Right Relationships

Restorative Practices in an Augustinian Catholic School

Graeme George, 2015

"Being an adult in a school is a profound moral challenge."
(Weissbourd, 2003)

1. Introduction

As indeed is all work which involves caring for people, teaching is *moral* work. The work of schools and teachers can have profound consequences for the students in their charge, and these consequences extend far beyond the mere academic or intellectual realms. How teachers *work with students* is, perhaps, even more important than *what* they objectively plan to teach them – the influence of teachers extends much further than the intended classroom lesson. One of the major influences on students' emotional, social, psychological and moral development is how the school and its teachers recognise, deal with and work from their fundamental interrelatedness and interdependence as human beings. Increasingly, educators are coming to understand that the lessons learned in school about how we should form and nurture relationships, how we should treat one another and, in particular, how conflict and wrongdoing should be dealt with, have life-long consequences for their students (George, 2014). Getting this relational basis right in schools is therefore a moral imperative, especially one may argue in a faith community such as a Catholic school. Restorative practices offers a way of embedding the values and principles of our Catholic faith tradition and Augustinian charism in the very lived experience of the teachers, students and parents of a school.

Restorative Practices is a coherent, but counter-cultural, philosophy which views conflict and wrongdoing through the lens of our fundamental relatedness with one another. This relatedness is perhaps *the* key starting point of our Augustinian charism. A restorative approach recognises that the central issue with conflict and wrongdoing is that these cause harm to people and relationships, and that there is an obligation on all concerned to attempt to repair this harm. In addition to repairing harm and seeking healing in the wake of wrongdoing, a restorative approach also aims to build and strengthen the relationships that exist within the community in order to help prevent or at least minimise the potential for such wrongdoing in the future. It provides one practical means by which we can strive to *'live together... one in mind and one in heart, and honour God in each other'* (*Rule*, 1.8). It is an *educative* approach which is in-keeping with our Catholic and Augustinian tradition. Working restoratively enables the better living out of the Gospel message, and enables expression of the richness of the scriptural and Catholic sacramental heritage. Restorative practices is congruent with the body of Catholic Social Teaching and with St Augustine's teachings on justice and discipline. It encourages the living out of the particular set of values that are central to the Augustinian tradition.

2. Restorative Practices

The traditional approach to dealing with conflict/wrongdoing, which was adapted largely from the criminal justice system, is to ask

- "What rule was broken?"
- "Who is responsible?" and
- "What do they deserve?"

This traditional approach can suffer from problems similar to those that afflict the criminal justice system, viz: that the needs of those most affected by the wrongdoing are often ignored, and they can be totally excluded from the process of seeking solutions; that wrongdoers are not held accountable directly to the people they have harmed; that it can lead to an externalisation of the 'rules' and a legalistic approach to solving what are essentially problems of relationship; that an undue focus and reliance on punishment and its supposed deterrent effect is ineffective in developing positive behaviours and values, and that it doesn't effectively prevent recidivism by offenders (Thorsborne & Vinegrad, 2006). St Augustine, writing in the fifth century, observed that "students often endure the punishments which are designed to compel their learning, rather than submit to the process of learning" (*City of God* XXI, 14).

In schools, where positive, healthy relationships should be valued as central to the teaching-learning process, the traditional approach to behaviour management can foster suspicion and separation between staff and students instead of the supportive relationships being sought. While punitive behaviour management regimes may enforce compliance, primarily through fear, they are unlikely to encourage the development of positive values and self-directed right behaviour, or to nurture positive, affirming relationships between adults and children. A primary reliance on the use of aversive punishment in schools has been shown to alienate students from connection with the very positive role models (the adults in the school) from whom we would hope they would be learning (Sanson, Montgomery, Gault, Gridley & Thomson, 1996). Eminent criminologist John Braithwaite (1989) notes that too rapid an escalation to punishment risks making young people more angry than thoughtful. All school communities would, however, presumably include the encouragement of *thoughtfulness* in students as one of their very primary aims.

The restorative approach starts from a very different set of questions:

- "What happened?"
- "What harm has been done, to whom?" and
- "What can be done to address the harm, and to avoid it in future?"

With these questions driving the process, the restorative approach focuses *first* on recognising the harm that wrongdoing or conflict cause to people and relationships, and the obligation to repair that harm. Restorative approaches enable and encourage wrongdoers to face up to the real consequences of their behaviour by allowing the people affected and harmed by wrongdoing to be heard and to have their say in any possible 'solution.'

Jesuit Fr Kurt Denk describes four *Guiding Principles of Restorative Justice* which apply equally to restorative practices in schools:

I. Relationships precede rules – the key issue with wrongdoing is the harm that it causes to people and relationships.
II. Justice by participation rather than by proxy – that those most affected should be directly involved.
III. Restoration of wounded communities, not just adjudication of offending individuals – that a restorative approach seeks healing, not just retribution, and
IV. The restorative justice continuum: from order, to rehabilitation, to shalom.

As Denk explains, where restorative justice differs is in its conviction that communities ideally desire not simply *order*, not even just the *rehabilitation* or *treatment* of its ill members, but a *deeper and more constitutive peace* – that is, a fundamental at-rightness and well-being of relationships that actually feeds relational growth. He describes this as the biblical concept of *shalom.* (Denk, 2008)

A restorative response to wrongdoing is, therefore, one which: brings together all who have a stake in the problem; recognises who has been affected and explores and acknowledges how they have been affected; identifies what needs to happen to repair as much of the harm that has been done as possible; and calls on the people themselves to work out how to put things as right as possible and how to avoid such problems in the future. This type of process is both *relationally-based* and *educative.* It is relationally-based since it *draws on* existing and potential significant relationships and encourages their repair and further growth; it is educative because it *draws out* (fr L. *'educare'*) from the people involved their inner resources and encourages learning about 'the other' and the effect our behaviour can have on them. It recognises, affirms, and helps build our fundamental interrelatedness.

