


Research Article

Faith and Reason: Reinventing Scholasticism in Postmodern Philippine Catholic Education

John Mark S. Astorga^{1*} 

¹ Granby Colleges of Science and Technology, Philippines

* Correspondence: markapinya14@gmail.com; astorgajms@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/eiki/10.59652/jcpas.v2i4.327>

Abstract: This paper aims to present the necessity of a new scholastic movement as an intellectual and religious movement and to reinvent it in the context of 21st Century Philippine Catholic Education. This reinvention of Scholasticism aims to design a curriculum for Senior high school students in order to equip them in understanding and defending the Catholic Faith and Teachings. Since the Catholic Church is facing the problems given by postmodernism and atheism, there is a need for another scholastic movement to counter these problems. This paper uses in-depth and comprehensive analysis of texts related to reinvention of scholastic movement in the 21st Century. The researcher used Purposive Sampling technique to carefully select the articles based on their relevance to the reinvention of scholastic movement. This paper uses updated and relevant research papers for analysis. In addition, to argue that there is a need for a new scholastic movement in Philippine Catholic education, the Hegelian dialectic was used, the idea of history repeating itself became the start point of this paper to argue that this is philosophical sound and valid. This paper examines the necessity of the 21st Century Philippine Catholic Education to the reinvented scholastic movement and it also offers a comprehensive curriculum design to reinvent scholasticism in education. Since, it aims to craft a curriculum which is anchored to apologetics and scholasticism, this proposed curriculum can equip the students to be effective Christians who will defend the church and its teachings. With this, the Religious Education for Grade 11 and Grade 12 will be a strong foundation of Catholic Faith in the 21st Century Philippine Education for Catholic schools.

Keywords: Scholasticism; Philippine Catholic Education; Postmodernism; Catechism; Catholic Apologetics; Catholic Theology

Received: October 19, 2024

Accepted: November 3, 2024

Published: November 10, 2024



Copyright: © 2022 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

As Hegel (2011) implied that “History repeats itself” within the lens of his dialectic, we can notice that our education is facing the same problems that the Christian philosophers and theologians encountered during the Middle Ages and the scholastic movement are their synthesis to reconcile the challenges served by atheism and Christian heresies. To support this paper with a solid philosophical and scientific background, it is also anchored within the philosophy of Scholasticism, Hegelian Dialectic, Jean-Francois Lyotard and other related and updated articles from other researchers.

This reinvention of the Scholastic movement in the 21st century aims to combat the influence of postmodern thoughts. It requires the cooperation of the Church and the Catholic schools. Postmodernism promotes the idea of subjectivism and relativism where knowledge is socially constructed.

According to Lyotard (1979) Postmodernism is a threat in religion and education, he argued that postmodern thoughts challenge religious beliefs, and emphasized that skepticism weakens the authority of the church. As argued by Lyotard (1979), Postmodernism rejects universal and objective truth, he believes that postmodernity promotes subjectivism and relativism which can lead to weak and unorganized beliefs and also pedagogical approaches in Education. In his *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) he emphasizes that Education must be the foundation objective of truth, values and knowledge, however, this essence of education and even religion is now changing because of

postmodernism.

In addition, Zygmunt Bauman (2000) a critique of postmodernism, agreed on his Liquid Modernity that postmodernity gives weak social relationships where he saw that relationships become more casual that may lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. He also argued that postmodernity leads people to existential questions about their purpose and meaning. That is why, postmodernist thoughts must be combated by the reinvention of scholastic movement in the 21st century.

In the 21st Century Philippine Education, postmodernism is at its peak. In the 2020 survey conducted by Philippine Statistics Authority 43,931 Filipinos answered that they have no religious affiliation. This statistics is surprising because this is the first time that in a religious country like the Philippines, a significant number of individuals who have no religious affiliation was recorded (Mapa, 2023). This is concrete proof that postmodernism reaches Philippine Education through the media. As studied by Enders et al. (2021), social media is the main distributor of conspiracy theories, misinformation and most importantly subjective thoughts. The 21st Century Philippine Education is an age of social media which can influence and manipulate the beliefs of students. That is why the 21st century learners are prone to misinformation and manipulation from the media. In every high school and college classroom nowadays, there are students who support abortion, divorce, death penalty and other social issues that may involve morality.

The Filipino students in the 21st Century Philippine Education are exposed to atheism and agnosticism which lead them to abandon their religious affiliation and their objective morality to support atheistic moral standards. As argued by MacIntyre (1981), secularization in education has an impact on the morality of students that may lead them to atheism. The Catholic schools and universities are targeted by Postmodern thoughts to separate them from the Christian teachings of objective truth and morality.

