Michael T. Buchanan
Adrian-Mario Gellel   *Editors*

Global Perspectives on Catholic Religious Education in Schools

Volume II: Learning and Leading in a Pluralist World

Springer

Global Perspectives on Catholic Religious Education in Schools

Michael T. Buchanan · Adrian-Mario Gellel
Editors

Global Perspectives on Catholic Religious Education in Schools

Volume II: Learning and Leading in a Pluralist World

🜪 Springer

Editors
Michael T. Buchanan
Faculty of Education and Arts
Australian Catholic University
Fitzroy, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Adrian-Mario Gellel
Faculty of Education/Faculty of Theology
University of Malta
Msida, Malta

This book is dedicated to the memory of
Rev. Prof. Mario D'Souza, CSB
(1956–2017)
The scholarship of Catholic Religious
Education in schools was enriched by his
contributions

Foreword

Just another Sunday in a church somewhere in Germany. A priest of advanced age stands at the ambo with his hands propped up, looking into his manuscript and reading the sermon. In the nave, there are a few believers listening, most of them also of older generations. So far familiar—at least in Germany and probably in many other countries, especially of the Western world. However, the scene, drawn by the German cartoonist Plaßmann (2018), turns surreal as soon as at a second glance some details catch the eye: all listeners are wearing headphones; at the edge of the scene a man is sitting next to the priest in a booth with the word 'interpreter' (Dolmetscher) written on it. Obviously, the audience is receiving a simultaneous translation of the sermon read by the priest. A fantastically useful invention, one might say.

The punch line of this caricature works because it plays with a widespread experience: In our times, religious language and notably the proclamation of the Church seem to need translations in order to be understood. And this does not only mean that—due to global migration flows—people of different origins, who very often do not speak any common language, come together in Catholic communities worldwide. Certainly, this is a great challenge in many places! Yet there is another aspect behind this snappy caricature, pointing to the far-reaching transformation of religious socialisation, which can be observed in many contemporary societies. Increasingly fewer children and adolescents grow up in the Christian tradition learning its language naturally as their 'mother tongue'. If at all, for most it is comparable to learning a foreign language (Altmeyer, 2011). Hence, the proclamation of the Church as well as Religious Education is facing a translation challenge. If religious learning processes are to lead to a mutual encounter between religious traditions and their worlds and learners within their worlds, then a common language basis is a necessary prerequisite that often no longer exists. The task of religious educators is becoming increasingly like that of language teachers: they must translate the Christian tradition wrapped in a language of the past into a language of the present, lead pupils to a differentiated understanding of this language and at the same time enable them to develop a personal and experiential language for matters of religious concern.

This book impressively reflects the complexity and richness of such translation processes taking place in Catholic Religious Education worldwide. It is thanks to the tireless dedication and great care of the editors—Prof. Adrian-Mario Gellel from the University of Malta and Prof. Michael T. Buchanan from the Australian Catholic University—that leading scholars from all around the world have been brought together to form a comprehensive panorama. In 52 chapters, authors from 18 countries and six continents provide theoretical insights and practical experiences on what religious learning in Catholic Religious Education can look like, taking seriously the diverse translation tasks that religious learning is confronted with within the context of a plural world. In addition to significant theoretical questions, the focus is widely on questions of inter-religious learning and contextual sensitivity, which always raise crucial issues about how teachers can be educated and trained for such challenging tasks. In the end, all the different perspectives and approaches centre on a fundamental question that requires theological and pedagogical reflection: what does (not only!) Catholic Religious Education contribute to the education and development of young people so that their lives might succeed under the conditions of today's plural world? In other words, how is the empowering message of the gospel translated into an educational practice serving (young) people's needs?

Looking closer on the translation challenge of Religious Education, it seems obvious that translations belong to all religious traditions in both the literal and figurative sense. Quite naturally, they assume that there are experiences documented in texts and traditions from bygone times and foreign cultures, which provide at all times and even today a 'life-bearing ground' (Lk 1:4) being worth to recall. If, however, every generation is necessarily confronted with the task of re-fathoming the meaning of what has been handed down on the basis of present experience, then the question arises as to the criteria by which these re-presenting translations work. What is the difference between good and bad translations; or in the sense of the caricature quoted above: who grants his licence to the religious interpreter, and based on what competences?

The translation problem touched upon by these questions is, theologically, without any doubt, as fundamental as it is boundless. At this point, we shall only mention one thought that the French philosopher Bruno Latour expressed in a remarkable essay on religious speech. Being neither a theologian nor an educator, he nevertheless tells something elementarily important about how translations should work in the context of the Christian tradition. For him, it is fundamental that religious translation should not be confused with information or explanation. In other words, whoever wants to transfer a tradition into the present day must not reduce it to a content of information that only needs to be packaged intelligibly. Neither should he or she try to explain the 'real' message theoretically, e.g. through historical knowledge or philosophical concepts. According to Latour, both ways do not achieve the desired goal. What religious translation is about instead, he shows with an example (Latour, 2013):

> Do a test: compile a list of everything said by the angels in the Bible, despite supposedly being tasked 'with conveying messages', and you'll learn next to nothing about anything. The information content of those thousands of injunctions remains close to zero – unless they're turned into clues guiding the erudite labours of linguists, archaeologists or specialists in angelology. This is because angels do not convey messages; they change those they address. (p. 32)

Imagine if the interpreter from the beginning was able to translate words that were merely informative or explanatory into words that changed the lives of those to whom they were addressed. The most important competence of the translator would then be to meet the demands of his present and of the people he or she is dealing with. A translation being good would then depend on whether it could reveal any real meaning for the present. Latour puts it like this: 'The original is not in the past but in the present, always in the present, the only asset we have' (p. 97).

It might be worthwhile to apply this thoroughly challenging idea to the theory and practice of Religious Education. Of course, such a Religious Education would still be about knowledge and skills, but they would need to be embedded into an integral approach that asks about the importance of all content for life. None other than Pope Francis (2013) has called it 'the greatest danger' of the proclamation to 'hold fast to a formulation while failing to convey its substance' (par. 41). And for him, this substance can only be translated into present by a community which 'gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; […] bridges distances, […] is willing to abase itself if necessary, and […] embraces human life' (par. 24). Where in numerous chapters of this volume such religious educational approaches are outlined which centre consequently on the basic concepts of identity and dialogue, encounter and understanding, the path into the future of a theory and practice of Religious Education has already been taken which in a real and literal sense deserves to be called 'Catholic'.

Mainz, Germany   Stefan Altmeyer
                                                                              Faculty of Catholic Theology
                                                                      Johannes Gutenberg-University

References

Altmeyer, S. (2011). *Fremdsprache Religion? Sprachempirische Studien im Kontext religiöser Bildung.* Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Latour, B. (2013). *Rejoicing. Or the torments of religious speech* (J. Rose, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Plaßmann, T. (2018). *Der Dolmetscher.* Retrieved September 24, 2018, http://archiv.thomasplassmann.de/Fromme-Bilder/dolmetscher.jpg.

Pope Francis. (2013). *Apostolic exhortation evangelii gaudium on the proclamation of the gospel in today's world.* Rome: Vatican Press.

Contents

Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Prof. Michael T. Buchanan is an Associate Professor in religious education at Australian Catholic University. He is a member of the La Salle Academy for Religious Education and lectures at postgraduate level in religious education curriculum development and in leadership in religious education. He has published widely in international scholarly journals and his book publications include; *Global Perspectives on Catholic Religious Education in Schools*, *Leadership and Religious Schools: International Perspectives and Challenges.* Michael is the immediate past editor of *Religious Education Journal of Australia.* He is a research fellow at York St John University, UK and an affiliate Associate Professor at the University of Malta.

Prof. Adrian-Mario Gellel is an Associate Professor in religious education at the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Theology, University of Malta. His main areas of interest are symbol literacy, children's spirituality, religious education and general pedagogy. Between 2006 and 2010, he was the national coordinator for religious education in schools for the Catholic Church. He led the consultation on the policy document Religious Education in Malta: Reflections by the Catholic Community (2009). Together with Prof. Michael Buchannan, he edited the first volume of the *Global Perspectives on Catholic Religious Education in Schools* (Springer, 2015) and convened the first conference on Catholic Religious Education (2018).

Contributors

Angelo Belmonte Faith Learning and Teaching Catholic Schools Office, Bathurst, NSW, Australia

Michael T. Buchanan Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Australia

Gareth Byrne Institute of Education, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland

Sandra Carroll Australian Catholic University, Sydney, Australia

Ann Casson Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury, UK

Francis Nai Kwok Chan Centre for Religious, Spiritual and Moral Education, Caritas Institute of Higher Education, Hong Kong, China

Roisín Coll University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland, UK

John Francis Collins Catholic Institute of Sydney, Strathfield, Australia

Hazel Crichton University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland

Sandra Cullen Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland

Nadia Delicata Faculty of Theology, University of Malta, Msida, Malta

Pauline Dimech Faculty of Theology/Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida, Malta

Maree Dinan-Thompson James Cook University, Cairns, Australia

Trevor Egli Johnson University-Tennessee, Knoxville, USA

Toke Elshof Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands

Max T. Engel Creighton University, Omaha, NE, USA

Paul Faller Catholic Institute of Education, Johannesburg, South Africa

Ana Thea Filipović Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

Toni Foley Catholic Education Services, Cairns, Australia

Claudia Gärtner TU Dortmund University, Dortmund, Germany

Adrian-Mario Gellel Faculty of Education/Faculty of Theology, University of Malta, Msida, Malta

Peta Goldburg RSM Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University, Brisbane, Australia

Jan Grajczonek The University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, WA, Australia

Thomas Groome Boston College, Newton, USA

Bernhard Grümme Ruhr-University Bochum, Bochum, Germany

Chris Hackett University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, Australia

David Hall La Salle Academy, Australian Catholic University, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Mary E. Hess Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, USA

Matt Hoven St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

Patricia Imbarack Dagach Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile

Anne-Marie Irwin University of Notre Dame, Sydney, Australia

Robert Jackson University of Warwick, Coventry, UK

Sérgio Rogério Azevedo Junqueira Institute of Research and Training Education and Religion (IPFER), Curitiba, PR, Brazil

Angela Kaupp University of Koblenz-Landau, Koblenz, Germany

Andrzej Kielian The Pontifical University of John Paul II, Kraków, Poland

Rebekka Krain WWU Münster University, Münster, Germany

Adrian Lacey Catholic Education Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

Imelda Pui-hing Lam Catholic Education Office, Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

Mary Lappin University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland

Terence Lovat University of Newcastle, Newcastle, Australia
University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

Shuet Yan Fion Luk Catholic Education Office, Hong Kong, China
Caritas Institute of Higher Education, Hong Kong, China

Emanuel P. Magro Archdiocese of Washington, Washington D.C., USA

Eugene P. McElhinney Loreto College Coleraine, Coleraine, Northern Ireland, UK

Stephen J. McKinney University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland, UK

Wing Kay Vion Ng Catholic Education Office, Hong Kong, China

Birutė Obelenienė Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Elżbieta Osewska State Higher Vocational School, Tarnów, Poland

Laura Otte TU Dortmund University, Dortmund, Germany

Stephen Reilly University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland, UK

Sergio Riquelme Muñoz Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile

Christine Robinson The University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, WA, Australia

Bert Roebben Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany

Richard Rymarz BBI-TAITE Sydney, Pennant Hills, NSW, Australia

Kieran Scott Fordham University, New York, USA

Paul Sharkey Catholic Education Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

John-Paul Sheridan Pontifical University of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Ireland

Linda Di Sipio St Columba's College, Essendon, VIC, Australia

Ros Stuart-Buttle Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, UK

William (Bill) Sultmann La Salle Academy, Australian Catholic University, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Bernadette Sweetman Institute of Education, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland

Chizurum Ann Ugbor Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy Congregation, Umuahia, Nigeria

Monique C. H. van Dijk-Groeneboer Faculty of Catholic Theology, Tilburg University, Tilburg, Netherlands

Ausra (sr. Gabriele OSB) Vasiliauskaite Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Edward Wright Faculty of Media and Communication, Bournemouth University, Poole, UK

Catholic Religious Education: Journeying On

Through the first volume of the Global Perspectives on Catholic Religious Education in Schools, we aimed to contribute to the building of a community of practice of scholars in the field. We hoped that together, we would embark on a journey seeking to further clarify the identity of Catholic Religious Education in schools, and through pedagogical discussion, explore means of being authentic to the Christian message. Furthermore, we wished the book to promote a process of dialogue both within the Catholic Community and especially outside the faith community (Gellel & Buchanan, 2015, p. 3). Four years on, these three objectives are still very much central to our goal. Through the response that we received from the community of religious education scholars and other interested parties, we were assured that the volume was responding to a real need felt by many. This spurred us on to embark a second volume of Catholic Religious Education in Schools.

Our invitation to scholars to contribute to a second volume was much greater than we had originally imagined, even though we were aware, that even if not formalised, Catholic scholars were already engaging a community of practice that fosters its own common language and that shares a fairly common theological basis. The call, inviting scholars, mainly Catholic, working in the field of religious education around the world to come together to reflect on Catholic Religious Education in schools, was purposely open and did not limit contributions to a specific focus. In this way, we wanted to encourage scholars to bring forward their projects, concerns and vision.

Just as in the first volume, the contributors came from all the continents. Sixty-four contributors hailing from 17 countries are presenting 52 papers that were all subjected a rigorous-double blind scholarly review process.

Going through the papers, we noted that the authors are grabbling with a limited number of overarching issues. For this reason, the chapters are organised around five different parts, namely, Theoretical Issues, Teacher Formation and Professional Development, Pedagogical and Content Issues, Inter-religious Issues and Contextual Issues. Nonetheless, the reader will note that many of the chapters could have easily been placed in another part. Indeed, the themes that the authors deal with overlap each other and the organisation into parts is only meant to help the

reader to structure one's experience of this volume. While in the first volume a considerable part of the book was dedicated to contextual issues, in this volume, we purposely made sure to give precedence to the other themes. Thus, while the author/s may be reflecting on a subject or problem from the point of view of a contextualised experience, we anticipate the reader may reflect on the issue in relation to similar topics explored in different contexts.

The part dealing with the theoretical foundations of the subject covers less than a quarter of all chapters in this volume. The reflections in this part stem from both theological and pedagogical considerations. A considerable amount of energy is devoted by the authors to reflect on the religious education—catechesis relationship. In this regard, we note that the Catholic Church hierarchy and scholars have consistently debated upon whether religious education in schools is distinct from, yet complementary to catechesis. This discourse has led to a lot of palaver and new policies, curricula and textbooks that at times seem to be in contradiction with the official position of the Holy See (see Congregation for Catholic Education, 2009). Whilst acknowledging the myriad local and national initiatives and the many studies to address the issues, there has not been a concerted effort to come together as a universal community. Almost 40 years have passed since the initial acknowledgement made by St. Pope John Paul II in 1981 about the distinction and complementarity between the two areas (Pope John Paul II 1981). Yet, in the meantime, societies have changed and so did the context and the world in which the younger generations live. No one can deny that religious education in schools occurs in a very peculiar context. Paradoxically, while being at the boarders of the faith community, with high proportions of its audience being non-practicing or non-believing, it is at the same time an activity that is very much at the centre of the evangelising mission of the Church. The tensions between positions at the extreme end of the spectrum of the debate are ironically represented by American scholars in the first three chapters of the book. Yet moving further on through the chapters, one notes that there is a will to overcome this impasse and to solidly ground the action of religious education in theology and/or the educational sciences.

Depending on the context in which they may be working, teachers are at the forefront of the Church's effort to offer either a religious education that is grounded in the Ministry of the Word, or in the Ministry of Diaconia or in both. The difference in recruitment procedures, as well as in the religious composition of the particular society, leads to variations in the religious identity of the religious education teacher as well as in the initial and ongoing formation. Once again, the differences are strikingly accentuated when one compares educational institutions in societies where Catholicism is a minority to contexts where Catholicism is rooted in a long tradition. Yet even in the latter case, there are complex issues stemming from pluralism, secularism and the ever decreasing number of religious and practicing lay faithful that need to be dealt with. Just as it is urgent to clarify the nature of religious education in schools, it is likewise crucial to define the role and stress the importance of the religious educator, maybe as a recognised minister of the Church.

However, as evidenced by the contributors, close to heart of Catholic Religious Education scholarship is the content and method employed in the subject. The two

dimensions are intimately tied to each other since the content chosen influences the method and the method is in itself part of the content shared. It is interesting to note how a number of contributors converged in a number of themes particularly on art and early childhood education.

In an age of globalisation very much marked by pluralism, this project wishes to stand out as a Catholic project, not so much because most of the contributors are Catholic but primarily because it endeavours to embrace universality and plurality. It intends to present a plurality of contexts, theological and pedagogical positions, as well as a will to include and to dialogue with non-Catholic Religious Education scholars. Reading through the contributions, it transpires that even though we live in a globalised society context still plays a pivotal role in shaping views, theologies and pedagogies. This becomes clear as one goes through the contributions from traditionally Christian societies that have become radically secular, or those stemming from a post-communist era society, or those coming from societies where Christianity and Catholicism, in particular, have a fairly recent history and where it is experienced as a minority reality. Indeed, regarding the latter, the contributions coming from South Africa and China are true eye-openers because they depict a reality that is not only marginal within the society in which they are situated but also at the fringes of the predominant Western-centric discourse on the Church. Yet, the power of Western theological discourse is such that it does not provide enough space for the development and strengthening of local, contextualised thought. In an age where all post Second Vatican popes have emphasised the central role of evangelisation in the life of the Church and who, from St. John Paul II onwards, have constantly reminded the Church on the necessity to embark on a new evangelisation project, it appears imperative that the communities in the Asian, African and Latin American contexts be empowered to develop their own theological and pedagogical discourse. The will to come together and to journey together is, or at least should be, a means whereby one appreciates how the rays of truth (see Second Vatican Council Nostrae Ateate, 1965) are also present in other cultures, not only in their knowledge and experiences but also and especially in their method of reasoning. Thus, it is heartening to witness attempts by some scholars and in particular early career to dialogue and to make use of the wisdom present in their world.

This diversity is further enriched through the plurality of pedagogical and theological stances that the contributors take. Catholicism is not a monolithic reality. This is also clearly reflected in this volume where the reader may encounter a wide spectrum of positions that may at times lead to tensions. Thus while some advocate for a rigid separation between religious education and catechesis, others advocate for a more faith-based approach. Likewise, the stances taken towards other religions or other Christian Churches vary from teaching about to an inter-religious approach within Catholic religious education to a total pluralist approach.

We offer this scholarly collection at a time when the Catholic community appears to be passing through a dark hour. This darkness is sensed especially through the scars and sorrow that sins against children and the most vulnerable have left, as well as the ever-growing divide between those holding fast to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and those who fear that Church doctrine is being

relaxed or changed. To be fair, this is not the first time that the Church is experiencing a crisis. Even a scant knowledge of history is sufficient to demonstrate that during various moments the Church passed through innumerable dark hours.

Darkness arises from the fragile nature of humanity. As a Church, we are continuously required to struggle against individual and collective demons. As scholars, one way of doing this is to come together on the way in an attitude open to the Holy Spirit and therefore in dialogue amongst ourselves, with our colleagues adhering to other traditions and with the wider Church.

<div align="right">
Adrian-Mario Gellel
Michael T. Buchanan
</div>

References

Congregation of Catholic Education. (2009). *Circular letter to the presidents' of Bishop's conferences on religious education in school*s. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20090505_circ-insegn-relig_en.html.

Gellel, A. M., & Buchanan, M. T. (2015). Contextualising the catholic religious education project. In M. T. Buchanan & A. M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 1–4). Switzerland: Springer.

Pope John Paul II. (1981). *Discorso del Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II ai sacerdoti della Diocesi di Roma*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1981/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19810305_sacerdoti-diocesi-roma_it.html.

Second Vatican Council. (1965, October 28). *Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions nostra aetate*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.

Part I
Theoretical Issues

Chapter 1
The Teacher of Religion: Choosing Between Professions in Catholic Schools

Check for updates

Kieran Scott

Introduction

When Catholic schools hire teachers of religion, it is sometimes the case that the hirer and the hired may not be on the same page. Both may be under false assumptions with regard to the nature of the work. Teaching religion in Catholic schools across the globe does not have a well-defined existence. But, at the same time, it is one of the schools most urgent needs. Teaching religion takes place in many Catholic colleges and secondary schools. It can also be found, to a lesser degree, in some of the better parishes. Primary school instruction in religion receives the most curricular attention and resources. However, in each of these settings, it is not always clear what linguistic games are being played here (Scott, 2015). Consequently, it is vulnerable to interference by outside authorities. Teachers of religion, especially with tenure, in church-related universities have some protection. Teachers in Catholic primary and secondary schools have little or none. And a teacher offering an academic course in a parish is liable to be misunderstood or reported to the chancery. The irony seems to be: the better the teacher of religion does his/her work the more inevitable is the conflict. But what is the nature and purpose of this work?

This paper seeks to continue the ongoing conversations on the elusive identity, nature and purpose of teaching religion in Catholic schools (Buchanan & Gellel, 2015). The angle of vision I wish to propose is under the frame of profession and professionalisation. In particular, I wish to pursue the question: What profession does the teacher of religion belong to? What profession do they or should they identify with? The teacher of religion in Catholic schools faces two professions: the profession of church ministry and the profession of the modern school system in education. The paper advocates a clear distinction between the two professions and their subsequent relatedness within the total school context. Each profession

K. Scott (✉)
Fordham University, New York, USA
e-mail: kieranscott@yahoo.com

brings with it its own set of assumptions, presuppositions, purposes and domains of authority. The distinction may seem a fine line and may overlap at times. But for the teacher of religion, freedom to the do his/her work, with professional integrity, without outside dictation, is the heart of the matter. Globally, of course, the context will differ but the professional and pedagogical principles and assumptions will be constant irrespective of the context.

The paper is divided into three main parts. First, the concept, character and crisis in the contemporary professions are explored, along with the ambiguity of modern professionalisation. Second, the two professions: (a) the profession of church ministry and (b) the profession of school teaching are unveiled with their respective forms, pedagogical processes and purposes. Third, the teacher of religion is directed towards the profession of the modern school system in education. The paper concludes by envisioning the interplay and integration of both professions at the centre of each Catholic school.

It may be helpful, and necessary, however, to first state a principle that governs my comprehensive meaning of religious education. Religious education has two chief aims or goals: (1) education as formation in the practice of a group's religious way of life, so that one can live by the richest resources of that tradition; and (2) education as the academic study, understanding and teaching of ones' own religion, and, to whatever degree possible, the religious life of other people (Harris & Moran, 1998). Religious education, in its two different forms, attends to both sides of this enterprise and their mutual interaction. Both aims and meanings function globally (for example, in the U.S. and U.K.), and can be integrated under the canopy of Catholic schooling. The above principle, the paper advocates, can be particularised in two professional forms: church ministry embodies the first, and the profession of modern schools in education concretizes the second. The major focus, however, of this paper is on the second.

