

Jesuit Secondary Education Association-*Commission on Research and Development*, "Profile of the Graduate of a Jesuit High School at Graduation," 1981.¹

In one sense, the graduate is a threshold person: he or she is on or rapidly approaching the threshold of young adulthood. The world of childhood has been left behind definitively. The movement from childhood to adulthood has involved anxiety, awkward embarrassment, and fearful first steps into sexual identity, independence, first love, first job, sometimes first lengthy stay away from home. It has also involved physical, emotional and mental development which brought out strengths, abilities, and characteristics which adults and peers began to appreciate. The adolescent during those four or five years prior to graduation began to realize that he or she could do some things well, sometimes very well, like playing basketball, acting, writing, doing math, fixing or driving cars, making music or making money. There have also been failures and disappointments. Even these, however, have helped the student to move toward maturity.

Fluctuating between highs and lows of fear and confidence, love and loneliness, confusion and success, the Jesuit student at graduation has negotiated during these years many of the shoals of adolescence. On the other hand, the graduate has not reached the maturity of the college senior. During the last year of high school, especially, the senior is beginning to awaken to the complexity, to discover many puzzling things about the adult world, He or she does not understand why adults break their promises or how the economy works, or why there are wars, or what power is and how it ought to be used. Yet he or she is old enough to begin framing the questions. And so, as some of the inner turmoil of the past few years begins to settle, the graduate looks out on the adult world with a sense of wonderment, with a growing desire to enter that world, yet not quite able to make sense of it. More and more confident with peers, knowing the territory, so to speak, of the youth culture, the graduate can more easily pick up the clues of that culture and what is expected in a given situation. And the graduate is independent enough to choose a value based response. As for the adult world, however, the graduate is still a "threshold person," one who is entering cautiously; an immigrant, eager to find the way.

In describing the graduate under five general categories, we chose those qualities which seem most desirable not only for this threshold period, but those which *seem most desirable for adult life*. These five general categories sum up the many aspects or areas of life most in accord with a full adult living of the Christ life. Whether one conceives of the desirable qualities of a graduate of a Jesuit school under the rubric of a "Person for Others," or as a "Vatican II person," as an *Insignis*, or simply as a fully

mature Christian, the qualities summed up under the five categories below appear to be the kind of qualities, granted that they are not fully developed in late adolescence, which cumulatively point in the direction of the kind of person who can live an adult Christian life in the late twentieth century.² These categories are *I. Open to Growth, II. Intellectually Competent, III. Religious, IV. Loving, and V. Committed to Doing Justice*. Some specific elements under these categories in the *Profile* could have been placed under other of the five categories. Obviously, all of the characteristics described are in dynamic interaction. The division into the five categories provides a helpful way to analyze and describe the graduate. Some overlapping is evident because in fact many of these qualities are mutually related and intertwined.

I. Open to Growth

The Jesuit high school student at the time of graduation has matured as a person-emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially, religiously-to a level that reflects some intentional responsibility for one's own growth, (as opposed to a passive drifting, a *laissez-faire* attitude about growth). The graduate is at least beginning to reach out in his or her development, seeking opportunities to stretch one's mind, imagination, feelings, and religious consciousness.

Although still very much in the process of developing, the graduate already:

- ✓ is beginning to take responsibility for growth as a person; desires integrity, commitment and excellence in multiple facets of one's life.
- ✓ is learning how to accept self, both talents and limitations.
- ✓ is more conscious of his or her feelings and is freer and more authentic in expressing them; at the same time is beginning to confront responsibilities to oneself and to others and to manage one's impulsive drives.
- ✓ is open to a variety of aesthetic experiences, and continues to develop a wide range of imaginative sensibilities.
- ✓ is becoming more flexible and open to other points of view; recognizes how much one learns from a careful listening to peers and significant others.
- ✓ is developing a habit of reflection on experience.

- ✓ is beginning to seek new experiences, even those which involve some risk or the possibility of failure.
- ✓ is exploring career and lifestyle choices within a value framework.
- ✓ is becoming more open to broader, adult issues.