This paper aims to present the necessity of Scholastic movement as an intellectual and religious movement and to reinvent it in the context of 21st Century Philippine Education. This reinvention of Scholasticism aims to design a curriculum for Senior high school students in order to equip them in understanding and defending the Catholic Faith and Teachings. This proposed curriculum is anchored in the concept of Scholastic movement and Catholic apologetics. This paper aims to examine the necessity of scholastic movement in the 21st Century and to reinvent it in Philippine Education to counter the postmodern thoughts that encourage students to doubt their religious beliefs. It also aims to inculcate Catholic Apologetics in the proposed curriculum as the starting-point of the reinvention of scholasticism.

2. Materials and Methods

This paper uses in-depth and comprehensive analysis of texts related to reinvention of scholastic movement in the 21st Century. There are two criteria for the texts to be selected, first, they must be relevant to the main point of the paper, lastly, they must be updated for the accuracy of the data. The researcher decided to use Purposive Sampling to accurately show in this paper that there is a need for the reinvention of scholasticism in 21st Century Catholic Education in the Philippines.

Through textual analysis of related literature and study chosen by the researcher using Purposive Sampling technique, the texts have been examined to support the proposed curriculum for religious Education subject of Senior high school. The researcher solely based with the two criteria for selecting the relevant texts for analysis, any article which did not reach the standards given by the researcher was rejected.

To argue that there is a need for a new scholastic movement in Philippine Catholic education, the Hegelian dialectic was used, the idea of history repeating itself became the start point of this paper to argue that this is philosophically sound and valid. The researcher intended to include the Hegelian dialectic to philosophically show that the Philippine Catholic Education needs another scholastic movement to counter the challenges posed by postmodernism.

For the discussions, the proposed curriculum for Grade 11 and Grade 12 was anchored with the Catholic teachings of the Catholic Church. The researcher made a comprehensive table to show the design of the curriculum. Additionally, the discussions became clearer and valid by focusing on the reinvention of the scholastic movement in the 21st century Philippine Catholic Education.

The researcher cited an updated research study by Quimson (2020) and Bella (2024) to



show that teaching of catechism has an impact on the students' lives. With these, the researcher made strong arguments for the reinvention of scholastic movement in the Philippine Catholic Education. To validate the results of this paper, the researcher cited relevant research papers emphasizing the importance of coping up with 21st Century Religious Education.

3. Results and Discussion

In the context of Hegelian dialectic, during the middle age there were a lot of skeptics who questioned the religious dogmas of Christianity, and to answer them, Christian thinkers came up with a philosophical system called “Scholasticism” to fix those problems with sound arguments from faith and reason. The main goal of scholasticism was to reconcile faith and reason in order to solve doubts and help the Church to develop Herself into an intellectual institution. This is what the 21st Century Philippine Education needs, another scholastic movement to counter the questions offered by postmodernity, especially atheism.

According to Patte (2010) Scholasticism is a method of learning anchored with dialectical reasoning to resolve contradictions. It is a movement conducted by Christian theologians and philosophers to reconcile Christian theology and late antiquity philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. The pinnacle of scholastic movement can be traced from Saint Thomas Aquinas and his work *Summa Theologica* on 1265-1274 A.D, Aquinas' reconciliation of Christian faith and Aristotelian metaphysics marked the flourishing of Scholastic movement in the world. However, Saint Anselm of Canterbury was credited as the 'Father of Scholasticism' for addressing Atheism by his 'Ontological argument' for proving God's existence through deductive philosophical reasoning.

As the Hegelian dialectic implies that history repeats itself, where the Thesis and Antithesis must be solved with a Synthesis, like how the Medieval philosophers reconcile atheism and skepticism through Scholasticism, The Church and Education must work together to combat Postmodernism like what the Scholastic philosophers did to atheism and heresies to provide quality education where objective truth within faith and reasons must be prioritize for Christians and other religious affiliations.

Scholasticism emphasized that scholastic thinkers used the universities to defend the Christian faith against atheism and heresies. It can be argued that education played an important role as the center of the scholastic movement. Colleges and Universities became the training ground of the future Christian apologists who will defend the faith against heresies and atheism.

To support this, the study of Bella (2024) concluded that scholasticism had a good influence on education because he saw that the students were encouraged to engage in critical discussions and developed a culture of analytical thinking and intellectual inquiry. Therefore, it can be concluded that for the scholastic movement to be reinvented in 21st Century Philippine education, it should start at education where students will be trained to defend the faith.