Restorative practices views every instance of wrong-doing as an *opportunity for learning* - especially for those responsible for the wrong-doing (Wachtel, 1999). It is an educative process which challenges the offender to become aware of, and sensitive to, the harm their actions have caused, to consider the needs of 'the other,' and to meet the obligation for reparation that their behaviour has brought. It enables those affected by the wrongdoing to have their story told and affirmed, and offers both offender and victim the opportunity to be involved in working out how to repair some of the harm that has been caused.

The inter-relatedness which is emphasised in the philosophy of restorative practices, can be described in a graph, as shown in *Figure 1*. In this two-dimensional field of practice, on the vertical axis are *'Expectations for being human'* - i.e. expectations that people will be all that they can be, including being accountable for their behaviour and actions. On the horizontal axis is *'Support for being human'* - i.e. the assistance people need to really be *all that they can be* (Vaandering, 2013).

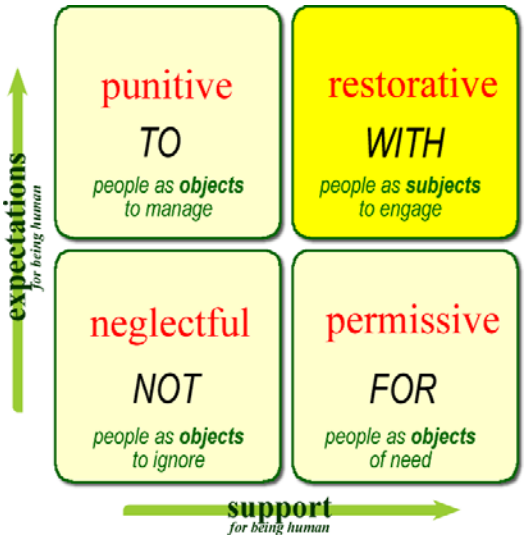

Figure 1 - The Relationship 'Window'

To have relationships in which we expect people to be all that they can be (high on the vertical axis), but not offer support for them doing that (low on the horizontal axis), is to treat people as *objects to manage.* This is reflected in a punitive regime, and involves doing things TO people in order to get them to do what we want.

Relationships in which we don't expect people to be all that they can be, but support them anyway, involve treating them as *objects of need.* We tend to do things FOR these people, often so that we feel good. If we don't expect people to be all that they can be, and don't support them, then we treat them as *objects to ignore* and as people that we do NOT need to care for. In each of these three types of relationships, harm can be done to the person's self-esteem and sense of self-worth. These types of relationships can also perpetuate harm in the wake of wrongdoing by re-victimising those affected by this harm.

To expect that people will be all that they can be, and to support them in striving for that, we are then working WITH people, not as *objects to manage, objects to ignore* or *objects of need,* but as *subjects to engage.* This is what restorative practices calls us to do. Working in this top-right quadrant, in which we have high expectations of people and in which we strongly support them to be all that they can be, is really expressing unconditional love. It is effectively saying *"no matter what you do or say, I'm still going to support you and hold you accountable to be all that you can be."*

Dealing with conflict or wrongdoing in this restorative way is therefore respectful of the inherent dignity of the *person* – both for the *offender* and the *victim* – while not tolerating or accepting the offender's *behaviour*. It is calling the offender to consider how his behaviour has affected others, to make amends for the harm done, and to find ways of reintegrating into their community. Braithwaite (1989) describes this separation of the *person* from the *behaviour* as confronting the behaviour with disapproval, but within a continuum of respect and support. St Augustine, centuries earlier, made this same distinction in his call to "love the sinner, hate the sin" (*City of God,* XIV, 6). For St Augustine, this was the way in which a wayward brother could be called back to the

righteous path - that it would only be with the loving support of his community that he would have the strength to leave behind whichever vice had separated him from his community.

While a punitive approach can encourage offenders to turn inwards and focus on themselves and their own distress, a restorative response encourages an inward examination and realisation, and then an outward movement towards the other in empathy and reparation. This movement inwards in order to transcend the self and reach out to 'the other' is reflective of an Augustinian view of justice as detailed below. The purpose of any restorative process is to have the difficult discussions that need to occur with the aim of repairing the harm done, and encouraging this movement in the offender towards 'the other.' The facilitator's role is simply to enable these discussions to occur.

In practical terms, restorative responses can be placed along a continuum of activity as seen in *Figure 2*. From *affective* statements ("It makes me sad when you do that...") and *affective* questions ("How do you think he feels when you do that?") at the informal end, through to the highly structured and formal community conference at the other. As you go along the continuum, the stakes get raised – and each step requires more forethought and careful planning. And the frequency drops – responses at the left-hand end of the spectrum are just part of everyday life. In each of the processes, though, the aim is the same, viz: calling the students to consider, to move towards, the needs of 'the other.'

The restorative process can be seen embodied in the standard sequence of questions that form the basis of the restorative encounter with an offender in the aftermath of wrongdoing:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

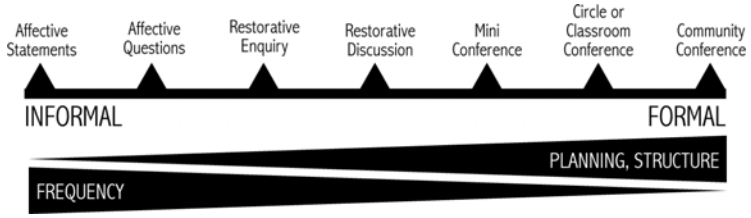

Figure 2 - The Restorative Continuum

These questions move the focus for the offender from the *past* (What were you thinking?) through the *present* (What have you thought about since?) towards the *future* (How can we make this right?). The questions take the offender through *storytelling* (being listened to, and heard), to *engagement* with the other, to considerations of *reparation*. They lead a person from a focus on the self, towards a focus on the other (George, 2015).

