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IMAGINATION: A KEY TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION METHODOLOGY

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Abstract

This paper presents integration as the method to address the common problems in teaching the faith. Integration, proposed by the *National Catechetical Directory for the Philippines 2007*, is an approach to faith that relates how faith is communicated and the way faith is actually lived in the daily life of the ordinary faithful. As a human capacity, imagination is a way of thinking about faith and how to practice the faith by paying close attention to the divine presence in human experiences and the sources of the faith. It is a key in the process of integrating Christian faith and life that hopefully leads to the maturing of faith. Imagination is a human capacity that sees created reality as a 'sacrament,' that is, a revelation of the divine presence creating and sustaining the world and finds appropriate ways to respond to the divine disclosure in the actual living out of the Christian faith of thinking, doing and hoping.

Keywords: Faith, Imagination, Integration, Methodology, Religious Education

Introduction

Religious education is a form of the ministry of the word in the church conducted in the service of the Christian faith that requires critical thinking about faith and faith's relation to life. It aims for the

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formation and maturing of the faith of young people. The instruction in the faith must foster this goal. This paper looks at the three concerns in teaching the faith that hinder religious education in reaching its purpose and these are addressed by emphasizing on imagination as a key factor in the process of integrating the Christian faith to life. Religious education methodology begins with human experience (Human Experience Before) and focuses on the integration of faith (Christian message) with the human experience (Human Experience During) that hopefully leads to a constant growth in the faith (Human Experience After).

1. Problems in Teaching the Faith

1.1. Content of Faith is Reduced to Abstract, Objective Tidbits and Facts Unrelated to Daily Life

One of the serious problems faced in teaching the faith is that it has become too academic that it focuses on mere rote memorization of objective tidbits, and facts, and traditional formula reducing students to passive learners. This approach disregards students' human experiences and fails to engage them sufficiently at the level of their contemporary spiritual and moral concerns. Hence, they experience a significant dissonance between their existential questions with the bits of information they have to memorize.

1.2. Focuses only on Human Experience at the Expense of the Truths of the Faith

The life-centred approach that concentrates on the sharing of life experiences has been the answer to the rigidity of purely dogmatic approach to faith. Unfortunately, the faith message has been overlooked to make it palatable to the concerns of young people. A reaction to a post-Vatican II instruction in faith claims that the faith received "was on engaging our emotions, not on challenging our intellects."¹ It has been observed that the Catholic belief, way of life, and celebration

were often neglected in favour of an understanding of Revelation that was rooted in the learner's existential sense of how God acted in his or her life. Approaches to RE that took account primarily of knowledge as a channel to finding meaning and religious understanding were seen as irrelevant and outside the capability of the student.²

¹Thomas Rausch, *Being Catholic in a Culture of Choice*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006, 16.

²Kathleen Engebretson, "Reviving the Chain of Memory," *Catholic Schools and the Future of the Church*, New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2014, 61.

A one-sided approach to faith that simply focuses on the human experience may be the reason behind the religious illiteracy among so many young people. Many students even at elite Catholic colleges and universities are ignorant of the basic truths of the faith and find it very difficult to give a coherent account of the Christian faith. Not only do they have difficulty in giving accurate explanation of the basic truths, they have glaring misunderstandings about the faith.

1.3. Directed only to the Individual Faith, not to Participation in the Life of the Believing Community

A limited approach in religious education pays attention nothing more besides the individual's faith. For example, a common question asked in study of the faith is: "Who is God or Jesus for you?" While this gives students an opportunity to own their faith, it can lead to several problems: students become committed to their private faith that is characterized by individualistic belief, pattern of values, norms and lifestyle and they eventually drift away from the Church and the communal practice of the faith.

The decline in attendance in Sunday masses can be attributed to the diminished appreciation for the church as well as the ritual sacraments. Among many of the young Catholics they see little connection between religion and spirituality. They believe that one can be spiritual with no religious affiliation and religious practices seem to be an extra that they can do away with.

The *National Catechetical Directory for the Philippines*³ proposes integration as the methodology of faith to address the problems in teaching the faith. It refers to the "holistic, unified character of all authentic catechesis" (NCDP 356). Human experience is a source of the faith but this has to be put together and related to the other sources namely the sacred scripture and tradition. The integrated approach to faith relates how faith is communicated and the way faith is actually lived in the daily life of the ordinary faithful. Integration has many forms and all forms of integration are aimed at closing the gap between faith and life (NCDP 356-367). This paper presents integration as a method that is communicated with renewed efforts at deepening the key insights by focusing on imagination as the key factor in the process of integrating the Christian faith to life that aims at the maturing of faith.

