



A Faith Internship Model: The Outcome of Contemplative Leadership

Merylann (Mimi) J. Schuttloffel, Ph.D
Senior Fellow



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The Center for Faith, Identity, and Globalization
1050 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036
T (202) 429-1690
E cfig@rumiforum.org

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A Faith Internship Model:

The Outcome of Contemplative Leadership

Merylann (Mimi) J. Schuttloffel, Ph.D.

Abstract

Catholic Church documents note that parents are their children's primary faith educators. The evangelizing purpose of the Catholic school is to assist parents. Contemplative practice as a leadership model acknowledges the Catholic school educator's distinctive role as evangelizer. Potentially, while giving primacy to faith formation, the model guides classroom teachers, counselors, staff, and administrators in academic and social development roles. Reflection and action, grounded in Catholic theology and intellectual tradition, are the heart of contemplative practice. This paper will address how contemplative leadership practice translates a religious school into a faith-formation internship community. A faith formation internship creates an environment where adult witnesses provide the knowledge and opportunities for growth as a Catholic Christian. This specialized community is the outcome of contemplative leadership. For the faith internship to be effective, it must be embraced by the entire school community, including parents and benefactors. Once the stakeholders adopt the evangelizing priority revisions to the curriculum, psycho-social programs and extracurricular activities become evident. Ultimately, the faith internship community generates parent social capital to support them as primary evangelizers of their children.

Keywords: *Catholic Schools, Contemplative Leadership, Faith Internship, Accompaniment, Character, Reflection*

Introduction

Within Catholic Church doctrine, parents are the primary religious educators of their children.¹ That said, parents often seek assistance with religious education from their parish Catholic school or other Catholic educational institutions.

The evangelizing purpose of the Catholic school is clearly articulated within Church documents.^{2 3 4} From my half-century as a Catholic educator (teacher, school counselor, principal, professor, and researcher), I have learned the pivotal role the Catholic school educator plays as a partner with parents. Pope Francis reminds us that the Catholic school has a distinguished evangelization function.

School can and must be a catalyst; it must be a place of encounter and convergence of the entire educating the community, with the sole objective of training and helping to develop mature people who are simple, competent, and honest, and who know how to love with fidelity, who can live life as a response to God's call and their future profession as a service to society.⁵

Within the Catholic school, the Catholic school teacher has a distinctive role that is more expansive than the typical public⁶ school classroom teacher.⁷

¹ Walter M. Abbott. "Education." *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York American Press, 1966).

² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium* (USCCB, 2005).

³ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *The Religious Dimension of the Catholic School* (USCCB, 1989).

⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *To Teach as Jesus Did* (USCCB, 1972).

⁵ Pope Francis. "Address of Pope Francis to the students of the Jesuit schools of Italy and Albania," June 7, 2013.

⁶ Within the schooling outside the United States, the term "public" refers to what typically is called a "private" school in the USA. "Public" refers to the specific audience, or public, that attends this nongovernment school. In the USA, public schooling is synonymous with government-sponsored schooling.

⁷ Archbishop J. Michael Miller. *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools* (Saint Paul's Publications, 2006).

The public (government) school's foundational purpose is to develop civic virtues within students that include becoming a productive member of society. Religious schools, and in this case, Catholic schools specifically, include the civic purpose for schooling but extend that purpose to incorporate religious formation. One could argue that public schools work to create upright American citizens, while religious schools embed good citizenship within their students' religious identity.

The question then becomes: How do religious schools achieve their formational goals? Drawing on my experiences as a practitioner, experiences related by my graduate students, and my research conducted at The Catholic University of America, I developed the concept called *contemplative leadership*.⁸ Contemplative leadership integrates leadership theory and reflective practice for the distinctive Catholic educational context. My impetus for this line of research has been the almost complete transition from vowed religious leaders and teachers in Catholic schools to lay educators. This shift has taken place at every level of Catholic education. Vowed-religious women and men (sisters and brothers) made Catholic identity apparent through their prayer life and commitment to their congregation's charism. Even their clothes sent a message about the virtues of poverty and humility. For this reason, without these visible representatives of Catholicity, attention needed to be given to the lay educators currently in those roles. If those institutions' Catholic ethos were to survive and thrive, the layperson's faith formation would have to be prioritized. Each Catholic school educator must embrace their evangelizing mission; every school community member needs to intentionally integrate the tenets of the Catholic faith (dogma and tradition) into decision-making.

