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**EFFECTS OF PASTORAL CARE ON THE SOCIAL WELLBEING AND  
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY**

Fr. Jude C. Zimoha

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EFFECTS OF PASTORAL CARE ON THE SOCIAL WELLBEING AND ACADEMIC  
ACHIEVEMENT OF CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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of

THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

at

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

New York

by

Fr. Jude C Zimoha

Date Submitted: January 30, 2023

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **EFFECTS OF PASTORAL CARE ON THE SOCIAL WELLBEING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY**

Fr. Jude C Zimoha

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of pastoral care on the personal social wellbeing and academic achievement of high school students, as perceived by the staff and students in Catholic High schools. This study is a qualitative case study research design. Purposive sampling was used to select one Catholic private co-educational high school in a large metropolitan city in the northeastern United States. The population for this study comprises all students in the Catholic High Schools. The sample of this study was comprised of 21 participants who were purposely selected and included 12 students from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades, five staff members, which included the principal, assistant principal, chairperson for guidance/counseling, coordinator for religious ministry and activities, and the director for the department of communication. In addition, four parents were included in this study. The two procedures that were used for collecting data for this study were focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The focus group discussion was used to gather information from the students on the effects of pastoral care on their wellbeing and academic achievements, while the in-depth interviews were used to gather information on the perceptions of the school staff members and parents about pastoral care in the schools. Data from the interviews and discussions were transcribed and analyzed thematically. Findings from this study reveal that pastoral care determines the ethos and culture of Catholic schools, and that pastoral

care programs can increase students' personal social wellbeing and academic achievements.

## **DEDICATION**

To my beloved late parents: Ezinna Jude Chukwuemeka and Nneoma Monica Ada, who were both committed school leaders and formators of young students.

And to all high school students who aspire to have a strong and positive foundation for their future lives.

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement has long served as a primary metric to assess the success or failure of schooling. However, mere achievement tests are unlikely to guarantee a holistic and stable future life for students who would grow to become adult members of the society. Their achievement tests may help them to be intellectually updated, but many of them may end up being bad citizens in a democratic country where peace, equity, and progress are highly valued. Perhaps, the school administrators and teachers should always remember as Ernest L. Boyer (1993) stated that, in the centuries ahead students in the nation's schools will be judged not by their performance on a single test, but by the quality of their lives. The above statement may help to explain why the education of young students should be done in such a way that there is a balance between their academic achievements and their - social, emotional, spiritual, moral, behavioral aspects of their lives, and their personal development. Pastoral care in schools has been identified as the extra-curricular school program that can ensure balance in the holistic formation of young people as both students and human persons.

The secondary school period is a very important stage in the formation of the persona of individual teenage students. Also, at this stage, students absorb learning that can truly impact their present lives and future careers. During this period, teenage students consciously and practically contribute to the effort of their school authorities to lay the foundation for their immediate and future holistic development as human beings. It is important to note that the success of a school in helping the students to consciously and practically contribute to their foundation building lies greatly on the effectiveness of that school. According to Dronkers & Robert (2003), the effectiveness of public and

private schools has been the topic of a large number of studies in education, science, sociology, and economics (p. 3). However, there is the consensus that the effectiveness of a school depends on a number of variables. Such variables include but are not limited to: the quality of administration in a school, the condition for teaching and learning, the school climate, students' characteristics, and the type of relationships that exist between teachers and students, and among the students. Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore (1982) analyzed the effectiveness differences between public and Catholic schools in the USA, with Coleman and Hoffer (1987) as well as Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) providing comprehensive follow-up study of the same differences (p.7). Findings from the Dronkers et al., (2003) reveal that private schools, whether Catholic-funded or government-funded are more effective than the public schools with issues concerning quality, condition, and relationships in schools. The major explanation for this higher effectiveness is the more positive school climate of the private schools, in comparison to the public schools (p. 2). Based on these findings, my effort in this current study will be to explore if the presence of pastoral care programs in a Catholic school result to more school effectiveness in terms of development of the students' social wellbeing and academic achievements. In addition to the social wellbeing and academic achievement of students, there is also an increase in the clarion call for school authorities, administrators, and teachers to develop holistic students who display aspects of moral uprightness, resilience, emotional, spiritual, social and ethical competences, problem-solving skills and autonomy in the contemporary learning institutions.

It should be noted that as teenagers, the secondary school students pass through countless experiences in their day-to-day attendance to school in pursuit of academic

achievements, and their journey through life. These experiences arise from their struggles, personal decisions, failures, fears, relationships, peer group influences, behavior problems and other experiences they acquire in the learning environment and in association with other people in the society. It can then be argued that a school may have a beautiful environment with qualified teachers and approved curricular and teaching strategies, yet fail to succeed in lifting the students higher academically because something is missing in the administration. Palardy (2019) observed that students' non-academic attributes, such as forms of engagement, dispositions, and social and emotional skills, are associated with a range of outcomes—including academic performance. Similarly, it can be said that many problems that are non-academic in nature (like daily negative life experiences or remembrance of past ones) may be strong enough to obstruct the mental focus and academic progress of students. Within the context of this current study, academic progress refers to the academic performance of individual students in the assessment scores from one year to the next, when compared to the school level. However, Sibley, J, et al, (2015), consider academic progress as “a normative measure as this measures students’ ability to complete their studies within the time frame required by their course of study”.

In the face of the various pathologies that beseech the life of secondary students in their academic journeys, many school leaders struggle with how to manage the non-academic and behavioral problems of their students. For instance, Riak (2007) stated that:

There have been frequent complaints about the decline in the standard of discipline in many schools today, despite all the effort by the school authorities to enforce discipline....While the general public is deeply concerned about the



problem, it has not been able yet to identify the basic cause or to find a satisfactory remedy to the problem (p.16).

Consequently, many school leaders react to unwanted student behaviors, with the strategies of disciplinary measures such as punishments and suspensions of the involved student/s from school, and sometimes if a student's problem is perceived to be caused by a toxic home environment, the authorities would facilitate the removal of the student from such toxic home environment. As useful as these strategies may be, mere punishments or suspensions alone, or removing teenage students from toxic homes are inadequate in improving the social wellbeing, creating a safe learning environment, or supporting learning for those students who are affected. Instead, there may be better and more proactive approach to help the involved students. Hatton and Smith (1995) believe that a strong strategy for fostering students' discipline is to engage with another person in a way which encourages talking with, questioning, in order to examine, plan, implement, and evaluate. It is a technique which can be structured to provide a safe environment within which self-revelation can take place. This approach explains the proactive nature of pastoral care programs when it comes to dealing with students' problems and behavior issues. However, the extent of cooperation in, the success, and the efficacy of the pastoral care program like any other school program, largely depends on how the students perceive and understand the importance, the aims, and goals of this program in their schools, and how effective the school leadership is in this area. It is important to note that when the teachers and students correctly understand the purpose for the presence of pastoral care in their schools, they may be able to appreciate the effort of their schools for both the students and the entire school community.

Therefore, this chapter will uncover the meaning and background of the concepts “Pastoral Care” (the theoretical framework). It will also state the problems that prompted this study, the purpose of this study, the significance of study, the connection of study to the Vincentian mission in education, the research questions, and the definition of terms.

### **Statement of the Problem**

At the kindergarten and primary levels, kids are very impressionable, vulnerable, and malleable (Karantzis, 2018). Consequently, parental and school care is very involved. For instance, parents drop their primary level children off to school and pick them after school, and have their eyes always on them, and at all times using the strategies of rewards and denial to strengthen good behaviors and control bad behaviors. In schools, the authorities implement various forms of safety measures to protect young students from both self-harm and external harms. At this young stage also, decisions are made for the kids by their parents and teachers with little or zero resistance from them. Hence, at this level life and schooling seem to be moving smoothly for the young students. However, these young primary kids would one day migrate to the more complex environment of a secondary school, where they may face various and different situations as students.

The secondary school level is a very precarious stage in the life and academic journey of adolescent students. At this stage, students are often seen to be curious and experimental with whatever opportunities life offers them (outside their academic pursuits). Eccles and Roeser (2011) observed that:

- (1) Adolescents actively create their own identities through their social interactions,
- (2) the nature of the social interactions they can have are influenced

by the worlds they inhabit, (3) these worlds are shaped in part by external structures in which they are allowed to participate and in part by their own choices, (4) these identities have implications for all aspects of their intellectual and social-emotional developments. (Eccles & Roeser, 2011, as cited in Karantzis, 2018, p. 236)

Consequently, at this stage students experience a variety of experiences.

Therefore, every event that happens around them, and every relationship or social interactions they make, influences them as they grow into adulthood. For instance, it is not a hidden fact that the secondary school students often get involved with negative experiences and behaviors such as: bullying (physical, verbal, cyber), abuse of drugs and tobacco substances by young students, early teenage pregnancies and abortions by the girls, various negative social networking, cultism, other risky behaviors and forms of radicalizations that are often visible through youthful exuberances. There is also an epidemic of gone violence by teenagers which has resulted into several school shootings, thereby bringing untimely death to young students, and grief to their families and communities. Then of course, there are major but lingering negative attitudes and behaviours exhibited by students in their schools, and which the teachers deal with every school day of the week. Such negative attitudes include but not limited to apathy, tardiness, disrespect and absenteeism, fighting, behaviours that signal violence and racism. These problems are witnessed more in the secondary schools, and also pose major challenges for teachers and the entire school communities.

As reflected in Pozniak (2018), Margret Banks - an assistant head teacher with more than 26 years of experience, observed that “students can require support for a

variety of reasons: bereavement, parental separation, domestic abuse, and toxic home life”. Moreover, there are students whose problems are more of psychological, social, and spiritual in nature. There is no doubt that any of the above mentioned behaviors and problems would greatly affect the smooth academic journey of students, and in some cases they can be instrumental to the termination or early withdrawal from an academic journey. All the above reports indicate the fact that indeed students have many problems which are either their own making or problems which are beyond their control. They also reveal the fact that the moral decadence going on among the youths and adolescents in their various secondary schools are becoming alarming, and that the moral standard expected of the students has diminished.

Hence, it can be said that the school’s environment can help to expose students with behavioral problems or tendencies which can make the school an unsafe learning environment, treat to the staff, and the entire school community. In addition, if these problems are neglected, they can actually affect the smooth academic learning processes of the involved students, resulting into low grades in both their internal (school terms) and external (state annual) examinations. Hence, there is the need to implement effective pastoral care in the single and coeducational secondary schools in order to improve safe learning environments and educational standards.

As Ayorinde and Ariguzo (2020), opined “high incidence of corruption in the society will lead to development of bad character among youths if concerted remedies are not put in place (p. 186). This is another important reason why pastoral care programs are needed in the secondary schools as part of the concerted effort to make sure that students, who are the future leaders, do not go through their learning processes without having the

virtues of moral discipline and ethical uprightness inculcated into them as they learn and grow into adulthood. This effort is very necessary because, if the students are to be educated only in the mind and not in moral, they will be a menace to the society.

Therefore there is great need to address the various students' pathologies, even as efforts are regularly made to ensure their academic successes. There is no doubt that the government, society, and families would prefer to witness holistically developed students who while attending school, and after they leave school, would maintain morally upright lives, and are economically useful to themselves, their families, and the society as opposed to those who would become menace to the society.

It may be plausible to state that, putting effective pastoral care programs in the secondary schools may go a long way to ensure the holistic formation of students by making positive impacts on their lives. Hence, this study will examine care in secondary schools even though it is practiced differently by different schools. Using one Catholic coeducational high school, I examined how the caring attitudes and relationships given to the students affect their academic and personal social wellbeing. I also analyzed how pastoral care in the secondary school helps in the development of the personal social wellbeing of students, thus leading to the academic achievement and holistic formation of today's students, who would turn into tomorrow's adults with the sense of maturity, freedom, accountability, and responsibility in all facets of life.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to understand pastoral care and its relationship with personal social wellbeing and academic achievement of secondary students in private Catholic secondary schools. As already indicated above, the secondary school students

face several challenges as they journey through life and their academic phases. Most notable is the fact that: students can harm themselves (e.g., suicide and other forms of self-harm), students can harm their fellows (e.g., bullying, threats of any kind), and students can also be harmed by others (e.g., physical, emotional, mental abuse, sexual abuse or rape). Therefore, students' problems can emanate from either within or outside of their individual selves, which may then affect their journey as students. Effective pastoral care program in the secondary schools has been promoted as an important non-academic program that is capable of - not only supporting students in their natural progression in life as human persons, but also facilitates the development of their self-esteem, social skills and ability to cope with stress. Moreover, it is important that students feel safe and valued in their school environment and pastoral care can help to ensure this. According to Best (1995), the success of the pastoral care in any school lies in:

The person of the teacher whose relationship with an individual child or young person is at the core of the system, offering advice, support, guidance and reassurance on a daily basis, helping them make progress academically, but also socially, providing the link between home and school, referring serious problems to experts who can help, and knowing and valuing the child or young person as an individual irrespective of background, age or ability. As one head teacher explained, 'it all comes down to relationships; if you get those right, all else will follow. If you don't then you won't achieve very much of anything'. (Best, 1995, p.5, as cited in Purdy, 2011, p.15)

It is public knowledge that the Catholic High schools operate strong pastoral strategies in the day-to-day administration of their schools. Therefore, this study specifically seeks to

discover how the participating Catholic high school strategizes pastoral care for the personal social development and academic achievement of their students.

### **The Concept of Pastoral Care**

The Concept “Pastoral Care” originates from the Latin religious word “pastor” which means “shepherd of God’s people”. Consequently, pastoral care refers to the different functions or services usually executed by a pastor which majorly revolves around the care for the spiritual wellbeing of the flock (i.e., the people) whether as individuals or as a group. Therefore, in its essence, pastoral care is about the wellbeing and care or cure for souls. This is precisely what distinguishes it from social work (which deals more with the reconciliation of people’s broken horizontal relationships) and other counseling efforts. However, with the passage of time, this pastor-flock relationship was imitated by the heads of schools and the teachers in their relationship with their students. Analogically, therefore, the heads of schools and teachers became as it were, the pastors (shepherds), while the students are their flocks. Perhaps, it is safer to say that traces of pastoral care for students have always been present in the secondary schools, even without a technical or proper nomenclature attached to such caring efforts.

In tracing the history of pastoral care in schools, Ribbins (1985), claimed that the term “pastoral care” has been in use in the secondary schools since the early 1940s. Presumably, by this time, many scholars were voicing their opinions on how to improve school relationships. In agreement with Ribbins, Power (1991) wrote that:

Oral evidence from long-serving teachers at schools where I conducted fieldwork, places the widespread categorization of these 'non-academic' activities within the 1960s. Precise dates are hard to come by, and the situation is further complicated

by the prior existence of features that have only subsequently been categorized as 'pastoral'.

Therefore, although many teachers have early recollections of taking 'form' groups, or school assemblies, the classification of these activities as part of 'pastoral care' took place much later. However, according to Hughes (1980), it was not until the 1970s that the term "pastoral care" began to appear in the educational literature. Consequently, the first books which appeared on how to perform pastoral care in schools were: Michael Marland's *Pastoral Care* (1974). In this book, Marland introduced the term "pastoral care" into the school administration, and set its working definition as, '*looking after the total welfare of the pupil*'. Other earlier authors who wrote after Marland were: Keith Blackburn (*The Tutor*, 1975) and Douglass Hamblin (*The teacher and pastoral care*, 1978). These authors made important contributions to the ideas and practice of pastoral care in schools. Other authors like Jarvis and Rubis (1977) and Lang (1977) drew attention to a number of problems about pastoral care which include lack of clarity in its meaning and also emphasis on structure at the expense of practice.

Similarly, Dooley (1980) and Hughes (1980) reported that the use of the concept pastoral care in education was unclear. They argued that pastoral care has its root in New Testament and is meant to be a concept of dependence which leaves little room for the exercise of freedom of choice between alternative courses of action, essential to moral actions, and thus does not square well with the goal of education as rational and moral autonomy. Pastoral care is concerned with promoting pupils' persona and social development and fostering positive attitudes - through the quality of teaching and learning, through the nature of relationship among pupils, teachers and other adults.



Additionally, it focuses on monitoring students overall progress, academic and personal social wellbeing, through specific pastoral structures and through non-academic activities and school ethos.

Therefore, in 1982, The National Association of Pastoral Care Education (NAPCE) was founded and developed into a significant professional organization. This organization or association published journals that reflected the growing amount of good and innovative practices in the area of pastoral care and encouraged innovations and developments within the schools. Hence, the term came into greatest use in schools (Robbins & Best, 1985).

This study hinges on two theories, which are: the Clinebell's Holistic Approach (2011) and Lezotte's Effective Schools Model (1991). Holistic Approach theory considers how the pastoral counseling can help individual persons to achieve personal and spiritual growth through the integration of the seven life dimensions. There is also the theory of effective school model by Lawrence Lezotte (1991). Lezotte's theory examines the seven correlates of effective schools. These theories will be discussed in chapter two and will bring out the proactive nature of pastoral care, which is a big part of this study.

### **Significance of the Study**

The central effort associated with pastoral care for students, is the attitude of caring relationships that should exist between the administrators, teachers and students, and among the students. As stated in Hussain, N. et al (2013),

Literature reveals that a positive relationship between the teacher and students is much needed and becoming fundamental in the holistic development of students

(Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Many studies have pointed out the importance of understanding the development of high quality teacher-student relationships on children's and adolescents' outcomes (Hoy & Spero, 2005). Positive teacher-student relationships are high in closeness like mutual respect, caring, and warmth between teachers and students (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hughes, Gleason, & Zhang, 2005; Pianta, 2001). P. 2

Therefore, it is the conviction of many effective school leaders that, having a program like the pastoral care in their schools, which targets the wellbeing and care for students, can help to build up the much needed positive relationships in the schools. So & Watkins (2005) stated that the quality of these relationships remains important for positive student outcomes. In addition to positive academic outcomes, pastoral care in the school prepares the students for an overall success in life. In fact, having an effective program for the students' wellbeing like the pastoral care in schools has the potential to address most of the negativities that are associated with the life of teenage students and still nurture an environment of opportunity, resilience and respect. Therefore, this study will be of significance because:

Its findings may indicate the effects of pastoral care on school ethos which may be necessary for the promotion of students' personal social wellbeing and academic achievement. The findings of this study might be of great assistance to the principals, teachers, students, school boards, stakeholders, ministry of education, the Catholic Church and other secondary schools, parent teacher associations (PTA), and the public. All the above groups may each be inspired in their unique roles to get more involved and think of how to improve the school's pastoral care effort, with the ultimate goal of

improving the various aspects of the school community relationships, and the students' overall development as human beings. Moreover, findings from this study may be of help to any future researcher and any person who is interested in the pastoral care, school ethos and culture, and personal social development and academic achievement of students to make further research on the suggestions made, thereby promoting studies in this area of school life.

### **Connection with the Vincentian Mission in Education**

The civil government as well as the church, both understand the importance of education for the young people. However, it can be observed that, most of the government's educational efforts for the young students are geared towards their intellectual achievements and other secular values, and less attention is given to the moral aspects of their lives. On the other hand, the church undertakes the education of the young as one of her central apostolate. The document *Gravissimum educationis* which was promulgated by the Second Vatican Council on October 28, 1965, described the distinguishing characteristics of a Catholic school in this way:

The Catholic school pursues cultural goals and the natural development of youth to the same degree as any other school. What makes the Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the gospel spirit of freedom and love. It tries to guide the adolescents in such a way that personality development goes hand in hand with the development of the "new creature" that each one has become through baptism. It tries to relate all the human culture to the good news of salvation so that the

light of faith will illumine everything that the students will gradually come to learn about the world, about life, and about the human person (8).

We often read about St. Vincent, as the passionate and devoted Catholic priest whose services to the poor and needy, led to the Vincentian mission and the education of the young. In examining the goals of the Vincentian mission in education, Dosen (2005, p. 51) mentioned two of the goals that resonate with my research effort: (1) Presenting the Roman Catholic tradition as an interpretive framework and spiritual support for students' professional and personal lives, while respecting and being enriched by the great religious diversity represented in the university communities. (2) Instilling in all students an affective and effective love for those in need. Objectively speaking, the Vincentian mission and style in education is an exemplary holistic approach to schooling and how the Church approaches the education of the young. The Vincentian approach to school administration and education of the young is distinguishable because of features such as: excellent and attractive school climate, diversity, anti discrimination, financial assistance and grants, excellence and professionalism, opportunity for development of inherent personal talents and skills, security for students and staff, embedded gospel and promotion of spiritual values, and academic excellence. These are rare features which most secular schools do not possess.

Like St. Vincent, I also realize the importance of educating the young people. Therefore, a very important aspect of this research study is to lay a foundation that will guide a future effort to replicate the Vincentian style of school administration and education of the teeming population of young teenage students in the Catholic private and even public high schools. Furthermore, during the nearly 6yrs of my youth apostolate in

my home diocese, I visited and interacted with the young people in their parishes, secondary schools, and universities. These interactions helped me to further understand the utmost need of good education for young people. Since educating the young is an important part of the mission of the church, I became naturally convinced that rendering extra care to young students will help them to succeed. Therefore, having gone through St. John's University for both my master's and doctoral programs in the areas of school building leadership and school administration respectively, I am certain that the mission of the Church in the education of the young which St. Vincent De Paul diligently put to practical realization, would resound again in the secondary schools where I may be opportune to serve after my study. As Brian Crimmins (2017, p. 43) puts it, "the importance of the Vincentian mission—would ring true in my life in such a profound and lasting manner, day in and day out. It is this—a Vincentian education in the way of service that gave me the foundation to succeed".

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guide the study:

1. How does a Catholic private high school understand and approach pastoral care program for students?
2. How do the administrators and teachers in the Catholic high schools perceive the effects of pastoral care on their students?
3. How do students in the Catholic high schools, perceive the effects of pastoral care on their personal social wellbeing?
4. How do the parents of students in a Catholic private high school perceive the effects of pastoral care on their children?

## **Definition of Terms**

*Academic achievement:* Academic achievement is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has attained their short or long-term educational goals.

*Catholic Church:* A visible society of baptized Christians professing the same faith under the authority of the invisible head (Christ) and the authority of the visible head (the pope and the bishops in communion with him) ([www.dictionary.com/browse/catholic-church](http://www.dictionary.com/browse/catholic-church)).

*Clergy:* This is a group or body of ordained persons in a religion, as distinguished from the laity ([www.dictionary.com/browse/catholic-church](http://www.dictionary.com/browse/catholic-church)).

*Coeducational schools:* Schools that are made up of boys and girls.

*Contemporary schools:* A framework for teaching and learning that offers curricula that prepares students across all curriculum areas and learning.

*Counseling:* This is a profession of helping relationship between a helper and the one that is seeking help.

*Gender:* A socio-cultural construct that differentiate a man and woman roles and identities in a given society.

*Pastoral:* This is related to the work of a pastor to his flock to the people of God.

*Pastoral care:* An emotional and spiritual support that can be found in many cultures and traditions.

*Pastoral counseling:* the practice of talking with individuals, couples, and families to increase their understanding of emotional and religious conflict. And to help resolve problems.

*Pastoral policy:* The formulation of clear and understood procedures for efficient management of pastoral care.

*Personal social wellbeing:* This describes a person's state of mind, relationship with the world around them and the fulfillment they get from life.

*School culture:* School culture can be referred to as the unique characteristics of a particular school that makes it different from others.

*School ethos:* Basic principles or values that are cherished and observed in the school and the school community.

*Secondary schools:* An institution that provides secondary education, an intermediate between elementary and college.

*Single Sex Schools:* Schools that are made up of either boys only or girls only

*Skills:* This is techniques, tactics and strategies needed in pastoral care.

## **CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

In chapter 1, the foundation for this study was laid through the examination of the concepts “pastoral care” as it affects the life, academic achievement, and personal social wellbeing of secondary school students. I also stated the purpose for this study as well as the problem under investigation which are: to determine the various pastoral care approaches used in the Catholic secondary schools, how they affect the school ethos and cultures, and how they affect the personal social wellbeing of the students and their academic achievements. A connection is also made between this study and the Vincentian mission in education. The important questions to be answered through this research study, the method to be used, and the definition of terms used, were elucidated. Chapter two will present the review of some literature connected with the topic of study. However, I will first establish the theoretical framework on which this study is anchored. Two theories will be explored: the Clinebell’s Holistic Approach (2011) – which looks at how the pastoral counseling can help individual persons to achieve personal and spiritual growth through the integration of the seven life dimensions. I will also explore the theory of effective school model by Lawrence Lezotte (1991). Lezotte’s examination of the seven correlates of effective schools brings out the proactive nature of pastoral care, which is a big part of this study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The concept of pastoral care is understood and approached in different ways by different schools. Although they may be different, every approach employed by any school reflect the concept of care and concern for the welfare of students within a learning environment which supports their physical, social, intellectual, emotional, moral,



and spiritual development. This section will first discuss the theoretical framework guiding this study, and then the review of the pertinent literature.

