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Comité catholique

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# THE CATHOLIC PUBLIC SCHOOL IN AN EVOLVING SCHOOL SYSTEM

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## The Catholic Public School in an Evolving School System

In the summer of 1980, at the end of a tumultuous year, marked by very complex legal discussions, we drew the public's attention in our Annual Report to the fact that the question of confessionality was becoming increasingly politicized. After listing the various parties to the debate, we came to the following conclusion: "In the long term, we must ardently hope for progress towards a future that is chosen and wanted, that matches the expectations of the population, and that is not merely the result of change or of the interplay of obscure forces, and still less of a test of strength." And we continued: "For the Comité catholique, this chosen and wanted future can be reached by recognizing the meaning and relevance of a coherent and open Catholic school, which remains the expectation of a large part of the Catholic population. Inseparably, it will be reached by acknowledging the religious diversity of Quebec in the Eighties, an acknowledgement which can no longer remain theoretical and which must become concretized through gradual and specific implementation of a real diversity in types of schools, as the communities evolve demographically, socially and religiously. It is within this perspective of a diversified school system that the Comité catholique intends to continue promoting the appropriate place and role of the Catholic School."<sup>1</sup>

The events of the past year convinced us of the pertinence of our diagnosis. When the Ministre de l'Éducation announced his intention last fall to completely restructure the school system, fundamental questions were raised with much public participation. Deep-seated uneasiness came into new focus: in some it revealed the fear that their cherished Catholic schools might disappear; in others the desire for new types of schools to emerge which wouldn't be defined in terms of religious affiliation; and in still others, there was even a fundamental questioning as to whether Catholic public schools should exist at all.

We could not remain indifferent to all these questions. That is why, without pre-judging the government's plan and in conformity with the mandate vested in us by the Superior Council of Education Act, we undertook a serious examination of the various articles of our Regulations and particularly that concerning Catholic religious instruction. This intensive reflection led us recently to propose that the Regulations be modified to the effect that in all primary and secondary grades an option would be offered between Catholic religious instruction and moral instruction.<sup>2</sup>

But over and above this particular modification, we were led to re-examine more in depth the two points raised in our report of the summer of 1980, namely the meaning and relevance of the Catholic public school as well

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1. Catholic Committee, "The Catholic School", in *The State and Needs of Education, 1979-1980 Report of the Superior Council of Education*, p.129.
  2. Comité Catholique, *Catholic Religious Instruction and Moral Instruction in Catholic Schools*, May 1982.

as the need to bring about real diversity among the various types of schools. More concretely speaking, the following questions came to mind: can Catholic public schools be legitimately proposed in a society that is becoming more and more pluralistic? Is it possible to develop new types of schools and how can this be done?

At the very time when the Ministre de l'Éducation had just officially invited us to begin a "year of communication and decision"<sup>3</sup>, it seemed appropriate to make public the present state of our thinking. In the pages which follow, we speak up after a year of waiting and uncertainty. In the light of the data outlined here, the Committee will, over the next few months, pursue its analysis of the planned school restructuring.

## **1. The Catholic Public School: Still a Relevant Asset**

One objection that keeps coming back in the present discussion is that raised by those who cannot see how public schools can call themselves Catholic in a pluralistic society like ours. "Either", they object, "the Catholic school is a school that does nothing but provide Catholic religious instruction and pastoral animation and, consequently, it's hard to see why it should have a special label; or else, it is characterized by a particular ambiance, a specific global perspective and consequently it cannot but be discriminatory." And, they conclude, "in either case it is difficult to accept that a public school be recognized as Catholic".

Formulated this way, the alternative presents a dilemma difficult to escape. We must, therefore, carefully examine the two alternatives and look again closely at some of the stands we have previously taken.

### ***1.1 A School with a Specific Educational Project***

The Regulations of the Catholic Committee are already clear: the Preamble indicates that "the institution which is the Catholic confessional school must be conceived as the educational institution which openly accepts the religious dimension as an integral part of its education programme and the Christian concept of man and of life as the inspirational principle and norm of its pedagogical action". We have just recently defined the Catholic school as being "one which places at the heart of its educational project an explicit reference to the Christian faith and thus inspires its educational and cultural thrust".<sup>4</sup>

Of course the Catholic school must ensure that the Catholic faith be presented in an explicit and respectful manner; this is carried out through

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3. Gouvernement du Québec, *The Quebec School: A Responsible Force in the Community*, 21 June 1982, p.90.