**“Drawing on my experiences as a *practitioner*,
experiences related by my graduate students,
and my *research* conducted at CUA, I developed
the concept called *contemplative leadership*.”**

My emphasis on leadership preparation during this transition was not unique, as numerous professors in Catholic colleges and universities also began focusing on preparing school leaders. The spiritual formation necessary to lead a Catholic school was integral to that preparation. Lay leaders needed the preparation usually acquired within the religious novitiate.

⁸ Merylann J. Schuttloffel. *Character and the Contemplative Principal* (National Catholic Educational Association, 1999).

At The Catholic University of America, we always included religious knowledge within academic requirements. However, as my research developed, our programs embraced the substance of contemplative leadership preparation. We recognized that only a holistic, integrated education provides the environment to form and develop religious identity within adults as well as students. In addition, colleagues across Catholic colleges and universities created an association⁹ to assist each other as we navigated the new environment within Catholic schools.

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Contemplative Leadership

Contemplative practice as a leadership model develops the character necessary for their distinctive role within Catholic educators.^{10 11} The model prepares, guides, and supports classroom teachers, counselors, staff, and administrators in their numerous educational roles as they integrate faith formation into school life. Each leadership dimension of these roles is intended to complement the family as a primary educator.

This paper will address how the contemplative leadership model translates daily life in the Catholic school and influences the decisions school leaders and teachers make. Decision-making that forms a religious identity within each school community culminates in what I named a faith internship community. A faith internship community creates an environment where adult witnesses provide the knowledge and experiences necessary for formation as a Catholic Christian. This specialized community is the consequence of intentional contemplative leadership. In addition to the Catholic school educator integrating a Catholic worldview into the curriculum, the Catholic worldview is embedded into the sum of school life, including playgrounds, gyms, athletic fields, and lunchrooms. For the faith internship model to be effective, it must be embraced by the entire school community, including parents, board members, and benefactors.

⁹ *Association of Catholic Leadership Programs (ACLP)*, currently named *Catholic Higher Education Supporting Catholic Schools (CHESCS)*.

¹⁰ Schuttloffel. *Character and the Contemplative Principal*.

¹¹ Merylann J. Schuttloffel. *International Explorations of Contemplative Leadership in Catholic Education* (Routledge, 2019).

“Decision-making that forms a religious identity within each school community culminates in what I named a faith internship community.”

The religious identity of each member of the faith internship community is developed according to their ability, developmental stage, and role. This paper presents the theoretical roots, implementation processes, and specific examples of contemplative leadership in action. In conclusion, the paper will present this model's challenges in contemporary American society.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Contemplative leadership is a leadership model for the Catholic educational context that includes prayerful reflection (contemplation) and intentional decision-making (action). The goal of contemplative leadership is to facilitate the creation of a Catholic faith-filled school community that passes on the faith to the next generation.¹² What distinguishes contemplative leadership practice is the integration of three theoretical underpinnings, i.e., *character*,¹³ leadership,¹⁴ and *reflection*,¹⁵ that necessitate a Catholic school leader to think about their own thinking within an integration of their professional knowledge and their Catholic worldview. That worldview includes Gospel Values, virtues, and Church tradition.

“Contemplative leadership is a leadership model for the Catholic educational context that includes prayerful reflection (contemplation) and intentional decision-making (action).”

¹² Schuttlöffel. *Character and the Contemplative Principal*.

¹³ Robert J. Nash. *Answering the "Virtuecrats": A Moral Conversation on Character Education* (Teachers College Press, 1997).