The Concept, Character and Crisis in the Contemporary Professions

To raise the question, what profession does/should the teacher of religion belong to? is not to simply quibble over terms. It has significant practical importance. At stake is how one perceives the very nature and purpose of one's work. Also, freedom to do one's work in a way that seems best is a major concern. However, the very idea of profession/professional is tossed around and has such currency in everyday speech today as if it were an obvious reality. This, in fact, may not be the case. The idea of profession and professionalisation needs close examination—and how they correlate with Catholic schooling. A brief historical perspective on the concept of profession may be the appropriate place to begin.

Premodern Meaning

Profession has its roots in the mediaeval Catholic religious order. An early meaning was identified with taking vows of consecration made by entering a religious order. The novice "professed" a new way of life, made a pledge to uphold ultimate values and dedicated his/her life to communal service. The term profession, William Sullivan writes,

> … derives from the act of commitment, the declaration to enter on a distinct way of life … It was, at least in theory, a response to the belief that one had received a call, not an action imposed by economic or other necessity. Profession entailed a commitment to embody the virtues needed to realize the community's highest purpose. (Sullivan, 1995, p. 12)

These ideals were assumed and identified with the first three professions of divinity, law and medicine. The claim to special knowledge was not self-serving. It was a grace to be shared. In its premodern form, the professional lived in the community and served it on a permanent basis. He or she was willing to sacrifice money because the work was so meaningful and valuable in and of itself—it was vocational. This was the ideal—even if it was sometimes violated in practice.

Modern Meaning

In the modern era, profession almost reversed its meaning. What emerged was a secularised notion of profession. The modern change in meaning occurred over a period of centuries. In the nineteenth century, a vast expansion of professions took place. At the same time, there was a narrowing of areas of specialisation. In the United States, by the twentieth century, the concept of professional had been thoroughly democratised. This has become tied to the effort of many persons and groups to secure prestige, power and status. It is also linked to their desire to separate themselves from the "unprofessional"—commonly identified with the incompetent, the volunteer and the amateur. The modern meaning is now based on possession of esoteric knowledge, skills and techniques. The expert knowledge and skills give the modern professional protected status from outside intrusion by the community.

The professional services now offered by the lawyer, physician and ordained minister are being overshadowed by the demands of "making a living" in a postindustrial society. Consumerist culture is causing increased frustration, pressure and identity crisis. The situation is a paradox: nearly everyone wants to be a professional today (Wilensky, 1964), yet many of the established professions are criticised for their severe self-serving shortcomings. This model is now in crisis.

The modern professional, William May writes,

> sites on a somewhat wobbly throne. On the one hand, professionals wield an enormous power. We might number them among the members of the ruling class … Yet, while they often enjoy vast privileges of a ruling class, they feel beleaguered. (May, 2001, pp. 1–4)

He describes the modern professional, often under siege, marginalised, insufficiently appreciated and suspect. Malpractice suits, inflated lawyer fees and clerical abuse are symptoms of the problem. The problem, however, is not simply the individual failure of certain professionals. The fundamental problem is the structure of a culture of professionalisation. This has created a professional class—elite, hierarchical, acquisitive and individualistic. It has widened the split between social classes in healthcare facilities, lawyers' offices, churches and educational settings. A class bias is deeply rooted in the professions.

Postmodern Meaning

Doctors, lawyers, ordained ministers and school teachers are experiencing a breakdown in the modern meaning of professional. Yet, becoming a professional remains highly desirable. Why? Because the opposite is unskilled, incompetent, amateur, lay. The way out of the quagmire can and must be to create a new postmodern meaning of professional. Part of the answer lies in recovering the earlier meaning of professional and integrating it with the contemporary meaning. We need professionals who are professional in both the mediaeval and modern sense. This synthesis reclaims the positive meaning of professional (devotion) and resists the negative meaning of professionalism (class bias). This is not nostalgic longing for a premodern world or yielding to modern secularism. A new meaning of professional must be a synthesis of moral/religious ideals and competence. The professional in the postmodern era will have to relearn something about (religious) vocation directed towards the community and (practical) on the job apprenticeship (Kammer, 1981).

Contemporary institutional forms of life are in critical need of this synthesis. Catholic schools, in particular, could house and embody this integration as exemplified in the two professions, church ministry and school teaching. Catholic Church educators have something to learn from modern professionals. However, they have also something to teach them. The teacher of religion, who works at the intersection of church and education, is particularly suitable to demonstrate a postmodern meaning of professional. He or she can resist a culture of professionalism, recover the religious meaning rooted in the Christian tradition, and play a unique competent academic role in the school community.

The Two Professions: Church Ministry and School Teaching in Education

Sociologists paint a portrait of characteristics that distinguish the contemporary professions from non-professions. The list can run into double figures but chief among them are the following:

First, a profession is founded upon a fund of (technical) knowledge that is organised into a systematic body of theory. This constitutes the knowledge base of the profession. The profession applies its intellectual understanding to the vital everyday affairs of life. Public legitimacy and authority is maintained by its claim to this special knowledge and training. The university, college or seminary are locations for this specialised training.

Second, a profession is institutionalised. One is a member of a profession. It is a mark of one's personal and social identity. The community sanctions the authority of the professional and confers upon him/her a series of powers and privileges. Among the professional privileges are authorising of work in their specialised area, relative freedom from outside evaluation, judgment only by one's own peers and the honouring of confidentiality.

The third mark of a profession is its service orientation. Service to persons and communities is intrinsic to professions as professions. They exist to do good and to serve the common good. This devotion to public service is the pivot around which the moral claim to professional status revolves. Every profession attempts to protect this claim by a built-in regulative code of ethics.

Church ministry and school teaching may not be numbered today among the most high-powered and prestigious professions but they do meet the criteria noted above. The first is among the most ancient professions, the latter is a product of modernity. Both professions can be housed in Catholic schools. Each has its own domain of teaching authority. No conflict need exist between them. At times, their content may even overlap but their method or approach to that content differs. However, a premature unity could blur all differences. In a Catholic school, the distinction may seem a fine line. But it is a vital one to honour the distinction between different autonomous realms of authority.

The Profession of Church Ministry

It is important for Roman Catholics to keep in mind that the word ministry has almost no currency in American English language outside of Protestant and Catholic Church circles. The case is different for English spoken in Britain. Ministry in the United Kingdom has political and educational significance. For example, the British have a Prime Minister and a Minister of Education. The language of ministry, however, has acquired ascendency since Vatican II in Roman Catholic circles. Many, if not most, Catholic efforts have crystallised around the term.

Ministry is an ecclesial reality, the work of the church community. This work is constituted by a set of practices: preaching, instruction, worship, social outreach, pastoral care and administration. These set of practices have been continuous throughout the tradition, and, at the same time, adaptive to the historical and cultural conditions of time and place. Ministry is pluriform and multiform. Historically, there are two overarching components: the priestly and prophetic. Priestly and prophetic ministry

are roles and functions to perform. They should not be associated with any class or the prerogative of any person.

The priestly role is expressed by specific practices within priestly ministry, namely, catechetical instruction, ritual remembering and formation of community. Prophetic ministry is the needed corrective balance to priestly ministry. It is the work of critically challenging, calling into account, speaking the disruptive word, confronting, condemning personal and structural evil and embodying them in works of outreach and service.

Church ministry, then, is one of the oldest professions. Its *raison d'être* is to pass on the tradition. It does so in multiple forms and in a plurality of practices. The set of practices are directed towards formation, nurture, maturation and deepening affiliation with the tradition. In sum, they honour one side of religious education noted above, namely, teaching people to practice a religious way of life, so that one can live by the richest resources of the tradition. The profession is a church profession. Credentials, if any, are supplied by a church body, and ministers function under the auspices of church authorities.

How does this correlate with Catholic schooling? Catholic schools are capable of housing an ecology of church ministries. Prominent among them are campus ministry, liturgical ministry, social service ministry, ministry of counselling and social care, and the director of ministries/administration. Magisterial and national episcopal documents regularly assume that the teacher of religion, at any and every level, functions in the capacity as a church minister. However, when the teacher of religion walks into the classroom of the Catholic school, he or she does not fit comfortably within the school's ecology of church ministries. An exploration of school teaching shows why this is the case.

The Profession of School Teaching in Education

Schools are highly complex forms of life. Add to that religious sponsorship and affiliation and the complexity only heightens. Schools are a significant part of modern society and one of its indispensable educational forms. It may be helpful to distinguish schooling as a form of learning (a verb) from school as a place (a noun) where learning is housed and finds multiple forms and expressions.

However, the uniqueness of the school in modern society is centred on the classroom in the school. This educational space connotes the acquisition of academic learning. Its function is to structure and design experiences on a knowledge basis. The kind of educational experience will vary depending upon the age and background of the learner. It is a kind of learning where conceptual linguistic learning is systematically addressed. It is mainly concerned with the past, making "the funded capital of civilization" (Dewey, 1972, p. 19) accessible to students in the present. As a form of learning, it is distancing of oneself from daily routine. It is intentionally setting aside time, space and materials for a dispassionate examination of our cultural traditions.

Schools, however, play an ambiguous role in the life of a community. They socialise the young into the community and maintain its traditions. On the other hand, they teach literary tools that cultivate doubts about the tradition. In some ways, schools are almost self-contradictory. The classroom teacher's task is to explore the meaning of what is written in the past and to help students articulate their own convictions. The role of classroom teaching–learning is mainly to be critical, to probe, to raise questions about whether what is assumed to be true really is the case. In this way, students discover multiple readings and meanings of texts, history, politics and religion.

Contemporary classroom teachers fit the modern concept of profession of the modern school system. His or her affiliation is with the modern profession of education. They look to parts of education for professional models, guidance, support, knowledge and domain of authority. Credentials are supplied by the university which certifies a specialised knowledge of education. The profession offers freedom of action, the capacity to engage in his or her pedagogical work in a zone of free inquiry. The marks of the modern classroom professional are independence, critical inquiry and wider vision. However, as school teachers know, the organisational setting of the school, more often than not, is bureaucratic in the classic Weberian sense. Nonetheless, Leggatt writes, the professional teacher

> has his own free and independent zone of decision making in the privacy of the classroom. It is precisely this very real autonomy that makes bearable for the teacher employment in a bureaucracy. The content of his teaching is his to determine, however defined the curriculum. (1970, p. 175)

The project, then, is a product of modernity. The classroom offers space for public discourse on the key issues of our times. It enables us to examine things from the outside.

The classroom teacher in school, in sum, is part of the great, secular, public work of education. Its supposition is that we can re-see things and the world anew with new eyes. The teacher of religion in the school classroom is invited to join in this modern professional endeavour.

The Teacher of Religion

Religious education, in the U.S. and some other parts of the world (e.g. Scotland), is often closely allied with one form of church ministry, namely, catechesis. Catechesis aims to instruct, form and deepen people in a Roman Catholic way of life. The Catholic Church has the right to claim that catechesis is a clear example of educational ministry. It resides on one side of religious education. Nevertheless, if religious education is to fulfil its twofold task (as noted above), its second aim, namely, the academic study, understanding and teaching of religion are needed. This educational work and aim is distinct from what churches call ministry. This form of education involves having people look at church matters from perspectives within and without

the Church. The content of these two sides may overlap at times but the methodology or approach to the content differs—to the point of being nearly opposite. There has been a strong tendency in Catholic circles, since the ascendency of the language of catechesis, to cover over the inherent tension between these two sides with the word ministry. A ministerial lens has become a near totalising hermeneutic of church life. A premature unity, however, that blurs all differences is a serious misunderstanding of their divergent educational purposes. The teacher of religion in the U.S. has to resist being absorbed too easily into the profession offering its embrace, namely, church ministry.

Discussion of the Church, with its vast array of schools, can be confusing today as Catholics navigate between two language systems. There is their first language of faith. This ministerial language, with its mix of theological content, theories and sacramental practices, views the Church from the inside. As valuable, and as necessary, as this language is, it can have the effect of blocking out questions that may be obvious to an outside view—or even an observant insider. On the other hand, the Church and its school system need to make itself receptive to being viewed from the outside. This can open up a different angle of vision, a more inclusive hermeneutic, and allow it to move beyond an enclosed particularity. This is precisely where the teacher of religion can play an indispensable role. He or she is caught between two worlds. He or she is working at the intersection of church and education. The process can be fraught with friction. But it is fertile ground where the sacred and secular can have a creative dialectical relation. The current classroom of the school, whether government sponsored or religious affiliated, is uniquely suitable for this interplay. It is one of the products of modernity and one of "The Blessings of Secularity" (Hull, 2003, pp. 51–58). Harold Horell notes,

> Moreover, because of the secularization of society public spaces were created for discussing social issues in which people stepped back from their specific life perspectives, including their faith commitments, in order to ensure that civil discourse was not plagued by destructive conflicts. (2014, p. 434)

The classroom of the modern school is one such distinctive space for stepping back from life perspectives and commitments to intellectually and freely examine them. It is designed to respect the integrity of the secular. Here religion and the secular are not opposed. In terms of teaching religion, Robert Johnson writes,

> I take the view that schools should be 'secular' in the same sense that the Indian Constitution is secular. That is, it should adhere to the principle of freedom of religion or belief; be methodologically impartial in relation to the truth claims of religion; and inclusive, allowing students to learn about religious diversity and to express their own values in a civil way. (2017, pp. 323–324)

These principles, I believe, ought to apply in government-sponsored and religiously affiliated schools alike. We can say, then, the classroom of the school and the process of schooling was invented for stepping back to explore, understand and examine the meaningfulness of religion.

Religion in the classroom of a Catholic school is the name of a school subject. Like any other subject in the curriculum, it is to be explored and examined with the standard

academic tools of scholarship applied to any school subject. The content, however, may have closer proximity to the students' lives than other subject matter. The teacher examines religion, in this case Catholicism, from both inside and outside. Usually, but not always, it is the teacher's and student's own religion. The aim of teaching and learning is to understand the religious elements of the Catholic Church. These could include, for example, Catholic moral teaching and its relation to contemporary science, its doctrines and their philosophical assumptions, its social teachings and their relation to contemporary government policies, its governance structure and its relation to a democratic polity, its history with its saintliness and sinfulness, its sacramental and spiritual practices and their rootedness, or lack thereof, in the secular lives of its people, the church's interpretation of divine revelation and its relation to other revelatory claims. The teacher's responsibility is to deal with this curricular content in an age-appropriate manner at the appropriate class level. It should be taught with fairness, accuracy and lack of arbitrariness. The responsibility of students is to do their homework and bring some kind of formed knowledge to the arena. The arena is a free academic space for dialectical discourse and academic criticism. In this free zone, the student affirms what makes sense in their lives and/or critiques what does not. Correct believing (orthodoxy) and incorrect believing (heresy) are terms not applicable in this setting. A classroom in a school is a distinct academic arena with definite boundaries within which no questions are forbidden and no opinions are heretical. The focus of so much religious instruction in the elementary school years lacks any clear intellectual logic or sense of educational readiness. The capacity to understand religion takes many years to develop. It is during the late high school and college years that students can more maturely begin to exercise critical judgement about one's own religion and place it in relation to the religious life of others.

The purpose of the teaching and study of the Catholic religion in Catholic schools, then, is not to produce committed believers, church membership or make good Catholics. In the long run, however, this may in fact be the outcome. But, in the meantime, religious beliefs must go through the hard route of academic scrutiny and a degree of understanding. A person needs, at times, to have an imagined distance from his or her religion to appreciate it more fully. Can he or she step back from immediate involvement and try to understand? This is not a cold antiseptic phenomenological study of the Catholic religion. The content must be intelligible, interesting and relevant to the lives of the students. Grimmitt's (1987) formula is suggestive here: learning about religion and learning from religion. In the first case, the student evaluates objectivity the inner logic and meaning of the Catholic religion. In the latter case, the student evaluates subjectively the persuasiveness and meaningfulness of the Catholic religion in his or her life. These two are in psychological tension in the classroom of the school. The pedagogical key is how to relate them. The teaching of religion, John Hull asserts, "is not only committed to the critical examination of religion; it also presents religion and religions as offering a critique of social and personal values. It combines the critique of religion with religion as critique" (2003, p. 57). In this manner, it can contribute to the raising up of an articulate and critical public and solidify the basis for a democratic way of life (Dewey, 1966 [1916]). It is a critical part of civic education today. But the student will have to

find the link between (inner) understanding and (external) activity for him or herself. So, in the religion class, the practice of the religion is the concern of the student alone, not the teacher or anyone else. When intramural language and terms such as catechesis, faith formation and evangelization are used to refer to the Catholic school classroom, they can distort the possibilities and limitations of academic instruction. The classroom is the main place that exists for engaging in the difficult but important work of understanding religion. Inextricably linked to this process is placing the Catholic religion in relation to the religious life of others and the secular world. The choice today is between mutual understanding and serious religious and secular conflict. The teacher of religion in his or her work is professionally devoted to the urgent work of the former.

The teacher of religion, then, ought to be judged by academic standards, not ecclesiastical orthodoxy. They ought to be judged for their competence on the same basis as any other teacher. The elementary and secondary school teacher of religion in religiously affiliated schools, however, is often assumed that he or she must teach as a believer. No such assumption is presumed and applicable to the university professor of religion. The same standards or criteria ought to apply to all (Schweitzer, 2002). Primary and secondary school teachers of religion, in particular, need the same protection that university professors have. They should be allowed to do their work without outside interference. Could such teaching be a catalyst for doubt in the minds of students? Could it be a threat to current doctrinal and moral orthodoxy? Yes, undoubtedly, a certain tension is expected. But, for the health of the school, as a school, and the credibility and legitimacy of the larger church, as it encounters the secular world and the world of religious plurality, intellectual exploration of the Catholic religion is indispensable. Attempts to shut it down or avoid it will only lead the intellectually curious to drift away from the church and become disaffiliated (Hornbeck, 2011).

The teacher of religion in a Catholic school, then, is not a church ministerial office. It is a profession of school teaching free from many of the limitations of ecclesiastical structures. People sometimes do participate in two professions (military chaplain, medical lawyer, pastoral counsellor). However, they have a primary allegiance to one profession. This primary allegiance is not always apparent in teachers of religion. This is not the case in England and Wales. In the U.K., teachers of religion in government schools tend to identify with school teaching. They are members of the teaching profession. Hull (2003) writes, in affirmation,

> we are dealing with a secular branch of education study, secular in the sense that the process is not under the control of the church or of any religious community, except in so far as the communities provide resources, and guarantee authenticity, and secular in the sense that the objectives of the teaching are concerned with the general human and educational progress of the child. (p. 55)

Hull notes,

> It is this secularity… which sets the subject free from ecclesiastical assumptions, free from partisan and proselytizing suspicions, and presents Religious Education as a legitimate heir of the European enlightenment, being each critical of religion and yet offering a continuing dialogue with it. (p. 56)

In this frame, then, teaching religion is an academic discipline within the sphere of educational studies. It is not a branch of theology, pastoral or practical. In certain parts of the world, religious educators are situated within faculties and departments of theology. Some contemporary theorists conceptualise the work within the frame of practical theology. In this frame, inevitably, theology becomes the master or coloniser and the enterprise frequently becomes subject to the norms and expectations of church authorities. Theology can contribute some valuable content to the teaching of religion in the classroom of Catholic schools. However, it is not inclusive of all kinds of religious phenomena. A vast treasure of religious material and experience lies beyond the realm of theology, and the methods, pedagogical processes and structured designs emerge from the modern meaning and practices of education. When theological content is placed in the classroom of the (Catholic or government) school, it becomes religion, a school subject—freed from the presupposition of theology. It is an educational approach to (the Catholic) religion. And the teacher of religion is aligned with the profession of education. Teachers of religion in Catholic schools need to be self-reflective of the motivation and purpose of their work. They must choose the profession with which they are primarily associated. They can learn and find some clarification in the U.K. model. Of course, the reverse is also true. The U.K. model, and some of its European derivatives, can learn and discover the other side of religious education, operative in the churches, mosques and synagogues in the U.S. and elsewhere, where their identity and work is a form of ministry.

For the Catholic school as a whole, however, there need not be a choice between one or the other profession. The Catholic school can house both the profession of church ministry and the profession of school teaching. As noted in this essay, each profession brings its own distinctive vision, competences, processes and aims to the house that is the school. The two professions can maintain their sameness and difference, that is, their uniqueness, in creative tension with each other. This integration can demonstrate a postmodern form of professionalisation at the centre of Catholic schools. I don't know any greater rationale for the existence of Catholic schools today, namely, to be ancient and modern simultaneously.

References

Buchanan, M. T., & Gellel, A.-M. (Eds.). (2015). *Global perspectives in Catholic religious education in schools*. Dordrecht, Netherlands/New York: Springer.

Dewey, J. (1966). *Democracy and education* (Free Press Edition). New York: Macmillan (First published 1916).

Dewey, J. (1972). My pedagogic creed. In *Dewey on education. Selections with an introduction and notes by Martin Dworkin* (pp. 19–32). New York: Teachers College Press.

Grimmitt, M. (1987). *Religious education and human development*. Great Wakering, England: McCrimmon.

Harris, M., & Moran, G. (1998). *Reshaping religious education*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Horell, H. (2014). On learning to see the world religiously: Moral awareness, faith, and public moral discourse. *Religious Education, 109*(4), 424–439.

Hornbeck, J. P. (2011). Deconversion from Roman Catholicism: Mapping a fertile field. *American Catholic Studies, 122*(2), 1–29.

Hull, J. (2003). The blessings of secularity: Religious education in England and Wales. *Journal of Religious Education, 51*(3), 51–58.

Johnson, R. (2017). Learning in encounter: Crossroads, connections, collaboration—A personal story. *Religious Education, 112*(4), 323–328.

Kammer, C. (1981). Vocation and the professions. In T. W. Ogletree (Ed.), *The annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (pp. 153–183). Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University.

Leggatt, T. (1970). Teaching as a profession. In J. A. Jackson (Ed.), *Professions and professionalization* (pp. 155–177). London: Cambridge University Press.

May, W. (2001). *Beleaguered rulers: The public obligation of the professional*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Schweitzer, F. (2002). International standards for religious education—In conversation with John M. Hull. *Panorama, 14*(1), 49–56.

Scott, K. (2015). Problem or paradox: Teaching the Catholic religion in Catholic schools. In M. T. Buchanan & A.-M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives in Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 47–60). Dordrecht, Netherlands/New York: Springer.

Sullivan, W. (1995). *Work and integrity: The crisis and promise of professionalism*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Wilensky, H. (1964). The professionalization of everyone? *American Journal of Sociology, 70*(2), 137–158.

Prof Kieran Scott is an Associate Professor in Religious Education at the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University, New York. He holds a doctorate in religion and education from Columbia University, New York. He has lectured widely in the United States and Europe, and has served two terms on the Board of Directors of the Religious Education Association. His research interests and expertise are in philosophies of religious education, curriculum theory and adult faith formation. His recent publications have focused on parish religious education, the tragic aspect of teaching and teaching religion in schools.

Chapter 2
Catholic Religious Education: Educating for Faith

Thomas Groome

Introduction: Educating for Faith as Common Ground

The central proposal of this essay is that all Catholic Religious Education (CRE) is to educate for faith. At a minimum this means educating for a Transcendent take on life, encouraging students to reach into an ultimate horizon in order to make sense, find purpose and experience grace. Such a Transcendent perspective is in contrast to a purely immanent view, as if there is no more to life than what we make of it and by our own efforts alone.

