

Father Ryan High School's Community Standards

Commitment to Socio-Economic, Racial, and Cultural Diversity



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Introduction

Diversity is a gift from God, who created us all and, therefore, made us His children, for we are made in the “image of God.”

“We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. [...] Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world.”

– United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

As a school, Father Ryan High School is a *learning community* where we teach continual growth in our knowledge of what is true and good. What follows are the expectations and standards, flowing from our faith, that Father Ryan High School has for those in this community regarding respect for human dignity both inside and outside of the school. These expectations are each referenced to source-based Scripture and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

From time to time, new sources and new references will be added to help us appreciate and respect the Catholic Church’s global world view and the richness that diversity brings to Father Ryan High School and our society.



Faith

As a diocesan Catholic high school, Father Ryan High School, while maintaining the teachings of the Catholic Church, welcomes students and families from Catholic backgrounds as well as those from other religious traditions.

Father Ryan High School's mission is to be an experience of the living Gospel while challenging students to reach their spiritual, academic, and personal potential. Father Ryan High School is committed to creating a climate of respect for all people who strive to live the mission of our school community. As children of the one, same God, we are brothers and sisters who are called to live in love and harmony. We are called by faith and our common humanity to seek ways to overcome our differences while recognizing the value of our individual religious beliefs.

Supporting Teachings of the Catholic Church

Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Church Is One

“The sacred mystery of the Church's unity” (UR2)

813

The Church is one because of her source: “the highest exemplar and source of this mystery is the unity, in the Trinity of Persons, of one God, the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.” The Church is one *because of her founder:* for “the Word made flesh, the Prince of Peace, reconciled all men to God by the cross, . . . restoring the unity of all in one people and one body.” The Church is one *because of her “soul”:* “It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that He is the principle of the Church's unity.” Unity is of the essence of the Church.

What an astonishing mystery! There is one Father of the universe, one Logos of the universe, and also one Holy Spirit, everywhere one and the same; there is also one virgin become mother, and I should like to call her “Church.”

817

In fact, “in this one and only Church of God from its very beginnings there arose certain rifts, which the Apostle strongly censures as damnable. But in subsequent centuries much more serious dissensions appeared and large communities became separated from full communion with the Catholic Church—for which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame.” The ruptures that wound the unity of Christ's Body—here we must distinguish heresy, apostasy, and schism—do not occur without human sin.

Where there are sins, there are also divisions, schisms, heresies, and disputes. Where there is virtue, however, there also are harmony and unity, from which arise the one heart and one soul of all believers.

818

“However, one cannot charge with the sin of the separation those who at present are born into these communities [that resulted from such separation] and in them are brought up in the faith of Christ, and the Catholic Church accepts them with respect and affection as brothers. All who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers in the Lord by the children of the Catholic Church.”

819

“Furthermore, many elements of sanctification and of truth” are found outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church: the written Word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope, and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as visible elements. Christ’s Spirit uses these Churches and ecclesial communities as means of salvation, whose power derives from the fullness of grace and truth that Christ has entrusted to the Catholic Church. All these blessings come from Christ and lead to Him and are in themselves calls to Catholic unity.”

838

“The Church knows that she is joined in many ways to the baptized who are honored by the name of Christian, but do not profess the Catholic faith in its entirety or have not preserved unity or communion under the successor of Peter.” Those “who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in a certain, although imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church.” With the Orthodox Churches, this communion is so profound “that it lacks little to attain the fullness that would permit a common celebration of the Lord’s Eucharist.”

839

“Those who have not yet received the Gospel are related to the People of God in various ways.”

The relationship of the Church with the Jewish People. When she delves into her own mystery, the Church, the People of God in the New Covenant, discovers her link with the Jewish People, “to whom the Lord our God spoke first.” The Jewish faith, unlike other non-Christian religions, is already a response to God’s revelation in the Old Covenant. To the Jews “belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ”; “for the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.”

840

And when one considers the future, God’s People of the Old Covenant and the new People of God tend towards similar goals: expectation of the coming (or the return) of the Messiah. But one awaits the return of the Messiah who died and rose from the dead and is recognized as Lord and Son of God; the other awaits the coming of a Messiah, whose features remain hidden till the end of time; and the latter waiting is accompanied by the drama of not knowing or of misunderstanding Christ Jesus.