³ Episcopal Commission for Catechesis and Catholic Education, *National Catechetical Directory for the Philippines*, Manila, Philippines: The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 2007. Hereafter referred to as NCDP with paragraph number.

2. Human Experience Before

The contemporary lived experiences have to be the starting point in the whole discipline of religious education. There are possible misunderstandings on the use of human experience in religious education: first, it may give the impression that the discipline is not intellectually sophisticated; secondly, it is used simply to catch students' attention; and finally, it espouses subjectivism or individualism unrelated to the Christian faith.

Human experience refers to what happens in the life of the young people, the community or the society. When experience comes into the room, it makes the study of the Christian faith relevant and meaningful. Obviously, some experiences are more suitable than others, and the "best experiences for theological reflection are those which signal that something meaningful is going on."⁴ Human experience is more than a secular reality; it is the locus of divine revelation. Revelation is not about propositions containing information about God, but about God's constant disclosure in human life and situations in the world.

The human person has the capacity to recognize and understand God's active presence in life and in the world. This human capacity is referred to as imagination. It is not about fantasy or make-believe; it perceives the material world, persons, events and objects as radically open to the divine realm and discerns the divine presence in all these. With the eyes of faith, imagination acknowledges space and time gaining access into the infinite and eternal. It recognizes the immaterial permeating the material, the infinite enlivening the finite world and that this world yielding to eternity is raised beyond its limitations. As a human capacity, imagination helps the person to understand the divine manifestation and finds appropriate ways to respond to the divine disclosure.

Imagination sees created reality as a 'sacrament,' that is, a revelation of the divine presence creating and sustaining the world. "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made" (Rom 1:19-20). "The holy... 'lurks' in creation. Objects, events, and persons are revelation of grace."⁵ Gerard Manley Hopkins captures the image of

⁴Robert L. Kinast, *What Are They Saying About Theological Reflection*, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2000, 65.

⁵Wendy M. Wright, *Mary and the Catholic Imagination Le Point Vierge*, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010, 39.

the sacramental world: "The WORLD is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil; it gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil." "God is present to us in all of creation and in the everyday experiences of living, and that reflection on our human experiences is therefore a rich source of discovery of God's presence within and around us."⁶

Catholic imagination is radically sacramental since it is rooted in the mystery of the incarnation. Jesus, the Word made flesh, has made his dwelling among humanity, is sent as man to free all from the darkness of sin and death raising all up to life eternal. Jesus is the Emmanuel, the "God with us." Sacramental imagination is a way of imagining the world enlivened and empowered by God's creative, redemptive and sanctifying presence revealed by Jesus Christ and the Spirit.

3. Human Experience During

Religious education aims to bridge the gap between life and faith. It looks at the human experiences and reflects on these in view of the Christian faith. This calls for an integration and creative dialogue between the messy, everyday lived spirituality of people, "the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our times" (GS, 1)⁷ with the channels of divine revelation, namely, sacred scripture and tradition (DV, 9, 10).⁸

A mutual critical relationship exists between human experience and the Christian faith. It is the "dual task here of interpreting the theological import of contemporary experience and interpreting the tradition, each in light of the other, with the aim of shaping ongoing praxis."⁹ The sacred scripture is the norm for authentic Christian living that shapes and critiques human experience, while "experience provides the basis for determining the relevance and relative adequacy of any additional theological meanings correlated with it."¹⁰

⁶Barbara Fleischer, "A Theological Method for Adult Education in the Works of Tracy and Lonergan," *Religious Education* 95, 1 (10 July 2006) 32.

⁷Vatican II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*," Austin Flannery, ed., *The Basic Sixteen Documents Vatican II Constitutions, Decrees, Declaration*, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 2007, 163-282.

⁸Vatican II, "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*," Austin Flannery, ed., *The Basic Sixteen Documents Vatican II Constitutions, Decrees, Declaration*, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 2007, 97-116. Hereafter referred to as DV with paragraph number.

⁹Claire E. Wolfteich, "Hermeneutics in Roman Catholic Practical Theology," in *Opening the Field of Practical Theology*, ed. Kathleen A. Cahalan and Gordon S. Mikoski, Rowman & Littlefield, 2014, 136.

