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Enlivening all staff through spiritual formation as lifelong adult learners who nurture education for transformation

Note about second edition
This second edition of Catching Fire follows the establishment of the framework and the piloting of strategic initiatives and targeted programmes developed out of the framework. This first phase of implementation with its critical mix of creating, implementing, listening and discernment has been rich in learning and growth, and is reflected in changes integrated into this edition. The feedback has been pivotal in the further shaping of strategic implementation, and we are indebted to the staff across our communities of schools for their wisdom, their commitment to authenticity and their collaborative feedback. Faithful to our tradition and with our eyes on the future, we journey forward together as Catholic educators – catchers and kindlers of the fire that burns within us.

Jill Gowdie
PEO, Evangelisation and Spiritual Formation, Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane
Foreword

This framework, *Catching Fire*, is intended for the shaping and resourcing of spiritual formation for all those involved in Catholic education in this Archdiocese. It is a timely response to a contemporary need, and is a response to our own renewal process.

We live and teach in a different and changing world. Spiritual formation that might have been presumed among those involved in Catholic schools 30 years ago, can no longer be so presumed. Lay staff have replaced predominantly religious staffing in schools and have quite different formation needs in a post-Vatican II Church and contemporary Australian culture. Younger staff members (generations X and Y) have emerged with philosophical and cultural influences that present new challenges for the effective nurturing of their spirituality in a Catholic educational context. Catholic educational leaders at present in this Archdiocese bridge the changes in staffing demographics with minimal ongoing formation opportunities themselves. And the many involved in Catholic education as support personnel engage with school communities using a significantly different lens than do teaching staff and leadership personnel. This experience too calls for different formation approaches.

The challenge for our schools is to engage all staff in positive ways in the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ within the spiritual heritage of Catholicism. This needs to be done through an approach that is both connective and respectful of individuals, and that relates meaningfully to their contexts and backgrounds.

The development of this spiritual formation framework builds on the good work already in evidence across our schools. In particular this framework seeks to provide a cogency and consistency in the philosophical, theological, educational and pedagogical underpinnings of all spiritual formation initiatives. The archdiocesan *Jesus Communion Mission* vision is the foundation for the framework, and this vision provides a comprehensive conceptual underpinning for the content and scope of Catholic Christian spiritual formation. The structure of the framework reflects a developmental approach to lifelong learning that is responsive to the range of target groups and their contexts. The capacities identified for spiritual growth reflect the striking characteristics of Christian community in every time and place.

We are pleased to publish this second edition of the *Catching Fire* document, a result of considerable research and experience in the field, and the learnings from our pilot year. I am grateful for the feedback received from so many staff, experts outside of the system, and from other dioceses and denominations during the extensive consultation phase.

What we have now in this framework is not only a touchstone for our thinking and understanding, but also a map for planning and strategic renewal, giving a strong broad direction within which individual staff and schools may navigate and shape a programme of formation according to their specific needs and context. It is my hope that our efforts here will indeed help the flame of God’s love and energy to grow ever more alive and vibrant within our educational ministry.

I commend this publication to you with enthusiasm, and in gratitude for all that you offer in your work with Catholic education. Thank you and may you know the radiance of God’s blessings in your life and work each and every day.

David Hutton
Executive Director of Catholic Education
Archdiocese of Brisbane
Spiritual Formation for Mission

‘Were not our hearts burning within us …’ (Luke 24: 32)

Unless the eye catch fire, God will not be seen,
Unless the ear catch fire, God will not be heard,
Unless the tongue catch fire, God will not be spoken,
Unless the heart catch fire, God will not be loved. (William Blake)
Preamble

Fire has become an image etched in the Australian psyche – we know its strength, its totality in the fierce blazes that strike up through the summer; its sweep through the cane fields and smoking heat through the gums in drought. We also know its warmth and comfort in the cold of night, and its calming mood in the candle flame. It is no accident that fire, with its associations of awe and energy, of comfort and stillness, is an enduring cultural image.

It is also no surprise then that fire is one of the earliest and richest images associated with the heart of God and the human passion for the Divine. It is an image traced through scripture, and embedded in the mystic tradition of Christianity. In the metaphorical language of Christian spirituality, fire speaks of the deep transformational experience that is the mystery of God’s work in the heart of humanity. In a post modern landscape, a landscape that extinguishes all which does not boldly and directly connect, fire is an image that retains an active, elemental, real and raw energy.

In any landscape, spiritual formation is a dynamic and challenging lifelong journey. Because in any landscape, it remains a journey of the heart – as simple and as confronting as that is.

Christian spiritual formation is deeply personal and radically communal in its vision and praxis. While the shape of a spiritual life is in the end a matter of unique mystery between God and the individual person, spirituality in the Christian tradition is developed in company. There is no such thing as a private Christian: Christian spirituality has a communal dimension which is integral to the journey.

Christian spiritual formation infuses every aspect of living, involving head, heart and hands – and it is about ultimate purpose. It is the growing into a personhood that reflects, in a way unique to the individual, the transforming engagement with the heart of God. It is about life to the full; it is about a particular vision of the world; and it is about living that out in the minutiae of each day.

This way of seeing the world and living in it constitutes a core belief system of reality that is shared and nurtured. In this sense alone, it poses a counter cultural challenge to a post-modern time. For, while our post-modern culture tends to reject universal narratives, the reign of God is the transforming vision for those who choose to stand in the Catholic Christian tradition. And while the individual path to this reality is acknowledged and respected, the vision itself is a non-negotiable touchstone for all those choosing to be involved in the educational mission of the church. It is founded on a sacramental view of the world, nurtured in the cradle of community, strengthened by pathways of prayer, challenged in the world to do what must be done for justice sake, and reflected in the compassionate hospitality that is the hallmark of all followers of Jesus.

While the vision remains constant, the journeys to the place where the heart catches fire are as different and sacred as each individual. Our challenge and responsibility is to facilitate formation that allows the spark to catch; the flame to spread. It is the tending of this kind of fire that kindles Catholic ‘Schools with Spirit.’
Part A – Overarching Goal and Implementation

Overarching Goal of Catching Fire

Enlivening all staff through spiritual formation
as lifelong adult learners who nurture
education for transformation
(Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane)

Implementation

This section outlines key principles of implementation for the Spiritual Formation Framework.

1. **Catching Fire** is directed towards all people working in Catholic education. These are grouped into target audiences associated with roles and experience:
   - Beginning Teachers/New Graduates
   - Experienced Teachers
   - Religious Education Teachers
   - APREs/KLA Coordinators/Year Coordinators/Campus Ministers
   - School Leadership Aspirants/Leadership Teams
   - Principals
   - School Support Staff
   - School Boards
   - Parent/Carer Communities
   - BCEC Senior Staff
   - BCEC Administrative and Educational Officers
   - BCEC Clerical and Support Staff

2. The **Catching Fire** framework recognises that spiritual formation occurs both within and beyond the school context and is a joint responsibility between the individual, the school and the system:
   - Individual staff members have the primary responsibility for their own spiritual formation.
   - Individual schools also have appropriate responsibility for the initiation and carriage of formation initiatives at school level, through renewal planning and annual goal setting.
   - BCEC has responsibility for system-wide formation policies, some general and targeted formation opportunities, system resources and spiritual formation support personnel.

3. It is envisaged that all working within Brisbane Catholic Education are invited to engage in spiritual formation within the core formation elements as appropriate to role and experience. Spiritual formation experiences will be offered on an invitational basis to specific groups across our schools and centres. This framework does not support a ‘one size fits all’ approach but looks to encourage all staff to set appropriate spiritual formation goals each year.

4. While initiatives proposed reflect a variety of delivery modes, particular attention is given through BCEC offerings to immersion opportunities that reflect contemporary best practice in spiritual formation and which are integrated into professional life.

5. The spiritual formation services offered are connected with and integrated into:
   - all Brisbane Catholic Education directorates
   - professional learning plans for all school communities and individual staff.

6. Nurturing of spiritual formation for leadership is a critical priority in framework implementation.

7. Spiritual formation initiatives will be underpinned by contemporary theory, reflective and experiential learning, access to best practice, and be related to the individual’s professional and personal world.

‘Shine through me, and be so in me, that every soul I come in contact with may feel Your presence in my soul.’  Prayer of Mother Teresa
Part B: Conceptual Underpinnings

This section outlines conceptual underpinnings for Catching Fire as a framework for spiritual formation appropriate to our contemporary setting.

... about Vision

‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’
(Prov 29: 18)

Vision proclaims what we believe ourselves to be about. It calls us and reminds and brings us back to our centre. In both Greek and Latin, the root meaning of ‘to believe’ is ‘to give one’s heart to.’ So, a vision expresses what a community ‘gives its heart to.’

Catching Fire makes connection with both the archdiocesan vision and the Brisbane Catholic Education vision.

Jesus Communion Mission

• Vibrant evangelising Archdiocese

The conceptual foundation for Catching Fire is the archdiocesan Jesus Communion Mission vision (Let Your Light Shine 2004). 

Jesus Communion Mission is the archdiocesan vision for growing as a vibrant, evangelising Archdiocese, promulgated by Archbishop John Bathersby to conclude Synod 2003. The words Jesus, Communion and Mission represent the vision’s three major actions, calling us to:

- Embrace the person and vision of JESUS
- Build COMMUNION with God and others
- Engage in Jesus’ MISSION in our world.

These three dimensions of living in the light of the Catholic Christian tradition encompass the things worth giving our hearts to – a deep connection to Jesus; a deep relationality in the world that is grounded in the sacred; and a spirit that sends one into the world to be a transforming presence.

The practice of these three dimensions is seen as essential if individuals, communities and institutions in the Archdiocese are to experience the fullness of Christian life and have the transforming impact on the world that is our mission.

Teach Challenge Transform

• Jesus Communion Mission and Catholic Education

Catching Fire also makes explicit connection to our vision statement for Catholic Education – to teach challenge and transform. Catholic education in this Archdiocese is promoted as a lifelong enterprise, inviting all those involved in educational ministry to be anchored in a Catholic vision that is personal and public, reflective and active, nurturing and transformative. Our schools, as part of the evangelising mission of the local church, are well attuned to the power of word and witness in school leadership, staffing and community culture.

The Jesus Communion Mission vision embraced by the Brisbane Catholic Education community in its Vision Statement (Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education, April 2005) is realised through everyday witness, learning and teaching that challenges and transforms the culture and the world in which we live.

However, while this vision for Catholic education is mission-focused, formation for those involved, in a myriad of ways, in our educational ministry, must be nurtured from the inside out. The development of a personal connection to the person and vision of Jesus, and the consciousness of, and building of communion with God and others, must be nurtured consistently and deeply so that there will be effective engagement in the transformative mission.
• From a spirituality of COMMUNION

The mission of the church is evangelisation. Catholic schools draw their purpose for existence from their partnership in this evangelising mission of the wider church. Evangelisation is about transformation. Thus our mission in all that we do in Catholic education as a ministry of the church is about transformation.

The understanding we have of our educational ministry in the church’s mission is vibrant. We provide an education that is underpinned, overlaid and shot through with a view of the world and life that is predicated on a dynamic loving Creator – the original Heart on Fire – who calls all creation to life-giving communion.

Mission in this context is the result and lived out expression of an underpinning spirituality of communion – how can we not respond to people and creation with whom we are connected in the communion of the Trinity in which we all live, move and have our being?

Mission is developed and expressed in ways that include ecclesial, systemic and individual dimensions.

• Ecclesial Dimension: Evangelising mission

In ecclesial terms, the fundamental evangelising mission of the church is about transformation on a personal, communal, local and global level, ‘bringing the good news into all strata of humanity, and through its influence, transforming humanity from within and making it new …’ (Paul VI Evangelisation in the Modern World, 1975). The current Church understanding of evangelisation has developed since Vatican II under the strong influence of both Paul VI (1975) and John Paul II.

• Systemic Dimension: The Heart of Catholic Education


Our evangelising purpose is expressed in a dynamic way in our vision statement as an educational mission to TEACH, CHALLENGE and TRANSFORM the world through what we do and how we do it.

This evangelising, educational mission responds to and incorporates the archdiocesan Jesus Communion Mission vision. Catching Fire is about spiritual formation for that mission, and as such, presents all three dimensions of the archdiocesan Jesus Communion Mission vision as integral to the spiritual formation of all within our educational communities and regards all three dimensions as directly relevant to the evangelising mission of Catholic education.