4. Comité catholique, *C'est-à-dire. Regards sur les mots qui servent à dire l'éducation chrétienne*, Québec, 1981, p.7.

religious instruction as well as pastoral animation. This is the absolute minimum. But the school is not defined only by that; it has a holistic aim, an educational orientation inspired by the gospel which tends to permeate all its activities. What is the make-up of this orientation? It includes the education of the whole person, which means more than formal instruction or juxtaposed courses; it goes beyond these activities and fosters integral development and growth in all aspects. It includes giving priority to the quality of human relations and showing a special concern for the poor and needy. In other words, the Catholic school attempts to provide young people with the experience of a humane and Christian environment, which is at once coherent and open and which promotes certain values such as solidarity, justice, honesty, respect for others, freedom, truth.<sup>5</sup> While these are not the exclusive values of any one religion, but correspond to the basic aspirations of all people, Christians are called upon to apply them with even stronger motivation.

Clearly, we are speaking here of an *orientation*, of a *project*; not necessarily of something already fully implemented. Neither is it only a wish or a mere dream; but truly a *project*, a firm intention, a will to do. Etymologically, the word "project means to cast ahead: to imagine and want to realize that which does not yet exist. It means we want to follow the particular direction we have chosen".<sup>6</sup> Such a project, if it exists, energizes, unites efforts and gives direction to diverse activities. If there is no project, educational activity is left open to disintegration: the school risks becoming a kind of giant shopping centre where each one chooses those particular skills he deems useful.

We think no one can question that such an overall project is relevant today; particularly in a world searching for new coherence and at a time when the schools are being criticized precisely for avoiding the essentials by not facing up to fundamental questions and life-giving values.<sup>7</sup>

It is a sign of health when a school tries to organize its activities around an overall orientation, to articulate and identify those values which inspire it. This is a complex undertaking, demanding a labourious effort of reflection and implementation; but it encourages the development of a truly 'educational milieu'.

Moreover, there is nothing surprising or reprehensible in the fact that such a project draws its inspiration from the Christian conception of man and the universe, which is part of a more than thousand year old tradition such as Catholicism. It continues to respond to the expectations of a large part

5. The question of the specific character of the Catholic school was dealt with at some length in our Annual Report for 1978-79. See: Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, *The State and Needs of Education, Report 1978-79*: "The Special Character of the Catholic School", pp.44-60. See also our recommendation to the Ministre de l'Éducation on the Green Paper on Primary and Secondary Education in Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation, *The State and Needs of Education, Report 1977-78*, pp.282-284.

6. See article "Projet Educatif" in Comité catholique, *C'est-à-dire*, p.57.

7. In this context we refer to the study published by the Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation and written by André Naud and Lucien Morin under the title: *Values in School Education*, Québec, 1979.

of the population and is closely linked to all that has gone into the making of the country in which we live. The Catholic school is deeply rooted in our history; it is part of our heritage. Furthermore, does not a school centered on the promotion of spiritual values have a dynamic role to play in a society overwhelmed by economic and materialistic preoccupations?

But the undertaking runs into objections where such a project is carried out by a school which is public and common, open, by its very nature, to all. Some claim that this situation constitutes a case of clear discrimination against those who are unable to accept the school's general orientation. This is exactly the dilemma in which we are placed by the option mentioned at the beginning. And, they specify, that if the Catholic public school is to be characterized by a particular project which creates a specific environment, then it cannot but be discriminatory. This objection is heard more and more often. It would be good to pause a moment here and realize that we are talking about extremely complex and delicate realities involving deep personal convictions.