¹⁰Kinast, *What Are They Saying About Theological Reflection*, 67.

Integration as an approach to religious education calls for a serious and constant effort to elicit imagination; it is the “key factor in this process of personally integrating one’s Christian faith.”¹¹ Imagination has a special power in “its ability to draw together the concrete, specific reality we sense, with the universal idea or concept of it.”¹²

“As a faculty of subjective experience, the imagination can mediate both truth and fiction, because it can fabricate fantasy as well as represent reality. Hence, [there is] the need for objective truth as revealed in Scripture”¹³ and in the living witness of the Church. God’s revelation is mediated by symbolic words and deeds in salvation history. Understanding, reflecting and studying the sources of the faith is necessary for Christian faith to shape and transform human life.

3.1. Sacred Scripture

Scripture, the divinely inspired Word of God, the living Word of God written in metaphorical language, calls for an approach that entails imagination. “Only through disciplined use of the imagination can the symbols, stories and metaphors of Scripture ‘come alive,’ and enable us to understand, re-understand and apply the Scriptural word of God.”¹⁴

3.1.1. *Scripture is Divinely Inspired Word of God*

“Sacred scripture is the utterance of God put down as it is in writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit” (DV, 9). “The voice of the holy Spirit sounds again and again in the words of the prophets and apostles” (DV, 21). As divinely inspired book, Scripture teaches faithfully and without error “that truth which God for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred scriptures” (DV, 11).

“Sacred scripture must be read and interpreted with its divine authorship in mind, no less attention must be devoted to the content and unity of the whole of scripture, taking into account the tradition of the entire Church and the analogy of faith, if we are to derive their true meaning from the sacred text” (DV, 12). The use of contemporary

¹¹Joseph L. Roche and Leonardo Z. Legaspi, “Imagination and Integration in the NCDP and CFC,” *A Companion to CFC A Collection of Essays on the History, Features and Use of Our National Catechism*, Manila, Philippines: ECCCE and Word & Life Publications, 1998, 57.

¹²Philip S. Keane, *Christian Ethics and Imagination*, New York: Paulist, 1984, 81.

¹³Mary Karita Ivancic, “Imagining Faith: The Biblical Imagination in Theory and Practice,” *Theological Education* 41, 2 (2006) 128.

¹⁴Roche and Legaspi, “Imagination and Integration in the NCDP and CFC, 63-64.

scholarship may aid in the understanding of the sacred text, but the use of imagination that recognizes the Scripture as inspired and inerrant can bring out the message for the sake of salvation. Reading the sacred scripture must lead to an understanding of the Christian faith and inspired Christian living.

3.1.2. Scripture's Metaphorical and Symbolic Language

God communicates through the various literary forms in scripture: myths, prayers, poetry, parables, symbols, historical accounts, narratives and other forms of literary expressions. Jesus, the fullness of God's disclosure, recognizes the power of images and symbols to change the way people perceive reality and this is why he has taught in parables (Mt 13:1-53). Through the use of figurative language Jesus reveals to his listeners an experience of God that radically upturns the way one thinks and lives.

Imagination is not to be identified with "fantasy," or some capricious image perceived to fulfil a need. Far from being opposed to reason, imaginative activity involves critical thinking that pursues the mystery that lies beneath scripture's poetic language and uncovers the spiritual meaning conveyed in the symbols, metaphors and analogies. Sacred scripture's metaphorical language strives to describe the ineffable God and challenges one's limited understanding about God. Imagination is the human capacity enabling one to encounter the divine realm by immersing into scripture's poetical, metaphorical and symbolic language with a poet's sensibilities that contemplates the mystery of divine love and human life with a believer's engagement that yearns for the truth to evoke faith.

Imagination is not static; it is dynamic that assists the human mind and heart to eternity, to a dynamic encounter between the human and divine. Scripture's poetic world is imbued with the presence of God and the use of the imagination in the study of scripture provides the possibility and calls for a receptive capacity to meet and encounter God in the myths, parables, symbols, narratives, images and characters of the text. The imaginative activity moves the mind and the heart toward the incomprehensible Mystery of love who constantly empties Oneself to give Oneself to the other. The encounter of God in scripture's poetical forms of speech gives a glimpse of the Beauty, Goodness and Truth bringing delight, love and worship, the actual living out of the Christian faith of thinking, doing and hoping.