841

The Church’s relationship with the Muslims. “The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind’s judge on the last day.”

842

The Church’s bond with non-Christian religions is in the first place the common origin and end of the human race.

All nations form but one community. This is so because all stem from the one stock which God created to people the entire earth, and also because all share a common destiny, namely God. His providence, evident goodness, and saving designs extend to all against the day when the elect are gathered together in the holy city...

843

The Catholic Church recognizes in other religions that search, among shadows and images, for the God who is unknown yet near, since He gives life and breath to all things and wants all men to be saved.

Thus, the Church considers all goodness and truth found in these religions as “a preparation for the Gospel and given by Him who enlightens all men that they may at length have life.”

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Excerpt is from the article Making Ecumenism Every Catholic's Concern by Jeffrey Gros, Associate Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (1991-2005), The Living Light, Summer, 1998 Vol. 34, No. 4.

Three decades of dialogue among the churches have moved us beyond mere theoretical understanding of one another as fellow Christians, coming into contact with other churches and sharing in prayer, common witness, and service together. We have articulated levels of sacramental and doctrinal agreement unimaginable at the time of the Second Vatican Council. We are moving toward decision on some of the important relationships with churches of the Reformation.

Over the thirty years after Catholic entry into the ecumenical movement, we have a long series of admonitions and directives that make it clear that ecumenism is everyone's concern. Not long ago, Pope John Paul II reminded us, “To believe in Christ means to desire unity; to desire unity means to desire the church; to desire the church means to desire the communion of grace which corresponds to the Father's plan from all eternity. Such is the meaning of Christ's prayer: “ut unum sint” (May they be one).

Pope John Paul II indicates the universal character of the ecumenical vocation. Certainly, formation leadership is called to mirror this collaborative vision.

The quest for Christian unity is not a matter of choice or expediency, but a duty which springs from the very nature of the Christian community. Concern for restoring unity pertains to the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike. It extends to everyone, according to the ability of each, whether it be exercised in daily Christian living or in theological and historical studies. It is absolutely clear that ecumenism, the movement promoting Christian Unity, is not just some sort of “appendix” which is added to the Church's traditional activity. Rather, ecumenism is an organic part of her life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does; it must be like the fruit borne by a healthy and flourishing tree which grows to its full stature. (UUS, no. 19)



Father Ryan High School House System Overview

Father Ryan High School implemented a House System in the 2020-2021 school year to deepen the development of spiritual servant-leaders with a global view and a thirst for inquiry, creativity, and problem-solving while challenging students to reach their full potential.

Each of the houses has a patron saint and is assigned one of the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching related to the specific saint's charism. Below is a guide for reference.

6 HOUSES *All Irish*



Patron Saint
Saint Maximilian Kolbe
Catholic Social Teaching Tenet
Call to Family, Community, and Participation



Patron Saint
Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati
Catholic Social Teaching Tenet
Rights and Responsibilities



Patron Saint
Saint Kateri Tekakwitha
Catholic Social Teaching Tenet
Care for Creation



Patron Saint
Saint Teresa of Calcutta
Catholic Social Teaching Tenet
Option for the Poor and Vulnerable



Patron Saint
Saint Katharine Drexel
Catholic Social Teaching Tenet
Life and Dignity of the Human Person



Patron Saint
Saint Oscar Romero
Catholic Social Teaching Tenet
Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers



Ability

Father Ryan High School seeks to create an environment based on the following beliefs:

- Appreciate the worth and value of every student.
- Empower students to live the Gospel daily in ways that develop capacity for moral and noble thinking and a responsibility for social justice and mercy.
- Provide students with the opportunity to express their faith through worship, prayer, and service as an essential part of the Catholic school experience.
- Partner with parents and parishes to minister to the needs of students.
- Meet each student's learning needs and motivate students to the pursuit of academic excellence.
- Provide academic, physical, and spiritual challenges for each student and fully prepare them for further educational opportunities.
- Support and encourage each student through academic counseling.
- Strive to be a community representative of the demographics of the Catholic Diocese of Nashville.
- Create an environment of personal development that encompasses the whole person, spiritually, intellectually, physically, and emotionally.
- Provide opportunities in all arenas for leadership and service that will empower students and faculty to reach their fullest potential.
- Provide a comprehensive program of extracurricular activities in art, clubs, music, sports, and service.