Our fundamental options now come down to two such paradigmatic stances towards life in the world. One proposes that human authenticity is forged within a purely immanent frame of exclusive (of the Transcendent) humanism and pursued by buffered selves, as if by and for oneself alone. The other is a Transcendent frame whereby we are conscious of, relate to, and live into an ultimate realm of fullness, achieved with and for others as well as for oneself, and empowered by God's effective love at work in our lives—grace (Taylor, 2007). Surely all CRE must propose and encourage in students a Transcendent perspective on life—must educate for faith.

Catholic religious education is realised in a great variety of schooling contexts, from ones managed by the Church and funded by tuition to schools sponsored by governments and receiving public funding. Likewise, the student population of Catholic schools is increasingly diverse. A significant number now come from families that are culturally Catholic but lacking in practice, and yet desire a Catholic education for their children. Add, too, the growing percentage from backgrounds of other or no religious tradition (now at 20% in US Catholic schools). To proselytise non-Catholic students to Catholic faith would be highly inappropriate.

Yet, even with such diversity, every expression of CRE is to educate for faith, to encourage all students to embrace a Transcendent take on life. Catholicism should

T. Groome (✉)
Boston College, Newton, USA
e-mail: groomet@bc.edu

be the preferential option of the religious education curriculum in a Catholic school, teaching other traditions as appropriate to age and context and in conversation with Catholic faith. Curriculum wise, this requires teaching about Catholic faith in ways that encourage all participants to learn from its spiritual wisdom for their lives, and to dispose Catholic students to learn into their own faith identity (Grimmit, 1987; Lane, 2013).

The proposal that all CRE is to educate for faith might be situated historically within the tired debate between catechesis and religious education. There are proponents still who separate these two, even posing a conflict of interests between them. The proposal here, however, poses catechesis and CRE as faith-education on a shared continuum rather than categorically separated enterprises. So there is need for catechesis whose explicit purpose is to inform and form in Christian identity; for example, this is the intent of school-based sacramental preparation with younger children. Likewise, religious education can have as a priority the scholarly study of Catholic and then other faiths; this will be primary in upper grades. However, there is a great deficiency in catechesis that is not grounded in the best of theology, and likewise in religious education that does not resource the being of students to become people of faith. That all CRE is to educate for faith can be the common ground that embraces catechesis and religious education as points on a shared continuum.

CRE Embedded in Catholic Intellectual Tradition

There was a tension in the early Church as to whether to educate for Gospel faith alone or also to engage in general education. The great commission that the Risen Christ gave to the community of disciples on a hillside in Galilee (Mt 28:18–20) directed them to both make disciples and to teach. But should the latter include reading, writing and arithmetic, to conduct general education as a context for educating-in-faith?

Tertullian (160–240), for example, argued that "Jerusalem" (i.e. the Gospel) has no need of "Athens" (secular learning), likening a partnership between "the academy and the Church" as a dangerous bonding "heretics and Christians" (Tertullian, 1994). Wiser voices prevailed, however, insisting that general education is an aspect of God's saving work in Jesus Christ. Clement of Alexandria (150–215) well argued that "Christ the educator" taught "body, mind, and soul", was committed to both education and formation, and the Church should do likewise (Clement of Alexandria, 1885).

Thereafter, the Church forged a Christian paideia, uniting formation and education, teaching the secular subjects as ladders to reach the sky of Gospel faith (attributed to Origen). Great church-sponsored schools emerged in Alexandria, Rome, Antioch and other cities. This Christian paideia was augmented with the

emergence of Benedictine and Celtic monastic schools in the sixth century, continued on into the great cathedral schools of the ninth century and after, and led to the foundation of the universities, beginning in the eleventh century. All of the first great universities (Bologna, Salamanca, Oxford, Paris) were established by papal charter and staffed by the emerging religious orders.

A defining aspect of this Catholic education was a both/and epistemology. So it promoted a partnership between God and the person, between faith and reason, revelation and science, wisdom and knowledge, formation and education, tradition and experimentation, hearts' desire and critical thinking, or, in sum, it honoured both Transcendent and immanent perspectives. The intended learning outcome of this Catholic intellectual tradition (CIT) was the integration of life and faith into living faith (Imbelli, 2013).

Those CIT partnerships prevailed unchallenged until the time of the Reformation. Luther recognised that for his reform movement to succeed would require taking general education out of the hands of the Church and into the hands of the governing princes instead (Luther, 1960). His request of 1520 to the German nobles marked the beginning in the West of what is commonly called public education. Though Luther never intended as much, the defining characteristic for education to be public was that it takes God, faith, revelation, spirituality, etc. out of its curriculum.

The "Enlightenment" era that followed made the de-faithing of education an explicit agenda, beginning with the universities and trickling down eventually into all public schooling. It erased the both/and partnerships of the CIT, declining the first and favouring only the latter. So the Enlightenment took God out of the curriculum, focusing exclusively on the person; likewise schools set faith aside to favour reason alone, science was to flourish without the perceived limits of tradition and revelation, knowledge and information was favoured to the neglect of spiritual wisdom and formation, empirical research and the mind were preferred over experiential and emotive ways of knowing.

By contrast and when faithful to its faith foundations, the CIT resisted the Enlightenment's impoverished epistemology and its de-ontologising of education—as if it is not to shape the "being" of people. It continued to insist on both/and ways of knowing, seeing the partnerships of faith and reason, revelation and science, etc. as mutually enhancing rather than limiting, and essential for education to be humanising and salvific to people's lives.

It would be most unfortunate for Catholic Religious Educators to abandon this rich CIT heritage. Regardless of its social or schooling context, all CRE must educate from and for faith, teaching about our own and other religious traditions in ways that encourage people to learn from them and, if they so choose, learn into them. To do less is to settle for the impoverished epistemology and the de-ontologising of education that began with the Enlightenment, prompting us to teach about religious traditions much as one might teach science, math, etc.

Signs of Hope for a New Day

The Enlightenment movement led on into the modern era, with exclusive emphasis on critical thinking and empirical data, and separating theoretical from practical reason, all inspired by Kant's battle cry of dare to think—for and by oneself alone. Modernity is biased against both common sense knowing from daily life and the wisdom of tradition, especially of religious traditions—as Gadamer well argued (Gadamer, 1975). Modernity's critical reasoning is inimical to any sense of an enchanted world (Weber, 1963), discounting people's experience of the Creator in the created order, of the ultimate in the ordinary.

Though modernity also has its assets for CRE (more below), its negativity towards religious faith spawned the secularisation (Taylor, 2007) and detraditionalisation (Boeve, 2007) that now marks our age, at least in Western cultures. Its influence has been pervasive and unchallenged—until recently. Now there are growing signs of disenchantment with modernity's purely immanent frame and its exclusive humanism. As Taylor argues, these encourage malaise and "a terrible flatness in the everyday" (Taylor, 2007, pp. 299–309). Increasingly, it seems, postmodern people are reconsidering a Transcendent take on life as far more life-giving than a purely immanent one.

Following on, the modernist assumption was that education would "subtract" faith out of people's lives, recognised simply as an old superstition. But some 85% of people throughout the world still claim to be people of faith, with many of the rest claiming to be spiritual but not religious. In contrast to the leading voices of modernity (Marx, Nietzsche, Freud), many postmodern authors now identify themselves as people of faith (Gadamer, Ricoeur, Levinas), seeing belief and unbelief as equally reasonable postures. In sum, postmodernity has far greater openness to the spiritual than modernity had. Taylor (2007) is convinced that we are merging into a spiritual supernova.

Likewise, many postmodern authors are recognising the need for a reasoned religion, one that subsumes "the cognitive achievements of modernity" (Habermas, 2010, p. 78) and yet is a posture of faith, and this being needed for the effective functioning of contemporary democracy. Such religious faith can provide a deeper grounding of a public ethic and a higher motivation for people to fulfil their social responsibilities. Further, postmodernity appreciates that religious faith can provide more holistic and humanising ways of knowing that respond more effectively than the purely scientific to the deepened hungers in our time for purpose and meaning, for agency and authenticity as persons (Lane, 2013, pp. 13–18). This fresh openness of postmodern people to a Transcendent frame of life lends new opportunity for CRE to educate for faith; how sad if we were to miss the boat!

The Nature, Purpose and Epistemology of Catholic Religious Education

To develop the proposal that all CRE is to educate for faith requires clarification of three central issues: (1) the kind of religious faith that CRE is to teach; (2) with what effect on people's lives and world; and (3) the ways of knowing that can promote the desired learning outcomes. Responses to these three crucial issues, then, will suggest an appropriate pedagogy.

The Nature of Catholic Faith. To begin with the obvious, every religious faith has recognisable phenomena: creeds and teachings, values and virtues, prayer practices and rituals, sacred times and places, communal and leadership structures, etc. We could teach about all these aspects (as in religious studies) and yet fall short of what the faith is existentially for people's lives. The proposal here is that the horizon of all the great religious faiths is spiritual wisdom for life to be lived in covenant with the Transcendent (however understood), with this divine/human partnership shaping every aspect of people's being in the world. In sum, all the great faiths are sources of spiritual wisdom for living a way of life.

That all faiths are incarnational—to shape who people are and how they live—is writ large in Christian faith, and maybe all the more in Catholicism. The faith that Jesus embodied, with all the truths and values that he lived and taught, is to become incarnate now in would-be disciples. The purpose of every aspect of Christian faith is to propose a way of life, a living faith that is to be alive, lived and life-giving for oneself and "for the life of the world" (Jn 6:51). As in its greatest commandment, Christian faith engages all of people's minds, hearts and strengths—their souls (Mk 12:30). To teach it as anything less than a way of life is akin to a swim course that teaches the theory of flotation without ever getting in the pool.

We hinted above that Catholicism places particular emphasis on faith as a way of life. In the Reformation debate regarding being saved by faith or good works, the classic Catholic position was that faith must be realised in good works; "faith without good works is dead" (James 2:26). Likewise, in the contentious issue of the relationship between grace and nature (God and human effort) Catholics agreed with the Reformers that God's grace is gratuitous—given out of love—yet insisted that every grace comes to us as a responsibility, or better a response-ability.

This centrality of living faith has clarified all the more of late for Catholics with our rediscovery of the historical Jesus and that the core of Christian faith is living as disciples towards the reign of God. For long, Catholics readily embraced the Risen Christ of faith but paid scant attention to the historical Jesus. One reason was that all the traditional catechisms were structured around the precepts of the Apostles Creed. However, "born of the virgin Mary" is followed immediately by "suffered under Pontius Pilate"—skipping over Jesus' public life. The catechisms did likewise, and Catholics, typically, knew little about him.

Again, there are signs of hope for a rebalance of the Jesus of history with the Christ of faith, with Jesus being the model for how to live and the Risen Christ as the source of God's "abundant grace" (Rm 5:19) which empowers to follow "the way". Defining

this core, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* summarises, "At the heart we find a person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father" (1993, para. 426). So this incarnate Person is indeed the carpenter from Nazareth who walked the roads of Galilee, preaching the radical love, mercy, justice and compassion of God's reign, he who worked miracles to feed the hungry, cure the sick, comfort the suffering and drive out evil. Based on his conviction of God's unconditional love, he made the greatest commandment that we love God and neighbour as ourselves—even enemies.

John has Jesus describe himself as "the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6). His first disciples were described as "belonging to the Way" (Acts 9:2). And disciples will be judged on whether we live the way that Jesus lived, showing compassion to all in need (Matthew 25: 31–46).

Note, too, that Christian faith as discipleship to Jesus encourages all who would learn from it or learn into it to bond with a faith community. From the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus called people into community, knowing that this "Gospel of God's reign" (Mk 1:14–20) could never be lived as a private affair. Jesus went out into the highways and byways seeking disciples, welcoming all to the table, including women and children. In consequence, the first Christians used only communal metaphors to describe themselves, with Paul's body of Christ having pride of place. An aspect of teaching people to learn from or learn into the wisdom of Christian faith is encouraging them to bond with a faith community.

Pope Francis is leading the way in refocusing Catholics on the core of their faith as discipleship to Jesus—a way of life. He is convinced that Catholic Religious Educators can mount an "apologetics of persuasion" for Christian faith by making Jesus the interpretive lens for every other aspect. In Jesus "we have a treasure of life and love which cannot deceive, and a message which cannot mislead or disappoint" (Pope Francis, 2013, para. 88 and 265). Regardless of a student's religious identity or lack of it, all can be inspired towards living with authenticity and integrity by exposure to the life-giving way of the historical Jesus and the hope for all creation reflected in the Risen Christ.

The Purposes of Catholic Religious Education. Building on Christian faith as spiritual wisdom for life after the way of Jesus, we will ask now, what is the intent of lending people persuasive access to its whole Story and Vision? What are our "intended learning outcomes" for teaching people about it in ways that dispose them to learn from it for their own lives and perhaps learn into it as their faith identity? Our purposes are at least twofold: (a) to shape the very "being" of people with the wisdom of Christian faith, and (b) to promote the social commitments that such faith demands in the public realm. Of course, these dual purposes—ontological and sociological—are two sides of the same coin.

Educating who People Become: First, to propose that the intent of CRE is deeply ontological—from the Greek ontos, meaning "being"—is simply to place it within the tradition of Western education that began in ancient Greece and was carried forward and augmented by the CIT. This classic education taught a core curriculum of seven great arts of learning (the quadrivium of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, and the trivium of grammar, logic and rhetoric) and called them "liberal"

precisely because they were taught as sources of human liberation. From Plato and Aristotle down to contemporary educators like Dewey, Montessori, and Freire, there is an enduring conviction that education is to form the very being of students and in humanising ways, enabling them to become agents of their own well-being and that of others.

Much of contemporary education has lost this humanising purpose, focusing instead on training and technical skills that may prepare people well to make a living but not to have a life. In words attributed to William Butler Yeats, "education is not about filling a bucket but lighting a fire". CRE should do no less. Embedded within the CIT, the intent of CRE is to set people's souls on fire with the spiritual wisdom of living Christian faith. It is to shape the very being of people, both as noun and verb—who they become and how they live. Every instance of CRE should have a life-giving influence on student's personhood and values, resourcing them, in the often cited phrase of St. Irenaeus (130–202), "to become fully alive to the glory of God".

Christian Faith for Liberating Salvation: From the beginning, Christians have been convinced that God's intervention in human history through Jesus Christ and continuing now through the Holy Spirit has momentous positive consequences for the course of human history. To cite Yeats again, Christians can say of Easter, "All changed, changed utterly. A terrible beauty is born". Or as St. Paul put it, through Jesus' life, death and resurrection all of creation has been "set free from its bondage to decay" and is to enjoy "the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rm 8:21).

From the beginning, then, Christians have been convinced that God's intent in Jesus Christ was literally to save the world. For our time and cultures, the metaphor proposed by Pope Paul VI in "The Evangelization of Peoples" (1976) can have deep resonance and appeal: "liberating salvation". It echoes both the personal and social purposes of what God did in Jesus, and what CRE should educate for now. As the Holy Spirit continues God's work of liberating salvation, CRE is to be among the Spirit's most effective instruments.

The whole curriculum of CRE should aim to promote God's liberating salvation in Jesus Christ (Groome, 1980). It must encourage students to engage in the public realm with compassion for all in need and to work for justice, disposing them to at least learn from and perhaps embrace as their own the values of Catholic social teaching.

The Ways of Knowing for CRE

The impoverished epistemology bequeathed by modernity and still reigning in many classrooms—even religious education ones—needs to be greatly expanded if CRE, honouring the CIT, is to educate for a living faith that shapes people's being and helps to save the world. To begin with, we need to engage people's hearts as well as their heads, their emotive as well as rational ways of knowing; both are needed for teaching spiritual wisdom towards a way of life.

Then, the context of such education needs to be conversation within a learning community. A didactic epistemology—teaching as telling—might be effective in learning about but is unlikely to encourage people to learn from and learn into the spiritual wisdom of any faith. This is much more likely as participants speak their own word and are enlightened by that of others. Of course, there is room for presentation and lending ready access to traditions of faith but the overall paradigm must be conversation and appropriation by learners rather than receiving and repeating what the teacher says—what Freire well described as "banking education" (Freire, 1970, p. 72).

Following on, the epistemology of CRE must expand beyond the scientific reasoning of modernity and engage peoples' whole being in the world. Dewey said that humanising education must begin with people's own experience, Freire with their historical praxis and Montessori with their sensory activities; I say simply, begin with and engage people's own lives. We can do so by turning them to their generative themes (Freire, 1970), to real issues, concerns and desires that arise from their historical praxis and that can be an entrée into the Story and Vision of Christian faith.

Then, our epistemology must encourage participants' own critical reflection on their lives in the world. Such reflection engages reason, memory and imagination—all of their capacities for knowing. It is critical in that it encourages people to think and to think about their thinking, both personally and socially. Such reflection raises consciousness of how their cultural contexts are shaping their present praxis. It also amounts to participants sharing their own stories and visions, thus engaging their hearts as well as their heads. That the focus of reflection includes people's lives insures that their desires are engaged as well; we cannot reflect upon ourselves dispassionately.

Following on, the epistemology employed must lend ready and persuasive access to the Story and Vision of Christian faith. Story is used here as a metaphor of the whole corpus of Christian faith—all of its Scriptures and Traditions and their spiritual wisdom for people's lives. Vision is likewise a metaphor for what the Story brings to and asks of people's lives now, the faith's invitations and responsibilities. This dual emphasis—on Story and Vision—can mediate Christian faith so that people encounter it as proposing a way of life rather than simply a body of knowledge.

Such accessing should be persuasive and enticing in that it highlights the spiritual wisdom for life of Christian Story/Vision (or whatever tradition is being taught). Far from proselytising, persuasion highlights how this faith makes sense and why good and intelligent people for thousands of years have found it an enriching way to live their lives.

Having accessed their own stories and visions and the Story/Vision of Christian faith, needed now is to integrate these two sources, with students taking the spiritual wisdom of the faith into their lives according to their own discernment. Such personal appropriation and integration need to be approached as a dialectical hermeneutic. This is essential if CRE is to avoid proselytising and yet encourage people to learn from and possibly learn into the spiritual wisdom of the tradition being studied.

This moment is hermeneutical in that it invites students to interpret the spiritual wisdom they have encountered and to see for themselves what it might mean for

their lives. It is dialectical—akin to the give-and-take of good conversation—in that it invites students to come to their own opinions and positions. Instead of simply accepting what was taught as Story/Vision, participants need to discern what they affirm, question and imagine onward for their own lives In effect, the teacher asks here: "what are you thinking or deciding", rather than "what did I say".

The great Catholic scholar Bernard Lonergan offers a helpful summary of the overall epistemology just outlined. Drawing upon the CIT, especially Aquinas, and reuniting the theoretical and practical reasoning that Kant separated, Lonergan (1972) described "the dynamic structure of people's cognitional and moral being" as four-fold. The four intentional activities for knowing begin with attending to data, move to understand it, reach judgments about it and make decisions in its light. He proposed that when enacted with "conscious intentionality", this cumulative dynamic can encourage conversion that is intellectual, moral and religious.

All four of these dynamics of authentic cognition and moral decision-making gather up much of the epistemology outlined above: attending to and understanding one's own story/vision, attending to and understanding the Story/Vision of Christian faith, to then judge and decide how to integrate and respond. Note that religious education which settles for attending to data and understanding it reaches only halfway to authentic cognition, settling for learning about. The pedagogy must invite onward to judgment and decision, uniting theoretical with practical reason, and thus to learn from and learn into the spiritual wisdom of Christian faith.

So Much Depends on the Pedagogy

To effect the nature, purposes and epistemology of CRE outlined above requires an appropriate pedagogy. It must actively engage the generative themes reflected in the present praxis of peoples own lives, give them access to the truths, values and spiritual wisdom of Catholic (or whatever) faith, and then encourage students to integrate their "life" and this "faith" into their own life-in-faith—however, they discern and decide.

For some forty years now, I have been attempting to develop, articulate and practice such a life to Faith to life-in-faith pedagogy for religious education. I have written about it more formally and comprehensively as a "shared Christian praxis approach" (Groome, 1991), though life to Faith to life is more explicit of its dynamic (Groome, 2012). While I originally discovered the potential of such an approach in the work of Paulo Freire, one can also detect its traces in the pedagogy of Jesus.

Jesus constantly began his teaching by turning people to look at their own lives in the world, be it fishing, farming, homemaking, working in vineyards, raising children or just observing the birds of the air, the lilies of the field and the list goes on. Then, he consistently invited people to reflect on their lives, even critically. He often turned their perspectives upside down with prodigals welcomed home, Samaritans acting as neighbour, the last getting to be first, etc. Third, from the beginning, Jesus preached his "good news" of the in-breaking of God's reign and taught his gospel "with

authority" (Mk 1: 15 and 22); this was Jesus' Story and Vision. Following on, he constantly invited to discipleship, presenting a choice. Jesus wanted people to see for themselves the blessings that come when God reigns in their lives, and to freely choose to follow his *way* as disciples within such a community.

Pedagogical Movements of a Life to Faith to Life Approach. In an actual teaching–learning event, this approach can be enacted around a focusing activity and five pedagogical movements. Though the movements can occur, reoccur, combine, overlap and vary in sequence (they are movements as in a symphony), for the sake of clarity they are laid out sequentially here.

Focusing Activity: Establishing the Curriculum around a Life/Faith Theme: Here the intent is twofold: (a) to engage people as active participants in the teaching/learning dynamic, and (b) to focus them on a generative theme of life or of life-in-faith that they can recognise as significant to their lives in the world.

Movement One (M1): Expressing the Theme in Present Praxis: The educator encourages participants to express themselves around the generative theme as reflected in their present lives and situations. They can name what they themselves do or see others doing, their own feelings or thoughts or interpretations, and their perception of what is going on around them in their sociocultural context.

Movement Two (M2): Reflecting Critically on the Theme of Life/Faith: The intent here is to encourage participants to reflect critically on the praxis they expressed in M1. Critical reflection can engage reason, memory, imagination or a combination of them; such reflection can be both personal and sociocultural.

Movement Three (M3): Accessing Christian Story and Vision: Here the pedagogical task is to teach persuasively the Christian Story and Vision around the particular theme of the occasion and this towards the students' way of life-in-faith. Participants should have ready access to the truths, values and spiritual wisdom of Christian faith (or whatever tradition) around the theme and as relevant to their lives—the Vision.

Movement Four (M4): Appropriating Christian Faith to Life: M4 begins the move back to life again, focusing precisely now on what students can learn from or learn into of Christian faith. The pedagogy of M4 is to encourage participants to see for themselves what this aspect of Christian faith might mean for their everyday lives and according to their own perspectives. This is where dialectical hermeneutics is particularly at work, preventing proselytising and enabling people to at least learn from and maybe learn into the spiritual wisdom of Christian faith by their own discernment.

Movement Five (M5): Making Decisions in Light of Christian Faith: Here participants are invited to make decisions about the accessed truths, values and spiritual wisdom of Christian faith. Decisions can be cognitive, affective or behavioural, shaping what people now believe, how they will relate with God or others, or the values they wish to live.