¹⁴ Thomas J. Sergiovanni. *Moral Leadership: Getting to the Heart of School Improvement* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992).

¹⁵ Max Van Manen. "Linking Ways of Knowing with Ways of Being Practical." *Curriculum and Inquiry* (1977).

The impact of virtues shaped within special communities leads to a Catholic educator's coherent life story. The decisions within this life story demonstrate the character of a Catholic school leader.¹⁶ A contemplative school leader understands the vocation of Catholic educators and the ministry of Catholic education.¹⁷ Contemplative Catholic school leaders deliberate about the consequences of their decisions regarding Gospel values, Catholic theology, and Church tradition. Coherence between beliefs and behaviors is an essential trait of contemplative leadership.

Within the contemplative practice, leadership behaviors include implementing a transformational vision, creating supportive conditions for learning, participatory governance structures, and community-building activities.¹⁸ In turn, the contemplative leader encourages teacher behaviors emphasizing faith integration across the curriculum, discipline strategies emphasizing virtuous behavior, and a Catholic worldview infused into daily classroom life. Contemplative leadership practice inspires a faith learning community for holistic student development.¹⁹

“Within the *contemplative practice*, leadership behaviors include implementing a *transformational vision*, creating *supportive conditions* for learning, *participatory governance* structures, and *community-building* activities.”

Sergiovanni's Leadership Schema

Thomas J. Sergiovanni is well-known as a leadership researcher who includes the moral dimension of teaching and leading within his framework.²⁰ He uses a metaphor for leadership: the heart, the head, and the hand.

¹⁶ Schuttlöffel. *International Explorations of Contemplative Leadership in Catholic Education*.

¹⁷ Richard M. Jacobs. *The Vocation of the Catholic Educator* (National Catholic Education Association, 1996).

¹⁸ Merylann J. Schuttlöffel. *Contemplative Leadership: Creating a Culture for Continuous Improvement* (National Catholic Educational Association, 2008).

¹⁹ Schuttlöffel. *Contemplative Leadership*.

²⁰ Sergiovanni. *Moral Leadership*.

The heart symbolizes the foundational beliefs and values of the leader. Within contemplative leadership, the heart embeds Church teaching and tradition within the Catholic worldview. The head is the metaphor for a person's thinking that processes how the world works. Sergiovanni uses the term *mindscape* to describe this process. The contemplative leader integrates how the world works with their Catholic mindscape or worldview. The final element is the hand, which symbolizes the leader's decisions. Each of these elements functions within Sergiovanni's leadership schema and was appropriate for contemplative leadership as they integrate foundational values as a key part of leadership and how our worldview impacts decision-making that results in a specific decision.

Van Manen's Reflection Model

Max Van Manen has been a popular figure in teacher education since early attempts to professionalize teaching. Reflective practice reacted to efforts to standardize teacher behavior by highlighting the situational context for a teacher's decision. Van Manen wanted to portray the complexity of teaching and elevate the profession. His reflection model includes three types of reflection.²¹ Though often considered hierarchical, each type serves a specific purpose in the reflection process. First is philosophical reflection. This is the highest form of reflection because it reflects on a decision's foundational values and beliefs. These values provide the basis for why Catholic schools teach students in a particular way and transmit the faith in a specific way. Within the contemplative practice, philosophical reflection relates to Sergiovanni's heart and incorporates Gospel values.

Second, interpretive reflection is essential because it examines the meaning created by a decision. Interpretive reflection answers the question of what this means or what meaning is created by a decision. Meaning makes a decision less utilitarian by tying it to a foundational value. The decision itself is considered by technical reflection. Technical reflection responds to the question: How will I implement my decision so that it reflects chosen values and creates the desired meaning? Next, contemplative leadership's integration of Sergiovanni and Van Manen includes Nash.

²¹ Nash. *Answering the "Virtuecrats."*

“Interpretive reflection answers the question of what this means or what meaning is created by a decision. Meaning makes a decision less utilitarian by tying it to a foundational value.”

