

TRENDS & VIEWS – KRCE NEWSLETTER

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“Teachers are like the candle, which consume themselves to brighten the lives of others”.

Author Unknown

Editorial

One of the most important things that teachers should always keep in mind is the fact that teaching is not only a profession but also considered as a vocation. None of them could become effective and efficient teachers if they will only work for the sake of the degree that they have earned in college or just for the sake of the salary they get from their employers. Modern teaching is supposedly geared to the average student. Many accept it as surrender to perceived necessity. No one ever thinks in terms of raising the quality of teaching to an average level. The very emphasis on bringing everything to an average level suggests a downward direction. Once this downward direction is established, the tendency is to continue it further, toward the less-than-average students. In the classrooms, the tendency to equate equality with uniformity has led to the penalizing of brilliance, and to the careful nurturing of mediocrity.



Many well-meaning teachers end up devoting a disproportionate amount of their attention to the duller pupils, giving more or less perfunctory attention, in the process, to children even of average intelligence, and virtually none to the brilliant students. The brilliant ones, consequently, are deprived of challenges, and become bored. Often it is these last who become the “problem” children in the schools. Intelligence is only one standard of a student’s all-round qualifications, of course. But it is obvious that all students are not equally intelligent. Neither are they all equally sensitive, creative, receptive, energetic, willing, or, in fact, equally anything. In a world where no two thumbprints are alike, the variety of human capabilities may be described as infinite.

It is one thing to say that all men are created equal before God; or that all, in their shared humanity, have an equal right to rise to their own levels of competence, to develop their own talents, and to fulfil their reasonable desires according to their own intrinsic abilities. It may even be justifiable, philosophically speaking, to say that all men have the potential to attain to equal heights.

It is quite another thing, however, to say that all men are, at all times, equally competent, talented, and capable of achieving success. Anyone can see that this is not the case. How intelligent people can so blind themselves to a reality so self-evident is a commentary on the intellect’s capacity for self-deception. Only a person thoroughly convinced that there are no sow’s ears, only silk purses, could even contemplate such an absurdity.

Thus, whatever system of education one follows; it must be flexible enough to provide for the shifting needs of a large variety of students. It must be child-oriented. A teacher may have specific information that he wants to impart, but if his students are not ready to receive it, his immediate job must be either to help them to receive it, or else to teach them what he thinks they can receive.

One of the mistakes often made by teachers, and by lecturers in all fields, is a tendency to be satisfied if they can convince themselves rather than their audiences. A good talk, however, whether a class or a lecture, is always in a sense a dialogue, even if one person does all the speaking. The competent speaker will “listen,” as it were, to his audience — to their thoughts, their unspoken questions — and will respond accordingly. The more intuitive he is, the greater his ability will be to sense their needs, both as a group and as individuals. As we remember the greatness of teachers today, we look for the strength and stability through which we build a new generation of men and women for the future. Let us remember that teacher has a great role in building the nation. Happy Teachers Day!

Fr. Eugene Lobo SJ

TEACHING AS A VOCATION: An important framework within which teaching has been conceived is that of a vocation. In a



generic sense, vocation refers to any career choice. In a more specific sense it connotes a calling in life

that consists of distinctive roles or functions. In its religious context, the concept of a vocation has an admittedly theological connotation, but it can be usefully understood in a non-theological sense as well. What, then, would it mean for an activity or role, such as teaching, research, or administration, to be a calling in life? To what and by who is one called? What does the concept of vocation imply?

In clarifying the concept of a teaching vocation, let us start with two theological considerations. All Christians are said to have a general vocation to witness to their beliefs or to evangelize their faith. Some Christians, however, such as ordained clergy or members of religious orders, are said to have a more particular vocation to a specific ministry of service within the Church. Likewise, teachers in Catholic schools are said to have a vocation to educate, not only in faith but also in the integration of faith and culture, and for the benefit of the faithful, society, and the Church overall.