Note how the movements echo the dynamics of cognition outlined by Lonergan. Essentially, participants are invited to attend to and understand the data of their own lives (M1 and 2), to attend to and understand the data of Christian faith (M3), and then to integrate the two—life and faith—through their own judgments and decisions (M4 and 5).

For a brief example, a CRE unit on the Blessed Trinity with high school students might begin with a contemporary song or podcast that focuses on the theme of love, getting them to recognise this as a major issue in their lives. Then follow on with M1 and M2 reflections about love, what it is, how we experience it, why we need it, the social context of how we understand it, etc. M3 could then review the inner and outgoing life of God as Triune Love (Story), highlighting what it might mean that people are made in such divine image and likeness (Vision). M4 and M5 could invite students' discernment of what the Trinity could mean for their lives and the kind of love to which God invites.

Or imagining a high school class on the Muslim tradition of Zakat (care for those in need and one of the five pillars of Islam), one could begin by focusing on the reality of poverty in our world (maybe some statistics). M1 and M2 could invite students to name and reflect critically upon the pervasive poverties of their lives, society and world, on its causes and consequences. M3 would teach persuasively the Muslim tradition of Zakat and how it encourages a spirit of dependence on God and giving generously out of gratitude to those in need. M4 and M5 would invite students to discernment and decision about how Zakat might inspire to respond to the various poverties in their lives and world, perhaps finding echoes in Christian faith. Muslim participants might be invited to consider a personal commitment to Zakat.

Some such approach as "life to Faith to life" is well suited for CRE to educate for faith in our postmodern world.

References

Boeve, L. (2007). *God interrupts history: Theology in a time of upheaval*. New York: Continuum.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. (1993). Washington, DC: USCCB.

Clement of Alexandria. (1885). Ante-Nicene fathers. Fathers of the second century: Hermas, Tafian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria (Enfire). In P. Schaff, *The instructor* [*Paedagogus*] (Vol. 2). Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury Press.

Gadamer, H.-G. (1975). *Truth and method*. New York: Seabury Press.

Grimmit, M. (1987). *Religious education and human development*. Great Wakening, UK: McCrimmon.

Groome, T. (1980). *Christian religious education*. New York: Harper and Row.

Groome, T. (1991). *Sharing faith*. New York: Harper Collins.

Groome, T. (2012). *Will there be faith*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Habermas, J. (2010). *An awareness of what is missing*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Imbelli, R. (Ed.) (2013, Spring). *Exploring the catholic intellectual tradition*. Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College, Church in 21st Century Resources.

Lane, D. (2013). *Religion and education: Reimagining the relationship*. Dublin: Veritas.

Lonergan, B. (1972). *Method in theology*. New York: Crossroads.

Luther, M. (1960). To the councilmen of all cities in Germany. In K. Cully (Ed.), *Basic writings in Christian education* (pp. 137–149). Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

Pope Francis I. (2013). *Joy of the gospel*. USCCB: Washington, DC.

Pope Paul VI. (1976). *On evangelization*. USCCB: Washington, DC.

Taylor, C. (2007). *A secular age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Tertullian. (1994). The prescription of heretics. *Anti-Nicene fathers* (Vol. III, Ch. 7). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing.
Weber, M. (1963). *The sociology of religion*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Prof Thomas Groome is Professor of Theology and Religious Education at Boston College. Tom has just completed his 40th year at Boston College and has lectured widely throughout the world. His most recent book is *Will There Be Faith* (Harper Collins 2011). He is also the primary author of a number of grade school and high school religious education curricula.

Chapter 3
The Challenge of Integrating Catholic Religious Education and Catechesis: An American Quandary?

Emanuel P. Magro

Introduction

Catholic faith formation until recently, whether in schools or in parishes, followed mainly what Westerhoff identifies as a "schooling-instructional paradigm" (2012, p. 6). Those responsible for faith formation "schooled" the children and adolescents in the content of faith emphasizing an intellectual approach to faith and grouped them in classes according to age. This formed what Pajer calls a triangular pedagogy of "teacher-student-knowing" (Pajer, 2002). The symbolic, liturgical and ethical dimension of faith was taken for granted for it was being communicated and supported through the daily religious practices and social interactions in both the family and the Christian community. Up to the Second Vatican Council and its immediate aftermath, faith was taught and formed through three interrelated means: the family, the local faith community and the school, especially the Catholic School. During this time, as Graham Rossiter remarks, "religious education in Catholic schools has long been regarded primarily as education in faith or more intensively as catechesis" (Rossiter, 1982, p. 21). Schools, for Berard Marthaler, were thought to be "a natural habitat" for catechesis (Marthaler as quoted in Rossiter, 1982).

The Church's reflection on faith formation at the Second Vatican Council (Simon, 1978) and in the post-conciliar times, in particular the 1974 and 1977 synod of bishops that dealt with evangelization and catechesis, respectively, led the Church to articulate the distinction and complementarity between Catholic religious education (CRE) in schools and catechesis that is primarily done in parishes (Rossiter, 1982). In Catholic schools, however, both CRE and catechesis are to be integral parts of the curriculum. The Church enshrined its position in the *General Directory for Catechesis* published by the Congregation for the Clergy in 1997 (henceforth GDC). The GDC relies on, and quotes at times verbatim, the 1988 document issued by the Con-

E. P. Magro (✉)
Archdiocese of Washington, Washington D.C., USA
e-mail: magroe@adw.org

gregation for Catholic Education, *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school: Guidelines for reflection and renewal* (henceforth RD). The latest document on religious education in schools issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education in 2009, *Circular letter to the presidents of bishops' conferences on religious education in schools*, reiterates the GDC's position (para. 18; henceforth CL).

The Church's differentiation between CRE and catechesis seems to indicate the Church's intimation of two models of faith formation that are complementary and operative in Catholic schools. CRE is to be an academic discipline like any other subject taught in school. It aims at imparting knowledge on the identity of Christianity and Christian life and in light of this communication aids students to become critical assessors of their culture and discover their own contribution for building a more human society. Through CRE students are to bring Christian faith into dialogue with their culture and the education they are receiving at school. They are to achieve a synthesis of faith and culture as well as faith and life (CL, para. 17–18; see also Hobson & Welbourne, 2002). This position reflects what Buchanan (2005) describes as an educational model of religious education. For as he explains, the acquisition of knowledge is to be "a vehicle for spiritual and personal faith development through attention to knowledge, understanding, and critical inquiry" (p. 33). In planning and designing lesson plans, CRE teachers are to formulate cognitive as well as affective learning outcomes or objectives so that students not only learn about but also learn from Christianity (Buchanan & Engebretson, 2008). As Paul Cillo (2017) points out "unlike other subjects, religion teachers … have the task of eliciting a personal response to their content" (p. 74). Knowledge of the faith does not exclude the possibility of strengthening the faith, since "catechesis cannot help but increase one's knowledge of the Christian message" (RD, para. 69). CRE, however, does not present the Christian message and event "as a salvific reality" demanding the students' assent of faith, their personal adherence to Christ and commitment to discipleship as catechesis does (CL, para. 17–18).

Catechesis, whether in a school setting or in a parish, is to model itself on the baptismal catechumenate that was reinstituted in the Church by mandate of the Second Vatican Council (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, para. 90). While the restored catechumenate may be called the liturgical or mystagogical model of catechesis (Dulles, 2009), it simultaneously constitutes the foundations for a community model of catechesis. For the liturgy is the work and the public ritual form of prayer of the Christian community. To state the obvious, no liturgy is possible without a believing, worshiping and participating community. The Christian community expresses, manifests and communicates to others its true nature of being the Church of Christ Jesus through its liturgy, especially the celebration of the Eucharist (Second Vatican Council, 1963, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, para. 2; henceforth SC).

By mandating both CRE and catechesis for the faith formation of students attending Catholic schools and by stating that they are complementary yet different, the Church seems to imply that the educational and community model of faith formation are to be brought in dialogue with one another and necessitate one another for the benefit of the students. In adapting this position to the United States through its publication of the *National directory for catechesis* (United States Conference of Catholic

Bishops, 2005; henceforth NDC), the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) demands that "In addition to classroom, grade-level, and all-school liturgical and prayer experiences, a generous amount of time should be allotted to religious instruction" (p. 263). Catholic schools are to provide their students with ample time and opportunities for integrating faith and life, and faith and culture. The *national standards and benchmarks for effective catholic elementary and secondary schools* (2012), published by the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness (School of Education, Loyola University Chicago) and the Roche Center for Catholic Education (Lynch School of Education, Boston College), however, seem to imply that religious education is to be held in the classroom and complemented by non-curricula and extracurricular catechetical activities held outside the classroom and/or outside the school building. Rossiter (1982) and Rymarz (2011) propose that one may include catechesis within religious instruction in the classroom but at the same time, one is to safeguard their distinctiveness. For as Rymarz (2011) argues, when one combines the aims of these two disciplines or focuses mainly on catechesis in the classroom, "religious education will lose its educational focus, thereby weakening its status as an academic discipline on a par with others" (p. 544). Similarly, one may argue that if one were to refer to catechesis as religious education, one may be reducing catechesis to just one of its tasks, namely, that of the knowledge of the faith (USCCB, 2005).

The task of employing these two paradigms and relating them to one another and simultaneously safeguarding their distinctiveness falls on the teachers of religion. The USCCB requests that these teachers of religion be certified both as catechists according to diocesan standards and as qualified teachers. As certified diocesan catechists they "have the same responsibilities and perform many of the same functions of parish catechists" (USCCB, 2005, p. 232). Their area of catechetical ministry is the Catholic school setting in conjunction with their teaching of the Catholic faith as an academic subject. They are to look at their position as both an academic and a catechetical one. Even though not all countries follow the USCCB position that all teachers of religion be certified catechists, any teacher of religion working in a Catholic school faces the quandary of interfacing, if not integrating, CRE and catechesis that follow a different model of faith formation.

This paper aims at familiarizing CRE teachers with the community model of catechesis and its implications to their discipline. The first section will outline the emergence of this model of catechesis. This will lead to a discussion of some of the key aspects of this catechetical paradigm that are to inform CRE in its endeavours in presenting the Christian faith. This section will denote some areas of complementarity between CRE and catechesis and how CRE may prepare its students for lifelong faith formation that is only possible in and through their participation in a Christian community. CRE is aware that the community of faith created in the school is transient and temporal and that the faith formation that it provides is limited and terminal. Christian faith, whether presented in CRE or catechesis, is always an ecclesial faith and one cannot genuinely communicate and discuss it without addressing its communal or corporate nature. Christian faith is always the faith of the Church.

A Community Model of Catechesis

Despite the fact that the Second Vatican Council did not publish any particular document on catechesis and that it rejected the suggestion to publish a catechism for the Catholic Church as the First Vatican Council did (Donnellan, 1972), it mandated the publication of a directory for catechesis (Second Vatican Council, 1965a, *Christus dominus*, para. 44). The publication of the *Directory for Catechesis* by the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy in 1971 (henceforth, DfC) proved to be a new catechetical genre, different from and yet complementary to the other catechetical literary genre of the catechism (Marthaler, 1986). This directory marks the first time that the universal Church "treated catechesis in a comprehensive and systematic way" addressing "the context and nature, the contents and methods, and the audiences and agents of catechesis" (Marthaler, 2008, p. 20).

While it defines catechesis as an ecclesial ministry of the word of God intending through instruction and experience in the faith the intellectual, liturgical and ecclesial formation of believers in the life of faith, the DfC sets adult catechesis as the "chief form of catechesis" and that all other forms of catechesis be "oriented to it" (para. 20). Without ignoring the importance of catechesis for children and adolescents, the Church placed the adult Christian at the centre of its catechetical ministry. The directory also states that religious instruction in schools is a form of catechesis (para. 19). Consequently, CRE is to draw its inspiration from adult catechesis.

By identifying adult faith formation as its primary mode of catechesis, the Church seems to have signalled its interest in shifting its paradigm for catechesis (English, 2010). However, the DfC did not indicate any particular form of catechesis for adults to be emulated. It reminded the bishops of their duty to implement the Council's mandate to establish the catechumenate in their diocese (para. 20).

Barely a year after the promulgation of the directory, the Church published in 1972 the *editio typica* of the *Rite of Christian initiation of adults* (henceforth RCIA) which the USCCB adapted to its particular context and approved for the United States dioceses in 1988. Following the proposed outline for a restored baptismal catechumenate in its conciliar document, *Ad gentes* (Second Vatican Council, 1965b, *Ad gentes*, para. 13–14), the Church demands that the faith formation of catechumens be the responsibility of the whole Christian community. It is to be accomplished in the context of a worshiping and living Christian community, and it is to lead the catechumens to become full and active members of the Christian community. The RCIA clearly states that all members of the local community are to be "fully prepared …. to give help to those who are searching for Christ" (para. 9) and not just their catechists, sponsors, godparents, priests, other parish ministers, family and friends. The community is to serve as a teacher and formator of the faith. The journey of conversion that catechesis is to foment, attend to and accompany is a public one and cannot be considered as a private affair between the individual catechumen and a priest as it was thought to be and practiced in pre-Vatican II's times (Mongoven, 1996). By inviting the catechumens to participate in its life, the community shares with them "its *tradition*, that is, its heritage, its history, its rituals, its life, its meanings

and its values" (Mongoven, 1996, p. 419—italics in original) and invites them to give their contribution to the community by sharing who they are and their charisms. By encouraging them to participate in its life, the Christian community imparts to them and shares with them its Catholic culture which is new to them. They find in the midst of the worshiping and living community the necessary points of reference, resources and environment to grow in their faith and overcome any crisis they might have. In the midst of the community, they learn the religious practices to express, celebrate and live their faith (RCIA, para. 75). It is the Christian community that is responsible for the faith formation of its new members. The faith formation of catechumens, adult converts, is to occur in the context and in the midst of a living and dynamic community.

The bishops gathered for the 1977 synod determined the baptismal catechumenate as the model of all catechesis. The identification of the catechumenate as the model, even if it is not as an exclusive one, for doing catechesis, seems to be the Church's first step in promoting a community model of catechesis. The revised directory, the GDC and the NDC strengthened this shift in the catechetical paradigm and identify the baptismal catechumenate as the model of catechesis. The NDC (USCCB, 2005) states that the baptismal catechumenate is "the source of inspiration for all catechesis" (p. 115) and that it "provides an admirable model for the whole of the Church's catechetical efforts" (p. 116).

Another element in the Church's advancement of a community model of catechesis is its determination of the parish or the local Christian community as the locus par excellence for the catechesis of adults, youth and children (USCCB, 2005). For many, the parish community they attend is their main experience of what Church is (USCCB, 2005, p. 254; the NDC refers to the USCCB's document, *Our hearts were burning*, para. 114) and the place where their faith is born and grows (USCCB, 2005, p. 257). It is the place where the Christians gather to celebrate their faith publicly and communally through liturgical actions, especially the Sunday Eucharistic celebration. The Church's faith or that of the local parish community precedes, engenders, supports and nourishes the faith of its individual members (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, para. 181). While retaining its divine origins, faith is mediated through the Church; its formation and maturing too occurs through and in the midst of the Christian community. As Avery Dulles states "through its Scriptures, creeds, and authoritative teaching, as well as its liturgy and forms of life, the Church continually transmits its faith to new members" (Dulles, 1994, p. 280). No faith formation is possible without the mediation of the Church or in real time the local parish community.

The description that the GDC provides of the six tasks of catechesis supplies another clue of the Church's trend to promote a community model of catechesis. The fifth task requests the formation of the Christians "*to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church*" (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, para. 61—italics in the original). Catechesis is to educate for community life that is rooted in, constituted by, and demanded by the common faith that all the members of the community share, celebrate and live. By professing their faith through the reception of the sacraments of initiation, their faith constitutes them into a divinely community of faith (Dulles 280). Through their baptism, they are incorporated into

the Church and are full, active and responsible members of the Christian community. They are the Church.

Faith, thus, unites and binds all the believers together and demands a life in communion (USCCB, 2005). Faith, by its very nature, is ecclesial. The faith that each member confesses and professes is the same like that of the other members. While it always remains a personal act, faith is never an isolated act (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, para. 181).

Through its catechesis, the Church not only intends to educate and form all of its members to become responsible agents of its life, but also to promote the mission of the Church. In the words of Pope Francis (2013), every Christian community is to become a community of missionary disciples. By virtue of their baptism, Christians are evangelizers and have the responsibility to promote the mission and ministry of Christ Jesus as entrusted to his Church. As the USCCB has highlighted in their recent document, *Living as missionary disciples: A resource for evangelization* (2017), the Church forms the Christians not only in discipleship but also for evangelization. This is to be done through the ministry of catechesis. As the NDC states, through the catechesis that it provides its members, the parish "energizes the faithful to carry out Christ's mission" (USCCB, 2005, p. 254).

In sum, catechesis is an ecclesial ministry done by the community, in the community and for the community (USCCB, 2005). The Christian community is the locus *par excellence* for nurturing and maturing the faith in all of its aspects. The Church or more concretely the parish community is the teacher of the faith. Through catechesis, the parish community aims at building up the Church as a community of faith, continually assisting all of its members to become disciples and at preparing and equipping them for their mission in the Church and in the world. The community is to be a process of faith formation as well as a school of faith.

CRE and Key Aspects of the Community Model of Catechesis

This community model of catechesis seems to highlight three essential aspects of faith that CRE is to underscore in presenting the knowledge on Christianity's identity and Christian life. First and foremost, CRE is to heighten the ecclesial dimension of faith. Christian faith is based on an original encounter with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. This core of Christian faith is common to all who believe and thus creates, in the words of Lonergan (1979) "a common field of experience" that brings together the individual believers and binds and forms them into a community. As Lonergan (1979) continues to explain the nature of a community, the common experience leads to a common understanding of the experience, to common judgments of facts and values, and to common decisions and commitments. In the case of Christian faith, the common field of experience or the act of faith leads the believers to a common understanding of the faith, such as the Creed, to common judgments of facts and

values such as discipleship, and to a common commitment, such as evangelization. The Creed, the call and demands of discipleship, and the mission to evangelize are all corporate entities rooted in, yet distinct but inseparable from the common experience shared by all believers. It would be an anomaly if not a contradiction in terms if one were to have faith without belonging to a community of faith. Christian faith is always bound and identified with a Church or Christian denomination. CRE cannot ignore or belittle this corporate character of faith, even though it is beyond its competence to demand from its students to accept Christianity as a salvific reality, as a common field of experience shared by those who believe.

As a corollary to this first point, CRE is to emphasize the fact that by its very nature faith intends the living and participating in the life of the community, the building up of the community, as well as achieving the community's mission. By pointing out this intentional communal or corporate aspect of faith, CRE counteracts, balances and corrects any misconception of faith as being only a personal and individual act. CRE is to enlighten its students that in relating the knowledge of the faith to their education, life and culture, they are somehow participating in and promoting the mission of the Church in becoming a community of missionary disciples. Teachers of religion need, then, to be attentive to formulate both cognitive and affective learning outcomes that address the ecclesial dimension of faith. This helps students discover and value the role and importance of the living and worshiping community for a better understanding and experiencing of the knowledge of the faith. By highlighting the corporate or ecclesial nature of faith, CRE transcends the limits that a school and/or classroom environment poses to an authentic understanding of faith.

A community model of catechesis also alerts CRE to the fact that faith formation and maturation occurs not only through formal programmes and activities, but also through the socialization process and intergenerational relationships that are operative in the Christian community and without which the community cannot be what it is to become in Christ Jesus. In the words of Westerhoff (2012), "shared experience, storytelling, celebration, action, and reflection between and among equal 'faithing' selves within a community of faith best help us understand how faith is transmitted, expanded and sustained" (p. 89). A community of faith is composed of people on different paths of faith. Westerhoff (2012) identified at least three paths or styles of faith (experiential, reflective and integrative) that are operative in a Christian community. None is better than the other and one does not replace the other. All three ways are present and contribute in their own particular way to transmitting, sustaining and maturing the faith. Consequently, each member of the community is on a journey of faith being influenced, supported, carried and encouraged by that of the other members. Their physical presence and interaction are conducive to faith formation. Together they not only form and express their communal living, but also continue to bestow and reinforce their identity, their attitudes and worldview as a community of faith. It follows, then, that a community model of catechesis marks a shift from a content-oriented paradigm to one that focuses on process. It seems to underline the process through which persons undergo conversion, belong to the community and constitute the Church.

By inviting its students to learn from their knowledge of Christianity, CRE is implicitly addressing the students' process of rendering the content of faith relevant to their life and thus affecting a transformation of the students. The planning and executing affective outcomes in CRE seems to address this particular process without knowing for sure whether the students have brought their dialogue between faith and life, and culture, as well as the education that they are receiving to any fruition. In light of the community model of catechesis, CRE is to pay more attention to this process that occurs in the classroom. For even though CRE does not intend per se the faith commitment of the individual students, the learning and sharing of the knowledge of the faith forms the students into a community of faith learners. In the same way that there are different paths of faith in a Christian community, in any single classroom there may be students who are believers, others who are searching and others who do not believe (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, para. 75). Their interaction affects one another. Forming of the faith occurs, however, not only through curriculum design, the selected methodologies and pedagogies, and content delivery systems, but also, if not mainly, through the transactions and relationships between the students themselves as well as between the teacher and the students.

CRE teachers face, then, the challenge of addressing the students' individual journey of faith and simultaneously maintain the academic nature of their subject. Presenting and attending to the scholastic nature of CRE means that they are to assess their students' competence in their understanding of the knowledge of the faith. They are to grade and rank their students in their mastering of the content of faith. This could lead to a competitive climate in CRE where students tend to seek their own individual good and obtain a better grade rather than attending to the good of the other classmates. This stands in great contrast with the role of how members of a faith community support and sustaining one another in their faith. One way how CRE teachers may overcome and mitigate the competitive nature of their discipline is by planning and designing whole class projects and/or group work activities. Through these instructional activities, students learn how to cooperate with one another, appreciate the gifts of one another and experience the beauty and challenges of collaboration in creating something in common. Consequently, students prepare themselves for community living.

Another challenge that CRE teachers face is to build on and expand the community of faith already created in the Catholic school and by and through CRE. The notion of the Christian community, its nature, characteristics and goals that the students gain through being a learning community and the experience of faith and community that they obtain through the liturgical and other religious activities held for them at school and/or behalf of their school need to be augmented and enriched by the larger community of faith, namely, that of the parish community. For the opportunities given to the students at school are rather fragmented and depend on the duration of the school year for their availability. The long summer break and the holiday breaks at the key Christian events, especially the celebration of Easter, hinders the students to live these significant moments of the paschal mystery in the midst of a community of faith. Their experience of community depends on the school year, on the time they spend together at school. It may also happen that the composition of their classroom

changes from one scholastic year to the next and the sense of community established among themselves in one year is curtailed, if not abolished, in the following year of their schooling. To address this crucial issue, teachers of religion are to be creative in addressing how to establish sound relationships between the school and the parish community. As they are in schools, students are to learn and experience the beauty of living and worshiping in a community larger than their school. For some students, CRE is the only experience of a community of faith and these students are to be given all the opportunities possible to go beyond the confines of a school setting. While the Catholic school environment leads to an experience of the corporate element of the faith, it can never replace, separate itself or regard itself independent of the parish Christian community. A parish community is the enduring spiritual home for all students.