The standard questions for those affected by wrongdoing:

- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

also move the victim from the *past*, towards the *future*. They affirm the victim's story by hearing it, and then engage the emotional dimension, before looking towards repair of the harm experienced.

This storytelling is fundamental for building and maintaining healthy social relationships - it's also how our own identity is formed and maintained. We are our story, our narrative, and we need our story to be heard in order to feel valued and respected (Pranis, 2000). Restorative practices is about enabling "re-storying" as much as it is about "restoring" – it enables and encourages offenders (and even victims) to envision and live into a different, more positive, personal narrative, drawing on the support of their community of care. Honouring the 'story' of those involved can also help to move the participants from negative, toxic emotions in the aftermath of conflict and wrongdoing, through vulnerability, towards a more positive resolution and a strengthening of relationships. The process *metabolises* the negative affect, ridding it of its power. This is important since it is a reality that much wrongdoing and conflict is emotionally-driven, and much harm is emotional harm. Restorative practices provides the opportunity for the free expression of emotion in a safe environment which is critical to the process of healing, and the development of empathy and compassion (George, 2015).

In a school environment, restorative practices are most effective when implemented and integrated across all aspects of the school's operation. Since relationships are at the heart of behaviour management, teaching and learning, personal development and faith development – in fact, all that schools do, and all that form part of their students' experience of schooling – a restorative approach underpinning the school's efforts in each of these areas brings these relationships to the forefront. Integrating restorative approaches means not only repairing harm in the event of conflict or inappropriate behaviour, but also building and nurturing

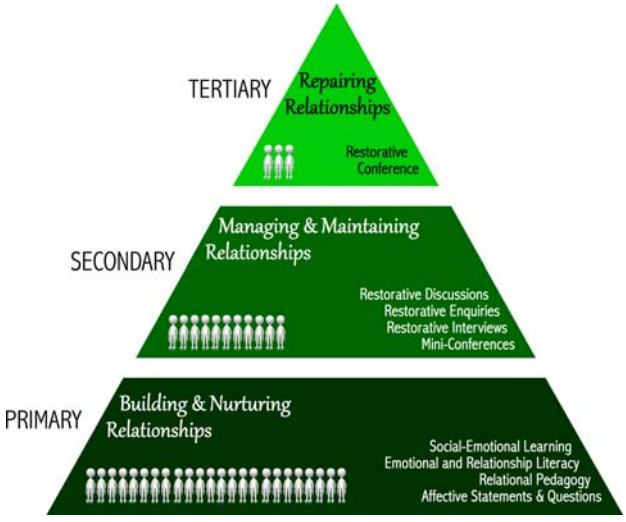

Figure 3 - Responsive Regulation - a Whole School Approach

relationship and community in the first place (Johnstone, 2000; Morrison, 2005). This model includes: *primary prevention strategies* targeted at all students, *secondary prevention strategies* targeted at those students who may be at risk, and *tertiary strategies* targeted at those students who have engaged in unacceptable behaviours (APA, 2008) as depicted in *Figure 3.*

The benefits that flow to a school community from such an integrated, responsive implementation of restorative practices include: the ability to be able to effectively and sensitively address the harm that results from wrongdoing; being able to better educate students towards self-directed right behaviour; to better promote, nurture and protect healthy relationships among members of the school community; and to enable wrongdoers to take responsibility for the real consequences of their actions. Most significant, perhaps, to faith-based school communities is the power of restorative practices to assist the school and its people in the movement from focussing on order, to rehabilitation, to *shalom*.

3. Restorative Practices in the Catholic School

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB, 2000) recognises that the approach to justice inspired by a Catholic vision can be seen as paradoxical – on the one hand, it does not tolerate behaviour that threatens or violates the rights of others and which demands responsibility and accountability and sometimes just punishment. On the other hand a Catholic approach does not give up on those who violate the rights of others, since all of us – victim and offender alike – are children of God, made in the divine image and likeness. It is precisely this counter-cultural, somewhat paradoxical, approach that is described in the Vaandering 'relationship window' depicted in *Figure 1*, and which is central to the philosophy of restorative practices. The condemnation of *behaviour*, while protecting the dignity of the *person*, is a key part of restorative practices.

The American Bishops conclude that the Catholic approach to justice "leads [them] to encourage models of restorative justice" since these models emphasise viewing "crime in terms of the harm done to victims, not just as a violation of the law" (USCCB, 2000). It is the focus in restorative practices on repairing the harm done to victims and communities that can lead to healing and the constitutive peace key to *shalom.*

Essential the the Christian message are the concepts of forgiveness, mercy and healing which lead to reconciliation. "This is what Jesus won for the human family on the Cross. These gifts form an essential part of what followers of Christ must practise in any age under all circumstances" (NZCBC, 1995). It is precisely such *reconciliation* that restorative practices has as its primary aim – a reconciliation not only of offender and victim, but also reconciliation of both the victim and offender to their own selves. Engagement of the victim and the offender in the process of seeking solutions and working towards *shalom* is central to the restorative approach.

Pope (2010) goes as far as to refer to restorative justice as a 'possibly prophetic path to peace that is needed for precisely the times we live in today.' He declares:

> "The restorative justice movement might well be providing us with an opportunity to participate in creating both a more just and compassionate society and even a church that is more Christ-like." (Pope, 2010)

Certainly, the two major themes of God's unconditional love, and the possibility and power of redemption (Eph 1:7), underpin the whole of the Catholic faith tradition. We are a people relying securely upon God's mercy and forgiveness, and are a people 'restored' to right relationship with God through the life and passion of Jesus Christ. In following Christ, believers are called to seek *shalom* within their communities, and that this can best be achieved through communities taking a restorative approach to building and nurturing relationships, and to dealing with conflict and wrongdoing when they occur.