II. Intellectually Competent

By graduation the Jesuit high school student will exhibit a mastery of those academic requirements for advanced forms of education. While these requirements are broken down into departmental subject matter areas, the student will have developed many intellectual skills and understandings which cut across and go beyond academic requirements for college entrance. The student moreover is beginning to see the need for intellectual integrity in his or her personal quest for religious truth and in his or her response to issues of social justice. (Note: Although this section deals with intellectual competence, elements from other parts of this *Profile* clearly presume levels of intellectual understanding consistent with those highlighted in this section.)

By graduation the student already:

A. Academic Requirements

- ✓ has mastered the fundamental skills of language.
- ✓ has mastered the fundamental skills of mathematics.
- ✓ can read and summarize material at a level of a beginning college freshman.
- ✓ has mastered those academic subjects required for entrance into college, or some other form of advanced education.

B. General Skills and Attitudes

- ✓ is developing mastery of logical skills and critical thinking.
- ✓ is developing greater precision and a personal style in thought and expression both written and oral.
- ✓ is developing a curiosity to explore ideas and issues.
- ✓ is developing the ability to apply knowledge and skills to new situations, and can adjust to a variety of learning formats.

- ✓ is developing an organized approach to learning tasks.
- ✓ can present a convincing argument in written and oral form.
- ✓ is taking pride and ownership of his or her school accomplishments and beginning to enjoy intellectual and aesthetic pursuits.

C. Substantive Knowledge

- ✓ has begun to develop a general knowledge of central ideas, methodologies, and the conceptual parameters of a variety of intellectual disciplines of knowledge.
- ✓ has begun to relate current issues and perspectives to some of their historical antecedents.
- ✓ is growing in appreciation of his or her cultural heritage.
- ✓ has begun to understand some of the public policy implementations of the uses of science, technology, and capital.
- ✓ is beginning to understand both rights and responsibilities as a citizen of the United States.
- ✓ is beginning to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the United States form and practice of government.
- ✓ has begun to develop a repertory of images of the human person as presented in literature, biography and history; exemplars which are shaping within him or her a more compassionate and hopeful appreciation of the human community in its variety and potential.
- ✓ is beginning to develop that critical consciousness which enables one better to analyze issues facing contemporary men and women and to evaluate the various points of view on these issues.

III. Religious

By graduation the Jesuit high school student will have a basic knowledge of the major doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. The graduate will also have examined his or her own religious feelings and beliefs with a view to choosing a fundamental orientation toward God and establishing a relationship with a religious tradition and/or community. What is said here, respectful of the conscience and religious background of the individual, also applies to the non-Catholic graduate

of a Jesuit high school. The level of theological understanding of the Jesuit high school graduate will naturally be limited by the student's level of religious and human development.

More specifically, the Jesuit high school student at graduation:

- ✓ has read the Gospels and encountered the person of Jesus Christ as he is presented in the New Testament.
- ✓ has a basic understanding of the Church's teaching about Jesus Christ and His redeeming mission, as well as the embodiment of that mission in and through the Church.
- ✓ has had some exposure to non-Christian and non-Catholic religious traditions.
- ✓ is beginning to take more responsibility for exploring and validating one's own faith.
- ✓ has had some personal experience of God, either in private prayer, while on a retreat, in liturgical prayer, or in some other moving experience; is learning how to express self in various methods of prayer.
- ✓ is beginning to form a Christian conscience and evaluate moral choices, and can reason through moral issues with increasing clarity.
- ✓ has begun to appreciate the centrality of the Eucharist to a vibrant Christian community.
- ✓ is learning through his or her own failure the need for healing and by reconciliation with friends, family, Church, and Lord.
- ✓ is at the beginning stages of understanding the relationship between faith in Jesus and being a "person for others."
- ✓ is familiar with Church teaching on social justice.

IV. Loving

By the time of graduation, the Jesuit high school student is well on the way to establishing his or her own identity. The graduate is also on the threshold of being able to move beyond self-interest or self-centeredness in relationships with significant others. In other words, he or she is beginning to be able to risk some deeper levels of relationship in which

one can disclose self and accept the mystery of another person and cherish that person. Nonetheless, the graduate's attempt at loving, while clearly beyond childhood, may not yet reflect the confidence and freedom of a mature person.

