, and supplanted a method of reasoning in place of that trust. The post-modern has now troubled modernist reason and method, and put an end, I think for the good, to the certainty that had characterized both the pre-modern and modern mindsets. That loss of certainty points to a response to “Now what?” and that response centers on hope.

As Bernie said, for the brothers, hope comes first. That statement, I think, has the potential for capturing what makes the new paradigm distinguishable from what preceded it while not requiring that it be defined as “post.” I suggest that for now the trans-modern look for a name for itself that captures the best of the critique it offers to modernist reason. That critique includes a distrust of meta-narrative, but I wonder if it can include a hope for a non-hegemonic metanarrative. That critique surrenders the idolization of certainty for the recognition of complexity, for a relational ontology. It surrenders pre-determined outcomes in education for a hope in the potential for a student’s transformation.

Hope surrenders control, and the brothers have acknowledged at some level that control of the charism is moving beyond them. It is about to whom to entrust this hope, and what it is that we are able to hope for when accounting for the reality that there is likely a day when the brothers are gone. That sense of hope calls for more study, and not just about the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. The brothers are not the only order seeing

their numbers fall and who at this moment must contemplate their charism in light of the possibility of an end to the order. Admitting for the moment that we don't know if there will be a resurgence of vocations, I'd like to assume for the moment that the future for the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart may have to continue without brothers. What does hope mean in that context?

Raising the question of hope in general called to mind Clifford's (2001) "Ontology of Hope," and led me to look at it again with new eyes (a recursion, to be sure). In that article Clifford addresses hermeneutics, not as acts of interpretations by subjects, but as an ontological reality itself. The following extended quotes from the beginning and end of the paper help to frame an understanding of hope that can speak to the question of "Now what?"

We believe that recursion is not an act of a mind or a self, but is, rather, an ontological characteristic of the being of the inheritances entrusted to us as teachers and students. Hermeneutics suggests that things themselves have a recursive character, a character of ancestry, returning, re-forming, transformation, and so on. It is because of this ontological character of the recursive being of things that our recursive conversations about them are appropriate and worthwhile. Thus, rather than recursion being an act of the mind, or of a self "looping back" or "turning around", things themselves have a way of turning on us, demanding things of us, laying claim to our attention.

What if reflection is not a human activity on a stubbornly self-identical subject, yielding different understandings, different perspectives, different points of view? What if multiplicity is just the way things show up in the world, not just as nouns that must be somehow be verbed? That is, what if a thing is its multiplicity--not an entity knowable in multiple ways, from multiple perspectives--but existing only and always in its actual diversity? (p. 3)....

And so interpretation becomes a matter of a certain kind of ex-perience (ex peria meaning "perimeter"), a certain way of knowing your way around, or being ready when a new "thing" like Plato's cave presents itself. It becomes somehow ecological--knowing how to dwell in a place in such a way that things will show themselves in this way, this time around (p. 10)....

And so hope, the essential commitment each of us makes when we enter into relationship with the young, may be less a matter of our wishes or feelings, less a matter of our willing and doing. It may be much more a matter of the character of things we offer, themselves, and living with them in such a way that they have a future of their own (p. 10).

Allowing Clifford's perspective to inform our "Now what?" I believe a few ideas suggest themselves for consideration. First, the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, indeed every charism of every order, must be understood as its own multiplicity. It is its own woven and constantly rewoven reality, an intersection of multiple histories both personal and social. The hope of which the brothers speak is a hope that the story will live and re-form each time the story is told to those who wish to live it, who wish to allow it to show itself in whatever circumstances it is told. Such a hope cannot be certain, but it can be well-founded in the stories of students and faculty who continue to be transformed as they encounter the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. The charism has a future of its own—to say so is an act of radical hope and trust. All it will take is a commitment to tell the story over and over so that it can be what is possible.

So have we answered "Now what?"? I confess I am not sure, but then being sure would be a cause for concern. I am reasonably confident that I have not said enough and what I have said has not been said well enough. Be that as it may, now we must find a new story that is trans but not post, one that is based on a hope that despite the loss of certainty there are stories we can tell that help us create meaning for us and for our students. This hope is present in the founding of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, it is present in their approach to young people so that students have a way to have their own future rather than one that is pre-determined for them.

Part of the answer to "Now what?" has to also be that "We don't know." However if we adopt a hermeneutic of an ontology of hope, perhaps what is next will be fruitful so long as we are dynamically faithful as we tell the stories of the charism. If we will trust that God's Spirit will be present, and approach the charism as a living thing that will evolve with those who live it, brothers or not, then we can legitimately hope for the future

of the charism in whatever unforeseeable form it may take. We are, in fact, “prophets of a future not our own.”

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR BR. NOEL

Describe to me your recollections of the environment at St. Stanislaus when you took over as disciplinarian.

How did faculty and students react to your appointment?

What differences did you have with your predecessor in that role?

What is your understanding of the charism of the Brothers, and how did that manifest itself in how you practiced the role of disciplinarian?

How would you describe your experience as disciplinarian at St. Stanislaus?

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL

ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST



Institutional Review Board
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

TO: Tom Eldringhoff
Curriculum and Instruction

FROM: Dennis Landin
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: January 14, 2015

RE: IRB# E9130

TITLE: Charism, curriculum and compassion: A narrative inquiry into the relevance of the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in a post-modern world.

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: New Protocol

Review Date: 1/13/2015

Approved X Disapproved _____

Approval Date: 1/13/2015 Approval Expiration Date: 1/12/2018

Exemption Category/Paragraph: 2b

Signed Consent Waived?: No

Re-review frequency: (three years unless otherwise stated)

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable): _____

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable) _____

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman 

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –

Continuing approval is **CONDITIONAL** on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.

