

## SOME OVERBERG QUOTATIONS

**In this selection from *Directives for Purposeful School-teaching* (Münster, 1793), No. 164, Bernard Overberg is giving teachers a model of how they might develop the idea that “Every Human Being Is Our Neighbor.” This is a dialogue or conversation in which only the words of the teacher are represented. The answers of the children are presumed.**

Konrad, who is your neighbor, whom you are obliged to love as yourself? So you understand not only your friends and those who live near you when you say: my neighbor? Then do you also know why all human beings are called and are your neighbors? Shouldn't each and every human being have a great similarity with you? Wouldn't you like to get to know this similarity somewhat more in particular? So now, think along with me.

Do you not have a truly skillfully built body, with which you can do all kinds of useful work when it is healthy; but which also can easily become defective, sick, weak, and finally will become dust again? Do you not find such a body also in every other human being?

Do you not have an immortal soul created in the image and likeness of God? Does not every other human being also have one? Do you not know when something does you good or gives you pain, when you are satisfied or dissatisfied, happy or sad? Your soul is therefore able to perceive contentment or discontent? So is the soul of every other human being. Do you not wish that things would go really well for you all the time? Everyone else wishes this too.

Why did God create you? For that reason he created every other human being also. Who keeps you alive, who gives you food, drink, and clothing? Does God not do that for every one else, too? Indeed do you think that God loves you, that he created you out of such a gracious intention, always sustains you, and cares for everything that is necessary for life? He loves everyone else in such a way also. What can you rightly call God, because he created you, sustains you, and cares for you in such a fatherly way? So can everyone else.

To what will our Lord Jesus help you, if you strive to share in his reward? To that will he also help everyone else, for he suffered and died for all. Are you already completely out of danger of making yourself unhappy through sin? So is it with every other human being also. . .

Thus all human beings are like you in body, in soul, in feelings and desires; all have with the same destiny, the same hope, one and the same Father in heaven, one and the same Savior; all are purchased with the very same price; all are on the journey with you to your and their joy-filled Fatherland; on this journey all are subject with you to mostly the same weaknesses and difficulties, mostly the same dangers of losing their way and becoming unhappy.

Do you now see well, that each single human being has a great similarity with you? Indeed do you know any other creature that has such a great similarity with you? Is not, then, every single human being in fact your neighbor?

*Translated by Sister Mary Jessica Karlinger, S.N.D .  
Chardon, Ohio, May 1996*

So long as God remains God, and human beings human, so long does it also remain impossible that a human being can find true happiness in transitory things.

*The Catholic Christian Religion Handbook, Vol. I, p. 280.*

The human being is too great to be able to find happiness in anything outside of God.

*The Catholic Christian Religion Handbook, Vol. I, p. (5)*

What happiness, to make human beings happy!

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 37*

Peace and happiness are the portion of a good schoolteacher.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 14*

Whoever gives another a drink of water, will not lack his reward. What reward will not therefore fall to an upright teacher who out of love, often with little public notice and poorly paid, has for many years used all his strength with firm self-conquest to lead many to the spring of living water.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 14*

You must love all your pupils; all have a right to good teaching from you, which comes from your love . . . The children of the poor just as much as the rich have God for their Father. Jesus Christ is their brother. God loves them all . . . Yet in their social position, the poor children have a greater likeness to our Savior than do the rich.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 27*

In order to use a good method to advantage, a teacher must also know his students; not only their names, but also their abilities, dispositions, and external circumstances, for example, whether the parents are poor or rich, if they lead their children with good example, bring them up well, etc.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 33*

Unnecessary constraint creates resistance.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 43*

A worthy teacher looks on all of his students as his own children, among whom none has assured privileges in preference to the others.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 64*

Seek before anything else to gain the respect, love, and trust of your students. This is an important duty for you.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 71*

You must always come into the school with a happy and bright face. Let the children read on your face that you are happy to see and to teach them.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 72*

You must seek to form your students not merely as naturally good people but as true worshipers of God according to the teaching of Jesus.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 79*

You do not need to relate (stories and examples) in an elaborate and learned way; the simpler the better.