This study is anchored on two theories: the Holistic Approach by Howard Clinebell (2011) and Effective School Model by Lawrence Lezotte (1991). The literature review examines: the aims and goals of Catholic education for young students, and the school ethos and culture.

### ***The Holistic Approach***

The Clinebell's holistic approach to pastoral counseling was formulated by Howard Clinebell (Huddy, 2008). Clinebell was an integrationist seeking to bring together resources from the psychosocial sciences, psychotherapy, and theology. He is also an eclectic counselor looking to the personality and transcendental view of Rogers (1942), Maslow (1943) and May (1958). Clinebell believed that growth means integrating the core of personal development of an individual into spiritual growth (Clinebell as cited in Huddy, 2008). Clinebell (2011) states that pastoral care and counseling emphasize holistic care giving which includes cultivating wholeness in seven dimensions of human life. The seven dimensions are the complete map of human life and experience – from matter all the way to spirit and from spirit all the way to matter. These dimensions include: physical, mental, relational, play, work, social/nature, and spiritual and ethical aspects of the human life. Clinebell stresses some special area in pastoral care like counseling in terms of chronic situations, bereavement and spiritual brokenness. Clinebell also indicated that pastors need “to be able to function simultaneously as teachers, counselors, and coaches” in order to provide holistic care and train lay counselors. Clinebell emphasizes that “lay training is an effective way of enlarging the

circle of congregational care giving by extending this vital ministry to more needy people more frequently” (p. 443) while allowing the paid pastoral staff to fulfill their other duties. This aspect of growth includes awareness, decision making, freedom, commitment, the quality of one’s spiritual life and relationship with God. The author observes that pastoral care should involve pastoral counseling and indicates that pastoral care counseling must be developed to achieve the goals of education. Hence, recommended that priest should be exposed to pastoral counseling during their training. However, one may argue that, since pastoral care and its approaches are effective ways to achieve personal development of students, and since not only the priests (in Catholic schools) have the duty of caring for students, Clinebell’s approach implies that intending teachers or those already in the care of students should equally be exposed to the skills of pastoral care and counseling during their training.

### ***Effective Schools Model***

The Effective Schools Model was propounded by Lawrence W. Lezotte in 1991. According to this model, an effective school is a school that can measure student achievement terms, demonstrates the joint presence of quality and equity (Lezotte, 1991). According to Lezotte (1991), there are seven correlates of effective schools: climate of high expectations for success, strong instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, opportunity to learn and student time on task, frequent monitoring of student progress, safe and orderly schools, positive home-school relations. These seven correlates of effective schools, point directly to what an effective school’s climate should look like. Accordingly, the author says that strong instructional leaders including the teachers are

proactive and seek help in building a team and a culture conducive to learning and professional growth.

A safe and orderly school is defined as a school climate and culture characterized by reasonable expectations for behavior, consistent and fair application of rules and regulations, and caring, responsive relationships among adults and students (Lezotte, 2010). Where classrooms are warm and inviting, and learning activities are purposeful, engaging, and significant. Environments where the school ethos and culture are responsive are created to increase positive relationships among students and between students and their teachers. Students feel that they belong in the school community, and children are valued and honored; their heritage and backgrounds are viewed as “assets,” not deficiencies. In a climate of high expectations, the mantra “all students can learn” must be followed by instructional practices and teacher behaviors that demonstrate that teachers believe in their students, believe in their own efficacy to teach students to high standards, and will persist in teaching them. Frequent monitoring of teaching and learning requires paying attention both to student learning results and to the effectiveness of school and classroom procedures (Lezotte, 2010). According to Lezotte (2010), family and community involvement is a general term used to describe myriads of activities, projects, and programs that bring parents and other stakeholders together to support students’ learning and schools. Families and other adults can be involved in the education of young people through a variety of activities that demonstrate the importance of education and show support and encouragement of students learning. This theory is relevant to this study because it reflects the characteristics or factors required for

effective teaching and improving academic achievement of students which pastoral care is part of it.

### ***The Link Between the Two Theories***

Analytically and within the context of this study, the above theories from Clinebell and Lezotte produce a perfect combination when it comes to the understanding of what a caring and effective school environment and community should look like for students. A productive school should be both administratively and structurally organized, and at the same time harbor students with caring attitudes and positive relationships. Clinebell's approach places emphasis on how to deal with the often internal and invisible (intrinsic) problems which individual students encounter in their lives and in their schools. For instance, the teacher may always encounter students who often externalize negative behaviors or those whose quiet and ambiguous behaviors call for attention. But unless effort is made to address these students individually in an attempt to find out what their problems are, and if possible refer them to experts, then those problems will continue and even get worse. However, by properly addressing the individual student's internal and invisible problems which may be: psychological, spiritual, emotional and social in nature, the students may once more, gain focus on their schooling which may result to academic gains. On the other hand, Lezotte's emphasis is on the administrative and external features of a school (extrinsic), such as: strong instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, safe and orderly schools, climate of high expectations for success, frequent monitoring of student progress, positive home-school relations, and opportunity to learn and student time on task. A school without the correlates enumerated by Lezotte may not produce the climate that is conducive for the students' academic learning and

achievements. Therefore, when a secondary school puts in place, a program that provide basic services of care to its students, and combines it with effective school administrative structures in the form of dedicated teachers and functioning edifices, then going to school and achieving overall success will be the outcomes.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### ***The Goals of Pastoral Care***

The following goals of pastoral care in schools were defined in the 1986 publication by the National Association for Pastoral Care in Education (NAPCE, 1986): To provide a point of personal contact with students; To provide a point of personal contact with parents; To monitor pupils progress across the curriculum; To provide support and guidance for the pupils' achievement; To encourage a caring and orderly environment; To promote a school which meet pupils needs; To provide colleagues with information to adapt teaching; To engage wider network as appropriate (as cited in Azubuike & Obih, 2018, p.108).

The above goals can be achieved if proper attention is given to pastoral care. It should be noted that there is need for each student to know at least one teacher and to have their progress monitored and be guided by that teacher. The students should also be given the opportunity to express their personal views on issues that affect him/her. Raymond, J. (2010, p.5) observed that, a number of authors such as: "Marland (1979); David & Cowley, (1979); Holden, (1971); Jones, (1979) and Hamblin, (1978)", had written a great deal about pupils' [students] problems. But these are usually taken from adult perspectives, with pupils rarely being asked themselves. This observation is very important because very often, students may not follow up with a particular school

program, just because they neither understand it nor feel its impact in their lives. I am convinced that the subjective and original opinion of students about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the pastoral care for them would trigger an informed decision-making by the school administrators to include, strengthen, or re-examine the pastoral care programs and approaches in their schools in order to maximize its benefits for students. And this is where the form tutor comes in as the liaison between or point of reference for the parents, the teachers, and the students themselves. The tutors use their personal contacts to hear the pupil's perspective on themselves and relay to appropriate teachers. Marland (1989) in Best, Lang, Lodge, & Watkins, (1995), described the tutor as the heart of the school, the specialist whose specialty is bringing everything together, whose subject is students himself/herself, who struggles for tutee's entitlement and who enables the pupils to make best use of the school and develop his/her personal social wellbeing.

### ***The Nature of Pastoral Care for Students***

Pastoral care has become a *sine qua non* for schools, as every school has a way of incorporating the non-academic care for students into its daily school programs. From an administrative or structural point of view, pastoral care in schools have become an umbrella name for a number of initiatives which schools put up, such as guidance counseling, religious ministry activities, anti-racism or anti-bullying among the students, or similar efforts. More so, the difference may be seen in the nomenclature given to these forms of care by schools and their modus operandi for these efforts. For instance, while the term Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is popular in the public schools, the term "Pastoral Care" is popular with the private mission schools like the Catholic Church. There are also visible differences in the nature and scope of the care received by students

in the different school models. The very unique thing about pastoral care in the private Catholic schools is that, while majority of the public schools departmentalize non-academic care for students (e.g., social work, mental counseling evaluation, school conferences, etc), and also pay for these services, the Catholic schools perceive as a moral duty, the holistic care for their students, and embed a caring attitude that is binding on all members of the school community in all aspects of their school's life without extra charge on the students and their families. Therefore, pastoral care, in a school context, is an ethic of care that demonstrates an active concern for the wellbeing and wholeness of all members of the school community (Rieger, W., 1990; p. 18). In reference to the pastoral care in the private religious schools, from a Christian point of view, Rieger (1990) calls it "ministry of care" which incorporates the horizontal and vertical relationships, providing hope, healing, and direction to individuals (p. 18). Obviously, every aspect of the student's life as a human person: physical, social, spiritual, and mental wellbeing is taken into consideration in the pastoral care program as practiced in the Catholic private schools. Therefore, as the ministry of care, pastoral care is a program put in place by effective school administrators, to help in addressing the non-academic problems of the students. The question is not if students would have problems, but how to deal with their problems when they arise. The fact is that as young human beings, teenage students will, from time-to-time, manifest problems which they can only resolve through the help of caring adults around them. According to Bethel, S. (1990), "Students don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care" (p. 19). Therefore, effective pastoral care in secondary schools is practical in nature and is made visible through such roles as: helping acts done towards the guiding, healing, reconciling,

sustaining, and nurturing of individual students or group of students, who have troubles and concerns that arise in the context of their daily struggles to have successful academic achievements and journeys through life

### ***The School Ethos and Culture***

School ethos can be seen as fundamental principles or values that are cherished and observed in the school and school community. Ethos has a great impact on the way things are organized in the school. Ethos is at the center of education and learning. Furlong and Mohanam (2003) defined school ethos as articulating core values in the school. Ethos is the pervading spirit and character that find expression in the habit and behavior of those that are part of it. Solvason (2005) states that ethos concern feelings and experiences in the school which becomes part of the student. Ethos can be the attitude of the school, collection of the belief and values, traditions, goals and aspiration they hold. Ethos can have a positive and negative effect and can enrich the lives of young people or impoverish them. To this, Pope Francis (2014) declared that education theoretically can help a young person to grow or can diminish a young persons' life, hence the need for a positive ethos in a school. The author states that positive school ethos is essential to developing good relationships and positive behavior in the classroom, playground and wider community.

In the Catholic Church, school ethos (principles) is referred to as the fundamental values of the Catholic Church (Bekwap & Anyanwu, 2020). According to Lineamenta (2014), in the heart of Catholic education there is always Jesus Christ, everything that happens in Catholic Schools and even Catholic Universities lead to an encounter with Jesus Christ. Based on this statement, Catholic schools' ethos could be described as those



outward signs and experiences of the teachings of Jesus Christ and Catholic Church in the whole daily life in all Catholic schools. Better still, Catholic ethos means the fundamental values of the Catholic Church exemplified by Jesus Christ in his short ministry on earth which includes faith, prayers, honesty, patience, tolerance, simplicity, endurance, perseverance, sacrifice, respect, humility and discipline which is based on love and care. These principles (ethos) the church implements through her schools and various institutions of learning that the church handles, and together these affect the culture of Catholic schools.

School culture is a broad and inexhaustible area of scholarships. However, for the purpose of this study, it can be referred to as the unique characteristics of a particular school that make them different from others. School culture can be defined as the historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions and myths understood by members of the school community (Slocum & Hellriegel, 2009). According to Bush in Ajaheb-Jahangeer and Jahangeer (2004), culture refers to the values, beliefs and norms of individuals in the organization and is manifested by symbols and rituals rather than through the formal structure of the organization. It can be argued that the culture of the school inevitably has an impact on the learning and academic achievement of the students. Therefore, school head teachers seeking to improve student performance should focus on improving the schools' culture by getting the relationship right between themselves, their teachers, students and parents. Hence, pastoral care can enhance school culture which seems to play a major role in enhancing student academic achievement.

Students' academic achievement can be affected either positively or negatively by the pastoral care program in the school. Academic achievement refers to the quality and quantity of knowledge, skills, techniques and positive attitudes, behavior and philosophy that learners achieve or acquire. This ability is evaluated by the marks and grades that the pupils attain in a test or examination which is done at the end of a lesson, school term, and year or education cycle. The scores and grades that each pupil obtains measure the degree of achievement. The quality of the grade and the number of candidates who pass in various grades determine the level of academic performance in a given class or institution in a given period in a particular examination, be it internal or external. Bell (2012, p.21) states that "academic achievement most commonly is measured through students written and oral tests, presentations, field work, classroom activities, discussions, homework, teacher observations, etc. Academic achievement does not only involve the students' grades in exams, but other factors like their behavior, skills, communication, situation handling, creativity, art and personal social development.

### **Major Approaches to Pastoral Care**

It was Michael Marland (1974), a teacher and author who introduced the term "pastoral care" into the school administration. He defined it to mean "looking after the total welfare of the pupil". As a follow up to Marland's ideas, Best et al. (1995) also suggested that the term pastoral care covers the non-instructional aspects of school administration. Konu, Alanen, Lintonen and Rimpela, (2002) define pastoral care as a link with teaching and learning and the structural organization of the school which promotes students' personal and social development and fostering positive attitudes. The Education Review Office of Wellington (2016) defines pastoral care as "a fundamental

aspect of effective schools and is integral to all aspects of the culture in the school, including wellbeing, curriculum content, teaching and learning (p. 22). Best (2014) defines pastoral care as the structures, systems, relationships, quality of teaching, monitoring arrangements, extra-curricular activities, and ethos within a school. The author adds that “pastoral care includes guiding, counseling, meeting parents, disciplining, and negotiating; that it is seen in the caring quality of relationships between people”. Pastoral care according to Cross and Lester (2014), is a practice fully integrated into teaching and learning and other aspect of the school to effectively meet the personal, social (wellbeing) and academic needs of students and staff. Further, Cross and Lester (2014) describe pastoral care as a way of achieving quality and effective schooling through effective network of care and appropriate and effective pastoral care strategies.

As cited in Purdy (2011, p.13), “Best (1999a; 2002), provided specific models in which he outlined five objectives of pastoral care in schools: (i) reactive care where, for instance the Form Tutor responded to pupils’ personal social, emotional or behavioral difficulties; (ii) proactive care where teachers used form assemblies to educate and preempt some of the most commonly perceived difficulties through helping pupils to make wise choices; (iii) developmental care comprising the school’s PSHE programmes; (iv) the promotion and maintenance of an orderly and supportive environment through a positive whole-school ethos; and (v) the management and administration of pastoral care through effective systems established to monitor and support individual pupils”.

Similarly, Cross, Lester, and Barnes (2014), opined that there are three major approaches to pastoral care. They include integrated, segmented and reactive pastoral care.

### ***Integrated Pastoral Care***

Just as the term implies, the integrated pastoral care depicts schools which are purposefully and coherently focused on providing effective pastoral care where there is active management of the school ethos and well-intentioned care for students. In describing an integrative pastoral care in a school, Cross and Lester (2014) stated that:

Pastoral care is not merely a complementary practice; it is policy and practices fully integrated throughout the teaching and learning and structural organization of a school to effectively meet the personal, social (wellbeing) and academic needs of students and staff. (p.1)

Analogically, this type of approach to pastoral care can be compared to the construction of a house whereby the waterlines are built in as part of the main structure, instead of being separated from the building. Therefore, in the integrated approach to pastoral care, the school leaders and the teachers adopt a more proactive and preventative care for the wellbeing of their students. Referring to the effectiveness of integrative pastoral care, Raymond (1985) states that “If a school wishes its pastoral care system to radiate a genuinely caring atmosphere, then that has important implications for its pastoral programme, which must then become preventive in its aims” (p. 5). In integrative pastoral care, teachers are consciously modeling positive values and as well view themselves as a part of the pastoral care and play their roles very well. The teachers also demonstrate positive attitude towards teaching the students. In the integrated pastoral care, students usually report being very satisfied and confident in their abilities to resolve issues.

### *Segmented Pastoral Care*

In the segmented pastoral approach, pastoral care is isolated from the overall management and day-to-day activities of the school. As Marland (1974, p.11, in Purdy, 2011, p.17) noted, “Some schools seem to set up a ‘pastoral system’ within, or even, as it were, beside the main structure – rather like the plumbing in a building. This ultimately proves unsatisfactory, because it is not the main structure, and there is a ‘dis-location’ between the teaching and the caring”. Here, the focus is to have pastoral care activities and programmes as a separate effort to address the problems encountered by students in the course of their school attendance. In this type of approach, pastoral care for students comes in the form of scheduled conferences or assemblies whereby the school leaders address their students on issues that concern them. Here, the school ethos is viewed as separate entity from the pastoral care and the school cultures are not well managed. The teachers are less concerned about modeling positive values and develop attitudes of indifference towards teaching, the school and the students. In referring to the schools that practice reactive pastoral care approach, Raymond (1985) stated that “such teachers operate within a system that has no explicit aims, but which nevertheless expect tutors to act as much more than glorified clerks” (p. 2). Moreover, the students in these schools show mixed levels of satisfaction and are less confident in the school’s ability to resolve their issues.

### ***Reactive Pastoral Care***

Raymond (1985) tersely explained the meaning of reactive pastoral care when she wrote that:

At present the pastoral system that exists in schools actually work by solving TEACHER problems as opposed to offering care and guidance to its pupils.

These problems tend to be those of classroom control, non-school attendance, infringement of school rules and anti-social activities such as fighting, and solvent abuse. (p. 2).

Therefore, the reactive pastoral approach focuses on responding to major or minor incidents or crises in the school. This is very much like controlling the damage that has already occurred. Another example is, giving assistance to a teacher who can no longer control her noisy class because, her students no longer obey her instructions. Here, the school ethos is different from what integrative pastoral care projects. In schools that practice reactive pastoral care approach, the staff or teachers here are less conscious of modeling positive behaviors, they view themselves as having limited or no role in pastoral care. They also demonstrate negative attitude towards teaching, the school and students. Students here are also dissatisfied with the care provided and are not confident with the pastoral issues in the school. This kind of situation paints a clear image of how limited a school's approach to the management of school cultures can be. In view of these different pastoral care approaches, this study will tend to discover the type of pastoral care approaches used in each participating school. Notably, pastoral care can also improve the quality of teaching through specific pastoral and support systems, and through extra-curricular activities and the school's ethos.

## **Role of the Catholic Church on Pastoral Care of Students**

Catholic schools are established by Catholic churches. Catholic schools in the context of this study refers to those institutions which are under the control of the competent ecclesiastical juridical person or one which in a written document is acknowledge as a Catholic by the ecclesiastical authority (The Code of Canon Law, 803). On the contrary, non-Catholic or contemporary schools are schools owned and managed by the government. As a service agency, a Catholic school is one which seeks the integral development and formation of pupils and students into full maturity in Christ under the guidance of the Catholic Church. Catholic schools in their unique identity are usually adorned with crucifixes, holy pictures, prayers of Stations of the Cross and angelus and these contribute to Catholic school culture and identity and speak loudly as Catholic ethos (Bekwap & Anyanwu, 2020).

Both Catholic and contemporary schools are geared towards the development of the whole individual students. However, the attitude, ethos and cultures of each school make the difference. Colton (2016) argues that both Catholic and contemporary schools work with young people to help them develop an awareness of all aspects of who they are and who they can become starting with what motivates them now and what gives them hope for the future. Young people therefore must have hope and must be empowered to develop their self beliefs and hope for the future. Catholic schools therefore provide an education illuminated by faith and permeated by gospel values exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ as the role model (Village & Francis, 2016). The major objective of establishing pastoral care in the Catholic schools is to make the young students better for tomorrow through the rest of their educational pursuits. Obviously, a school could be

rendered ineffective if the pastoral care is not effective. However, to the best of my knowledge, no study has been carried out to specifically verify this situation or ascertain how the pastoral care can affect the personal social wellbeing and academic achievement of students.

In the Catholic schools at all levels, pastoral care of students is infused into all the school activities. In addition, great care is also taken to be sure that teachers who are employed in the Catholic schools will be able to follow the school objectives in the overall development of the students' life, faith, and intellect. The public schools also have programs of care and other services which are geared towards the development of students apart from their academics. Many public schools still refer to their programs of care as pastoral care, even though the ingredients of the spiritual and moral formation of students may not be a priority to their school management. Rieger (2013) explains the reason behind this approach, saying that "from a structural viewpoint, pastoral care may become the 'umbrella' for a number of initiatives which schools might run, such as anti-bullying, Life Education and Peer Support programs, including a fully functioning chaplaincy ministry" (p. 18). Hence the organization of pastoral care in the Catholic schools should be seen as a mandate given by the Church authorities to ensure the holistic development of students under their care, hence, a ministry of care. It is also proper to mention here that the pastoral care practices in any school, Catholic or non-Catholic will always be as strong as the caregivers (school leaders and teachers) are. Hence, the effectiveness of pastoral care efforts in a secondary school becomes real when the following features are made available to the teachers: Leadership and coordination, Motivation and inspiration, Resources and facilities including time, Rooms for



counseling, Clear job description, Sensitive appraisal, and feedback, Staff development opportunities (the PDs), Opportunities to be incorporated into activities and to feel valued as members of the team, To be appreciated and develop positive self-image, Counseling, guidance and moral support in the face of demands.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

The literature review for this study was done under three headings: theoretical framework, related researches that discussed the nature and goals of pastoral care in schools, major approaches to pastoral care in schools, the role of the Catholic schools, and relationship between prior researches and present study. The study conceptualized some concepts such as pastoral care, school ethos, school culture, and students' academic achievement. It also reviewed two theories or models which include Clinebell holistic approach and Lezotte's effective school model. The Clinebell model emphasized on the importance of pastoral care and counseling while the effective school model by Lezotte dealt with the external factors of a school which can influence the students' behavior as well as their academic performance, one of such factors is effective school administration. The review of many previous empirical studies also revealed that although pastoral care is practiced in secondary schools, each school emphasizes or practices pastoral care in different degrees. These studies also looked into the effectiveness of pastoral care in the secondary schools. Also, while the pastoral care approaches were highlighted, the pastoral care tasks were also identified in the literature.

To conclude this section, one would agree with Best (2014), that - recent reviews of literature have highlighted renewed attention to pastoral care, pastoral structures/approaches in education, and how effective pastoral care can augment

academic outcomes and assist in enriching learners' lives and wellbeing. Nevertheless, there is still the need to investigate how the pastoral care approaches and practices improve the personal social wellbeing and academic achievement of students. This is the focus of this study.

### **Relationship to Present Study**

It is true that so many studies have been carried out in the areas of school relationships and improvements strategies. However, most of these studies concentrated on the academic achievement of the students and teacher effectiveness in the classrooms. The studies were also carried out in other parts of the world. In addition, they produced varying results and only very few are in exact agreement with other's findings. Again, none of these studies was carried out in any of the Catholic private schools within the area of the current study. Moreover, the manner and approach to pastoral care in schools which produces effectiveness in the holistic development of students as individual human persons is questionable. These lacks creates the gap which this study intends to fulfill. Therefore, this research study is an effort to examine more closely, how the pastoral care program is structured in a private Catholic school, and its effect on the personal social wellbeing and academic achievement of its students.

## **CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY**

Chapter 3 explains the methodological procedures used for this study and the significances of these methods to this study. It also discusses the settings, selection of participants, data collection procedures, trustworthiness of the research design, research ethics, data analysis approach, the coding of themes, and the role of the researcher.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guide the study:

1. How does a Catholic private high school understand and approach pastoral care program for students?
2. How do the administrators and teachers in the Catholic high schools perceive the effects of pastoral care on their students?
3. How do students in the Catholic high schools perceive the effects of pastoral care on their personal social wellbeing?
4. How do the parents of students in a Catholic private high school perceive the effects of pastoral care on their children?

### **Research Design/Setting**

This current research study is a qualitative case study design. Yin (2014) explains that a case study involves the study of a case or cases within a real-life, contemporary context or setting. Similarly, Stake (2005) states that case study research is not a methodology but a choice of what is to be studied. Creswell & Poth (2018) suggested that the choice for study may be a concrete entity such as an individual, a small group, an organization, or a partnership. Based on this understanding, they defined case study research as:

a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes. (p. 96).

Therefore, I used this method for this study because my focus is to explore how a Catholic private school approaches a non-academic program such as the pastoral care of students, using multiple sources to gather information for a detailed understanding of the issue being researched upon. It is safe to say that using this research design will make a lasting impact on the researcher. Although the scope of this research study is limited to the selected participating school and also bounded by the time within which this research was carried out, the findings from this research study can be beneficial to other schools.

### **The Research Site**

The school site where the data for this research study were collected through interviews was, the St. Mary's High School. St. Mary's High School (SMHS) is an independent private Catholic co-educational secondary school harboring grades 9-12 students. It is located in New York City in the United States of America. The topic of my research study made it necessary that I should look for a Catholic high school that truly understands and practices the pastoral care for its students. In my search for such a school, I visited three of the highly rated Catholic high schools located around the eastern part of New York State, and tendered a request to used their schools for a research study. At the end of my search process, I selected the Mary's High School (SMHS) as my research site. I made my selection based on how fast the authorities of this school

responded to my request, the rich information which is displayed on this school's website, and the online public recognition of this school as a top-rated Catholic private high school, known for preparing its student for life beyond academics. At the time of this study, St. Mary's High has an enrolment of about 1500 students.