While CRE is to retain its academic rigour and methodologies, it is to attend to catechesis and its respective approaches, models and pedagogy. Without confusing the two disciplines, CRE teachers are to allow for that cross-fertilization between these two models of faith formation for the benefit of their students. By interfacing a community model of catechesis with the education model of faith formation that they follow in CRE, teachers of religion may underscore and enlighten their students on the ecclesial or corporate nature of faith, the intentionality of faith to create and sustain the community in its life and mission as well as the role and significance of intergenerational interactions and interpersonal relationships for the life of faith and of the community. Even though such an integration of catechesis with CRE poses challenges to the teachers of religion, the two disciples complement one another and enhance the faith formation of the students.

In mandating both CRE and catechesis for the faith formation of students attending Catholic schools, the Church seems to desire to provide students with all the necessary means to encounter, appreciate and eventually appropriate the faith. Both disciplines follow their respective model and serve in their own particular way the Church's ministry and mission to attain its goal in educating and forming in the faith. Aiming at the good of their students, CRE teachers face the quandary of creating unity in diversity of these two models of faith formation.

References

Buchanan, M. T. (2005). Pedagogical drift: The evolution of new approaches and paradigms in religious education. *Religious Education, 100*(1), 20–37.

Buchanan, M. T., & Engebretson, K. (2008). Cognitive and affective dimensions of religious education. In K. Engebretson, M. de Souza, R. Rymarz, & M. T. Buchanan (Eds.), *Cornerstones of Catholic secondary religious education: Principles and practices of the new evangelization* (pp. 79–92). Terrigal, Australia: David Barlow Publishing.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. (1993). Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Center for Catholic School Effectiveness (School of Education, Loyola University Chicago) & Roche Center for Catholic Education (Lynch School of Education, Boston College). (2012).

National standards and benchmarks for effective Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Retrieved from http://gmcec.com/documents/NCEANationalStandardsandBench-marks.pdf.

Cillo, P. (2017). Religious education and catechesis. *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa, 41*(1), 73–88.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988). *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school: Guidelines for reflection and renewal*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2009). *Circular letter to the presidents of bishops' conferences on religious education in schools*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20090505_circ-insegn-relig_en.html.

Congregation for the Clergy. (1971). *Directory for catechesis*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Congregation for the Clergy. (1997). *General directory for catechesis*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

Donnellan, M. (1972). *Rationale for a uniform catechism: Vatican I to Vatican II* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation). The Catholic University of America.

Dulles, A. (1994). *The assurance of things hoped for: A theology of Christian faith*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dulles, A. (2009). Models of catechesis. In A. Dulles (Ed.), *Evangelization for the third millennium* (pp. 101–114). New York, NY: Paulist.

English, L. (2010). Adult education of the laity: A church concern. *Theoforum, 41*(1), 131–148.

Hobson, P., & Welbourne, L. (2002). Modal shifts and challenges for religious education in Catholic schools since Vatican II. *Christian Education Journal, 6*(1), 55–71.

Lonergan, B. J. F. (1979). *Method in theology*. Minneapolis: Seabury Press.

Marthaler, B. L. (1986). Catechetical directory or catechism? Une question malposée. In D. A. Lane (Ed.), *Religious education and the future* (pp. 55–70). New York, NY: Paulist Press.

Marthaler, B. L. (2008). *The nature, tasks and scope of the catechetical ministry: A digest of recent church documents*. Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

Mongoven, A. M. (1996). Overview of the rite of Christian initiation of adults. *The catechetical documents: A parish resource with commentary and index* (pp. 418–421). Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications.

Pajer, F. (2002). Une catéchèse où la communauté chrétienne dans son ensemble est à la fois catéchisante et catéchisée. In H. Derroitte (Ed.), *Théologie, mission et catéchèse* (pp. 19–32). Montreal, Canada: Novalis.

Pope Francis. (2013). *Evangelii gaudium*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Rossiter, G. (1982). The need for a 'creative divorce' between catechesis and religious education in Catholic schools. *Religious Education, 77*(1), 21–40.

Rymarz, R. (2011). Catechesis and religious education in Canadian Catholic schools. *Religious Education, 106*(5), 537–549.

Second Vatican Council. (1963). Constitution on the sacred liturgy. *Sacrosanctum concilium*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html.

Second Vatican Council. (1965a). Decree concerning the pastoral office of bishops. *Christus dominus*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_christus-dominus_en.html.

Second Vatican Council. (1965b). Decree on the mission activity of the church. *Ad gentes*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html.

Simon, M. (1978). Vatican II et le mouvement catéchétique. *Revue theologique de Louvain, 9*, 59–67.

Synod of Bishops. (1977). *Synod of Bishops, 1977, Fourth General Assembly, Rome, September 30-October 29, 1977: Message to the people of God and interventions of the U.S. delegates. 1978*. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1988). *Rite of Christian initiation of adults. Approved for use in the diocese of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and confirmed by the Apostolic See*. Study edition. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publication.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2005). *National directory for catechesis*. Washington, DC: USCCB.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2017). *Living as missionary disciples: A resource for evangelization*. Washington, DC: USCCB.

Westerhoff, J. (2012). *Will our children have faith?* (3rd rev. ed.). New York, NY: Morehouse Publishing.

Dr. Emanuel P. Magro taught Catechetics at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. His research interests are the relationship between Catholic religious education and catechesis, role of imagination in religious education/catechesis and the history and theory of catechesis/religious education, especially the period between the First and Second Vatican Council. He was a member of the Board of the Religious Education Office within the Secretariat for Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Malta and a member of the Task force for Catholic Education of the Maltese Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Chapter 4
Rethinking Catholic Religious Education in the Light of Divine Pedagogy

Check for updates

Adrian-Mario Gellel

Introduction

Teaching has always been central to the identity of the Catholic Church, and consequently, the teaching of religion has always been fundamental to the educational mission of the Church. Over these past two millennia, this was, and still is, reflected in the centrality that the subject, in its various forms, holds in the educational institutions of the Church. Yet the changing context of schools, education, society and Church require a rediscovery and a redefinition of teaching as a ministry essential to the very ontological nature of the whole community of believers, and consequently a redefinition of what is Catholic religious education.

During the past few decades, we have been witnessing the coming of age of a number of processes that have been slowly evolving over a number of centuries. Our context is not novel but has been progressively developing from one generation to the next. With the advent of electricity and the digital age, these processes have been hastened. It is unfortunate that in most cases, the Church, both at the local and universal levels, has been slow in reading the signs of the times and has only responded to what was considered to be the most urgent consequences of 'recent' developments. In a number of cases, it seems that we, as a Church, have failed to note the much wider interconnected processes that are leading humanity to new pastures.

From the very start, I must admit that one of the main deficits of this reflection on the processes that have been developing over the centuries is that it is too Eurocentric or rather Westerncentric (for a want of a better term). Yet, it must be conceded that for far too long the Catholic Church has been Eurocentric. Suffice to recall how in the processes of its expansion to other continents, it has in too many circumstances imposed its own worldview and minimally tolerated the development of contextualised theologies, liturgies and modes of being Church. Thus, for instance,

A.-M. Gellel (✉)
Faculty of Education/Faculty of Theology, University of Malta, Msida, Malta
e-mail: adrian.gellel@um.edu.mt

the suspicions towards the theology and Catechesis of Matteo Ricci in China during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Fontana, 2005), the imposition of European Christian names and customs on newly baptised persons in China (see, for instance, Rienstra, 1986), and much more recently the suspicion towards the liberation theologies that emerged in Latin America by a number of members high up in the hierarchy (see, for instance, Boff, 2012) are just a few examples of the Eurocentric restraints over the development of the Church. There is no doubt that Greek philosophy was fundamental to the first Christian communities, as exemplified by the ministry and theology conducted by St. Justine Martyr, in the development of such concepts as omnipotence, person and Trinity. The centrality of Greek philosophy to the development of Christian doctrine has been noted on various occasions by Pope Benedict (see, for instance, Pope Benedict XVI, 2006). Nonetheless, it should also be equally true that the rays of truth are also shared by other non-Western (or non-Hellenised) cultures and religions (Second Vatican Council, Nostra Aetate, 1965). Thus, it is hoped that any reflection put forward here will be taken up and reflected upon in a non-Western perspective.

It should be reiterated that our current situation is the result of a very long process that is not yet concluded. Individualism and its paradoxical partner connectedness, the scientific and technological revolutions and their epistemological derivatives, globalisation and consequently pluralism as well as secular and the recent post-secular worldviews are all major contributors to the progressively changing context that inevitably influences the way of being Church and of doing ministry.

This paper aims to reflect on the current challenges faced by CRE and use theological language in order to justify a more secular approach to CRE. Thus, while I agree with Scott (2015) that CRE should be justified by using educational language and reasoning, the persistence of a number of dioceses and academics to treat CRE as an extension of catechesis, even though the official Church documents have been pointing to a different direction (see, for instance, D'Souza, 2015), requires a theological reasoning to show the current place and nature of religious education within Catholic circles.

An Evolving Context—An Evolving Discipline

There are many factors that are influencing the nature and role of religious education in schools, first amongst which is the secularisation process that is occurring in most Western countries. What up till a century ago was considered to be a core scholastic discipline is now being considered as a marginal subject through a process that is 'completely rejecting the transcendent, [and which] has produced a growing deterioration of ethics, a weakening of the sense of personal and collective sin, and a steady increase in relativism' (Pope Francis, 2013, par. 64).

This secularisation process is also the result of an overt attention to the promises of the scientific revolution which may trace its origins in the methods developed by Galileo, Descartes and Newton. Apart from contributing to more prosperous

economies, it has also led to the privileging of one type of knowledge over another and towards the overspecialisation of knowledge. In so doing, society is losing what Gianbattista Vico, a seventeenth-century Italian philosopher and rhetorician, termed as poetical logic, that is, the type of reasoning which is at the basis of mythologies and narratives. Vico was convinced that myths were essential in the development of human ideas and in the way society has developed (Mali, 2002). Among other things, the consequences of this process are leading to an impoverishment of the language that we normally use in order to access and understand the transcendental reality. Together with other processes, it is also contributing to the fragmentation of knowledge, to the permanence of a competency-based approach in education and consequently to the side-lining of religious education in schools.

A third far-reaching process is that related to globalisation and pluralisation. As Benedict XVI (2009) has noted, while the human community is becoming more and more interdependent, globalisation has created neighbours but is failing to promote fraternity. Thus, a globalisation that is spurred by technology and by economic interests leads to giving more importance to scholastic disciplines that are understood to give an immediate economic return and to the pre-eminence of the values of competition through such programmes as PISA, TIMMS and PIRLS. By bringing peoples closer and by instigating new immigration trends, it leads policymakers to consider religion merely for its cultural dimension and thus promote a religious education that is only meant to mitigate differences and to foster understanding among faiths.

However, these three major processes should not be seen just as a malaise of contemporary society. They also hold the key for reconceptualising Catholic religious education (CRE) in a way that develops and uses a language that points to the true nature of the human person. I as well as others have already argued elsewhere that the Christian understanding of the human person is key to the discipline of CRE (see, for instance, D'Souza, 2015; Gellel, 2009). Once again this is not an original claim or endeavour. Already during the early period of Christianity, the Church Fathers argued that their doctrine was the true philosophy and therefore their teaching constituted the true paideia, that is educating humans into their true form (Rylaarsdam, 2014). This may seem to be an arduous task especially at a time when relativism seems to be rampant and when there is scepticism, or even suspicion, towards anyone who makes truth claims. Nevertheless, these developments in society present a number of opportunities.

Secularisation challenges us to adopt new ways of thinking and to adapt our language to the language and requirements of students. Within a Western context, with the process of secularisation, most of our students are alien to religious discourse and religious practice. A good number of Western countries (particularly European and Australian countries) are no longer guided by a Christian culture since most of them are becoming post-Christian in their outlook. As this process progresses, the process of retrieval may be less hampered by false conceptions and perceptions of students. Such hope is also cultivated by the recent signs of an emerging post-secular attitude, that is, a 'return of religion to the public sphere' (Eder, 2006). Eder noted the rise of religious messages in the society of communication, resulting in the greater visibility of religious beliefs in public arenas. He expands on this idea, claiming that

during the secular era (still predominant in Europe), religion did not disappear, but instead took a form that was invisible at a public level. No one talks about religion, and religious groups don't dare to enter the public sphere because they do not feel legitimate. Secularization is nothing more than a phenomenon that has hushed up religion: seizure of land, interventions, censorship in schools. Therefore, religion has left the public sphere and entered the private. But this is not to say that it has disappeared. It has simply become invisible. In fact, at a certain point in secularization, religion became confident enough to re-emerge in the public sphere, not with one voice offered by the institutions, but with as many voices as there are individuals. (Eder, 2006)

This process of post-secularisation allows more space for the language of the transcendental. With this consideration in mind, it is appropriate to retrieve and make use of poetic logic that is at the basis of the Judeo Christian narrative and which is present in art, rituals, Sacred Scriptures and stories of saintly people. Furthermore, given the pre-eminence of technical and instrumental reasoning, it is fitting that CRE balances the reasoning and discourse presented by other subjects with a discourse that is open to the transcendental and that helps students in their search and formulation of meaning. In this sense, CRE in school should contribute to the cultivation of wisdom. However, it is important to keep in mind that 'true wisdom, as the fruit of self-examination, dialogue and generous encounter between persons, is not acquired by a mere accumulation of data which eventually leads to overload and confusion, a sort of mental pollution' (Pope Francis, 2013, par. 47).

Lastly, in a society that is more than ever plural and that is guided by the logic of globalisation, CRE may become a space of encountering the other. First and foremost, as Habermas argued, by recognising that

in the post-secular society, there is an increasing consensus that certain phases of the "modernization of the public consciousness" involve the assimilation and the reflexive transformation of both religious and secular mentalities. If both sides agree to understand the secularization of society as a complementary learning process, then they will also have cognitive reasons to take seriously each other's contributions to controversial subjects in public debate. (Habermas and Ratzinger, 2006, pp. 46–47)

CRE should offer a challenge to current modes of thinking. It should take on the challenge posed by Pope Francis when speaking of globalisation and a technocratic paradigm. He hoped that we

slow down and look at reality in a different way, to appropriate the positive and sustainable progress which has been made, but also to recover the values and the great goals swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur. (Pope Francis, 2013, par. 114)

But where do these developments leave us? From a practical point of view, Catholic religious education cannot take on the responsibilities of catechesis, that is, accompanying students on their personal faith journey. Beside the fact that most students that partake of CRE have barely received the initial proclamation of the Gospel, most of them need a person who meets them in their life journey, who makes use of their language in order to invite them to reason in a different manner from how the world reasons and to make use of a different language from that which they have been accustomed to. From a ministry point of view, this new scenario places

Catholic religious education in between the ministry of witness (marturia) and that of service (diakonia). In most cases, CRE has to become more of a ministry of service than of witness. Indeed, it has to be understood as a service for students to discover true humanity. Such an understanding of CRE can only be justified and can only be possible if it is steeped in a theology and an imitation of Divine Pedagogy.

The Demands of Divine Pedagogy

The notion of 'Divine Pedagogy' is strongly rooted in the Sacred Scriptures but the term was mostly developed during the patristic period and was rediscovered recently by the documents of the Church mainly in the field of Catechesis. The term was used in the 1971 General Catechetical Directory, John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation Catechesi Tradendae, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and most notably in the General Directory for Catechesis of 1997. Yet the post-conciliar Church is still in a process of rediscovering this theological framework.

Pedagogical action is at the core of God's relationship with humanity. God calls humanity 'to share in his divine life' (Second Vatican Council, 1964, Lumen Gentium, par. 2). Yet, while God calls the individual and the human community to Himself he also requires an internal transformation. It is in this process of transformation, that the pedagogical action of God is most evident. Indeed, the history of salvation may be understood as a history of a vocation and at the same time of a pedagogical relationship between God and humans. This is most evident in the Sacred Scriptures in the call and journey of the prophets, in Wisdom literature, but especially in the Gospels, where Jesus is presented to us as the teacher while his followers are called disciples. The use of this terminology highlights the teacher–student relationship already present in classical antiquity.

The Israelite understanding of the relationship of God with the community, and eventually with every single individual, was a progressive one. From their experience, one can read God's respect for their different historical stages and God's different ways of dealing with the condition of different human groups and individuals. Their belief in a God who is always with them was the major key that enabled them to perceive the possibility of an intimate relationship with God, a relationship experienced and experimented, particularly in the lives of the patriarchs and the prophets. It is mainly in these community-read experiences that one can understand God's personalised pedagogy, a pedagogy radically rooted in the pedagogies of accommodation and adaptation.

In the history of Israel, God is revealed as the Teacher not only of the community but progressively, also of the individual. In the call and in the relationship that is thereafter established, one can understand the intimacy of these relationships and the different ways God deals with every individual. It is indeed in these relationships that one may perceive God's adaptive pedagogical approach. Thus, for instance, Isaiah and Jeremiah can be understood as two different characters whose relationship with God and the way God deals with them is different. From a pedagogical point of view,

one can infer that God not only accommodates to the needs, mentality and progress made by the community but indeed respects every single member by adapting to his/her times, understanding, character and requirements while at the same time demanding renunciation of self in order to be educated into a new being.

In Jesus, God's accommodation and adaptive pedagogy is expressed in its fullness. The incarnation itself is an expression of God's accommodation. The incommensurable God becomes flesh at a given moment in time, in a particular culture, using the language, customs, traditions and mentality prevalent at the time. Furthermore, in the New Testament, Jesus is presented as the teacher whose teaching addresses individual needs according to one's stage in the journey towards total belief in Him. Thus, his message is suited to his audience (crowds, disciples, twelve, small group or individuals). However, the gospels also make the readers aware that all Jesus' actions and words are pregnant with didactic meaning. Jesus does not address solely the masses but he addresses every individual he encounters and he adapts his pedagogy accordingly. Nicodemus, the Samaritan, the blind man, Levi, the tax collector, the rich young man, Jairus and the woman suffering from a haemorrhage are all perfect examples of Jesus' attention to the individual and his ability to adapt to different personal needs.

However, one should also consider that God's personalised pedagogy occurs in the context of the community. The theology of equilibrium between individual and community is once again reiterated even if through a different perspective. Whilst in the Old Testament more attention was given to the salvation of the community, in the New Testament more attention is given to the salvation of the individual. Nonetheless, in both periods there is the belief that there is no community without the individual and vice versa. This theology and this change of emphasis during the two different testamental periods rest in the framework of God's respect, not only of the individual but also of human development. In the New Testament, society had developed a more personalised concept of what is meant by community. God respects this progression by adapting revelation accordingly and by making the call more personal. From a pedagogical point of view, one can infer that God respects the individual in his/her fullness through the positive human model found in the person of Christ. In the New Testament God, through the person of Jesus Christ, personalises his call and adapts to the needs and characteristic of every individual by first addressing the individual, and thus demanding personal commitment, then by walking alongside the individual in his/her faith journey and thereafter by restoring and giving him/her Life.

The process within the history of salvation that led to the incarnation continues to highlight the pedagogy of accommodation. Just as St Gregory Nazianzus, John Chrysostom argued that God is the total Other who is incomprehensible to His creatures. Chrysostom claimed that so great is the distance between God and creation that the prophets and sacred writers could only shudder in front of the 'limitless and yawning depth' of God (Rylaarsdam, 2014). Because of the incommensurable distance between the creator and the creatures, it is God who takes the initiative to reveal Himself progressively in a manner that could be comprehended by humans according to the mentality, language and culture of their time. Thus, while the patriarchs walked before God (Gn 17,1; 48,15), rather than 'with God' as used to happen

in the early years of humanity (Gn 5,24; 6,9), God walked with Israel during their journey from Egypt to the promised land, guided them through the Law, sent Wisdom from His mouth 'to cover the earth like mist' (Sir 24,3) and instructed her to pitch her tenth in Israel (Sir 24,8–17) until in the 'final days' the Word of God became flesh (Jn 1,14) so that we may see the Father (Jn 14,8).

Indeed, it is through the mystery of incarnation that revelation is at its fullest so that every person is called to relate with Him. Yet, even though incarnation is the fullness of revelation, as Origen aptly noted, the incarnation itself is a ladder that leads the disciple towards the next level and deepest truth about our being (Benin, 1993). In and through the Incarnation, humans can ascend from the flesh to the spirit and can, in Clement of Alexandrea's words, become gods; 'the Word of God became a man so that you might learn from a man how to become a god.' (Roberts & Donaldson, 1974, 174). In the thought of the Fathers of the Church, in particular in the theology of Clement, humans are called to participate in the life of God through the process of Divinisation. Clement of Alexandria argued that those who believed that Christ is Lord are saved but those who imitate him become gods, inferior only to God (Yingling, 2009). In this way, Jesus is the Teacher of those who move along the Way and obey His commandments so that God may dwell in them (Jn 14,23).

Reflecting and expanding on God's pedagogy, the early Fathers of the Church, particularly those pertaining to the Alexandrian Church, make use of the Greek concept Paideia (παιδεία) to denote an understanding of education that is more than mere instruction but which gives importance to 'the process of education, the inculturation of a person into the developing heritage of society, which was transmitted from generation to generation' (Willey, 2011a, p. 17). In this sense, the Alexandrian writers and thinkers, most notably Clement of Alexandria, developed the unique concept of Christian paideia. It was understood as the education of the whole person including the body, intellect, heart, passions, spirit and will. In the teachings of the Fathers of the Church and in the subsequent reflections of the Church on its understanding of the human person, it transpires that God's pedagogical action is not just a matter of reconciling humans with God but is a re-education to the original image of the human person at the beginning of creation. The whole history of salvation, which points to the Incarnation and Pascal mysteries, seeks to invite and educate every human person to a new creation obtained by the new Adam. It is clear that the Christian concept of paideia is more than a simple positive reflection of the current nature of the human person but is a belief in higher dignity that the human individual and community can acquire through God's grace so as to be recreated in the image of Christ and be able to participate in the divine life. It is evident that the community of believers must understand God's pedagogy as a continuous journey that will be fulfilled at the end of times and that likewise, the Christian paideia is also a progressive journey of 'the already is' and that which is yet to come.

In view of this, in a world that is evermore being led by globalisation, pluralism and secularisation, there is an urgent need for a CRE that puts the Christian paideia at the centre and fulfils its vocation of being a lamp on a stand (Mt 6:15). Indeed, there is a need for a CRE that helps students understand the meaning of being truly human and rediscover the priorities of humanity that can lead to human flourishing,

that is, living life to the full (Jn 10:10). Such a feat can only be achieved if CRE points to the Teacher who also happens to be the model and image upon which the Father fashioned humanity.