3.1 Scriptural Tradition

Restoration was the primary focus of Old Testament justice systems and the Law was there to seek, protect and promote *shalom* (NZCBC, 1995). Even in the notion of 'an eye for an eye,' has the biblical tradition a restorative focus.

The USCCB (2000) recall that:

> "Just as God never abandons us, so too we must be in covenant with one another. We are all sinners, and our response to sin and failure should not be abandonment and despair, but rather justice, contrition, reparation, and return or reintegration of all into the community."

Such *contrition, reparation* and *return or reintegration* of all into the community is the aim of a restorative approach to wrongdoing.

The New Testament extends the earlier justice tradition. Jesus rejected punishment for its own sake, noting that all are sinners (Jn 8). In the present day, we are called to find Christ in young people at risk, in troubled youth, in the prisoners in our jails and on death row, and in crime victims experiencing pain and loss (Lk 4). The parable of the *Good Samaritan* (Lk 10) calls us to work to help victims recover from their distress and trauma, and the *Prodigal Son* (Lk 15) reminds us that the lost who have been found are to be welcomed and celebrated, not resented and rejected (USCCB, 2000). Bishop Ricardo Ramirez identifies the story of *Zacchaeus* as "a clear example of how Jesus' message can lead to the healing and restoration of relationships, so pivotal to restorative justice" (Ramirez, 2009). In each of these parables and episodes, healing and reconciliation are achieved through *relationship* – through our fundamental interrelatedness with one another, and with God. Restorative practices seeks to honour this interrelatedness by working *with* people *through relationship* and towards healing.

For Denk (2008) the *pardon of the sinful woman in the Pharisee's house* (Lk 7) is a particular example of this *relational* justice called for by Jesus: "This Gospel episode centers on [the sinful woman's] *restoration* to God, to her community, and indeed to her very self… through a justice of Jesus that is *relational*, that knows and sees her root dignity and faith" (Denk, 2008).

Denk draws two lessons from this Gospel story, firstly that:

> "...a Christian vision of justice for those who commit wrongs requires that we *see* – that we look upon – others *first as persons* (who have committed offenses), as persons *with whom we have a mutual relational claim*. That we *not*, that is, look at them simply as objects, as 'offenders' – thereby, rather, *over*looking them."

and secondly, that:

> "our duty, indeed our very ability, to fulfill the Greatest Commandment – the love commandment (cf. Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28; John 13:34), *stems from* our being restored, and our restoration of others, to social and ecclesial communion." (Denk, 2008)

Combining these lessons, Denk (2008) concludes that the Christian vision of justice *is restorative*, and that it requires that we first see – and search for if we don't see – the root dignity of every person who has offended through crime or violence, seeing them as *subjects to engage* and to call to repentance and restoration, rather than *objects to manage* or *ignore*, or *objects of need*, as described in the Vaandering relationship window of *Figure 1*.

3.2 Sacramental Tradition

> "Just as we look inside our own hearts during the penitential rite of every liturgy, to see and offer up our own offences, so too our ecclesial duty is to *see* the root dignity and personhood of every *other* offender in our midst." (Denk 2008)

The sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist are real encounters with the Saving Lord and central Catholic signs of true justice and mercy. Sinners are encouraged to take responsibility and make amends for their sins; they never give up hope that they can be forgiven and can rejoin the community. The four traditional elements of the sacrament of Penance embody the process of taking responsibility, making amends, and reintegrating into community, similar to that of the restorative process:

- *Contrition:* Genuine sorrow, regret, or grief over one's wrongs and a serious resolution not to repeat the wrong.
- *Confession:* Clear acknowledgment and true acceptance of responsibility for the hurtful behaviour.
- *Satisfaction:* The external sign of one's desire to amend one's life (this "satisfaction," whether in the form of prayers or good deeds, is a form of "compensation" or restitution for the wrongs or harms caused by one's sin)
- *Absolution:* After someone has shown contrition, acknowledged his or her sin, and offered satisfaction, then Jesus, through the ministry of the priest and in the company of the church community, forgives the sin and welcomes that person back into "communion" (USCCB, 2000).

Outside the sacramental situation, the restorative conference process can also lead to forgiveness and reconciliation, and to *shalom* in the community, and contains parts analogous to these four elements of penance. The restorative conference brings offenders and victims together, with their communities of care, to enable clear acknowledgement and acceptance of responsibility for the harm done *(Confession)*. During the course of the conference it is usual that, as the offender learns about and begins to understand the breadth and the depth of this harm, he expresses genuine sorrow and grief over his wrongs *(Contrition)*. Working towards reparation or restitution *(Satisfaction)* occurs towards the end of the conference process, as the group works to find a way to repair some of the harm and prevent it happening again. The involvement and engagement of the offender's community of care encourages the reintegration of the offender back into the community *(Absolution)*.

The restorative conference offers a structured, formal process for dealing with harm done as a result of conflict and wrongdoing which encourages conversion and reconciliation. More informal restorative processes, such as those that might be used everyday in schools, have similar aims and also encourage an attitude of continual conversion towards the good and the right. These informal restorative processes are part of the teaching role within the school, calling students (and ourselves and our colleagues) to consider 'the other' and to work for the common good.

Indeed, restorative practices enables, and calls, teachers in Catholic schools to participate in an active ministry of reconciliation. Those who have experienced restorative practices in schools readily recognise such conference processes as being grace-filled and transformative.

3.3 Catholic Social Teaching

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church (CSDCC) identifies the starting point for all of Catholic Social Teaching as the 'inviolable dignity of the human person', in whom there is 'the living image of God himself.' (CSDCC, 105,107). Both the most wounded victim, and the perhaps callous offender, have their humanity recognised.