### **Study Participants and Recruitment**

Creswell & Poth (2018, p.154) suggest that the building up of rapport between the researcher and the research site should be one of the first things in the process of collecting data for a qualitative research study. Therefore, prior to the interview arrangements, I read about St. Mary's High School from their official website. In order to build up my rapport with the school, I wrote to the president and the principal in order to declare my intention to use their school for a research study. Their positive response to my request gave me the opportunity to visit the school in-person, to make a visual observation of the school climate and to present myself to the school authorities for further arrangements. Therefore, when I got my IRB permission to conduct the interview, I presented it to the president and principal of this school. I also wrote a separate letter to express where I may need help for the interview exercises. Next, the consent letters for the participating school administrators, staff, and parents as well as the assent letters for the participating students who are under the age of 18 were handed over to them to sign and return through the staff who was delegated by the principal to assist with the arrangements as well as be the research gate-keeper throughout the interview process. In the consent letters, promises were made to the participants that on no account should their names and identities be disclosed throughout the research processes. During the process of arranging for the interview, I collected the phone numbers and emails of the

prospective participants for easy connection and reach out to them when the day for the interviews came close. Therefore, after a period of two weeks from the first day they were contacted, I sent a reminder to all the participants. The second reminder was sent to them 7 days before the actual interviews began. Following the opinion of Usman (2010), the qualitative approach was utilized for the interviews, and this enabled the participants to freely give their perspectives on issues being discussed and provided them with the voice to narrate their experiences. Therefore, all the interviews with the participants were conducted either face-to-face or over the phone.

The total sample for this study comprised 21 participants. These participants were purposively selected for this study among the staff, the students, and parents of St. Mary's High School. Thus, a total of 12 students were selected for this study. The selected students were of different ages (15 – 17 years), genders (5 boys and 7 girls), grade levels (9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>), and self-identified family socioeconomic status (middle and upper classes). Furthermore, the education level of their parents differed, ranging from high school certificates and college diplomas to bachelor and doctoral levels. Among the school staff, five members were purposively selected to participate. Thus: the principal, an assistant principal, the school guidance counselor, the coordinator for religious ministry activities, and the director for communications. Finally, four parents were selected and included to participate in this study. These parents were selected by the principal through the delegated gate-keeper for the current research. There were no criteria applied in the selection of the parents.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

Apart from the prior preparations made, the actual interviews and group discussions with all the participants lasted between September and October 2022. Since this study was designed to be a qualitative case study approach, a combination of instruments was used to collect data. Instruments used were: face-to-face in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, recording of interview responses and discussions with a digital recording device, and observations of the students and school environment. Initially, the plan was to conduct virtual or online interviews with all the participants, due to the unstable COVID-19 pandemic situations. However, by the time the interviews were conducted at the beginning of the fall school term, the school and its neighborhood had become safer regarding COVID-19. Therefore, while the in-depth face-to-face interviews were used to elicit information from the participating principals, the staff and the parents on their understanding of pastoral care and its effects on high school students, the focus group discussion was used to find out from the students, how the pastoral care programs and activities in their school affect their wellbeing and holistic development as human persons, and their academic progresses. The responses from all the participants were very instrumental towards a clearer understanding of the pastoral care and its effects on both the students and the school's ethos and culture.

### ***In-Depth Interview***

The in-depth face-to-face interviews were held for each of the participating school administrators, staff and the selected parents. In order to be authentic and successful with these face-to-face interviews, the principal and assistant principal as well as the other school staffs were interviewed separately in the space provided by the principal for this

exercise. Two of the staffs could not make the face-to-face interviews and were therefore interviewed over the phone. Also, all the four participating parents were interviewed over the phone.

The following specific research question was addressed to the participating principals and other school staffs. There were also prompts from me (the researcher) which helped them to streamline their responses: How does the private Catholic School understand and approach the pastoral care program for students? The researcher's prompts for this question were:

- As a private Catholic school, how familiar are you with the Catholic Church's mission on the education of the young people?
- Do you believe that students have so many problems that are non-academic in nature, but which can obstruct their academic journeys? Can you mention some of these problems?
- Are you familiar with the term "pastoral care for students"?
- Observably, pastoral care can be approached as structured or unstructured by different schools. What approach do you use in your school: is it an integrated, segmented, developmental, or reactive approach?
- What specific activities and programs do you recognize as pastoral care for your students?
- Do the teachers always know how to care for students pastorally or are they given special training for this?



The second question for the staff and administrators was: How do the administrators and teachers in the Catholic high schools perceive the effects of pastoral care on their students? The researcher's prompts that helped to streamline the responses were:

- How well do you know your students individually?
- How do you monitor the effectiveness of pastoral care on your students?
- As someone close to the students, can you give a broad explanation about whether or not, students truly benefit from pastoral care?

Further, some specific questions were addressed to the principal of this school and his assistant as leaders of their school's administrators. Thus:

- As you reflect on the outcome of the pastoral care experiences in your school, do you think that students consciously comply with the programs or do so out of fear for the disciplinary measures? How do you monitor their compliance?
- Do you think that students' participation in the various programs of care promotes a positive school culture and safe learning environment?
- Does the non-academic care your students receive reflect in their academic achievements? Can you explain more about this?
- What is your school's ranking in the state, in terms of academic performance of students?
- What are the difficulties and obstacles associated with the pastoral care for students as you see it?

Finally, a specific question was addressed to the parents in order to get their perspectives on the issue being discussed. Thus: How do the parents of students in a Catholic private

high school perceive the effects of pastoral care on their children? The researcher's prompts that helped to streamline the responses were:

- As a parent, do you think that families and the community benefit from the pastoral care which students get from their schools?
- What is the reason for the answer you gave?
- Can you describe some of the changes you observed in your child, and which can be attributed to the effectiveness of the pastoral care received in his/her school?

All the above questions are both proper to the status of the interviewees as either school staffs or parents of students, and also *ad rem* to the research endeavor. In my opinion as the researcher, the responses provided to the questions by the interviewees during the face-to-face interviews seemed to be deep-rooted and relevant to the research endeavors. These face-to-face interviews were recorded with a digital audio recording device, and were carefully transcribed word-for-word for data coding, development of themes, and further analysis.

### ***Focus Group Discussion***

The focus group discussion was used as the mode of interview for the participating students. Focus group method contributes a wealth of resources to research practice (Goldman and Donald, 1987; Kreugar, 1998). According to Lazarsfeld (1986), the focus group method is best used where “why?” “What?” and “How?” questions are required. Therefore, the focus group discussions for this study involved 12 students. The aim of this focus group was to explore the in-depth responses from the students about their experiences in the pastoral care programs and activities in their school. The question addressed to the students was: How do students in the Catholic high schools, perceive the

effects of pastoral care on their personal social wellbeing? The researcher's prompts that helped to streamline their responses are:

- Do you believe that as students, you have problems and concerns that are not about your classroom subjects and assignments? Do you think that these problems can distract your life or disturb your attention to academic issues? Give me some examples!
- Have you also observed some bad behaviors in some students? Give me examples!
- What do you consider as caring attitudes from your teachers and principal outside of the classroom? Do you see evidence of this kind of care in your school?
- Do you think that your life has become more positive or negative since you entered your school?
- Are you aware that the things you do or relationships you keep while in school go a long way to shape your future life and careers?
- Do you think that Pastoral care for students helps to ensure a safe environment for all students and teachers?
- Do you believe that the non-academic cares you receive in your school prepares you for a less obstructive life in your family and in the society?
- Every secondary school should implement pastoral care programs to ensure a safe learning environment. What do you think?
- Do you think the pastoral care you received makes you feel different from other students in your community? Tell me more about how different you feel!

- Does your participation in the Pastoral care as student help you in your relationship and interactions with other students? How?

Castleberry and Nolen (2018) suggested that, using participants from the same organization makes the focus group discussions more beneficial to the researcher in the quality understanding of concepts, experiences, and terminology in the emerging discussion. Onwuegbuzie & Collins (2007) suggested that the average time to spend during the focus groups discussions should range from 45 minutes to one hour.

Therefore, the time scheduled for this focus group discussion was between 45 minutes to 1 hour. This time frame enabled all participants to voice out their opinions in an orderly and relaxed manner, without fear or coercion. As Breen (2006) and Kuckartz (2014) suggested, a little time was taken before the interview began to build good rapport between the participants and the interviewer. This rapport enabled the participants to introduce themselves and converse freely before the introduction of the research questions and the discussions on the topic. During this rapport building, I also set the rules that guided the group discussions smoothly. These rules include: silence during the discussions, wait for your turn and do not interrupt the one speaking, do not laugh at someone's grammatical mistakes, pay attention to the discussions going on.

The data from the focus group discussion were recorded with a digital recording device and carefully transcribed verbatim. In line with the suggestion made by Creswell (2003), the transcripts from the interview data were carefully reviewed and analyzed. The analysis revealed so many themes that are relevant to the topic being studied. These emergent themes are organized to reflect the opinions of the three different groups of participants who were interviewed for this study, and will be discussed in chapter four. It

is important to mention that in transcribing both the face-to-face and the focus group interviews, I deleted all repetitious expressions such as “uhms”, “you knows” or “uh-huhs”. Also, pseudonyms were used in place of the participants’ real names.

### **Trustworthiness of the Design**

Trustworthiness establishes if the research findings are credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness is all about establishing these four rules. Hence, the trustworthiness of the work is discussed under these subheadings.

#### ***Credibility***

Credibility means the ability of the researcher to link the findings of research to real life situations. The researcher’s success in doing this, demonstrates the truth and accuracy of the findings made through the research. Hence, in this research, I used a combination of instruments or triangulation to determine the credibility of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This research is credible because all the participants spoke from the personal experiences they got through the pastoral care programs in their school, St. Mary’s High School.

#### ***Transferability***

This shows how the qualitative researcher demonstrates that the findings of the study will be applied to other contexts and in similar situations with similar phenomenon or similar population. Definitely, the findings from this research study can be applied in or transferred to various schools and organizations.

### ***Dependability***

This means the extent to which the study can be repeated by other researchers and the findings will still be the same. In other words, if a researcher wants to replicate this work, he/she already has enough information from the research report that will enable him/her to obtain a similar result. Here the researcher will ascertain to validate the instrument to review and examine the research process and data analysis in order to ensure that the findings are consistent and could be repeated. This research meets the criterion of dependability.

### ***Confirmability***

This describes the degree of neutrality or objectivity in the research study's findings. This means that the data collection and data analysis should be based on the responses of two or more participants and not by only the personal opinion and motivation of the researcher. The researcher should make sure that he is not biased and does not screw the interpretation. Therefore, in order to establish the confirmability of this study, the researcher provided explanations and highlight at every step in the data analysis. Hence, this research meets the criterion for confirmability because I was not influenced or biased in any ways during the interviews. Moreover, many of the participants were in agreement about the issues being discussed in this research.

### **Research Ethics**

The participants were fully informed about the study objectives, their role in the study, voluntary nature of their participation and the fact that they could decline or pull out of the study any time they wished. The interview was carried out only after receiving the signed consent letters from all participants. These letters were given out during the

period of arranging for the interviews. Confidentiality of the disclosed information was also assured and maintained in order to minimize potential risks to respondents. The St. John's University IRB permission was secured, and presented to the administration (via the principal) of the school where the research was carried out. The school authorities through the principal gave their approval for the research study to be carried out in their school. In addition, a staff was delegated by the principal to assist me with the needed arrangements that helped to facilitate the interview processes.

### **Data Analysis Approach and Coding of Themes**

The responses from the various individual participants for the in-depth interviews were recorded verbatim with an audio recording device. As suggested by Cooper and Schindler (2006), after a careful transcription of the audio recording of the interviews was made, the data were coded and analyzed. Similarly, the audio recorded interview from the focus group were coded and analyzed after the transcription. Following the suggestion by Robson (2002), the data from the focus group interview were grouped into themes according to the common patterns of responses from participants and interpreted based on the key research questions that guided this study. Saldana (2016) had suggested that a generic coding method should be adopted for figuring out the right type of coding for data, beginning with attribute coding and followed by structural/holistic coding, descriptive coding, and in vivo, initial, or value coding. Therefore, Saldana's method of coding in qualitative studies was applied in the coding of the responses from the focus group participants into themes for further discussions.

## **The Role of the Researcher**

Creswell & Poth (2018) recommends the use of Stake's approach to Case Study. According to Stake (1995), "Although the rules of research oftentimes seem prescribed and restrictive, the styles researchers follow in designing, studying, writing, and consulting vary considerably (p. 91)." Moreover, "Each researcher consciously or unconsciously makes continuous decisions about how much emphasis to give each role (p. 91)." Therefore, as I researched on the effects of pastoral care programs and activities on the high school students, with focus on the school participating in this study, I approached it in various ways: first, I determined the type of case study that is being pursued. And in this case, it is a single case study about the effects of a non-academic program (pastoral care) on the high school students. I also described in the methodology section, the procedures used for data collection, coding and analyzing the data collected. In my effort to interpret my findings, I compared how the structures and approaches to pastoral care in the participating school align with the findings in the literature reviews and the opinions of various school administrators, in terms of how to achieve the goal of the holistic and effective development of high school students. In order to enhance the validity and credibility of findings, and produce a clearer picture of my study, I applied the method of triangulation. Carter et al. (2014) described triangulation as the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of an issue. Therefore, in this research study, triangulation involved the use of interviews from: the principal, assistant principal, the guidance counselor, the director for religious ministries, the communication director, a group of students, parents, to make the findings clearer, and other literary sources which I consulted in my effort to



have comprehensive understanding and explanation of the case being studied. Finally, in line with the suggestion made by Stake (1995, p.123), I summarized what I feel that I understood about the issue being researched upon and how my generalizations about the case either changed conceptually or still in level of confidence. In all these efforts, my goal was to do an objective analysis of findings.

## **CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS**

Chapter 3 explained the methodology applied in this study as it relates to the design/setting, recruitment of participants, interview questions and data collection procedures, trustworthiness of the design, the coding and selection of themes, research ethics, and the role of the researcher. Chapter four discusses some of the most important findings from this study through the various individual interviews and the focus group discussion as they affect the pastoral care of students in the Catholic High schools. The following themes emerged during the analysis: the description of observations, the emergent themes which includes – the principal and staff as care-givers, the students as subjects and care receivers, and the parents as outsiders and evaluators.

### **Description of Observations**

First, it is important to provide the context regarding the site of the research. Therefore, on the day of the interviews, I made some observations about the school in which the interviews were conducted. On the street leading to the school main building, I observed the presence of the school police and their patrol vehicle. This scenario immediately gave the impression that there is security around the school environment. Coming to the main school building, I also observed that the school is a beautiful edifice with carefully arranged environment that clearly indicated the areas for field and other outdoor sports events and places for relaxation. The inside of the school building was welcoming and conducive for academic efforts. For instance, I observed that the hallway was silent and free of students loitering around and the information notice boards indicated that the students were still learning in their classrooms at that time. The receptionists at the entrance desk as well as the staffs in the administrative office were

very professional in their manners of approach. According to one of the administrators interviewed, the enrollment of the students at the time of this study was around 1500. The students are also diverse in race, ethnicity, culture, and religious affiliations. The student population is made up of 98% Catholic Christians and Greek Orthodox Christians. There are also a small percentage of non-Christians and others. Even with all these differences, the students were observed to be interacting with each other and with their teachers in a respectable and friendly manner during their break-time. These observations were encouraging because they suggested that this school is truly conducive and safe for young people to stay together and pursue their academic endeavors and personal social developments individually and as a group of students in the same school. These observations also indicated that the research site was a good choice for the intended research study.

### **Emergent Themes by Groups**

The themes that emerged from the interviews and discussions are arranged to represent the opinion of the different groups that participated, and examined in the light of their relationships with the literature review and the research questions that guided this study. The three groups are:

- The principals and school staff as the insiders and care givers
- The students as the subjects and care receivers
- The parents as the outsiders and evaluators.

### **The Principals and the Staff: Insiders and Caregivers**

The main interview question that was posed in order to get the perspectives of the principals and the participating staffs as both insiders and care-givers was: How does a

private Catholic high school understand and approach pastoral care program for students? Although the responses from this group came in various ways, they all proved that they are knowledgeable and familiar with the mission of the Catholic Church on the education of the young students. All the interviewees in this group agree that high school students have many non-academic problems that may affect or obstruct their academic journeys if they are neglected or unresolved. From the perspectives of the principals and staffs, the following were mentioned as problems and behaviors that can be obstructive to the students' academic progress and social wellbeing: anxiety, poor self-image, sexual violence, domestic violence, school avoidance, vaping, drug use and substance abuse, doing jobs to support family upkeep. They seem to agree on the idea that the long stay of students at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic has strong effects on them, causing them to avoid school attendance and immaturity with school stuffs. Consequently, there was a general agreement among this group about the importance of extracurricular programs that can take care of their students' non-academic needs. It was also discovered that the principals and staffs of St. Mary's High favor an integrated approach to the care of their students, as they apply both the structured and unstructured extracurricular programs to achieve this aim. Observably, they do not address their extracurricular care for their students as "Pastoral Care". Instead, everyone in St. Mary's High is familiar with the phrase "being Marist". Objectively, their explanation about the care they give to their students in their application of "being Marist" is equivalent to what it means to pastorally care for the students. As insiders and caregivers, the participating principals and staffs also mentioned the different programs which their school recognizes as non-academic care for their students. Mention was also made about how they monitor the

progress and continuity of the care they give to their students, as well as the difficulties and challenges they encounter. A more detailed description of the findings from this group will be discussed under the various themes below:

### ***Knowledge of the Mission of the Catholic Schools in the Education of Students***

The motto that describes St. Mary's High is "*Non Scholae, Sed Vitae*" which means "*Not for School, But for Life*". This phrase speaks volumes about this school's approach to Catholic education. Therefore, in describing the school administration's knowledge of and approach to the church's mission in the education of the young, one of the staffs from the religious ministries department stated: "our effort as a school is to prepare the students for life and not just for the class academic subjects". She also made further description in these words:

Each person is made in the likeness and image of God. So, the church's perspective is to help each child develop in that image of God in all the ways they are meant to develop and become the persons God created them to be. So, our education system is not just about the head, it is also about the heart, and the whole person. This is my understanding about the church's mission in the education of the young people.

### ***Unfamiliarity with the Term "Pastoral Care" for Students***

An unexpected discovery was the fact that although the principals and the staff are knowledgeable about the church's mission in the education of the young, the term "pastoral care for students" is not a familiar terminology used in St. Mary's High School. While the students are not at all, familiar with the term "pastoral care", the principals and the staff expressed their knowledge about its ordinary meaning as a church-related

terminology, but do not apply it as the nomenclature that describes the extracurricular programs in their school. Thus, the religious ministry department would refer to pastoral care as “campus ministry” or “student counseling”. However, at a closer examination of the whole extra-curricular care they give to their students as a school, and in relation to the pastor-flock relationship, it was then discovered that they truly have been rendering pastoral care to their students even without using that nomenclature. Observably, the principals, the staff, and students in St. Mary’s High, are more familiar with the term “being Marist”. The term “Marist” is an adjective that comes from the name “Mary”. Therefore, it describes the virtues of Mary, and simply means “like Mary”. The Mary being referred to here is Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ. The full meaning of “being Marist” would therefore read “like Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ”. The Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ is an outstanding figure in the Catholic Christian faith. The Catholic Church teaches her faithful (old and young) to approach life in the manner that Mary did while living in flesh and blood. Therefore, in his own word, one of the principals said:

I think the biggest term we use here, and which we understand to be pastoral care or extra-curricular caring for the students will be “Marist”. When we talk about being Marist, we are talking about the values which are associated with the charismas of the Blessed Virgin Mary – the Mother of Jesus Christ. These virtues are: Presence, Simplicity, Family Spirit, Love of work, and in the way of Mary. I think that for us, Marist is synonymous to pastoral care. It is a kind of pseudonym for pastoral care.

The responses from the other staffs also resonated with what this principal said.

### ***Perception of Teenage Problems and Need for Effective Pastoral Care for Students***

Strategies associated with pastoral care were identified as a remedy to many challenges faced by students. The school officials, who were interviewed, agreed on the fact that students have so many problems that are not academic in nature, and that these problems are strong enough to impact their lives negatively or obstruct their academic journeys if neglected. All the interviewees came up with examples of non-academic problems experienced by students. For example, the religious coordinator expressed concern that:

Students now, express a lot of anxiety. They worry about their self-image, what they look like physically. They worry that they are not smart enough, not strong or athletic enough. They worry that they aren't unique enough, so, some don't value their own self-worth. They struggle also with issues like domestic violence, sexual violence, drug use and abuse. So many students struggle not only because they go to school, but because they have additional jobs which they have to do in order to support their parents and take care of their younger siblings. So, they have way more responsibilities than I had when growing up.

One of the school counselors also conveyed his experiences with students' non-academic problems in this way:

Yes. Obviously we see a lot of problems in our students. The first one is the pandemic problem in terms of the fact that they have stayed home for so long or that some have chosen to go to school in a hybrid format, while some chose to remain home instead of doing the hybrid format. Currently, we are noticing that some of the freshmen and sophomores have problems of immaturity and school

avoidance. Some also avoid coming to school because they have the problems of anxiety caused by loud noise in the school cafeteria during lunch time. We are thinking that it is the residual effects of the pandemic that is causing such behaviors. So we've seen the problem of maturity and other residual effects of the pandemic. The other one unfortunately is the issue of some students' vaping marijuana in the school. Not quite long ago, two female students were suspended for vaping nicotine in one of the school bathrooms. Therefore yes, we have been encountering a number of things that have been affecting the students.

The principal also mentioned problems like – crippling or clinical level anxiety and fear associated with being freshmen in a new high school environment. These problems do affect students in the sense that they prevent them from actively sharing their thoughts during classroom learning or socializing properly with other students. The guidance counselor hinted that the school always tries to help students with the above problems or other behavioral problems, but refers serious cases to the experts outside the school.

***Specific Pastoral Care Programs/Activities in St. Mary's High and How They Are Offered to the Students***

In an effort to help their students to achieve academic success and total wellbeing, the administrators of St. Mary's High, put in place myriads of pastoral care activities. St. This school adopts a combination of the different approaches to pastoral care in schools: structured, unstructured, developmental, and proactive approaches, depending on the needs of students at a time. The principal made some clarification regarding the types of cares offered to the students at St. Mary's High. In his words:



There are different branches of care, but they can be summarized into different two types of cares: the official and unofficial care. The officially recognized cares by the school are guidance and counseling programs, mission trips, campus ministry, and religious education. Plus, there is the unofficially recognized care which includes how the faculty and staff deal with students on everyday basis, the care the teachers have which they put into their teaching. It's not only preparing lessons using Apps, textbooks, or workbooks, but trying to use the subject they teach to help students understand their worldview and lessons about life. There are also other efforts we make as a school to assist our students on their journey to maturity and adulthood.

Every student is attached to a guidance counselor so that if there are issues, the person would have to look at them globally. In this school, the campus ministry department works hand-in-hand with the guidance counseling department because, a lot of times, the campus ministry would discover something about a student and would have to refer it to the counseling department, because the student involved needs therapy. For instance, when a student is bereaved or suffers a traumatic experience.

Apart from the religious activities and the counseling efforts, students also have a retreat class specifically devoted to human developments. The religious coordinator explained saying:

We have a retreat program that is developmental for the kids so that they can see that they are more than the academics. This program is organized according to their developmental stages i.e., what they are ready to do at their different ages. It is in this developmental retreat program that the peer leaders come in to talk to

them. Part of this program is structured and some of it is proactive. We also have the campus ministry meetings, we have service meetings, and we bring up topic to help prepare them for what they may face in the future, or help to uncover something that we should help them to deal with.

It was also found out that the department of counseling in St. Mary's High, involves "peer group counseling" in the developmental program for their students. The peer group counseling was inspired by an afterschool program called "S.M.I.L.E. This program was started in 1965 by one of the staff who showed great interest in the development of the young students. By 1971, S.M.I.L.E had become a major afterschool program. S.M.I.L.E. is an acronym which stands for "Something More In Life's Experience". S.M.I.L.E involves different discussion groups. One was the bereavement group for students who had lost a parent or sibling. One is for students who are shy or in the autistic spectrum. Another one is an open group where any student could come and speak in general about any topic or anything that bordered them, and these discussions were always guided. Therefore, since 1971, every sophomore experiences peer group counseling. According to the counselor, peer group counseling is an outstanding extracurricular program that was marked out for all sophomores for one full year. The program is confidential, private, and there is no grading for it. It occurs in the guidance counselor's office, and it meets every other day for one marked monthly period. The peer group counselor has many seniors that help to facilitate the group, and they are called "peer group leaders" (PGL), and there is also a small group of sophomores at a time. The discussion in this program covers everything from family to drugs, alcohol, sexual relationships, faith, fears, mental health, discrimination, sexism and racism or any discomfort that students experience. The

department of counseling carries out this program during the day in school, and in partnership with the campus ministry department.