The Religious Educator as Pedagogos

In Christian thought, God, and consequently Jesus, is the sole Teacher. Based on Gal 3, 24, the Fathers of the Church argued that through an accommodating pedagogy God gave Israel the Law as a pedagogue that can lead them to Him (Benin, 1993). For St Irenaeus of Lyon, God taught a people so that He would teach the nations. Indeed, God gave them a Law that is most suited to their condition. For Irenaeus God

> educated a people easily inclined towards idols, and the Lord employed pedagogical techniques apposite for the situation. He led them to primary matters by means of secondary ones: by the figurative to the truth, by the temporal to the eternal, by the carnal to the spiritual, and by the earthly to the celestial. (Benin, 1993, p. 5)

One should understand that the original Greek concept of 'pedagogos' (παιδαγωγος) bears very different nuances to our common understanding of a pedagogue as a teacher. The Greek '*paideuei*' (παιδεύει) means 'to bring up, to train, or to instruct'. The '*pedagogos*' was, however, not the teacher or instructor. In Greek and Roman households, he was usually the slave who would accompany the child to the school teacher to receive instruction, and subsequently also brought him home safely. Thus, he was not the one to give formal instruction but the one who provided supervision on behalf of the father (Willey, 2011b). The emphasis is on the formation of character through a personal relationship with the child. In line with the concept of *paideia,* this would lead to an integration of the instruction received at the teacher, with the virtues and qualities of character expected in the household. The development of the child's character depended on modelling passed on through the relationship with the pedagogue, as a father figure.

The General Directory for Catechesis (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) clearly notes that God is not the pedagogue. God is the 'merciful Father, teacher and sage', 'a creative and insightful teacher', entrusting 'words of instruction and catechesis' and he 'admonishes with reward and punishment' (par. 139). The function of the pedagogue is taken up by all those who bring the 'child' to God, the Teacher, for instruction.

In the current evolving context, it is the Religious Educator who is called to be a pedagogos to students in their everyday life. The Religious Educator is called to be a pedagogue, not a transmitter of knowledge nor a transmitter of faith. Within a post-secular setting, the pedagogue's function to bring the child to God should not be taken literally and for granted. God's own pedagogy of accommodation and adaptation as well as God's deep respect for the human person and for one's freedom should be at the very basis of the identity of the religious pedagogue. To borrow Roebben's (2009) metaphor, the place of the Religious Educator as a pedagogue is

to stand in the narthex meeting children and young people on their life journey and challenging them to become mindful pilgrims rather than simple distracted tourists.

However, one decides to evaluate CRE, its nature and mission requires that it is radically rooted in Divine Pedagogy in that it is called to emulate God's divine pedagogy. Just as God did not impose the Word on Israel until the time when humanity was ready for it, so too the Body of Christ should not impose a catechesis, or even an initial annunciation of the Word, to those who do not even possess the grammar of religious thought.

This theology and way of conceptualising Catholic religious education calls for changes at least three levels, namely:

 (i)   the way the Church understands the ministry of teaching,
 (ii) the way curriculum leaders and episcopal conferences develop the curriculum as well as textbooks and
(iii) the way how the community of believers understand the role of the CRE teacher.

By specifying that the Religious Educator is a pedagogue rather than a teacher one is not downgrading the role of the Religious Educator. On the contrary, it is a means of specifying better the teaching office within the Church. While the Church is required to act as a custodian of the deposit of faith given to us by the apostolic community, to interpret it according to the context we now live in and to share it with all its members and with the world, the Church is also required to pre-evangelise, that is, to prepare the ground for the seed of the Word and the Kingdom of God. In a more secular and plural context, the Church is becoming more aware of this specific way of teaching. The process of pre-evangelization is recognised as essential to the evangelising mission of the Church by Pope Paul VI (1975) who extends this ministry from the missionary contexts to secular context. Indeed, he states

> as a result of the frequent situations of dechristianisation in our day, it also proves equally necessary for innumerable people who have been baptized but who live quite outside Christian life, for simple people who have a certain faith but an imperfect knowledge of the foundations of that faith, for intellectuals who feel the need to know Jesus Christ in a light different from the instruction they received as children, and for many others. (par. 52)

Thus, meeting students in the narthex in their personal life journeys is to encounter them where they are respecting who they are and God's hidden action in their lives. The role of religious education is to provide the religious grammar to those who due to a secularising culture are orphan of the language, a community and a tradition but who still express and search and answer for their fundamental and spiritual quests (Roebben, 2009). CRE then becomes a process of walking with, of theologising, of humanising and enlightening. Expecting more of the discipline within a school setting would be expecting too much and probably lead to failures and disappointments.

As a ministry in its own right, CRE finds its sources in the teaching function of the Church, while the Religious Educator is called to share the ministry of the pedagogue with the Holy Father (Code of Canon Law, 1983 Can. 759) and consequently to be in communion with him (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, par. 44). This should require that Religious Educators are given canonical recognition and therefore

a mandate. Although not the norm, such a situation already exists in a number of dioceses. The giving of the mandate should sensitise ecclesial communities to invest in the preparation and the ongoing formation of teachers. Rather than investing in books and syllabi, which many a time delimit the adapting and contextualising role of the teacher, local Churches would do well to invest in the professional and spiritual support of teachers who most of the time are front liners and who need to be well versed in the science and art of Divine Pedagogy.

This calls upon the Church to rediscover the meaning and practice of Divine Pedagogy so as to rethink the meaning of the ministry of teaching in today's society with a view of acknowledging and strengthening the role and mission of CRE, and of recognising those who teach it as pedagogues who point the way to the Teacher. The richness available in the way God the Teacher has dealt with humanity should help us move beyond any dichotomies of cognitive and affective nature of CRE as well as the impasse in the distinction between catechesis and Catholic religious education.

References

Benin, S. D. (1993). *Footprints of god: The divine accommodation in Jewish and Christian thought*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Boff, L. (2012). *Church: Charism and power: Liberation theology and the institutional church*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Code of Canon Law. (1983). Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_INDEX.HTM#fonte.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988). *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html.

Congregation for the Clergy. (1997). *General directory for catechesis.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

D'Souza, M. O. (2015). The progression of religious education since the Second Vatican Council as seen through some church documents. In M. T. Buchanan & A. M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 9–21). Switzerland: Springer.

Eder, K. (2006). Post-secularism: A return to the public sphere. *Eurozine*, *17*(August). Retrieved from http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2006-08-17-eder-en.html.

Fontana, M. (2005). *Matteo Ricci: un gesuita alla corte dei Ming*. Milano: Mondadori.

Gellel, A. (2009). Adapting to the requirements of the individual in the RE classroom. In *International handbook of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions in education* (pp. 1093–1109). Dordrecht: Springer.

Habermas, J., & Ratzinger, J. (2006). *The dialectics of secularization: On reason and religion*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Mali, J. (2002). *The rehabilitation of myth: Vico's 'new science'*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pope Benedict XVI. (2006). *Faith, reason and the university memories and reflections. Apostolic journey of His Holiness Benedict VI to München, ALtötting and Regensburg (September 9–14, 2006).* Meeting with the representatives of Science. Lecture of the Holy Father. Retrieved from https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html.

Pope Benedict XVI. (2009). *Encyclical letter Caritas in Veritate. On integral human development in charity and truth.* Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html.

Pope Francis. (2013). *Apostolic exhortation Evangelii Gaudium. On the proclamation of the Gospel in today's world.* Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

Pope Paul VI. (1975) *Apostolic exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html.

Rienstra, M. H. (Ed.). (1986). *Jesuit letters from China, 1583-84*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Roberts, A., & Donaldson, J. (Eds.). (1974). *Ante-Nicene fathers*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans.

Roebben, B. (2009). Narthical religious learning: Redefining religious education in terms of pilgrimage. *British Journal of Religious Education, 31*(1), 17–27.

Rylaarsdam, D. (2014). *John Chrysostom on divine pedagogy: The coherence of his theology and preaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scott, K. (2015). Problem or paradox: Teaching the Catholic religion in Catholic schools. In M. T. Buchanan & A. M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 47–60). Switzerland: Springer.

Second Vatican Council. (1964). *Dogmatic constitution Lumen Gentium* (21 November 1964). Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

Second Vatican Council. (1965). *Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions Nostra Aetate* (28 October 1965). Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.

Willey, P. (2011a). An original pedagogy for catechesis. In C. Farey, W. Linnig, & M. J. Paruch (Eds.), *The pedagogy of god. Its centrality in catechesis and catechist formation* (pp. 15–28). Ohio: Emmaus House Publishing.

Willey, P. (2011b). The pedagogue and the teacher. In C. Farey, W. Linnig, & M. J. Paruch (Eds.), *The pedagogy of god. Its centrality in catechesis and catechist formation* (pp. 15–28). Ohio: Emmaus House Publishing.

Yingling, E. (2009). Ye are gods: Clement of Alexandria's doctrine of deification. *Studia Antiqua, 7*(2), 93–99.

Prof Adrian-Mario Gellel is an Associate Professor in Religious Education at the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Theology, University of Malta. His main areas of interest are symbol literacy, children's spirituality, religious education and general pedagogy. Between 2006 and 2010, he was the national coordinator for religious education in schools for the Catholic Church. He led the consultation on the policy document Religious Education in Malta: Reflections by the Catholic Community (2009). Together with Prof. Michael Buchannan, he edited the first volume of the *Global Perspectives on Catholic Religious Education in Schools* (Springer, 2015) and convened the first conference on Catholic Religious Education (2018).

Chapter 5
New Wine in Fresh Wineskins. Rethinking the Theologicity of Catholic Religious Education

Bert Roebben

Introduction

In understanding religions and worldviews today, every effort to do so is necessarily biased, situated in time and space, and shaped by the very context of the beholder. Both the researcher of Religious Education (RE) and the people in the local RE classroom, teachers and students, rely on limited resources and insights. No one can grasp the complete picture of RE today. Even on a meta-reflective level, it is impossible to describe, let alone to understand, the historical role, the contemporary impact and the future challenges for RE in church and society today. Researchers in the field can only try to understand each other's provisions of RE, create common criteria to describe the local landscapes, develop a meaningful cartography (for instance, the REL-EDU project, Rothgangel, Jackson, & Jäggle, 2014) and then start a conversation on comparative features and challenges. They will discover issues that can be considered as common denominators globally, but that are dealt with in specific and divergent ways locally (Bråten, 2013). Convening in international conferences—exchanging local provisions, good practices, evidence-based research and theoretical concepts of Catholic RE—serves precisely this goal: comparing "worlds of difference" and hoping to create a common vision for a world filled with such worlds of difference. The argument in this paper is rooted in a perception and evaluation of RE in a post-secular West-European society. The bias of the chapter lies in the knowledge that the author is a white male Catholic lay theologian, a father of three young adults, teaching and researching in a state-funded university in Germany.

This chapter contains four parts. First of all, both the external and internal challenges for RE today will be depicted and evaluated through a hermeneutical lens. RE as dealing with the challenge of growing in shared humanity (externally) and the challenge of providing safe hermeneutical space to consider existential questions

B. Roebben (✉)
Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany
e-mail: hroebben@uni-bonn.de

(internally) will be discussed. Second, the implications for RE as a brave hermeneutical space are discussed. A specific irritating hermeneutic and the involvement of young people who are re-creating traditions will be addressed. This is followed, third, by an invitation to inquire theologically the foundations of Catholic RE, revitalizing the four traditional dimensions *institutio, confessio, traditio* and *fides*. This will be done from a cosmopolitan perspective: the four dimensions will be reconsidered conceptually and practically by overcoming their static representation in today's culture. In a fourth and final part, perspectives for further theological research in "cosmopolitan RE" are considered and reflected.

External and Internal Challenges for Religious Education

Challenges for RE in General

Religious and non-religious worldviews are present these days "all over the place", in negative or positive representations, in highly outspoken and provocative or unarticulated and undifferentiated forms. "The semantic potential of [religious and non-religious] traditions is at everybody's disposal—on the street, in the newspaper, on the (not always so) "social" media. Children and young people do pick up these things effortlessly" (Roebben, 2016, p. 3) and often remain unsure about what to do with it. As far as I can see, they deserve better than what we offer them today. They deserve a solid educational space in which these experiences are "named and tamed"—articulated and reflected. According to the REDCo-research, they are longing for "knowledge (…), shared interests, and joined activities". But at the same time, they are "more ambivalent about its value since in practice, not all [of them] are comfortable with the way diversity is managed in schools" (REDCo, 2018, n.p.). It all boils down to "understanding" religious and non-religious worldviews (Jackson, 2014; Toledo Guiding Principles, 2007) in the specific way religious and non-religious people (as fellow students in the microcosm of the classroom) are "viewing" the world personally and collectively. Living and learning in the presence of the other—being in dialogue with each other, in order to understand the other and oneself better, to move "closer and closer apart and further together" (Hansen, 2011, pp. 3–5), to overcome conflicts (Ter Avest, 2009) and to try out new practices of "togetherness-in-difference"—should be the educational answer to the societal quest of children and young people.

"Growing in shared humanity" (Roebben, 2016, pp. 43–61) as an external challenge is only one issue. The internal challenges for RE are enormous as well. In a post-secular age, churches, faith communities and worldview providers need to unravel their semantic potential to make it accessible to the outside but also to the inside. In order to reach this goal, they need to support their future generations in developing personal and spiritual skills—based on the generic (religious or non-religious) worldview of the community at stake, but also with respect to new and

globalized forms of living in today's world (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Groome, 1998). They just need to "think outside the box and open their spiritual capital for new generations" (Roebben, 2016, p. 11). They need to consider new wine in fresh wineskins. This is not about a soft correlative adaptation of old forms of tradition to the contemporary situation (*Traditionskrise*), because they are both, tradition and situation alike, debated controversially (Schweitzer, 2009, p. 242). The issue is much more the radical rupture between the old wineskins and the new wine (*Traditions-abbruch*), between the old traditions and the new experiences, accelerated by the lack of religious socialization and language and by the ongoing transformation of religions and worldviews in today's world. New wine should not be in old, but in fresh wineskins.

Challenges for Catholic RE

Just as every other worldview tradition, the Roman Catholic Church has to deal with these challenges too. Will she be honest to herself and keep her hermeneutical learning space safe and brave for young people to live an "examined life" (Socrates), in order to cultivate "spiritual muscles" (Martini, 2008, p. 52) for the future? For sure, there are many good practices on the ground: the intentions of teachers struggling with daily reality in the classroom are generous, school leaders and school boards are as creative as possible in facing difficult local situations. But "where there is no vision, the people run wild" (Proverbs 29:18). Where there is no long-term perspective for the Roman Catholic Church as a community of *Bildung* (the German inclusive word for educating the whole person) in a globalized world, local people in schools will run wild and in the end burn out. My plea is to create more discursive communities in the Roman Catholic worlds of education, according to the principle of subsidiarity and *consensus fidelium*, and getting as much people as possible on board: pupils, teachers, local communities, school leaders, policy makers and curriculum developers.

There are at least three reasons why this challenge is highly urgent. First of all, the Jewish-Christian faith is from its origins and in its nutshell an educational religion (*Bildungsreligion*) (Koerrenz, 1997). It fully corresponds with the definition of *Bildung* according to Hegel and Gadamer, which "consists in learning to allow what is different from oneself and to find universal viewpoints from which one can grasp the thing, 'the objective thing in its freedom', without selfish interest" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 14). Second, Muslim scholars are challenging Christians to refresh and reinvigorate their tradition. They are asking their Christian fellows why they do not respect, know and practice their own tradition more (Kermani, 2017). And finally, from an educational perspective, the challenges are no longer local, but global (Biesta, 2016; Hansen, 2011; Peukert, 2002) and they need to be addressed urgently. If the promising vision of the Second Vatican Council regarding the Roman Catholic community and its education wants to continue to flourish for the next generation, it will need to become "cosmopolitan."

Implications for Religious Education

RE and the Education of the Whole Person

What does *Bildung*, comprehensively understood as the education of the whole human person, mean for RE? Paul Ricœur helps us to interpret this process by using the metaphor of travelling:

> A person is a creative hermeneutical being who is always in search of meaning, and meaning can only be found via multiple hermeneutical detours. It is revealed not by introspection but rather by reaching out. We are given to ourselves indirectly (…). Identity never takes the form of a possession to be defended against 'outsiders' or 'strangers'; it is not even a place to start. For Ricœur, the formation of identity is a never ending journey that one may only undertake with others. The human being is a traveller, who, like Moses, will never be allowed to enter the Promised Land but will only see it from afar before dying." (Paul Ricœur paraphrased in the words of Moyaert, 2014, pp. 110–111)

Being an educated person means to be a person "at home on the road" (Roebben, 2016, pp. 25–42)—staying in motion, not rusting in resignation or apathy, but keeping the hope alive through "the deliberate act to interrupt isolation and to dare communication" (Roebben, 2017, p. 201). According to Thomas Aquinas, even the act of learning itself is rooted in the "hope structure" of the human existence (Roebben, 2017, p. 201), in the person longing for the next meaningful step in his/her life (Freire, 2004). In the twenty-first century, this journey is accelerated by the very process of globalization. People now need to be aware of the ultimate destination of their journey in life, but more than ever before also of the collateral impact of meaningful others along the road, using the more "transversal" (Wolfgang Welsch) or "in over our heads" (Robert Kegan) modes of their human existence, intelligence and education.

The specific opportunities that RE can offer in this respect should be considered extensively. RE is driven first of all by the basic assumption that life is not only *worth* examining but also principally *open* for examination and consideration (Roebben, 2016, pp. 20–21). The human being has the right to raise existential questions (this should be considered to be a generic "human right") and this right is rooted in the human capacity of raising questions.

> The person who still can be astonished about things, is a learning being. This fragile personal and spiritual dimension of education (…) – of becoming a human being in the midst of a complex world so often incapable of dealing with unsolved questions – should be at the core of the school curriculum. Learners are human beings who learn to live, to a degree, with unanswered questions. They are not machines or computer applications, endlessly repeating the schemes and procedures they were trained in. *Bildung* can and should create space for this process of awareness of unpredictability and fragility – this sense of mystery. (Roebben, 2016, p. 83)

In line with Karl Rahner, who coins this capacity theologically as "transcendental openness", Gottfried Bitter argues:

The human being is born with the ability and the task to become a question to him- or herself. He/she can delve in oneself, but also can look further and ask further, in order to break open the opaqueness of the self and find a valuable self-interpretation. (…) it is precisely in this self-responsibility [in this responding to oneself, BR] that the human being can become truly a person. (Bitter, 2007, p. 33, *free translation*)

RE and the Idea of Transcendence

Education in general is oriented towards self-transcendence. The German philosopher Hans Joas refers in this respect and in line with Hegel and Gadamer to self-transcendence as the "easing and liberating oneself of the fixation on the self" (Joas, 2004, p. 17). RE contributes to the cultivating of a permanent disposition for such self-transcendence: seeing oneself radically from a different angle, by observing actual fellows surrounding the self but also by daring the possibility of an ultimate, a radically different transcendence. All the things that occur to the pilgrim-learner on his or her journey in life and in the diverging ditches along the road can become objects of existential learning. In the Christian tradition, this is called the "ultimate concern" (Paul Tillich) or the possibility to perceive the self, the other and the world *etsi Deus daretur*, as if God would exist (Schweitzer, 2009). Or, in the rather provocative words of Terrence Copley:

If you leave God out, you are communicating a value just as much as if you keep God in public discourse (…). We are culturally programmed to be wary of religious indoctrination in the West, but the question of secular indoctrination has largely escaped attention. It seems that our children need to be protected from religion, but not from secularism. (…). If teaching the certainty of God constitutes attempted indoctrination, then teaching the impossibility of God, or suppressing discourse about God, constitutes another sort of attempted indoctrination. In the face of this, how is education about religion(s) to proceed? The answer is clear. It must dare to teach the possibility of God. The individual student is then invited to engage with alleged evidence and experiences and eventually to reach his or her own conclusions. (Copley, 2008, pp. 22–31 passim)

This RE enactment of self-transcendence can never be executed under pressure and should always occur in freedom and under the vigilance "about our own practices through the recognition of accountability to a God who does not use power against us, even to the extent of not persuading us beyond our cooperation that God is there at all" (Bellous, 1995, p. 83). Nevertheless, it should be presented to young people as a creative and innovative way of rethinking the human being, the world and its secularized "sacred" practices (for instance, of market and media) today (Mette, 2009).

It is up to the teacher of RE to present this offer in an open and inviting way, so that young people can freely decide how to deal with it. The assumption is moreover that he/she uses creative and innovative didactical methods. One of the ways of inviting young people into the brave hermeneutical space of transcendence is to offer them "irritating hermeneutics", provoking them with divergent images of the human person, the world and God and their complex relationship (for instance, If

there is suffering, where is God? What is the connection between God and creation? Why should you be moral at all? Where does my vocation as a human being come from, if not from myself?). The concept of theologizing with young people (Schlag & Schweitzer, 2011), inviting them to become the creators of their own theologies, reflecting with them their journey in the presence of other journeys, offering them food for thought and exemplifying as a teacher what the disposition of self-transcendence encompasses, seems to be the preferred way for didactics in RE. In this approach, young people use and produce theology—through performance, storytelling and conceptualizations of theology (Roebben, 2016, p. 90–93). They try out performatively, inductively and creatively what it means to be a person open for and reflective of transcendence. In this didactical approach, flexibility is expected, not only from the learners but also from the teachers and, last but not least, from the curriculum as well:

> (…) Objects are "runaway objects", never fixed and open to change. In a setting of Religious Education this means that the object, what we perhaps could call "students' religious understanding" is never fixed. It changes as a result of the processes in the activity system. An interesting conflict arises when there is a contradiction between new objects and old tools. (Afdal, 2010, p. 55)

To put it differently: an interesting opportunity arises when the new wine doesn't fit in the old wineskins anymore.

Implications for Theological Inquiry in the Roman Catholic Tradition

What are the implications for the Roman Catholic tradition—this very specific "safe and brave" hermeneutical RE space—in which we invite young people in our schools? How can the experience of self-transcendence be lived out and reflected upon within a Roman Catholic community of discourse? Which theological concepts and frames of reference do we have at our disposal to understand the implicit theological origin, relevance and promise of RE? How do European RE provisions understand transcendence as a basic disposition and in which ways are they making this disposition explicit, by searching for names and practices for it (Beaudoin, 2008)?

According to the basic principle of education (see above)—that it is in life, about being and about staying on the move—the issue is now how to overcome the danger of a paralysed and static theology of RE and to move towards a more creative and dynamic perspective. It goes without saying that in a secularized context where de-institutionalization, de-confessionalization and de-traditionalization reign, the relevance of a theological discourse on self-transcendence in general, and within RE more specifically, is utterly vulnerable (Berger, 2014). Will RE be strong enough to counter these cultural developments all by itself? Definitely not! But, rather than hiding away as RE teachers, one should be inviting young people to enter the traditional

learning spaces of RE and reframe with them the faith-dimension in these learning spaces again. The British religious educationalist Jeff Astley argues as follows:

> What they [= young people] need is a *religious response* to other faiths, rather than some improved rational reflection on their own position in the ultimate order of truths about reality. That is why current emphases on 'humility' and 'hospitality' often seem to hit the mark; whereas debates over the (theo)logical limits of tolerance and religious relativism leave people cold, because the debates are themselves cold… (Astley, 2012, p. 257)

And he continues:

> The really significant religious dialogue for *the learner* is not that between the religions. It is the dialogue between, on the one hand, that individual himself or herself, with his or her own worldview; and, on the other hand, the variety of beliefs, values, and spiritual and moral practices of the plural world around them, especially where it takes on a religious form. If religions are fundamentally soteriologically oriented cultures, this educational dialogue is in principle open to developing into a salvific dialogue. It is therefore bound to lay the student open to risk (…) *the risk of religious embrace.* (Astley, 2012, p. 259)

One way of doing this in a theologically reasonable, educationally responsible and didactically appropriate way in RE is by asking the *where*-question, rather than the *what*-question: where can we see religious-constitutive language in action, where can we meet people of faith, living and learning *etsi Deus daretur*? I believe that the four traditional, but rather static legitimizations for RE (institution, confession, tradition and faith) can be reconsidered in more critical and dynamic representations of theology, fitting for RE today. The *fides qua* (where and how do people actually live their Roman Catholic faith in transcendence?) is in this respect more thought-provoking than the *fides quae* (what is the precise content of the Roman Catholic faith, its tradition, confession and institution?)

