**On writing a Catholic curriculum that is pluralistic**

1. It is a key intention of Welsh Government that the curricula that schools will have to produce from 2021 fulfil the requirement to be 'pluralistic'.

2. In order to achieve this in Catholic schools, the Curriculum Guidance that we are writing needs to provide for this aspect also, not least because some both within and without our school system may assume that a 'pluralistic Catholic Curriculum' is a contradiction in terms.

3. In order to clear up this misunderstanding, the CES has provided a paper specifically for RE, showing how RE taught according to the RECD already fulfills the requirement to be 'pluralistic'. However, beyond this it might be useful to provide some extra guidance on what the requirement means more generally and for the whole Curriculum.

4. The idea of "Pluralism" is originally a concept in Ontology (the "Philosophy of Being"), and describes the contradictory opposite of "Monism", thus stating that reality cannot be reduced to just one substance or ultimate principle governing everything.

5. When applied to the study of human communities and societies, pluralism can mean one of two things, either:

a) affirming the need for social subsidiarity in societies over against the tendency of states to be 'monistic' (or 'totalitarian' in outlook), and saying instead that the reality of modern societies is the existence of a multiplicity of worldviews within them, held together by the foundational acceptance of the human dignity of all, regardless of their views; or

b) further proposing that modern societies consist of nothing but particular groups and their interests, engaged in semi-permanent struggle against each other by means of recourse to law and elections, and containing a multiplicity of worldviews that is justified because none of them are more than expressions of personal convictions without real 'truth-value'.

6. It will be obvious that Catholicism is compatible with 5. a) above but not 5. b): we are very aware that we live in a society containing a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, that these need to be studied in order to prepare our young people for life in modern Britain, and that such study and learning needs to be underpinned by mutual respect of everyone and tolerance of their views, even where we think these views are wrong. "Tolerance" of and learning about religions and worldviews other than Catholicsm is thus the result of the deep respect due to the human dignity of the persons that hold such views.

7. Crucially, however, this does not imply or require the acceptance that religions and worldviews are nothing but the expression of 'personal convictions' or 'tastes' incapable of being true or false. This second understanding, the consequence of 5. b) above, is in effect 'relativism', and it is not just incompatible with Catholicism but with *any* substantial worldview - including the one expressed by Welsh Government in, for example, the four 'core purposes' of the New Curriculum.

8. It is easy to see why this is so: in making any statement describing goals or any purpose for education, the person making the statement is implying performatively (that is: by the very act of making the statement or proposing the purpose) that what is being stated or proposed is true (or at least more true than any alternative).

9. Welsh Government, in prescribing the four core purposes, is making such a statement, saying that these purposes are good and right and appropriate for 21st century Wales, certainly better than other possible aims of education (such as those focusing only on the economy, for example, or those centred on producing 'compliant' citizens in, say, China).

10. This in turn means that if we are not to assume that Welsh Government is being simply self-contradictory, Welsh Government guidance for the new Curriculum to be 'pluralistic' cannot possibly require a school to produce something expressing 'relativism' (the 'pluralism' of 5. b) above).

11. As a result of all this, the following principle can guide our writing of the Curriculum Guidance for Catholic schools: that in describing any AoLE, we should unashamedly be expressing the Catholic view of reality summarised in Dr Manghan's paper, demonstrating at the same time an awareness of the principles of 5. a) above, namely that there are other religious and non-religious views of reality in our society that would describe the AoLE differently, and that young people need to be made aware of in a way that does not need to 'compromise' or 'explain away' the claim to truth inherent in the Catholic understanding of reality. In doing so, we can be entirely confident of fulfilling the requirement for our Curriculum to be 'pluralistic' in the only sense compatible with Welsh Government's own project.