Further explanation was made by the counselor on how the peer group counseling activities worked. Thus, he said:

This is an instance of how we carry out this program: the first quarter (comprising four groups) goes from September to mid-November. So, when the kids leave my class, they go to another religious class called “personal growth”. And that class is normally more than a normal class size, so my group will have 6 sophomores in it. At the same time another colleague of mine has another group of 6 sophomores in it, and another colleague also has 6 sophomores in this group. Therefore, there are about 18 sophomores gathering for this section. And at the end of the first quarter the reverse happens. The 18 students who attended the personal growth and religious class get spread out into 3 different groups of peer group leaders (PGL). As time passed-by, we realized that we could have every student do this as part of an extra curriculum and that’s what we do now.

The director of communications sees the afterschool extracurricular programs as the life-wire of the school, and one that the students place great value in attending because of the new inspirations they gain through it. He summarizes:

In terms of the after-school programs, I think majority of the students utilize those opportunities. It is the life-wire of the school and students love to attend them because it helps them to find new inspirations and interests through their interactions with one another. And I don’t think there is anything in those

activities that they don't like, including our over 60 different clubs for the students' social life.

Through my interviews with the staff it was found out that the administrators of St. Mary's High, creates many opportunities for their students to go on field trips which give them the opportunities to learn practical charitable services to humanity, especially those in need. The counselor revealed that their field trips is done yearly, and takes them to the international, national, and local places. It was revealed to me that these trips were made possible *ab initio* through a service society called St. Marcellin Champagnat Society or SMCS for short. This society has provided students of St. Mary's High with many opportunities to learn humanitarian services, as they travelled to places such as: LOURDES in France where they gave companionship to the sick, and the faithful, and to help move people around, in addition to serving food at the tables; El Paso, Texas where they got involved with the border emersion type of services to migrants called "El Encuentro Project"; Nicaragua, Peru, Jamaica, and Dominican Republic. They have also gone to the North/South Dakota through the American-Indian Reservation and to the New Orleans a few years after the Hurricane Katrina. Then, after the Hurricane Sandy affected New York, instead of doing international or domestic trips, the school did two trips locally to help people who had their houses or parts of their houses destroyed. These field trips and mission opportunities expose the students and adult staff of St. Mary's High school to extend pastoral care ministry at different levels. It is therefore quite obvious that administrators of St. Mary's High have many opportunities for the holistic development of their students, apart from academic pursuits.

## ***Opinions of Administrators and Staff About the Response of Students to Pastoral Care Programs***

The administrators and staffs responded perceptively to the question about whether students comply freely with the pastoral care programs or out of the fear of being disciplined. The responses from the staff me with the information that students seem to be complying with the pastoral care programs in their school for different reasons including an understanding of the benefits and the long-term effects of active participation in the programs. The coordinator for religious ministry summarized this:

They are freely participating in the programs because they understand the values. For instance, we had two students who were on retreat last year who needed psycho evaluation because they were trying to commit suicide. But now, they are part of our leadership team based on how they were loved and cared for during their crises moments. They were dismissed small kids who were helped to pick themselves up. I could give you the story about every one of the students, about how they have grown and developed. It is not because we are the authorities. It is rather because of real relationships.

The assistant principal sees the students' response as being driven by the mixture of – grading, relationships, and faith encounters with God:

Obviously, we have the religious class and the students are graded for it. But I think that as the students are exposed to the lived faith through the different opportunities, they encounter God and as they do that, they feel really good doing so. And I don't know if they can say that this is why they feel good about it. But it is that encountering of God that allows them to feels so.

The principal equally views the compliance by students due partly to fear of discipline, peer-to-peer connections, and genuine efforts, thus:

I think there is some compliance by fear and this is a terrible motivator. But I also think that most students feel connection to each other, feel connection to the school and to the Marist values. I think that they are motivated by who they are and who they want to become. Nevertheless, they are teenagers and teenagers act like teenagers. Sometimes they act foolishly from anger or jealousy. But overall, I think I have witnessed a lot of pastoral care from student to student, and I feel that most of that is genuine and not from fear because if fear is their motivator, they are not just going to get a lot of output from the program.

The guidance counseling department views the compliance of the students from how they (counselors) are able to help students participate in the program. They set examples by sharing their own stories first, so that students can have the courage to share theirs too.

Hence, one of the counselors said:

Because it is mandatory that students are in these programs, we work so hard to know our students, we do a lot of leading by examples. So the peer group counselors, the seniors, and the peer group leaders, share their own aspects of personal and family lives, or faith journeys with the students. It can really be any topic that comes up. We the counselors and leaders are the initiators of the discussions, so that the younger students could see that it's a safe place to trust, and can bring their own stories forward. And this has been really worthwhile and of course we meet individually with students about anything personal to them that they need to talk about: personal life, family, dating, academics, stress,

depression, anxiety, and anything. And if we need to refer the students to an outside agency/therapy because they need it, we do so. This is the role we have as guidance and counselors.

### ***Difficulties Associated With Pastoral Care of Students in St. Mary's High***

The major aim of pastoral care in a school is to improve the individual life of students holistically. However, the monitoring of the individual growth of each student in the program is not an easy thing to do. The success of pastoral care is reflected by how the students care for and embrace each other despite their differences. The witness of this big picture of general care and embrace among students can lead to a hasty but false conclusion that every individual student is growing equally. However, one of the administrators stated – “As a teacher in the class, there are a couple of students that I know. But a lot of the things I know about the students are through some statistics and through a kind of anecdotal interaction with them”. This implies that it is difficult for the administration to monitor the progress or growth of individual student. Further, the administrator expressed the difficulties the school is having with monitoring the progress of individual students, in this way:

There are a couple of things we do here and we see them from the campus ministry. The campus ministry has tried to quantify the service hours that the students are given. And this is something that the students love themselves. In terms of service hours, this refers to the students practicing their faith according to what they have been taught here. Monitoring the progress of individual student is challenging to us but that's what the campus ministry has started doing.

However, the coordinator for the campus ministry explained how the use of metrics helps

the monitoring of the students' progress in campus ministry:

I do things based on metrics whereby I look at how many students are participating in these extra activities this year and compare it with what we had last year. And if there is increased participation, increased number of students who want to participate in the faith-life of the church and the service programs and leading in retreats and other activities with the students, I will say that that is evidence of the effectiveness in what we are trying to do.

### ***Strategies for Continuity of Pastoral Care in St. Mary's High***

For a private school like St. Mary's High which already has the pastoral care program for the students (albeit addressed as being Marist) the idea of how to ensure its continuity is very important. This importance stems from the fact that as a well-known school, generations of students would pass through it, and it is hoped that all students who attend St. Mary's High would receive similar care. Therefore, since every member of the faculty and staff is considered as a potential caregiver to the students, I enquired to know from the administrators of St. Mary's High, the steps they take in order to make sure that they don't lack continuity of pastoral program for their students. Consequently, I raised the idea of periodic training of the faculty and staff on what is expected of them. However, one of the participating principals saw the solution to continuity in the strategic hiring of the right persons for their school jobs and in the collaboration among the staff:

I think the biggest thing is who you are hiring. And I think it is a combination of people who simply understand the importance of pastoral care naturally and have shown it in their careers in one way or the other. We also hire a lot of graduates who have been through this school, who have a lot of experiences through it and



can pass on their experiences to the students. We also hire people who embrace the Catholic faith and doctrines, the Marist way of being. We don't just hire for the sake of academic progress; we hire based on what impact they are going to make on the school as a whole. So when you hire that way and encourage collaboration among all, the amount of training you need to do becomes less.

Participants also mentioned the formal Marist professional development weekends as a valuable opportunity for their constant growth and knowledge updates. This PD is specific for the new faculty and staff, with the title "Sharing your call". It is also periodically arranged by the Marist provincial office. Apart from the PDs that help to train the new faculty and staff, St. Mary's High has two other programs that help the faculty and staff to update themselves: the Professional Learning Community (PLC) for academic growth and the Professional Praying Community (PPC) for spiritual growth. These programs ensure that while the faculty and staff are taking care of the student, they are also receiving the care they need to be more effective in their jobs.

### ***Strategies Used to Communicate the Effort of St. Mary's High School to the Public***

A section of the in-depth interview was devoted to finding out how the communications department of St. Mary's High disseminates information in regard to the pastoral care of the students. It is also important to this research to find out how the school communicates its effort in ensuring the holistic development of its students to the parents and the public. Therefore, the first discovery made is that communications at St. Mary's High is more external than internal. The director explained further:

Communication at St. Mary's High is very much about external communications, sort of – marketing, social media, News, Reporting. And we also do more creative subjects like – signs, visual abstracts and some website works.

He also explained the extent to which the department contributes to the internal communications to the students about school programs and activities:

As far as communicating to the students is concerned, we send out emails to inform them about events coming up and initiatives. That is the major means we use to communicate to them. But there is an App that we use called “Remind” which enhances text messaging between the students and moderators in a more secure way when the school is not in session. We also use the Blackboard where we can send out messages to the students. In regard to the reporting of incidences that happened in school to the faculty and staff, and to students and parents, we use an App called the “V-alert”. The V-alert could be sent to, to inform them of some kind of situation.

Enquiries were also made in regard to the strategy of communication used by St. Mary's High, which the public schools do not have. This is how the director explained it:

I don't know what the presence of many public schools is on social media, but we try to appeal to the interests and sensibilities of students through the social media whenever it is possible. One of the things we have learned is that student like to see themselves on the instagram page; they get excited about it and want to show their friends things they have done to get featured on social media. We try to make sure that our social media pages are shared to and viewed by parents and alumni. We try to share consistent and relevant news, the photographs of students

during the various activities, and students' activities. We know that parents shop through the school websites when making their choices. And we try to make our pages very interesting to read. I need to say also that many people know more about St. Mary's High now than before because of the effects of the social media. In the past we used to rely for the advertizing of our school through the students, their families, and the Catholic Church gatherings. But, not anymore! Nowadays, immigrant who arrived newly can surf the website and read about St. Mary's High and make the choices for the schooling of their children.

Therefore, communications department at St. Mary's High as it were, sells the school to the public through the media in regard to the possibilities that exist in it for students who attend it, and also creates awareness to the students about what is available to them and the benefits for their lives. It was also important to discover that the communication department does not send out messages to the parents on behalf of the principal. Instead, messages that go to the parent are updated and many times, sent directly from the office of the principal. However, the communications department could offer to proofread the letters and provide the principal with any other support that he might need to do the sending. Lastly, since St. Mary's High is a fully independent private Catholic school, the administration does not have regular communication with the diocese of Brooklyn, except when requesting for the Bishop's pastoral visit to the students, or when expressing an opinion through the diocesan newspaper – "The Tablet".

### **The Students: The Subjects and Care Recipients**

The main question that guided the focus group discussion with the students was: How do students in the Catholic high schools perceive the effects of pastoral care on their

personal social wellbeing? The focus group discussion gave the students the opportunity to express their experiences and narrate from their perspectives, the many problems which are non-academic in nature, but which nevertheless besiege the life of students. Similar to the participating principals and staffs, students expressed their awareness in different ways and with different examples. The discussion also provided for them the opportunity to explain what they feel they are gaining by participating in the pastoral care program of their school. The following themes emerged from the focus group discussion: familiarity with the problems that can distract academic progress; awareness and indicators of the school's genuine caring efforts for students; consciousness about God and life of faith; positive impacts on life; opportunities for personal development and growth; feelings of safety and sense of belonging; culture of peer-to-peer counseling; other positive impacts due to pastoral care program; and support for the extension of pastoral care to all other schools.

#### ***Awareness of the School's Genuine Caring Efforts for the Wellbeing of Students***

Most of the students who participated in the group interview were seniors in their final year (i.e., 4<sup>th</sup> year and 12<sup>th</sup> grade) in St. Mary's High. Therefore, they were expected to know about the programs in their school that may be considered pastoral care. However, it was observed that the students are not familiar with the term "pastoral care". But when it comes to the knowledge about the practical caring efforts of their school, the students proved that they are aware of their school's effort in ensuring holistic formation for all enrolled students. This finding further confirmed my earlier observation that, although students in different schools settings engage in pastoral care programs regularly, they do not usually identify the care they receive with this unique term. In the case of St.

Mary's High, the administrators confirmed during their interviews that their students are more familiar with the term "being Marist rather than "pastoral care". For the administrators, helping the students to become Marists is synonymous with giving them pastoral care.

### ***Familiarity with Teenage Problems that Distract Their Academic Progress***

The students were in total agreement about the fact that there are many problems that besiege their adolescent stage of life, which also affect their academic journeys if there are no effective interventions. Students mentioned problems with long-term effects such as: health issues (e.g., anxiety), vaping, drug abuse, smoking marijuana, alcoholism, sexual abuse and teenage pregnancy. They also mentioned short term bad behaviors that may affect their academic progress and wellbeing, such as: disruption in the classroom, unwillingness to share knowledge or collaborate with others, disrespect for teachers and students, pride, domineering attitudes, strained relationships in the family or in school, apathy, nick-naming, hostile learning environment, family issues, and inability to balance play and study. In an effort to explain how the long-term problems affect the academic progress and wellbeing, one of the students stated:

For instance, students who are constantly reporting to school sick, whether it is natural sickness or self-inflicted through vaping or abuse of drugs, do not normally finish up their schooling. They often drop along the way. Also, teenage female students who experience accidental pregnancies feel shy to mingle with other students, and this may cause early withdraw from school.

Another student also tried to explain how the short-term problems affect their academic life and wellbeing:

I feel like when you are trying to learn, you have to pay all attention to what you are learning. But if you are in the classroom and have all sorts of issues hanging on you, you quickly lose focus. Think for instance about a student who is experiencing strained relationship with peer or family issues. The student cannot concentrate during lecture and may not even be able to finish his or her weekly assignments.

Yet, another student spoke about the effects of over-doing things. She gave example with the inability of many students to strike a balance between sporting and their study time or having too much responsibility at home such that they cannot study well. These inputs from the students clearly indicate that they are aware of the many problems that affect the wellbeing and academic journey of teenage students.

### ***Consciousness about God and Practical Life of Faith***

All the students who participated in this study agreed that the campus ministry aspect of their school's pastoral care program helps them to be conscious of God's existence and to know that God is inseparably involved in the life of human beings. This aspect of the students' experience is very important because, the school is the learning ground for all kinds of knowledge - practical and theoretical. Many students may be influenced negatively or positively for the rest of their lives due to what they learned while in high school. In practice, the effort of the campus ministry at St. Mary's High stresses the fact that no matter the faith background of any young student, they should be helped to grow with the knowledge and understanding that God exists, and that spiritual life is important.

### ***Opportunities for Personal Growth and Development of Life***

In various ways, the student-participants indicated that the pastoral care they received in St. Mary's helps them to form a strong foundation for their future lives. Their claims were indicated by the phrases they used, such as: "encouragement to develop talent" "opportunities to engage in meaningful relationships" "peer-to-peer support" "family and community oriented" "feeling of sense of value" and "help to address students' inquisitiveness". They also mentioned that the many opportunities for voluntary services which they have help them to both inspire others and be inspired by others as they discover new ways of doing things. All the participants expressed the fact that it makes them happy to know that someone values them and is close-by to give them support and advice when they needed them most. In these words, one of the students explained. "When teachers and the counselors make themselves available to the students under any circumstances, it is easy to see that they truly want you to succeed and progress in your learning".

### ***Safety and Sense of Belonging to the School Community***

Students are of the opinion that if the teachers show genuine care to their students, it will make them more obedient to school authorities and create less animosity among the students, and between the teachers and students, thereby making the school safer for all. For example, one student stated:

When teachers make students feel that they are valued and have someone to talk to when they have something bordering them, it keeps the school safer for all. Therefore, the more caring teachers are, the more students are willing to hear them out and obey them.

Two of the students who joined in the group interview had been in the public school before enrolling at St. Mary's. Both students had compared the two school systems and confirmed that they feel safer and more motivated to do things in St. Mary's than in their former public schools. Two other students spoke about the support system in St. Mary's which is rare in the public school. One of them said:

I feel that here in St. Mary's specifically, there is always something like support system. Another aspect of St. Mary's is that the teachers are always available to cheer you on what you are able to achieve. They show you how to get involved and serve the marginalized with all the help you are receiving at St. Mary's.

Yet, another student stated this:

I think one of the big things that happen here at St. Mary's is that –you get to develop faster, your talents or who you are faster than those in the public school.

This early and faster development can impact your future life positively.

### ***Culture of Peer-to-Peer Counseling***

Students spoke about St. Mary's High as a school with the culture of students helping each other i.e., peer-to-peer counseling. The older students help the younger ones or newcomers to know about their school and to get settled. This culture encourages friendship and companionship among the students, which in turn makes the school a home for all students. Obviously, this is one of the fruits of the school's pastoral care. The narrative about how the peer counseling began had been established somewhere in the above narratives. One of the students described his experience in this way:

I think St. Mary's does a great job of helping students take care of students, because I am in a class where we help to talk to sophomores about the issues they



go through. So the pastoral care we receive and pass unto other students, is done in hope that the students will pass unto those following them, what they have received.

It was also observed that the students use the name “buddy” to describe the companionship of the older students to the younger ones. This feature of peer-to-peer counseling is very rare in the public schools where most of the time students rather form gangs to fight each other.

### ***Other Positive Impacts of Pastoral Care on Students***

Students voiced other positive impacts that their school’s pastoral care programs have made on them. Summarily, all the students agreed that the pastoral care they receive, promotes: safe learning environment; sense of responsibility and holistic development; positive attitudes and outlooks on life; sense of justice between and among students; Culture of collaboration among students unlike the competitiveness that is often seen in the public schools; and the process of academic learning and achievement of success by students due to conducive school atmosphere. A few direct sentences from the students are: *“I believe the program ensures safety in the learning environment by instilling in students, a sense of peace and justice toward others”*. From another student - *“I also believe that such programs have the potential to nurture the culture of good relationship and respect among students and their teachers.”* Another opined - *“I believe that it helps students to develop a sense of responsibility and structure for their lives”*. Yet, one other said – *“I believe that pastoral care helps in the holistic formation of student for life”*. Finally, one student struck a note of gratitude, saying:

I feel that we are blessed to have the opportunity to be at St. Mary's High because of the positive care we receive here. There are too much negative behaviors in many public high schools. And I feel that the care we receive here we can extend to others.

### ***Support for the Implementation of Pastoral Care to All Other Schools***

Based on their experiences and perceived benefits from the pastoral care efforts of their school, all the participants students agreed and wished that all other schools should put in place the pastoral care programs and activities in their students. They expressed their wishes in these words:

I think secondary schools should implement a pastoral care program even at the junior high level"; "Students need good direction to stand up to the temptations of social media and peer pressure"; "I believe that practicing such extra-curricular programs will be of great benefits for the school-community, for the students, and their families.

Therefore, as the researcher, I would say that, based on my experiences and observations, the literatures that were reviewed and the findings from interviews with principals, and comments from students and other people who are involved in the education of the young, pastoral care is very important for all grade level students.

### **The Parents: The Outsiders and Evaluators**

The contribution of the four parents who participated in this study increased my understanding of how parents perceive the pastoral care effort in high schools. The four parents were interviewed individually over the phone. Nevertheless, they all agreed on the importance and benefits of pastoral care for teenage students. The perspectives of

parents can be articulated within the following themes: the awareness of various problems associated with teenage life, motives for the choice of St. Mary's High school for their kids, the positive changes observed in students as a result of pastoral care, and the differences between Catholic private schools and public schools in terms of caring for the students.

### ***The Awareness of Various Problems Associated with Teenage Life***

Parents are quite aware of the fact that besides their academic struggles, young teenage students also have other problems that are not academic in nature. Some of the teenage problems as mentioned by the parents include but not limited to: poor self-esteem and body-image, anti-social life, too much alcohol consumption, teenage sexual issues, and too much exposure to the social media. They also believe that these problems are strong enough to mar the future of the young students if they are neglected. One of the parents raised the fact that many parents may truly wish to give their children the best preparation for a productive adult life, but may never know exactly how to achieve such feat. Therefore, this parent opined that great education without the moral part of being human cannot help the society in the end. She also strongly believes that the building up of the moral part of students starts at a very young age. She stated:

I believe in students, I believe that as they grow into adulthood everybody could be well rounded. You have a great education but you lack the moral part of being a human like - being kind, being thoughtful and thinking about others. If you don't have it, the society will break down. That's number one. I believe that it starts at a very young age. There are families that always want the best for their children, but they may not know how to prepare them to be adults.

The above opinion supports the fact that the pastoral care efforts in the high schools is a good idea because, it targets the formation of the young students in the areas of life that truly helps them to fit into the society apart from their academics.

***Motives for the Choice of St. Mary's High School for Their Kids***

Parent stated that they were motivated to enroll in St. Mary's High school for reasons such as: holistic development of their children for productive adult life and contribution to their families and communities; safety and academic success of their children; happiness of their children and zeal for personal development of themselves; knowledge of God and respect for fellow human beings. In narrating her personal experience about education in a Catholic school as a teenager and what she gained, one of the parents stated:

I can tell you that being a product of Catholic education myself and coming up to ranks in education, I felt that I had something a little bit extra than my friends who attended public schools. And now as I moved on with my life, I work in a public school, and I see a big difference in terms of what I see there and what I feel I got and what the kids are getting by attending the Catholic school. They are getting more nurturing and more awareness not only in terms of religion or life of faith, but also in terms of norms and values, and it's something all of the staff model everyday and show to the children.

All the participating parents expressed their understanding on the necessity of an extracurricular school program like the pastoral care for young students in general. They also agree that students who experience pastoral care programs are often more prepared for life than their counterparts who did not.

Furthermore, one of the parents, whose son migrated from grammar school to St. Mary's High, explained why the migration had to happen:

Prior to coming to St. Mary's High, my son attended Grammar schools, and always did well even as a younger middle school student. However, I wanted him to experience something better. I attended a Catholic school and I wanted him to also have the experience of attending a Catholic school.

For the sake of clarity, a grammar school is one of the different secondary schools in the history of education. Originally, its main distinguishing factor was that students who attended it learned the language of Latin. But more recently, it has become a state funded secondary school that offers admission to students based on their academic achievements and abilities, unlike the regular secondary schools. It is also believed that a higher percentage of students in grammar schools attend the university compared to the percentage of students who don't attend grammar schools.

Lastly, a parent revealed how the summer camp recruitment strategy organized yearly by St. Mary's High makes it to stand out above other high schools around, when making a choice for school enrollment:

This is what I feel made St. Mary's High to stand out. The school reached out to my son and the other incoming freshmen during the summer time and kept in touch with them, and they went on a weeklong camp which prepared them. The camping helped them to establish friendships with one another, and when they came in by September, that made a very good impression on them. No other school in the area does that kind of reach out exercise. And a lot of times, these freshmen enter the school being afraid because they don't know anybody.

Therefore, in summary, prior personal experiences of Catholic education and the pastoral care programs associated with it, awareness and understanding of solid foundation for life through pastoral life, and the search for better school, are uppermost in the motive of the parents for choosing St. Mary's High school for their kids.

***The Positive Changes Observed in Students as a Result of Pastoral Care Programs***

When parents enroll their kids in a private Catholic high school like St. Mary's High, they also hope to witness in them, positive change in attitudes and outlook on life. The parents in this study spoke about the positive changes they see in their kids as a result of the pastoral care programs in St. Mary's High:

My daughter is a freshman and has only been at St. Mary's for a few weeks.

However, I have co-workers whose kids attend St. Mary's. One said to me that since her kid started attending St. Mary's, he has gone through some transformation that he is now acting so responsibly and tries to do well. He is like a different person. This is the type of things that put St. Mary's on top of our list when we were shopping for high schools

Another parent narrated the changes she witnesses in her kids who attend St. Mary's High, in the form of their being more friendly with other kids that attend the same school. The observation of this parent solidifies the claim students made during the focus group discussion that St. Mary's High is family and community oriented and encourages relationships amongst students and teachers.

## *The Differences Between Catholic Private Schools and Public Schools in Terms of Caring for the Students*

Parents did not condemn the public schools as institutions of learning to be avoided by teenage students. Instead, they see the differences between the public schools and private Catholic schools in terms of their administrative styles, school ethos, and school atmosphere. Hence, one parent said:

The public schools have guidance and counselors; they have good teachers to whom students can always go. There are really many good people out there who have good religious backgrounds. So it comes from different places. The public school is not a bad place, it's also a good place. But it's just different from Catholic school administration and environment.

It is important to reiterate that there are many counseling opportunities available in public schools, such as: mental health counseling, psychological counseling, medical counseling, and also services rendered by social workers. Currently, as a result of the after-effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' behaviors, the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has been introduced into the school curricular programs. As a subject, Social Emotional Learning teaches students issues like: respect, punctuality, behaviors, conducts, and manners. However, while all the above efforts are for the wellbeing of the students, none of them can take the place of pastoral care for students. While effective and genuine pastoral care is described as a holistic approach to the care and wellbeing of students, the other counseling efforts mentioned above, address compartments of the students' lives.