Instead of getting behind the text to uncover the meaning intended by the human author, the reader has to get in front of the text to discover the world imagined by scripture, a projected world of possibility for humanity. The world that Scripture imagines is a world “larger than that of ordinary human endeavor.”¹⁵ It is a world permeated with the divine presence characterized by certain patterns of God’s dealings with humanity.

We expand our minds by entering into the imaginative world of Scripture, for it is only within that world that we can learn of God who creates us from nothing, interacts with us at every moment, knows us utterly, and saves us by granting us a share in God’s own life through the death and resurrection of Jesus.¹⁶

The engagement of imagination in understanding scripture’s metaphorical and symbolic language has the power to transform and uplift human life. It enables one to develop a new way of being and living in the world within the all encompassing love and mercy of God. Contemplating scripture with all its poetic language makes it possible to discover insights and meaning about human life with all the joys, sorrows, triumphs and failures, hopes and anxieties and bestows new possibilities to one’s relationship with God, others and creation.

3.1.3. Unity of the Books of Scripture

The scriptural stories, both in the Old and New Testaments, reveal God who cares deeply for his people and comes to meet them at every moment of their life. “The plan of salvation, foretold, recounted and explained by the sacred authors, appears as the true word of God in the books of the Old Testament” (DV, 14). “The word of God... is set forth and marvellously displays its power in the writings of the New Testament. For when the time had fully come (see Gal 4:4)” (DV, 17) Jesus Christ, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth (see Jn 1:14). “The interpretation that emerges from the liturgical juxtaposition of selections from the Old and New Testament within a liturgy”¹⁷ commemorates Jesus’s life, passion, death and resurrection.

¹⁵Luke Timothy Johnson, “Imagining The World Scripture Imagines,” in *Theology and Scriptural Imagination*, ed. L. Gregory Jones and James J. Buckley, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1998, 3.

¹⁶Johnson, “Imagining The World Scripture Imagines,” 10.

¹⁷Susan K. Wood, “The Liturgy: Participatory Knowledge of God in the Liturgy,” in *Knowing the Triune God The Work of the Spirit in the Practices of the Church*, ed. James J. Buckley and David S. Yeago, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001, 103.

Telling and retelling the story of salvation in Jesus Christ is an essential aspect in the Christian faith and the proclamation of Scripture is of primordial significance within the whole area of worship. A reciprocal relationship exists between the biblical text and the liturgy. "The liturgy is the interpretative lens for the Bible, while the scriptures are necessary for the community's response to God in worship and ethics."¹⁸ In the Eucharist, scripture is proclaimed, heard, interpreted, heard afresh, open to rediscovery as reimagined, prayed over and exercised in the community's daily life. Imagination helps the believer and the community to participate in the saving events proclaimed and heard in the liturgy in the world today.

[The] recovery of scriptural imagination must come from a relationship with Scripture that is mediated, not by a scholarly guild committed to historical reconstruction, but by a faith community whose practices are ordered to the transformation of humans according to the world imagined by Scripture – a world, faith asserts, which expresses the mind of God.¹⁹

3.2. Tradition

Sacred scripture has a preeminent position in the teaching of the faith. The other channel of divine revelation is the Church's tradition. A narrow use of tradition in the teaching of the faith is presenting it as a dead letter, an imposition, in an authoritarian way, "often quite unrelated to the daily Faith life of the hearers."²⁰

"Tradition is not a baton in a relay; it is not an inherited mould into which we are indiscriminately poured. It is not a static system of doctrines, ritual practices and moral rules, sealed, as in a time-capsule during the fourth or during the sixteenth century... it is the transmitted life of a historical community, something organic, rather than something ideological."²¹

The conversation between human experience and corporate experience "seeks to understand present beliefs, life and worship as well as those of tradition. This approach questions, examines, explores and tests both the tradition and contemporary experience."²² Relating tradition and experience may confirm, challenge, clarify, and expand the understanding of tradition and how faith is lived.

¹⁸K. Wood, "The Liturgy: Participatory Knowledge of God in the Liturgy," 115.

¹⁹Johnson, "Imagining The World Scripture Imagines," 9.

²⁰Joseph L. Roche, *Practical Catechesis The Christian Faith as a Way of Life* 82, Quezon City: Phoenix, 2008, 43.

