

KEY THEMES

OF THE COMMON EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

Catholic Schools Organization

Spain

2007

PRESENTATION

We present here the second part of the Educational Proposal of the Catholic Schools. Once established in the document “Quality, Equity and Freedom in Education: our vision of the Educational System” the position of the two organizations, EyG and FERE-CECA, regarding the educational system, we wanted to push out into what is most specific of our educational style: the “Proper Character”.

The two Boards of the Catholic Schools considered unsuitable to study entirely the contents of the themes of the document “Proper Character Common to all the Titular Entities”. It was preferred to choose some of the issues that because of their urgency, actuality and centrality could be considered as “key themes” at the time of reformulating the “Proper Character” of each one of the Institutions to adequate it to the actual needs. There were the Boards of the Autonomic Regions who suggested the themes and the National Boards of the Catholic Schools who endorsed the nine “key themes” to be studied.

In the development of this document we will find a common organization of the nine themes: Firstly the peculiar values of the Catholic Schools are presented giving way, immediately, to their contextualization into a society characterized by the challenges that Europe presents, by the interculturality and by the interreligious dialogue. The third theme approaches the Educational Community as a whole and as the relational educational field where we offer those values to be known and lived by our pupils. The following themes address the different groups of the Educational Community centering the reflection on the relevant aspects of the actual situation of the school: The role of the Titular Entities, as seen from their own option of life in the Church; the evangelization and the pastoral work through and along the different educational stages; the new challenges of the “Shared Mission” and the collaboration between Family and School. The eighth theme deepens on the Shared Mission as guarantor of the permanence of the identity of the schools; and the ninth closes the circle of reflection stating that the Proper Character together

with the Educational Project are the touchstones of the quality of our schools.

The methodology for the reflection and the concretion of each one of the themes tried to complement the vision of theorist and practical people in education together with the experiences of a wide group of Titular Entities devoted also to education; the team of the National-Cofederal headquarters of the Catholic Schools has coordinated and revised all the work. We have not tried to offer a balanced and complete “corpus” of the contents of our Proper Character but have preferred to keep the plurality of approaches of the document, something that is its characteristic as it is the result of the conclusions of thirteen working groups. Certainly the outlooks have been common, so that in spite of the great diversity of treatments of the themes, there is not any discrepancy among them.

Short time before undertaking the last revision of this document the Spanish Conference of Bishops has approved in its 89th Plenary Assembly a new document entitled “The Catholic School: an offer of the Spanish Church for the education in the 21st century”. As Institutions devoted vocationally to the evangelization from the heart of our schools, we congratulate with the arrival of this document that offers so much guidance for our mission that we want to live fully at the service of the Church in Spain. The Institutions that join in “Catholic Schools” had an active participation and at different moments with their inputs to the draft that was studied at the Assembly of the Bishops Conference. This constant dialogue between the Bishops’ Commission for Education and Catechism and “Catholic Schools” has allowed that the content of this present “Educational Proposal of the Catholic Schools” might follow our Bishops’ orientations in every one of the nine key themes collected here. The document of the Spanish Bishops’ Conference points out the need to revise the "Mission and Vision Book" of the schools that were given by the Titular Institutions, in order to adequate them to the educational and evangelization needs of the 21st century; we do hope and trust that this present proposal could be a guiding help in the realization of such review. Due to the importance of the text of the Bishops’ Conference, there will be constant references to it all along our own proposal.

In this presentation I do want to thank all the people who have taken part in the elaboration, redaction and animation of this work, very especially to Fr. Miguel Angel Velasco López, cmf, previous president of FERE-CECA and of EyG who, from his responsibility, boosted decisively this project.

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1. VALUES OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: OUR MAP OF INTERPRETATION OF LIFE. A BET FROM THE VALUES.