Separating the condemnation of the *behaviour*, from the support of the *person*, in restorative practices allows for affirmation of the fundamental dignity and worth of every person. Victims, too, must have their dignity protected. This requires that they are able to participate in the process of seeking restoration and *shalom*.

Founded on the 'dignity, unity and equality of all people' is the principle of the common good (CSDCC, II) through which the

fundamental interrelatedness of human beings is expressed socially by actions seeking the moral good of all. The problem-solving nature of restorative processes calls the group to work towards this common good and gives the group responsibility for working together towards this good.

Central also to Catholic Social Teaching is the requirement of balance between rights and responsibilities. Dealing with conflict and wrongdoing puts us at the intersection of these rights and responsibilities. One's rights and responsibilities, however, are lived out in relationship with others (CSDCC, 110), and maintaining community and family connections can help offenders understand the harm they have done and prepare them for reintegration into society, which is the goal of restorative processes.

> "Both the Old and New Testaments present an anthropology that conceives of the human person as relational – as regards God and as regards others – in terms of covenant. The story of creation, sin, grace, and redemption is one of relationship and of covenant which, when broken, calls for healing and restoration." (Denk, 2008)

In the Catholic tradition, restoring the balance of rights through restitution, and working to both repair and further nurture relationships damaged by wrongdoing, are important elements of that justice which is the central aim of restorative practices (USCCB, 2000).

In *Table 1* below, Denk (2008) correlates the *Four Guiding Principles of Restorative Justice* outlined earlier, with the major themes of Catholic social thought, and presents four nexuses. See Denk (2008) for a full exploration of this analysis.

Table 1 - Nexuses between the Restorative Justice Themes and Catholic Social Thought

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE THEMES	CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT THEMES
	Foundations
	Anthropology of incarnation and covenant:
Relationships precede rules	*1. human dignity and respect for human life*
	2. the link of the religious and social dimensions of life
	Justice Orientation
	Justice as fidelity to the demands of a relationship:
Justice by participation rather than by proxy	*3. the link between love – caritas – and justice*
	6. the balancing of rights and responsibilities
	9. the value of association and subsidiarity
	Restorative Orientation
	Covenantal social ethics linking the religious and social:
	2. the link of the religious and social dimensions of life
	4. social/economic justice, "fidelity to the demands of a relationship"
Restoration of wounded communities, not just adjudication of offending individuals	*5. the value of and right to equality and to political participation*
	6. the balancing of rights and responsibilities
	7. solidarity and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable
	8. stewardship and promotion of the common good
	9. the value of association and subsidiarity
	Restorative Vision
	The integrative Gospel vision: peace and liberation:
The restorative justice continuum: from order, to rehabilitation, to shalom	*7. solidarity and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable*
	10. promotion of peace and liberation from structural sin

Denk's (2008) presentation of restorative justice in the light of Catholic social thought leads to his conclusion that a restorative approach offers:

> "...opportunities, in the light of Jesus' paschal mystery which necessarily orients Catholic Christian social thought... to encounter that Jesus and to ourselves be transformed by his restorative, redemptive action in our own lives."

4. Restorative Practices in an Augustinian School

4.1 St Augustine on Justice and Discipline

St Augustine distinguishes justice by emphasizing "right relationship" – rightly related to God, man is rightly related within himself and to the external world of people and things:

> "This distinctive view of justice as *order within man* redounding to social order was retained by Augustine until the end of his life. 'Its task is to see that to each is given what belongs to each' (City of God) – this public order of just transactions among men is impossible unless there are just men, rightly related to God by an interior order. Justice begins within." (Clark, 1963)

In keeping with this "right relationship" view of justice, St Augustine sees discipline as primarily concerned with the reform and spiritual well-being of the wrongdoer (Stewart-Kroeker, 2015) through the restoration of relationships. Correction must be done:

> "without hating a person, without returning evil for evil, without being inflamed with the desire to harm, and without vengeance seeking to feed on even what the law permits." (*Letter* 104.8)

While St Augustine, in the context of his time, assumed a retributive model of criminal justice, Stewart-Kroeker (2015) argues that he applies a "restorative reasoning" in his views on discipline and mercy – that the appropriate response to wrongdoing is not predetermined by a regulatory formalism that matches particular sanctions to particular crimes – but rather by a process of discerning in each case what would best enable the wrongdoer to return to the righteous path and to God. In an approach consonant with the restorative practices *relationship window* in *Figure 1*, St Augustine says:

> "Be angry at wickedness in such a way that you remember to be humane, and do not turn the desire for revenge upon the atrocities of sinners, but apply the will to heal the wounds of sinners." (*Letter* 133.2)

In this letter to Marcellinus, St Augustine is appealing to his fellow judge to hold the sinner accountable for becoming all that he can be as a person, but at the same time to assist the sinner in this reform by taking action to 'heal the wounds.'

While St Augustine's approach to healing the wounds of sinners is often summarised in his restorative appeal to "love the sinner, hate the sin" (*City of God*, XIV, 6), he expands upon this in his letter:

> "In no way, then, do we approve of the sins that we want to be corrected... Rather, having compassion for the person and detesting the sin or crime, the more we are displeased by the sin the less we want the sinful person to perish without having been corrected. For it is easy and natural to hate evil persons because they are evil, but it is rare and holy to love those same persons because they are human beings. Thus in one person you at the same time both blame the sin and approve of the nature, and for this reason you more justly hate the sin because it defiles the nature that you love." (*Letter* 153.3)

He further adds that:

> "We should love those who are bad in order that they might cease to be bad, just as we love the ill not in order that they may remain ill, but in order that they may be healed." (*Letter* 153.14)

In this letter, then, St Augustine not only commands a restorative approach to dealing with wrongdoing – one that is based upon high expectations and strong support, not treating the wrongdoer as an *object to manage*, an *object of need*, or an *object to ignore*, but rather *working with them as a subject to engage* (as in *Figure 1*). He also proposes the conditions by which the wrongdoer might be encouraged to seek to be healed:

> "He, therefore, who punishes the crime in order to set free the human being is bound to another person as a companion not in injustice but in humanity." (*Letter* 153.3)

This means to redemption and healing is through fellowship – binding oneself to an offender as a 'companion not in injustice but in humanity.' One is not bound in solidarity with them in their crimes, but in fellowship with them in their broken humanity. While for St Augustine, such fellowship has the ultimate aim of drawing the sinner into the fellowship of the church, the initial fellowship into which a wrongdoer might partake could simply be the fellowship among human neighbours where love binds them in a relationship. For St Augustine, such a relationship can be a source of formation and restoration for the wrongdoer because it is a source of compassion, support, and love:

> "The practices of fellowship are *demonstrative* and *imitative* (letting good deeds shine that they may be made known), *celebratory* (to share enthusiasm, to catch one another's flames), and *intercessory* (to confess, to pray, to forgive). All of these contribute to the formative restoration to health of the wrong-doer. ...it is evident that human relationships are central to the process of healing. In order to seek the restoration of the wrong-doer unto health, one must befriend them; one must bind oneself to them in a fellowship of love." (Stewart-Kroeker, 2015, emphasis added.)

St Augustine recognises the critical role of the restorative *community of care* around a wrongdoer, and further that it is through the relationships in this community that the wrongdoer learns empathy, develops compassion, and begins, by turning towards 'the other,' to repair the harm he has caused. This community of care thus challenges the wrongdoer towards the right path. It heeds the call to bear one another's burdens and to act out of solidarity in suffering, in fallen humanity. Within this fellowship, bearing one another's burdens in transformative relationships encourages the conversion of the wrongdoer towards right relationships with themself, with others, and with God. Such rightness is the mark of true justice in the Augustinian view.

Redemption and restoration to right relationship are therefore, in St Augustine's view, the primary aims of justice and discipline. For him, the only path to such redemption is the transformative power of love – through relationships which call wrongdoers to be all that they can be as human beings, while providing the support and love necessary for this to happen, bearing their burdens in solidarity with them in their broken humanity. It is a particularly *restorative* approach. The means by which this transformative love can act is through the living out of the particular Christian values espoused by communities living in the Augustinian tradition.

4.2 Augustinian Values

While Christ, and his Gospel, are to be at the centre of an Augustinian community, such faith in Christ is not lived abstractly, but always in a personal way (*Ratio,* 1993). It is the particular emphases which St Augustine gives to the message of Christ that forms the basis for the Augustinian charism – the lens through which his spiritual heirs see themselves, the world around them and the Gospel. An appreciation of these emphases can be gained through study of the particular values that St Augustine, and the Order through its tradition, identifies, holds and cherishes. These values then establish the unique character of an Augustinian school. The restorative approach enables the living of these values on a day-to-day basis.

While scholars have authoritatively explored the issue of 'Augustinian values,' and provided lists and descriptions, it is proposed that the essential qualities of an Augustinian school and of an Augustinian education can well be glimpsed through consideration of four key values that, taken together, provide a particular lens through which to view the human person, their relationship with God, and their relationship with others. These four values are *humility, interiority, community* and *the restless search for truth.* These values are each important in their own right, but taken together they provide a community with the pathway towards Christ that is characteristic of the Augustinian vision. Importantly, the application of restorative practices across a school provides practical means for members of an Augustinian community to become more authentically *'of one mind and one heart intent upon God'* (*Rule*, 1,2).

4.2.1 Humility

For St Augustine, *humility* is the basis of all the virtues, and the starting point for the Christian life:

> "The first step in the search for truth is humility. The second, humility. The third, humility. And the last one, humility." (*Letter* 118, 3, 22)

Augustinian humility is not meekness, however, and is not slavish subservience. Rather it speaks to knowing and accepting oneself, and appreciating the needs we have for each other, and for God:

> "You are not told: be something less than you are, but: know what you are." (*Sermon* 137,4,4)

For St Augustine, the *Confessions* are an exercise in self-knowledge, on deeper and deeper levels, by examining himself, his motivations, his choices, and his actions in relationship with himself, with others, and with God. This quest was in keeping with his prayer *'Lord, let me know myself, let me know you.'* St Augustine saw humility as the antidote for – the opposite of – hubris, or human pride, of an overinflated impression of the self and of a denial of the need for others and for God. Humility calls for acceptance of the sacred in oneself and in others and lays the basis for love (Villanova University, 2009).

Because of the Augustinian view of humility as underpinning the other virtues, humility appears as the foundation or base of the values in *Figure 4* below. It is the foundation upon which the other values can be built.

4.2.2 Interiority

Humility allows for truly knowing oneself through a process of discovery that proceeds via an inwardness that is beyond mere introspection – Augustinian *interiority:*

> "Do not look outside; return to yourself. In our interior the truth resides. Go inside, where the light of reason is illumined." (*True Religion*, 72, 102)

In the *Rule,* the inward movement is invited in no fewer than seven different ways. However, these are not invitations to forms of self-reflection where one's ego can take prominence, but rather are a call to be in touch with the *Inner Teacher* – to encounter Christ, and through him, all others. Perhaps somewhat ironically, interiority enables one to discover the true self in order to transcend the self and reach out to the other, and to God. Palmer (2014) describes interiority as the process of developing a capacity or receptivity for connectedness, which makes possible the reaching outwards to others.

Figure 4 - Augustinian Values and Movement

In interiority we find the beginning of a sense of *movement* in these values. There is the move *inward,* to reflect, to listen to the 'still small voice,' to learn and to meet God. This *inward* movement then prepares for and enables an authentic move *outward* to others in community. Thus, through interiority and humility one is able to transcend the self and come to 'the other' with one's true being. The arrow in *Figure 4* depicts this initial movement inward through interiority and humility, in order to then move outward toward others in community.