• Individual Dimension: Personal FIRE

For an individual, mission is multilayered, referring to private, personal, vocational, and public commitments that have grown out of a personal spirituality and that carry some ‘fire’ for...
them. That fire – the passion which shapes the individual’s spirituality, may be found, articulated and named without reference to the Christian vision just discussed. This pre-evangelisation stage requires recognition and respect, with invitations to connect the individual experience to the Christian meta-narrative. This challenge – holding in balance as it does the deep respect of the individual journey and where God may be found, as well as the corporate beliefs that are foundational to the mission and ministry of Catholic education – is central to the present context of spiritual formation.

... about Evangelisation

‘Evangelisation means nothing less than the total transformation of our world, ourselves included! Archbishop John Bathersby

• Recovering Meaning and Purpose

The word evangelisation is taken from the latin word evangelium (Greek – evangelion). It translates as ‘good news’ or ‘gospel.’ Catholics believe the church exists in order to evangelise (Paul VI), and the word has regained pre-eminence in describing the mission of the church.

The term ‘evangelisation’ was revived and became embedded in the conversations and outcomes of Vatican II. In the years following, Pope Paul VI re-centred evangelisation as the baptismal responsibility of all Christians (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 1975) and under Pope John Paul II the idea of ‘a new evangelisation’ gained currency. He saw the need for new ways, new strategies and new commitment in sharing the Gospel, and he saw the Holy Spirit as ‘the principal agent of the “new evangelisation”’. (Tertio Millennio Adveniente 1994, #45) In 2001, Pope John Paul II in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation Ecclesia in Oceania reiterated his call for a ‘new evangelisation’ and cited the strengthening of the identity of Catholic schools (#19) as a critical way in which to action this.

Finally, two more terms have come into currency. The term ‘re-evangelisation’ has emerged giving emphasis to the importance of re-newing and maturing faith in our journey as Christians. The term ‘pre-evangelisation’ refers to the stage of spiritual journey where the recognition of the ‘fire’ is identified without connection to the Christian meta narrative, and the emphasis here is on respectful engagement.

Evangelisation is often confused with the term ‘evangelism’. The latter is most commonly used in protestant churches and linked to the narrower practice of proclaiming the gospel with words. Evangelisation, as it has developed in the Catholic Tradition, has a broader and deeper sense. To share the good news and to give witness to it is done in a myriad of ways including direct verbal proclamation but extending beyond it. This embodied understanding of evangelisation is expressed well in the directive attributed to St Francis of Assisi: Preach the gospel always, and when necessary, use words!

Evangelisation then, includes not only the proclamation of the gospel in words, but all of the Church’s ministries and the realisation of its whole mission (cf. GDC, nos. 46-48 passim). This involves the reflection of the gospel in our values and practices, social systems and institutions. It is not just part of what we do, but rather implicit in all we do.
• Deepening Understanding – Our Archdiocesan Response

In Australia, and in our Archdiocese, evangelisation has become a much more mainstream term in Catholic culture over the last ten years. The publication of the General Directory for Catechesis (1997), and the accompanying adaptation for Australian Catholic Schools provided by the Australian Bishops (authored by Bishop Gerard Holohan) has been helpful in this process. In 2005, the publication of Pope Benedict XVI’s first encyclical, Deus Caritas Est, provided a further lens in understanding the mission of the church using key terms (in their original Greek) connected to the church’s earliest times: leitourgia (worship), marturia (witness) kerygma (proclamation), and diakonia (service). Two other functions associated in this way with the Church’s activity are didache (teaching) and koinonia (community). The faces of evangelisation in the work of the church through these ways are as old as the Church herself. The shape and character of each of these is always renewing in the creative wake of the Holy Spirit in our times.

In this Archdiocese, the task of evangelisation and in particular, an understanding of what this call is and how it looks in this culture and for the people of this time and place has been the focus of attention and development at archdiocesan level since 1996. It is predicated on the understanding that God is living and active in the world. God is the first evangeliser. In our work of evangelisation, God’s work is our model. God has set the pattern. All that we do is a response to God’s passionate heart, the first Heart on Fire. In doing so, our response reflects a fullness of life and our journey toward deep communion with this Creator – through our own growth as a person – and through our combined action to create a transformed world. (Understanding Evangelisation, 2000)

Thus, evangelisation is understood as being carried out through word and action and is made visible in personal, social and organisational dimensions. It is an understanding that both reflects our Catholic tradition and challenges us as Catholics looking towards the future.

• Key points

The key points in a current understanding of evangelisation can be summarised as follows:

~ Evangelisation is firstly individual and personal. It is about promoting personal encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ to nurture a deeply personal following of Jesus that is transformative.

~ Evangelisation is communal and corporate. It is about our shared Catholic identity, and involves us all at a communal level. In this, we recognise our collective call through our organisational ministry areas within the church whatever they may be – in catholic education, catholic health, parish life, prison ministries, social outreach.

~ Evangelisation is about transformation on a personal, communal, local and global level. Re-evangelisation (John Paul II) is not so much about ‘bringing them in’ as ‘bringing us out’, re-lighting the fire in ourselves and connecting in a renewed way to our story and ‘the hope we have.’

~ A New Evangelisation calls us to new ways of sharing the gospel in our time and culture.

~ Evangelisation is not just about the ‘words’ but about every way the church continues the ministry and mission of Jesus in the world. These ways include celebrating the sacraments; doing works of justice, peace and compassion; building up community; carrying out our everyday vocation; and being citizens in society.

~ Evangelisation involves deep listening as well as dialogue at a communal level with other traditions and faiths. While Christians must commit to sharing and bearing witness to their own faith, they must also respect the Spirit’s movements throughout humankind and appreciate the many ways in which the Spirit leads to life. This is explicit in Vatican II documents as well as the new General Directory of Catechesis. (See Thomas Groome pp 4, 5 and Understanding Evangelisation, 2000)

~ This nurturing of ‘deep listening’ is also fundamental within our personal spiritual journeys and with those to whom we minister.
and alongside whom we work. Whether we are renewing or maturing our own Christian faith (re-evangelisation) or whether we are part of the journey in making the connection between personal ‘fire’ and the ‘sacred fire’ of the Christian story (pre-evangelisation), we are challenged to recognise our own stories and hear each others’ stories into life. None of us has arrived!

**Evangelisation and the School Community**

Catholic education fulfils its evangelising mission through the development, support and engagement of its schools. Our witness - as individuals, as school communities, and as an organisation – takes on a broader challenge than attention to the concrete exemplars of proclamation. How we manage behaviours in the classroom and the staffroom; the underlying values with which we design curriculum and develop pedagogy; the underlying vision with which we set goals and undertake school renewal; the approach we have to student wellbeing and the shape of the religious life of the school all give expression to our witness. It is the Catholic school as a whole, in all that it does, and how it does, which brings the good news to those within the school and the broader community. It is the organisation as a whole, through its policies and structures, ways of operating and sense of identity which gives witness to gospel values and the vision of Jesus.

**Place of Staff Formation in Evangelisation**

Staff formation for all those engaged in and supporting our school communities is recognised as critical in the effectiveness of our evangelising mission. The Catching Fire Spiritual Formation framework is a strategic response to this important need. It constitutes a key tool for the challenge of new evangelisation as we attend to our individual journeys which in turn give life to organisational identity and witness. It offers a transformational approach from the inside out!

**Spirituality – a way of LIFE**

‘Spirituality defines one’s whole way of life. As such, spirituality can be defined as a way of seeing, being and acting. What is distinctive about Christian spirituality is that it is a way of being, seeing and acting that is founded in, and takes its inspiration from, the person and vision of Jesus Christ’ (Let Your Light Shine, p.4). Christian spirituality is about consciously living our lives in relationship with God, empowered by the Holy Spirit and following the way of Jesus. Christian spirituality is sustained by personal and communal prayer (Jesus), lived in relationship with a Christian community (Communion) and expressed through working for God’s way of doing things in the world (Mission).

In our Catholic tradition this spirituality is fed by word, by tradition, by the sacraments, by the life and witness of the saints, in Trinitarian theology, a justice imperative and Marian devotion.

**Spirituality of COMMUNION**

In the Archdiocese of Brisbane, faithful to the teaching and spirit of Vatican II and recent
papal teaching (At the Beginning of the New Millennium 2001 # 43-45), the core spirituality that all Catholics are called to develop is known by the term ‘spirituality of communion.’ It is a spirituality that ‘has its source in our communion with God, and which is forged in communion with others and with all creation. It is a spirituality of relationships.’

While there are many different ways in which a spirituality of communion can be lived out, it has the following core characteristics:

~ a belief in the Trinity of divine persons as the communion in which we live, move and have our being, and the model for the communion of love the Church is called to become
~ a commitment to liturgy, especially the Eucharist, communal prayer and personal prayer
~ a collaborative spirit
~ an ecumenical commitment
~ an inclusive attitude to the world
~ a readiness to dialogue with other faiths and all people of good will
~ a passion for social justice and human rights
~ a view of the natural environment as God’s creation to be loved and cared for.

(Let Your Light Shine [2004] further developed in Spirituality of Communion and Body of Christ [Archbishop John Bathersby, 2005])

• **Spirituality and CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

Christian spirituality in the Catholic tradition is at the very core of what is done each day in the enterprise of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. This is evident in the explicit proclamations of official Church documents on Catholic education, both universal and local, and in the day-to-day discourses of the Brisbane Catholic Education Leadership Team and support personnel and of principals, leadership teams and staff in our Catholic schools and offices all around the Archdiocese.

A spirituality of communion is the spiritual foundation of all teaching and learning in all subject areas insofar as such activity ennobles the human spirit, develops the human capacity to act for the welfare of others and all creation, and contributes to a world that is ‘prayerful, sacramental, just, peaceful, inclusive and reconciling’ (Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education, 2005).

• **Dynamic process of growth**

Spiritual formation in the Catholic Christian tradition is a dynamic process of growth in the understanding and practice of Christian spirituality. The word ‘formation’ generally refers to a set of experiences designed to prepare a person or group for a particular purpose. It is important to remember that central to our contemporary Christian understanding of formation is the respectful engagement of the experience and wisdom already within. The word ‘formation’, in preference to a word like ‘training’, is most often used in the context of spiritual development and conjures images of a deep learning that involves attitudes, values,
commitment to particular life directions as well as knowledge and skills. In this case, spiritual formation is about all these things in response to Jesus Christ who is seen as the Way the Truth and the Life, and the Holy Spirit acting through the community of Christ’s disciples (Church) in the context of the mission of Catholic education and the Catholic school in particular.

- **LIFELONG partnership with the Spirit**

  Spiritual growth is a lifelong journey. It is also basically an inner journey travelled in a partnership between God’s Spirit and our spirits working in kinship (Groome, p.325). Ultimately, it is the encounters with God’s Spirit that advances spiritual growth. The aim of a spiritual formation programme therefore is to facilitate and nurture that internal encounter with God through communal support and resources provided in a range of ways.

- **CORE expectation within Catholic schooling**

  Spiritual formation of staff in Catholic schools is universally acknowledged as critical to the effective mission of Catholic schools:

  ‘The concrete living out of a vocation as rich and profound as that of the lay Catholic in a school requires an appropriate formation, both on the professional plane and on the religious plane. Most especially, it requires the educator to have a mature spiritual personality, expressed in a profound Christian life.’ (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, n. 60)

  The effective structuring and resourcing of spiritual formation that both supports this mission and responds to the contemporary contexts of people’s lives is a current and challenging issue for all Catholic education authorities around Australia.

  Spiritual formation is about transformation in the context of lifelong learning and has intentional outcomes relating to the inner journey. While spiritual formation is primarily the responsibility of the individual, both school leadership and Brisbane Catholic Education Centre leadership have key expectation-setting, resourcing and support roles to play.

  Spiritual formation of personnel is understood to be integrally connected to the core business of Catholic schooling and is built on the hope that ‘an adult community whose faith is well formed and lively will more effectively pass that faith on to the next generation. Moreover, the witness of adults actively continuing their own formation shows children and youth that growth in faith is lifelong and does not end upon reaching adulthood.’ (US Bishops Statement: Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, n. 68.)
The **Catching Fire** Framework can be described as a **HEAD HEART HANDS** approach. It reflects an holistic understanding of formation, respectful of the individual context and journey, and at the same time developed within a communal perspective of mission.