This exercise to "accelerate" the religious experience (*fides qua*) within the Roman Catholic theological tradition (*fides quae*)—to reset theological content in motion, so that taught theology becomes learned and lived theology—could be done as follows. In a Catholic RE with a strong focus on institution or church socialization, young people could (and actually do) ask for correlative learning communities where church can be seen "in motion": vital, responsive and young minded. In a Catholic RE with a strong focus on confession, young people could (and actually do) ask for support in finding their own positioning: where do I locate myself within this belief system and what is, for instance, the position of the teacher? In a Catholic RE with a strong focus on the transfer of tradition, young people could (and actually do) ask for ways in which that tradition can be seen "in motion", can be hermeneutically "liquefied" in key narratives, made accessible to their grass roots experiences. And finally, in a Catholic RE with a strong focus on "having faith", the issue could be (and actually is) how young people can learn to know faith "in motion", the disposition of being a person open for transcendence, a person of "decentration—putting the centre outside of oneself and dedication—committing oneself to the otherness and strangeness of the other" (Roebben, 2016, pp. 70–71), daring also the possibility of an ultimate, a radically different transcendence, opening students for the "risk of religious embrace" (Astley, see above), daring "to teach the possibility of God" (Copley, see above).

These four representations of Catholic RE do exist in their generic forms in Europe. My argument now is to critically interrelate them and to reconnect them proactively to the fourth one, the habitus of lived faith, as an invitation for young people to enter the safe and brave space of self-transcendence. It goes without saying that this kind of faith-oriented theologizing *with* young people presupposes an "irritating-hermeneutic" theology *for* young people. Here again, the dimensions institution, confession and tradition can play their thought-provoking role. There is no normative linearity, not upwards to the institutional, not downwards to faith. It is all a matter of discerning what the differences are and how every provision of RE can and should become more dynamic in the light of RE as self-transcendence.

What is the concept of faith? The Austrian religious psychologist and educationalist Bucher (2013) argues (based among others on the work of Fowler, 1981) that faith in its two anthropological representations of "basic trust" and "safe attachment" in childhood is highly relevant for RE with children today. Other authors are dealing with the reframing of these experiences in adolescence and young adulthood (Faix, Riegel, & Künkler, 2015). They argue that augmented reflexivity can cause doubt and critique concerning the idea of self-transcendence in faith, but can as well be discussed and (through dynamic impulses by institution, confession and tradition) be reflected in RE. Moreover, other authors are pointing to forms of "lived theology" where people give ultimate words to their experiences with self-transcendence (Cameron, 2010). Another approach that provides a good foundation for an inter-worldview dialogue on faith in contemporary culture is one which questions what ultimately concerns people in their personal spiritual life and in their communal ethical decision-making. In this sense the idea of "A Common Faith" proposed by John Dewey is not far away (Dewey, 1934; Roebben, 2016, pp. 65–66).

> Ultimately, faith as self-transcendence is rooted in the experience of saying "Thou": "You come first, I can step out of my comfort zone and dedicate myself to you." The "Thou" is a majestic way to address the other as the ultimate other. In the Catholic-Christian tradition,it is allowed for the human being to address God personally as a 'Thou' and to tell his/her story as an 'I' in his presence (*coram Deo*). The storyteller may ask questions such as: 'Have you heard my small story? Have you seen me? Do you accept me the way I am?'" (Roebben, 2016, pp. 105–106)

God is like a father who gives life to his prodigal son, offers him the "Thou" by welcoming him, listening to his story and speaking out the ultimate "Thou" in the son's face (Luke 15). The youngest son is free to respond, but so is the eldest son, who is involved as a critical bystander and has been recognized by the father as well.

Theologicity: Towards a "Cosmopolitan" Religious Education

Rethinking the theologicity of RE, that is, rethinking the postmodern idea of self-transcendence in a theological way as *etsi Deus daretur,* and anchoring RE provisions (related to church, confession and/or tradition) in the experience of faith, seems to

be the major challenge for globalization-proof RE. This theologicity is the public theological outreach of RE to young people in the (virtual) city, to that immense and dense learning space where people search for meaning and scan the ultimate horizon behind and above the skyscrapers. Therefore, one could reread this term as 'Theologi-City'. In line with the work of the American philosopher of education David T. Hansen, one could call this type of RE as "cosmopolitan" (Hansen, 2011). It consists of "reflective openness to the new and reflective loyalty to the old" (Hansen, 2009, p. 137). It is searching deep in the existing local provisions of RE and retrieving the innovative and creative theological power, when one digs with young people in the RE classroom into the spiritual capital of these provisions. Cosmopolitan RE tries "to metabolize the new into the known, such that the latter itself takes on new qualities" (Hansen, 2011, p. 8). It tries to develop new theological insights with young people, such that the old concepts take on new qualities. Hansen is not radical, but rather modest. He wants to pour out the new wine in the old wineskins. Jesus, in the Gospel of Marc (2:22) is more radical. New wine should be in fresh wineskins. He suggests that one should empty the old wineskins or at least one should not pour out new wine in old wineskins. One should build one's hope in new wine and/in fresh wineskins. This liquefying (new wine) or emptifying (not in old wineskins) act of Jesus sounds very kenotic.

An interesting meta-reflective endeavour for RE research consists in collecting the new theologies born out of the encounter between old RE provisions and new generations. In RE, young people are "using and producing" theology (Roebben, 2016). Is the official (institutional, confessional and traditional) theology ready to learn from this "ordinary theology" (Astley, 2002) and to dare to understand its concepts and practices as "runaway objects" (see Afdal above)? Is she ready to rethink the dynamic challenges from the outside-in, before claiming credibility from the inside-out? I believe that RE can offer a solid ground for the renewal of theology as a whole.

Conclusion

"No one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins are ruined. Rather, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins" (Mk 2:22).

Inviting young people into the theologically brave space of RE, where there is room for struggle, denial and/or acceptance of the possibility of God, where they can become the agents of their own theology in motion, always in communication with meaningful others in the global classroom, is the huge challenge in the gospel of Mark. To meet this challenge, RE teachers should dare to focus on the theologicity of RE as a thought-provoking and hermeneutical-irritating gift to young people. They should not hide but dare to invite. Moreover, they should dare to abide in the presence of the Holy Spirit:

Jesus says so firmly: 'New wine in new wineskins!' (…) Even customs must be renewed in the newness of the Holy Spirit, in the surprises of God. (…) The Lord give us the grace of an open heart, of a heart open to the voice of the Holy Spirit, which can discern what must not change because it is fundamental from what has to change in order to be able to receive the newness of the Holy Spirit. (Pope Francis, 2016)

References

Afdal, G. (2010). *Researching religious eduction as social practice*. Münster/New York/München/Berlin: Waxmann.

Astley, J. (2002). *Ordinary theology. Looking, listening and learning in theology*. London: Ashgate.

Astley, J. (2012). A theological reflection on the nature of religious truth. In J. Astley et al. (Eds.), *Teaching religion, teaching truth. Theoretical and empirical perspectives* (pp. 241–262). Oxford: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers.

Beaudoin, T. (2008). *Witness to dispossession. The vocation of the postmodern theologian*. Maryknoll (NY): Orbis Books.

Bellous, J. E. (1995). Moral identity, human maturity and Christian experience. *Panorama, 7*(1), 72–85.

Berger, P. (2014). *The many altars of modernity. Toward a paradigm for religion in a pluralist age*. Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter.

Biesta, G. (2016). *The beautiful risk of education*. New York: Routledge.

Bitter, G. (2007). Spiritualität als geistlicher Lebensstil. In M. Langer & W. Verburg (Eds.), *Zum Leben führen. Handbuch religionspädagogischer Spiritualität* (pp. 15–44). München: DKV [Spirituality as life style].

Bråten, O. M. H. (2013). *Towards a methodology for comparative studies in religious eduction: A study of England and Norway*. Münster/New York/München/Berlin: Waxmann.

Bucher, A. (2013). Wie viel und was für Theologie braucht das Kind? *Jahrbuch für Kindertheologie, 12,* 27–39 [How much and which theology does a child need?].

Cameron, H. (2010). *Talking about God in practice. Theological action research and practical theology.* London: SCM Press.

Copley, T. (2008). Non-indoctrinary religious eduction in secular cultures. *Religious Education, 103,* 22–31.

Crawford, M., & Rossiter, G. (2006). *Reasons for living. Education and young people's search for meaning, identity and spirituality.* Victoria: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Dewey, J. (1934). *A common faith*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Faix, T., Riegel, U., & Künkler, T. (2015). *Theologien von Jugendlichen: Empirische Erkundungen zu theologisch relevanten Konstruktionen Jugendlicher*. Münster: Lit-Verlag [Theologies of young people: empirical explorations of theologically relevant constructions of young people].

Freire, P. (2004). *Pedagogy of hope. Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Fowler, J. (1981). *Stages of faith. The psychology of human development and the quest for meaning*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

Gadamer, H.-G. (1975). *Truth and method*. London: Sheed and Ward.

Groome, T. (1998). *Educating for life. A spiritual vision for every teacher and parent*. Allen: Thomas More.

Hansen, D. T. (2009). Dewey and cosmopolitanism. *Education and Culture, 25,* 126–140.

Hansen, D. T. (2011). *The Teacher and the world. A study of cosmopolitanism as education*. New York: Routledge.

Jackson, R. (2014). *Signposts. Policy and practice for teaching about religions and non-religious world views in intercultural education*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Joas, H. (2004). *Braucht der Mensch Religion? Über Erfahrungen der Selbsttranszendenz.* Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder [Does the human being need religion? On experiences of self-transcendence].

Kermani, N. (2017). *Ungläubiges Staunen. Über das Christentum*. München: C.H. Beck [Unbelievable wondering].

Koerrenz, R. (1997). Hermeneutik des Lernens. Der anthropologische Wirklichkeitsbezug der biblischen Überlieferung. *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie, 12*, 221–242 [Hermeneutics of learning. The anthropological reality of biblical tradition].

Martini, C. (2008). *Jerusalemer Nachtgespräche? Über das Risiko des Glaubens*. Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder [Night talks in Jersualem. On the risk of faith].

Mette, N. (2009). Gottesverdunstung. Eine religionspädagogische Zeitdiagnose. *Jahrbuch der Religionspädagogik, 25,* 9–23 [The evaporation of God. An epochal analysis from a religious educational point of view].

Moyaert, M. (2014). *In response to the religious other. Ricœur and the fragility of interreligious encounters*. Lanham/Boulder/New York/London: Lexington Books.

Peukert, H. (2002). Reflexionen über die Zukunft religiöser Bildung. *Religionspädagogische Beiträge, #49*, 49–66 [Reflexions on the future of religious eduction].

Pope Francis. (2016). *Morning meditation on January 18, 2016*. https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2016/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20160118_new-wineskins.pdf (consulted on the 1st of February 2018).

REDCo. (2018). www.redco.de. See recommendations (consulted on the 1st of February 2018).

Roebben, B. (2016). *Theology made in dignity. On the precarious role of theology in religious eduction* (Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs 44). Leuven/Paris/Bristol (CT): Peeters.

Roebben, B. (2017). Generating hope. The future of the teaching profession in a globalized world. *Religious Education, 112,* 199–206.

Rothgangel, M., Jackson, R., & Jäggle, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Religious education at schools in Europe* [Vol. 2: Western Europe]. Wien: Vienna University Press.

Schlag, T., & Schweitzer, F. (2011). *Brauchen Jugendliche Theologie? Jugendtheologie als Herausforderung und didaktische Perspektive*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag [Do young people need theology? Youth theology as a challenge and a didactical perspective].

Schweitzer, F. (2009). Gott im Religionsunterricht. Bestandsaufnahme – neue Herausforderungen – weiterführende Perspektiven zu einer Didaktik der Gottesfrage. *Jahrbuch der Religionspädagogik, 25,* 239–263 [God in religious eduction. State of affairs, new challenges and further reflections on a didactics of the quest for God].

Ter Avest, I. (2009). Conflict matters. 'The making of' a difference. In I. Ter Avest (Ed.), *Education in conflict* (pp. 15–37). Münster/New York/München/Berlin: Waxmann.

Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools. (2007). Warsaw: OSCE.

Prof Bert Roebben is Professor of religious education at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Bonn. He earned the degrees of Doctor in Theology (1994), MA in Religious Studies (1985), MA in Theology (1987), BA in Canon Law (1989) and BA in Educational Sciences (1991) at the KU Leuven. He was Assistant Professor at KU Leuven (Belgium), Associate Professor at Tilburg University (the Netherlands) and Full Professor at TU Dortmund University (Germany). In 2017, he served as President of the Religious Education Association. From 2019 till 2021, he is appointed as Extraordinary Professor at the Faculty of Theology of Stellenbosch University (South-Africa).

Chapter 6
Theological Underpinnings of Australian Catholic RE: A Public Theology Proposal

Terence Lovat

Introduction

This chapter will begin with an appraisal of Religious Education (RE) as it has functioned in Australian religious and public school settings over the past century and a half, with especial reference to the Catholic setting. Such appraisal will be shown to reveal a paucity of theological underpinning and directionality in RE, rendering it weakened against other school subjects by means of a gap in its disciplinary underpinnings. This chapter will move to propose a public theology perspective as one highly suitable to redressing this weakness and providing RE with the theological infrastructure necessary to its role as agency of both informing and enfaithing. This chapter will justify this move against a range of prominent scholarship in theology, including that of Newman and Aquinas, and will utilize a key feature of Habermasian epistemology that fits well with the intentions of both public theology and an informing and enfaithing RE.

In earlier work, I appraised Religious Education (RE) as it had functioned in Australian religious and public systems from the nineteenth into twenty-first centuries, making an essential distinction between overt 'enfaithing' and more subtle 'interfaith' approaches, each with associated curriculum models. I made the point then that both approaches had been tried at times in Catholic settings, some more successfully than others. I concluded by proffering an 'integrated' approach, with a critical model that could garner the strength of each other approach while avoiding their weaknesses. It was a model that not only allowed for but demanded both strong theological and educational foundations and methods.

T. Lovat (✉)
University of Newcastle, Newcastle, Australia
e-mail: Terry.Lovat@newcastle.edu.au

T. Lovat
University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

To each model, I applied a theological critique. In the case of the enfaithing models, what was proffered as constituting a theological foundation was, in my view, overwhelmed by an evangelical imperative that potentially constrained the levels of scholarly freedom necessary to serious theological consideration or procedure. In the case of the interfaith models, theological underpinning had been deemed irrelevant because the explicit aim was to avoid or at least skirt the issue of faith formation so, even when these models were employed in the Catholic setting, they tended to function in a theology-free way. The paucity of theology could therefore be deemed to be the single greatest weakness of Australian Catholic RE of any species as it had functioned since the beginnings of Australian school education. Furthermore, it could be proffered that this weakness rendered the subject inert as either an effective informing or enfaithing educational tool. This chapter is aimed at redressing this weakness by proposing that the tenor of public theology presents as one highly suitable to both of these essential RE purposes.

RE Models and Theological Underpinnings (or Not)

In the work referred to above (Lovat, 2009), enfaithing approaches were characterized by a fundamental intention to proselytize, further the faith (whatever that might be) and so advance the credentials of a particular religion or denomination. As such, it was a largely idiosyncratic feature of a school's curriculum, not intended to look or function like other subjects. In contrast, interfaith approaches were characterized by an overarching goal to inform and educate about the world of religion in its various forms. As such, they were designed to function as much as possible and look like other subjects in the curriculum. Finally, integrated approaches were innovative attempts to do a little of both enfaithing, at least in a limited sense, as well as being essentially interfaith educational. To each of these approaches and their associated models, I applied a theological critique.

Enfaithing Models

Within the enfaithing approaches, I identified three models that had some currency in Australian Catholic schools. The prescriptive model was best described as oriented towards induction rather than education, unapologetically geared to passing on the tradition from one generation to the next. It was a model that could be found across various Christian traditions, normally taking the form of direct instruction focused on the Bible or a compendium of beliefs such as the so-called Catechism of the Catholic Church. The model constituted the most common approach over time and formed the mainstream of RE in the Catholic School from the early part of the twentieth century through until the 1970s. Apart from its inherent educational weaknesses, being tied to lower level learning around reception and memorization, there were

just as clearly weaknesses in the theological infrastructure, or lack thereof. Where the Bible formed the content, very little biblical criticism seemed to be operative, even in the higher grades; assumptions about the Bible were invariably that it formed a repository of truth to be taken literally. Where a compendium like the Catechism was the focus, it was similarly bereft of developments in theological thought and analysis, even from within the Catholic Church itself. Hence, one found little reference to or understanding of late nineteenth-century documents such as *Rerum Novarum* (1891), by which the Church revised its social morality and position in the world, or *Providentissimus Deus* (1893), by which the Church revised its position on the role of the Bible and its relationship with Protestant Churches. Least of all was there much in the way of understanding the new directions of the Second Vatican Council (Abbott, 1966) or any of the theological debates that had presaged it. The kindest interpretation was that it was stuck in a theological time warp; the harder truth is that it was not, in any comprehensive sense, a theologically founded model.

Another enfaithing approach was seen in the so-called 'life-centred' model that constituted something of a reaction to the prescriptive model. The content here was on 'life' itself, rather than a text. In speaking of the problems faced by the prescriptive model, Ronald Goldman, a pioneer of life-centred RE, said:

> …The root of it… lies in the assumption that religion can be taught as a body of knowledge to be absorbed by pupils, as other facts are learned… religion is a way of life to be lived, not a series of facts to be learned. (Goldman, 1965, p. 6)

Utilizing an array of updated educational theory (for instance, Stenhouse, 1967), life-centred RE focused its content on live situations, real and imaginary, regarded as relevant to the students' lives and concerns, and so hoped to elicit some religious response from reflection on these situations. In contrast to the prescriptive model, life-centred RE tended to be largely unstructured, often taking the form of removing students from the classroom setting and normal artefacts of learning (for instance, books, pens, etc.) altogether. 'The less like normal learning, the better' became a kind of mantra for its advocates. This was both its strength and its weakness, the latter being especially around the normal expectations of managing the learning situation. Unless in the hands of a teacher with skills beyond those in which most were trained, discussions could be endless with no resolution in sight and even less overt learning achieved. Clear aims, processes and outcomes were conspicuous by their absence, with instances aplenty of behaviour management issues. The theological critique was not dissimilar. Because there was little to no emphasis on learning any content, the theological underpinnings and ramifications were vacuous. The only theological remnants apparent were vague humanistic ones that suggested reflecting on life would have 'ipso facto' spiritual implications. The store of theological development of the past century was absent. This was the equivalent of physics education without physics as a discipline and store of knowledge.

The third model considered as part of the enfaithing approaches was one referred to as praxis, the brainchild of the US religious educator, Thomas Groome. As if to attempt to find the fine line between the other two models, prescriptive and life-centred, both of which had serious educational flaws and theological gaps, Groome

employed a sophisticated arsenal of theorists, principally educational ones, to construct a model that would stand up to serious academic probing. Of especial interest, he utilized the high-status epistemological theory of Habermas (1972, 1974) and a fashionable action research process (see Grundy, 1982) to develop a practical direction for RE that would be true to both the theory and the process. It was by far the sturdiest of all the enfaithing approaches and quickly became a favoured model in Australian Catholic schools across many dioceses.

The praxis model was also theologically sturdier, clearly employing many perspectives to be found in modern biblical analysis and conscious of instilling updated theological insights as well. Groome (1980) was explicit in this intention: 'Bad theology is harmful to the faith life of people at any age.' (p. 214). My only suggested improvements to the theological infrastructure were, at the time, that it could have entered more robustly into interfaith and faith into non-faith spaces, both features of public theology as I will outline it below. These are slightly unfair criticisms of a model emanating from almost 40 years ago but are worth mentioning here in light of the direction of this paper. The other feature of the praxis model worthy of comment is that the very fact of its requiring some theological sophistication on the part of the teacher showed up the weak, indeed often abysmal levels of theological training in the average teacher education programs, including from Catholic colleges and universities.

Interfaith Models

The interfaith approach came with a variety of models as well, some of them influenced by attempts to instil more rigorous and educationally bound RE in public schools, an educational area with a sad history in the public setting (Lovat, 2018). This move coincided with a turn towards religious studies in universities, pioneered by eminent social scientists like Smart (1968, 1974). Smart had developed a form of study for religion that made the best use of social science methodologies without in any way stepping into the enfaithing realm. Models of such were developed during this time, in both universities and schools, and one could find detections of the same approach in various state-based moves in Australia (see NSW, 1980). Among them was a historical model that focussed on different religions as historical phenomena, no more no less, a psychological model that studied the psychological motivation and effects of religion, no more no less, and a sociological model that appraised religion as a social phenomenon alongside other social phenomena. These models were all characterized by a steely social science methodology that assured objectivity and distance. While as educationally sound as the discipline studies they cloned, they were wholly theological-free. Anything smacking of theological analysis or appraisal would have been seen as an infraction of the need for objectivity and distance. Anything theological could be interpreted as an attempt at enfaithing, and that was considered inappropriate to the education setting. As an aside, by this time, theology as a discipline had been well and truly dispensed to the margins of public

scholarship. Especially in a society like Australia that had placed a constitutional ban on theology faculties in its first universities (Douglas & Lovat, 2010), theology was regarded as wholly a tool of churches and religious bodies and, as such, had no place in the public curriculum of universities or public schools. Nonetheless, the interfaith approach gradually found a place in the public curriculum of several states (see NSW, 1991) and so inevitably influenced the way RE functioned in certain Catholic settings. The approach, while tending to be theologically vacuous was at least more educationally sound than much of what had passed for RE in the Catholic setting, so placing some pressure on Catholic schools to approach the area of religion with at least as much in the way of educational fortitude as was occurring in public schools.

One model of interfaith RE that clearly found a place in many Catholic schools was the so-called phenomenological model, pioneered by Smart himself, initially for his own universities in Lancaster, UK, and California. The essence of the phenomenological model was in its balancing the normal social science imperatives of objectivity and distance with the need to 'get inside the head' of the religious believer, and to do this without entering the space of enfaithing. Smart achieved this by utilizing a version of phenomenological method developed a century or so earlier by Husserl (1958). Husserl had spoken of his social science model as one that possessed two elements of science, namely descriptive and eidetic (concerning essences). The former guaranteed all the objectivity and distance required of the social investigator but, once data had been accrued through any amount of observation and description, then the scientist should employ a different kind of science, an 'eidetic' one that could 'lift the lid' on all the external evidence and find out what it all meant to individual believers. In the context of RE, this might sound as though it was straying into the territory of enfaithing but Husserl had developed such a strict method that he was able to convince followers like Smart that this was not the case.