Nash’s Definition of Character

The third theory integrated into contemplative leadership is Nash’s definition of character. Robert J. Nash used terminology that readily translates into the Catholic Christian worldview.²² He includes formative virtues, special communities, and the resulting life story as crucial character elements. Pursuing virtue is evident in Catholic educators who embrace Gospel Values within their worldview. Formative communities include family, friends, colleagues, mentors, teams, and every group that shapes identity from the local to the national and global. Integrating the virtues acquired and practiced within these communities creates an individual’s life story. Oftentimes, when I interview a Catholic educator, it is possible to trace the threads of these various contributors as they create the tapestry of the person’s life story. Contemplative leadership is comprehensive in that contemplation (reflection) is included in all leadership decisions, not just those that appear “religious” in their purpose. The leader is coherent in the rationale between decisions and the Catholic worldview. Finally, the faith internship community is the culture resulting from these decisions, where adults witness their faith and students experience lived faith.

The Faith Internship and Accompaniment

In my view, the faith internship resembles what Pope Francis calls *accompaniment*. Accompaniment, or traveling on a spiritual journey with others, is a long-standing Christian tradition. Catholic school educators meet students “where they are” in moral development and help the student move toward a more mature faith in action. This accompaniment includes education in religious knowledge in the traditional sense. However, it is more than just academic instruction—it involves guiding students to live out their faith meaningfully.

²² Nash. *Answering the "Virtuecrats."*

“Contemplative leadership is comprehensive in that contemplation (reflection) is included in all leadership decisions, not just those that appear “religious” in their purpose.”

Considerable research reminds us that Catholic school students know their faith as academic knowledge. However, they often do not recognize its connection to their daily moral challenges. Moving from what Kohlberg called the pre-conventional stage to the post-conventional stage is critical as young students become older adolescents and young adults with more agency over their lives.²³ Religious formation means students must learn how to apply their faith to develop an active Catholic identity.

The use of *internship* language was intentional. What is an *internship*? It is an experience of a learner or trainee of a skill or art from exposure to and modeling of a master of a craft. Catholic educators are the advanced practitioners (“masters”) of Jesus’ lifestyle who model a living Catholic identity by exposing students to experiences where their faith is applied to decision-making. This moral modeling takes place within a faith internship community. In Jesus’ lifetime, his disciples were often described as living The Way; Jesus’ way was described within the two great commandments of love and the Beatitudes. The faith internship—accompaniment—approach is not “telling students what the right decision is” but helping them discern the appropriate decision. This can be challenging for teachers and parents, but it is the only way to develop student ownership of their Catholic identity. It is not the same as a neutral “you decide,” but instead gently walking beside the student to help them see how their Catholic faith responds to challenging decisions. This requires vulnerability on the part of adults as they share the complexity of their decision-making processes.

Like any internship, knowledge and skills are disseminated, but experiences with the mentor’s worldview influence the intern. This is the expectation of a faith internship: students will be exposed to not only the dogma of their faith but also a lived faith. How educators make this environment happen is challenging for devoted Catholic school educators. A framework for implementing a faith learning internship has emerged from sincere discussions with practitioners and my experiences as a Catholic educator. The faith internship is the culmination of contemplative leadership.

²³ Brenda Munsey (Ed.). *Moral Development Moral Education and Kohlberg* (Religious Education Press, 1980).

“Like any internship, *knowledge* and *skills* are disseminated, but *experiences* with the mentor’s worldview influence the intern.”

Shaping the Faith Internship Community

First, let us begin with some definitions. A distinction needs to be made between community and culture. Anthropologists would declare that culture is the glue that holds a community together. Culture distinguishes one community from another. Culture includes everything from values to language, history to food, and art to music. In a faith internship, the Catholic culture carries the Catholic values and beliefs articulated by Church dogma, rituals, and tradition. A community lives its culture, and its culture gives members a particular identity with a distinctive worldview. Finally, a person’s identity manifests through integrating their worldview into their decisions.