This framework has been designed so that

- current visions, programmes and opportunities may be situated and supported
- new initiatives, whether long term or spontaneous, may find an appropriate fit
- formation pathways can be developed

The framework comprises both the **Matrix** and **Model**. The **Matrix** lays the information out in a linear way with elaboration on the elements. The **Model** presents **Catching Fire** in a way that captures visually the symbolic power and dynamic interplay between the framework elements.

The section is in six parts:

1. The Catching Fire **MATRIX**
2. The Catching Fire **MODEL**
3. The Catching Fire Capacities
4. Head, Heart and Hands Approach
5. My Story, Our Story, The Story
6. Using the Framework

‘Earth cannot escape heaven, flee it by going up or flee it by going down. Heaven still invades the Earth, energises it, makes it sacred’

Meister Eckhart

**The Catching Fire Matrix**

**TABLE 1** overleaf is a matrix of the different components of the **Catching Fire Framework** linked together in an integrated, dynamic way.

Across the top row are the different components of the framework in sequential order from left to right and in the respective columns below are the contents for each of the components, as follows:

- **Responsive to the Jesus Communion Mission vision** - the three vital dimensions of the archdiocesan vision

  ..with **HEAD, HEART and HANDS**, we undertake spiritual formation for mission in

  core formation elements - these four formation elements (EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICE, APPLICATION) are arranged in three groups around the **Jesus Communion Mission vision**.

  ..further developing as lifelong learners with the confidence, qualities and capacity – nine formation capacities are connected to the three dimensions: developing as persons of PRESENCE, PRAYER and PRINCIPLE; as persons of WELCOME, RITUAL and JOURNEY; as persons of PURPOSE, COMMITMENT and FIDELITY.

  ..to carry out the Vision for Catholic Education, – to **TEACH, CHALLENGE, TRANSFORM**.

From page 18, following **TABLE 1**, further explanation of some of the Matrix components is provided.

Following that, on page 22, the **Catching Fire** Model is presented and unpacked.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Catching Fire Matrix</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Responsive to the Jesus Communion Mission vision of the Archdiocese of Brisbane</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>JESUS</strong> Embracing the Person and Vision of Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J1 EXPERIENCE</strong> Experience and value the witness of self and others who model lives centred on Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J2 KNOWLEDGE</strong> Know about the person and vision of Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J3 PRACTICE</strong> Develop skills and practices, especially in prayer, that nurture and deepen a personal relationship with Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J4 APPLICATION</strong> Understand and apply the values in the vision of Jesus to our everyday educational contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNION</strong> Building Communion with God and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1 EXPERIENCE</strong> Experience and value the witness of self and others who model a spirituality of communion through liturgy and ritual, relationships with others and a sacramental view of the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C2 KNOWLEDGE</strong> Know and understand spirituality of communion as the heart and soul of the Church and its mission, and the centrality of the celebration of eucharist and the other sacraments in this communion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C3 PRACTICE</strong> Develop skills and practices that express hall-marks of Christian communion – reverence, respect, hospitality, inclusivity, pastoral care, forgiveness, worship and common prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C4 APPLICATION</strong> Apply a sacramental perspective to our everyday educational contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MISSION</strong> Engaging in Jesus’ Mission in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M1 EXPERIENCE</strong> Experience and value the witness of self and others who model different expressions of Jesus’ mission, including social justice outreach, vocational commitment and everyday choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M2 KNOWLEDGE</strong> Know the evangelising mission of the Church and the place of Catholic schools in this mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M3 PRACTICE</strong> Develop and practise a sense of personal and communal mission in the context of a vocation within Catholic education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M4 APPLICATION</strong> Apply the transformative purpose of Jesus’ mission to our everyday educational contexts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TEACH** promoting faith in Jesus Christ, teaching and learning about Jesus, the gospel and the faith of the Christian community

**CHALLENGE** educating to live in communion with God, others and the whole of creation in prayerful, sacramental, just, peaceful, inclusive and reconciling communities

**TRANSFORM** educating for a transformed world in communion, nurturing the gifts and potential of each person, enacting shared leadership and exercising a preferential option for the poor and marginalised
Matrix components

**Jesus Communion Mission**

The dimensions of the Archdiocesan *Jesus Communion Mission* vision embraced in the *Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education* (2005) provide a comprehensive and relevant conceptual foundation for the framework. These three dimensions: Embracing the Person and Vision of Jesus, ‘Building Communion with God and Others’; and ‘Engaging in Jesus’ Mission in our World provide key content for the core formation elements, and point to formation outcomes or capacity building identified in the framework.

**HEAD, HEART and HANDS Formation Process**

Anchored by the ‘Jesus’, ‘Communion’ and ‘Mission’ dimensions, formation is seen to involve four elements that reflect a Head, Heart, and Hands approach. These are common to all formation activities, but elaborated more particularly as they are applied to each core dimension (*Jesus Communion Mission*). Formation for each of these dimensions then aims to grow particular capacities named in the Matrix.

The common elements of the formation process are:

**Experience**: Experience refers to engagement with personal experience or stories of others who model particular ways of being, relevant to key formation elements.

**Knowledge**: Knowledge refers to information and conceptual understanding of key spiritual formation content.

**Practice**: Practice refers to skills, practices and disciplines in everyday life that will deepen spiritual growth in an ongoing way.

**Application**: Application refers to applying key elements of spiritual formation learnings to everyday educational contexts.

In brief, and taking an example, the action ‘Embrace the Person and Vision of Jesus’ elaborates in the following way when the formation elements are applied:

**Experience**: refers to personal encounter with Jesus eg in prayer and other experiences, moving from knowing about, to a much deeper knowing which can be described by the word embrace.

**Knowledge**: refers to information about Jesus and his vision of life.

**Practice**: refers to the trying out for oneself the experience/learnings, understanding and adapting them for one’s own situation.

**Application**: refers to practices and disciplines integrated into one’s everyday life that will deepen one’s embrace of the person and vision of Jesus.

Knowledge (The ‘Head’) is a vital component of spiritual formation. At the same time, this framework is based on the belief that adult spiritual formation must also include a strong experiential (The ‘Heart’) aspect that allows for reflective learning, and the application of knowledge, skills and practices. (The ‘Hands’)

See p 26 for further information on the Head Heart Hands Approach.

**The Core Formation Elements and Capacities**

Core Formation Elements and Capacities relating to the ‘Jesus’ Dimension

**Core Formation Elements**

J1 Experience and value the witness of self and others who model lives centred on Jesus

J2 Know about the person and vision of Jesus

J3 Develop skills and practices, especially in prayer, that nurture and deepen a personal relationship with Jesus

J4 Understand and apply the values in the vision of Jesus to everyday educational contexts
Formation Capacities being developed

The formation capacities developed in the Jesus dimension are identified as Presence, Prayer and Principle. That is, Catching Fire seeks to further develop all involved with Catholic Education across our school and office communities ..

.. as persons of presence who reflect an incarnational understanding of God

.. as persons of prayer who have developed personal prayer styles and are nurtured and sustained by faithfulness to this practice

.. as persons of principle who live the gospel values of Jesus’ vision

Aspect of the Vision for Catholic Education being supported

Formation in the above elements and the development of the above capacities will enhance the power to teach, promoting faith in Jesus Christ, teaching and learning about Jesus, the gospel and the faith of the Christian community. (Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education 2005)

Core Formation Elements and Capacities relating to the ‘Communion’ Dimension

Core Formation Elements

C1 Experience and value the witness of others who model a spirituality of communion through liturgy and ritual, relationships with others and a sacramental view of the world

C2 Know and understand spirituality of communion as the heart and soul of the Church and Its Mission, and the centrality of the celebration of Eucharist and the other sacraments in this communion

C3 Develop skills and practices that express hallmarks of Christian communion – reverence, respect, hospitality, inclusivity, pastoral care, forgiveness, worship and common prayer

C4 Apply a sacramental perspective to our everyday educational contexts

Formation Capacities being developed

The formation capacities developed in the Communion dimension are identified as Welcome, Ritual and Journey. That is, Catching Fire seeks to further develop all involved with Catholic education across our school and office communities ..

.. as persons of welcome who understand and build an ethos of Christian hospitality in every circumstance

.. as persons of ritual who understand sacramentality and apply the Christian value of reverence in all relationships

.. as persons of journey who understand the ‘people of God’ narrative and have found a place in the wider Church

Aspect of the Vision for Catholic Education being supported

Formation in the above elements and the development of the above capacities will enhance the power to challenge, educating to live in communion with God, others and the whole of creation in prayerful, sacramental, just, peaceful, inclusive and reconciling communities. (Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education 2005)

Core Formation Elements and Capacities relating to the ‘Mission’ Dimension

Core Formation Elements

M1 Experience and value the witness of others who model different expressions of Jesus’ mission, including social justice outreach, vocational commitment and everyday choices

M2 Know the evangelising mission of the Church, and the place of Catholic schools in this mission

M3 Develop and practice a sense of personal and communal mission in the context of a vocation within Catholic education
M4 Apply the transformative purpose of Jesus’ mission to our everyday educational contexts

Formation Capacities being developed

The formation capacities developed in the Communion dimension are identified as **Purpose**, **Commitment** and **Fidelity**. That is, *Catching Fire* seeks to further develop all involved with Catholic education across our school and office communities..

.. as persons of **purpose** with a strong sense of personal and professional vocation

.. as persons of **commitment** with a passion for making a difference in the world through their vocation and witness

.. as persons of **fidelity** who live out, through their ministry, the best of the Catholic Christian educational tradition, and identify with all those who work in the name of Catholic schooling.

Aspect of the Vision for Catholic Education being supported

Formation in the above elements and the development of the above capacities will enhance the power to **transform**, educating for a transformed world in communion, nurturing the gifts and potential of each person, enacting shared leadership and exercising a preferential option for the poor and marginalised. (*Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education 2005*) See p 24 for a further explanation of the background and understanding of the Capacities.

Unpacking the Model

The model gives a visual sense of the dynamic process and elements that make up the framework.

Embedded in the *Catching Fire* model is the recognised graphic of the archdiocesan Jesus Communion Mission vision representing what is required to be a vibrant Christian person, a vibrant Christian community or institution, or a vibrant Christian Church. The model contains several elements, namely: the flame; the words *Jesus, Communion, Mission*; the expanding band of colour outside the flame. Added to these are several other elements, namely: the lifelong learner circle; the words *Teach, Challenge, Transform*; the double-headed arrows; the formation cycle and the formation outcome capacities.

An explanation of each of these elements now follows.

The Lifelong Adult Learner Circle

At the centre of this model is the individual. This is, and must be, a person centred framework – not a school centred framework or a system centred framework. Every individual working in any capacity in our communities presents with their own **personal story**, their own **personal**
spirituality and their own community (school/offices). This presenting context is the starting point for all spiritual formation. We believe God is present and active in every person’s life. Spiritual formation, then, finds the connecting points with the individual’s personal story, deepens an awareness of it, and offers some new and challenging lenses through which to understand and frame that story.

Thus we approach the individual’s reality bringing with us two key assumptions:

- **every person is a lifelong learner**
- **God is real**, present and at work at the heart of each person and in their lives

The individual (and the context of the lifelong learner) is symbolised by the central figures across the flame and the gold circle surrounding the flame.

### The Flame

The flame, which is at the centre of this circle and the *Catching Fire* Model itself, is symbolic of the heart of God burning with love and passion for life. In the Judeo-Christian story, there is a long tradition of the flame representing the presence of God active in the world at highly significant moments as in the burning bush encounter of Moses (Exodus) and the flames of fire at Pentecost (Acts).

The metaphor of fire in describing the power of divine energy is also the old, old language of Christian mysticism, used by the early desert Ammas and Abbas of Egypt and echoed throughout the rich written history of our great spiritual figures including Teresa of Avila, Richard Rolle, St Macarius, Julian of Norwich, Meister Eckhart, Mechtild of Magdaberg, St Columba and Teilhard de Chardin. In this tradition, the flame represents the meeting place between us and God in which we are formed and transformed by the love and life of the God of relationships, the Trinity of life. It is not so much a physical place but an experience of encounter which may be beyond words. This experiential encounter with the Divine, captured so well by the Christian mystics, is very often described by them in terms of fire-like passion which is transformational.