More specifically, Catholic school teachers are called to a ministry within the church to educate "for the integral formation of the human person" and to develop the whole person in all their capacities. In a Catholic university, the vocation of a scholar-teacher has a Christian inspiration that enables the institution "to include the moral, spiritual and religious dimension in its research and to evaluate the attainment of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the human person" says Pope John Paul II.

In its theological sense, a vocation is an inner call that arises from one's own faith experience. It is experienced as an invitation from God, an exhortation from the person of Christ that expects a response. It imposes a role or a task directed toward the Church community, a task that in the case of teachers takes on a specific dimension not

only to educate in skills or learning but also in faith.

The two aspects of call and service that emerge from a theological meaning carry over to a non-theological meaning of vocation. Avocation to a lifestyle, a career, or a social role can be understood to constitute an inner call, an imperative that imposes itself. To claim, for instance, that someone feels called to be a parent or an artist has an element of moral obligation. In this view, it is not that an individual particularly wants to be a parent or seeks to become an artist. It is, rather, that he feels impelled to become a parent or that she is convinced she should become an artist. Nevertheless, whether we respond to such a call, whether we carry out the perceived obligation, is a matter of intentional choice. Since a calling in life, if it is consciously experienced at all, is unique to each individual, one's response likewise engages one deeply and personally, both in making the choice of acceptance, or rejection, and in taking full responsibility for it.

We can further elucidate the sense of call in terms of presence and gift. Here human existence is viewed as an inner being or presence we encounter. The encounter offers a choice to accept or refuse one's own unique being and purpose. However, since an encounter with being and the fundamental choice it imposes amounts to an inner call, it implies that human life is itself a vocation, a unique call to respond to the presence of being. It can further be elucidated in terms of understanding of life as a gift, presented to each individual. But a gift needs to be accepted or acknowledged. An item presented to someone is not a gift unless it has been accepted as such. A gift expresses a deeper reality to which we bear witness. A gift implies an interpersonal dimension; it is offered by one person and received by another.



And in choosing to accept a gift we also assume a personal responsibility for the gift by way of fidelity and trust. The acceptance of a gift, just as the response to a call, engages an individual personally and interpersonally. On this analysis, the concept

of a vocation can be understood--theologically and non-theologically--as an inner call, an offered gift, that originates beyond ourselves, that demands an intentional response, that solicits fidelity and trust towards whoever imposes the call or offers the gift, and for which we assume a responsibility once accepted.

Another aspect of vocation that emerges from its theological meaning is that of service. In other words, the call implies a purpose individuals are invited to fulfil. As the call comes from beyond oneself, so its task and purpose extends beyond oneself as well. Thus, for instance, when Christians are expected to witness to their beliefs, they become a model to others; their call to witness is not so much for the benefit of themselves as it is for the benefit of others. When artists respond to a creative impulse, they do so not to satisfy their own interests but to respect aesthetic ideals. In either case, a vocation--a call and its response--not only acknowledges others but also is directed toward others and for that reason implies a kind of service. A vocation is inherently altruistic and interpersonal. Not only does a call or gift implied in the concept of a vocation have its origin in someone else, the direction of a vocation is toward service of someone else.

To view teaching as a vocation, then, is to acknowledge a call to serve others through the means of education and learning, be it at a primary, secondary, or post-secondary level. Such a calling may, in turn, be grounded within a religious worldview, as coming from God and forming part of a divine plan for one's particular life, but it need not be. A teaching vocation can also be grounded in a humanistic worldview, in which a call to teach can be understood to originate from those in need of teaching services. The point is that in the conceptual framework of vocation, we do not merely choose teaching from among a range of alternative careers that may suit our personal interests. Rather, we assume a teaching role and whatever is involved in fulfilling it out of a sense of duty. The role itself, moreover, is directed toward others, because it is after all their learning that is the purpose of education. If we were to ask why we are called to teach, an obvious answer would be so that others could learn. Understood as a call and a service, the function of teaching would engage an individual in two distinct ways: personally in

its various activities as an obligation more than a desire and interpersonally in acknowledging those who offer the call and those who are the recipients of its service.