²¹Kevin Nichols, "Imagination and Tradition in Religion and Education," Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis, ed., *Christian Theology and Religious Education Connections and Contradiction*, London, UK: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1996, 189.

²²Kinast, *What Are They Saying About Theological Reflection*, 68.

The Church, in her “teaching, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that it itself is, all that it believes” (DV, 8). “The tradition that comes from the apostles makes progress in the church with the help of the holy Spirit” (DV, 8). For there is a development and growth in the understanding of the realities and the words that have been handed down. What is handed on in the Church is “a living witness to God’s continuing presence to his people – a historical witness that by its very nature is always fresh and new by virtue of the Spirit who always speaks afresh.”²³

Imagination helps in understanding the religious heritage in order for the young people to appropriate the faith by cooperating with God’s actions and words in the world today. “It helps us access the Christian tradition as a reliable source of guidance as we search to discover the meaning of what God is doing now in our individual and corporate lives.”²⁴ Understanding the Christian faith’s three dimensions, namely the doctrine, morals and worship, can help young people discern and cooperate with God’s presence in the Church, in the historical events and movements in present times. The desired outcome is a deepened and a renewed way of living out the faith.

The doctrine has been the traditional primary focus of religious education. The challenge is to present the doctrine as a liberating message and saving truth directly related to the daily life of people. Jesus is the basis of the unity and coherence of the doctrines of the faith that rests on the infinite, gratuitous, personal love of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Catholic doctrine has to be viewed in terms of its relation to two realities: the sacred scripture as the source of the saving truth, on the one hand, and to the daily living of faith on the other hand. The doctrinal truths of faith, drawn from scripture, are truly salvific, saving, inspiring, uplifting, guiding, and offering help and consolation have relevance for the daily life – personal, interpersonal, ecclesial and societal. These truths are connected to the daily practice of faith and have crucial implications to practical commitment to social justice and liturgical celebrations.

²³Claire Watkins, “Texts and Practices: An Ecclesiology of Tradition for Pastoral Theology,” in *Keeping Faith in Practice Aspects of Catholic Pastoral Theology*, ed. James Sweeney with Gemma Simmonds and David Lonsdale London, UK: SCM Press, 2010, 173.

²⁴Patricia O’Connell Killen and John De Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection*, New York, NY: Crossroad, 1994, viii.

The teaching of Catholic morality insists on the correct understanding of authentic freedom; the necessity and value of moral law that is ordered toward love; conscience, with actual practice in developing the personal skill in moral decision-making; the reality of evil and sin; and the special moral field of sexuality, family and social justice. Catholic morality, inculturated in the Philippine context, demands a continued stress of the church's social teachings and preferential option for the poor.

Scriptural grounding that focuses especially on the gospels in which Christian spiritual life forms the backdrop for developing the Christian moral living provides the basis for renewed appreciation of Christian morality. The gospels reveal that Jesus is the ultimate norm of Christian life and the inner inspiration of the Spirit's role in bringing all to Christ. Teaching the pattern of life and death enables all Christians to share in Christ's own faith, hope and love.

Relating morality to prayer, the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and spiritual discernment is necessary in forming and helping address the dilemmas of conscience. The love of God is the centre of Christian morality for "God is love" (1 Jn 4:16) and Christian moral life is summed up in the two great commandments (Mt 22:37-40). The moral dimension rests firmly on the truths of the faith, the doctrinal dimension, and celebrated in prayers and the church's official liturgical worship.

Catholic worship refers to prayers, the liturgy and the Church's seven ritual sacraments. Sacramental imagination makes it possible for people to recognize God's presence in the liturgy and shapes people's understanding, attitudes and faith commitments in the Christian faith community. Encountering God in the liturgy entails contemplation and active participation in the liturgical practices such as listening to the word, praying, performing the gestures and paying attention to the symbols of the Eucharist. Christian faith finds its source and fulfilment in the Eucharist. There is an intrinsic connection between authentic liturgical celebrations, especially the Eucharist, and the thirst for justice and preferential option for the poor. The Latin maxim *lex orandi, lex credenda* and *lex vivendi* declares as we worship, so we believe, so we live. The law of worship is the law of belief that impacts on life.²⁵ "Tradition then is something we practice. Something within which we live, rather than an inert heritage."²⁶ Participation in

²⁵Joseph Martos, "The Sacraments and Morality," *The Sacraments*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009, 178-216.