When we talk nowadays about the quality of our Catholic Schools it is frequent to hear more or less apocalyptic statements from different extraction that show preoccupation for recovering something we always had in the past and today is perceived as being in crisis or, at its worst, as loss of identity. It is usual to hear, for instance, that “values are disappearing” or that it is necessary to inculcate values in education. Which type of persons we want to be? What, at the end, makes human the human being? What do we want for our society? How all of us could be happy?

Under these questions we discover intuitively a temptation or, at least, a kind of attitudes that try to continue, to get back, to keep the old schemes that have always lead our educational action or even an eagerness to adequate the languages so that “everything changes while everything remains the same”.

It is like:

- Going back once more to the declarations of what has been declared many times.
- Trying to show that the problem of values is due to the others: the receivers (the pupils), the families, the teachers, leaving aside an “institutional” lecture of what is going on around.
- Falling in the sin, that is almost a vice, of reading, rereading and proclaiming once more our well known educational proposals, so that all the others will know them once and for all.

We sincerely think that this is not the way. This is the reason why we try to help in deepening in the values of our educational proposal at the light of the new “map” of interpretation of life.

Individuals, groups and institutions we are elaborating, from our different experiences, an ensemble of lines of interpretation of life that will allow to give a sense to all: the world and the life, as something external to us; to

ourselves, situated in the world; to our own person and its internal processes. In the deepest level of this ensemble of interpretations there are the fundamental values, forming up a “system”, a kind of “frame” into which all the other values and attitudes are intimately interweaved and mutually get an interpretation and a sense. On the whole, it is a kind of “map of interpretation” of the reality with its own history –our own personal history- growing in definition all along the course of our lives. The Catholic Schools as a whole, each one of the Titular Institutions and each one of the schools have elaborated a “map of interpretation of life”, what we call “the mission”.

We understand the human being as a being in constant search for the meaning of all things, of the world and of his or her own existence; someone who is in search of the reason of being of whatever exists. That is why the educational proposal of our schools involves the totality of the human person.

We understand the human being as an evolving reality: a man or a woman who from childhood is building little by little the answer to all the questions that existence puts to him or her. That is why we have to offer to our pupils in such determinant ages as childhood, adolescence and juvenility the treasure accumulated along so many years of experience, both of educational institutions and of schools: “a chart” for life, based in the heritage of Jesus of Natharet.

The values of the “mission” of the Catholic Schools are in this way fully related and constitute a system of sense that guides all the educational action in them.

At this point, it should be convenient to clarify some options:

- To stir up new questions to the educational communities of the schools and to the educational institutions better than proposing replies that, in any case, should have to be adapted to the concrete reality of each one of the situations.
- To promote institutional questions of the schools and their educational communities on what has been entrusted to them by the church and by society.

- To foster some options that will mean an added value to the school, as school and as catholic, and that will be interpretation key for life.

2.- TO EDUCATE FOR A EUROPEAN, INTERCULTURAL AND IN INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE CITIZENSHIP

Our society is changing rapidly and we have to give an answer to these changes. Three realities already present in our schools will define in great measure the world in which our pupils will take part when they will leave our schools: to belong to the European Union, as full right citizens and the presence of different cultures and of other religions in the building of this European Union and of the “global village” of this world. How to prepare our pupils to this new type of society? How to offer them an education that will allow them to be committed protagonists of the new times?

The three dimensions of the sense of ownership to the citizenship to which we are referring in this second “Key Theme” have a strong resonance regarding the Christian faith and the Christian values that are at the basis of the world’s vision proposed by the Catholic Schools.

- European Citizenship: at present a new political entity of world reference is under construction. It is taking conscience that it is necessary to move from the “Europe of the Merchants” to the “Europe of the Citizens” and, even more, to the “Europe of the Human Rights”. The European Union, the new Europe, has its cultural roots –even if we refer to its founders- the Christian values. For many centuries Christian people had a lot to do with the agglutination and the building of Europe as a space with its own identity within the world. It is now the time of a committed takeover and, overcoming the errors and failures of the past, the time to help in the construction of a Europe that had at heart the evangelical values of the human dignity of the person, the fraternity and the openness to transcendence.