In summary, the data from the findings truly expose the fact that the administrators of the Catholic high schools understand the delicate and impressionable behavior of teenage students, and the importance of having extracurricular programs that target their holistic formation while still in school, apart from their academic endeavors. Findings also expose the fact that students are aware of their non-academic problems and their need for guidance. The cumulative responses from students indicate that they are happier and more responsive to school attendance because of the genuine caring relationships they that exist in their school. Finally, the perspective of the parents as indicated by their responses during their interviews, support the fact that school attendance and learning of academic subjects are not enough to prepare the teenagers for their future life of adulthood. Parents expressed their agreement that an extracurricular program like pastoral care is important in high schools.



## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

The findings were obtained by me through first-hand personal observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups discussions, over-the-phone interviews, and recordings made with a digital audio recorder. Several themes emanated from the transcription and analysis of the interview data. Certain themes were selected to encapsulate the essential findings from the interviews, as related to the pastoral care for high school students. In chapter 5, I will discuss my findings in regard to the effects of pastoral care for the academic achievements and wellbeing of high school students. Finally, I will discuss the relationship between the current findings and prior research findings.

Therefore, this study was carried out to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. How does a Catholic private high school understand and approach pastoral care program for students?
2. How do the administrators and teachers in the Catholic high schools perceive the effects of pastoral care on their students?
3. How do students in the Catholic high schools, perceive the effects of pastoral care on their personal social wellbeing?
4. How do the parents of students in a Catholic private high school perceive the effects of pastoral care on their children?

The big take-away from this research effort is the discovery of the fact that the presence of pastoral care and the programs associated with it can play a big role in the administration of a successful school. The efficacy of the pastoral care program in schools lies in the understanding that school administrators and teachers should be seen

as leaders and care-givers, students should also be seen as the followers and care-receivers, while parents should be seen as partners to the school in terms of observing their kids and giving feedbacks to the school. This is the underlying principle for the pastoral care initiatives in schools.

Having given detailed responses to each of the above research questions in chapter four “findings”, I will make further discussion on issues that are associated with the practice of pastoral care in high schools as evidenced in St. Mary’s High. These discussions will happen under different subtitles, as this approach will enable a detailed description of facts about how pastoral care programs are carried out in the Catholic private schools like the St. Mary’s High school.

## **Discussion of Results**

### ***Awareness***

From the onset the rationale for this study has been to find out how effective pastoral care helps in the academic achievements and wellbeing of students. Therefore, one indicator of effective pastoral care would be that, the administrators, teachers, and their students should be aware of the non-academic problems of students, and the goals and importance of pastoral care in their school. This awareness is paramount because in a situation where the school leaders, teachers, and students are not on the same page about a school program, that program normally lacks effectiveness in its implementation in that particular school. Another indicator of effectiveness would come from the observation of the parents on their kids and the extent to which they confirm and communicate their observations about the effort of the school. In this study, the first thing to note is that the administrators, teachers, students, and parents of the students of St. Mary’s High school

are truly aware that in addition to academic efforts, students have non-academic problems which, if not attended to would become obstacles to the academic successes and wellbeing, and as they progress into the adult members of the society.

Similar to several other researchers who have done studies on the importance of pastoral care for students, I also made several important discoveries. For instance, Horsman (2004) discovered that “violence” is a factor that affects the academic progress of students; Adelaida (2015) discovered – sexual violence, anger, and negative relationships; Kyriacou (2017) discovered – cyber bullying and social media problems; Banks (2018) cited problem like - bereavement, parental separation, domestic abuse, and toxic home life; and Kagema et. al. (2019) discovered students’ problems like - unhealthy social networking e.g., bullying (physical, verbal, cyber). In mentioning the behaviors and problems they feel are obstructive to the successes and wellbeing, the students who participated in this study mentioned issues like: disruptions during the classroom lectures, disrespect for teachers and fellow students, hostile learning environment, and unwillingness to share knowledge with others, apathy, and absenteeism. They also mentioned problems which are associated with life in the family and society, such as: strained relationships, sibling-quarrels, health issues, inability to balance studies and sports or home chores, problems related to sexual abuse, and vaping and use of drugs by young teenagers. The fact that the students are aware of and mentioned these many problems as factors that affect their academic successes and wellbeing, indicates that they would welcome and appreciate any programs which their schools put in place to help them deal with these issues and be guided to proper growth and development as

teenagers. Hence, the pastoral care program should be considered as a necessity in the administration of every high school.

### ***Consciousness about the Existence of God***

The school is the learning ground for all kinds of knowledge - practical and theoretical. Many students will be influenced negatively or positively for the rest of their lives due to what they learned while in school. As a pastor and an insider in the faith life of the Catholic Church, I have also observed that in our societies today, there are more elderly people (parents) than youths who are very conscious about the existence of God and spiritual realities. Perhaps this is because in our public schools, religion is taught both as history and a part of the school curriculum, but there is no concrete practical application to what is learned. Hence, aided by the constitutional separation between the state and the church the consciousness about God which is cultivated through prayer and other spiritual activities, and which also form part of what makes up the pastoral care program for teenage students, are forbidden in public schools. My opinion has been that if teenage students are given a foundational upbringing that takes into consideration, the holistic formation that makes them aware of the existence of God, the importance of self-worth, development of personal skills, and respect for human life, then the negative behaviors which flood the life of teenage students, would be drastically reduced. It is therefore important to suggest that teenage students should be helped to grow with the consciousness that God exists, that each person is unique and valuable, and that human life is sacred. All the participants in this study made reference to pastoral care as a program that helped them to be conscious of God's existence and to know that God is inseparably involved in the life of human beings.

### *Approach*

Purdy (2011), Best (1999a:2002), and Cross, Lester, and Barnes (2004), had discussed the different approaches adopted by different school in the provision of pastoral care for the students. Such approaches include - reactive, proactive, developmental, and promotional or managerial approaches. As I observed, the pastoral care program in St. Mary's High is a combination of the different approaches according to the needs of individual students. The approach to pastoral care as employed by St. Mary's High, takes consideration of all aspects of the life of their students as human persons: physical, mental, social, and psychological. In fact, it is as Rieger (1990) opined, a "ministry of care" that incorporates the vertical and horizontal relationships, providing hope, healing, and direction to individuals (students).

St. Mary's High has several programs through which students can develop themselves faster or find wellbeing for their lives. These programs include: faith or religious ministry and service hours, counseling programs, peer-to-peer counseling programs, yearly field trips which provide them with the opportunities to render humanitarian services to the needy and of course, the sporting activities, etc. A further reflection on the combination of pastoral care approaches as seen in St. May's High reveals that pastoral care has several dimensions. For instance: spiritual dimension (e.g., the religious ministry or faith activities organized for the students), a psychological dimension (e.g., the counseling efforts made by the school to help the students), physical dimension (e.g., sporting activities and other games), a social dimensions (e.g., the community-style relationships and other clubs existent in the school for the students), academic dimension (e.g., teachers using their subjects and embellishing it with practical

examples in life to enrich understanding by the children), humanitarian dimension (which manifests itself in the yearly international, national, and local trips undertaken by the school to give student the opportunity to learn by practice).

### ***Positive Impact of Pastoral Care on Students***

The findings from this study suggest that effective pastoral care can positively impact the students' lives and by extension, their school communities. Therefore, the principals and the staff who participated in this study agree that the pastoral care effort has positive impacts on the students and the school community. These positive impacts can be seen from the point of view of the safety, teaching students the practice of peace and justice among themselves and for others, and to shun violence. These virtues are rarely seen in the schools that do not have effective program of care for their students. The positive impacts of pastoral care are also extended to the holistic formation of students, and the promotion of their academic learning. All the participants agreed with me on this issue.

In conclusion, pastoral care can be very helpful in dealing with students' bad behaviors and attitudes should not be surprising because, it is a series of extra-curricular and non-examinable programs which the school puts in place to ensure that students value respect for their peers, their teachers, and other members of their school community. Effective pastoral care in secondary schools is practical in nature, and is made visible through such roles as: helping acts done towards the healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciling and nurturing of individual students or group of students, whose troubles and concerns arise in the context of their daily struggles to have smooth academic journeys and existence in life.

### ***The Theories by Clinebell and Lezotte Practically Applied***

The two theories that guided this study: The holistic approach by Howard Clinebell (2011) and the effective school model by Lawrence Lezotte (1991) were very evident in my findings. Clinebell (2011) approached the holistic development of individual persons as something that can be achieved through the restoration of a person's internal disorientations. Clinebell laid great emphasis on the use of counseling skills as the best approach to ensure this restoration, leading to the holistic development of an individual person, especially in the chronic situations in a person's life. Therefore, Clinebell emphasized that pastoral care should involve pastoral counseling and indicates that pastoral care counseling must be developed to achieve the goals of education. I also discovered that a very big part of the successes recorded in St. Mary's High is due to the presence of its effective campus ministry and faith activities which help students to be conscious about the existence of God and spiritual realities. St. Mary's High also has highly dedicated and full-time professional school counselors who organize individual and group counseling programs based on the need of the students. In addition to the normal individual counseling of troubled students, St. Mary's High also has an after S.M.I.L.E. school program and peer-to-peer counseling sessions. These provide great help in the caring and guiding of the teenage students at.

Similarly, Lezotte's (1991) ideas for effective school model are clearly mirrored in the administration and structures in St. Mary's High. Structurally, St. Mary's High has very attractive edifice, well organized with clean classrooms harboring twenty students to one teacher ratio, clean library, conference and administrative staff offices, dining rooms for students and staff. The fields for sporting activities and the entire school compound

are quite clean and attractive. Administratively, the principals and the staffs are dedicated and determined to achieve success in their mission of educating the teenage students entrusted to their care. Observably, the school environment is conducive and safe for the students' engagement with their learning and with one another in the school programs. In fact, in the three groups of interviewees for this study, mention was made about the safety of St. Mary's High school's environment and its family or community style of relationships. St. Mary's High has strong instructional leaders who frequently monitor the progress of its students through the use of data and other monitoring systems. Also, as confirmed by almost every interviewee, St. Mary's High has many opportunities to enhance the rapid personal development of students. Therefore, in my view as the researcher, St. Mary's High appears to be a school that is focused in fulfilling its mission statement "*Not for Education, but for life*". With the availability of professionals and the skills to deal with the internal and behavioral problems of individual students (Clinebell) and well organized administrative and external (or physical) structures, as well as a conducive school environment and good curricular (Lezotte), a high school like St. Mary's High is a perfect place for the teenage students to thrive in their academic and personal developments.

### ***The Idea of Collaboration Among Students***

The term collaboration appears regularly in the discussion about educational strategies. Simply put, collaboration implies a team or group work. The word "TEAM" here is also an acronym that succinctly explains the practical result of a group's work. In this sense, it means "Together Everyone Achieves More". The effort of collaboration in the administration of schools appears in different forms: among teachers, between



administrators, and between students. It takes place when members of an inclusive learning community work together in order to assist students to succeed in their academic endeavors. Today, many schools are still struggling with how to teach all their students well. However, experience has shown that when students collaborate in their classroom discussions, learning occurs easily. This fact was confirmed by the students who participated in this study. For them, their collaboration and knowledge sharing help them to achieve success in everything they do in their school. Therefore, effective collaboration between students should be encouraged in schools. Cozza (2017) wrote about the many advantages that are realized in schools when students of different ages learn together. My findings reveal that the continuous success being recorded in St. Mary's High is also due greatly to the collaboration between the administrators and the staff and all the different departments in the school. These hold meetings periodically and make informed decisions based on shared knowledge about their observations and findings from their daily school life and relationships with the students.

### ***The Continuity of Effective Pastoral Care Efforts in Schools***

The effectiveness of pastoral care programs for the academic success and wellbeing of students cannot be denied. Therefore, there may be the need to ensure its continuity for the teenage students, especially in those schools where the program already exists. Perhaps the most important thing to consider is how to prepare the teachers for this task and make the program more effective and continuous in the daily care for the students.

However, the problem with many schools that started the pastoral care program is how to ensure its continuity. The administrators of St. Mary's High revealed the secrets of how to ensure continuity in this program. Some of the emphasized tips include:

*Strategic hiring:* As was revealed by the principal of the participating school, the key to continuity of pastoral program in a school, lies in hiring the right school personnel who believe that students have myriads of issues that accompany their young life as human persons apart from their academic endeavors, and who also understand the importance of helping them to deal with such issues. Strategic hiring also involves the effort to include some of the past students who went through the school and its pastoral care programs. Their contribution will be great as they will endeavor to pass onto the students, what they learned during their own time in school.

***Opportunity for Constant Growth and knowledge updates***

The schools that have pastoral care programs should make arrangement for periodic professional developments for their staffs. The PDs will give them the opportunity to share knowledge and skills with one another, as well as gather new ways to improve what they already have. Therefore, principals need to place the constant learning for teachers at the center, knowing that whatever new thing they learn is for the benefit of the students.

*Collaboration:* The advantages of collaborative efforts cannot be over emphasized, as it is the key to the success of any endeavor that involves a group work. Collaboration and sharing bring support and encouragement to the professional learning community (PLC) members, and ensure collective accountability. Like every other school improvement effort, pastoral care involves more than one department of a school. Therefore, there is

need for every department to constantly work together in pursuance of success and continuity in the program.

### **Relationship between the Current Findings and Prior Research Findings**

As already indicated in the literature review section of this study, many authors have researched and written about the various aspects of pastoral care of students. Although different terms are used to describe a school's extracurricular programs, there is a consensus about their importance for the promotion of the students' wellbeing and academic achievements. Similarly, the findings made from this current study are not different from the findings of previous researchers. For instance, the participating administrators and staffs admitted that students truly have problems that are not academic in nature, and that they have programs that can help them to deal with those problems. The students also admitted with several examples, while at the same time agreeing that they need help over certain behaviors and experiences in life which obstruct their academic journeys and life as teenagers. In the same way, parents acknowledge the value of pastoral care for teenage high school students, while giving examples of how this same extracurricular school program helped to prepare them for future life. I also benefitted from the practical experience of pastoral care in my high school years in the Catholic seminary school. Therefore, the findings of this study are credible.

### **Limitations of Study**

Firstly, this case study lacks scientific vigor and the information is tied to the particular school selected for the study. Precisely because this case study is tied to a particular private Catholic school (St. Mary's High), the findings reveal subjective, detailed, and original perception of the purposively selected participants on the topic of

study, and this process produced rich data. However, one can still say that the perceptions of the participants cannot give the final opinions on how all the other Catholic school leaders and their students perceive the program called “Pastoral Care for Students”. This is because every school leadership is unique and perceives differently, and has its own version of care for its students, and the opinion of students on issues can vary. More so, as the researcher and interpreter of the data collected, my interpretations of the participants’ responses to interview questions may not have been hundred percent accurate. Also, I may not have exhausted the total meanings or opinions about the idea of pastoral care for the students. The sample of the students for this study was purposively selected from mostly the senior students (12<sup>th</sup> grade). Perhaps, I should have had an equal representation of all the grades during the sample selection, in order to gather more responses from students of all grades on this topic. These shortcomings will be considered in the future researches since this work is not the end of the research in this area of school life.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

As seen from this study, pastoral care is very important for high schools students, especially when one considers the fact that there can be no denial of the reality of many serious problems which teenage students encounter in their lives. These problems obstructively linger on the paths to their wellbeing and academic success, and are therefore dealt with on daily basis by their schools. Perhaps, the major problem with the success of pastoral care for high school students lies in the approach used by different schools. Best (1999a; 2002), already indicated that the approach to the pastoral care in schools can be: reactive, preventative, developmental according to the needs of the school

practicing it. Also, Raymond (1985) opined that if a school wishes its pastoral care system to radiate a genuinely caring atmosphere, then it has to pay attention to the programs being created to achieve its aims (p. 5).

Therefore, in my recommendations for the practice of pastoral care in any school, I would say that any school that aims at a successful pastoral care for its students should design their programs in such a way that they are combined with the school's daily activities, and not be separated from it. They should also adopt a purposeful combination of the various approaches in order to achieve a maximum outcome on students. This purposeful combination requires a mindful, collaborative team work approach with clear communication skills by all involved in the care-giving. This is necessary because the better a staff team can collaborate with clear information sharing in order to provide guidance, using their complementary roles and skills, the better the students' wellbeing can be holistically supported and achieved. It is important to ensure that the staffs who lead in any of the programs should be those passionate about the students' wellbeing. There should also be strategic planning at all levels of the programs and funds should be made available in order to provide what is needed for success. In addition to funding, there should be ongoing review and evaluation of the programs as this can help to indicate success or failure and what needs to be done next. I would also recommend the use of external services or programs which specialize on the wellbeing of teenagers, for those areas where the school cannot provide expertise. Practicing schools should also ensure the wellbeing of their staff who are taking care of the students, and this can be achieved through the inclusion of Professional learning and development (PLD) in sessions throughout the school year. Last but not the least, practicing schools should

engage in relationships with other schools that are also practicing pastoral care for their students. This will help them to borrow ideas for improving what they already have.

### **Implications of Findings for School Authorities**

This study and its findings have many implications for school administrators, teachers, parents, and stakeholders. First, there is no doubt that schools which harbor students with a plethora of behavioral problems are likely to be unsafe learning environments for their students, the staff, and the entire school community. And if these problems are neglected, they can actually affect the smooth academic learning process of the involved students, and in some cases terminate their academic journeys altogether. The practice of pastoral care in the high school or middle or primary levels reveals the fact that apart from the classroom academic works, there are also extra ways to assist the students in their non-academic struggles and personal developments as human persons.

Understandably, academic process is a stressful endeavor. Factors such as fear, anxiety, stress, and even poor self-image or esteem, can weaken a student's zeal for school attendance and academics efforts, and even affect his/her wellbeing. This will always be the case unless students are assisted to learn how to deal with these factors whenever they begin to manifest in their lives. Therefore, it would not make sense if students, instead of having a confidential, impartial person to relay their problems to, they end up consulting with the disciplinary enforcer. This approach will negatively impact the students and would in fact prevent them from truly expressing or disclosing their feelings, anger, and worries over any aspect of their school's life, including complaints about a teacher's negative behavior to them, in fear that they may be penalized by such proclamations. Administrators and teachers must also always remember that the day-to-

day life and interactions of students with their peers and their teachers, contribute a great deal in shaping whatever personalities the students may turn out to be in the future.

Pastoral care programs should be welcomed by any school that cares about the smooth life-journey of their students, because what they learn as teenagers while in school, go with them all through their adult lives.

Another implication of the findings from this study for school administrators and teachers is the importance of knowing their students very well. Adequate knowledge of students involves more than knowing their names off by heart. Most importantly, it involves gaining knowledge about the backgrounds - religious, ethnic, culture, language, and even in ways they learn and understand, since these factors shape the individualities of the students. Diversity among the student population is a reality in the American schools, and there is no better way to gain knowledge about the students' background than to develop a strong attitude of caring relationship with all students in a school. Gay (2010) captures the negative effects of inadequate knowledge of students by school authorities when she wrote - "the inability to make distinctions among ethnicity, culture, and individuality increases the risk that teachers will impose their notions on ethnically different students, insult their cultural heritages, or ignore them entirely in the instruction processes". Furthermore, Dr. Berry-Jones (2018) maintains that what is needed in order to close the achievement gap among students is "equity" not "equality". As she described it, equality means "every learner getting the same thing". But equity means "every learner gets what she/he needs to be successful", and that is what is needed for all learners, not only for the gifted, but also for the struggling students. The truth is that the differences that are evident among the students due to their diversity, imply that all

students need to be known well and treated fairly. It is consoling to discover that effective pastoral care program in a school can take care of all students irrespective of differences in their backgrounds. This is because care for the students is the central focus and essence of having such program in a school, and to show this care in various ways to the students.

Finally, with regards to measuring the progress of students through the pastoral care programs, the school authorities should realize that the use of metrics or statistics to monitor the progress of students in any school programs is plausible. However, it does not provide the link between the school and the parishes of these students, to ascertain their continuous participation in the life of faith which they learn in school. Obviously, the aim of the campus ministry is to help students learn about God and issues of faith so as to continuously attend religious services even when they leave school. Therefore, the missing link between the school and the church would breed some kind of inconsistency in what the school is trying to achieve. Inconsistency itself, leads to the gradual failure of any program. This is why the parents and surrogate parents should play the role of observation and give feedback to the school as they make effort to realize their ultimate goal, which is to build a strong foundation for their students' moral lives. Also, apart from the campus ministry, the other programs that contribute to the pastoral care for students need also to be monitored in order to ascertain how students are making real progress in these areas.

### **Recommendations for Research**

This research study was undertaken with the intention of discovering the effects of pastoral care on the academic achievement and wellbeing of students in a private Catholic school. It is also my intention that the findings from this research will create



more interest in research endeavors in the area under consideration. This particular research was based on the theories of Howard Clinebell (2011) – The Holistic Approach to Pastoral Care, and Lawrence Lezotte (1990) – The Effective School Model. Many facts previously unknown have been uncovered through this study. Consequently, these findings have raised a variety of other issues that can be researched upon. Therefore, a future researcher who is interested in this area of school life may do:

- A comparative research study on pastoral care and social emotional learning, in order to find out the details about their differences, similarities, and limitations?
- Pastoral care approach in the Catholic private coeducational high schools compared to the extracurricular programs for students in the public coeducational high schools: differences and similarities.
- A study may also be done to compare a single gender Catholic high school and another single gender public school in terms of the extracurricular programs they have for their students.
- A study can be done that focuses on the parents to know their level of support to the schools' effort in the pastoral care of their children.
- A researcher may also look to examine the hindrances to the effective pastoral care programs in the high schools.

As future researchers narrow down their study in the above specified areas and beyond, more findings will be made in this seemingly nascent area of school program called “pastoral care for high school students”.

## **Conclusion**

This case research study on the effects of pastoral care on the academic achievement and wellbeing of high school students was very challenging for a number of reasons. First, the topic of pastoral care in schools does not grab attention very easily in the American school system, like the social emotional learning and other school counseling programs. The result of this unfamiliarity shows itself in the different names with which school administrators and teachers address their caring effort for their students. It is important to state here that pastoral care is not – jolly and homely classroom, it is not a mummy kind of teaching for children, it is not sex education per se, and certainly not just access to the school nurse. These are pieces of pastoral care, and they have their proper places and times in a school’s pastoral care program, but they are not the major thing. Pastoral care in school looks at the whole student and renders a holistic care. Pastoral care focuses on the whole student as a human person and engages all members of the school community as providers of care to the students. Pastoral care actively involves the community in consistent, comprehensive, multi-level activities which incorporates whole-school approaches, class or other group approaches and programs. It is the ensemble of all the cares which students and teachers can get as human persons interacting and working together in an institution like the school for a common good. In the case of the site for this research work, a different name “Marist” is used to depict the pastoral care of students. However, all the programs mapped out for and followed by the students under this title (Marist), qualify as authentic pastoral care for students, as the Catholic school authorities would perceive it. Therefore, I made extra

effort to bring all the interviewees to a common understanding of what is involved in the study being undertaken.

This research may not be concluded without mentioning that the findings from this study have helped to prove Michael Marland's (1974) provision of a working definition of pastoral care in schools to be true and acceptable to many school administrators. At the time Marland defined the pastoral care of students to mean looking after the total welfare of the pupil, it was acceptable to many authors and researchers, while some opposed it as described in the historical background section. Today however, many schools are leaning towards the pastoral care as a better way to help students to deal with life as young persons seeking for both intellectual knowledge and personal development of themselves. Therefore, Marland is again right in his argument that 'pastoral care' has 'a central educative purpose in itself', and therefore should not be seen as just 'a way of simply supporting the academic work' (Marland (1974, pp. 8–9).

Finally, in my opinion as the researcher in this study, the results and findings are very interesting and serve as eye opener to the need for pastoral care in our schools. In fact, having an effective program for the students' wellbeing like the pastoral care in schools has the potential to address all the negativities that are associated with students' life and also nurture an environment of opportunities for self-developments, skills acquisition, resilience and respect for all. The findings from this study have created in me more enthusiasm to further expand the research work in this area of school life.

## APPENDIX A APPROVAL LETTER

6/28/22 6:36 PM

Mail - Jude C. Zimoha - Outlook



Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Jun 28, 2022 9:35:17 AM EDT

PI: Jude Zimoha  
CO-PI: Stephen Kotok  
The School of Education, Ed Admin & Instruc Leadership

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - **IRB-FY2023-10** *EFFECTS OF PASTORAL CARE ON THE SOCIAL WELLBEING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: A Case Study*

Dear Jude Zimoha:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for *EFFECTS OF PASTORAL CARE ON THE SOCIAL WELLBEING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: A Case Study*. The approval is effective from June 27, 2022 through June 26, 2023.

Decision: Approved

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data must be discarded.