Consequently, the focus of conceptualizing teaching as a vocation is more on students for whom teaching activities are carried out than it is on the teacher who performs these activities or on the institution that supports the teaching function. A similar analysis can apply to other components of an academic career: research and administration. To conceptualize these as a vocation would be to consider them as an obligation and a service toward those who would benefit from the research or to whom administrative functions are directed.

One of the most important things that teachers should always keep in mind is the fact that teaching is not only a profession but also considered as a vocation. We can see why teaching is considered as a vocation, first, let's take a look at the difference between profession and vocation. Teaching is technically a profession where it normally involves occupation and the salary that is being awarded to a teacher after hard days of work. However, unlike any other profession, it requires dedication and service in order for an individual to be considered as a real teacher. That's the reason why teaching should not just be treated as a simple profession but also a serious vocation where other people and service is over self and salary. Anyone can work over time but not everyone can go to mountains and serve those needy people. Therefore, a vocation is only for some who are really dedicated not just to work but also to serve other people.

"There are two kinds of teachers; the kind that fills you with so much quail shot that you can't move, and the kind that just gives you a little prod behind and you jump to the skies."

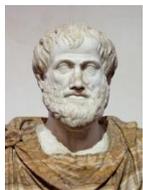
Robert Frost

10 Famous Teachers Who Changed the World: Education is just impossible without a proper and appropriate teacher and the present world that we are looking around would not be possible without an appropriate and right teacher. However, the great teachers of time had their own methods to teaching and



learning and put through the foundation of present contemporary world. Below are mentioned some of the greatest teacher of our times who shaped the civilization to a greater extent.

1. **Confucius:** He was a Chinese thinker and social philosopher whose teachings have influenced Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese life to a greater extent. In his philosophies, he advocated personal and governmental morality. His teachings developed into a system of philosophy known to be as Confucianism.



2. **Aristotle:** He was a Greek philosopher, student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. He has written over a good number of subjects like physics, metaphysics, poetry, theatre, music, logic, rhetoric, politics, biology and zoology.

3. **Johann Amos Comenius:** He was a Moravian teacher, scientist, educator and writer. He was a Unity of the Brethren/Moravian Protestant bishop, a religious refugee, the earliest champions of universal education and a concept set forth in his book Didactica Magna

4. **John Locke:** He was an emphatic follower of the belief that knowledge is needed to be taught. He insisted on teaching of character first and academics later. He was of the belief that good character far exceeds the value of learning to read, write, and complete calculations and other uses.

5. **Friedrich Froebel:** He was a German pedagogue, a student of Pestalozzi who put forth foundation for modern education on the basis of research that students have their own specific need and capabilities for learning. He created the concept of kindergarten and coined the word as well for use in English language.

6. **Henry David Thoreau:** He was an American poet, author, surveyor, historian, philosopher and leading transcendentalist. He is better known for his book Walden, about simple living in natural surroundings. His articles, essays, journals and poetry total over 20 volumes.

7. **Booker T. Washington:** He was a noted and renowned American political leader, educator, orator and author. He was a prominent personality in the American-African community from 1890 to 1915 in the United States. He was from the last generation of those black leaders who were born in slavery and fought for the civil rights of their brethren.

8. **Noah Webster:** He was an American lexicographer, textbook author, spelling reformer, word enthusiast and editor. He is known to be the Father of the American Scholarship and Education. His "Blue-Backed Speller" books have used for five generations in US to teach children English.

9. **Albert Einstein:** He was a theoretical physicist and his contribution to the physics is known from the special and general theories of relativity, the founding of relativistic cosmology, the first post-Newtonian expansion, explaining the perihelion advance of Mercury and others. He is best known for his theories of special relativity and general relativity. In 1921, he received Nobel Prize in Physics for his services to Theoretical Physics and his discovery of law of photoelectric effect.