Students must understand that whatever their academic, athletic, or artistic abilities are, they are all gifts from God to be exercised for their own development and for the good of society. Their talents and abilities do not make them superior to someone else. Exclusion of or ridicule for others thought to be less talented is contrary to the very core of the mission of Father Ryan High School. Faculty and staff see the potential for growth and development in all students and seek to celebrate the pursuit of excellence, regardless of ability.

Supporting Teachings of the Catholic Church

For by the grace given to me I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than one ought to think, but to think soberly, each according to the measure of faith that God has apportioned. For as in one body, we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them.

Romans 12, 3-6

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.

To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

... But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.

1 Corinthians 12: 4-7, 11



Socio-economic Status

A deep and abiding tradition of the Catholic Faith is our responsibility to the poor and vulnerable. Catholic Social teaching instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. Father Ryan High School seeks to provide a school community that is socio-economically diverse. We strive to keep tuition as low as we can and still provide a quality education. We make financial aid available for students based on qualified need. We include in our curriculum for all students a service requirement that is aimed at assisting the “materially poor.”

As outlined in the overview of the House System on page 6, the charism of Oak House is that of Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta and the Catholic Social Teaching of “Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.”

Scripture, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and social documents from the Vatican and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops call us to share our blessings with those who have less than we do.

Supporting Teachings of the Catholic Church

God’s word teaches that our brothers and sisters are the prolongation of the incarnation for each of us: “As you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). The way we treat others has a transcendent dimension: “The measure you give will be the measure you get” (Mt 7:2). It corresponds to the mercy which God has shown us: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you . . . For the measure you give will be the measure you get back” (Lk 6:36-38). What these passages make clear is the absolute priority of “going forth from ourselves toward our brothers and sisters” as one of the two great commandments which ground every moral norm and as the clearest sign for discerning spiritual growth in response to God’s completely free gift.

Pope Francis, The Joy of the Gospel [Evangelii Gaudium], no. 179

“The Church’s love for the poor . . . is a part of her constant tradition.” This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of His concern for the poor . . . “Those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 2444, 2448, quoting Centesimus annus, no. 57, and Libertatis conscientia, no. 68

Love for others, and, in the first place, love for the poor, in whom the Church sees Christ Himself, is made concrete in the promotion of justice.

Saint John Paul II, On the Hundredth Year [Centesimus Annus], no. 58

The obligation to provide justice for all means that the poor have the single most urgent economic claim on the conscience of the nation.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Economic Justice for All, no. 86

New Testament

My brothers, show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. For if a man with gold rings on his fingers and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and a poor person in shabby clothes also comes in, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say, “Sit here, please,” while you say to the poor one, “Stand there,” or “Sit at my feet,” have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil designs?

James 2, 1-4

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1938

There exist also sinful inequalities that affect millions of men and women. These are in open contradiction of the Gospel.

Their equal dignity as persons demands that we strive for fairer and more humane conditions. Excessive economic and social disparity between individuals and peoples of the one human race is a source of scandal and militates against social justice, equity, human dignity, as well as social and international peace.

1940

Solidarity is manifested in the first place by the distribution of goods and remuneration for work. It also presupposes the effort for a more just social order where tensions are better able to be reduced and conflicts more readily settled by negotiation.

1941

Socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all the forms of solidarity: solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor, of workers among themselves, between employers and employees in a business, solidarity among nations and peoples. International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends in part upon this.



Race

As one of the first schools in the southern United States to integrate, just months after the landmark decision from the United States Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, Father Ryan High School seeks to continue this legacy started by men and women of faith to attract and provide a welcoming environment of belonging for students and families from all racial backgrounds. As part of our curriculum, students and faculty alike are challenged and instructed to live out their Catholic and Christian responsibility through Catholic Social Teachings. Specifically, respecting the dignity and personhood of each individual connects us to our history of Catholic education in Nashville. Scripture, Church teachings, and the spirit of inclusion from Father Ryan High School leaders like former principal, Father Francis Shea (Bishop of the Diocese of Evansville 1969-1989), historic educator and coach, Mr. Bill Derrick '48, and countless others demand no less.