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP  
Chair, Institutional Review Board  
Professor of Psychology

Marie Nitopi, Ed.D.  
IRB Coordinator

## APPENDIX B RESEARCH AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Research Questions	Interview Questions
General Question for all staff	
<p>How does the private Catholic School understand and approach the pastoral care program for students?</p>	<p>As a private Catholic school, how familiar are you with the Catholic Church’s mission on the education of the young people?</p> <p>Do you believe that students have so many problems that are non-academic in nature, but which can obstruct their academic journeys? Can you mention some of these problems?</p> <p>Are you familiar with the term “pastoral care for students”?</p> <p>Observably, pastoral care can be approached as structured or unstructured by different schools. What approach do you use in your school: is it an integrated, segmented, developmental, or reactive approach?</p> <p>What specific activities and programs do you recognize as pastoral care for your students?</p> <p>Do your teachers always know how to care for students pastorally or are they given special training for this?</p>
For staff and administrators	
<p>How do the administrators and teachers in the Catholic high schools perceive the effects of pastoral care on their students?</p>	<p>How well do you know your students individually?</p> <p>How do you monitor the effectiveness of pastoral care on your students?</p> <p>As someone close to the students, can you give a broad explanation about whether or not, students truly benefit from pastoral care?</p>
REFLECTION SPECIFIC TO THE PRINCIPALS	<p>As you reflect on the outcome of the pastoral care experiences in your school, do you think that students consciously comply with the programs or do so out of fear for the disciplinary measures? How do you monitor their compliance?</p> <p>Do you think that students’ participation in the various programs of care promotes a positive school culture and safe learning environment?</p> <p>Does the non-academic care your students receive reflect in their academic achievements? Can you</p>

	<p>explain more about this?</p> <p>What is your school's ranking in the state, in terms of academic performance of students?</p> <p>What are the difficulties and obstacles associated with the pastoral care for students as you see it?</p>
FOR THE PARENTS	
How do the parents of students in a Catholic private high school perceive the effects of pastoral care on their children?	<p>As a parent, do you think that families and the community benefit from the pastoral care which students get from their schools?</p> <p>What is the reason for the answer you gave?</p> <p>Can you describe some of the changes you observed in your child, and which can be attributed to the effectiveness of the pastoral care received in his/her school?</p>
FOR STUDENTS	
How do students in the Catholic high schools, perceive the effects of pastoral care on their personal social wellbeing?	<p>Do you believe that as students, you have problems and concerns that are not about your classroom subjects and assignments? Do you think that these problems can distract your life or disturb your attention to academic issues? Give me some examples!</p> <p>Have you also observed some bad behaviors in some students? Give me examples!</p> <p>What do you consider as caring attitudes from your teachers and principal outside of the classroom? Do you see evidence of this kind of care in your school?</p> <p>Do you think that your life has become more positive or negative since you entered your school?</p> <p>Are you aware that the things you do or relationships you keep while in school go a long way to shape your future life and careers?</p> <p>Do you think that Pastoral care for students helps to ensure a safe environment for all students and teachers?</p> <p>Do you believe that the non-academic cares you receive in your schools prepare you for a less obstructive life in your family and in the society?</p> <p>Every secondary school should implement pastoral care programs to ensure a safe learning environment.</p>

	<p>What do you think?</p> <p>Do you think the pastoral care you received makes you feel different from other students in your community? Tell me more about how different you feel!</p> <p>Does your participation in the Pastoral care as student help you in your relationship and interactions with other students? How?</p>
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## APPENDIX C LETTER OF CONSENT



### **ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY**

**80-00 Utopia Parkway,  
Jamaica, New York, 11439.**

Fr. Jude C Zimoha is conducting a research study on the effects of pastoral care on the personal social [wellbeing] and academic achievement of high school students. Pastoral care for students is a further step [apart from their academic achievements] taken by the administrators of effective secondary schools, to ensure an overall formation of their students through caring relationships, with the aim of helping them to have positive outlook on life, as they grow into adult members of the society. My position is that if schools focus only on the academic achievement of students, without at the same time helping them to develop firm foundation for positive and productive future life and careers, then the society will be chaotic. This is because: academics without moral discipline and development of personal social wellbeing and skills, often breeds menace to the society.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in either of the two interviews arranged for this study: in-depth interview and focus group discussion. Once your consent is received, you will be allowed 14 days to prepare and be reminded 7 days to the date of the interview proper. The in-depth interviews will consist of series of short and open-ended questions related to the topic of study. The interviews will take place over the phone and through WebEx virtual services. These interviews will take about 45 minutes and will be recorded using a digital device.

There are no perceived risks associated with your participation in this study. While there are no direct benefits for your participation, it is important to inform you that your participation in my findings will provide school administrators, stakeholders, parents, and the public with important insights about the benefits of helping students to establish strong foundation for their future lives. Your participation in this study is voluntary, if you prefer not to answer a question, or you wish to discontinue your participation for any reason, let me know.

Be assured that this study will be as confidential as possible. While the name of your school will be mentioned in my discussion of findings, your name and identity as a participant will not be included in any form, transcription, analysis, or summary reports; only pseudonyms will be used. This consent form is the only document identifying you as a participant; it will be stored in a private archive during the entire course of this study and only the researchers who have the essential need to see names and other identifying information will have access to that particular archive. In addition, the data collected will be destroyed after this study has been completely finished and approved. Aggregated



results from this study may be published in academic venues to inform educational researchers and school administrators. However, if you wish to have a copy of the results, you may contact me.

If you have any questions concerning any aspect of this study or your participation, you can contact me (the researcher) on [judezim@yahoo.com](mailto:judezim@yahoo.com) or my WhatsApp +2348034036516.

Your signature acknowledges receipt of a copy of the consent form as well as your willingness to participate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Fr. Jude C Zimoha  
Principal Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX D PARENTAL PERMISSION LETTER



### ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

80-00 Utopia Parkway,  
Jamaica, New York, 11439.

Dear Parent,

My name is Fr. Jude C Zimoha. I am conducting a research study on **the effects of pastoral care on the personal social wellbeing and academic achievement of high school students**. Pastoral care for students is about the non-academic approaches which are manifested through caring relationships between the students and staff, and among the students in a school community. Effective administrators of high schools take this extra step to ensure an overall formation of their students, with the aim of helping them to develop a positive outlook on life, as they grow into adult members of the society.

The site for this research study is Archbishop Molloy High School, in Briarwood, Jamaica, Queens, New York. I plan to request the participation of students in this school between the ages of 14 and 17 in my study. The principal or a representative will be involved in the selection of students to participate, but I need your permission to include your child in the discussion group.

If you permit your child to participate in my study, your child will participate in a focus group discussion in which students would be asked questions that are related to how students in the Catholic high schools, perceive the effects of pastoral care on their personal social wellbeing and academic achievements? The discussions will take place in a convenient place as shall be provided by the principal or through WebEx virtual services. The discussion will also take about 45 minutes and will be recorded using a digital recording device. Students' participation in this study is voluntary, and if for any reason any prefers not to answer a question, or wish to discontinue with participation, I only need to be informed.

There are no perceived risks associated with participation in this study. While there are no direct benefits for participation, it is important to inform you that your child's participation in my findings will provide school administrators, stakeholders, parents, and the public with important insights about the benefits of helping students to establish strong foundation for their future lives.

I plan to publish the findings of this study, but will not include any information that would identify you, your child or your family. To keep this information safe, the audiotape of my discussion with the students will be placed in a locked file cabinet until I have written the word-to-word transcription of the discussion. As soon as this is done, the tape will be destroyed. I will also save the data in a password-protected computer. To

protect confidentiality, your child's real name will not be used in the written copy of the discussion

If you have any questions concerning any aspect of this study or your participation, you can contact me (the researcher) on [jude.zimoha15@my.stjohns.edu](mailto:jude.zimoha15@my.stjohns.edu) or 718-296-4900 Ext. 16. Or Dr. Stephen Kotok (my Mentor) – [kotoks@stjohns.edu](mailto:kotoks@stjohns.edu) (718-990-2654)

Your signature acknowledges receipt of a copy of the parent permission letter as well as your permission to audio record your child's contribution to the group discussion.

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Printed Name of Parent

---

Signature of Parent

---

Date

Fr. Jude C Zimoha  
Principal Researcher

---

Signature of Researcher

---

Date

## APPENDIX E ASSENT LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS UNDER 18



### **ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY**

**80-00 Utopia Parkway,  
Jamaica, New York, 11439.**

Dear Student,

My name is Fr. Jude C Zimoha. I am doing a research study about **the effects of pastoral care on the personal social wellbeing and academic achievement of high school students.** The purpose of this study is to find out how the caring relationships among students, and between students and teachers, promote students' wellbeing and academic progress. There are no perceived risks associated with your participation in this study. While there are also no direct benefits for participation, it is important to inform you that your participation in my study and its findings will provide school administrators, stakeholders, parents, and the public with important insights about the benefits of helping students to establish strong foundation for their future lives while still in the high school.

If you agree to participate, you will be included in the group of other participating students for a focus group discussion. During the discussion you would be asked questions that are related to how you perceive the effects of pastoral care on your personal social wellbeing and academic achievements. The group discussion will take place in a safe place as shall be provided by the school principal or through WebEx virtual services. I wish to let you know that your school authorities and parents know about the study also. The discussion will also last for about 45 minutes and will be recorded using a digital recording device. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and if wish to discontinue for any reason, just let me know.

I plan to publish the findings of this study, but will not include any information that would identify you. To protect confidentiality, your real names will not be used in the written copy of the discussion, only pseudonyms will be used. To keep the information safe, the audio recording of the group discussion will be placed in a locked file cabinet until I have written the word-to-word transcription of the discussion. As soon as this is done, the audiotape will be destroyed. I will also save the data in a password-protected computer.

If you have any questions concerning any aspect of this study or your participation, you can contact me (the researcher) on [jude.zimoha15@my.stjohns.edu](mailto:jude.zimoha15@my.stjohns.edu) or 718-296-4900 Ext. 16. Or Dr. Stephen Kotok (my Mentor) – [kotoks@stjohns.edu](mailto:kotoks@stjohns.edu) (718-990-2654)

If you decide that you want to be in this study, please sign your name.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, want to be in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Sign your name here)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**APPENDIX F RESEARCH INTERVIEWS AT ST. MARY’S HIGH**

<b>PERSONS</b>	<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>CODES</b>	<b>THEMES</b>
	<b><u>INTERVIEW #1:</u></b> <b><u>FOCUS GROUP</u></b> <b><u>STUDENTS</u></b>		
ME	Are you aware that there is such term as “Pastoral Care” in school programs?		
STUDENT S	No!	Unfamiliarity	Unfamiliarity with the term “pastoral care for students”
ME	<b>I explained the meaning of the “Pastoral Care” in relation to students’ welfare.</b>		
ME	Do you believe that as students, you have problems and concerns that are not about your classroom academic subjects?		
STUDENT S	Yes!	Awareness	Agreement
ME	Tell me some of these problems		
STUDENT S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Family Issues:</b> Quarreling between siblings</li> <li>• <b>Strained relationship</b> with parents</li> <li>• Too much responsibilities in the family, which causes less time for studies</li> <li>• <b>Health Issues:</b> many students suffer from anxiety. This can impact their lives and academic wellbeing</li> <li>• <b>Hostile learning environment,</b> e.g., when a student has strained relationship with fellows or in the class</li> </ul>		Examples of students’ non-academic problems
ME	Do you think that these problems you have mentioned, can distract		

	your life and academic endeavors?		
STUDENT S	Yes		
ME	Explain more to me about how these can distract your life and study		
STUDENT	I feel like when you are trying to learn, you have to pay all attention to what you are learning. But if you have all these issues hanging on you, you quickly loose focus	Distraction	Lack of focus as problem to students
ME	Any other thing to point out about this?		
STUDENT	Too much responsibilities may cause students not to have enough time for studies	Over-work	Inability to balance chores at home with school works
ME	Is it responsibilities at home or in the school?		
STUDENT S	Yes, at home. But also in the school, for instance, getting involved too much into sports such that one doesn't have enough time to study.	Excess sporting	Inability to balance sporting with school works
ME	Have you also observed some bad behaviors in some students? Behaviors that give you real concerns, such that you wish something is done to bring such student to order?		
STUDENT S	Yes		
ME	Tell me some of those behaviors		
STUDENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Disruption in the classroom</b> when a teacher is teaching. This does not help students to learn.</li> <li>• <b>Unwillingness to share knowledge</b> with others</li> <li>• <b>Disrespecting and making fun of teachers</b></li> <li>• <b>Disrespecting other students too</b>, especially in a group work, when a student becomes proud</li> </ul>	Bad Behaviors of students	Examples of bad behaviors among students

	for being better than others and blames others for not being able to do the work. In other words, being domineering!		
ME	<b>What about apathy?</b>		Apathy
ME	I explained to them, what apathy means, and asked them if they have observed such behavior in some students.		
STUDENT S	Yes		
ME	<b>What about “name calling” or nick-naming?</b>		Nick-naming
STUDENT S	Yes, we observe it too		
ME	<b>Do you also observe that some of the students avoid/reject encouragement from fellow students?</b>		
STUDENT S	Sometimes!		
ME	<b>Do you think that your life has become more positive or negative since you entered Molloy High School?</b>		
STUDENT S	Positive!		More positive life
ME	<b>This is very interesting to hear. So tell me your reasons for answering “positive”?</b>		
STUDENT	I feel that Molloy High is family-oriented such that even if it is in a club or classroom or in the field activities, you always have the opportunity to engage in meaningful relationships. This is why I feel that Molloy High school has made my life more positive. I have had many opportunities like this gathering to participate in meaningful engagements. So it is great to be here.	Meaningful Engagement	Opportunity to engage in meaningful relationships
ME	<b>So I am hearing from you that there is: caring attitude and</b>		Caring attitudes Good relationships



	relationships here, there is friendship, and there is cooperation here. These can truly make a student happy and relaxed to learn. Any other contribution to this?		Cooperation
STUDENT	I think that at Molloy, you are given a lot of opportunities to develop yourself; and a lot of service opportunities to show your abilities. That's why I chose to attend Molloy. So, I think it's not just family oriented, but also community oriented and brings people together in the sense of helping one another.	Community	Community oriented
STUDENT	There are a lot of opportunities here, always discovering something to do, giving one the opportunity to grow and make friends.	Opportunity	Opportunity for new discoveries
ME	<b>I emphasized more on the opportunities to the students at Molloy High in order to grow themselves.</b>		
ME	Having known now, what pastoral care is, do you believe that it can help to ensure a safe learning environment for the students and for the teachers and entire school community?		
STUDENT S	Yes!!	Safety	Safe learning environment
STUDENT	When teachers and the counselors make themselves available to the students under any circumstances, it is easy to see that they truly want you to succeed and progress in your learning	Nearness	Nearness of teachers to their students
STUDENT	Also, when teachers make students feel that they are valued, such that they have someone to talk to when they have something bothering them	Nearness	Sense of belonging
STUDENT	Going back to what has been said	Care	Safety and less

S	about care of students by their teachers, I would say that it keeps the school safer because it creates a situation of less animosity between the students and teachers. Therefore, the more caring teachers are, the more students are willing to hear them out and obey them.		animosity
ME	<b>Now, what about “violence”? Do you experience violence here?</b>		
STUDENT S	No!		Zero violence
ME	This is wonderful to hear, that you have no experience of violence in your school. Many public schools are known for violence. They even fight along the way back to their homes after school. So you don’t fight here.		
STUDENT S	No!		
ME	<b>You love everyone?</b>		
STUDENT	One student answers “no” (negative) and others laughed.		
ME	<b>Ok. But that lack of love would not be strong enough to push you to engage in fight, right? (Students answer “no, not enough”, and I continued my statement)...I know that this is a matter of personal opinion.</b>		
ME	<b>You are privileged to be in a special Catholic school and receive all the care and love it can offer to you. Now, do you think that these different types of care you receive in your school, should be extended to other schools?</b>		
STUDENT S	Yes! It should be like a right to students and everyone should have access to someone being there for them, who they will be able to talk to in their times of need.	Extension	Pastoral care should be extended to the public schools

STUDENT	I agree with him in the sense that we don't deserve to have any more than the public school students, especially when you consider the little resources some of them have, to provide these services. In fact in public schools, the students might even need this care more than us.		
STUDENT	Yea, I think they should be given the same opportunity to have the same loving care. We didn't do anything to deserve it		
ME	<b>Then I tried to explain to them that: for the sake of the society's good, all students should equally receive care and love as they grow into adulthood. If this does not happen, the society will still be filled with some good, but also many bad citizens</b>		
ME	<b>Do you think that the special care you receive from your school makes you feel different from the other students in your communities? Do you think so?</b>		
STUDENT S	Yes!		Feeling of difference
ME	<b>How would you explain that difference?</b>		
STUDENT	Since I have been attending this school, I have been able to develop my capabilities more than the average kid that goes to the public school, in terms of showing what I am able to do. For e.g., being a leader. I just hope that all the kids will have the same opportunity to show what they can be or do	Students feel different from their colleagues in the public schools	Opportunities to develop abilities
STUDENT	Before I came to Molly, I was in a public school. Looking back to when I was in 7 <sup>th</sup> grade, I find myself to be better and happier now than I used to be. Here	Growth in self-esteem and happiness of life	Better relationships leading to happier lives

	students are more relational to each other. Even, I don't talk to my old friends anymore because I feel that I am so different from them now. I feel that I have grown so much now in many things more than them.		
ME	So you think that right now there is a change in you compared to when you attended the public school, and a positive change at that?		
STUDENT	Yes!		
ME	Any other who wants to say something?		
STUDENT	So going back to what the previous speaker was saying, I also was in the public school before entering here. In the public school, I felt like I was more closed off unlike I am here at Molloy. I feel like I am more motivated here to do services. And like the previous speaker said, the teachers are more ready to help students. It is like a family oriented thing. It is like a second family to you. They check on you to see how school related things are going on and to be there for you as academic advisers		More motivation than in the public schools
STUDENT	I had friends in public school who constantly said that the competitiveness there, brings them down, as in disrupts their life and work. I think that in Molloy, you can definitely try to give your best, but there is not that sense of "I need to be better than this one person". If I am in public school now, I would have been bordered by that competitiveness in trying to be better than somebody. Here in Molloy, we don't get to feel that	There is no competition among students. Instead, there's encouragement for growth through collaboration	Progress achieved through cooperation instead of competitiveness

	pressure of I need to be better than this person or that person. It is more of community oriented.		
STUDENT	As a follow up to Katie & Isabella (previous speakers), I think that at Molloy we are smaller in class than the public schools. So we get to form those relationships. Here it is like 1:20 unlike the public school where you have 1:32 or more. So it's harder on the public high schools than us	Small class size	Effects of class size
ME	<b>You are talking about the student-teacher ratio?</b>		
STUDENT	Yes		
ME	<b>You are right, the smaller the classroom is, the more attention is given to individual students.</b>		
ME	<b>One last question: Does your participation in pastoral care, help you in your interactions with one another in general? If you understand my question very well, I am saying – how does the pastoral care you receive here help you in your interactions as freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors?</b>		
STUDENT	So I feel that here in Molloy specifically, there is always something like support system. Another aspect of Molloy is that the teachers are always available to cheer you on what you are able to achieve. They show you how to get involved and serve the marginalized with all the help you are receiving at Molloy		Teacher support and encouragement
STUDENT	I feel that we are blessed to have the opportunity to be at Molloy High because of the positive care we receive here. There's too much negativity in many public high schools. But I feel that the care we receive here we can		Positive care

	extend to other.		
STUDENT	I think Molloy does a great job of helping students take care of students, because I am in a class where we help to talk to sophomores about the issues they go through. So the pastoral care we receive and pass unto other students, is done in hope that these students will pass unto those following them, what they have received	Peer-to-peer assistance	Continuity of care among the students
ME	I know that at SECA they have what the students call “buddy” i.e., the older students are assigned the younger students to take care of them, answer their questions, and teach them about the school generally. Do you have such a thing in Molloy?		Older students grooming the younger ones
STUDENT S	Yes!		
ME	Any more contribution on this?		
STUDENT	Yes. I think one of the big things that happen here at Molloy is that – you get to develop faster, your talents or who you are faster than those in the public school. This early and faster development can impact your future life positively.		Faster personal development
	<b><u>INTERVIEW #2: CO-ORDINATOR FOR RELIGIOUS MINISTRY</u></b>		
ME	The term “Pastoral Care” is not commonly used in America. So, what term do you used in its place?		
Religious Coordinator	We will call it <b>campus ministry</b> or <b>counseling</b> . So we have the counseling department and counseling ministry. That’s what we will call it. It cares for the whole child outside of the academic	Other names that signify pastoral care for students	Issues of Nomenclature

ME	<p><b>Ok. But the religious care and the psychological care are aspects of pastoral care, because pastoral care involves care for all aspects of the child's development while in school apart from their academics. So, it also includes: sports, conferences for moral lessons, care in the classroom, etc.</b> It was Michael Marland (1974) who introduced the term into school administration. He borrowed the religious image of the relationship between the shepherd and the flock, and likened it to the teacher-students relationship</p>		
RC	I completely agree with you in the application of pastor-flock relationship to the teacher-students relationship.	Teachers agree that teacher-student relationship is pastoral care.	
ME	<p><b>Are you aware of the church's mission in the education of young people?</b> In other words, that the church (particularly the Catholic Church) pays special attention to how the young people should be educated? How do you explain your understanding?</p>	Aware of the mission of the church in the education of the young.	
RC	Each person is made in the likeness and image of God. So, the church's perspective is to help each child develop in that image of God in all the ways they are meant to develop and become the persons God created them to be. So, our education system is not just about the head, it is about the head, the heart, and the whole person. This is my understanding about the church's mission in the education of the young people	Knowledge	The church's mission in the education of the young
ME	Definitely, I will take your answers because, the Catholic		

	education of the young is not just about the head. It is also about the heart. Someone said – “if you train only the students only in academics, they will become menace to the society, because you didn’t train them in the area of discipline and morality. So, they may be brains but chaotic in the society. And to prove the church’s point of emphasis, you can vividly see the difference between students in the public schools and those here at Molloy, just for that lack of special care that students should have.		
RC	Yes. I agree with your explanations.		
ME	<b>Do you think that students have many kinds of problems that meet the special care you are giving them apart from their academics? Can you mention some of these problems from your perspective as the coordinator for religious ministry?</b>		
RC	Students now, express a lot of anxiety. They worry about their self-image, what they look like physically. They worry that they are not smart enough, not strong enough, and not athletic enough. They worry that they aren’t unique enough, so they don’t value their own worth. They struggle also with home issues like: domestic violence, sexual violence, drug use and abuse. So many students struggle not only because they go to school. But because they have other jobs, they have to work in order to support their parents and take care of their younger siblings. So, they have way more		<b>PROBLEM OF STUDENTS:</b> anxiety; poor self-image and self-esteem; domestic violence; sexual violence; drug use and abuse; too much family responsibilities



	responsibilities than I had growing up		
ME	You're right! Some of the things you just mentioned like: drug use, sexual, and domestic abuses are among what many researchers have already found out as problems surrounding the life of teenage students. They cannot have those experiences outside the school environment, and when they come to the class we expect them to concentrate well		
ME	<b>What are the programs you consider to be part of the pastoral care for the students?</b>		
RC	So, we have a very large counseling staff here, and every student is attached to a guidance counselor so that if there are issues, the person would have to look at them globally. We have the campus ministry department, which is kind of an extension of the counseling department. So, the students can go to their counselors, they can also come to the campus ministry. Someone dies in their family, they have a place to go to grapple with that. A lot of times, campus ministry will discover something and would have to refer it to the counseling department, because they need therapy. So, there is coordination between the two departments. The other piece is that in our school, all our staff are taught that they are part of the campus ministry. It you see a child in the hallway that looks sad, but he was happy yesterday, reach out to him and do a little checking. This is one of the most wonderful things any school can		Guidance counseling; campus ministry;  As adults in the environment teachers are encouraged to reach out to troubled students.

	do for the student, not just your science class or math.		
ME	Yea, you are right. I think I have heard a teacher in a public school say to a student “I am here to teach you. I am not here to baby-seat you”. These are unkind word to a student that needs help from the teacher		
ME	From my observation and readings, pastoral care can be structured or unstructured. In other word, it can be integrated (every aspect), it can be segmented (certain aspect), it can be developmental (particular area you want the students to develop). It can be reactive (only when something happens then we can react to it.). It can also be proactive (nothing has yet happened but we have to prevent it from happening). <b>So, which style do you practice here?</b>		
RC	It’s both ends. We do the structured approach. We have a retreat program that is developmental for the kids so that they can see that they are more than the academics. This is leveled by their developmental stages i.e., what they are ready to do at their ages. So we do that, and then they have the religious class. One class is just on human development, and that’s where the peer leaders come in to talk to them. Some of it is structured and some of it is proactive. We have the campus ministries meetings, we have service meetings, and we bring up topic to help prepare them for what they may be facing in the future, or help uncover something that we should help them to deal with		PASTORAL APPROACHES USED: It’s a combination of approaches based on the need of students