²⁶Nichols, "Imagination and Tradition in Religion and Education," 190.

ritual and liturgical celebrations can help young people understand the Christian way of life and how to live out the faith.

The communication of the saving message from the sources of faith must be directly related to the actual living out of the faith. By doing this, sacred scripture and tradition are not longer simply words to be memorized and analysed but become a window to the mystery of the unutterable Love and incomprehensible Mercy seen through the lens of human frailty and suffering, and the destruction of creation. Prompting imagination makes possible the human response of faith, hope and love to the divine love and mercy. The methodology of integrating faith to the Christian belief, love and hope aims at the constant growth of faith of the young people as members of the community and of society.

4. Human Experience After

Religious education's primary aim is to develop and deepen the students' belief, moral living and spiritual capacities. "Many of the valued goals associated with religious education however, such as the development of virtues, are longer-term goals and are not so easily verifiable,"²⁷ and cannot be empirically measured. "In other words, religious educators are less concerned with overt performance than with how religious knowledge, attitudes, language and skills are integrated with the personal development of the individual."²⁸

Human beings are persons-in-relation and they experience human flourishing or what it means to be fully alive as they "enter more deeply and richly into the field of life-giving relations that replicate the eternal rhythms, the relational fecundity and generosity that is the life of Father, Son and Spirit."²⁹ Imagination is a way of thinking about faith that impacts on the integrated practice of faith. Faith is the response to God's disclosure that touches the "total personal act, having repercussions in the faculties of intellect, will and affectivity. Touching the person's belief, trust and obedience."³⁰ It is not a singular momentous event in one's life but a lived reality, practiced

²⁷Patricia Kieran and Anne Hession, "Christian Religious Education: Purpose and Process," *Children Catholicism & Religious Education*, Dublin, Ireland: Veritas, 2005, 172.

²⁸Kieran and Hession, "Christian Religious Education: Purpose and Process," 172-3.

²⁹Robert P. Imbelli, "The Heart Has Its Reasons Giving an Account of the Hope That Is in Us," in *Handing on the Faith* 59, ed. Matthew Lewis Sutton and William L. Portier, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013, 35-36.

³⁰Avery Dulles, "Jesus and Faith," in *The Convergence of Theology: A Festschrift Honoring Gerald O'Collins, S.J.*, ed., David Kendall, S.J. and Stephen T. Davis, New York: Paulist Press, 2001, 278.

and repeatedly done and carried out throughout in one's life. Transformation, the ongoing growth or maturing in faith, is a life-long process of growth. Adopting a new vision of reality on how young people relate to God, other persons, and the created world can spring from the use of imagination in the creative dialogue of the significant human experiences and the symbolic and metaphorical language of scripture and the church's tradition.

Integral faith formation touches the whole person: one's head, hands and heart involving the actions of believing, doing and praying are expressed in the famous song *Day by Day* from the Broadway musical *Godspell*.³¹ "Day by day, Day by day, Oh Dear Lord Three things I pray. To see thee more clearly. Love thee more dearly. Follow thee more nearly. Day by day."

Faith consists in believing that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name (cf. Jn 20:31). The students must seek to know and understand more deeply God through Jesus and the Spirit. Knowledge is not simply intellectual assent, it is a commitment, a participation in the life of God. The truths of the faith enable the students to imagine and develop a new way of being and living in this world and creatively respond to the life of grace. Believing means to grow in their theological understanding, articulation of their faith convictions and how these truths come alive in their life experiences and how they relate with other people.

A response to a loving and compassionate God is to be found at the heart of human life that requires constant conversion. This means to transcend one's narrow-mindedness or self-centredness to a self liberated and renewed in Christ, the new Adam, and sanctified by the Spirit and to give oneself in love to God and neighbour. A renewed self is engaged in the transformation of the world that demands concern for the plight of the poor and for creation.

A deepening relationship with God necessitates hoping in the faithful God who creates and redeems through Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, and by the power of the Spirit. This hoping is rooted and expressed in prayer and the Eucharist, popular devotions and religious celebrations that build up the body of Christ within the social, political and cultural contexts. The embodied way of life, grounded in prayer and worship, is expressed in charity.

³¹"Day by day" is a folk rock ballad from the *Godspell* musical based on Matthew's Gospel, accessed February 24, 2016, <http://www.musicalschwartz.com/godspell.htm>.