- Intercultural reality: The experience of diversity is connatural to Europe. All along the centuries Europe has been the land where people from the East and from the South have settled. It has been also the space for mobility, for encounters and mess ups of the peoples and nations in it as it have been intense the relations and connections with other alien peoples and cultures, sometimes as their receptor, other times as a result of its traveler, commercial, expansive and evangelist vocation all over the world. We could say that interculturality is thoroughly connatural to Europe that owes its being and its consciousness of being to the mutual acceptance –not without strenuous fights- among peoples and cultures with the result of an own cultural style.

If the contact with other cultures has been regular in Europe's history, it is not the case nowadays of being surprised by the arrival of people coming from the most distant places on the world, but by the speed and the huge amounts of people arriving into Europe in the search of a better living place. The greatest challenge for our European society is that of offering the European values so arduously bid and conquered as a place of encounter among the cultures so that, keeping the best of our traditions and performing the important role of the receptor culture, we could enrich others and ourselves giving birth to a Europe definitively open to the world.

As Christians, the universality of the presence of Christ's message that forges a universal and C

atholic Church, has to be a kind of reference for us in order to maintain a fair attitude at the time of helping in the formation and raising of a European society more and more open to the world. As educational communities that want to live the Christian values we have to seek that our style in doing everything should bring up our pupils from those keys of cultural openness to other cultures' values, in order to make possible the emergence of a fraternity overcoming the cultural boundaries.

The multireligious reality of the world and, more concretely, of Europe, and as a part of it, of Spain, can be –as many other human things-

reason for failure to meet or for encounter. The Catholic Schools make a clear option for educating from the key of the religious dialogue that will enrich all of us. This religious dialogue has to be set up on the shared prayer, the reflection and the cheek by jowl work for a more human world in the full sense of the word. The Declaration “Nostra Aetate” of the Vatican Council II clearly articulates the acknowledgement of all the good present in the other religions and of how it is necessary that all the Christians be open to it. From a clear recognition of Christ as “the way, the truth, the life and the light”, from which everything finds its final and definitive sense, we have also to say that in the other religions there are found too, in an especially outstanding way, those “seeds of the Kingdom” of which the Vatican II tells us.

The encounter among the great religions is going to be, is being already, one of themes Europe has to face and our Catholic Church has to dig deeper while our schools have to look for the adequate ways in order to educate in the right attitude.

3.- THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY: THE FIELD WHERE TO EDUCATE FROM THE INTERPRETATION OF LIFE PROPER OF “THE MISSION”

Once the set of the distinctive values of our Proper Character has been defined, it is necessary to articulate the best way to educate having them as main reference. Now, what is more essential in order to attain that the pupils assume the values of the Proper Character of each Institution is not the participation in activities or reflections on curricular themes related with those values but their intense experience by the educators, the kind of interpersonal relations among these and the priorities in life and in the organization of the school that the directive bodies had established in it; to this ensemble we could call “the educational atmosphere of the school”.

It is not difficult to come across teachers, pupils and parents who are enumerated as agents of the educational community. It is more difficult to

find enumerated as such the personnel in the administration and services, or the Titular Entity or even the teachers engaged in the non formal religious or physical education. It is usual to find **Ideariums** and educational projects made up by general objectives and goals intended by the school, but it is unusual to make an explicit reflection, embodied in documents and in life, on how to interrelate life and organization so that everything should be guided by the criteria of the Proper Character. Only the mutual involvement of all the agents within the educational community in order to translate to the day by day the principles of the Proper Character will create the appropriated atmosphere to educate in values. We can affirm that the educational community will only offer to the pupils a particular scheme of assessment of life if the relational climate of the persons in the community tries to live it.

What to do in order that the educational community could transmit these values from its members, from the style of interpersonal relations and from the priorities in life? How to enter into a closer and more committed relation between the parents and the school? How to interrelate all the agents of the education in such a way that they might transmit the values present in the Proper Character? Undoubtedly, each Titular Entity and each school will have to develop and to particularize a series of ways and proposals.