Since the Catholic schools offer Religious Education as one of their core subjects; Christian Apologetics, Catechism and Basic Systematic Theology can be integrated. Theology is a Science of God, it requires deep studies in Philosophy, History, Culture and Languages, therefore, implementing this in the Catholic School Curriculum compliments the idea of lifelong-learning. Table 1 below suggests Religious Education Curriculum for Grade 11 and Grade 12.

Table 1. Proposed religious education for Grade 11.

| Grade 11 | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| First Semester (Religious Education 1) | |
| Sacred Scripture | |
| Preliminary | Old Testament |
| Midterm | New Testament |
| Pre-Finals | Hermeneutics |
| Finals | Exegesis |
| Second Semester (Religious Education 2) | |
| Catechism of the Catholic Church | |
| Preliminary | The Profession of Faith |
| Midterm | Celebration of the Christian Mystery |
| Pre-Finals | Life in Christ |



| | |
|--------|------------------|
| Finals | Christian Prayer |
|--------|------------------|

Table 1 shows the proposed curriculum for Grade 11. It is aligned to the structure given by the Kto12 Program in which the school year for Grade 11 is divided into two semesters. The first semester is designed to equip the students to read, understand and interpret the Sacred Scripture. The researcher argued that the basic foundation to defend the faith is by learning the Sacred Scriptures. It is designed to help the students to study the Words of God scientifically and systematically. The Preliminary term focuses solely on understanding the content of the Old Testament that includes Literary Genres, History, and Language (Hebrew). After an in-depth study of the Old Testament, the New Testament will follow as the prerequisite. The students' learning from the Old Testament must be used to read, understand and interpret the content of the New Testament. With this, the constructivist approach of learning is applied. In continuation, the Pre-final and Final term focus on the science of interpretation which the students will be equipped in Hermeneutics that will help them to consider the Historical, Cultural and Linguistics aspects of the Bible for proper interpretation.

The proposed curriculum for the Second semester of Grade 11 focuses on the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC). According to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (2002), Catechism is not a theology book, it is a book of Catholic Faith. The CCC is actually the proclamation of faith and a clear presentation of the Catholic Teachings. This curriculum is designed to equip the students to understand the Catholic Faith and Teachings through Catechism of the Catholic Church. As studied by Quimson (2020), teaching catechism has a significant impact on the senior high school students in different cultures and faith. According to Quimson (2020), the teaching of the Catholic faith helped the students to understand and appreciate God in their lives. Based on the respondents, because of the teaching of catechism they were able to know more about Jesus Christ, also helped them to improve their prayer and spiritual life and most importantly because of Catechism they understood the teachings of the Catholic Church better. Therefore, through these results, it can be concluded that it is necessary to not just include the Catechism of the Catholic Church in the curriculum for Senior high school, but it must be studied in a whole semester for mastery.

Table 2 shows the proposed curriculum for Grade 12. This curriculum is designed to equip the students in Catholic Apologetics which is the core of the reinvention of scholasticism in 21st Century Philippine Education. Catholic Apologetics is an art on defending the Church and her teachings and dogmas. According to Cardinal Levada (2010), there is a need for 'New Apologetics' for the Church in the 21st Century, he argued that the main challenge of the catholic apologists is to let people know the reason for our Catholic faith and hope with all courtesy and respect as he anchored it with 1 Peter 3:15. Since, the Church is facing the challenges given by postmodernism and atheism. The catholic institutions must teach and train the students Catholic apologetics in order for them to live with their faith with reason and confidence and defend it if necessary. As presented in Table 2, the lessons are designed to equip the students to be Catholic faith defenders.

Table 2. Proposed religious education curriculum for Grade 12.

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Grade 12 | |
| First Semester (Religious Education 3) | |
| Catholic Apologetics | |
| Preliminary | God's Existence |
| Midterm | Defending the Sacred Sacraments |
| Pre-Finals | Defending the Church Magisterium |
| Finals | Defending Four Marian Dogmas |
| Second Semester (Religious Education 4) | |
| Church and Community Service | |

The second semester of Grade 12, this is the last semester for senior high school before moving to college, every candidate for graduation is required to be an intern to their local parishes or community. This is designed to allow the students to apply the learnings that they have learned, they have to put their knowledge into practice by serving their local church as Catechists, Catholic defenders, Youth leaders and Church administrators. In the current times, there is not a part of any Religious Education curriculum. That is why a Church and Community internship must be required to help the students feel that they have obligations to the Church and Community.