4.2.3 Community

Encountering Christ within in the form of the *Inner Teacher*, we are then called to transcend the self to reach out to others in *community*, finding Christ anew in one another:

> "The main purpose for you having come together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart." (*Rule*, 1, 2)

Community for the Augustinian is not simply a means to an end – a coming together to serve some other purpose, even one as noble as Christian apostolate or ministry (*Ratio,* 1993). Community, rather, is where one again encounters 'the other' – and Christ. Humility and interiority enable one to come to community, and live in community, authentically and genuinely. One moves outward from the self towards others to share a restless search with them.

A fundamental aspect of love in community is to wish for, and work for, the common good and the good and well-being of 'the other.' Respect for each person, as a child of God, is primary in an Augustinian community. The *Ratio Institutionis* notes that St Augustine viewed 'every aspect of the common life [as] itself an exercise in asceticism.' He proposed community life as an alternative model for social relationships – 'a renewal of authentic human relationships inspired by humility, and not by power' (*Ratio,* 1993):

> "The degree to which you are concerned for the common good rather than for your own, is the criterion by which you can judge how much progress you have made" (*Rule,* 7, 2).

Indeed, St Augustine saw the formation and maintenance of community as a fulfilment of the twofold commandment of love – love of God and love of neighbour. While the love of God remains first in terms of importance, for St Augustine, love of neighbour necessarily comes first in terms of action. Thus one loves God by attending to love of neighbour in community. Not that living in community is always easy. Palmer (2014) defines community as "that place where the person I least like to work with is always present," but St Augustine writes of the joy and learning that can derive from working to resolve disagreements or conflicts within community.

Together in community, the Augustinians continue their restless search for truth and reach *outwards* and *upwards* 'on the way towards God' as depicted again by the arrow in *Figure 4.*

4.2.4 A Restless Search for Truth

The Augustinian *restless search for truth* is not a seeking of 'academic excellence' or 'knowledge for its own sake,' but rather the pursuit of wisdom, and an understanding of one's self, others and the world in light of the Ultimate reality of God:

> "When truth is eagerly sought, finding it produces greater enjoyment. Found, it is sought again with renewed desire." (*The Trinity*, 15, 2, 2)

The search for truth involves a search for meaning, for wisdom, and for God. Through community one reaches *outward* and also *upward* towards the truth. For St Augustine, this search was a rational one, shared with his friends in community. Fulfilment of the twofold commandment of love he combined with the restless search for truth, and pursued both through living in community:

> "The love of knowledge and truth should invite us to continue learning. The love of others should compel us to teach." (*Answers to the Eight Questions of Dulcitius*, 3)

4.3 Augustinian Values and Restorative Practices

Each of the four characteristic Augustinian values now outlined resonates with a different aspect of restorative practices. *Humility* addresses the need for self-awareness and self-knowledge when it comes to one's motivations, as well as the need to transcend the ego through working *with* others to deal with conflict and wrongdoing. *Interiority* provides a means of developing self-awareness and self-knowledge, listening to the *Inner Teacher,* and the development of the conscience, which is an aim of restorative practices. *Community* challenges one to consider the common good and the needs of 'the other,' and to seek to repair any harm that one's actions may have caused for others, while the *restless search for truth* calls for constant striving in the direction of wisdom and understanding.

It is when taken together, however, and in keeping with the sense of *movement* outlined above, that the role of restorative practices in enabling us to more closely live out these particular Augustinian values is presented. The four values call for this movement, *inward* to know oneself better, so that one can then transcend the self to move *outward* to others, and *upward* to the truth. This movement is central to the Augustinian vision of restorative practices. The processes involved in restorative practices

challenge people to take just this journey – they call one to reflect *inwardly* on one's behaviour, in order to reach *outward* to others in understanding and empathy for the harm one's actions may have caused them, and to move *upwards* towards wisdom and compassion. Restorative practices involves educative processes which attempt to achieve this transcendence of self towards the other.

The four key values, and the movement inherent in them, are in keeping with St Augustine's emphasis on right and just relationships. Humility, interiority, community, and the restless search for truth, together enable right and just relationships with *ourselves*, with *others*, and with our *God*. And at the heart of an Augustinian school community are the relationships that form primarily between students, between staff and students, and among staff. Such Augustinian focus on relationships is reflected, as outlined earlier, in restorative practices. Gary McCloskey OSA identifies the mission of members of the Augustinian Order as essentially to be *with* people. With reference to the restorative *relationship window* in *Figure 1*, one could say that the mission of heirs to the Augustinian tradition is to work restoratively *with people as subjects to engage.* An Augustinian approach to justice is clearly *relational*, and relational justice *is* restorative justice.

5. Conclusion

> "Many people promise themselves that they will live a holy life. But, they fail because they go into the furnace and come out cracked." (*Expositions on the Psalms* 99, 11)

Applying St Augustine's imagery, all have been tested in the furnace, and all are 'cracked pots.' Human frailty ensures that relationships *will not* be perfect, and that there *will* be conflict and wrongdoing in communities from time to time. In searching for ways of dealing with these human imperfections and failings that can nurture and strengthen the fundamental human inter-relatedness, the Catholic faith and the Augustinian tradition can point the way. The theological, scriptural and sacramental heritage offers hope of redemption and restoration through relationship with Christ. The Augustinian tradition offers a potential 'road map' to such reconciliation through humility, interiority, community and a restless search for the truth. Both emphasise that the pathway is, as St Augustine taught, through right and just relationships – with the self, with each other, and with God.

It is well-recognised that educational work in classrooms and schools is mediated by the influence of the relationships that exist between teacher and student. St Augustine realised this centuries ago, and modern educational research 'confirms' it. That relationships are central to teachers' work in schools has become self-evident. Experience, and recent research, also suggests that the traditional approaches to behaviour management and discipline in schools are ineffective and may in fact be counter-productive to the higher aims of education.