### *1.2 A School Which Is Not, of itself, Discriminatory*

*Clarifying a Concept.* In a publication entitled *La discrimination*, The Québec Commission of Human Rights attempts a more precise definition of the word discrimination. "Dictionaries" the Commission says, "give two meanings of discrimination. In a neutral sense, it means the act of distinguishing between two objects of concrete thought; and in a negative sense, it refers to segregation. The dictionary, *le petit Robert*, indicates that discrimination is currently taken to mean separating one social group from others by subjecting it to worse treatment. It means the opposite of equality." The Commission sums up as follows: "It is possible, therefore, for us to state that even though the word discrimination may have a neutral or even positive connotation — when referring to the capacity to perceive differences — this is not the meaning given to it in current usage, where the word is ordinarily used in a negative sense."<sup>8</sup> It is the negative connotation which is retained in International as well as Canadian Law. The same is true of the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedom. "According to the Charter", pursues the Commission, "discrimination results from distinction, exclusion or preference based on illicit reasons, and as the effect of nullifying or impairing a person's right to equality in the exercise of his rights and freedoms."<sup>9</sup> Not every distinction, however, tends toward discrimination, in the pejorative sense. One is not necessarily discriminated against because one is a member of a small group whose opinions are not those of the majority. One is, however, subject to discrimination where preference is given to other groups or individuals for unlawful motives. Is this necessarily what happens in a public school which claims to be Catholic?

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8. Commission des droits de la personne, *La discrimination*, Cahier n° 1, Québec, 1980, p.15.

9. *Ibid.* p.18.



*Grasping a Complex Reality.* We cannot be satisfied with a general, theoretical answer. First of all, we must pay attention to those various factors which make a school a Catholic school. There are two factors particularly which could cause problems: first the religious instruction and pastoral animation offered by such a school; second its general atmosphere, the educational environment that normally should be created by an educational project inspired by the Gospel. Moreover, we must be sensitive to the gaps which may exist between the theoretical level of principles and structures and the realities of daily life in a particular school.

*Catholic Religious Instruction and Pastoral Animation.* Is it discriminatory if a public school includes religious instruction in its timetable and offers activities of pastoral animation to those who want them? Formulated in this way the question calls for a negative response, insofar however as the following two conditions are fulfilled. First, no one is exposed to teaching or activities which are not in conformity with his personal convictions. Second, everyone is guaranteed quality teaching or an appropriate educational activity. This being said, it must be admitted that sad situations may still exist. This will be the case, for example, when only a very small number of pupils opt out of religious instruction. We have often been informed of the difficulties this creates for some students when they are separated from their usual class group. Here it is necessary to understand that offering a choice arises only from the desire to make the best possible response to the interests of each pupil, as happens in other disciplines. We think, for example, of individualized teaching, promotion by subject, the options at the end of secondary school, and orthopedagogy. One promotes, then, principles and practices which bring out differences in the treatment and academic progress of students. In this case, it is a question of respecting their rights to religious convictions and freedom of conscience. A procedure instituted so that fundamental rights be respected can hardly be accused of being discriminatory because those who avail themselves of it are placed in the situation of asserting their identity. Note that this difficulty could quite easily be experienced by those who choose Catholic religious instruction where they are in a minority position.

*General Atmosphere and Educational Environment.* But, as we said previously, the Catholic school is not uniquely defined by the fact that it guarantees Catholic religious instruction and pastoral animation. It proposes an educational project whose source of inspiration is the Gospel and which creates a special atmosphere. It follows that the student who, for reasons of conscience, does not follow Catholic religious instruction nor participate in activities of pastoral animation is still surrounded by this atmosphere and immersed in this educational environment. Is not this a subtle violation of conscience?

*Values Universally Shared.* Here again, an effort must be made to be concrete and not to be led astray by mere declarations of principle and easy slogans. Earlier on, when we tried to describe the atmosphere of a Catholic school, we said it was characterized by certain values which are "not the exclusive values of any one religion, but correspond to the basic aspirations of all people. Christians are called upon to apply them with

even stronger motivation''. And we enumerated: "solidarity, justice, honesty, respect for others, freedom, truth", all realities which are universally recognized and commonly accepted.