*Directives for purposeful School-teaching, No. 82*

Seek to make it ever more clear and perceptible to your students that to love God and consciously to do good in order to please God, is the only thing that makes human beings truly happy here.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 105*

Seek to make your students eager to learn.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 116*

The children believe they know very much if they can babble out a lot by heart, but their knowledge is then like the knowledge of a chattering magpie. The memorization of the not understood catechism is one of the foremost sources of the deplorable ignorance in matters of faith among the common people and certainly not seldom among the nobility.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 172*

The awakening of attentiveness and reflection must become an integral part of all lessons.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 225*

Rewards and punishments should serve for the furthering of happiness.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 234*

The example of adults is indeed always the first master teacher of children in the art of lying and hypocrisy.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 250*

Children must never be punished for faults that are not at all subject to human free will.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 252*

It is not possible for children to improve everything at once that still needs improvement. Therefore you must patiently put up with many of their faults for a while and thus also in this imitate the wise goodness of God, who with forbearance endures so many flaws in us, and lets us take exact note of them only little by little, as we become more able to put them aside.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 254*

Never punish in anger.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 257*

The reason why some children learn so well and others so poorly, often lies simply in this, that some parents make a lot of fuss, and others so little, over whether their children learn or not.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, Appendix 2*

Often look at your students with the eye of faith and think: are these not God's children, God's darlings, God's heirs? Are they not the innocent, under age brothers and sisters of my Savior, the price of his blood, the temple of his Spirit? Are they not foster children of the angels, the joy of their parents, the blossom of humanity, the hope of a better future?

*The Catholic Christian Religion Handbook, Vol. I, p. 6*

We must exert ourselves most attentively to develop love in the children as the seed of temporal and eternal happiness; namely, the love for God, which in trust of his fatherly goodness, almighty

power, and wisdom, affords the sweetest consolation and peace in all circumstances; well-ordered self-love, which in the endeavor to make all lasting goodness and beauty one's own, will be an inexhaustible source of independent delight; love for the neighbor, which conquers the envy, hatred, and all other passions which narrow and torment the heart, and so fills up the heart with the most noble joys of empathy, that through it particular sorrows will often be driven out, always eased.

*Directives for Purposeful School-teaching, No. 261*

God has not given us so much pleasure and joy through his visible works that we should rest with them and content ourselves with them. No, God desires through these pleasures and joys to help us to a still greater joy, namely, the joy of recognizing him as our kindest Father, loving him from the heart, and being happy forever.

*Catechism for the Use of Older Students, Part I, 62*

When God gives me a thought about himself without my having sought it, he, so to say, greets my soul. Then I should return his greeting by allowing my thoughts to linger somewhat on him and by saying a few words to him interiorly. For example: God, stand by me! or All for your love!

*Catechism for the Use of Older Students, Part I, 139*

All the irrational and inanimate creatures that God brought forth on the earth can be seen as a mirror of God's glory and as his messengers who call to us: Know that the Lord is God. (Ps 100, 3)

*Catechism for the Use of Older Students, Part III, 30, 33*

Divine providence is the wise and loving care of God for the welfare of his creatures. It extends over all without exception, even the most insignificant; most especially, however, over his intelligent creatures.

*Catechism for the Use of Older Students, Part III, 365,66*

It is important that we recognize God's providence and firmly believe in it, because this most of all can make us peaceful and contented in life and in death.

*Catechism for the Use of Older Students, Part III, 367*

God works with us in all that we do and, so to say, himself gives a hand to everything except sin alone.

*Catechism for the Use of Older Students, Part III, 382*

We can be solicitous for the sustenance of our neighbor in these ways: 1) through diligence and frugality, try to save something so that we are able to share with the poor; 2) gladly share with them

from our surplus; 3) assist them wherever possible to become honestly self-sufficient in procuring their daily needs.

*Catechism for the Use of Older Students, Part IV, 372*

The essence of a good prayer is the striving or the struggle to tear one's heart and mind from earthly things and to turn them to God and keep them there. When this striving or struggle occurs in any form, then there is prayer.

*Catechism for the Use of Older Students, Part IV, 532*