What is currently needed is a focus on developing and nurturing right relationships across schools, and the adoption of approaches that effectively enable the repair and restoration of relationships when things go wrong. What is needed are practical processes that help us bring abstract notions such as reconciliation and restoration into day-to-day reality in such a way that our Catholic and Augustinian values are more than just platitudes. What is needed are practical means by which fellowship in broken humanity can provide transformative relationships to encourage wrongdoers back to the right path. Restorative practices offers this focus and approach, these processes, and these means. Restorative practices recognises that we are relational beings and that the key issue when conflict or wrongdoing occurs is the harm that is caused to people and relationships, and the obligations that follow from that harm. The restorative approach helps us build and nurture relationships in schools and provides the means to work to repair harm when things go wrong – through transformative relationships within a community of care.

The relational nature of restorative practices reflects the relational nature of the Old and New Testament visions of justice. Restorative practices ensures fidelity to the somewhat paradoxical view of justice, mercy and compassion that originates in our Catholic tradition and which reflects the major tenets of the Church's social teaching. Restorative practices is congruent as well with the Augustinian view of justice as rightly-ordered relationships with the self, with others, and with God. Augustinian values provide a pathway to these rightly-ordered relationships – inwardly through interiority and humility in order to move out towards others and upwards towards the Truth. The processes in restorative practices encourage the same movement inward in order to transcend the self and build capacity for connectedness, and then outward towards others, and upward towards wisdom and compassion. Restorative practices invites all teachers (and other adults in a school) to participate in an active ministry of reconciliation; to form communities of care around wrongdoers and those affected in order to 'bear one another's burdens' and bring them back to rightly-ordered relationship.

There is no panacea for all ills in education, nevertheless the schoolwide implementation of restorative practices – integrated and embedded across all aspects of the school's activity – enables working *with* colleagues and young people and *engaging with them* in ways which build community, strengthen right relationships, give expression (and flesh and blood) to shared values on a day-to-day basis, and which enable the seeking of *shalom* within an Augustinian school.

6. References/Further Reading

APA 2008. *Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations.* American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force.

Clark, M., 1963. Augustine on Justice. Revue des Études Augustiniennes, Vol 9, 1963

CSDCC. 2004. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church. 2004 Retrieved September, 2011: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html

Denk, K.M. SJ, 2008. *Restorative Justice and Catholic Social Thought: Challenges as Opportunities for Society, Church, and Academy*. Lane Center for Catholic Studies and Social Thought, University of San Francisco, Spring Lecture Series.

Esmeralda, A. OSA, 2003, Ten Augustinian Values. Retrieved September 2003: http://agustinongpinoy.net/values/

Fitzgerald, A., 1999. Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

George, G. 2014. Affect & Emotion in the Restorative School, in V. Kelly & M. Thorsborne (Eds), *The Psychology of Emotion in Restorative Practice: How Affect Script Psychology Explains How and Why Restorative Practice Works.* Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

George, G. 2015. *Teaching with Mind and Heart: Affect & Emotion in the Restorative School.* Unpublished manuscript.

Johnstone, G. 2002. Restorative Justice – Ideas, Values, Debates. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

Morrison, B. E., 2005. Restorative justice in schools. In E. Elliott and R. Gordon (eds.), *New Directions in Restorative Justice: Issues, Practice, Evaluation.* Willan Publishing, Devon.

NZCBC 1995. Creating New Hearts: Moving from Retributive to Restorative Justice. A Statement of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Palmer, P. 2014. Thirteen Ways of Looking at Community, Retrieved November 2013: http://www.couragerenewal.org/13-ways-of-looking-at-community_parker-palmer/

Pope, S. 2010. Restorative Justice as a Prophetic Path to Peace. Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America 65.

Pranis, K, 2000. Empathy development in youth through restorative practices. Public Service Psychology, 25(2).

Ramirez, R. CSB. 2009. Catholic Social Teaching on Restorative Justice. University of Villanova Academic Symposium, September 18, 2009.

Ratio Institutionis, 1993. The Plan for Augustinian Formation, The Order of Saint Augustine, Rome.

Rule. 2002. The Rule and Constitutions of the Order of Saint Augustine. Augustinian Historical Society. Villanova University. 2002

Sanson, A., Montgomery, B., Gault, U., Gridley, H., & Thomson, D.,1996. Punishment and Behaviour Change: A Position Paper of the Australian Psychological Society. Australian Psychologist, Vol 31, Issue 3.

Stewart-Kroeker, S, 2015. Friendship and Moral Formation: Implications for Restorative Justice, in *Augustine and Social Justice*, Teresa Delgado, John Doody, and Kim Paffenroth (Eds) Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015, 251-275.

Thorsborne, M & Vinegrad, D, 2006. *Restorative Practices in Schools: Rethinking Behaviour Management.* Second Edition, Inyahead Press.

USCCB 2000. Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice. United States Catholic Bishops statement, November 2000.

Vaandering, D, 2013. 'A window on relationships: reflecting critically on a current restorative justice theory.' Restorative Justice: An International Journal. 1,3, 311-333.

Villanova University, 2009. Augustine's Values.Retrieved 4th April, 2009: http://www.villanova.edu/mission/spirituality/about/values.htm

Wachtel, T, 1999. *Restorative Justice in Everyday Life: Beyond the Formal Ritual,* Reshaping Australian Institutions Conference, The Australian National University, Canberra

Weissbourd, R, 2003. *'Moral Teachers, Moral Students'*, Educational Leadership, pp. Vol 60, No 6

The author acknowledges the kind assistance of Fr Kevin Burman OSA and Fr Laurie Mooney OSA in reviewing and proofing the manuscript.