*A Positive Presentation of Religion.* But this is not the most sensitive issue. It must be added, that in a school which claims to be Catholic, Catholicism is presented in a clearly positive fashion and is understood as being called upon to integrate all dimensions of human existence. For the Catholic school, faith is not relegated to just something private and personal; it must be able to express itself openly and communally in school life. This is fundamentally different from schools where religious instruction, if given, would take up a few periods cut off from the rest of school life. This is what creates difficulties for many of those who promote a secular (laïque) school, but avoid giving the word secular (laïque) the pejorative connotation that it sometimes takes on in other contexts. Such a secular (laïque) option sometimes conveys the notion that religion is something negative which alienates the person and from which one must be liberated. More and more in our milieu, it reduces religion to the sphere of the private, the personal and the intimate. According to some, the Catholic school cannot but be discriminatory, since it presents religion in a favourable light; for Catholics, the purely secular (laïque) school risks being discriminatory because it imposes a reductionist and marginalizing vision of religion. Here we have reached a depth where identities and differences must be asserted. It is, then, of the very essence of pluralism to acknowledge these identities and to respect these differences. In fact, pluralism must not lead to a meaningless levelling. Rather, it demands that the right to be different be promoted, as much for majorities as for minorities. "In the same vein, the Catholic population of Quebec, in seeking a Christian education for its children, is only asking for recognition of its right to be different. And the Catholic school constitutes this recognition of its right to be different. To support such schools is not a reactionary sign on the part of the State, but rather a proof of its acceptance of the right to distinctiveness in a democratic and pluralist society."<sup>10</sup>

Obviously, the non-believer or Moslem enrolled in such a school would not find that it is in perfect harmony with his convictions. Religion would be treated as something meaningful; Catholicism would be presented in a favourable light. It is difficult to avoid a certain amount of tension, such as that experienced by any minority group within a mainstream society. Every society is dependent upon its history. It is part of a culture which conveys a certain number of values, of world views and exerts a major influence on each one.

This is one of the aspects of the human condition from which we cannot escape. Were the whole of society agnostic or Moslem, it would be the Christians who would be called upon to exercise great vigilance in order to preserve their identity and their convictions.

10. Recommendations of the Catholic Committee to the Minister of Education on the *Green Paper on Primary and Secondary Education*. Conseil supérieur de l'Éducation, *The State and Needs of Education 1977-78 Report*, Québec 1979, p.281.

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*A Constant Attention to Daily Life.* This being said, it must be added that the public school which has taken on a confessional orientation must be particularly careful to respect the beliefs of those who do not share its educational project in its entirety. The more dynamic and explicit the school is, the more care it must exercise in this regard. The school would surely be guilty of discrimination if it showed contempt or a lack of consideration for minority groups. However, a school could not be accused of discrimination if it warmly welcomes those who do not share the same opinion as the majority, and where there is a sincere attempt to provide them with substitute activities of good quality. It is then, perhaps, that the school attains the true spirit of pluralism, combining an unconditional welcome and a very great respect for the other.

*Rights to be Reconciled* This becomes clear as we analyse it. We are faced here with a whole series of rights which must be reconciled in the concrete: the right to freedom of conscience which requires respect for the convictions of each person whether these tend toward rejection or acceptance of the religious dimension of man; the right to freedom of expression which entails the possibility of openly manifesting one's profound convictions; the right to education which is essential so that everyone fulfills the fundamental obligation which is at the source of all rights, namely — the duty to fulfill and to liberate oneself. These are essential rights and fundamental freedoms. They cannot be sacrificed. In this, there is no question of majority or minority.

These rights extend, however, into what are called socio-economic rights: the right to have society provide the tools, the means, which permit the realization of the fundamental rights. And here we enter an area where we must, with utmost care, take into account the facts of history and the concrete possibilities of what can be done. No society can become ideal overnight. For example, free education for all at every level would, undoubtedly, be a right to be claimed; but a country where the majority of the population is illiterate and where many die of hunger is unable to assure its immediate implementation: the much more fundamental right to subsistence and literacy must come first. In the same way, one may imagine that a country provides every imaginable type of school so as to equally satisfy the aspirations of everyone: a neutral school, a secular school, a Moslem school, a Catholic school. Except in a situation of extreme affluence, this seems impossible. It is necessary, then, for political prudence to step in with arrangements that meet as well as possible the expectations and respect the rights of each one in the historical and cultural context of each political community. We cannot hope to find a chemically pure solution nor to identify the principles which would allow everything to be settled in the abstract. One has to work in the concrete, in close relationship with the population and without sudden moves which introduce ruptures and break the continuity necessary for social peace. One thing is then imperative: to be attentive to expressed expectations and to facilitate an evolution which provides real choices.

### ***1.3 A School Which Responds to Expectations***

In this context it seems necessary to us to reaffirm the relevance of the Catholic public school in Quebec. It responds to real expectations. Even if they reveal the emergence of other aspirations, the numerous surveys carried out in recent years show that a large proportion of the population retains its preference for the Catholic public school.<sup>11</sup> The hearings which we hold regularly in different regions of the province, generally confirm this perception. The fact that since September 1981, we have received around 60 requests for recognition also confirms this. Undoubtedly, the motivations may differ. One may occasionally encounter contradictions. But the bare fact remains: the various milieux have indicated their choice through proper channels and we must take this into account.