This change may be characterised by comfort, peace or joy. At other times it may be amidst distress, doubt, anger, grief or frustration. Such an encounter may happen anywhere, anytime. In this space, the being of the lifelong learner meets the being of the lifelong creator.

Thus we believe that the spiritual journey is an awakening to that presence and its fire and energy and that the spiritual relationship that develops is characterised by **transformation, integration** and **re-creation**. This essentially life-giving, sacred encounter is the mystery we try to facilitate in formation pathways and the *Catching Fire* Framework seeks to reflect these characteristics in its outcomes.

No one can presume to **make** the encounter with God happen; this is a personal response to grace which cannot be coerced or manipulated. However, we take seriously a responsibility to support a culture and a professional learning approach where the spark is more likely, rather than less likely, to ‘catch fire.’

### The Jesus Communion Mission Action Dimensions

In the *Catching Fire* model, each of these dimensions intersects with the central circle of the lifelong adult learner/seeker. The model indicates the action of engagement of each of these dimensions with the world of the lifelong adult learner in a way that has an effect on the spiritual growth of the person (represented by the arrow inward and the
expanding circle of colour around the flame) as well as an effect on the outwardly visible behaviour that reflects growth in each particular dimension (represented by the arrow outward).

Our work lies in creating and coordinating ways of turning the Jesus ‘lens’, the Communion ‘lens’ and the Mission ‘lens’ on to the life of the individual and tracking an understanding of what this way of seeing the world offers the individual in their personal and work contexts.

*Jesus Communion Mission and our Vision to teach, challenge and educate for a transformed world*

*Jesus Communion Mission* - These three words encapsulate three action dimensions that we need to develop if we are to be authentic followers of Jesus who live out of our centre (Flame) in a way that is life-giving and life-engaging.

We need to:

**Embrace the person and vision of Jesus.**
This is about knowing and following the person, vision and way of Jesus Christ. Formation for this action dimension will assist us to *Teach* about Jesus, the gospel, the faith of the Catholic Christian community as proclaimed by the *Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education*.

**Build Communion with God and others.**
This is about creating bonds of understanding, respect, love and shared commitment within and beyond our Church. Formation for this action dimension will assist us to *Challenge* those we educate to live in communion with God, others and the whole of creation in prayerful, sacramental, just, peaceful, inclusive and reconciling communities, as proclaimed by the *Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education*.

**Engage in Jesus’ Mission in the world**
This is about making a difference in today’s world by living the vision of Jesus in everything we do in relationships, family, work and society. Formation for this action dimension will assist us to *Educate for a Transformed World* in communion, by nurturing the gifts and potential of each person, enacting shared leadership, and exercising a preferential option for the poor and marginalised, as proclaimed by the *Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education*.

Thus these action dimensions are very much related to the core business which is the context for all engaged in the mission of Catholic education. At the same time, these dimensions are also about personal balance and centering. They provide a way of mapping the essential areas of focus for a Christian, and at the same time, help to identify the balance between the inner and outer life that can so often be knocked out of kilter.

**The Arrows**
A two-way action

The Arrows
The model shows the two-fold effect of developing these three action dimensions.

**Inwardly directed arrow:**
Firstly, as explained above in the ‘The Flame’ section, these action dimensions draw us into closer encounter with God, inasmuch as the actions themselves become our way of life, our heart becomes more receptive to the creative, transforming growth that God wants to nurture in us. This is represented by the arrows leading inwards from the three dimension circles right into the flame.
Outwardly directed arrow: The action dimensions themselves have an outwardly directed impact, but become even more expansive and powerful as a result of the transforming effect of God’s grace bestowed abundantly upon receptive hearts. Well-directed formation assists this process of graced encounter with God, and results in identifiable outcomes or capacities.

The arrows can represent the journey of the individual person - teacher, principal, secretary, teacher-aide, consultant, professional support and so on. The arrows can also represent the journey of a school or office community as a whole (or any other kind of Catholic community).

Expanding Band of Colour
Around the central flame is a band of colour similar in colour to the flame and representing our expanding impact for good in the world around us as a result of commitment to the three action dimensions and the formative/transformative encounters with God that inevitably follow.

Formation Capacities
Each formation focus – the Jesus Lens; the Communion Lens; the Mission Lens – seeks a two-fold outcome. Every initiative offered within this framework seeks to nurture the inner fire – the deep personal connection to God in each person. At the same time, formation experiences seek to develop particular qualities and capacities – hallmarks recognised in all those connected to a Catholic, Christian foundation and finding expression in the education mission.

These capacities are identified in the model as a result of the outward trajectory of each arrow.

For example, in the ‘Embracing Jesus’ Dimension, the formation capacities are identified with the words Presence, Prayer and Principle, illustrated here.

Following is a ‘snapshot’ outline of the capacities in each dimension, identified in the model as a ‘snapshot’ or circle at the end of each arrow.

Snapshots of Formation Capacities in the ‘Jesus’ Dimension
- A person of presence who reflects an incarnational understanding of the world
- A person of prayer who has developed their own personal prayer style and is nurtured and sustained by a faithfulness to this practice
- A person of principle who lives the gospel values of Jesus’ vision

Snapshots of Formation Capacities in the ‘Communion’ Dimension
- A person of welcome who understands and applies the Christian ethos of hospitality in every circumstance
• A person of **ritual** who understands sacramentality and applies the Christian ethos of reverence in all relationships
• A person of **journey** who understands a ‘people of God’ narrative and has found their place in the wider church

**Snapshots of Formation in the ‘Mission’ Dimension**

• A person of **purpose** with a strong sense of personal and professional vocation
• A person of **commitment** with a passion for making a difference in the world through their vocation and witness
• A person of **fidelity** who lives out through their ministry the best of the Catholic Christian educational tradition and identifies with all those who work in the name of Brisbane Catholic Education

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**Formation Capacities in the Framework’s ‘Jesus’ Dimension**

**Presence**

*We are called to be people of presence who reflect an incarnational understanding of God in the world.*

*Grant me to recognize in other men and women my God the radiance of your own face.*

Teilhard de Chardin

To grow the capacity of Presence is to nurture a deep sense that God is present and part of our lives and the life of the world. It is to believe that every encounter, every moment is rich with sacred possibility. It is to look into the eyes of each other and see reflected there God’s own being.

Christians believe that in Jesus Christ, God has entered the world, ‘one like us.’ For the early disciples, Jesus was ‘The Way’ – the way to the heart of God, and the way to fully live. Our central Christian belief remains that in Jesus, the fully human and fully divine are one. This is the theology of incarnation and it changes not only the way we look at each other, but the way we see and live and have our being in the world.

**Prayer**

*We are called to be people of prayer who have developed personal prayer styles and are nurtured and sustained by faithfulness to this practice.*

*Be Still and Know that I am God. Psalm 46*

The simplest description of prayer is one that comes from St Augustine: *Prayer is communication with God.* And the way we each do this is as unique as we are. To grow the capacity of Prayer is to nurture a personal relationship with Jesus, through the Spirit and held in the Godhead – God the Father. It requires seeking out and regular practice in, a personal prayer style that is connective and real. The place of prayer in Jesus’ life was non-negotiable, even in the midst of demanding crowds. His deep and nurtured connection to God was his centre, his heart. We too are called into relationship to discover the deep peace and wordless reality of God’s ever-present love.

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**Catching Fire Capacities**

If spiritual formation in the Christian Catholic tradition is essentially about ‘growing people’, in an holistic way, respectful of where people are at, connective to role and context, and that this happens in community, then we need to be clear about what exactly each person is growing into, and what might be the discernible marks of such a community of people.

The *Catching Fire* framework identifies nine capacities as these discernible hallmarks within a Catholic educational community growing into God. These capacities are named as ‘presence’, ‘prayer’ and ‘principle’; ‘welcome’, ‘ritual’ and ‘journey’; and ‘purpose’, ‘commitment’ and ‘fidelity’. They have their source in scripture and in the compelling characteristics of the early Christian communities, who first sought to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. What follows now is a brief introduction to each capacity offering background and invitation for a deeper understanding.
There are many forms of prayer and ways to pray. Here, we are giving focus to the personal rather than public forms, and the best place to go to seek a way to pray for yourself are the prayer traditions within our rich Church history. These include lectio divina, Ignatian prayer, Christian meditation and the contemplative traditions.

**Principle**

*We are called to be people of principle who live the gospel values of Jesus’ vision.*

*Happy are those who love God... they are a light in the darkness for the upright; they are generous, merciful and just... People such as this will be honoured. Psalm 112*

Jesus’ vision of a discipleship of equals, of the reign of God breaking in on the world, was founded on core values. We now call these gospel values, and we believe that they lead us to fullness of life. These gospel values are compassion and justice, love and forgiveness, peace and hope.

To truly live by these values is challenging, as it was when Jesus first spoke of this new Kingdom of God. But Jesus modeled the power of living these values and people witnessed the transforming impact this had. It is no less powerful today when people witness to those same gospel values, and we believe that we are called to do that in our classrooms, our staffrooms, our offices and playgrounds.

**Key questions to ponder….**

What way of personal prayer might best suit me?
How do I understand the Jesus vision?
What Gospel values do I recognize in our school or work community – compassion, love, forgiveness, justice, peace, hope?

**Formation Capacities in the Framework’s ‘Communion’ Dimension**

**Welcome**

*We are called to be people of welcome who understand and build an ethos of Christian hospitality in every circumstance.*

*Hospitality is the way we turn a prejudiced world around one heart at a time. Sr Joan Chittester*

One of the most compelling features of the early Christian communities was their sense of mutuality and genuine welcome to all. Hospitality and generosity go hand in hand, and certainly these early communities had a long and deep tradition of welcome in the Jewish scriptures. ‘Welcoming the stranger’ was rewarded beyond measure in the great stories of the Hebrew scriptures such as Abraham and Sarai. In the gospels, Jesus’ open welcome to all, including society’s strangers – the tax collectors and sinners, women and the sick – challenged the very structure of society.

It is noteworthy that the great spiritual documents in Western civilization all give priority to this most fundamental of things – welcome. It is acknowledgement that the practice of respectful attentiveness in these small moments of human encounter develops a habit of gratitude and grace that is a hallmark of the Holy, and the pathway to God.

Today, the practice of welcome is still very challenging for us, because still it is the call to be attentive to the daily encounters we have with other staff, with parents and with children, and at the same time in the wider world to reach out to the marginalized, the sick, the outcast and the hurting.
Ritual

We are called to be people of ritual who understand sacramentality and apply the Christian value of reverence in all relationships

Day after day takes up the story. Night after night makes known the message. Psalm 19

Ritual is fundamental to the meaning-making of human beings and, because of this, is common to both ‘secular’ and ‘sacred’ worlds. Words, actions and symbols are used in a way that requires little or no explanation to those participating because they speak so clearly to a shared ‘knowing’. In the Catholic tradition, liturgy – the formal prayer of the church – developed out of the rituals of the early Christian communities who gathered together to remember, to break bread and to celebrate the living reality of Jesus.

There is a ritual pattern common to most gatherings whether they be secular (e.g., birthday parties, sporting events) or sacred (liturgies of the Church, prayer rituals and devotions). The elements of this pattern are: we gather; we listen; we respond; we go forth. All the official liturgies of the church – including the Eucharist, the other sacraments and the Liturgy of the Hours – have a gathering rite, proclamation of scripture; response in either spoken word, song or ritual action, and a concluding rite that sends us forth. Prayer rituals and other celebrations which allow for more flexibility in structure and style also follow this pattern.

All Catholic ritual is founded on an incarnational understanding of God and the belief in the sacramentality of all things. That God is revealed in the world and in a particular and powerful way through Jesus Christ means that God is revealed and encountered in the real and tangible moments of everyday life. The seven sacraments name and celebrate moments that are key points of this divine encounter.

The power of ritual in our Catholic Christian tradition invites us into a deeper reality that engages all our senses – head, heart and hands – in a way that turns the ordinary into the extraordinary. When we understand this, we cannot help but see the world and each other with eyes of reverence.

Journey

We are called to be people of journey who understand the ‘people of God’ narrative and have found a place in the wider Church.