10. **Ayn Rand:** She was a renowned Russian-American Novelist, philosopher, playwright and screensaver and is known for her two bestselling novels and starting a philosophical system that is known as Objectivism. She came into the fame with her novel The Fountainhead in 1943 and again she became immortalized with her philosophical novel Atlas Shrugged in 1957.

"When you study great teachers... you will learn much more from their caring and hard work than from their style."
William Glasser

India's most famous teachers: Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. The man whose birthday we celebrate as Teachers' Day in India!

Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the first Vice President and the second President of the country, was first and foremost a teacher. Coming from an extremely humble background, Dr Radhakrishnan began his teaching career at the Madras Presidency College.

Eventually, he would go on to become Professor of Philosophy at the University of Mysore, represent the University of Calcutta at international congresses in the UK and the US and even lecture Oxford on Comparative Religion.



Even though he received the title of the Earl of Willingdon he never once used it in his personal life, rather preferring to use the title he had earned on his merit -- 'Doctor'.

The story goes that after he was elected to be the President of India some of his students and friends asked him if they could celebrate his birthday.

His reply was this: "Instead of celebrating my birthday, it would be my proud privilege if 5 September is observed as Teachers' Day."

And so it was. The day, since then, has been celebrated in India as Teachers' Day.

"The chief wonder of education is that it does not ruin everybody concerned in it, teachers and taught." Henry Adams

We the Teachers.... *"Those who educate children well are more to be honoured than they who produce them; for these only gave them life, those the art of living well."*— Aristotle.

This quote from Aristotle summarizes well the meaning of being a teacher. Accordingly a teacher is the one who inspires the students to be winners, to learn from their mistakes and thus to grow and stand tall in the society.



"Your role as a leader is even more important than you might imagine. You have the power to help people become winners," says Ken Blanchard. The influence the teacher has on the life of students is beyond measure. We feel proud of being one, when some of the ex-students comment: "We understand, remember and practice what our teacher has said and do understand it more now than

those days in the classroom." This is true indeed because our education is for life and not just limited to the classroom in reading, writing and Arithmetic.

Our dear Teacher friends must realize that our profession as a teacher is a noble vocation and not mere occupation. "It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge," says Albert Einstein who himself was a great teacher. For this we need the commitment to our work as mentors of little minds. Let's play our part well with joy and commitment as teachers, reaching out and recognizing young talents to mature with wisdom and creativity.

Teaching is a wonderful invitation coming from the divine and it is high time that we place before every teacher and express our tribute to them as we celebrate the Teachers' Day:

*We march to the house of learning with zest
Much zeal, smile, enthusiasm and delight
To ignite young minds to bring out the best
And make their vision beautiful and bright.*

*To know fully the simple truths of existence
Searching wisdom, creativity built in passion
Entering portals of knowledge with confidence
Leading children to build a harmonious nation*

*Learning, leading, inspiring and envisioning
Come; let's charge ahead without any rest,
Guiding their little steps towards awakening
Ready to face life's challenge, indeed our quest.*

Sr. Cynthia Pais, BS

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible". - Francis of Assisi

Teacher's Day Teachers have an influencing role in the life of every student. They are like beacons of light, guiding us in the formative years of our life. Teachers mould us and in the process and shape our future. What we learn from our teachers remains with us, throughout our life. However, very often, we fail to show our appreciation and gratitude for their altruistic devotion. Teachers do need encouragement and support from the community to feel that their efforts are being

recognized. To serve the purpose, Teacher's Day is celebrated throughout the world, year by year. By celebrating National Teacher's Day, we thank our teachers for providing us their invaluable guidance.

The festival is celebrated on different dates in different countries. In India, Teacher's Day (also called Teachers' Appreciation Day or National Teacher's Day) is celebrated on 5th of September, every year. The date was selected, because it is the birthday of a timeless teacher and the former President of India - Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. When some of his students and friends approached him and requested him to allow them to celebrate his birthday, he said, "instead of celebrating my birthday separately, it would be my proud privilege, if September 5th is observed as Teacher's day". From then onwards, the 5th of September has been observed as Teachers Day, in India.