As outlined in the overview of the House System on page 6, the charism of Immaculata House is that of Saint Katharine Drexel, patroness of racial justice and philanthropist, and the Catholic Social Teaching “Life and Dignity of the Human Person.” Immaculate Mother Academy founded by Saint Katharine Drexel, provided Catholic education to African Americans in Nashville from 1909-1954, and when it was closed in 1954, its male students integrated Father Ryan High School.

Church leaders, from the Vatican, national conferences of bishops, and local bishops, in their statements and documents call us to rid our society of the “sin” of racism.

Supporting Teachings of the Catholic Church

“By the work of the Holy Spirit, the Church is called to share with all the world this gift of love. As Pope Francis points out, ‘The salvation which God has wrought, and the Church joyfully proclaims, is for everyone. God has found a way to unite himself to every human being in every age. Racism arises when—either consciously or unconsciously—a person holds that his or her own race or ethnicity is superior, and, therefore, judges persons of other races or ethnicities as inferior and unworthy of equal regard. When this conviction or attitude leads individuals or groups to exclude, ridicule, mistreat, or unjustly discriminate against persons on the basis of their race or ethnicity, it is sinful. Racist acts are sinful because they violate justice. They reveal a failure to acknowledge the human dignity of the persons offended, to recognize them as the neighbors Christ calls us to love (Mt 22:39).’”

Open Wide Our Hearts, The Enduring Call to Love, a Pastoral Letter on Racism, (USCCB, 2018, page 3)

Racism occurs because a person ignores the fundamental truth that because all humans share a common origin, they are all brothers and sisters, all equally made in the image of God. When this truth is ignored, the consequence is prejudice and fear of the other, and—all too often—hatred.

Open Wide Our Hearts, The Enduring Call to Love, a Pastoral Letter on Racism, (USCCB, 2018, page 4)

A Pastoral Letter from an Archbishop to his people

In God's Image: Pastoral Letter on Racism (2003, #5 & 6), Archbishop Harry Flynn of Minneapolis and St. Paul wrote, “I believe that two broad types of racism need to be recognized and resisted: individual and institutional.

“Individual racism is evident when a person adopts attitudes or takes actions that are based on the assumption of racial superiority. Such attitudes and actions violate the rights and dignity of other people because of race.

“A second type of racism is institutional or structural. This type of racism exists where patterns of racial superiority are embedded in the systems and institutions of society. Such racism is less blatant and more complex, but it exists nonetheless. It is present wherever systems and institutions are created and maintained in such a way that they provide privilege or prejudice for one race over others. This type of racism can be seen, to varying degrees, in many of our social, economic, and political structures, including the structures of our Church.”

A Document from the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops “Open Wide Our Hearts, The Enduring Call to Love, a Pastoral Letter on Racism” (2018)

Educating Ourselves (pages 25-26)

“As bishops, we encourage our leadership to make formal visits to institutions of culture and learning, to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the National Museum of the American Indian, and the Holocaust Museum—all in Washington, D.C.—and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center in Atlanta, for example. Similar opportunities should be encouraged in our local communities. Parishes, for instance, could use the National Day of Prayer for Peace in Our Communities, which falls on the feast of St. Peter Claver (September 9), to organize activities that foster community, dialogue, and reconciliation. These encounters will help open our minds and hearts more fully and continue the healing needed in our communities and our nation. By listening to one another’s experiences, we can come to understand and to empathize (37) which leads to those right relationships that unite us as brothers and sisters. This justice finds its source and strength in the love of Christ, who laid down His life for His friends (see Jn 15:13).

“A change of heart,” the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace points out, “cannot occur without strengthening spiritual convictions regarding respect for other races and ethnic groups.” We must, therefore, form the consciences of our people, especially the young, “by clearly presenting the entire Christian doctrine on this subject. [We] particularly [ask] pastors, preachers, teachers and catechists to explain the true teaching of Scripture and tradition about the origin of all people in God, their final common destiny in the Kingdom of God, the value of the precept of fraternal love, and the total incompatibility between racist exclusivism and the universal calling of all to the same salvation in Jesus Christ.”

Here we call on our religious education programs, Catholic schools, and Catholic publishing companies to develop curricula relating to racism and reconciliation. Our campus ministers should plan young adult reflections and discussions that strive to build pathways toward racial equality and healing. We can also learn from the example of those young people who rise above racist attitudes and model respect. We also charge our seminaries, deacon formation programs, houses of formation, and all our educational institutions to break any silence around the issue of racism, to find new and creative ways to raise awareness, analyze curricula, and to teach the virtues of fraternal charity.