‘Were not our hearts burning within us as he spoke to us on the road…!’ Luke 24:32

Our understanding of followers or believers being called the ‘people of God’ has its roots in the Old Testament – itself the story or narrative of the journey of a believing people – the Israelites – in their relationship with God. It has three key elements: Faith, kinship and call.

Behind the events and stories in the Old Testament, there is the movement in faith of individuals and a people. It is a narrative of growing in faith. The New Testament follows as the breaking open in faith of the reality of God’s love in the being and action of Jesus Christ. There is a sense of the growing maturity of understanding that culminated in the explosive reality of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

In this journey of faith, the understanding that we only make this journey in community – in kinship with each other – is central to the Catholic tradition. We do not go the journey alone; in fact,
we need each other to know our own deepest truth in God.

The call to return to God is woven through all the scriptures. It was Jesus’ call to us too, and it remains our call today. It is no less difficult, no less compelling than it ever was. In answering that call we remember that we are part of a larger company of travellers that stretches back in time and into the future encompassing the great communion of saints and faithful.

We are the people of God, called to find our place in the wider Church as we journey in community, in faith.

Key questions to ponder….
How do we reflect the deep Christian tradition of hospitality and welcome in our community?
In what ways do we show a sacramental understanding of the world and all that’s in it?
How do we celebrate that sacramental understanding in communal ritual and liturgy?

Formation Capacities in the Framework’s ‘Mission’ Dimension

Purpose

We are called to be people of purpose with a strong sense of personal and professional vocation.

Never doubt that a small group can change the world – indeed it is the only thing that ever has. Margaret Mead

We too are called to have this sense of purpose about who we are and what we do. For baptized Christians, that call is as it was for the early Christians – to follow Jesus in seeking to bring about the reign or kingdom of God in the everyday circumstances of life and work. This is what it means to be disciple.

As people involved in Catholic education, it means that we need to understand the bigger picture of our tasks and roles - that we are part of a Church whose vision is of a transformed world. It means we realize that our work is not an end in itself, but a witness to the vision of Jesus and the enduring love of God.

Fundamentally, being a people of purpose means we have a clear sense that who we are and what we do and how we do it has an impact that echoes in eternity.

Commitment

We are called to be a people of commitment with a passion for making a difference in the world through our vocation and witness.

Give and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back. Luke 6: 36 - 38

It is one thing to know what we are about. It is another to be committed to that with passion and conviction. Commitment gives life to the purpose we
have. It is the lived out witness to the vision we carry, and the tangible expression of the deep faith we have.

The way we express our commitment is as unique as we are. But it will be nurtured in us all by a personal prayer life, and characterized by engagement with the world that is respectful, empowering and hopeful.

**Fidelity**

*We are called to be a people of fidelity who live out, through their ministry, the best of the Catholic Christian educational tradition, and identify with all those who work in the name of Catholic schooling.*

‘See how they love one another!’ These are the words Tertullian noted (Apology [39.6]) in the Third Century, as spoken by some of the Pagans of the time regarding Christian communities.

As people involved in the ministry of Catholic education, we carry out our work of discipleship and witness in a particular way. This ministry of Catholic education is a vital ministry of the Church. It promotes a dynamic vision of God’s faithful love, manifest in the life and mission of Jesus Christ, and these fundamental realities underpin our curriculum, our pedagogy and our professional learning.

Catholic educators have a strong sense of community among their peers and in the unique and valuable nature of the work they do. It is sacred work, because it is precious lives we nurture. In this we are called to honour the ministry of each other and all those in the past and still to come who will have given their head heart and hands to the work as part of the company of travellers we call Catholic educators.

Key questions to ponder….

*Do we understand and proclaim our vocation and mission?*

*Do we witness to that in ourselves and others in word and action?*

*Do we take our place in the wider community of Catholic education and Church?*

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**Head, Heart and Hands Approach**

The head heart and hands design signals an approach that is holistic in intention. It recognizes that each of us has a different gateway to the spiritual journey that is as unique as we are. Thus, while one person may be nurtured most easily in their spiritual life through focused reading, another may find God more easily in their relational connections with people. Others yet may be drawn to service activities such as street work. Many people find the Eucharist and formal worship their deepest nurturing pathway; still others connect with God most easily in nature, immersed in the beauty of creation. This recognition of different entry points into the dynamic of ‘head heart and hands’ is critical in the process of effective spiritual formation.

The challenge of integrating this recognition into formation processes has never been more important. Too easily have we seen initiatives under the banner of spiritual formation begin and remain in the ‘head’: where people learn a lot about prayer for example, but never actually practise praying …..or tap into the ‘heart’: where people are moved in their own being and feeling;

‘Mission must drive every word we speak, every action we do, whether they be as simple as a smile, or as complicated as protesting about unfair legislation, or the destruction of the environment.’

*Archbishop John Bathersby*
but without it ever having to impact in any action in their lives ……or again, where the focus is on the ‘hands’ – doing service work, often with a strong social justice base, but without making any overt connection to Jesus or Church. While we recognize that formation in ‘the head’ element (or the heart or hands) does not preclude deep learning that takes in the other elements, we are saying there is a need to be intentional about an holistic approach being embedded in our formation processes.

Thus in the HEAD, HEART and HANDS approach articulated in the Catching Fire Matrix and expressed in the model graphic, the core formation elements specifically identify key steps that are important in the formation process summed up as embracing ‘head, heart and hands’. All formation, regardless of target audience or mode of delivery, ought incorporate these four steps. This simple process, adaptable for any initiative or experience, both grounds and strengthens the range of pathways of engagement that may be offered. These formation steps reflect best practice adult learning principles.

In the end, the journey to the heart of God is embodied; it is about becoming whole and it calls the whole of us. This is what we honour.

My Story, Our Story, The Story

Spiritual Formation is very much about uncovering the narrative of our own lives. In other words, our spiritual journey begins with the meaning making of our own story and experience first. We must start where we are, and where we are in this contemporary time sees individuals often disconnected with their own stories, let alone having resonance with the church story or the Jesus story. Thus this methodology acknowledges the starting point of the individual, connecting to the collective Christian story and into the God narrative.

Richard Rohr elaborates this design in a way that builds into the big story of God’s extraordinary presence through scripture, through our lives and in all creation. It is a journey motif that is proving to be a critical component in the design of formation programmes for our contemporary context. The importance today of meeting people where they are, developing a mutual trust in the journey, and committing to a sustained and sustainable journey recovers three traditional characteristics of formation work that are old but true:

• Meeting people where they are, with a respectfulness for the sacredness of story already there
• Companioning, in whatever shape that takes, to accompany the seeker, open and trusting to where it may lead
• Giving time to the journey

These characteristics have been contemporised in our initiatives, but remain as fundamental to formation as they ever were.

‘The spirit of God, poured into our hearts as love (Rom, 5:5) gathers us together into the body of Christ, transforming us so that we become by grace what God is by nature, namely, persons in full communion with God and every creature … The world is the tabernacle.’

Catherine LaCugna
Using the Framework

The core formation elements in the framework matrix are applicable to all spiritual formation opportunities for all staff across our Catholic school and office communities. In this way, they constitute foundational scaffolding for all initiatives in spiritual formation across directorates, and are tailored to staff roles and contexts. In terms of specific use, elements may be integrated into existing and new professional learning, tailoring them to particular role contexts and needs. Current initiatives can also be checked and/or developed in the light of these elements. New initiatives will use the framework elements as touchstones for content and process.

This task is approached with two more key assumptions:

• Spiritual formation is the joint responsibility of the individual, the school and the archdiocese. Archdiocesan leadership is not responsible – and ought not be responsible – for the total spiritual formation journey of the individual. But it is responsible for creating a culture of expectation and supporting ongoing formation pathways for those employed in the mission of Catholic education.

• The Catching Fire model reflects a Christian world view. More specifically, it shows the Archdiocesan Jesus Communion Mission vision as its conceptual foundation. We believe that the archdiocesan vision ‘Embrace the Person and Vision of Jesus; Build Communion with God and Others; Engage in Jesus’ Mission in the World’ captures the essence of what it means to be a follower of Christ in the contemporary world. These three dimensions, which together constitute a distinctive way of seeing and living in the world, form the foundation of our vision. As partners in the archdiocesan Church’s mission, we seek to teach Jesus’ gospel vision in ways that engage the whole person, to challenge our learners to a communion perspective and to educate for a transformed world.

This is the way we engage in evangelisation.

Concluding Remarks

All in Catholic education share a responsibility to assist staff to access opportunities for spiritual formation. In terms of this framework, that ongoing task means that together we will, within the context of the Jesus Communion Mission vision, provide opportunities for staff to take the journey inwards to transforming encounters with God that they might make the impact in their school or organisational community to which the Spirit calls them. Practically speaking, we will continue our focus on the strategic implementation of the framework through staff formation programmes, system wide resourcing and the integration of spiritual formation into goal setting, induction, succession and leadership. In the context of broader professional learning and linked to the Strategic Renewal Framework, we will continue to facilitate staff becoming lifelong, self-directed learners in formation for mission.

God is ‘communion’ and our destiny is to respond to his gracious invitation to share in that unique set of relationships which characterise the divine life. There, total love and total communication is to be found and God’s life becomes not only our destiny but also the pattern of our lives and for our living” Bishop Crispian Hollis
Part D – About Implementation

While Part A outlined the key implementation principles, this section briefly explores shared assumptions, values and responsibilities, along with implications for leadership and induction processes.

Shared assumptions

Any initiatives in spiritual formation will sit within the Catching Fire Framework, and operate on the following assumptions:

• The lifelong learner is the focus and frame. This is a person-centred framework.

• Each ‘lens’ (Jesus Communion Mission) provides a trajectory through which that dimension of Christian life has particular focus and is connected to the lifelong learner’s context, personally and professionally.

• These three dimensions overlap and interplay. In reality, they are interconnected and the development of each develops the whole. In any one initiative, it is possible to shift and layer each lens. At the same time, the elements of each dimension ought be identifiable and easily articulated.

• Embedded into the design framework is a communal dimension of living and learning, foundational to Christian spirituality and Catholic education. It is cognisant of both the common journey characteristic of the individual’s immediate staff and school or office community, as well as the broader Catholic education community that includes parents, parish communities and archdiocesan ministries. This circle of connectivity wraps around, and holds in community, the individual journey.

• Strategies are multi-targeted, multi-locational, multi-modal and multi-dimensional. In addition to school based training and initiatives, presenters are coordinated from all directorates and from an ‘outside’ network.

• All initiatives coordinated through BCEC are explicitly and carefully linked
  • conceptually to the Spiritual Formation Framework (Jesus/Communion/Mission Dimensions) and
  • strategically to the Strategic Renewal Framework for Catholic Schooling 2007-2011 (Priorities 1, 4 and 5).

Shared Values

This Spiritual Formation Framework is based on the following shared values which we hold to be fundamental to our educational mission:

• Our Catholic Christian tradition - we are a pilgrim people, journeying together. Our story is never fully written, so our plans are never fully realised. We are constantly drawing upon our tradition and being called into new ways of growing and renewing ourselves as church.

• Dignity and justice for all - all persons are created equal and human dignity is inviolable. Our educational efforts should confirm the belief that everyone is unique, that individual distinctions enrich and enliven our world and that the individual has both rights and responsibilities.

• Catholic Christian community - a community in communion that does not exist for itself but is empowered by the Spirit to be at the service of others; an evangelising and joyful presence in the world.

• High quality learning - education shall impart in the learner a zest for life, the courage to tackle it, and a desire by students to use and extend what they learn. Critical judgement in different areas of learning should be developed by testing expression and performance against identifiable standards.
• **Collaboration and subsidiarity** - Catholic educators make use of a ‘shared wisdom’ in arriving at decisions and attempt to locate decision making at the lowest appropriate level.

• **Creativity** - we look for creative, flexible and future oriented responses that best address the needs of students, the local community, system and government.

• **Stewardship** - education should view individuals as moral beings, accountable for their decisions and responsible for their actions, with an ability to seek what is true and to do what is right.

• **A mutual accountability** - as an educational community we report on the outcomes of our work and the degree to which our intentions are realised.

