

**THE PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP ROLE
IN THE
SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF TEACHERS
IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS:
A CASE STUDY
IN ONE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

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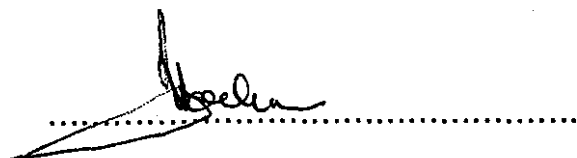
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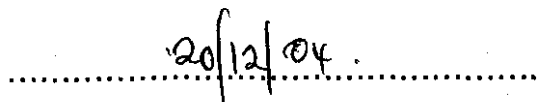
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STATEMENT OF SOURCES

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution. All research procedures reported in this thesis received the approval of the Australian Catholic University Ethics Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Belen', is written above a horizontal dotted line.

Signature

A handwritten date '20/12/04' is written above a horizontal dotted line.

Date

ABSTRACT

This study arose out of experiences within the Parramatta Diocese, a large diocese located on the western edge of Sydney, associated with spiritual formation programs and initiatives within the diocese between 1990 and 2004. These experiences reinforced the pivotal role of principals in encouraging and facilitating teacher spiritual formation and also identified a lack of role definition for principals in this area. The importance of the spiritual formation of teachers to the authenticity and vitality of Catholic schools signalled a need to clarify the principal's leadership role in the spiritual formation of teachers in Catholic schools in the Parramatta Diocese.

The case study methodology utilised different data collecting methods including individual and group interviews, survey, document analysis and observation to draw different perspectives from teachers, principals, and personnel from the *Catholic Education Office, Parramatta*. The research explored the range of spiritual formation experiences valued by teachers, both within structured programs and in the day-to-day experiences within schools. It identified responses of teachers to spiritual formation, the challenges in this area, and the role of principals.

The research findings suggest that the principal's leadership roles in the spiritual formation of teachers apply at the every-day cultural level of school experiences for teachers, where the principal shapes and strengthens experiences of Catholic culture for teachers, and the school community; at the whole school level, where the principal has a key role in strategic planning in relation to spiritual formation, in extending individual consideration to teachers, and in nurturing teacher leadership and co-leadership; and finally, at the diocesan level, where the principal has a stewardship role with other principals in relation to the long term spiritual formation of teachers. At the diocesan level *the principal also participates in collaborative alliances with diocesan personnel* which increase opportunities for teacher spiritual formation.

A fundamental leadership responsibility for principals is to nurture a spiritual base to their own leadership. Support for the spiritual formation of newly appointed principals and those aspiring to the role should be a system priority and would augment initiatives currently in place for experienced principals in the diocese.

The research findings point to multiple leadership roles for principals in the spiritual formation of teachers. These findings expand and elaborate the existing role description for principals in Catholic schools in the Parramatta Diocese.

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