In the study of Woocher (2012) about Jewish Education, he also argued that Jewish

education should also be reinvented in the 21st Century. He emphasized the importance of reinventing the Jewish Education to accommodate 21st century learners. In his paper, he highlighted that the reinvented Jewish Education should be student-centered, relationship-infused and life-relevant. This conclusion of Woocher (2012) in the reinvention of Jewish education in his context validates the design of this paper's proposed curriculum.

These findings relate to the paper of Cacho (2015), she concluded that the real challenge of Religious Education especially in the Philippines is crafting a curriculum that promotes the core values of the Gospel, she emphasized that the students must actively participate in learning Religious Education and not just memorizing lessons. This also validates the proposed curriculum of this paper that active participation of the students is the main priority. Therefore, the Grade 12 students will be required to have a Church or Community internship for a whole semester before graduation.

4. Conclusions

As emphasized, the Catholic Church is facing the same problem as She encountered during the middle age. To address these problems, Christian thinkers came out with a solution by starting a movement called "Scholastic Movement" to counter the arguments given by the heresies and atheism to stop the Church from reaching her goals for humanity. The scholastic movement became an effective way to stop the heresies. In the postmodern world, the Church is facing these problems again, therefore, it can be concluded that there is a need for the reinvention of scholastic movement in the 21st Century. As argued by the researcher, this reinvention of scholasticism must be begun with the initiative of Catholic schools. Since, education played a crucial role as the center of the scholastic movement. Colleges and Universities became the training grounds of the future Christian apologists who will defend the faith against heresies and atheism.

This paper proposed a curriculum designed to equip the students to be effective Christians who will defend the church and its teachings to counter atheism and postmodern thoughts. The alignment of the subjects and topics will help the students to understand the Catholic teachings better. This curriculum is not only designed to build their intellectual skills but also to build their spirituality by defending and serving the church and their community.

This paper recommends that for the reinvention of Scholasticism in the 21st Century Philippine Education to happen, the cooperation of the Department of Education and the Catholic Institutions such as Catholic Universities are highly needed. This paper can contribute to the catholic schools in the Philippines for them to create curriculum that can mold intellectual students with the light of faith and reason.

For further recommendation, if this curriculum will be implemented to senior high school and proven to be effective. The researcher recommends that the junior high school department should also adopt it. Since the Kto12 Curriculum uses a Spiral curriculum and is anchored with the concept of Lifelong learning. Philosophical topics and approaches can be emphasized in the minor and major subjects such as Science, Araling Panlipunan and most importantly Values Education. This is not intent only for religious purposes but it is proven that integrating philosophy in the academic subjects promotes critical and analytical thinking.

References

- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Polity Press.
- Bella, D. K. M. J. (2024). Education System in Medieval Period – The Impact of Scholasticism on Medieval Learning. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Arts, Science and Technology*, 2(2), 17-22. <https://doi.org/10.61778/ijmrast.v2i2.39>
- Cacho, R. G. (2015). Making Religious Instruction and Values Formation Relevant to 21st Century Learners. *HAPAG Journal*, 12(2), 161-172. <https://www.svst.edu.ph/upload/assets/hYOOgmwBWWIWxF7jcordH0PoO98EQMb7pySCASpcPjLeFwIMlt.pdf>
- Current Doctrinal Relevance of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. (2002). The Holy See. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20021009_rattinger-catechetical-congress_en.html
- Enders, A., Uscinski, J. E., Seelig, M. I., Klofstad, C. A., Wuchty, S., Funchion, J. R., ... Stoler, J. (2021). The Relationship Between Social Media Use and Beliefs in Conspiracy Theories and Misinformation. *Political Behavior*, 45, 781–804. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-021-09734-6>
- Hegel, G.W.F. (2011). *Lectures on the Philosophy of History: Complete and Unabridged*. WordBridge Publishing.
- Levada, W. (2010). The Urgency of a New Apologetics for the Church in the 21st Century. The Holy See. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20100429_levada-new-apologetics_en.html
- Lytard, J.-F. (1979). *The Postmodern Condition*. University of Minnesota Press.
- MacIntyre, A. (1981). *After Virtue*. University of Notre Dame Press



- Mapa, D. S. (2023). Religious Affiliation in the Philippines. 2020 Census of Population and Housing.
- Patte, D. (2010). *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Quimson, L. J. O. (2020). The Impact of Catechesis among Grade 12 Non-Catholic and Non-Christian Students of University of Santo Tomas Senior High School. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, 10, 67-76. <https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrse.2020.5725>
- Woocher, J. (2012). Reinventing Jewish Education for the 21st Century. *Journal of Jewish Education*, 78(3), 182-226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15244113.2012.700636>