8. SPECIAL NOTE:

*All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORMS

Consent Form

1. Study Title: Charism, curriculum and compassion: A narrative inquiry into the relevance of the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in a post-modern world.

2. Performance Site: Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

3. Investigator: Tom W. Eldringhoff

The investigator is available for questions about this study, M-F, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
225-252-6645

4. Purpose of the Study: This project is a hybrid philosophical/narrative inquiry into the possibility of a curriculum that is faithful to the Charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and that embraces the aspects of the broad paradigm that falls under the umbrella of post-modernism.

5. Subject Inclusion: Selected Brothers of the Sacred Heart

6. Number of subjects: 3

7. Study Procedures: Conduct interviews with the selected Brothers. Transcribe the interviews and share with participants. Analyze the interviews for themes consistent with a post-modern curricular framework. Interviews will begin with a set of questions, and proceed informally to a conversation about the Brothers' understanding of the spirit of their order. An interview will last from 1 to 2 hours.

8. Benefits: Benefits will be unique to each subject, but the hope is that each participant enjoys the conversation, and the opportunity to reflect and sharpen his understanding of the spirit that guides his religious order.

9. Risks: The only study risk is the inadvertent release of personal information that might be shared during the interview. Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of any information you would not want published in the study.

10. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

11. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, and if so the hope is that participants will allow their names to be used. Subject identity may remain confidential if requested, though given the specificity of the information that is the focus of the inquiry, actual confidentiality will be difficult to maintain if the study is read by those familiar with the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

12. Signatures: The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Dennis Larkin, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject: Brother Noel Lemmon

I do/do not (circle one) request that my identity be kept confidential.

Signature: Brother Noel Lemmon Date: 12/22/14

Consent Form

1. Study Title: Charism, curriculum and compassion: A narrative inquiry into the relevance of the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in a post-modern world.

2. Performance Site: Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

3. Investigator: Tom W. Eldringhoff

The investigator is available for questions about this study, M-F, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30p.m.
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5. Subject Inclusion: Selected Brothers of the Sacred Heart

6. Number of subjects: 3

7. Study Procedures: Conduct interviews with the selected Brothers. Transcribe the interviews and share with participants. Analyze the interviews for themes consistent with a post-modern curricular framework. Interviews will begin with a set of questions, and proceed informally to a conversation about the Brothers' understanding of the spirit of their order. An interview will last from 1 to 2 hours.

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10. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

11. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, and if so the hope is that participants will allow their names to be used. Subject identity may remain confidential if requested, though given the specificity of the information that is the focus of the inquiry, actual confidentiality will be difficult to maintain if the study is read by those familiar with the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

12. Signatures: The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. I understand that interviews conducted with me for an earlier project by this investigator will be used in this study, and I grant permission for that use. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Dennis Landin, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject: BROTHER IVY LEBLANC

☒ I do ☐ do not (circle one) request that my identity be kept confidential.

Signature: Brother Ivy LeBlanc Date: 2/10/2015

Consent Form

1. **Study Title:** Charism, curriculum and compassion: A narrative inquiry into the relevance of the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in a post-modern world.
2. **Performance Site:** Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College
3. **Investigator:** Tom W. Eldringhoff
The investigator is available for questions about this study, M-F, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30p.m.
225-252-6645
4. **Purpose of the Study:** This project is a hybrid philosophical/narrative inquiry into the possibility of a curriculum that is faithful to the Charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and that embraces the aspects of the broad paradigm that falls under the umbrella of post-modernism.
5. **Subject Inclusion:** Selected Brothers of the Sacred Heart
6. **Number of subjects:** 3
7. **Study Procedures:** Conduct interviews with the selected Brothers. Transcribe the interviews and share with participants. Analyze the interviews for themes consistent with a post-modern curricular framework. Interviews will begin with a set of questions, and proceed informally to a conversation about the Brothers' understanding of the spirit of their order. An interview will last from 1 to 2 hours.
8. **Benefits:** Benefits will be unique to each subject, but the hope is that each participant enjoys the conversation, and the opportunity to reflect and sharpen his understanding of the spirit that guides his religious order.
9. **Risks:** The only study risk is the inadvertent release of personal information that might be shared during the interview. Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of any information you would not want published in the study.
10. **Right to Refuse:** Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.
11. **Privacy:** Results of the study may be published, and if so the hope is that participants will allow their names to be used. Subject identity may remain confidential if requested, though given the specificity of the information that is the focus of the inquiry, actual confidentiality will be difficult to maintain if the study is read by those familiar with the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.
12. **Signatures:** The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. I understand that interviews conducted with me for an earlier project by this investigator will be used in this study, and I grant permission for that use. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Dennis Landin, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject: Brother Bernard G. Couvillion, SC

I do/do not (circle one) request that my identity be kept confidential.

Signature:  : February 18, 2016

VITA

Tom W. Eldringhoff, a native of Kansas City, Missouri, grew up on the Mississippi Gulf Coast in Ocean Springs. He received a bachelor's degree in philosophy from St. Joseph Seminary College in Covington, Louisiana in 1985. He taught high school religion at St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi from 1986 to 1990, and at Catholic High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (both Brothers of the Sacred Heart schools) since 1990, where he currently serves as academic assistant principal. He completed a master's degree in philosophy at Tulane University in 1991, and a master's of religious education from Loyola University, New Orleans, in 2001. His interest in doctoral studies in curriculum theory was sparked after he began a doctoral program in educational technology at LSU. He plans to continue his work with the brothers in whatever capacity they will allow.