

"12" Catholic educators from Catholic schools across the Diocese of Ballarat ventured off to Belgium on a Saturday evening recently, excited and open to learning. Once in Leuven, Belgium we discovered we were also working with a team of another "12" from the Melbourne Archdiocese and a further three from Sale and Sandhurst Dioceses.

Katholieke University Leuven, the oldest Catholic university in the world, has been partnering with the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria in a project to enhance the Catholic identity of our schools since 2006. This year, diocesan education leaders have been inspired and challenged during daily university lectures with renowned theologians and visits to Catholic schools in Belgium and the Netherlands. We have had an opportunity to study, discuss our learning, reflect, analyse data and deepen our understanding of the effects of a pluralising culture on faith and identity. Shared times of prayer, reflection and Eucharist have complemented the formal study and professional dialogue.

Examining the effects of modern culture and learning from the Belgian experience allows us to plan more strategically and effectively to enhance the Catholic identity of our schools now and in the future. We seek to ensure that the rich treasures of our Catholic faith continue to speak to the context of children and young people in our schools as they have done for past generations.



Left: Back: Torie Waight, Leonie Leviston, Donna Bryce, Bernadette Lynch, Sonia Turner, Audrey Brown  
Front: Fr Peter Sherman, Bernadette Luckman, Fr Andrew Hayes, Ethan Corfee, Darren Egberts, Chris Roberts

Right: Mass at Crypt of Father Damien of Molokai