4.- THE ROLE OF THE TITULAR ENTITIES IN THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY: RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY, DIOCESAN PRIESTS AND ASSOCIATIONS OF FAITHFUL

We have referred several times already to the Titular Entities or Titular Institutions. Usually they have appeared as responsible of the educational profile of the schools. In this new paragraph of the Key Themes we want to present a different facet of them: which is the specificity of the ecclesial identity of each one of them according to the way of life they have adopted in the Church. Undoubtedly, if in the only one evangelical mission

of the Church the diversity of ways of life is a very enriching reality to the Church itself and an identifying reality to every institution, the same happens regarding their educational styles.

The mission that the Lord Jesus Christ gave to his disciples the day He was taken up into heaven and took his place at the right hand of God (Mk 16:19) has been carried out along the time and with strenuous effort by many men and women who, submitting totally their lives to the service of the Church, have proved the transforming strength that irradiates from the Gospel. Through them and by the action of the Holy Spirit, the words of the Lord and the signs of His presence have been concretizing in visible realities that embody the truth, the good, the love and the unity God wants for all humankind.

Many of those men and women understood that the Gospel, of which they made the rule of their lives, was demanding from them to assume in a peculiar way what Jesus Himself had been for his disciples and contemporaries: “Master”. That is why teaching belongs to the mission of the Church and, consequently, of all its members. Thus, the Church has presented herself as mother and teacher of peoples :”(...) giving life to her children and of teaching them and guiding them—both as individuals and as nations—with maternal care. Great is their dignity, a dignity which she has always guarded most zealously and held in the highest esteem”. (John XXIII, “Mater et Magistra”, nº 1). Education and teaching, in all their combinations and possibilities, have been always present in the life of the Church that in this way has granted to all the access to the truth and, therefore, to the understanding of the reality surrounding us and of the contents of the revelation, opening so the way to the encounter between faith and reason.

In this way, the educational centers promoted or run by Jesus’ disciples have this three aims: to educate in the essential contents of the human knowledge and of the social habits, to evangelize through words and deeds and, thirdly, to promote the bonds between Christ’s Good News and the human culture. These schools are called Catholic because in them is seen the presence of the Church in which the variety of its members and

the abundance of their charismas contribute to reinforce, day by day, the uniqueness of its mission received from Jesus Christ.

The schools with Catholic Proper Character have been traditionally promoted by religious orders, congregations or other institutions, whose founders included education, directly or indirectly, among their objectives.

The diocesan clergy has been also running schools, juggling this task with many other obligations. There are also other Titular Entities, with clear Catholic identity that promote the existence of educational establishments with a Proper Character.

The ensemble of Titular Entities –religious, priests and lay people- show the richness of charismas and ministries for the one and same educational mission. The diversity of vocations generates diversity of styles, but its variety and complementarity makes better-looking the educational proposal of the Church.

The presence of a religious community or of a group of priests as members of the educational community or of a group of lay people of the institution goes further of the mere representation of the correspondent Titular Entity. What theological and evangelical sense have they into de educational community? Which are the implications in the dynamic and in the style of the educational establishment of belonging to one Titular Entity of the three mentioned different lifestyles?

People from the three types of Titular Entities have voiced their reflections about the actual role of the Titular Entities and of their members within the educational community of the Catholic schools. Many common characteristics do exist among them but also appear their own accents that show what is specific.

5.- EVANGELIZATION AND PASTORAL WORK IN THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL ALL ALONG THE EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

From their very beginnings Catholic schools do exist to announce the Gospel and, therefore, this is a mission that, although not being free from difficulties, has always been a part of the evangelizing action of the Church.