Steps of Implementation

Prior to any public stage of implementation, the school leader reflects on how this new faith internship model requires changes in their behaviors. Honesty is required for this self-reflection. Then comes the school leader’s private reflection on their school’s religious education and faith life. Again, honesty is required to gain an accurate evaluation. This contemplation considers improving the supportive conditions for the school to function as a faith learning community. The process identifies what changes in their leadership behaviors are necessary to make decisions that create these supportive conditions. This stage could be described as a technical reflection: What is happening in my school? Do we have evidence of a lively life within the school community?

Next is a conversation between a school leader and their teachers and staff. The school leader shares their evaluation of the school’s religious formation process. The leader asks for reactions and feedback. This stage requires gentle evangelization by the school leader as she exposes the weaknesses or shortcomings of their current school environment when considering faith formation.

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One must also acknowledge that others might find the status quo satisfactory. It can be a high-performing Catholic school on other measures (academic performance or football trophies) while paying little heed to essential faith learning outcomes. Before the supportive conditions for improvement can be determined, there needs to be an agreement that change is necessary. Change is always tricky. It suggests negative criticism of the current situation. However, a contemplative school leader allocates substantial time to reflect on how best to move her school community to proactive evangelization. The message needs to focus on how the change will serve the students. This discussion opens the opportunity to describe the faith internship and why a faith internship community could be a means to benefit faith formation in their school community. When a school already has a culture of continuous improvement, the faculty is comfortable with discussions about their school’s potential for improvement in all areas.²⁴

The next stage demands critical reflection that explains to parents why the teachers and staff have embraced a change in faith formation. The philosophical orientation behind the decision to change their approach needs careful presentation. Reminding parents that faith formation is the very reason for the existence of a Catholic school. “Christ is not an afterthought or an add-on to Catholic educational philosophy; He is the center and fulcrum of the entire enterprise, the light enlightening every boy and girl who comes into a Catholic school.”²⁵ If Catholic schools do not evangelize, they are not meeting their distinctive purpose.

“[*Change*] suggests *negative criticism* of the current situation. However, a *contemplative school leader* allocates substantial time to reflect on how best to move her school community to *proactive evangelization*.”

²⁴ Schuttloffel. *Contemplative Leadership*.

²⁵ Archbishop Miller. *The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools*.

Oftentimes, when change is required, individuals fall into several categories: those who are enthusiastic and have the ability and willingness to implement the change. In this case, some teachers or parents who perhaps have advanced theological training, have studied catechetics, or have a further developed personal faith life would embrace the proposed change in the school's approach to faith formation.

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Other teachers or parents may declare that this is not what they are “buying” or raise concerns that this shift will jeopardize other areas where the school excels. They fear the loss of status or may not have an adequate religious knowledge base or personal faith commitment to meet the new required teaching and witnessing practices. Others may have never thought about the school in these terms and, with adequate information and formation, could embrace the evangelizing role. Recognizing and responding to individuals in different places will require the school leader to practice accompaniment and model Catholic Christian behavior by moving the school community gently forward.

The third step relies on the leader making decisions reflecting the school community's commitment to evangelization. This requires the school leader, in conjunction with teachers, staff, and parents, to determine how resources, most typically time and money, can be used to support the priority of supportive conditions for faith formation. Maybe resources must be expended for the teachers to advance their theological knowledge. Also, minutes during the school day must be designated for studying the faith, prayer, and service.

There may be questions about the implications of using instructional time for these activities. Technical reflection may indicate that an extension of the school day is required, which implies additional resources. The implementation stage is highly challenging because reality sets in. It is much easier to rally support for a faith formation emphasis in principle than to make tough decisions to create supportive conditions that provide students with the faith internship experience.

“It is much easier to rally support for a *faith formation* emphasis in principle than to make tough decisions to *create supportive conditions* that provide students with the *faith internship experience*.”