ME	Do the teachers here know how to care for the students automatically or are they trained fir that?		
RC	<p>Sometime along their education training, some of that training will take place. We have a mentoring program that just started this year, which helps the new teachers to understand what the mission is, and is particular to how “Marists” educate. So based on the knowledge that every child needs to be seen, known, and loved, that every child has the right to know who Jesus Christ is. So in our school programs we have a system to help the new teachers learn how to advance and educate to that principle to be able to care for the whole child. So sometimes they (teachers) come with that, sometimes they have it naturally, and sometimes people don’t have it because they come from the place where they thought that they were Math or English teachers and they don’t want to baby-sit. But that’s not the way we do it here. Here, we are more than just what we do in the classroom.</p>		New teachers are trained and Mentored to understand the mission of Molloy among students
ME	<p>The next set of questions is particularly addressed to you as the coordinator for Religious services. And I put them this way:</p> <p>How well do you know your students in the area of participation? Are they growing from what they are getting in this school?</p>		
RC	They are growing from what they are getting. But to be honest with you, there are 1500 kids and there is no way we can know the		Students are gaining from pastoral care programs.

	individual growth level of all 1500 of them intimately. But overall, I can say yes I see really great trance. But I can't tell you whether they are participating on the parish level. We don't have that link with the parishes, so I don't know that.		It is difficult to have deep knowledge of all the students
ME	<b>So, how do you monitor the effectiveness of what you are offering them?</b>		
RC	So, I look at how many students are participating in these extra things this year versus last year. I do things based on metrics whereby I compare what we had last year to what we have this year. And if there is increased participation, increased number of kids who want to participate in the faith-life of the church and the service programs, and leading in retreats and other activities with the students, I will say that that is evidence of the effectiveness in what we are trying to do	Ways to monitor progress	Use of Metrics to measure the effectiveness of pastoral care programs
ME	<b>From your perspective as an adult and professional in your relationship with the students, do you think that they are participating in these programs freely because they understand the importance of it to them, or are they doing so for fear of discipline from the school authorities?</b>		
RC	It is out of their own volition. I know this is private, but in the group discussion you had with the students, we had two kids who were on retreat last year who needed psycho evaluation because, they were trying to commit suicide. But now, they are part of our leadership team	What drives students to obey the pastoral care programs? -personal volition Understanding of values	Free participation by students, not out of fear of discipline

	based on how they were loved and cared for during their process. They were dismissed small kids who were helped to pick themselves up. I could have given you the story about every one of the kid that were here about how they have grown and developed. It is not because we are the authority, it is rather because of real relationships.		
ME	All that you have said now, proves to me that you really know your students. Thank you so much		
RC	Thank you!		
	<b><u>INTERVIEW #3: THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL</u></b>		
ME	Are you aware that there is a program called “Pastoral Care” for students?		
ASP	I know that there is something called “pastoral care”, but I don’t know that there is pastoral care for students.		UNFAMILIARITY WITH THE TERM
ME	So, in your school’s administration, what other names do you use for the extra cares you give to the students? I believe many schools, but not so much in America, use the term “pastoral care” for students. It was borrowed from the religious terminology i.e., pastor-flock relationship, so teacher-students relationship. So what other term do you use to express the teacher-students care?		
ASP	Sure! I think the biggest term here is “Marist” i.e. the idea of Marist charisma. That for me encapsulates a lot of pastoral care for teachers and students. This is		The term <b>MARIST</b> is familiar with Molloy high school.

	something that reigns here, something we are familiar with, and something that meets the definition of pastoral care for us even without using the direct term		
ME	So, <b>what are the charismas associated with being Marist?</b>		
ASP	So, we look at the five pillars of being Marist: <u>simplicity</u> , <u>presence</u> (which I think is the biggest between teachers and students), <u>love of work</u> , <u>way of Mary</u> , and <u>family spirit</u> . Again these are the best ways that our teachers and students do things.	What does being Marist imply?	The five pillars of being Marist
ME	<b>My Explanation:</b> So, when I said “Pastoral Care”, I was referring to the extra cares that students receive from their schools in addition to their academic pursuits. The point I am trying to prove in my study is that, if students are given only academic care without at the same time looking at their wellbeing and whatever may be bordering them, they may be physically present in the school or classroom but spiritually absent. They may also end up getting degrees in their academic results, but in the society they may be chaotic because they had no foundational discipline to grow with.		
ASP	Sure!		
ME	<b>How do you monitor the progress of the students with regards to the care they are receiving? How do you know that they are actually assimilating it and that they love it?</b>		
ASP	There are a couple of things we do here. <u>First, we see it in the campus ministry</u> . The campus ministry has tried to quantify the	Monitoring of progress in pastoral care programs:	Difficulty with measuring the progress of pastoral care.

	<p>service hours that the kids are given. And this is something that the kids love themselves. In terms of service hours, this refers to the kids practicing their faith in terms of what they have been taught here. Monitoring the progress is challenging to us but that's what the campus ministry has started doing. There are other qualifying things that we do, like <u>retreats</u>, <u>mass attendance at special seasons</u> like – <u>Christmas</u> and <u>Easter</u> which students love to attend voluntarily. These are some of the qualifying things we do here and see the kids attend to as they grow.</p>	<p>Ways to measure the positive impact of pastoral care programs among the students</p>	
ME	<p>Are all the students Catholics or Christians?</p>		
ASP	<p>About 98% of our students are Christians. There are 72 or 73% Catholic students. The biggest group of Catholics in our school is the Greek Orthodox</p>		
ME	<p>What is the total number of the students here?</p>		
ASP	<p>1500 at current</p>		
ME	<p>As you reflect on the outcome of the care that students receive, do you think that students comply with the pastoral care programs freely or do they do that out of the fear of being disciplined or something like that?</p>		
ASP	<p>Obviously, we have the <u>religious class</u> and the kids are <u>graded</u> for it. But I think that as the kids are <u>exposed to the lived faith through the different opportunities</u>, they <u>encounter God</u> and as they do that, they feel really good doing so. And I don't know if they can say that this is why they feel good about it. <u>But it is that encountering of God that allows</u></p>	<p>Driving for obedience to pastoral care programs -Grading -Faith -Encountering God</p>	<p>What drives students to attend the programs: value or fear?</p>

	<u>them to feels so.</u>		
ME	When I think about pastoral care for the students, I think of school safety. It is true that not all the students will exhibit discipline in the same way, but if many of them are well disciplined they will understand the importance of respect for each other and their teachers and the entire staff, and the school will be a safer place. What do you think?		School safety
ASP	I agree with you a 100%. I think our kids are doing well although some of them do silly things at times. But <u>overall, I think the way the kids respect themselves, the way they respect each other and their teachers, they are trying.</u> But we are also dealing with a lot of teenagers whose <u>brains are not fully developed such that they still make the silly snappy mistakes online like posting or doing something.</u> So, we deal with a lot of that, but I think it's more of the condition of teenagers. I would say that when I see kids come back or on the street or alumni come back, you tell if the kids had gone to Catholic schools. And you know this because they exhibit a certain understanding of the way things should be. This is my experience now for 46yrs	Teenage students will always behave like teenagers.  Kids are doing well with respect for each other and teachers.  Some are still doing online silly things	The care rendered to students eventually ensures that they behave well. This helps to keep our school generally safe.
ME	What you are saying reminds me of the importance of a school's alumni. I read that many of the top politicians in this country, passed through Molloy High school		The importance of a school's alumni
ASP	No, don't judge us on that please!		
ME	Ok. But what I am saying is that if students who passed through an institution truly love their school,		



	<p>they would always want that school to keep progressing by making valuable contributions. Therefore, I am thinking that your young students if they also receive good discipline, they will one day, perhaps in better positions remember that their school helped them to prepare for their future lives, and therefore they think of what to give in return.</p>		
ASP	<p>I think what you have said is very true. Observably, <u>some of them don't like discipline right now, but when they leave school they will understand the importance of the discipline they received while in school.</u> So, I will believe that!</p>	<p>Some students realize the importance of school discipline late</p>	<p>Late Realization</p>
ME	<p><b>So, as an administrator, how well do you know your students?</b></p>		
ASP	<p>Chuckles! As a teacher in the class, there are a couple of students that I know. But a lot of the things I know about the students is through some statistics and through a kind of anecdotal interaction with them.</p>	<p>-statistics -anecdotal interactions</p>	<p>Ways to know students</p>
ME	<p>Yes I asked that question because I believe that to know the students is not just to know their names. But you also have to know their backgrounds so that you know how to treat them, because if you don't know a student's background, a student may be behaving differently from others and you wouldn't know that that behavior is traceable to the student's background. In this way, a student may be misunderstood just because he/she is not known well. I believe that some students here or other places have experienced some kind of abuses or negative</p>	<p>Why it is important for teachers to know their students well</p>	

	<p>peer-group influences. But they won't tell anyone, but when they come to school, those experiences keep affecting them. In this way, you will only see the smoke but not the fire until you investigate to know what started the smoke. This is exactly the reason for everyone, not just the counselors to be involved in caring for the students. <b>So, are all your teachers involved in care giving to the students?</b></p>		
ASP	<p>I would think so. The vast majority of them go to help. There is a situation whereby a student suffered severe anxiety and couldn't get into the building. You know, the mother will be outside waiting but the student couldn't get into the building, and there was this particular teacher who didn't have this kid as his student, but who has as a way of life, a certain charisma, who took this kid under his arm and walked with him fully into the school. It was an amazing thing to see. And I think this happens a lot but you don't get to hear about it. <u>We already mentioned our department of guidance counseling. They are very good at scratching beneath the surface of the student's problems to see exactly what's going on with their lives, and they are great at communicating with teachers</u></p>	<p>All teachers are involved in giving care to the students</p>	<p>Administrators and teachers depend on the school counselors for a deep knowledge about the students and their problems</p>
ME	<p><b>One of the things I know is that if the students are well taken care of, it reflects in their academic results. Is that the case here?</b></p>		<p>Care for students and their academic progress</p>
ASP	<p>Yea, our students do really very well, and we are also lucky to have <u>students who come in</u></p>	<p>Knowledge of a safe environment,</p>	

	<p><u>already academically motivated because they came from a good foundation – some of our Catholic elementary schools.</u> But they should be able to do well, <u>knowing that they are in a safe environment,</u> a place where people care about you, and want to see you succeed. <u>That kind of, transposes the motivation on the kids to do well.</u></p>	<p>helps our students do really well in academics</p>	
ME	<p>Yes you are right because, <u>if they started in a place where they were well cared for, the foundation is already formed so that when they come to a place like Molloy which has a replica of their earlier foundation, they will do well</u></p>		<p>Effects of early foundation in a Catholic elementary schools</p>
ASP	<p>I think apart from kids who had strong foundations laid from their former schools, we have also encountered kids who came in from schools that are not as caring as the Catholic schools. When they come in, this place becomes a place of refuge for them, and when they follow the school programs within the cause of their four years they excel. So it not too late for such students to strive in a good environment.</p>	<p>Kids who came in from the public schools, follow our programs, which results in positive behaviors</p>	<p>Effects of following the school programs on the students</p>
ME	<p><b>Do you have a situation whereby the older students are given the freedom to help the younger ones,</b> like they call it “buddy” or something like that?</p>		
ASP	<p>Yea, we have it but it’s not something formal</p>		
ME	<p><b>What is your school’s ranking in the state in terms of your students’ academic performance</b></p>		
ASP	<p>I will say, overall, in the top. About 100% of our students go to college. I think a couple of years</p>	<p>Top 100%</p>	<p>School ranking in academic performances</p>

	ago, our kids got a \$100m worth of scholarships. I think if a student is motivated and wants to get it, they can do everything they have to do to get here in terms of high academic things. For kids who are less motivated they are still definitely on good spot when they leave.		
ME	How does the school administration coordinate the different departments of care in your school: religious ministry, counseling, and the communication aspects? <b>How does the administration help them to coordinate?</b>		How the different departments that give extra care to the students help each other.
ASP	I think the key word here is <b>coordination</b> . Philosophically, as an administration, as a school, there is a lot of trust that we give to these different departments. Again, these people are professionals and they are here for the right reasons. I think there is a lot <b>dialogue</b> between the different departments that help to talk things through. These departments also guide and support the teachers in the cause of actions they wish to take. For instance, if there is a program they are interested in trying or they need to do, they give them a lot of support to go ahead and do it. So, there is nothing like a heavy-handed top of a model	<b><u>Coordination</u></b> <b><u>Dialogue</u></b> <b><u>support</u></b>	
ME	Yes, I think the two words “coordination” and “support” explains a lot about the interaction between the different departments as they strive to support and care for the students.		
ME	I think that I am ok with what you have given me on this interview. Thank you so much		

ASP	Thank you also!		
	<b><u>INTERVIEW #4: THE PRINCIPAL</u></b>		
ME	As the principal of the school, how do you coordinate the different departments that render special care to your students?		
PAL	<p>That's a very good question, and the first answer is, not very easily! As you mentioned, there are different branches of care. And I think there are two different types of cares: the official and unofficial care. The officially recognized cares by the school are: guidance and counseling programs, mission trips, religious education. Plus, there is the unofficially recognized care which is how the faculty and staff deal with students in everyday basis. Also how our faculty and staff engage with the parents and community on everyday basis. I think that one of the things that the students say and I take great pride in is that – the school is a community and that they love the way they are made to feel by the faculty and staff. And that could be just taking interest in how the students performed in sports or remembering that the students took a trip and remembering to ask them how the trip/vacation was. I think there is informal connection with the students that a lot of our teachers just practice and we encourage that because it indicates that they are Marist in a Catholic school, and continuously putting out the message that the reason we are here is to make Jesus Christ</p>	<p>Types of care for students</p> <p>The impression of students about Molloy high</p> <p>Unofficial way of caring for students</p> <p>Care through the way teachers do</p>	

	<p>known well. We do this in an official way, but there are unofficial ways as well. <u>So, we have teachers who are great and make students feel that they are part of the community, and the kids really appreciate that.</u> I think another informal way that you can instill pastoral care is by <u>the care the teachers have which they put into their teaching.</u> It's not <u>only preparing lessons using Apps, textbooks or workbooks.</u> <u>But trying to use the subject you teach to help students understand their worldview and lessons about life.</u> In terms of the official components, we had a meeting today between the administration, student services, and campus ministry about a fundraiser, and unfortunately <u>there are so much need in the world and we wish to teach our students to do some charity, but we also want to coordinate our message so that our fund raising will be effective, and we can accommodate every request to do a fundraiser.</u> I think the biggest thing is to open up a line of communications, have meetings – formal or informal with all the department, and to try to have a coherent educational system whereby student are treated in a certain way, learn about God and religion, and then have the opportunity to help others in the way that make sense to them. That's my goal to make know that the way they are treated by their physics teacher can inspire them to help the homeless in their communities; will also inspire them to take a second look at how they treat</p>	<p>their classroom instruction</p> <p>Teaching and giving students the opportunity to do charitable services</p> <p><b>How the different department are coordinated to achieve success.</b></p>	
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	<p>their brother or sister at home, and ultimately inform their decisions about what they wish to do with their entire life. So I think it's important to have lines of communication across the different care departments.</p>		
ME	<p>The students seem not to be familiar with the term "Pastoral Care". The teachers are not aware too. So, what other term is used to communicate this aspect of care</p>		
PAL	<p>I think the biggest term we use here, and which we understand to be associated with pastoral care or extra-curricular caring for the students will be "Marist". When we talk about being Marist, we talk about Marist values, the five pillars of Marist charisma. I think being Marist is for us a kind of pseudonym for pastoral care. We also say that we are Stanners if we act like Stanners. Being a Stanner is another way of being Marist because a Stanner's way of acting is the Marist way of acting. It is all about: Presence, Simplicity, Love of work, in the way of Mary, Family Spirit. These are the pillar. So, I would think that if ask them what it means to be Marist, and how they feel that the school is Marist, I think they will give you the answer that you are looking for. Marist is synonymous to pastoral care</p>	The issue of nomenclature	
ME	<p>Actually, when I explained to the students what pastoral care entails, they understood and were able to answer many questions in that regard. One thing is sure though: In America, the term that is commonly used to refer to the</p>		





	<p>have this atmosphere than those services, because we can only supplement those services, a lot of teachers try to be very accommodating. But they chose to be in this environment which in some ways make up for those services. I will say that these are some of the ways in which pastoral care supplement for academic interventions</p>		
ME	<p>Are the teachers trained for this special care for the students or do they know that automatically?</p>		
PAL	<p>This is my 8yrs as principal. You talked about training teacher, but I think the biggest thing is who you are hiring/hired. And I think it is a combination of people who simply understand the importance of pastoral care naturally, and have shown it in their careers in one way or the other. We also hire a lot of graduates who have been through this school, who have a lot of experience through it and can pass on their experience to the students. We also hire people who embrace the Catholic faith and doctrines, the Marist way of being. We don't just hire for the sake of academic progress, we hire based on what impact they are going to make on the school as a whole. So when you hire that way, the amount of training you need to do is less. However, during our professional days, we always have the Marist components. They are specific workshops put up by the Marist provincial office. For instance in New York 4 or 5 of our teachers attend a professional workshop for the new faculty called "Sharing your call". These are</p>	<p>Ways to ensure continuity of pastoral care for the students</p> <p>How the faculty and staff are assisted to grow</p>	

	<p>the Marist professional development weekends, they are formal programs. And then we have something called “Professional Learning Community”, and we are going to start a program this year called “The Professional Prayer Community. This is because I think it’s not only to be one who delivers Marist education or pastoral care to their students, but you also want to be able to create space for your own personal reflection and growth, and to treat yourself nicely as well. So I think prayer and reflection are going to be part of that program</p>		
ME	<p>As you reflect on the outcomes of the pastoral care programs given to your students, do you think that the students freely comply with the programs or do so out of fear for the disciplines if they should refuse?</p>		
PAL	<p>I think there is some compliance by fear and this is a terrible motivator. But I also think that most students feel connection to each other, feel connection to the school and to the Marist values. I think that who they are and who they want to be. They are teenagers and teenagers act like teenagers. Sometimes they act foolishly from anger or jealousy. But overall, I think I have witnessed a lot of pastoral care from student to student, and I feel that most of that is genuine and not from fear because if fear is their motivator they are not just going to get a lot of output from the program.</p>	<p>Do students benefit from pastoral care?</p>	
ME	<p>When I think of pastoral care for students, I also think about</p>		

	<p>school safety. With regards to your students, do you think that they are benefiting from the pastoral care program in such a way that your school is devoid of students' violence?</p>		
PAL	<p>So, if you ask a typical parent why they send their children to Molloy, I think they will talk about academic, they will talk about faith, and they will also talk about safety. And I think the major motivator to go here is safety. For instance you and I are wearing the <u>identification badge</u>, the windows are treated with bullet resistant frames, we have the emergency <u>alert system</u>, and we also have <u>security guards</u>, and when we hired the security guards we didn't want them to be the students' friends but we wanted them to be friendly to them. And the students love them and want to hang out and talk to them. Therefore, our security guards are not to be feared by the students, they are embraced by the students. We actually had to talk to them about "don't let the students hug you". And so it is a very welcoming and safe environment. Because of the environment, we put a lot of effort into putting up the <u>physical barriers</u> in case anyone is trying to get outside we can lock the doors automatically. But in terms of fights within the student body it is very rare. In some high schools they are very common and you have them every single day. Here, it is my 8<sup>th</sup> year like I have said and I think I can count the few instances, and even those fights were not that bad, and</p>	<p>Ways to ensure school safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification badge</li> <li>Alert system</li> <li>Security guards</li> <li>Warm environment</li> <li>Physical barriers</li> <li>Fighting is discouraged</li> </ul>	

	<p>often student will break in and stop the fight before even the teachers and administrators can get there, because the students get the feeling that we don't do that here. Some years ago, I had an instance of two students who in my office were apologizing to one another. And after 10 minutes it happened they were friends again. So I don't think they need to bring the sense of that here.</p>		
ME	<p>Ok. So, where do place your school in terms of academic achievement? And would you say that the pastoral care that students receive helps them to reach the level of academic achievement in the school?</p>		
PAL	<p>I do. I would think that we are rated high. We could be the highest rated or strongest academic school in the diocese. People may debate that, but we are definitely one of them, and I do think that the level of Marist community pastoral care that students receive here absolutely raises their academic achievements, and I think that many students end up achieving at a level they never thought were possible before.</p>		
ME	<p>Thank you for your answers to my questions. As I have always argued, if students are given only the academic upbringing, they may achieve academic successes, but they may end up being a problem in the society because they lack the moral upbringing thereby being half-baked members of the society. So, is there any other thing you wish to tell me about our discussions?</p>		

PAL	Sure! What you just said reminds me of Victor Frank's book "Man's Search for Meaning", and I go back to that book a lot. It a great book to read for high school students, but it is also why human beings are searching for meaning. And meaning comes from having compassion for other human beings, and when you experience that you would want to pass it on to others. Therefore it is accurate to say that intelligence thrive without meaning, will result in emptiness. But when you have meaning you have the motivation to overcome obstacles at the end.		
ME	Thank you so much!		
	<b><u>INTERVIEW #5:</u></b> <b><u>PARENT #1</u></b>		
ME	As a parent, do you think that the families and communities benefit from the pastoral care which students get from their school?		
PRT 1	Absolutely 100%		
ME	So how do you explain that in terms of what you see?		
PRT 1	Well, I can tell you that being a product of Catholic education myself and coming up to ranks in education, I felt that I had something a little bit extra than my friends who attended public schools. And now as I moved on with my life, I work in a public school, and I see a big difference in terms of what I see there and what I feel I got and what the kids are getting by attending the Catholic school. They are getting more nurturing and more awareness not only in terms of religion, but also in terms of norms and values, and it's		

	something all of the staff model everyday and show to the children		
ME	Do you have a child in Molloy?		
PRT 1	Yes		
ME	So, what can you tell me in terms of the changes you have observed in your child since entrance into Molloy. And can you attribute those changes to the pastoral care being received?		
PRT 1	Well, since my daughter is a freshman and has only been there a few weeks, I don't know if I could answer that question truthfully enough. I know she's very excited to go to school and she seems to be striving in the environment. But she's also a teenager who is speaking less about the things that are going on in her daily life than she did before. So, for that question I don't know if I can answer that truthfully. However, I have co-workers whose kids attend Molloy. One said to me that since her kid started attending Molloy, he has gone through some transformation that he is now acting so responsibly and tries to do well. He is like a different person. This is the type of things that put Molloy no top of our list when we were shopping for high schools	Transformation in character due to pastoral care	
ME	In the Catholic schools we lay emphasis on pastoral care for the students. But in the public schools they also have some form of care for their students. So what other names do they call their version of care for their students?		
PRT 1	They have guidance and counselors; they have good teachers they can always go to.	Difference between Catholic	

	There are really many good people out there who have good religious background. So it comes from different places. The public school is not a bad place, it's also a good place. But it's just different from Catholic school environment.	private and public schools.	
ME	I have the impression that the term "Pastoral Care for students" is not familiar within the American schools. But that they use other terms like "Social Emotional Learning" to describe the special care to students. Is that also your experience?		
PRT 1	Yes, I believe that there is more awareness about it as time has gone along and especially during the pandemic times		
ME	I have also heard this remark from a public school teacher during an interaction. So, I wish to thank you for your time and responses to my questions.		
PRT 1	Thank you!		
	<b><u>INTERVIEW #6:</u></b> <b><u>PARENT #2</u></b>		
ME	As a parent, do you think that the families and communities benefit from the pastoral care which students get from their school?		
PRT 2	Yes, absolutely!		
ME	How do explain that?		
PRT 2	So, I believe in students, I believe in children, I believe that as they grow into adulthood everybody could be well rounded. You have a great education but you lack the moral part of being a human, being kind, being thoughtful and thinking about others. If you don't have it, the society will break down. That's number one. I		

	<p>believe that it starts at a very young age. There are families that always want the best for their children, but they may not know how to prepare them to be adults. As a parent, I believe that our children came through us, my child came through me the mother. He's mine to keep, and I believe that my job is to make sure that he is a positive contributor to the society. So I teach him how to fish versus giving him the fish, and I have always been that way with him. My son is 15yrs old and he knows how to cook for himself, he has his chores, he knows his responsibilities, he worked in the summer. I help him and teach him. When I cook I teach him. As a young boy I teach him how to be respectful to women/girls both his age and to adults.</p>		
ME	<p>So, I don't know how long he has been in Molloy or from where he moved into Molloy. But from what you experience in your child, do you think that what Molloy is offering him and other students is evident in his behavior? In other words, do you see some changes in his behavior as a result of the care he's receiving at Molloy High School?</p>		
PRT 2	<p>Yes I do. I said yes because I have a friend of mine, She and I are of the same age. She has two sons that graduated from Molloy. Her sons and mine are paddies, and their friends are 95% from Molloy. My son is in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade (sophomore), and Molloy is all about community, they encourage togetherness, and they</p>	<p>Changes in behavior due to pastoral care program</p>	



	help to instill good relationships not only for the teachers, but also amongst the children to each other		
ME	So you have reiterated what the children told me during the group interview. They spoke about Molloy as being family-oriented, encourage good relationship and easy friendships. But they also recognize that there are some bad behaviors among the students that give them some concern, and they actually mentioned some of these behaviors. I already know that teenagers pass through a lot experiences as they grow which is the reason for the pastoral care in order to guide them well so that they don't grow into adulthood with a lot of familiar misbehaviors. However, the worst thing will be that a student is corrected and remains heady or refuses to take correction. This indicates that something serious is happening in the life of the student		
ME	The students have given me many reasons to believe that Molloy is doing a lot of things to show them care. But they also recognize that some students are struggling with obeying or following the school programs. So, as parent, do you sometimes notice apathy in your son about following the school programs or does he follow all the school programs willingly? And do you think that he's attending all the school programs just to please you, or because he truly understands the importance of those programs for his life?		
PRT 2	I don't know! My son actually		