### Shared Responsibility

#### Individual Staff Responsibility:

An invitation to Spiritual Formation goal setting

**Spiritual Formation Goal Setting**

This key strategy seeks to integrate spiritual formation goal setting into the general individual goal setting of Brisbane Catholic Education staff. Professional goal setting already happens at middle management and leadership level and is presently being encouraged at general staff level. This strategy invites individual discernment about needs and interests in the area of spiritual formation, and can be facilitated to integrate into broader professional goal setting. Again this is an approach that sits spiritual formation within the broad field of professional learning and not as an adjunct to core business. School based, flexible options are important for this initiative. Rather than being a ‘silo’ strategy, it is envisaged as a way of putting spiritual formation in focus with other goal setting and actively supporting staff to identify and follow their own needs in this area.

#### School or Section Level Responsibility:

With the integration of spiritual formation into renewal planning and goal setting, spiritual formation will become more intentionally integrated into school renewal planning and goal setting, and annual planning for the whole staff.

### Archdiocesan Level Responsibility:

Provision and co-ordination of strategic development of staff formation programmes that are sustainable at a grass roots level, as well as a range of system wide resources accessible to all school and BCEC communities. Programmes are targeted with an inherent long-term aim to build facilitator capacity among school communities. The integration of spiritual formation into priority areas such as leadership and induction processes constitute priority targeting.

### Spiritual Formation and Catholic Leadership

**Leadership plays an essential role in any Christian community. The pre-eminent doctrinal principle of leadership in the Church is founded in the fact that the church is a communio, the people of God. This understanding of community recognises that everyone shares in the responsibility of mission – the charism of Christian leadership is calling forth the gift in others to action that mission.**

The authentic witness of the leader will have much to do with the effectiveness of that calling forth. The eminent Australian writer and theologian, Fr Tony Kelly, observes that for personal witness to be authentic, the leader must, at some point, go the personal journey into God themselves and also in relationship with those she/he leads.

In these times, the very nature of the task demands leadership that is prophetic, relational and creative. It is prophetic because the leader must be a guiding light who keeps marking the vision and setting the challenge to be gospel centred in how Catholic education looks and feels in their school. It is relational because fundamental to a Catholic understanding of education is a communal imperative and a positive anthropology. This means that the nurturing of relationship at all levels is not simply an effective strategy for leadership, but at the core. It is creative because...
our educative purpose is centred in the present yet oriented to the future and demands new ways of engagement that are authentic, outward looking and life-giving.

**Spiritual Formation and the Leadership Framework**

Spiritual formation is therefore closely and explicitly linked to Catholic leadership development. While religious leadership is well highlighted as a particular function or dimension of Catholic leadership, this is not the sole focus of attention for spiritual formation. Rather, spiritual formation for leadership rinses through all capabilities underpinning every function or dimension of leadership. It is as critical in the delivery of educative leadership and staff leadership as it is for religious leadership. Thus, spiritual formation is not an optional extra for those aspiring to Catholic leadership or continuing in Catholic leadership. As builders and leaders of Christian community, in each person’s unique way, spiritual formation animates, colours and informs the development of all leadership capabilities. While the Catholic leader must ensure that the religious life of the school is maintained, it is the way in which they carry out all their leadership domains that reveals a deeply grounded authentic Catholic leader. In doing so, these leaders embody and encourage those core Catching Fire capacities such that they become the fabric of the community they lead.

The literature consistently indicates that if leaders do not see spiritual formation as central to effective ministry in Catholic education, in overall staff development and in their own leadership, then it is highly unlikely that staff will develop this perspective. The connection for Catholic leaders between educational leadership and spiritual formation has yet to be strongly forged and supported. The need here, as it is for all professional learning, is to have formation that is owned, tailored to needs, and planned for intentional growth.

The integration of spiritual formation into professional learning plans for leaders will require a proactive strategy, rather than an ‘in principle’ approach. This is the area that is most easily left off professional renewal. But if we are to grow outstanding Catholic education leaders, it is essential that we have people who have attended seriously to their own spiritual formation.

Continuing dialogue around the connections between spiritual formation, religious leadership and Catholic educational leadership within our Catholic schools and across the broader Australian Catholic educational arena will greatly aid a cohesive comprehensive and coherent approach.

Along with the importance of this strategic dialogue, one other specific strategy bears comment here. Mentoring or leader companioning, which has a long and rich history in spiritual formation, has developed strong support in prominent leadership centres throughout the world and in other Christian denominational settings. Research shows this to be particularly effective in deepening inner leadership capacity in the second term of principalship, and thus is a powerful tool in contemporary spiritual formation in particular and professional learning in general.

Attending to one’s spiritual formation is core business in Catholic leadership and the bedrock of Catholic leadership capability. In the words of leading spiritual writer and educationalist, Parker Palmer, ‘We lead who we are.’

**Spiritual Formation and Induction Processes**

*I do not pray for success. I ask for faithfulness.*

*Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

The nurturing of teachers, the forming of leaders and the development of a Catholic culture across the organisation begins at induction. Increasingly, less and less can be assumed with regard to familiarity with the Catholic culture. While information about the structure, operation and key people in a Catholic organisation can be a significant introduction to church in itself, the deeper understanding and learning of what it is we are about requires formation rather
than information. The invitation and culture of expectation that we wish to nurture must be intentionally and strategically supported. It will not just happen.

The implications are for new ways of engagement that again meet people where they are, welcoming who they are and what they bring, helping them to name and situate their own story within our story. It calls us too, those who are already engaged in the story, to know it, to witness to it strongly and authentically in what we do and how we do it.

Spiritual formation therefore is a vital part of induction processes and we will continue to intentionally and creatively integrate formation into existing and future induction processes at all levels.

Moving from the broad circle of concern to a targeted circle of focus for spiritual formation in the Brisbane Catholic Education community, Leaders and New Graduates are seen as the two critical growth points. Within initiatives here, particular attention will be given to the inclusion of direct witness, narrative and face to face sharing. Research indicates that particularly in the area of spiritual formation, this remains the most effective (transformational) mode of learning for any adults, regardless of demographic or generational identity.

New graduates need to be appropriately inducted into the Brisbane Catholic Education community in a way that places spiritual formation as central to their vocational journey, and supports their early development as Catholic teachers. Preliminary research among fourth year ACU students in 2005 confirmed that these prospective graduates carry an expectation that spiritual formation will be provided as part of their beginning and ongoing development as Catholic teachers. This imperative around the inclusion of spiritual formation within induction programmes also applies to everyone newly joining our staff community – whether that be in the schools communities, within the ICT team, the O’Shea Centre Team, the secretarial staff, or any other section of the centres.

Two other groups that have emerged for priority targeting are experienced teachers and those on staff who already display an energy for their own spiritual journey. The formation seeding of these staff members, with a view to resourcing and empowering them as practical ‘animateurs’ of the ‘spiritual culture’ among their own communities, will constitute a key strategy in developing a grass roots culture of expectation around spiritual formation in our ministry of Catholic education.

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared Responsibilities</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Leaders and Managers (Schools and BCE Centre)</th>
<th>Archdiocese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>An invitation to include spiritual formation (SF) goal-setting in annual planning.</strong></td>
<td>Actively encourage staff in individual spiritual formation planning and goal setting.</td>
<td>Sets system expectations for Spiritual Formation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Takes up opportunities provided including individual, school-based and system-based options.</strong></td>
<td>Plan for and integrate school based or section based SF initiatives into professional learning connected to Strategic Renewal Framework priorities.</td>
<td>Organises occasional whole of system events.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Offer opportunities for SF to the wider school community as appropriate.</td>
<td>Coordinates and/or provides targeted formation opportunities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Follows through opportunities identified in earlier goal setting.</strong></td>
<td>Ensure staff have access to SF initiatives both school-based and BCEC/other offerings as appropriate to role and experience.</td>
<td>Provides support and resource personnel and mechanisms in an integrated way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part E - About Adult Learning

This section outlines beliefs and principles around adult learning, acknowledging the opportunity and challenge of our contemporary milieu.

St Thomas Aquinas, some 750 years ago, proposed that the whole Christian community ought become teachers and learners together. Secular organisations have embraced the idea of learning communities as a way they can have continuity. We also now clearly identify all our educational communities as learning communities and give a renewed emphasis to the process of learning in the teaching/learning dynamic. Students are no longer regarded as vessels to be filled but rather reflective, self-directed learners who are to be empowered in the learning process.

Reflecting this shift in focus away from a gathered information paradigm and into a lifelong learning paradigm, adult professional development too, is now widely referred to as professional learning. All school and centre staff are involved in the lifelong learning journey. For them too, learning happens in a variety of contexts in their lives, and is a continuing process of discovery, understanding and integration. Thus, adult learning is lifelong and lifewide, and is less about collecting ‘chunks of information’ and more about discerning one’s own needs and proactively shaping that learning path.

Aquinas’ ideas too have come of age in contemporary Christian communities. A growing body of work in adult education and Christian adult education now situates all learning in community. Here too, learning communities are the conduit for the development of ‘shared vision’ and systems thinking, ‘personal mastery’ and team learning. (See Senge, whose work is foundational to the movement in organisations as learning communities) In all processes, reflective practice is integral. For Christian communities, the notion of being a learning community has some sound theological foundations as well. To nurture community is to embrace an ecclesial understanding that wisdom and insight (the Spirit) live within every member of the community and we are called to identify and support the gifts of all.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (SCCE, 1988) frames education as a dynamic and transformative process. The work of teachers in a Catholic school is vitally linked with the evangelising mission of the church and is concerned with the formation (and transformation) of human persons (SCCE, 1982, #16). The Catholic School at the Threshold of a New Millennium sets education for the promotion and formation of the human person as a centrepiece of the document. (SCCE, 1998, #11). Most importantly, this formation occurs through interpersonal relationships within an educational community that has a theological as well as a sociological foundation (SCCE, 1998, #18). Apostolicam Actuositatem acknowledged that the spirituality of the laity is shaped by the conditions of one’s life (Vatican 11, 1965, #4).

Adult spiritual formation in the Catholic educational context then is central to the professional life of the workplace. It is personal and it is professional, tapping into the adult learner’s own experience and living that out professionally as part of the Catholic education community.

Beliefs and Principles

This next section outlines our beliefs and principles about learning and discusses two of the main challenges for adult learning within Catholic
education communities in the Archdiocese of Brisbane today:

**Beliefs About Learning**

*...about adult learners*

- Each person is created in the image and likeness of God
- Every person is a lifelong learner
- Every person is in some respect, like all others, like some others, like no other

*...about adult learning in spiritual formation*

- The person of Jesus gives meaning to life and learning
- Learning occurs in the richly diverse aspects of all life experience which is lifelong and lifewide
- Formation approaches encompass the variety of adult learning styles and strengths
- God (the Lifelong Creator) is present and active in each person’s life
- Learning in the context of Christian spiritual formation is about facilitating the engagement of the lifelong learner with the lifelong Creator

*...about adult learning communities*

- The educational mission of Catholic Christian schools gives witness to the gospel and the integration of faith, life and culture through the learning community
- Adult learning communities engage in systems thinking – seeing the whole; recognising interrelationships rather than separated ‘things’
- Adult learning communities for spiritual formation are:
  - flexibly structured
  - mutually instructive
  - respectful of personal story
  - experiential
  - reflective
  - re-creative
- All Christian communities, including school communities, are learning communities where each person is both ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’

- Each adult Christian learning community seeks to maintain a clearly defined vision of its fundamental identity, its shared beliefs and understandings, and is concerned to make meaningful connections to life

**Principles of Adult Learning**

Based on the above beliefs about adult learning in the area of spiritual formation, the following principles are operational:

- Learning is an experience which occurs inside the learner and is activated by the learner
- Learning is the discovery of the personal meaning and relevance of ideas
- Behavioural change is a consequence of learning through relevant experience
- Learning is a cooperative and collaborative process, with high individual engagement
- Learning is a sometimes painful process
- The process of learning is emotional as well as intellectual
- Clarity of purpose, progress and methods informed by sound research and experience is central to all quality learning opportunities
- Professional and skilled facilitators are crucial in effective adult learning
- The processes of problem solving and learning are highly unique and individual
- Adult learning is most useful when it draws on personal experience and is relevant to day-to-day life/work
Catching Fire

Spiritual Formation Framework

• Adult learning is most effective within the context of a learning community
• Individual and shared reflection and application are critical in adult learning processes, with opportunities for review within a variety of developmental stages

The Challenges of Contemporary Times

These beliefs and principles about adult learning operate within a challenging contemporary culture. Two characteristics of this environment which have great impact are the rapid pace of change and the influence of post-modern thinking.