Evangelization and pastoral action go intimately united as they are like two faces of one same educational reality. To search for new ways, for appropriated languages, for attractive methodologies to make real Jesus' message, always actual, is a tension of hope in which we, all priests, religious and lay, do feel immersed in all the fields of the Gospel's explicit announcement in such a way that it is in the educational field where better appear the processes of secularization in which family and society, educators included, are immersed.

The Catholic schools, faithful to the evangelizing project of their own, want to be always attentive to the reality, to the needs of children, teenagers and young who will be the men and woman of tomorrow. The schools want to facilitate to all the young generations in them their encounter with God, who always is with them: urged by God's grace and with full freedom, some of them will be the Christians who will live their faith in the Church and into the world, trying to transform according to the Gospel the social realities they will be called to live.

The Catholic schools want to look down over the future of their evangelizing horizon. They want also to contribute with a reflection that, beyond the pastoral life of the individual school, could lay the groundwork –always counting on the freedom of the human being and on the Lord's grace- for the encounter of faith of the children, the teenagers and the youth at a time in their classrooms and who will be tomorrow the grown-up Christians developing their lives and their faith into the Christian communities and into the social realities they will have to live.

The Catholic school is well aware of being responsible of announcing, seeding and encouraging the faith in ages that are essential in life, sharing this responsibility with the families and the parochial communities, in the hope that what has been sown will produce in the best possible way adult Christians responsible of their faith or in adult persons who, from their freedom of children of God, do live with particular values and attitudes among which may be it is not the Christian experience, so that they are men and women sensitive and engaged for a better world. From our part, as Christian educators we keep the fidelity and the hope in this mission.

The reflection made by four working groups the starting point was the persuasion that our Catholic schools are true agents of evangelization. They educate in a project of person and of society based on the experience, the pedagogy and the values of the Gospel. The whole of the educational project of the school is impregnated and elaborated from this conviction while, at the same time, our pastoral action wants to give an answer to changes of every time and every place in order to make it, the project, reality beyond the academic limits. We have to move from “the school of the religious community and at the service of a church in situation of Christianity” to “an educational establishment of the Christian community in the Church living its service in pastoral key within a situation of new evangelization”, over passing the mere instruction or the mere answer to a social demand.

We understand the evangelization as the explicit announcement of Jesus Christ’s Good News, with all the activities and efforts necessary to make effective such announcement. These activities and efforts is what we could call “pastoral” that in the school context it implies to work in order to educate our children, teenagers and youth in the most integral and complete way possible, from the acquisition of knowledge, values, abilities and competences to making possible processes and experiences of faith from the person of Jesus of Nazareth. These identity, originality and orientation mean openness to all kind of children and of families, from every race, culture and religion, in the love and respect that the offer of the “new man” according to Jesus presumes, securing in this way an adequate pastoral itinerary. To educate according to the Gospel,

therefore, supposes to educate the experience of faith, preparing the pupils so that they could attain a personal, free and explicit attachment to the Christian faith into the Church. To educate is to provoke the life that all bring inside and is aroused when they experiment the personal encounter with Jesus of Nazareth. These actions have their own and explicit identity inside the aggregate of the school activity.

The evangelization-pastoral action could be envisaged thinking of the whole of the educational process, but it should be quite interesting to differentiate the reflection according also to the different ages and educational stages. Once established the fundamentals of the school and made clear that evangelizing is the basic reason of our presence in it as Titular Entities, it is convenient to differentiate the aims, the strategies and the actions according the age of our recipients. The arch of ages of the pupils we take care of in our schools is certainly wide. Besides, theirs are stages in which the changes in the person's development that occur in a few years are very important. Those changes urge to choose quite different educational actions for the different stages of age and development.

In short: we want to attend each one of the educational stages as it deserves, without giving preference to one of them or better, giving preference to all of them.