However, there are other expectations. Great changes are required to meet them. We believe this could only happen if the community is offered real and concrete choices.

## **2. An Evolution Needed : to Offer Real Choices**

### ***2.1 Clear Choices***

We believe that one of the major obstacles to the harmonious evolution of the school system in recent years has been the absence of clear, precise and, above all, real choices. The Catholic school exists. It is well known. We know what it conveys. Of course, it wears different faces: the little primary country school is not the same as the big comprehensive high school in Montreal. Both of them however exist; some people see this as an advantage, others as an inconvenience. The same is true of Protestant schools. These have particular characteristics fashioned by the historical context and the interaction between various Protestant communities and denominations. Alongside these confessional schools is the idea of schools for "others" which do not as yet exist and whose concrete image is not yet clear. When various surveys ask people to make a choice, there is great ambiguity: people have to choose from hypotheses, from definitions, rather than from already existing models. In order to respond to new needs, it is urgent that these schools for "others" be allowed to emerge.

The first condition for this is that the legislator define just what these "other", non-confessional schools could be; that he outline their principal characteristics, their general framework. Will they have a special *régime pédagogique*? Would moral instruction be compulsory? Would they have a place for religious instruction and, if so, what type of religious

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11. The most recent study is that by Guy Pelletier and Claude Lessard: *La population québécoise face à la restructuration scolaire*, Guérin 1982. In its recommendations on Confessionality in August, 1981, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation refers to several surveys. See: *La confessionalité scolaire*, April 1981, Appendix VIII pp.67-81. For its part, the Catholic Committee has analysed several surveys. See: *Éléments de lecture de la situation confessionnelle scolaire à partir des sondages*, December, 1981.

instruction? Would complementary activities be available? Would special guarantees be given to various minority groups? So many important questions — many others could have been raised — which must be answered before informed choices can be made.

One of the great accomplishments of the White Paper on school reform is to have addressed these questions and to have put forward a certain number of characteristics which should be found in every public school, regardless of its educational project. This is a very important item to be clarified.

## ***2.2 Realistic Choices***

Clarity, however, is not enough; it is also important that the options offered be realistic ones. We mean by this that they must meet the expectations of the community, that they be really suitable, that they must everywhere encourage openness and dialogue. It would, for example have been possible to define two clearly identifiable types of public school: a Catholic or Protestant public school with compulsory religious instruction for all and no substitute activities for those seeking exemption; alternatively, a non-confessional school providing compulsory moral instruction for all with no possibility of substituting religious instruction. The option would have been clear. But, because of its radical nature, there would be the risk of arousing violent passions and involving us all in a real school war. It has been said and often repeated, that the people of Quebec are very tolerant and ask only that the aspirations of each one be met in the best way possible. The debate which will be touched off in most communities following the publication of the White Paper, will be much calmer since everyone will have the guarantee of seeing their fundamental rights respected in a community school that provides an option between religious instruction and moral instruction. All that remains to be decided is the general orientation of the school, its educational project. Of course, much is at stake here and great care must be exercised. There is, however, no threat to freedom of conscience nor to the services which make it possible.

## ***2.3 Choices to be Made Democratically***

Once the reasonable options have been defined by the legislator, it is up to the milieu itself to choose which type of school it wishes to have. In so doing, one will render even greater justice to the diversity of the milieux. One will encourage the population to take charge of itself. And one will better respect the right of parents to choose the kind of education they want for their children. In effect, the State cannot replace in all respects the family, whose role remains fundamental and whose responsibilities and rights are prior to those of the State with regard to the development of the child.