Responding to Change

The reality of change and the speed of change in our present culture means that to survive and thrive, there must be an openness to seeing the future and creating the future in a new way. For many, it may well be that our community’s intensified focus on spiritual formation constitutes unwelcome change. This needs to be given some consideration, since spiritual formation is fundamentally about change facilitation. Following are principles of ‘change education’ which reflect best practice research in the field.

Principles of Change Facilitation

Some of the most important characteristics of change facilitation that need to be integrated into strategic action include the following:

• Experiential – many of the best ‘intuitive’ change facilitation helps people to ‘dip their toe in the water’.
• Participatory – systemic change seeks to involve as many of the people in as many parts of the process as possible, and seeks to help them interact in new ways.
• Multi-sensory – the most effective learning approaches seem to limit the use of text and passive listening approaches.
• Narrative – people are moved most deeply by stories rather than by propositions or arguments for change.
• Connective – the most effective change allows and encourages people to connect with other people in new ways.
• Transformational – Education in the Christian western tradition has been more about information than transformation. This is a shift in focus.
• Christological – reformation of our ecclesiology and missiology cannot take place without an exploration of Christology – it must be Jesus centred.
• Contextual – change involves seeing and understanding our living context in new ways.
• Historical – people have little sense of history and respond strongly to fresh insights about today from the past.
• Paradoxical – educating for change and living with change involves helping people to name, explore and become comfortable with paradox.
• Behavioural – acting ourselves, into new ways of thinking, not assuming that people will change because they have been given reasons to change; this is about learning or recovering vital practices/habits/gestures of Christian spiritual tradition.
• Discerning – more about discovering the skills, settings and habits which encourage prayerful discernment than being told ‘where to go’ by someone in authority.
• Integrated – learning to speak ‘two languages’, to engage with God in the world, to discover the sacred in the secular, faith as a part of everyday life.

A Note on Post-modern Generations

Generation X are those born between 1960 and 1975; Generation Y are those born between 1976 and 2000. (Baby boomers are those born between 1945 and 1959) Generation X includes many of our young teachers and educational leaders, and Generation Y incorporates those in early teacher training now. Consideration needs to be given to the implications for the spiritual formation of these generations who have had experiences of religion, Church and culture that are distinctly different to
the baby boomers who currently carry the major leadership responsibilities for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Gen X Catholics are the first post-conciliar generation and have little knowledge and connection to the cohesive pre-Vatican II Catholic culture with its strong experiential indicators (fasting; benediction; devotional practices; distinctive liturgical practices). While researchers like Rymarz identify three different cultures within Gen X Catholics, there are some generalisations that are made about Gen X-ers and Gen Y-ers relevant to our focus.

• They are suspicious of authority, institutions and ideology, reactive to orthodoxy and absolutism, preferring to build their own conceptions of reality.

• They identify liminal experiences but do not connect them to ‘Catholicity’.

• They have engaged with the world in ways that often give stronger meaning to them than their engagement with ‘church.’

• Voluntary commitments tend to be short term, outcome visible and local.

There is a view that trying to ‘sell’ spiritual formation connected with a church tradition to post-modern generations is doomed to fail; that the clash in world views is too great to reconcile. However, there is another view that holds that contemporary spiritual formation affords an approach that has the potential to connect with Gen X-ers and Gen Y-ers in ways that other kinds of ‘religious learning’ may not. This approach allows for a respectfulness of previous and current experience and the individual quest. The path to God and the meaning making of that is individual and unique. This understanding speaks to a generation who trusts their own experience, distrusts second hand truth, knows the plurality of experience and sees validity in the individual’s truth. In fact there is a longing for a personal discovery of trustworthy certainties. They are a generation of seekers.

The experiential dimension of formation is key here. Authenticity is powerful for this generation. It is not coincidental that the mystic tradition in Christianity holds the strongest point of connection for this generation. The exposure to real life, real time interaction with mentors/companions is critical, for it is in story and dialogue that this generation organises its loyalties and makes meaning. While much is made of these communities being in cyberspace, face to face interaction remains the most powerful formative context for all spiritual formation.

Overarching codes and myths are irrelevant because they cannot be relied upon, but once an overarching narrative has become authentic, allegiance is strong. The post-modern culture is one of such bombardment with words that they have no meaning. The experience gives the meaning. Old assumptions about a ‘one size fits all’ mentality need to be laid to rest.

At the same time, an understanding of the Communion dimension that speaks of an interconnectedness between us all as the basis for a bigger binding picture remains a challenge. Spiritual formation, however, is an area that allows for the introduction of new language to talk about ‘old beliefs.’ Again, nowhere in the tradition do we see new language used to talk about God more innovatively than we do in the language of the mystics. There is precedent! And there is need. While nested within a clear framework, there is a freedom to use new ways of speaking about the sacred, about church and about being Catholic, that may well unlearn some ill-informed assumptions. At the same time it allows an embracing of the creative, colourful, theological imagination of post-modern generations, unbounded by an adherence to traditional culture.

Finally, for this generation (but not only this generation) time commitment is an issue. Voluntary involvement in any ‘extras’, especially initially, is unlikely. System expectations need to be clear, and the integration of spiritual formation into professional learning pathways must be explicit.

Within this framework, though, the opportunity for self directed learning and the provision of a well articulated vision commands its own respect as a basis for the development of a personal vocation in a professional context.
Part F: Catching Fire in Context

This section outlines key contextual factors around the emergence of this framework. From global ecclesial shifts to local systemic developments, these contextual factors act as influences, markers and connecting points for the framework’s development.

The past five years in particular have seen a number of developments both within the wider church and the local church which impact on the life of Catholic schools in a variety of ways. At the same time, Commonwealth and State Government initiatives have required a unique response from Catholic education.

Wider Church

In the wider church in an ecclesial context, evangelisation has become a catch cry central to the last pope’s pontificate and is being carried forth under the current pontificate. Spiritual formation is a key plank in evangelisation. Evangelisation, defined in the Queensland Bishops Project on Catholic Schools for the 21st Century as bringing the love and message of Jesus to people through witness and word is the church’s central mission. Catholic schools draw their purpose for existence from their partnership in this evangelising mission of the wider church. While this relationship is embedded in all Vatican documents, Ecclesia in Oceania (2001) reinforced for these new times, the understanding of the place of Catholic education in the broader mission of the church. It affirmed the Catholic school had an ‘ecclesial identity’ through its role as ‘part of the evangelising mission of the Church’, and it reaffirmed the impact of the witness of teaching staff to the identity and success of Catholic schools.

At the same time, the broad Australian church has witnessed a general decline in church affiliation; a decline in clergy numbers and therefore presence and leadership among Catholic faith communities; a decline in perceived authority and integrity due to the clergy abuse revelations and a decline in adherence to particular church teachings.

For Catholic education the decline in religious vocations has meant the gradual disappearance of religious in schools and the accompanying increase in lay people staffing and leading Catholic schools. The particular style of monastic formation which accompanied the religious lifestyle and thus informed the culture of Catholic schools remains inappropriate to the formation needs of lay people today.

It is a time of transition.

Local Church

In this Archdiocese, evangelisation has been a central focus for development since 1996, anchored around the archdiocesan vision: Jesus Communion Mission.

The Archdiocesan Synod, convoked in December 2000 and whose outcomes were promulgated in July 2003, set the pastoral directions for this archdiocese into the new millennium. These directions were encompassed in a new Archdiocesan vision of Jesus Communion Mission.
In July 2004, the document *Let Your Light Shine* was launched, giving shape and articulation of the future directions in the light of Synod Promulgation 2003. This document was designed to serve as a common reference point for all engaged in planning and visioning initiatives within the Brisbane Archdiocese.

The Catholic Education community in this Archdiocese, as well as making a key contribution to the Synod process, has responded to the post Synod developments by revisiting its own key documents and shaping any emerging documents so that they sit clearly in alignment with the new archdiocesan vision and priorities.

**Government Initiatives**

At both national and state levels, the direction of government policy and initiative continues to impact Brisbane Catholic Education in a range of ways. The *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* (1999) followed in 2000 by the introduction of the *Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme* and in February 2005, the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* all directly address the context and culture of education. More recent developments in 2008 include the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals and the Queensland Teachers College Professional Development Framework. These too will have an unfolding impact on our school communities. As such, these initiatives afford Catholic education the challenge and opportunity to re-articulate and re-imagine its place and purpose, its call and contribution.

**The Challenge of Church and State Contexts**

What might have been assumed, given the Catholic demographic attending and staffing schools and the institutional Church model of some 30 years ago, can no longer be assumed. The institutional church simply does not command the authority over followers it once did. Yet it has become increasingly obvious that the school for many (students and adults) has become the primary place to make contact with the Church. This is the new ecclesial reality. At the same time, values based leadership and education is becoming part of the fabric of general Australian culture. The *Leaders Lead Project, the Australian Schools Values Education Framework*, the *2005 Balanced Leadership Institutes (ACEL)* and several current AIM initiatives are all illustrative of this current shift.

Within the Church then, Catholic schools have emerged with a religious leadership role that carries more responsibility than ever before. Within the broader Australian culture, personal authenticity in leadership and values-based education has been embraced. There is a general shift giving a heightened profile to values and personal character in leadership and education. So for Catholic education, the stuff of faith, spirituality, mission and vocation must now be defined, articulated, modelled and explored in ways we have not done before. This has been an emergent challenge, becoming a more urgent issue.

*Catholic Education – Response Markers to the Wider Contexts*

Catholic education authorities at national, state and archdiocesan levels have been attentive to the centrality of the mission dimension of schools and the emergent needs of the faith dimension of school personnel to support the mission dimension for some time.
National Catholic Commission Markers

At the national level, the National Catholic Education Commission’s 1991 *Statement of National Curriculum* firmly placed the vision of the human person in the Christian tradition and faith development in the Catholic tradition as the foundational platform for Catholic education.

A subsequent policy document *Catholic Schools: Why We Have Them: What They Aim to Achieve* (1998) addresses explicitly the distinctive goals and features which derive from a core of philosophical and theological truths which are central to the character and mission of Catholic education.

Further to this, *The Top Ten Challenges of Catholic Education* identified in 1996 a particular need, among other things, to provide better quality programs for the professional development of religious educators and for the faith development of all teachers.

Queensland Catholic Education Commission Markers

The Queensland Bishops Project: Catholic Schools for the 21st Century in 2001 posed the question: What are to be the defining features of Catholic schools within the context of the Church’s evolving mission in the world? Each of the Queensland dioceses undertook a process of developing their own profile in response to this research.

The QCEC in its revised policy on school renewal in 2003 addressed and incorporated the outcomes of the Bishops Project. It also identified the Catholic school as a faith community and reaffirmed the school as ‘an integral part of the evangelising mission of the church.’ (*Catholic School Renewal in Queensland*)

In its 2000 policy statement on senior leadership positions, the centrality of the religious dimension of Catholic leadership is acknowledged and the inclusion of ongoing formation in the religious dimension of leadership is named as a principle on which the policy is based. Those aspiring to senior leadership positions in Queensland Catholic schools will show ‘a demonstrated commitment to ongoing religious formation’. However, the responsibility for the implementation of ‘ongoing formation’ remains with individual employing authorities.

Reflecting and responding to a growing national concern about the lack of people aspiring to school leadership positions in Catholic schools, the QCEC initiated ‘The Succession Project’, commissioning a number of research projects under that banner to investigate specific issues around leadership and succession. Spiritual and faith formation was the focus of one of these research projects and was completed in January 2005. The findings identified a general dissonance between the assumed priority and need for spiritual and faith formation for leaders in Catholic schools in Queensland and the support for this area. This report indicated that while some commendable things were happening, a more intentional and systematic approach was required to respond more effectively to the needs and responsibilities of spiritual formation in Queensland dioceses.

Brisbane Catholic Education Markers

Within a demanding ecclesial and educational environment, Brisbane Catholic Education has continued the development of policy and perspective that owns and reflects an understanding of Catholic education as vocational, missional and transformational.

There are NINE markers relevant to the contextual discussion here.

