The Catholic Identity Profile of Marymount College, Hove

Catholic College Profile

This comprehensive survey on the Catholic Identity of Marymount College examines the level of support for Catholic school identity; it assesses belief in God and whether the college is a good place to grow closer to God, as well as a number of other features of Catholic school identity.

This summary provides a snapshot of the findings of the survey.

The research sample frame in Marymount College consists of the students in year five and six, students in secondary education, school staff, and the parents. In total, we drew a sample of 685 from the 1086 potential respondents. Each respondent completed at least one of the surveys in a valid way. This results in a general sample ratio of 63,1%. If we disregard the parents in this calculation and only consider the school population, then 596 of 636 school members took part in the research, which makes a ratio of 93,7%.

The results from the 685 respondents from Marymount College, Hove on the Catholic identity 2012 survey generally indicate that the building blocks for its recognition, preservation and nourishment are well in place. Below we present the summary and conclusion of the results in the form of strengths and challenges according to the data gathered.

**Strengths**

The following information draws from the results of the survey as well as reflects on the positive actions that are being put into place as a result of the work in this project.

In 2013, Marymount will continue to focus on building these strengths but also address some of the challenges that we face as a Catholic College in a largely secular society. Listed below are the stated strengths highlighted in the survey.

1. Marymount College’s Catholic identity rests soundly on its strong faith profile. More than 90% of adults say they have faith in Christ, with more than 40% characterising their faith is strong (see Figure B.3). Students also profess a high level of faith, with almost 85% characterising themselves as believers and 20% saying they believe strongly.

2. As we might expect, then, this strong belief translates into support for Catholic faith and for the Catholic identity of schools. A full 87,4% of adults would say that the Catholic faith deserves their support (see Figure B.4), and 86,1% would specifically support the Catholic identity of schools (see Figure C.1). Support is slightly less adamant among students, though it is very strong: 63,1% support Catholic faith and 72,3% support the Catholic identity of schools. These very high levels of support show that the community at Marymount College remain dedicated to the school’s Catholicity, even within the modern, plural context.
3. Adults at Marymount College also exhibit strong prayer lives. 41.1% say they pray regularly, with another 46.4% praying from time to time (see Figure B.3). And though students are less likely to pray regularly, a very high percentage have some relationship to prayer. Among students, a considerable 28.7% pray regularly, with another 50% praying sometimes. This openness to prayer is key to preserving and strengthening a strong Catholic identity at Marymount College.

4. It is also worth noting that students are extremely open to further celebration of faith within the school context, with many stating that they are specifically open to more prayer at school.

5. Both adults and students are very likely to characterise their peers as believers in God (see Figure C.2). It comes as no surprise, then, that most respondents believe that Marymount College is a good place to get to know God better (see Figures C.3 and C.4).

   The results from the PCB Scale, Melbourne Scale, and the Victoria Scale also suggest that Marymount College has strong support structures in place to retain and strengthen its Catholic identity and to build upon it.

6. Both adults and students exhibit strong scores in Post-critical Belief (adults: 5.25/7; students: 4.98/7), a key component in building up the school’s Catholic identity (see Figures D.1-D.4). In addition, it is encouraging that External Critique is rejected overall (adults: 2.90/7; students: 2.69/7).

7. Although Post-Critical Belief drops from 5.49/7 to 4.77/7 from years 5-6 to years 7-8, it is encouraging the scores remain stable and even grow slightly after the initial fall.

8. Adult scores on the Melbourne Scale are very strong. Adults value and prefer Recontextualisation to any other school typology, and they see a high level of Confessionality in the school environment.

9. Both adult and student scores on the Victoria Scale show that the Dialogue School model is strongly valued at Marymount College. In addition, student and adult scores on the current level are distributed remarkably similarly.

10. Even in the ideal level, students show a strong affinity for the Dialogue School model. Despite their very high level of approval for the Colourful School, this may indicate that the building blocks are in place to solidify the use of Christian dialogue as the primary means of relating to faith in a diverse context.

   These strengths show that Marymount College already has many of the building blocks necessary for preserving and developing its Catholic identity in place. It is particularly encouraging that adults are already so open to the programs of Recontextualisation and Dialogue, which are reinforced by their strong Post-Critical Belief. Students have already benefitted from these messages greatly, and have particularly begun to internalise the importance of Dialogue. Though there are some areas in which students do not agree with the vision adults have for the school, through conversation and openness, the school can continue to live out its Catholic Christian mission. While student populations turn over every few years, adults usually remain, providing stability and continuity. NECSIP maintains that Recontextualisation and Dialogue present the best chances for a school to strengthen and preserve its Catholic identity within the constantly changing cultural context, and it is therefore encouraging to see that adults prioritise these methods.

The above snapshot is a sample of the survey results and findings from this project. Our work in this area has continued into 2013. If you wish to discuss the full report with the Principal and the Assistant Principal, Religious Identity and Mission, you are most welcome to make an appointment.

Report on the National Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project (NECSIP), issued in September 2012 by the Centre for Academic Teacher Training of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), under the supervision of prof. dr. Didier Pollefeyt.