Teachers serve as the guiding force in a student's life. They are responsible for molding a student's personality and shaping his/her mental orientation. Teachers deeply impact our lives and direct the course of our future. One cannot deny the influence of teachers in one's life. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that, till a certain age, our life revolves around our teachers. They are our constant companions, until we grow old enough to come out of their shadow and move ahead on our own.

Right from the time we embark on our education trip, we come across different types of teachers. Some are friendly, some are strict, and some are the ones we idolize. We also dislike a few, who fail to impress us positively. Students begin to like teachers, according to their own individual preferences. They even classify their teachers into different categories, such as Friendly Teachers, Lenient Teachers, Perfectionist Teachers, Strict Teachers and Funny Teachers. All these classifications for teachers are based on some typical personality traits of the teachers. For example - some teachers constantly criticize the students, some act like friends, some are fun to be with and so on.

An ideal teacher is the one we respect from our heart. He/she acts as a guide to the students, while not pushing them too much.

Such a perfect motivates them and boosts their morale. He/she tries to encourage the students and refrains from criticizing them. The perfect teacher prefers to give positive motivation to his/her students. His/her comments are always constructive in nature. He/she serves as our friend, guide, educator, confidante, and a blend of all the good qualities one can possess. Such a teacher shapes the entire life of the students. If everyone in this world gets an ideal teacher, he/she won't have to look back in his/her life ever

Bidding farewell to Fr. Ronnie Prabhu SJ

For us every death is painful. It is more painful when someone whom we love goes away from this world. For us every death is an unexpected shock. True this death was expected once we were told of his sickness, but not so quickly. If for the psalmist the number of our days on earth is 70 years and 80 if we are strong, then 75 years was a good age to die. However, in this case we can confidently say that humanly speaking Fr. Ronnie's life was filled with not one span but two even three because in his life he knew no fatigue, no let up, no rest.



On the 9th of April this year we celebrated his 75 years and that was the celebration of life. We did not expect him to go away so soon. We would have loved to see him around, listen to his talk, enjoy his smile, and feel him close to us. Now he has gone away from us for good. There is an inspirational poem written by a friend of ours:

*"The rose is plucked
And planted in the mansion of the master;
The garden is sad at the loss of his beauty;
But the rose shines full bloom before the master
And its fragrance lingers on here, in the garden".*

The rose is taken away but the fragrance lingers on in the garden. God wanted him and he has taken Fr. Ronnie away. His fragrance lingers on.

Fr. Ronnie shared his life with all. He loved those whom no one else loved. He went out of his way to console others; he shared himself with all to make them happy. He showed courage in the face of challenges.

Fr. Ronnie is not merely memory; he is part of us, part and parcel of each one of us. He is inescapably built into our lives. His smile, courage, laughter, sharing, dedication, concern, care, Christian understanding, serviceability, limitless love, all have entered into our blood stream. He was a priest, Jesuit, Christian, friend and mainly remained that way ever.

Digging A Way Out: Rebecca had decided that her best chance of getting hired by a company doing geological survey work in the Alaskan wilderness was to earn a private license to fly twin-engine planes. A few days later she began taking lessons from a wise old bush pilot, highly respected throughout the region for his cool and collected ways of dealing with the worst possible situations.

After the mandatory ground schooling, at which Rebecca excelled, and during her fourth lesson in the sky, the flight instructor gave her what she thought was a special treat: Taking his hands off the yoke, he turned the flight controls over to her. There she was, just as she had dreamed, sitting tall in the co-pilot's seat with the flight stick firmly in her hands.

Rebecca felt as though she was literally on "cloud 9" – at least, until a scant moment later when she found herself rudely awakened from her dream. She tried shaking her head to get rid of what was before her eyes, but that did not work. In the distance, through the windshield, she could see something rushing toward her faster than what she could think to do about it!