- Brisbane Catholic Education Statement of Principles for Employment in a Catholic school
- Defining Features of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane (2001)

Brisbane Catholic Education Centre Renewal Report (2005)

Archdiocese of Brisbane


Brisbane Catholic Education Statement of Principles for Employment in a Catholic school concerns our expectations about standards as they apply to the professional and witness responsibilities of any staff member. These principles derive from a reflection on Church documents relating to the work of Catholic education. This statement aligns with the documents highlighting professionalism, witness and mission as key principles of employment.

The Defining Features of the Catholic Schools of the Future in the Archdiocese of Brisbane was developed after broad consultation in response to the Queensland Catholic Bishops Research Project. This report was approved in 2001. In reviewing the wording of the defining features in the context of the Archdiocesan Vision of Jesus Communion Mission, the Archbishop wanted to stress the significance of the life and mission of Jesus Christ as foundational for our

Catholic schools and has elaborated the first defining feature accordingly that:

The Catholic school of the future in the Archdiocese of Brisbane will promote the dynamic vision of God’s love manifest in the life and mission of Jesus Christ.

Again, key features of the full document include recognising and nurturing the spirituality of each person and providing an authentic experience of Catholic Christian community.

The Brisbane Catholic Education Learning Framework, developed in 2002, identifies the overarching goal for learning as the empowerment of learners of all ages to shape and enrich our changing world by living the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The educational mission of Catholic Christian schools is focussed on giving witness to the gospel and the integration of faith, life and culture. The framework builds on the premise of the uniqueness of every human being in understanding each human being as a life-long learner.

Celebration and Challenge was first released in 1998 and revised in 2004. This document articulates six dimensions of the role of a teacher in a Catholic school. Key elements of these dimensions include Vocation, Community and Witness. This document provides an important and useful framework for teachers to reflect on their work personally and professionally.

The April 2005 launch of the Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane makes explicit an holistic approach to lifelong learning in Catholic education which
is personally and communally faith centred, and which is intentionally transformative. The statement embraces the new archdiocesan vision of Jesus Communion Mission, modelling a collaborative perspective to which it calls each individual Catholic educational community.

The Brisbane Catholic Education Centre Renewal Report (2005) was commissioned by the Catholic Education Council and conducted by the Flagship for Creative & Authentic Leadership at ACU National. It constituted a comprehensive review of service and direction. The findings were very affirming of the service provision of the centre, and nine recommendations were made. Importantly, the first of these was to focus specifically on the area of spiritual formation and evangelisation. Catching Fire is a central component in the strategic re-sourcing of this area.

The Strategic Renewal Framework for Catholic Schooling 2007 – 2011, launched in October 2006 is responsive to the new archdiocesan vision of Jesus Communion Mission; the new Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education; and the Brisbane Catholic Education Centre Renewal Report recommendations. A key development from the previous Strategic Renewal Framework (2002 – 2006) has been to situate the religious and evangelising mission of schools as Priority One, and to give particular focus to the place of spiritual formation for staff within this. Intentions and expectations include providing ongoing formation opportunities in spirituality for mission and theology .. for staff (I 3) and ensuring programmes are in place to support ongoing formation in spirituality for mission … informed by the Spiritual Formation Framework. (E 2)

While the specific reference to the spiritual formation of leaders articulated in the previous Strategic Renewal Framework document (2002 – 2006) has been removed, the new Strategic Renewal Framework document (2007 – 2011) highlights a planned approach to developing leadership (Pr 4: E 4). The new direction in the integration of spiritual formation into leadership development and professional learning will be reflected in this planning.

The Brisbane Catholic Education Leadership Framework was launched with the Catching Fire Formation Framework and the Strategic Renewal Framework in October 2006, highlighting the link between these three key frameworks.

The Brisbane Catholic Education Leadership Framework is elaborated out of the Leadership Framework designed as one of the research projects commissioned by the QCEC. The Framework was developed further by Brisbane Catholic Education. The scaffolding of the religious dimension of this framework is in harmony with the underlying assumptions and understandings of spiritual formation and leadership articulated in the Spiritual Formation Framework. There is also a strong alignment between spiritual formation and the Leadership Framework Capabilities. It is spiritual formation which is foundational to the development of all the capabilities in the Leadership Framework. In other words, spiritual formation is pivotal to the vital functioning and real outcomes for leadership across all core and supporting dimensions.

The Guidelines for the Religious Life of the School, launched in September 2008, provides a mapping of the areas of religious focus within the school community outside of the classroom. With the key components aligned with the Strategic Renewal Framework, the guidelines provide a useful support to schools for planning and goal setting in this area. Together with the Religious Education guidelines, they also provide a mapping of the areas of responsibility in religious leadership.

Key Questions Informing the Framework

The nine markers outlined above, highlight our beliefs and values, frameworks, planning principles and priorities, and expected outcomes for the mission and purpose of Catholic education and all those involved in this enterprise.
Catching Fire, our Spiritual Formation Framework, supports and amplifies these clearly expressed signposts.

In revisiting these markers – signposts that proclaim who we are and what we are about as people involved in the mission and purpose of Catholic schooling in the Archdiocese of Brisbane – a number of spiritual formation questions emerge that help focus our attention:

Questions about Embracing Jesus:
- How do we support people to ‘give witness to the gospel’? (BCE Learning Framework 2002)
- How do we nurture the spirituality of each person? (Defining Features of Catholic Schools 2001)
- How do we ‘support the ongoing formation in spirituality for mission’ for all our staff? (Strategic Renewal Framework 2007 - 2011)

Questions about Building Communion:
- How do we develop a capacity to witness and build community? (Celebration and Challenge 2004)
- How do we provide an authentic experience of Catholic Christian community? (Defining Features of Catholic Schools 2001)
- How do we integrate faith, life and culture? (BCE Learning Framework 2002)

Questions about Engaging in Mission:
- How do we understand ‘the religious and evangelising mission of schools’? (Strategic Renewal Framework 2007 - 2011)
- How do we ‘promote a dynamic vision of God’s love’? (Defining Features of Catholic Schools 2001)
- How do we understand our role in Catholic education as ‘transformative’? (Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education 2005)
- How do we promote teaching in Catholic schools as a vocation? (Celebration and Challenge 2004)
- How do we ‘achieve a recognition that evangelisation is the responsibility of everyone in Brisbane Catholic Education’? (Brisbane Catholic Education Centre Renewal Report (2005)

Questions about Strategic Approach:
- How do we ensure ‘a planned approach to developing leadership is evident’? (Strategic Renewal Framework 2007 - 2011)
- What is the function of spiritual formation within the roles and domains of school personnel? (Spiritual and Faith Formation QCEC Project 2005)
- How do we ‘develop effective supporting structures and processes for evangelisation’? (Brisbane Catholic Education Centre Renewal Report (2005)
- How do we facilitate the embedding of evangelisation within our ministry of Catholic Education including the faith formation of all staff with particular emphasis on those in leadership positions?’ (Brisbane Catholic Education Centre Renewal Report (2005)

Flagging a Shift in Perspective

In responding to these questions, Catching Fire heralds a shift in thinking about the place and process of spiritual formation in the people and structure that is our educational community. This is evident in two main ways:

1. It represents a shift from a silo model to an integrating model. This is not a framework that sits outside or as a separate silo next to other frameworks/initiatives. Rather, it seeks to embed the spiritual formation of all involved in Catholic education within the frameworks, processes and domains that already exist, or may develop.
2. **It requires a shift from a ‘function’ modality perception of spiritual formation to a ‘core’ modality perception.** Spiritual formation has to do with the growth of a person from the inside out. It is not an added function or domain itself, nor is it time out from the range of functions or domains within which one must operate. Rather, spiritual formation permeates and shapes the way in which every function or domain is fulfilled. It certainly involves a knowledge base and skilling, but these are facilitators of the real work which is about developing a spiritual core that has a direct bearing on how one leads, teaches, supports, interacts, plans and manages.

**Concluding Comments - Into the future**

*It has become a more and more commonly held view that Catholic schools are for many Catholics and people of other faiths and traditions the place for a more intense encounter with the gospel message and the lived community of the Catholic tradition. (Seamus O’Grady 2005)*

**Spiritual Formation in a Catholic Educational Setting**

Spiritual formation is understood here as both an integrating reality and a dynamic process. It is not a separate component of a skill base, role description or professional domain. More than any other kind of formation or professional learning, spiritual formation deals with the lodestone of a person’s being. In this sense, we are about developing people so in touch with their own soul and with God that they make a difference in every context of their lives. Spiritual formation is about facilitating the growth of the Spirit in individuals in a way that radiates in every aspect of their vocation.

Historically, within the wider church and within schools, the work of spiritual formation along with faith witness and leadership resided with religious and clergy. While Vatican II established the baptismal call and right for lay people to develop, witness and proclaim the gospel vision, in reality lay people were perceived as having a secondary role in all areas of spirituality and faith.

Times have changed and school staff demographics have radically changed. However, as the religious and clergy numbers in schools have diminished and lay people have taken up the teaching and leading roles previously held by religious and clergy, the mentality that the spiritual and faith role is ‘other’ has not altered. We are at a time now where a paradigm shift in this thinking is required.

In our policies and vision, the foundational and permeating nature of a transforming mission based on the life and Gospel message of Jesus is absolutely clear. Spiritual formation in any Catholic community is that which colours and shapes every function that every roleholder performs. For us in particular, it infuses all of the activity – goals, processes and outcomes of Catholic education.

Because spiritual formation is about being, spiritual formation will determine very much how one teaches … or leads …. or deals with parents …. or engages with staff …. or tends to children ….. or gives professional support … or relates to students. It is a powerful and fundamental fuel for the mission of Catholic education.

Catholic educational communities are about nurturing ordinary people with an extraordinary vision that speaks of the heart of God. Every good teacher in every good Australian school nurtures the education of each child. But the teacher in a Catholic school is about nurturing the education of each child with the eye of one who sees God’s imprint and God’s love in the face of each child, and responds with a sense of presence and patient awareness that God’s work is done, yet never finished, in these encounters.

Every good leader in every good Australian school displays competencies across a range of dimensions, including community building, curriculum management and vision keeping. However, the leader in a Catholic school manages and leads the school community with the eye of one whose vision is larger than the dimensions she/he manages and who knows the witness of
this vision which permeates his/her approach to all planning and people. Leading and learning can only be grown and sustained in a rich and real spiritual life.

Every good school secretary in every good Australian school is the competent welcoming face of the school and is a caring reference point for staff, students and parents in the school community. The school secretary in a Catholic school though, manages this role with the eye of one who knows ‘Christ has no hands but hers’, and who is mindful of the heightened importance of all the small exchanges in the day that no one else but the heart of God will witness.

This is the transforming vision called to be lived out in Catholic communities every day.

In this diocese, there is a sound and collaborative relationship among archdiocesan vicariates, with a proactive and integrated approach to addressing contemporary realities with a living understanding of mission and evangelisation. In this respect, the local church context is conducive to an equally contemporary initiative to address the needs for mission formation in school communities.

In addition to this, the Australian, Queensland, and Brisbane Catholic Education Markers outlined above clearly define what it is that Catholic schools in the Brisbane Archdiocese are about, how they are to be identified, and what priorities they will have into the future.

This framework is about supporting the development of all people involved in Brisbane Catholic Education to realise that vision and mission, so that words like ‘gospel witness’, ‘faith community’, ‘vocation’, ‘evangelising mission’, ‘transformation’ and ‘Jesus’ vision’ are words that no longer need explanation or unpacking, but rather become secondary descriptors of a strong and personally owned positive experience of seeing and living in the world through a Christian Catholic lens. Mission and Vision only ever becomes real and powerful, when enfleshed, moment by moment, in the daily lives of each and every person. The success of this meaning making rises and falls on the lived out action of a lived in faith, shown in each encounter in and out of the classroom, the office, the assembly hall and the sporting field. Mission lived out in this way happens through attending to and growing in the spiritual journey. Those who do this not only help the spark to catch; they are in fact, the most potent agent of evangelisation the Church will have.

The degree to which Catholic educators take seriously the challenge to translate the vision and mission statements into everyday practice, to be intentional about witness and word, to explore personal meaning making in the light of the gospel, will be the measure of the effectiveness of Catholic education as an agent of transformative mission in the Church.
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