Our individual efforts to encounter, grow, and witness, to change our hearts about racism, must also find their way into our families. We urge each person to consider the dignity of others in the face of jokes, conversations, and complaints motivated by racial prejudice. We can provide experiences for children that expose them to different cultures and peoples. We can also draw upon the incredible diversity of the Church worldwide in providing education within the family and make it clear that God dwells in the equal dignity of each person. We ask all the faithful to consider ways in which they and their families can encounter, grow, and witness through an understanding and commitment to these values today. In turn, we pledge to provide tools and resources to facilitate those efforts.

“Brothers and Sisters to Us”

U.S. Catholic Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Racism, 1979

Racism is an evil which endures in our society and in our Church. Despite apparent advances and even significant changes in the last two decades, the reality of racism remains. In large part, it is only external appearances which have changed.

In 1958, we spoke out against the blatant forms of racism that divided people through discriminatory laws and enforced segregation. We pointed out the moral evil that denied human persons their dignity as children of God and their God-given rights. A decade later in a second pastoral letter we again underscored the continuing scandal of racism and called for decisive action to eradicate it from our society.

We recognize and applaud the readiness of many Americans to make new strides forward in reducing and eliminating prejudice against minorities. We are convinced that the majority of Americans realize that racial discrimination is both unjust and unworthy of this nation.

We do not deny that changes have been made, that laws have been passed, that policies have been implemented. We do not deny that the ugly external features of racism which marred our society have in part been eliminated. But neither can it be denied that too often what has happened has only been a covering over, not a fundamental change. Today, the sense of urgency has yielded to an apparent acceptance of the status quo. The climate of crisis engendered by demonstrations, protest, and confrontation has given way to a mood of indifference; and other issues occupy our attention.

Racism is a sin: a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family, and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father. Racism is the sin that says some human beings are inherently superior and others essentially inferior because of races. It is the sin that makes racial characteristics the determining factor for the exercise of human rights. It mocks the words of Jesus: "Treat others the way you would have them treat you." Indeed, racism is more than a disregard for the words of Jesus; it is a denial of the truth of the dignity of each human being revealed by the mystery of the Incarnation.

When we give in to our fears of the other because he or she is of a race different from ourselves, when we prejudge the motives of others precisely because they are of a different color, when we stereotype or ridicule the other because of racial characteristics and heritage, we fail to heed the command of the Prophet Amos: "Seek good and not evil, that you may live; then truly will the Lord... be with you as you claim!... Then let justice surge like water, and goodness like an unfailing stream."

The structures of our society are subtly racist, for these structures reflect the values which society upholds. They are geared to the success of the majority and the failure of the minority. Members of both groups give unwitting approval by accepting things as they are. Perhaps no single individual is to blame. The sinfulness is often anonymous but nonetheless real. The sin is social in nature in that each of us, in varying degrees, is responsible. All of us in some measure are accomplices. As our recent pastoral letter on moral values states: "The absence of personal fault for an evil does not absolve one of all responsibility. We must seek to resist and undo injustices we have not ceased, lest we become bystanders who tacitly endorse evil and so share in guilt in it."

Finally, racism is sometimes apparent in the growing sentiment that too much is being given to racial minorities by way of affirmative action programs or allocations to redress long-standing imbalances in minority representation and government-funded programs for the disadvantaged. At times, protestations claiming that all persons should be treated equally reflect the desire to maintain a status quo that favors one race and social group at the expense of the poor and the nonwhite.

Racism obscures the evils of the past and denies the burdens that history has placed upon the shoulders of our Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian brothers and sisters. An honest look at the past makes plain the need for restitution wherever possible - makes evident the justice of restoration and redistribution.

This is the mystery of our Church, that all men and women are brothers and sisters, all one in Christ, all bear the image of the Eternal God. The Church is truly universal, embracing all races, for it is "the visible sacrament of this saving unity. The Church, moreover, follows the example of its founder and, "through its children, is one with [people] of every condition, but especially with the poor and the afflicted."