6.- NEW CHALLENGES TO THE SHARED MISSION: FORMATION AND CORRESPONSABILITY IN ORDER TO LEAD AND TO EDUCATE FROM A PROPER MISSION

The situation of the society and of the Church in which the Catholic schools developed 25 or 50 years ago has changed significantly. The main factors for the changes have been, firstly, the theology of the Vatican Council II inviting all members of the church, whatever could be their vocation, to take part in the evangelising mission. Secondly, the new reality of the Titular Entities and of the religious in the educational

institutions. Thirdly, the social changes that bring to the school new types of families and of pupils with overall plurality, even in their entailment with the religious dimensions. All these factors have made necessary to redefine the mission of the Catholic school itself emphasizing its clear evangelizing character. And this implies necessarily that all the educational agents have to be jointly responsible in this mission.

This understanding of the educational mission of the school as something clearly shared with others means to be ready to put all personal competence at the service of the pupils' education. To share the mission in the Catholic school implies to see oneself as protagonist in this mission together with the other members of the educational community while sharing something that is of the Titular Entity. This is a shared mission that comes into being from an spiritual experience and lumps into organizations that have well defined the different competences of each educational agent and with leadership vocation.

To carry out this mission it is indispensable to plan a formation with specific contents and ways for all educators. Given that the tasks inside a school are plural and complex, the contents and methodologies of the formation must always to have into account the diverse receivers and the organization as a whole. Contents and methodologies must be evaluated and plans for permanent improvement, designed.

7.- THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN FAMILY – SCHOOL

A high percentage of educators give a great value to the relation with their pupils' families and most of them promote the contacts with the parents. Nevertheless, in some of the educators it is perceived a kind of dismay because of the distance or difficulty they perceive for the collaboration with the families.

The social reality in its constant changes shows more and more diversity of family models and structures. This introduces a great complexity both to

understand the different social realities in which the pupils live and to facilitate an easy, clear and direct communication between educator and family. On the other hand, among the requests to the Catholic schools it is to be pointed a greater social presence, beyond the classroom, so that the relation between the school and the families becomes one of the axes of the social framework.

One of the most important contributions of an educational community in the Catholic school is that it tries to reinforce the awareness of a way towards otherness: to built with the other and for the other. This insight makes reality communion and offers a genuine perspective of a living Church. Children, teenagers and youth are both the cause and the agents of the encounter of the school with the family and even if families are the main sphere for the growing up, development and maturing of their children, the school is also a privileged space for such a process of evolution. Parents and teachers/educators have, therefore, a common goal: to favor the complete and adequate development of children, teenagers and youth: their education.

This goal or common interest implies the central reason of the relation between parents and teachers, although each one of them approaches the minors from different perspective and roles: for the parents it is a question of their children while for the teachers it is a question of their pupils. Parents and teachers have in front of them the same person but with a different approach leading to have different views what, if at times could seem to be a fountain of difficulty in the dialogue family-school, it is in reality a great richness for all: children, teenagers, young, parents and teachers.

It is necessary to stress specially the relevance of these different perspectives trying, at the same time, to find a common ground that will permit to define the relation between parents and teachers and the role of each one of them in the development of the children-pupils. A reflection is required that starting from the assessing of the family's and school's needs, pays attention to the referents of actuation for parents and for teachers in the educational assignment. From this map a series of actuations has to be proposed directed to make of the Catholic school a

space of genuine dialogue family-school, a real setting where the Christian values are enhanced and fostered.

The Educational centers with Catholic Idearium are places of education that have the Gospel as structural factor of their system of values, as it has been taken in all and everyone of the Key Themes. Parents, once they have known the Idearium, trust in our schools as adequate places in order to complement and to continue the educational process they have by reason of vocation and of right. From here it comes that the relation between the school and the parents of pupils in the field of the education of the faith has to be very tight. The Catholic Schools we conceive ourselves as privileged places for the announcement, the care and the deepening of the faith. This conviction, clearer every time, has to take us to attend this bond between parents – faith – pupils and, from here, to look for the ways to offer to the parents and to the families programs for the education of the faith.