While students are the explicit target of the faith internship, the entire school community will benefit from the supportive faith environment for their faith development. To accomplish this cultural shift, a school leader frequently considers formative experiences for parents, many of whom do not have the religious education necessary to recognize the significance of the distinctive environment the school is trying to provide. Much like any individual's faith journey, an entire school community's faith journey enriches the evangelizers. Ultimately, the contemplative practice model challenges everyone in the school community to seek coherence between the beliefs they espouse and their behaviors within the school community. An abstract Catholic faith does little to provide students with the tangible witness students seek to claim their own Catholic identity. The implementation stage engages interpretive reflection, making educators aware of the unintended messages they send through actions inconsistent with the Catholic worldview. Also, interpretive reflection allows adult school community members to understand the messages coherent with our Catholic faith—encouraging mindfulness of one's actions. This understanding and recognition of the positive Gospel messages already conveyed will be fundamental. By seeking coherence between actions and behaviors, the meaning of being a Catholic Christian becomes a reality rather than an abstract concept. It means something to be a Catholic.

Interestingly, Simon Sinek, a secular leadership researcher, speaker, and author, explains what makes an effective workplace environment. What he describes is an emphasis on positive relationships rooted in love. He points out that when individuals are satisfied with their work, they usually have positive feelings about their co-workers. Moreover, when that is missing, the work and the individual suffer. He makes his point by indicating that workers need to love their work and co-workers so that their work is productive and they feel good about themselves. When this does not happen, there is frustration and apathy.

“By seeking coherence between *actions* and *behaviors*, the meaning of being a *Catholic Christian* becomes a *reality* rather than an *abstract* concept. It *means* something to be a Catholic.”

For many years, my husband managed “big box” retail stores. He often noted that his employees were not making tremendous salaries, and the work might seem mundane to outsiders. However, as was often noted by the upper management, his employees found satisfaction in their work because they were appreciated by their manager and the people they worked with daily. Moreover, I would add that this is a testament to his management style. A management style built on respectful relationships between management and employees, among employees and co-workers, and between employees and customers fosters a positive and productive work environment.

In our work world—the Catholic school—it seems evident that we should be doing as well at developing loving relationships as those within the secular employment world. As Catholic Christian educators, we know that our faith embraces loving everyone. Jesus was very clear about it: Love God and show that we love God by loving each other (even our enemies!). Developing this worldview is the goal of faith formation within a faith internship. Students learn to love by witnessing love. Students learn to make decisions within their Catholic identity’s worldview because the adults around them share how they do it. Students have opportunities to live the faith within their student world.

What Are the Challenges?

Nothing is more noble than participating in the faith formation of another person. Jesus sent the disciples forth to be teachers. Watching the seed of faith grow is the greatest reward for those who work in the ministry of Catholic education. Evangelization is the baptismal call of all Catholic Christians; it would be naïve to present the contemplative leadership model and the faith internship community described in this paper as straightforward to implement within a Catholic school community. Beliefs, values, and personal priorities are deeply entrenched in one’s identity, and any activity that challenges a person’s current worldview is likely to meet considerable resistance.

“Beliefs, values, and personal priorities are deeply entrenched in one’s identity, and any activity that challenges a person’s current worldview is likely to meet considerable resistance.”

That said, whenever I describe the contemplative model, many Catholic educators recognize that they do this thinking about their own thinking already. They simply did not have a language to describe it. An awareness of our reflection's purpose helps to make contemplation more productive and keeps it from becoming a circular activity with no purpose or outcome.

The broader secular society holds values different from those of the Gospel. Consumption, wealth, and status are given more importance than the values inherent in the Beatitudes. Teachers, students, and parents are immersed in this secular culture, and embracing other values is a considerable challenge. However, the purpose of the Catholic school is to prepare our graduates to transform the world with love, mercy, and justice.