How great, therefore, is that sin of racism which weakens the Church's witness as the universal sign of unity among all peoples! How great the scandal given by racist Catholics who make the Body of Christ, the Church, a sign of racial oppression! Yet, all too often the Church in our country has been for many a "white Church," a racist institution.

Each of us as Catholics must acknowledge a share in the mistakes and sins of the past. Many of us have been prisoners of fear and prejudice. We have preached the Gospel while closing our eyes to the racism it condemns. We have allowed conformity to social pressures to replace compliance with social justice.

Yet more is needed. The prophetic voice of the Church, which is to be heard in every generation and even to the ends of the earth, must not be muted—especially not by the counter witness of some of its own people. Let the Church speak out, not only in the assemblies of the bishops, but in every diocese and parish in the land, in every chapel and religious house, in every school, in every social service agency, and in every institution that bears the name Catholic. As Pope John Paul II has proclaimed, the Church must be aware of the threats to humanity and of all that opposes the endeavor to make life itself more human. The Church must strive to make every element of human life correspond to the true dignity of the human person.

Therefore, let the Church proclaim to all that the sin of racism defiles the image of God and degrades the sacred dignity of humankind which has been revealed by the mystery of the Incarnation. Let all know that it is a terrible sin that mocks the cross of Christ and ridicules the Incarnation. For the brother and sister of our Brother Jesus Christ are brother and sister to us.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

1931

Respect for the human person proceeds by way of respect for the principle that "everyone should look upon his neighbor (without any exception) as 'another self,' above all bearing in mind his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity." No legislation could by itself do away with the fears, prejudices, and attitudes of pride and selfishness which obstruct the establishment of truly fraternal societies. Such behavior will cease only through the charity that finds in every man a "neighbor," a brother.

1934

Created in the image of the one God and equally endowed with rational souls, all men have the same nature and the same origin. Redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, all are called to participate in the same divine beatitude: all therefore enjoy an equal dignity.

Vatican Documents

"The Church and Racism"

Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace (1988, #17 & #19)

John Paul II in turn reaffirmed: "Man's creation by God 'in his own image' confers upon every human person an eminent dignity; it also postulates the fundamental equality of all human beings. For the Church, this equality, which is rooted in man's being, acquires the dimension of an altogether special brotherhood through the Incarnation of the Son of God. In the Redemption effected by Jesus Christ, the Church sees a further basis of the rights and duties of the human person. Hence, every form of discrimination based on race is absolutely unacceptable."

Faith in the one God, Creator and Redeemer of all humankind made in his image and likeness, constitutes the absolute and inescapable negation of any racist ideologies. It is still necessary to draw out all the consequences of this: "We cannot truly pray to God the Father of all if we treat any people in other than brotherly fashion, for all men are created in God's image."



Ethnicity and Culture

Ethnicity, closely associated with culture, refers to membership in a group that is usually viewed as a minority within a society. That ethnic group is defined, then, by its language, customs, or social history and views.

Today the Catholic Church calls us all to respect and value the cultural and ethnic riches along with the diversity that makes up our Church, Christianity, and the world.

The Church calls us to value the good in every race, culture, and ethnic group and see in them the genius and gifts with which God has blessed His many sons and daughters.

Father Ryan High School calls its community to do no less. Father Ryan High School is to be a community that welcomes all and invites all people of good will to live, learn, grow, and pray.

Culture is defined as the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.

Rooted in the Catholic Social Teachings of “Rights and Responsibilities” and “Solidarity,” Father Ryan High School calls its community to see, appreciate, respect, and celebrate the richness that new immigrants bring to our society. We welcome all people of good will to be a part of our school community and expect students, staff, and parents to provide an atmosphere of inclusion and welcome. As part of our curriculum, community behavioral standards, and student-led organizations, Father Ryan High School seeks to express welcome and belonging to our students, faculty, families, and community.

As outlined in the overview of the House System on page 6, the charism of Trinity House is that of Saint Óscar Romero, patron of persecuted Christians and the Catholic Social Teaching of “Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers.” Norwood House is that of Blessed Pierre Giorgio Frassati, a global patron and companion for youth and young adults, and the Catholic Social Teaching of “Rights and Responsibilities.”

Supporting Teachings of the Catholic Church

“The Church of the twenty-first century will be, as it has always been, a Church of many cultures, languages and traditions, yet simultaneously one, as God is one—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—unity in diversity.”

Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity In Diversity, Pastoral Letter, United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, November, 2000.

“If we journey together, young and old, we can be firmly rooted in the present, and from here, revisit the past and look to the future. To revisit the past in order to learn from history and heal old wounds that at times still trouble us. To look to the future in order to nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge, awaken prophecies, and enable hope to blossom. Together, we can learn from one another, warm hearts, inspire minds with the light of the Gospel, and lend new strength to our hands.”

Pope Francis | Christus Vivit 199

The U.S. Catholic Conference

“Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity”

Pastoral Letter, November 15, 2000

Twenty years ago in *Beyond the Melting Pot: Cultural Pluralism in the United States*, we the bishops of the United States noted that cultural pluralism was the common heritage of all Americans. As the new millennium unfolds, the “new immigration” from all the continents of the world calls attention to the reality of the United States as largely a “nation of immigrants” and to the diversity of national and ethnic origins of all people of this country. In this new context, the Catholic community is rapidly re-encountering itself as an “immigrant Church,” a witness at once to the diversity of people who make up our world and to our unity in one humanity, destined to enjoy the fullness of God’s blessings in Jesus Christ. This unity in diversity was celebrated at Encuentro 2000, sponsored as the National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ principal jubilee celebration, highlighting “many faces in God’s house.”

A century ago, the Church responded generously to the needs of immigrants: building parishes and schools, establishing a vast array of charitable institutions, evangelizing newcomers, and being evangelized in turn by immigrant Catholics with distinctive traditions of worship and often a deep spirituality of their own. Members of the Eastern Catholic Churches arrived during the same period. They were not always understood by their fellow Catholics, although they were received and did develop as members of the Church in America. Despite the attacks of “nativists” and the criticisms made by English-speaking Catholics, national parishes were established that provided a safe haven where newcomers were able to pray and hear the Word of God in their own languages, begin the education of their children in the language of the home, and so adapt to their new society with the security of community and faith. The Church embraced these immigrants, supporting them in their striving to build a better life and encouraging the efforts of many of them to help build a labor movement that could represent them in that struggle. And then, as now—despite the predictions of critics—immigrants and their children quickly became vital participants in American society, acquiring proficiency in English by the second and third generations, rising in the educational system, and contributing in thousands of ways to the economic growth and social, political, and spiritual life of the country.

Forgetful of Our Heritage

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to welcoming the stranger is that many Americans have forgotten their immigrant past. “Nativism” assumes that there is just one image of a “real American” and that immigrants either cannot live up to it or willfully refuse to do so. Originally directed against Catholics of all sorts, today such nativism can be seen in a campaign against “multiculturalism” in all its forms, on the premise that reverence for distinctive traditions and histories undermines the unity of American society. Like the Catholic “Americanizers” of the nineteenth century, who opposed the establishment of national parishes, the critics of multiculturalism today want immigrants and other distinctive groups to shed their languages, customs, and identities as quickly as possible, to become Americans “just like the rest of us.” But “the rest of us” are, in fact, a culturally plural society—Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Muslims; believers and non-believers; Southerners and Northerners; Irish, Italian, and Mexican—proud of our heritages and proud to be Americans, all at once.

A kind of nativism appears in the Church itself when established members insist that there is just one way to worship, one set of familiar hymns, one small handful of familiar devotions, one way to organize a parish community, one language for all—and that immigrants must adapt to that way of doing things. In doing so, such nativists forget not only that their ancestors spoke different languages and worshiped in different ways not long ago, but that their devotions and familiar saints, even their patterns of church organization, sprang from encounters between differing traditions within the Church.

Competition for Resources

Competition for resources and recognition among the ethnic groups of the parish often centers on specifics such as Mass times, the use of facilities, and the attention of priests; but such conflicts can reflect vague fears that one group will somehow displace a long-established one. Established parishioners, used to thinking of their parish practices and religious traditions as the norm, may cling to their control over the parish council or “prime” Sunday Mass times. They may find themselves increasingly a minority and may react with fear to protect the parish where they were raised and where they saw their children baptized and educated in the faith. African American Catholics, who have their own history of having been excluded and discriminated against in the larger Church, as in society in general, now face newcomers in many of their parishes, newcomers who threaten their hold on the few institutions where they have come to feel at home. In some cases, multiple immigrant groups compete with one another within a single parish. In other cases, immigrant clergy struggle with their bishop or pastor for control over the finances of an immigrant group or for final authority over the congregation. While such competition can be destructive of community life, the issues involved are often real, and they require wisdom, much charity, and careful mediation to reach solutions that respect the legitimate concerns of all sides.

