



20:20 VISION?



And he said to them, **'Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom new things as well as old.'** Matthew 15:32

A THINKPIECE...

*OFFERED BY MARIA B. RIMMER, NATIONAL PRESIDENT,
THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS, SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES,
AS THE ASSOCIATION ANTICIPATES ITS TWENTIETH BIRTHDAY:
AN INVITATION TO ALL OUR SUBSCRIBERS TO REFLECT ON HOW
CATSC'S WORK TO REPRESENT ITS GRASS ROOTS MEMBERS IN THE
CLASSROOM OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS IS BEST PROFILED AND
COMMUNICATED...*

In April this year, The Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools and Colleges, CATSC, will celebrate its twentieth birthday, happily with the highest number of members ever in its history. CATSC was formed in April 1996 and officially launched by Cardinal Basil Hume at Westminster. The Cardinal referred to the **rich tradition** which was being carried on by the Association. He commended the Association to all teachers who through their **commitment, expertise and experience** *'may play a part in the Church's mission to the world so that children and parents will benefit from your vocation.. I am confident that the Association will most ably represent you, enable you to work, act and pray together, for the benefit of Catholic Education'*.

Formed in 1996 to refresh and renew previous precious provision for Catholic educators, The Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools and Colleges took up the challenge to offer a powerful,

representative and meaningful organisation, fashioned from the amalgamation of two other associations, namely the Association of Catholic Schools & Colleges (formerly the Conference of Catholic Secondary Schools & Colleges), the Catholic Teachers Federation with the support of the Association of Religious in Education. These had each been in existence on behalf of Catholic teachers, schools and colleges in the independent and state maintained sectors across all of the phases including Special and Higher Education ~ the oldest since the 1890s and the early 1900s. CATSC's journey, then, is clearly **rich with the reiterations and re-capturings** of time-honoured legacies. We are mindful of these legacies in all that we do, and we are mindful also of our duty to continue to fulfill in and for the 21st Century the remit offered by Cardinal Basil Hume, which I cited at the start of this Thinkpiece. We bear a responsibility to continue to serve by "*playing our part in the Church's mission to the world*" in order that, as the Cardinal said, "*children and parents will benefit from our vocation*". Cardinal Hume went on to express his confidence in the Association, stating that he felt it would "*most ably represent you, enable you to work, act and pray together, for the benefit of Catholic Education*".

And so, as The Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools Teachers, Schools & Colleges is on the brink of its twentieth anniversary, its Council Officers reflect on their heritage, their roles, and on their responsibility to ensure that CATSC remains an organisation which **enables, works and acts for the benefit of Catholic education**. As we look to the future - and, specifically, the next twenty years, our breath is taken away by the changes - and the sheer pace of those changes - that have been ushered into our world, and many of them into our classrooms, across the first twenty years of CATSC. Can you remember?? Mobile 'phones the size (and weight!) of bricks; "personal" computers - being then usually the domain of the privileged - taking up almost the whole of a physical desk space; blackboards, not whiteboards; terrestrial television still the norm; "Google", "selfie sticks", iPads, iPhones, "Facebook", "Skype", "Instagram", "SnapChat", Apps, "Powerpoint Share" and driverless cars not even in our vocabulary.

The point of this Thinkpiece? How should The Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools and Colleges best plan its media and communications strategy to sustain the organisation in its

work for Catholic Educators over its next 20 years?! We rely 100% on membership subscriptions; we serve an ever wider audience of Catholic educators, given the exponential and much-needed growth in the number of para-professionals and support workers in our schools. To echo a well-known paradigm - *Shift Happens!!* Can CATSC afford to ignore this shift? How does CATSC best invest its members' subscriptions to respond, reflect and relate to the shifting times, whilst offering that same, still voice of reason, care, concern and support?

CATSC's provision includes a confidential Helpline; a Handbook; two annual Conferences; regular editions of its in-house newsletter "*The Vine*", and the co-funding of the publication of 5 editions each year of this Journal "*Networking*". In funding *Networking*, CATSC currently expends **50% of our members' subscriptions, and is the largest sponsor organisation of any other sponsoring group**. At the same time, CATSC **struggles** to keep its website and twitter accounts up to date, with meaningful links, uploads and news, as they are media platforms **manned only by volunteers**, almost all of whom have day (and evening!) jobs working in our schools and colleges. CATSC wants to ensure its **credibility, currency, connectedness and constancy** by remaining a body that those at the grass roots, working in our schools and colleges see as providing ready, handy "go to" media platforms, making meaningful and useful links to partner organisations, such as CAFOD, and sister organisations, such as CYMFED. My wish is that CATSC remains connected and in touch with those whose work touches the lives of the parents and children Cardinal Hume was so keen to see benefit from CATSC's work...

SO – PLEASE LET US KNOW: What speaks to you most powerfully and effectively in our work to support you? Is there an offer we make that you want to suggest that we discontinue to make? Our Conferences? The *Networking* Journal? Our Helpline? Our website? Our Handbook? Our Twitter account? And - which of these would you advise us to invest in for your future, and that of your fellow colleagues, please? Is there another service you would like to recommend that we try to provide?

As we work with vigour to provide support and stimulation for Catholic Educators in England & Wales in a contemporary context, we contemplate the best way to invest our members' subscriptions

to ensure **the next 20 years** will be successful. We absolutely recognise the need for any organisation seeking to be authentic, credible, responsive and accessible to its members - and potential new members - to have a strong, agile media platform, and look with admiration at the fabulous provision made now by The Vatican, and which our own Holy Father, Pope Francis, uses so ably and powerfully!

CATSC is here for you, and wants to hear from you.. Our organisation has more members now than ever before. We seek earnestly to carry on the work of those people who formed the first associations, to unite their endeavours, to provide a united front and effort on behalf of the Catholic community in England & Wales. In many respects, yes, these are different times in which we are operating, but our core function is still alive within us:

- to respond on behalf of our Catholic schools and colleges;
- to give guidance and support to each other;
- to provide where required politically, personally, pastorally, academically, spiritually, professionally;
- to speak with one voice in matters affecting Catholic education, that are within the Association's remit and competence.

It is thus that CATSC - with your support - has helped to take Catholic Education into this [no longer new] millennium, seeking at all times, and in all actual and virtual places and spaces, to maintain the professional enthusiasm for its mission - characterised by those who had the same interest at heart over a hundred and twenty years ago.

Let CATSC know your thoughts - we would love to hear from YOU!

Visit our website www.catsc.org



Or go to our twitter account

@CATSCEW # *keeping it real*