Right in the path of the plane, and seeming to have appeared out of nowhere, a huge snow-capped mountain lay dead ahead. Transfixed by its sheer mass, Rebecca found herself as frozen at the stick as were the iced and craggy peaks stretched out before her. And she was headed straight for them! A deep chill came into the cabin. All along the wise old instructor was watching her closely,

studying her reactions. Of course, she didn't know it, but he had turned the controls over to her for just this test now taking place. He waited until the last moment he could, and was just about to take over again, when Rebecca snapped out of her fear-induced trance. She looked away from the mountain and turned to face him.

Then, in a voice so trembling and timid that it even scared her, she broke the tense silence of the moment. "Sir," she said, "please take over the controls. I'm afraid we are about to crash!" His reply stunned her. "No," he spoke quietly, "I don't think I will. After all, it's your flight."

It was getting harder for her to take in a whole breath, as if she were standing in the oxygen-thin air atop the great white mountain before them. Struggling to control her voice, she dug down into herself and managed to ask one more question of her teacher: "Then what should I do? Please, tell me what to do!"

She looked over at him again, and was surprised to see virtually no worry at all upon his face. His calm demeanour helped to steady her nerves.

She took  a deep breath and relaxed her hands that had just about choked the life out of the control yoke. The next moment he gave her a short three-word instruction, and she knew everything would soon be all right. He simply said, "Change your altitude." "Of course," her own mind echoed back to his command, and a split second later she pulled firmly back on the yoke; the craft responded by rising, and mere moments later the icy peak passed beneath her and out of sight.

As Rebecca sat there, relieved by the results of her actions, she was struck by two things at once: How could she have forgotten that the controls were in her hands, and at least as important, why had she been unable to remember this on her own? At that moment, soaring at ten thousand feet above the ground, she made a silent vow never again to forget the lesson of this day:

She could choose her own altitude.

An Old Tree. Once upon a time there was a leafy tree in a field. Leaves grew densely on the tall branches. The roots were deeply into the ground. The tree was the most remarkable among the rest. The tree then



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became the home for some birds. They built their nests and they lived on his branches. The birds made holes on him, and they hatched their eggs within the greatness of the tree. The tree felt so delighted because he was accompanied as he walked through his long lasting days.

People were grateful for the presence of the tree. They often came over and sheltered under him. Under his branches, they sat down and opened their picnic baskets. "This tree is very useful," that's what the people said every time they went home from shelter. The tree was very proud hearing those compliments.

However, time went on. The tree was beginning to be sick. His leaves and twigs were falling, and then his body became thin and pale. The greatness he used to have was fading away. Birds felt reluctant to build their nests there. No one would come to sit under the tree to shelter anymore.

The tree wept, "Oh God, why is it so hard for me? I need friends. Now no one would come close to me. Why do you take all the glory I used to have?" The tree cried loudly, so it echoed throughout the forest. "Why wouldn't you cut me down, so I don't have to bear this suffering?" The tree kept on crying, and his tears were running down his dry body.

Seasons came and went, but his condition had not changed. The tree was still feeling

lonely. His branches became drier and drier. Every night the tree wept and cried, until the morning broke. "Cheep...chirp....cheep" Ah, what was that noise? Oh, it's a little baby bird who has just piped from the egg. The old tree woke up from his daydream.

"Cheep...chirp...cheep", the noise became louder and louder. There was another baby bird. Not long after that, the tree became noisy because of the birth of new baby birds. One...two...three...and four baby birds have been born to this world. "Ah, He has answered my prayers," exclaimed the old tree.

The day after, there were many birds flying to the old tree. They were going to build new nests. The dry branches have turned out to attract their attention to nest there. The birds felt warmer to stay inside the dry branches instead of their place before. The number of birds was increasing and there were more kinds of them. "Wow, now my days are brighter with their presence here", murmured the old tree gladly.

The old tree was back to cheer again. And when he looked down, his heart was flowing with joy. There was a new little tree growing near his roots. The new tree seemed to smile at him. The tears of the old tree have grown a little tree who would continue his devotion to nature.

"Learning gives creativity, Creativity leads to thinking, Thinking provides knowledge, and Knowledge makes you great."

- Abdul Kalam



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