So that the choice of the type of school be made under the best possible conditions, it is even more necessary that the decision making process and the discussions which accompany it be guided by precise rules and known



in advance by all. Let us note, among other things, the importance of ensuring objective information, of establishing methods of consultation, of setting aside sufficient time for reflection and of defining the roles of the various partners (school boards, school principals, school committees, parents, teachers, etc.). In conformity with the principle which we alluded to a moment ago, it seems essential to us to give decisive weight to the views of parents with children in the school. It might also be wise not to consider decisions once taken as irrevocable and to make sure that they be periodically revised, say, every five years. This would provide the flexibility required to respond within an optimum time to changing expectations and new needs.<sup>12</sup>

## ***2.4 Choices to be Recognized Officially***

Once a community has chosen the orientation it wants for its school, that choice must be recognized and made official. This, it seems to us, is the meaning of the term "status". The Assemblée des Évêques du Québec has written quite correctly in this regard: "An official status indicates clearly and quickly what type of service can be obtained from an organization. It furnishes clear information to which anyone can refer. It gives an element of strength, of longevity and of permanence to the project: in giving it a status it seals a commitment. Where it exists, a status makes things clear for everyone. It allows debate to be quickly settled because it refers to orientations which are desired and recognized clearly and officially."<sup>13</sup> It seems that at times a somewhat mythical meaning was given, in our milieu, to the concept of status which reduced it to nothing but a legal label unrelated to concrete reality. Essentially, the status does nothing but recognize that a Catholic school project exists and that commitments have officially been made to carry it out. This provides clarification for parents when they have to choose a school for their children. It also shows to the authority of the school as well as to the whole of the personnel, the orientation that the school has chosen and that they must carefully respect. The effects of such clarification can only be beneficial, allowing as they do, for an ordered and civilized resolution of many conflicts. More and more, over the years, the various milieux must come to feel really responsible for the school and its educational project. In any case, recognition serves to put the seal on the choice of those involved and to authenticate the validity of the steps taken.

## ***2.5 Choices to be Respected***

It is not enough, however, to register or to recognize the choices which have been made democratically by the various milieux. These choices must

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12. In its recent declaration on the school system, the Assemblée des évêques du Québec has extensively developed the issue of school democracy. See: Assemblée des Évêques du Québec, *The School System and the Religious Convictions of the People*, 18 March 1982, particularly nos. 17 to 24.

13. *Ibid.* no. 13.

be respected by making sure they are carried out. This raises the whole question of the means to be made available and of the services to be provided. To avoid any ambiguity, the law must be clear on this issue and must provide the essential juridical guarantees.

What is basically at issue? It is to insure that in all schools of Quebec there will be full respect for the fundamental freedoms of each individual. This means that moral instruction and religious instruction of high quality will be offered everywhere. But, what is also at issue here, is to allow that the educational project which has been drawn up by the school and which has received official sanction, may be pursued and implemented.

One easily foresees all that is required; for example, sufficient time devoted to religious instruction, adequately trained teachers, sufficient pedagogical support and provision for high quality pastoral animation. But, one must go further. It is important that at all levels of school administration (school, school board, Ministry of Education) individuals or bodies be in charge of confessionality and that they be given precise powers and adequate resources.

The Committee has already begun its reflection on this point and it has been able to observe that the White Paper approaches it head on. After further examination of the government's project, the Committee, in conformity with its mandate, will be in a position to indicate more exactly what seems to be essential if the expectations of the whole Catholic population are to be met and its rights guaranteed.

### **Conclusion : an Exercise in Pluralism**

This year, our review of the situation has taken on a particular colour. It has been strongly conditioned by the political circumstances and the expectation of an overall project of reorganization. We see two points as important. First of all, to re-emphasize the relevance of the Catholic school, while recognizing its limitations! It cannot suit everyone, even though it be careful to respect each person's basic freedoms and to avoid all discrimination. It remains, nevertheless, firmly rooted in our milieu and fulfils the wishes of a large part of the population. Secondly, we felt it essential to insist on the urgency of encouraging the expression of democratic choices likely to bring forth new types of schools and to introduce into our school system a necessary diversity sensitive to the particularities of the various milieux.

The coming year will be marked, without doubt, by a more fundamental debate on school reorganization. Where are we going in terms of confessionality if not towards an exercise in pluralism? There is much talk these days about pluralism, but it is sometimes in order to attack those who do not share our opinions. Is not real pluralism that which helps each person to become aware of his own identity and that of others in order to find, through discussion and dialogue, practical ways of cooperating that allow each one to feel respected and to find fulfillment? This is the kind of dialogue which must now be carried on. We wished to participate in it at once by

assessing the events of the past year and by reaffirming our deep conviction: there is a place for a Catholic school within a public school system which has to become more and more diversified.



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