More specifically, the Jesuit high school graduate:

- ✓ is learning to trust the fidelity of some friends, members of the family, and some adults of the school community.
- ✓ has experienced moments when God's love for him or her as a person began to be felt.
- ✓ is coming to accept and love self as lovable and loved by God and others.
- ✓ has begun to come to grips with personal prejudices and stereotypes; communicates more easily with others, especially peers of other races, religions, nationalities, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- ✓ has experienced the support of various levels of community in the school.
- ✓ has made specific contributions to building up the school community.
- ✓ feels more at ease with persons of the opposite sex.
- ✓ is beginning to integrate sexuality into his or her whole personality.
- ✓ has begun to appreciate deeper personal friendships, but is also learning that not all relationships are profound and long lasting.
- ✓ through service of others, is beginning to appreciate the satisfaction of giving oneself for other people and thereby finding life enriched.
- ✓ is more capable of putting self in another person's place and understanding what that person is feeling.
- ✓ is more sensitive to the beauty of the created universe and is more caring about life and the natural environment.

V. Committed to Doing Justice

The Jesuit high school student at graduation has achieved considerable knowledge of the many needs of local and wider communities and is preparing for the day when he or she will take a place in these communities as a competent, concerned, and responsible member. The graduate has begun to acquire the skills and motivation necessary to live as a person for others. Although this attribute will come to fruition in mature adulthood, some predispositions will have begun to manifest themselves earlier.

By graduation the Jesuit high school student:

- ✓ is more aware of selfish attitudes and tendencies which lead one to treat others unjustly; consciously seeks to be more understanding, accepting and generous with others.
- ✓ is beginning to see that Christian faith implies a commitment to a just society.
- ✓ is growing in awareness of the global nature of many current social problems (human rights, energy, ecology, food, population, terrorism, arms limitations, etc.) and their impact on various human communities.
- ✓ is beginning to understand the structural roots of injustice in social institutions, attitudes and customs.
- ✓ recognizes the needs of some disadvantaged segments of the community through working with them in community service programs and has gained some empathetic understanding for their conditions of living.
- ✓ is developing both a sense of compassion for the victims of injustice and a concern for those social changes which will assist them in gaining their rights and increased human dignity.
- ✓ through reflection and study is becoming aware of alternatives in public policy which govern the services provided for various segments of the community.
- ✓ has begun to reflect on public service aspects of future careers.
- ✓ is beginning to understand one's obligation as a Christian to participate in the building of a humane, civic and ecclesial

community in a way that respects the pluralism of that community.

- ✓ is beginning to see the importance of public opinion and voter influence on public policy in local, regional, national and international arenas.
- ✓ is just beginning to understand the complexity of many social issues and the need for critical reading of diverse sources of information about them.
- ✓ is beginning to confront some of the moral ambiguities imbedded in values promoted by Western culture.
- ✓ is just beginning to realize that the values of a consumer society are sometimes in conflict with the demands of a just society, and indeed with the Gospel.

Conclusion

In presenting this profile, it must also be recognized that the influence of the school on a student's growth is limited. Other influences, frequently out of the control of the school such as family, friends, the youth culture and the general social environment in which one lives, will hinder or foster the student's growth. But in so far as the school can intentionally bring its resources to bear on fostering the student's growth in the direction of the profile, it should do so.

It must be recognized that in offering this profile of the ideal graduate we are suggesting that this is the legitimate and necessary goal for a Jesuit high school. The goal of influencing the student's growth in all five areas described in the profile will mean for some schools far more attention to formational activities throughout the total school program, as well as the introduction or recasting of some of the academic material of the curriculum. For all schools it will mean a more thorough going integration of formational concerns with academic concerns as the school tries to foster the development of the total Christian person during his or her adolescent years at that school.

¹ This text is commonly referred to as "Grad at Grad."

² The term *isignis* is an Ignatian term that describes persons who respond to the call of Christ with complete and total generosity.