There is significant evidence that Catholic educators desire their vocation to contribute to their student's faith formation, thus a meaningful calling. For many, this ministry aspect is why they came to work in a Catholic school, or at least, why they stayed.^{26 27 28 29 30}

Educators desire to create classrooms with a curriculum full of the vitality of the Catholic intellectual tradition. They seek classroom management infused with virtues young students recognize. Moreover, even athletics and extracurricular activities become venues where positive social capital supports faith learning. Contemplative leadership calls attention to how a coherent cultural community provides a comprehensive educational experience that shapes a Catholic identity exemplified by its member's transformational actions.

²⁶ Peter L. Benson and Michael J. Guerra. *Sharing the Faith: The Beliefs and Values of Catholic High School Teachers* (National Catholic Educational Association, 1985)

²⁷ John J. Convey. "Motivation and Job Satisfaction of Catholic School Teachers." *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice* (2014).

²⁸ Merylann J. Schuttloffel. "Catholic Education: The Future is Now." *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice* (2001).

²⁹ Cathy Squillini. "Teacher Commitment and Longevity in Catholic Schools." *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice* (2001).

³⁰ Hope C. Tarr, Maria J. Ciriello & John J. Convey. "Commitment and Satisfaction Among Parochial School Teachers: Findings from Catholic Education." *Journal of Research in Christian Education* (1993).

“Educators desire to create classrooms with a curriculum full of the vitality of the *Catholic intellectual tradition*. They seek *classroom management* infused with *virtues* young students recognize.”

Conclusion

From my half-century as a Catholic educator and researcher, it has become increasingly apparent that Catholic school educators play an integral role in their students' faith formation. School leaders and teachers desire to partner with parents seeking support for their child's faith formation within a Catholic school. Historically, Catholic schools have assisted immigrants in social mobility. However, at least within the United States, evangelization success often receives less acclaim.

Contemplative leadership is a model that places faith formation as the primary focus of Catholic schooling. Consequently, the Catholic school educator serves as a key faith witness. This distinctive role within the Catholic school is more substantive and impactful than expectations for a typical educator. In addition to the Catholic school educator's role in integrating a Catholic worldview into the curriculum, the faith internship involves all aspects of classroom life, including playgrounds, gyms, athletic fields, and lunchrooms.

The substance of contemplative practice and its faith internship community are a leadership model with potential for all religious schools. Faith-based schools exist to pass faith to the next generation. How this procedure takes place may be a technical process. However, more importantly, it is a process grounded in a particular theological worldview that requires witnesses to be authentic. Believers of all faith traditions desire their children to embrace the beliefs, values, and behaviors inherent within their faith.

In an increasingly secular world, faith witnesses make this hidden identity visible. The contemplative leadership model and the resulting faith internship community are a means to make faith formation a reality within religious schools.

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The Center for Faith, Identity, and Globalization (CFIG) is the interdisciplinary research and publication unit of Rumi Forum. CFIG contributes to the knowledge and research at the intersection of faith, identity, and globalization by generating academically informed analyses and facilitating scholarly exchanges. CFIG's spectrum of themes will cover contemporary subjects that are relevant to our understanding of the connection between faith, identity, and globalization, such as interfaith engagement, religious nationalism, conflict resolution, globalization, religious freedom, and spirituality.

About the Author

Merylann “Mimi” J. Schuttloffel, Ph.D., is Professor Emerita at *The Catholic University of America*. With over five decades of experience in education, Dr. Schuttloffel has served as a teacher, counselor, principal, professor, department chair, and founding director of Catholic leadership institutes. She has shaped generations of Catholic school leaders through her direction of programs in educational leadership and policy studies. An internationally respected scholar in contemplative leadership and Catholic education, Dr. Schuttloffel has authored numerous books and publications, including *International Explorations of Contemplative Leadership in Catholic Education* (2019) and several widely used National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) resources. Her research has taken her to Catholic schools across the globe—from Europe and Southeast Asia to Latin America—and she frequently presents at international conferences. In recognition of her contributions to Catholic education, Dr. Schuttloffel received the prestigious C. Albert Koob Award from the NCEA and the College of St. Teresa Alumnae Award. She continues to influence educational leadership through writing, consulting, and public scholarship.

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