	<p>enjoys going to school, he has never complained about anything, and he does very well in school. And I think he understands the importance of those programs for his life. He has always done well in school even when he was younger at his other school – Grammar school, and in the Middle school. He had always been in the public schools, and I wanted him to experience something better because he is such a good kid. I attended a Catholic school and I wanted him to also have the experience of attending a Catholic school</p>	<p>Reason for migrating from public to Molloy high</p>	
ME	<p>Finally, you will agree with me then that pastoral care as an extra care given to the students is very important for their growth into adulthood, right?</p>		
PRT 2	<p>Absolutely I agree with you 100%. One more thing I wish to mention is this: when the students enter the school as freshmen, what I think is really very important, and what I feel will make Molloy to stand out – the school reached out to my son and the other incoming freshmen during the summer time and kept in touch with them, and they went on a weeklong camp which prepared them. It helped them to establish friendships with other students, and when they came in by September (school opening), that made a very good impression on them. No other school in the area does that kind of reach out exercise. And a lot of times, these freshmen enter the school being afraid because they don't know anybody.</p>	<p>Summer camp recruitment strategy</p>	

ME	You are exactly right because attending the summer camp helped them to make friends even before they entered into the high school. I also experience the same closeness among our younger students at SECA. There, they have what they call “buddy” i.e., the older students each, has a younger student assigned to take care of and to help understand the school better. This approach also encourages friendships and good relationships among the students. So, thank you so much for your input to my study.		
PRT 2	Thank you also!		
	<b><u>INTERVIEW #7:</u></b> <b><u>PARENT #3</u></b>		
ME	Do you have a kid in Molloy High School?		
PRT 3	Yes I do		
ME	So, you see any noticeable difference in your child between now that he/she is in Molloy and the time before entrance into it?		
PRT 3	No. I think she’s doing well at Molloy. She’s happy there.		
ME	Do you notice any change in the way she behaves? I mean in the way she does things, her sense of responsibility, and respect for each other and relationship with others. Is it better before she entered Molloy or the same?		
PRT 3	It’s the same I would say		
ME	This means that influences like home upbringing is playing along in her life		
PRT	Yea!		
ME	And do you think she’s behaving the way she does out of fear for discipline or being denied some		

	favor or out of her personal volition?		
PRT 3	I think it's a combination of being disciplined and personal volition		
ME	Do you think that the families and the society will benefit from the students in the future because of the extra formation they are receiving in terms of discipline and character formation? My position is that, with the extra formation they are receiving and emotional upbringing, they will end up becoming better members of the society. Is that your belief too?		
PRT 3	Yes I agree with you 100%		
ME	So do you agree with me then that pastoral care is very important for high school students?		
PRT 3	Yes, if they choose to go to a Catholic school. Yes!		
ME	Most of the students in the public schools do not have the type of caring that students in the Catholic school have, and for me, this is what makes the difference. Some of the teachers in the public schools, care only about the subjects they teach. Care for the students is not in their agenda.		
PRT 3	Yes, it's true		
ME	Finally, is there any more things you wish to tell me the behavior of student and how best to help them while they are still in school?		
PRT 3	I think that a lot of kids are now being exposed to the social media more than ever before. So, if the school helps the students to understand more about the world we live in, and have more	Benefit to the society	

	discipline for themselves and others, the society will be a better place.		
ME	Thank you for your opinion on my subject		
PRT 4	Thank you too!		
ME	Bye		
	<b><u>INTERVIEW #8:</u></b> <b><u>PARENT #4</u></b>		
ME	<b>Do you have a child in Molloy High School?</b>		
PRT 4	Yes. I have one in there right now, and one graduated last year.		
ME	<b>What's the level?</b>		
PRT 4	She's a junior i.e., grade 11		
ME	<b>Do you observe any difference in her now that she's in Molloy compared to the time before she entered?</b>		
PRT 4	No. I think she has been in the Catholic school her whole life. And I think she has a peer-group, and she never really talks about it. She is very a closed child. But from what I understood, she does open up to her peers. Her father died when she was in 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade. You know, she's a very complicated young person. But I think she's very consistent in her behavior. I have not observed negative or positive changes in her		
ME	<b>For a child that keeps to himself/herself, peer group interactions are very necessary as they can help her to open up and talk about issues that border her in life. But as her mother, does she also open up to you about her personal issues?</b>		
PRT 4	No. She rarely opens to me on issues. I would say that if there are 100 issues bordering her, may		

	be she will tell one. It is a very difficult age. She's the most closed of all my children		
ME	What about opening up to her other siblings?		
PRT 4	Also, she does not open up to her other siblings		
ME	In Molloy, there are students' counselors, the psychologists, and the religious coordinators. Does she open up to them?		
PRT 4	No. She doesn't like to.		
ME	This is part of the reason for pastorally caring for the students. It is never good for a student to not talk to anyone about issues bordering his/her life. During my interview with one of the teachers, I learned that two of the students that joined in the group discussion already contemplated suicide sometime ago. But through the assistance of the counseling and other approaches used on them, they became better and even joined the leadership team among the students, helping others to cope. So, it is not a good thing for a student to always keep to themselves when they are in a community with others. That kind of behavior is usually indicative of internal struggles with issues in life. Having said that, I wish to ask: do you believe therefore, and can you mention some of the problems you feels that students may have apart from their academic class works		
PRT 4	Sure! For instance, my child in particular, during the heavy period of the COVID-19 pandemic, she was having issues about body image, she has developed eating disorder which		

	<p>we are still dealing with. We are also going through medical processes because of her other problems like: body development, sexual development issues, and even social orientation issues – Am I cool? Am I in a cool group? Nobody invites me to parties, and always wondering if where she fits in the social scheme of things. And I see my daughter as compared to myself because, I also had similar upbringing during my elementary school days in a Catholic school. But today, there's definitely more wide spread pressure, bullying, and stress among students than when I was in school. Or may be it was my personality. My parents were immigrants and I learned that I couldn't go out like the other children did or like girls, do this and do that. And I felt that that was bad enough for me. Now, my daughters have more options, and this causes another type of stress. You know, things like drinking and drugs. My middle daughter started drinking in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, but this one is much more reserved and I don't think she's engaging in anything like that. So yes, Molloy is a great school. But they cannot know the nitty gritty aspects of every student's life. They have about 1500 students and they also acknowledge how difficult it is to know everything about each of their students. But if a student seeks friendship or community kind of life, I think Molloy offers that. But definitely, some student are more closed or keep to</p>		
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	themselves more than others		
ME	<b>Does your daughter do very well in academics?</b>		
PRT 4	Yes she does. And she also does the competitive gymnastics. So she's a very busy teenage students – keeping up with her studies, and her spots		
ME	So, with regard to your daughter, I feel that she's battling with 2 issues: low self-esteem and being an introvert. Pastoral care is meant to help students like your daughter. So, I feel that this sharing about your daughter's life can help me in my analysis. <b>Thank you. Is there any other thing you wish to share about this topic?</b>		
PRT 4	No Fr., if I think of anything, I will respond through your email or call you. But I think the school does have many options, and I talk to the counselors on occasions, especially when my middle daughter was in sophomore, and I have been very happy with that.		
ME	<b>So, you will therefore agree with me that pastoral care is important for high school students?</b>		
PRT 4	Absolutely yes I believe it. It helped me in my own school days. That time, we have a special nun we could go to, outside our counselors. Literally, she was like a social worker, and we could go to her and talk about our private things, and we could feel like no one could see us go into her office because it was in another section of the building. And this was immensely beneficial to me. My older daughter too, she had a nun in her school she could talk to as often	Necessity of having pastoral care for high school students.	



	as needed to talk about what she was going through		
ME	So all your children attended Catholic schools?		
PRT 4	Yes. And that is important to me because I know that they do get that care		
ME	During your school days, did they call the care students received by the name of “Pastoral Care” or another name?		
PRT 4	No. They didn’t call it pastoral care. Rather we associated that care with something that could happen through the parish and not through the school. But I think the younger students of today prefer to use other terms like “peer-grouping” or “social emotional learning” which is a very new terminology in the schools in relation to the students’ care.		
ME	Rosa, I thank you so much for your contributions.		
PRT 4	Thank you too.		
	<b><u>INTERVIEW #9: THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR</u></b>		
ME	Are you familiar with the term “Pastoral Care”?		
SC	Yes for sure. I went to Boston college for my masters in social work, and some of my classmates were doing a dual degree with in pastoral counseling in one of the theological colleges. So, I was really exposed to it in the 1990s when I was in Boston College. I didn’t take any course in it, but some of my classmates did.		
ME	From my observations, it looks like what the schools in America are so familiar with is the term		

	<p>“Social Emotional Learning”. And social emotional learning is something that just began with the COVID-19 pandemic (SC agrees with me), and they are still struggling with how to fathom it into the school curriculum. But pastoral care is the umbrella name for all the cares that students do receive in their schools apart from their classroom academic curricular.</p> <p>Having heard my explanations, do you believe that your students at Molloy have so many problems that are non-academic in nature, but which can obstruct their academic endeavors?</p>		
SC	<p>Yes. Obviously we see a lot of problems in our students. The first one is the pandemic problem in terms of the fact that they have stayed home for so long or that some have chosen to go to school in a hybrid format, while some chose to remain home instead of doing the hybrid format. So, we are noticing that some kids, whether it is maturity or school avoidance. Our current sophomore class had a lot of issues with maturity when they were freshmen. Right now, I have a sophomore girl who is dealing with the issue of school avoidance, and we are having a hard time with her. She has been absent from school 7 times already. We are having a time figuring out what exactly is the cause. However, the principal and I are thinking that it is the residual effects of the pandemic that is causing such behavior. The only thing I am getting from her is – how loud the cafeteria is.</p>		

	<p>That she doesn't want to come to school because whenever she has to go for lunch, it's causing anxiety. And this is a girl who has a very good family, she's smart. So we've seen the problem of maturity and other residual effects of the pandemic. The other one unfortunately is the issue of some students' vaping marijuana in the school. We had a very big problem last year. But this year we are hoping that with the many things we are doing, we are hoping to have a better situation. But even last week we had two girls who were suspended because they were vaping nicotine in one of our bathrooms. You know, because of the addiction side of it. Therefore yes, we have been encountering a number of things that have been affecting the kids</p>		
ME	<p>In addition, I think that many students come to school carrying with them heavy burdens, perhaps, sexual violence or something making them angry. When they come to school with that kind of ill dispositions they definitely cannot learn because they are thinking of what happens to them</p>		
ME	<p>Pastoral care is practiced in many schools, but in different ways. Some have either structured or unstructured pastoral care programs, some are proactive, segmented, developmental and/or reactive. In Molloy, what is the structure of the pastoral care program being used?</p>		
SC	<p>Sure! I would say that it's a combination of both. There are two parts to it – curricular and</p>	<p>How the guidance counseling</p>	

	<p>extra-curricular. The peer group program started here in 1971 if you can believe that. So, since 1971, every sophomore experiences peer group cancelling. It is one marked out program during their sophomore for one full year. It is confidential, it is private, there is no grading for it, it's in the guidance counselor's office, and it meets every other day for one marked monthly period. The peer group counselor has many seniors that help to facilitate the group, and they are called "peer group leaders" or PGL for sure, and there is also a small group of sophomores. So, we cover everything from family to drugs and alcohol, and sexual relationships, faith, fears, mental health, discrimination, sexism and racism or any discomfort that kids experience. We do all these during the day in school as a curricular. And we do this in partnership with the religious department. So, basically the religious department gives the guidance counseling time when it is our own instructional time but it is actually group counseling. For e.g., the first quarter goes from September to mid-November. There are four groups that do this. So, when the kids leave my class, they go to another religious class and it's called "personal growth". And that class is normally more than a normal class size, so my group will have 6 sophomores in it. At the same time another colleague of mine has another group with 6 sophomores in it, and another</p>	<p>department in Molloy coordinates care for students</p>	
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	<p>colleague also has 6 sophomores in his group. So, there are about 18 sophomores gathering this section. When they finish their section they go together to another class called “personal growth”. And at the end of the first quarter the reverse happens. The 18 kids that attended the personal growth and religious class get spread out into 3 different peer groups. So this program has been in our curriculum since 1971. And it was inspired by a group called “SMILE” which stands for “Something More In Life’s Experience”. This was an after school program with different discussion groups. One is the bereavement group for kids who have lost a parent or sibling. One is for kids who are shy or in the autistic spectrum. Another one is an open group where any kid can come and speak in general about any topic or anything that borders them, and we also have topics. Again, this is called SMILE and is an extra curriculum which started in 1965. This program is what gave birth to “Peer Group”. It was an after school program and we realized that we can have every kid do this as part of an extra curriculum and that’s how peer group is born. And I should tell you that it was Brother Leo Richard (died in 1995), who had no training in mental health, but a history teacher and a coach. He was so good at Molloy which was obviously a boys’ school for a long time. Brother Leo was so good with the boys such that the SMILE program he began helped</p>		
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	to create the peer group		
ME	So, as the school counselor, do you think that students are complying with all these programs out of fear of being disciplined should they be absent, or out of their own personal volition?		
SC	That's a great question. So, because it is mandatory that students are in these programs, we work so hard to know our students, we do a lot of leading by examples. So the peer group counselors, the seniors, and the peer group leaders, share their own aspects of personal and family lives, or faith journeys with the students. It can really be any topic that comes up. We the counselors and leaders are the initiators of the discussions, so that the younger kids could see that it's a safe place to trust, and can bring their own stories forward. And this has been really worthwhile and of course we meet individually with students about anything personal to them that they need to talk about: personal life, family, dating, academics, stress, depression, anxiety, and anything. And if we need to refer the students to an outside agency/therapy because they need it, we do so. This is the role we have as guidance and counselors	Monitoring compliance	
ME	Do you think that the students appreciate all these helps they are getting or do they sometimes resist it?		
SC	Not really. You know, we give students feed backs where we talk to them about our observation and what we think of		

	<p>them. It's mostly positive, and we so get constructive feed backs. But as they say, sometimes it could be a little bit warm fozzies. But I will say that many kids say that they wish that it was a little bit longer. They wished it was two marked periods not one.</p>		
ME	<p>Yea, some students are very shy to talk about themselves and their issues when asked, but truly they are in a mess with something happening in their lives</p>		
ME	<p><b>So, apart from the religious activities and counseling programs, what other programs do you have in place to ensure the holistic development of the students?</b></p>		
SC	<p>So, I am assuming that you spoke with the religious coordinator. There is a group that one of the brothers (Pat Hogan) and I founded, it is a service society. We founded it in the year 2004, and we called it St. Marcellin Champagnat Society. So, through this society, we started bringing students to <b>LOURDES in France</b> to give companionship to the sick, and the faithful, and to help move people around, and actually we worked in the desks (i.e., serving). This St. Marcellin Champagnat Society we call the SMCS for short. We started this service in Lourdes France, and started travelling to Nicaragua, Peru, Jamaica, and Dominican Republic. We also went to the Lakota (i.e., North/South Dakota) through a reservation (arrangements) and New Orleans a few years after the hurricane Catharina, and then after the hurricane Sandy affected New</p>	<p>Trips that enhance pastoral care for students at Molloy high</p>	

	<p>York, instead of doing international or domestic trips, we did two trips locally. We went to Rockaway, Queens, and helped people who had their houses or parts of their houses destroyed. So, this society has been a wonderful extension of Molloy which is a great example of activities here in Briarwood and throughout New York. In the past few years, we have done some border emersion type of experiences. We have been to Two Son Arizona and El Paso Texas twice.</p>		
ME	<p><b>How often do you make these journeys?</b></p>		
SC	<p>Sure! So the pre-pandemic they were twice a year. During the pandemic we obviously slowed down, but the last group before the pandemic was in February of 2020, I led a group to El Paso. And it was a Jesuit priest and a Marist brother running something called “El Encuentro Project”. This joint mission project between the Marists and Jesuits exposes high school college kids and adults to pastoral ministry at the border and working with migrants. So, we were able to return there last Easter (this past April) with our group. And we are meeting with the principal tomorrow to discuss the new trips for this school year and nail it down. The Marist brothers are at the border in Texas, so there is the possibility of doing a trip there again at El Paso; and may be in the summer we may make a trip to the Appalachia in Kentucky. We haven’t nailed it down yet, but we are looking at</p>		



	doing 1-3 trips for 2023 from the Spring semester.		
ME	<b>Do you see the effects of these several care projects, on the academic performances of the students?</b>		
SC	So, we have not done a study on what you are asking. But my guess would be that – it would have a huge benefit to the student’s academics because of the connection greater sense of purpose in the world. So I would think that there is a positive link to academic performance from this kind of works		
ME	<b>Are teachers at Molloy High trained to know how to care for the students or do they know that automatically?</b>		
SC	That’s a great question. So, outside of the guidance counselors, teachers are encouraged to refer students to us. The vast majority of the teachers are either licensed or certified. So, they had some of these trainings, but not the direct training that I know of.		
ME	Ok. So I am thinking that if the teachers have the basic trainings during their teacher training and preparations, on how to care for the students pastorally, they will definitely do better in that area.		
SC	Yes I agree with you.		
ME	<b>Where do you place Molloy in terms of academic ranking in the state?</b> I asked this question because, if pastoral care is helping the students to be safe in the school environment, making violence less and also taking care of their emotional wellbeing, that means they will also pay more attention in the classroom, and		

	therefore do better. <b>What do you say to my question?</b>		
SC	<p>That's a great question. You know, we consider ourselves the best high school in Queens for sure. From my understanding, the state hasn't done any real rankings on private schools. I have often seen them on public schools. I think we will argue on key scores like the SAT scores and college acceptances that we are a top school. But I don't know of any specific state rankings. Probably that question will be for the principal. But I can tell you that several years ago, in the 1990s we were given a special recognition by the federal department of education and called "An Exemplary High School". I think this was around 1995. Remember the brother I told you (Pat Hogan) who founded the SMILE, he passed on in 1995. And I remember when I was a student here, I graduated from here in 1991, this was around the time we got that recognition from the federal department of education, and we include that recognition in the bottom part of our school's letter heads, saying "US Department of Education Exemplary School". The other one is that every so many years we get credited by the Middle States Association of Secondary Schools. Thirdly, we were actually in the US World News Reports in the year 2000s. And finally, there is the Parochial School kind of one called "The Blackboard Recognition". So, those are the actual big rankings we have got, but I haven't seen</p>		

	an actual state rankings. If we did have one, we would be bragging about it for our marketing purposes		
ME	At the beginning and in fact throughout, my argument has been that the term “Pastoral Care” is an umbrella name for all the types of care that students receive apart from their academics. In other words, these other aspects like – counseling, religious ministry, sports, and all the trips that students make, are all parts of a the bigger umbrella name “Pastoral Care”. Even in books, so many administrators acknowledge the fact that there are different ways to care for students. Michael Marland (1974) introduced this term “Pastoral Care” in school administration while examining the teacher-students relationships in the fashion of pastor-flock relationship.		
SC	Sure! I agree with you.		
ME	So, thank you for your time and knowledge sharing about my topic on the pastoral care for the students.		
SC	It’s my pleasure. Thank you too.		
	<b><u>INTERVIEW #10:</u></b> <b><u>THE</u></b> <b><u>COMMUNICATIONS</u></b> <b><u>DIRECTOR</u></b>		
ME	How long have you been at Molloy High school?		
CD	For about 12 yrs now.		
ME	Do you also teach any subject in the classroom?		
CD	I do not teach in the classroom. However, I am involved with some of the after school		

	activities.		
ME	With regards to the pastoral care activities in Molloy, how do you summon students to participate actively?		
CD	There are two different groups of people that communicate with the students. So, it's not solely through communications department. Communication at Molloy is very much about external communications, sort of – marketing, social media, News, Reporting. And we also do more creative subjects like – signs, visual abstracts and some website works. As far communicating to the students is concerned, we send out emails to inform them about events coming up and initiatives. That is the major way we use to communicate to them. But there is an App that we use called “Remind” which enhances text messaging between the students and moderators in a more secure way when the school is not in session. We also use the Blackboard where we can send out message to the students. So we use our communication to create awareness to the students about what is available to them and their benefits for their lives, and also communicate to the public about the possibilities that exist in Molloy for the students.	External and Internal communication s strategies.	COMMUNICATIO N STRATEGY:
ME	So there are two major ways of communication strategy at Molloy?		
CD	Actually, the communication department was officially launched last year. Prior to that, we had many people working in communications but they were all		

	<p>in different departments, and it wasn't necessarily a school wide-position. So we recreated the communications department to sort of refocus and streamline it so that every information will be coming from the right place. So to start a department, the communications is mostly focused on external effort. But I believe that there is room to grow and do more internal. For instance, when the message is going to the parent, there is an update from the principal, and many times those messages go directly from the principal's office. So it's not us doing it for him as communications, but we would offer to proof read his letters and provide him with any other support that he might need to do those things. But he does the sending. So while we do not oversee every communication for the principal, we do offer help where we can.</p>		
ME	<p>Do you have specific modalities for reporting incidences among the students or things that happened in the school environment? If there is a situation, how will you handle that?</p>		
CD	<p>So, we have the V-alert (an App) which can be sent to the faculty and staff, we downloaded it and it's also on the students' iPads. So the V-alert could go out. I believe we utilize the Blackboard and the emails for the purpose of communication. We would definitely do a kind of mass email to students and parents to inform them of some kind of situation. We do not have</p>		

	incidences often, but if they were to happen, then the V-alert messaging App and the email will probably be used to send out messages.		
ME	Since Molloy is a private Catholic High School, do you communicate to the diocese in terms of the pastoral care activities?		
CD	Molloy operates as an independent private catholic school with the permission of the diocese. There is no frequent line of communication between the diocese and Molloy. But if there is any need to reach out directly to the diocese, we do that. For instance, one of our teachers is a deacon, and he arranged to schedule the Bishop's mass for Molloy at the beginning of the fall semester. We also reach out to the diocese or the public through the diocesan news paper called "The Tablet"		
ME	As an insider, do you think that the students put up resistance to some of the programs/activities (counseling, religious activities etc) put up by the school to help them grow holistically?		
CD	In terms of the after school programs, I think majority of the students utilize those opportunities, because it is the life-wire of the school and students love it because it helps them to find new inspirations and interests. And we have many clubs, I think over 60 different clubs. So, no, I don't think there is anything in those activities that they don't like. Recently, we introduced the German club, and the students are excited about it.	Programs that students love	

	<p>But I couldn't tell you if there are any kinds of resistance or not to these programs. Any student applying to Molloy knows that there will be religious classes. It is part of the program and lasts for years. So, if anyone didn't want it, I don't think the person would have come in the first place.</p>		
ME	<p>Is there any kind of communication strategies that you use in Molloy which we cannot find in public schools?</p>		
CD	<p>I will answer it this way. I don't know what the presence of many public schools are on social media, but we try to appeal to the interests and sensibilities of students through the social media whenever it is possible. One of the things we have learned is that student like to see themselves on the instagram page, they get excited about it and want to show their friends things they have done to get featured on social media. We try to make sure that our social media pages are shared to and viewed by parents and alumni. We try to share consistent and relevant news, the photographs of students during the various activities, and students' activities. We know that parents shop through the school websites when making their choices. And we try to make our pages very interesting to read about. So, I don't know whether many public schools have the consistent presence in the media the way we have. We have put resources behind these achievements in the communications department in</p>	<p>Strategies which Molloy use in communication which public school do not have.</p>	

	<p>order to make these achievements. So, I don't think the public schools are as consistently daily as we are about our use of the social media.</p> <p>I need to say also that many people know more about Molloy now than before because of the effects of the social media. In the past we used to rely for the advertizing of our school through the students, their families, and the catholic church gatherings. But not anymore. Nowadays, immigrant move into New York and surf and read about Molloy and make the choices for the schooling of their children.</p>		
ME	<p>Let me try a summary of our discussion this way:</p> <p>Externally, Molloy puts out information to the public to inform them of what the mission of Molloy is, what it can offer to the students, even the trips you undertake yearly. All those things are there so that people can know more about Molloy, and actually, they have known more now compared to what used to be in the past from what you have said.</p> <p>Internally, students gain more of the communication from the principals and the teachers than from your office, but your office also does what is necessary to support what they are communicating to the students and their parents</p>		
CD	<p>That's wonderful. One thing I will add is that we do have the communication letter called "The Beehive". It's a kind of Newsletter which we send out to the students and parents, the alumni and every other person</p>		



	who wishes to subscribe. We do this every two weeks. Somehow we are shifting focus from the alumni only and adding the parents and students to that list so that we can focus on Molloy community on the whole		

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