VIII. THE TITULAR INSTITUTIONS AND THE DIRECTIVE FUNCTION: TO ASSURE THE CONTINUANCE AND THE IDENTITY OF THE SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

Catholic schools are well-established, regarding their number and also the roots from where they emerge. The Spanish Church has this activity of evangelization as something very outstanding for his life and mission into the society and the Catholic schools perceive this membership more and more strongly. The very rich and varied evangelizing action of the Catholic schools comes from a long tradition of our Church that through religious founders, dioceses and lay people have made it possible.

In the previous chapter it has been mentioned the shared mission, a reality deeply founded in the impetus given to the Church by the Council Vatican II as a communion model and, from there, to the reflection over the complementarity of forms in the life of the own church and to the need of understanding its evangelizing action as something born from the union of faith and the plurality of charismas and ministries constituting it.

This should be sufficient reason to not confuse again the reading of “the signs of the times” –in this case the less number of vocations to the consecrated life, to the priesthood and to the lay institutes- with what the Spirit or the Council mark as a new way and style of our being and mission in the church.

Here we deal directly with a question related with the drop of effectives in the Titular Institutions of the Catholic schools. For many years the identity of each school, related to the spirit of its Titular Institution, has been granted by the presence of a large number of religious priests or lay members of the institutions. Nowadays that number has moved to be smaller or even very small. This new situation has helped to locate every “form of church life” in the place and the work for which the Spirit called it into existence in such a form that, in this sense, it is beneficial for the harmony of the charisms and the ministries. But next to this, it is indispensable to structure a new model of organization to guarantee the mission, the future and the growth on new grounds.

As it is necessary to deal with the lay people’s formation in the charism and own style of the Titular Entity, it is necessary to deal with different possibilities of organization and of juridical forms that the Titular Entities could create in order to keep in effectively guarding and assuring the identity and continuity of the schools of which they are responsible.

In this sense, the new configuration of the directive function appears as a strategic factor for the future of the Catholic educational offer and as resource more for the quality of the Catholic schools.

9.- MISSION AND EDUCATIONAL PROJECT: THE KEYS FOR OUR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

Along the last years the effort to improve everything, with more quality, has come to pervade the culture of all organizations. This is being a reality in the enterprises with economic interests but also in the organizations

that not have as an aim the economic profit, the so called “Third Sector”. In this group, into which are included the NGOs, Catholic schools must be enclosed. The systems of quality were born to make profitable the efforts in order to attain stated objectives, usually related with a commercial product. The operational principles used in the processes of quality can be applied to all the processes by objectives, but it is necessary to adapt well them to the concrete sphere of actuation, above all if the sphere of which we are talking is the educational one.

The consecution of a greater educational quality has been always present in the Catholic schools. Our institutions have been pioneers in the search of the best educational plans and systems that could better be adapted to the personal and sociological reality of the pupils, in order to attain the desired objectives. It has been always attempted to innovate and to look for the best for the pupils maintaining the essence and the root of the values proper of the Christian humanism.

This said, it is also necessary to say that the new offers of quality processes that come from the world of the enterprises have questioned many times if the implementation of the endorsed programs of quality had too much of the impersonality of the production processes, less of attention to the needs of the persons and even less of the roots and the values of the Gospel. To clarify and to give an answer to this uncertainty in order to have an open way to continue in working with the quality systems have been the reasons to include this theme about the quality into the “Key Themes of the Common Proper Character”.

The option for the endorsed quality processes has been accepted by the Titular Entities and by the schools as something peculiar of the Catholic schools. But once this could be asserted it is necessary to make it clear that the processes of homologation of the quality in our schools have a series of peculiarities: one of them is the specification of being an educational center, but another, that qualifies even more the previous one, is that of being an educational Catholic center.

The maximum criterion of quality is to make possible that the educational center and all the processes within it be really related to the Catholic

Idearium of every Titular Entity and to the educational-pastoral project of every school. It is necessary to have in mind all that is required to obtain that the Idearium, basic option of the Titular Entities, and the educational project as organizational principle, be always the maximum criterion in the processes of endorsed quality.