Cultural Fears

The fears associated with encounters between groups are often difficult to overcome precisely because they are unacknowledged or unclear. Some are afraid because they do not know how to behave with others of a different culture. Others—in ignorance, relying on stereotypes—are convinced that those who are different are also somehow inferior: less educated, “dirty,” or dangerous. Negative images and derogatory jokes and remarks readily merge with racism, America’s “original sin,” reinforcing the fear of the unknown in many people’s minds by creating stereotypes about people whose facial features or skin color identify them as Asian, Arab, African, or Mexican. In some instances, racism has been so deeply ingrained that an institutional racism prevails. Racist attitudes can linger in subtle ways, even when people get to know one another in parish activities, unless we vigorously educate ourselves about our neighbors, learn to appreciate their heritages, encounter their own images of us, and strive to work with them on behalf of common causes.

Some of our fears are tied to what we see as defense of our own culture or way of life. Many people cling—rightfully so—to their distinctive culture. They fear the loss of their own familiar ways of doing things as they encounter new images and practices of community life and worship that are foreign to them. Immigrants themselves often fear other groups and worry that their children will lose the values of the homeland, come to show disrespect towards their parents and elders, and exchange their own culture for the consumer values of the surrounding society. Such concerns are well-founded, and they compound the difficulties of adaptation to a new setting as both host and immigrant react, each against the other, in fear of change.

Coming to Understand Others as the First Form of Hospitality

Time and time again, Pope John Paul II has echoed the teachings of his predecessors and of the Second Vatican Council that “it is one of the properties of the human person that he can achieve true and full humanity only by means of culture” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 53) and that to take away a person’s culture is therefore to damage human dignity grievously. Communion does not abolish differences but brings together one family, diverse and united in the one Lord. Pope Paul VI urged that “it must be avoided that these diversities and adaptations in accordance with the various ethnical groups, even though legitimate, result in harm to that unity to which all are called in the Church” (*Pastoralis Migratorum Cura*). Thus, the Church’s norms for the pastoral care of immigrants attempt to balance the legitimate rights of immigrants with their duty to look to the common good of both their communities of origin and their host community (*Instruction on the Pastoral Care of People Who Migrate*, nos. 5-11).

The Church embraces the rich cultural pluralism of this immigrant nation—what some call its “multicultural” reality. Pope John Paul II insists that “the immigrant members of the Church, while

freely exercising their rights and duties and being in full ecclesial communion in the particular churches, feeling themselves Christians and brothers towards all, must be able to remain completely themselves as far as language, culture, liturgy and spirituality, and particular traditions are concerned” (*Address for World Migrants’ Day, July 16, 1985*). Indeed, the pope warns repeatedly against attempting to rush a process of assimilation or cultural adaptation in the name of unity, because the goal is the mutual enrichment of peoples, not their assimilation to one way of being human. Thus, the pope reached out to refugees in the camp at Phanat Nikon, Thailand, in November 1984, saying, “My heart is with you. Have faith in yourselves. Don’t forget your identity as a free people with your own legitimate place in this world. Don’t lose your distinctive personality as a people! Remain firmly rooted in your respective cultures. The world needs to learn more from you and to join in appreciation of your uniqueness.”

The pope teaches that immigrants must guard their cultures for the enrichment of the world. But the cultures of immigrants will only be able to enrich this country when all Americans—recent immigrants and those long settled in this country—open their hearts and minds to their neighbors and come to appreciate the diverse cultures that make up this society. Knowledge of cultures cannot just come from books but must come from the concrete efforts of individuals to get to know their neighbors, in all their diversity.



Summary

Father Ryan High School’s mission to be an experience of the living Gospel guides us in our commitment to Socio-economic, Racial, and Cultural Diversity throughout the school community. Respecting these community standards, following the teachings of our faith, and inspired by the message of Christ, we remain in constant pursuit of an environment where every student is known and loved.



A Tradition of Faith, Knowledge, Service