Employing a form of eidetic science, Smart spoke of the need for the study of religion to be '… warm and vibrant … (and full of)… imaginative participation.' (Smart, 1974, p. 3) His phenomenological model recommended an empathic entering into a representative sample of religious examples, a 'stepping into the shoes' of its followers, as the best way of coming to 'know' in the unique religious sense (Lovat, 1995). As suggested, the phenomenological model leant itself arguably better than any explored so far to a theological attachment if not underpinning. As long as theology as a discipline could be seen as a distinctive way of knowing and understanding the world without being an inherently enfaithing tool, then it could well have been seen as a useful adjunct to the broad intercultural learning that lay at the base of the model. As above, however, this was not how theology was widely conceived and indeed Smart's university venture had begun largely around its attempt to offer an alternative to the pursuit of theology in the UK setting, a pursuit that was viewed largely as being faith-based. In contrast, as proffered by Moore and Habel (1982):

> [Smart] has provided the teacher with a methodology which enables assessment of student achievements in the study of religion which does not require intrusion into the area of the student's faith or lack of it. (p. 15)

Moore and Habel would themselves develop a form of phenomenology, titled typological, that was even more stringently non-enfaithing than Smart's original. Some of this was to counter a view that the phenomenological model was overly liable to slip into enfaithing territory, granted the nature of the eidetic science that sat behind it.

Critical Model

Finally, I covered off on an attempt at integration in the form of what I described as the critical model. It amounted to trying to find the strength in each of the two approaches, these being the social science rigour of the phenomenological model and the educational philosophical soundness of the praxis model. The critical model adopted the broad interfaith approach of phenomenology and the pedagogical steps of the praxis model. I suggested that it had the potential to provide the foundations for a universal methodology for RE, whether functioning in a public or religious school setting. I suggested that the Husserlian eidetic disposition in Smart's model and the Habermasian praxis directionality of Groome's model had the potential to feed into each other in a way that would allow for an appropriate measure of non-coercive reflection on one's personal faith journey (or nil) while bounded by the emancipatory freedom that was central to any subject in the public curriculum. After all, I argued, any subject entails an array of learning, some of it objectively descriptive, some interpretive and some more reflective, drawing on a learner's personal experience of the content in focus, be it in science, music, history or religion, and challenging the learner to own, reject or tolerate the object of learning. A model of this sort would not only have scope for but would demand some theological input and method.

In later work (Lovat, 2012), I refined the argument for an integrated approach further by exploring and illustrating the close philosophical connections between the central theorists behind the phenomenological and praxis models, namely, Husserl and Habermas, respectively. Connections between Habermasian and Husserlian world views have been made by Habermas himself (Habermas, 1985). In making these connections, he refers to the lack of reflectivity that he sees in traditional social science methodologies, emanating essentially from their common failure to address satisfactorily the hermeneutic dimension. In his view, this lack of reflectivity had led to overly simple empirical analyses being applied to data, especially when focussed on cross-cultural studies. For Habermas, knowing required a fortified hermeneutic dimension which ultimately could lead to those forms of reflective knowing (including knowing of self) that lie at the heart of the notion of, and impel, praxis (Habermas, 1972, 1974). Habermas (1985) is quite explicit that, for him, this owed much to Husserlian philosophy, stating 'praxis philosophy renewed by phenomenology… has at its disposal the tools of the Husserlian analysis' (p. 317). Furthermore 'communicative reason makes itself felt in the binding force of intersubjective understanding and reciprocal recognition' (p. 324).

Hence, from his own lips, the importance of phenomenological underpinning to the entire schema of his two key theories ('Ways of Knowing' and 'Communicative Action') is confirmed. It follows then that any curriculum area that makes explicit use of phenomenological epistemology and methodology has the potential to be a leader of educational thought and practice in an era that sees Habermasian conceptualization so prominent in educational theory (Lovat, 2013). Certainly, any such curricula are worthy of special attention and evaluation concerning their effects.

A further and vital contribution to underlining the importance of phenomenology to the wider goals of learning is made by Van Manen's notions of 'phenomenological pedagogy' (Van Manen, 1982) and 'pedagogical thoughtfulness' and 'tact' (Van Manen, 1991). Both concepts go to the heart of the Habermasian critique and the overwhelming benefits of phenomenological methodology in addressing the deficits of education implied by these critiques and so furthering the goals of holism in education. Van Manen, who has written extensively on Habermas, speaks of the need for pedagogy to be sensitive to the lived experience of students, requiring a hermeneutic capacity to make interpretive sense of this lived experience and requiring also a 'way of language' whereby pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact can impel deepened forms of learning in students. The notion is of such phenomenological pedagogy evoking thoughtfulness in student attitudes and tact in student behaviour and practice. Such a notion clearly has sharp implications for RE where the sensitivities of both intercultural communication and action are particularly exposed. It also speaks to the need for some theological foundation and orientation as an attachment to any serious RE enterprise. But to where do we look for an appropriate theology to today's needs?

Public Theology's Credentials for Underpinning Catholic RE

Newman (1927) regarded theology as the centrepiece of modern education. For him, the focus was on the university but the same could be said of the school. I would argue that his view of theology as the supreme liberal discipline makes it essential for any educational setting, but certainly for a Catholic one, and not just as an adjunct but as essential to the very heart of what the Catholic school should be in the contemporary world. Newman emphasized the distinction between 'liberal' and 'illiberal' theology. The latter was suitable to enfaithing purposes but, even as such, it lacked educational substance without the former. It was liberal theology that connoted the open pursuit of truth and so constituted the kernel of any education aimed at such. Newman saw liberal theology as the supreme public discipline that ensured education would stay true to its essence as '… a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected.' (p. 472) For Newman, theology was the archetypal public discipline and, as such, had to be at the heart of any truly Catholic education, as he understood it.

Newman is rightly regarded as a polymath, including a theological and philosophical one. He traversed and understood philosophies and theologies from the ancient world to his own contemporary one and all points in between, being as familiar

with Origen, Clement and the ancient Persians as he was with Newton, Bacon and Locke (Newman, 1979). He was nonetheless, above all, the archetypal Aristotelian and Thomist. He said of Aquinas that he '… evinces a masterly command over the whole subject of theology.' (Newman, 2013, Preface) What Newman found in Aquinas (1948) was the theological essence of Aristotle's 'Eudaemonia' (Aristotle, 1985), a supreme good characterized by the integral link between knowing and doing. In other words, the knowing implied in Aquinas's theology was, for Newman, an applied knowing, calling on and requiring practical judgement.

In its time, Aristotle's direction represented a radical departure from traditional Hellenistic philosophy, constituting in many ways the beginning of what would come to be known as natural philosophy of the kind that would become so important to the development of science and the thinking of the Enlightenment. In the medieval Islamic world, it was the Muslim scholars who rediscovered Aristotle. Among those who relied heavily on his natural philosophy was the intellectual giant, Al-Farabi (1968), for whom God was not the distant reality of his and the other Abrahamic traditions, but a transcendent reality necessarily involved in the real world, both natural and social. Similarly, we find in Al-Ghazali (1999), the spiritual giant and architect of Sufism, an emphasis on Islam's theology being essentially a natural one and its piety a practical one. Hence, we find in him a blend of deep mystical and grounded practical emphases. Both Farabi and Ghazali played a part in redirecting Aquinas's thinking towards the Aristotelianism that would underpin his signature theology, one that blended holiness and practical action in the world as one.

For these scholars, there was no contradiction between theological and scientific method because only in the scholarly blending of contemplation on God and on God's world could we come to understand God as God would be revealed. Knowing and action were one and it was only in the conjunction between the two that we could find God. This was at the heart of Newman's liberal theology, one that Bingaman (2015) equates with Moltmann's (2016) public theology when he sees in Newman 'a recovery of the ancient sense that beliefs … can be measured in a practical sense by the shaping effect they have on the lives and consciousness of a believing community and its members.' Public theology's main concern is with applying theological analysis and method to the realities of the world, to matters in the public square (Graham, 2013; Moltmann, 2016; Paeth, 2005; Stackhouse, 2004). Stackhouse (2004) describes public theology as one that insists

> …that theology, in dialogue with other fields of thought, carries indispensable resources for forming, ethically ordering and morally guiding the institutions of religion and civil society as well as the vocations of the persons in these various spheres of life. (p. 275)

The role of an Aristotelian natural philosophy and of Farabi's, Ghazali's and Aquinas's natural and practical theologies are hardly surprising philosophical and theological underpinnings for public theology, as defined here. Arguably, a more innovative idea is that Habermas also contributes to the sharpening of thought around a theology with such public square credentials. I contend that the great contribution of the Habermasian perspective in this context is in its twofold capacity both to take us back to the foundations of Western philosophy by its radical re-formulations around

the phenomenon of knowing and, at the same time, to translate these foundations into a concept that lies at the heart of a theology with potential to add to our ways of knowing, including about events in the world around us, and especially at a time that many regard as a post-religious, secular age. Indeed, at a time when so many of the world's events concern religion and religious belief, it seems to go without saying that theology must play a part when RE is attempting to address these matters.

Habermas (2002, 2006, 2008) has, in more recent times, explicated a more accommodating appreciation of the role that theology can play in generating a distinctive way of knowing (Adams, 2006). His concern is not so much with issues around the existence of God or not but with his perennial interest in the different ways of knowing available to the human. In this context, his interest in theology is in its potential to offer unique insights into reality, so providing understanding that might not otherwise result, come to know things, including about ourselves and our world that we might not come to in any other way. The theology that Habermas can be seen to be advocating can well be named as public theology, a theology that belongs to public academe and the public arena in general, rather than a tool exclusive to religious institutions (Browning & Schussler Fiorenza, 1992). Indeed, in the hands of Farabi, Ghazali and Aquinas, along with Newman and Habermas, one could suggest that a theology of the public square variety might well have a role to play whatever the educational enterprise, be it history, physics, music education or any other. The idea that RE would function without such a theology guiding its every move begins to seem like a nonsense and, indeed, offers some insight into why it is that Australian Catholic RE has remained problematic as both an informing and enfaithing artefact.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to identify a lacuna in the theological underpinnings of Australian Catholic RE over time and further attempted to employ updated public theological perspectives to fill this gap. Public theology represents a modern-day attempt to recover the ancient tradition of theology as a vigorous participant among the disciplines of knowledge, offering a distinctive way of understanding the world in its natural and social order and as a powerful motivator of human action directed to harmony and wellbeing in the natural and social order. From a public theology perspective, we might well say 'theology is not for the church; theology is for the world.' We might well add 'theology is for education' and furthermore 'theology is a must for RE'. Public theology connotes the theological infrastructure that an effective RE requires as a 'sine qua non' attachment, including and especially in a Catholic context.

References

Abbott, W. (1966). *The documents of Vatican II*. New York: The America Press.

Adams, N. (2006). *Habermas and theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Al-Ghazali, A. (1999). *Abu al-Ghazali's path to sufism* (R. McCarthy, Trans.). Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.

Al-Farabi, A. (1968). *Ihsa'al-'ulum (Enumeration of the sciences)* (U. Amin (Ed.), Trans.). Cairo: Librairie Anglo-Egyptienne.

Aquinas, T. (1948). *Summa theologica* (Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Trans.). New York: Benziger Bros.

Aristotle, (1985). *Nicomachean ethics* (T. Irwin, Trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett.

Bingaman, B. (2015). *All things new: The Trinitarian nature of the human calling in maximus the confessor and Jurgen Moltmann* [Foreword by J. Moltmann]. Cambridge: James Clarke and Co.

Browning, D., & Schussler Fiorenza, E. (Eds.). (1992). *Habermas, modernity and public theology*. New York: Crossroads.

Douglas, B., & Lovat, T. (2010). Theology in Australian higher education: The 'Newcastle Model' brings theology home to the academy. *Higher Education Research and Development, 29*(1), 75–87.

Goldman, R. (1965). *Readiness for religion*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Graham, E. (2013). *Between a rock and a hard place: Public theology in a post-secular age*. London: SCM Press.

Groome, T. (1980). *Christian religious education: Sharing our story and vision*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

Grundy, S. (1982). Three modes of action research. *Curriculum Perspectives, 2*(3), 23–34.

Habermas, J. (1972). *Knowledge and human interests* (J. Shapiro, Trans.). London: Heinemann.

Habermas, J. (1974). *Theory and practice* (J. Viertal, Trans.). London: Heinemann.

Habermas, J. (1985). *The philosophical discourse of modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (2002). *Religion and rationality: Essays on reason, God and modernity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (2006). Religion in the public sphere. *European Journal of Philosophy, 14,* 1–25.

Habermas, J. (2008). Notes on a post-secular society. *New Perspective Quarterly, 25*(4), 17–19.

Husserl, E. (1958). *The idea of phenomenology* (W. Alston & G. Nakhnikian, Trans.). The Hague: Nijhoff.

Lovat, T. (1995). *Teaching and learning religion: A phenomenological approach*. Sydney: Social Science Press.

Lovat, T. (2009). *What is this thing called religious education?* (3rd ed.). Sydney: David Barlow Publishing.

Lovat, T. (2012). Interfaith education and phenomenological method. In T. van der Zee & T. Lovat (Eds.), *New perspectives on religious and spiritual education* (pp. 87–100). Munster: Waxmann.

Lovat, T. (2013). Jurgen Habermas: Education's reluctant hero. In M. Murphy (Ed.), *Social theory and educational research: Understanding Foucault, Habermas, Derrida and Bourdieu* (pp. 69–83). London: Routledge.

Lovat, T. (2018). Spirituality in Australian education: A legacy of confusion, omission and obstruction. In M. de Souza & L. Halafoff (Eds.), *Re-enchanting education and spiritual wellbeing*. London: Routledge.

Moltmann, J. (2016). *The future of public theology.* Address at World Council of Churches Forum, Geneva. Available at http://www.pubtheo.com/page.asp?pid=2061.

Moore, B., & Habel, N. (1982). *When religion goes to school: Typology of religion for the classroom*. Adelaide: Texts in Humanities.

Newman, J. H. (1927). *The idea of a university defined and illustrated*. Chicago: Loyola University Press.

Newman, J. H. (1979). *An essay in aid of a grammar of assent*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press.

Newman, J. H. (2013). *Catena aurea: Commentary on the four gospels* (by T. Aquinas). London: Baronius Press.

NSW. (1980). *Religion in education in NSW government schools*. Sydney: NSW Department of Education.

NSW. (1991). *Studies of religion*. Sydney: NSW Board of Studies.

Paeth, S. (2005). Jurgen Moltmann's public theology. *Journal of Political Theology, 6*(2), 215–234.

Smart, N. (1968). *Secular education and the logic of religion*. London: Faber and Faber.

Smart, N. (1974). *The science of religion and the sociology of knowledge*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Stackhouse, M. (2004). Civil religion, political theology and public theology: What's the difference? *Journal of Political Theology, 5*(3), 275–293.

Stenhouse, L. (1967). *Culture and education*. London: Nelson.

Van Manen, M. (1982). Phenomenological pedagogy. *Curriculum Inquiry, 12,* 283–299.

Van Manen, M. (1991). *The tact of teaching: The meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Prof Terence Lovat is Emeritus Professor and former Pro-vice-chancellor and Dean at The University of Newcastle, Australia. He also holds a number of honorary positions, including research fellow at Oxford University, UK, honorary research professor at Glasgow University, UK, and research professor at Royal Roads University, Canada. Professor Lovat's research interests span religious education, values education and interfaith studies, with an especial interest in Islam. He has served as chief investigator on a number of Australian government funded projects concerned with interfaith matters and has authored over 20 academic books and 150 refereed journal articles and book chapters.

Chapter 7
The Religious Education of the Religion Teacher in Catholic Schools

Check for updates

Sandra Cullen

Introduction

The basic premise of this chapter is that religious education, insofar as it is concerned with the interpretation and communication of religious traditions and people's engagement with these, is best conceived of as a conversational activity that is hermeneutical in nature. As explicated in Catholic religious education, such an activity is both formative and educative. In its formative sense, it is concerned with proposing a vision of life and a meaning-making structure that responds to the religious impulse. As an educative activity, its purpose is not merely to give the impression that religion is something out there that other people do and which can be known about; rather its purpose is to help people to engage with and understand the religious impulse, the nature of religion and their own personal engagement with this so as to be able to draw on that as a resource for their own spiritual wisdom and ethical practice.

The religiously educated person can then be described as someone who can understand religion, religious traditions, their own and others' engagement with these, can communicate this understanding and can live out of this wisdom. For Groome (2000), the religiously educated person has spiritual wisdom. For Jackson (1997), the religiously educated person is edified. For Hession, the religiously educated person has developed 'religious ways of thinking, feeling and doing, which give expression to the spiritual, moral and transcendent dimensions of life and can lead to personal and social transformation' (2005, p. 32). For Boeve, the religiously educated person can 'deal creatively, critically and reflectively with plurality, identity and fundamental life options' (2004, p. 253).

If the religion teacher is to undertake the task of educating others for this purpose, then it is appropriate to ask if they are religiously educated themselves? This concern

S. Cullen (✉)
Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland
e-mail: sandra.cullen@dcu.ie

for the religious education of the religion teacher in the Catholic school provides the impetus for some initial probing: Who makes the best teacher of religious education? The vision of the Catholic teacher outlined in *The Catholic School* (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977) is of a person who has integrated faith and life in their own person (para. 43), is full of Christian wisdom, well prepared in their subject, and who over and above what they say, guides their pupils 'beyond mere words to the heart of total Truth' (para. 41). How does a teacher prepare for this? What then might constitute an appropriate and adequate religious education for the teacher? In responding to these questions, this chapter will argue for an explicit religious education for the teacher that (i) prepares them for their professional task of understanding religion(s) and communicating this, and (ii) helps them to continually develop a way of seeing, interpreting, and appropriating concepts and images in ways that shape who they are in the world, what they think, what they feel and how they are to participate in the world. This chapter contends that an explicit religious education for Catholic teachers has its roots in the integral relationship between theology and religious education. It responds to Roebben's (2015) call for a reconceptualisation of theology in RE by (i) arguing for a God-focussed religious education, (ii) considering which type of theology is appropriate and adequate for religious education and (iii) introducing the term theological education to describe the interplay between theology and the religious education of the religion teacher. The chapter finally proposes that a theological education approach is an appropriate religious education for the religion teacher.

God-Focussed Religious Education

In its legitimate concern for social cohesion, mutual understanding, and human flourishing, there is a danger that religious education may at times lose its central purpose, which, for Catholic religious education, is the focus on belief in God's revealing activity. Such God-focussing emphasises that the concept of God, however that is articulated, is crucial for understanding religion and is what holds religions together despite disparate phenomena (Watson & Thompson, 2007). Religion cannot be disconnected from its originating impulse and must be considered both in its problematic forms as well as in its life-giving forms. Religious education exists because faith, the response to the religious impulse, exists (Cullen, 2017). This moves religious education beyond the study of religion as a social phenomenon or cultural fact, into an engagement with people's living responses to their apprehension of God. Therefore, religious education must be able to access the deepest possible understanding of the religion's convictions, appreciate the demands it makes on believers and engage with the religion on its own terms. It attempts to understand and engage with the inner world of the religion which cannot be adequately observed from the outside but demands theological knowledge and sensitivity.

Similarly, Sullivan (2007) argues that the duty of religious education is 'to bring out for pupils key features of the demands that a religion makes on its adherents

and the way it poses probing questions about individual and communal life' (2007, p. 127). This description is consistent with Anselm's definition of the task of theology as faith seeking understanding. The task of theology is in the active voice so implies engagement, reflexive activity and a movement toward understanding. Theology is therefore a community's attempt to articulate its best current understanding of itself and its convictions about God. Theology however does not just aim for a cultural, theoretical or philosophical understanding, but is an invitation into the realm of contingency, faith and the transcendent. This invitation to enter into a God-focussed religious education brings students into a theological education in which a 'sensitivity to the transcendent supports the notion that RE offers an opening to the infinite and recognises the impossibility of any sense of finally solving issues, of achieving an exhaustive, comprehensive, and total understanding of religious beliefs, practice, experiences, traditions' (Sullivan, 2017, p. 22). Arguing for a God-focussed religious education cannot necessarily assume belief-ful participation on the teacher's part. In a world characterised by detraditionalisation, the pluralisation of religion and the individualisation of identity formation (Boeve, 2011), it cannot be assumed that teachers of religion in Catholic schools share similar faith stances or worldviews. However, what could perhaps be agreed is that religious education be considered a space like no other (Sullivan, 2017), in which the question of God can be taken seriously by the teacher and by the students. According to Roebben and Warren, the religion teacher experiences

> the permanent challenge of inviting others to explore, to explain and to experience their daily life from another angle… to participate in their struggle with a particular living tradition, with the 'fides et mores' of that tradition and, through this, with their own narrative identity. In this process they open up the hermeneutic space in which others can confront themselves with their meaning giving framework. (2001, p.vii)

For the teacher to undertake this challenge, they first must enter into a reflective mode to consider their own meaning giving frameworks and their own stance vis-à-vis the tradition.

Reconceptualising the Relationship Between Religious Education and Theology

Historically, religious education has always been aligned with theology and in many cases seen as the pastoral application of theology (Kravatz, 2010). However, Post Vatican II theologies, developing understandings of the learner and the learning process, and the emergence of constructivist pedagogies have altered the context for the reconceptualisation of the relationship between theology and religious education. In many instances, there still remains an assumption that theology provides the impetus for religious education, or that religious education can be independent of theology. Maintaining the dialogical tension between the two disciplines is part of

the necessary reconceptualisation of the relationship between theology and religious education.

A separation between theology and religious education only emerged with the study of religious education as an academic discipline and an understanding that religious education is a discipline which draws on theology but is not determined by it. Moran (1982) argues that theology may prove to be an obstacle to religious education. While such a view is welcome in terms of developing the unique contribution of religious education, there is now some agreement that religious education is a branch of practical theology, with Boys (1989), arguing that, though related, the two disciplines are distinct. Boys contends that theology is significant for religious education because, (i) it offers a means of constructing analytical categories for investigating the concerns of religious education, (ii) it suggests some useful methodologies for 'constructing one's own worldview' and (iii) it provides significant knowledge that is unavailable from other sources (1989, p. 200). However, Boys also advises that theology does not suffice for religious education since theology is only one way to understand religion. On the other hand, the maintenance of theology as a foundational discipline of religious education can be justified on the grounds that theology offers an indispensable way of understanding religion. Observing pupils reflecting on their own and other's religious beliefs, prompts Astley's question, 'what discipline is the pupil engaged in when reflecting on religious beliefs? Is it, perhaps, theology?' (1996, p. 61).

Lombaerts situates religious education within the context of practical theology which is both an empirical and hermeneutical reflection on how the 'religion-related dimensions of human existence are mapped and interpreted against the background of social and cultural shifts' (Warren and Lombaerts, 2004, p. x). Its aim is to clarify and justify the broader search for meaning, religion and faith that increasingly takes place outside institutional faith communities. The link between religious education and practical theology is premised on two fundamental convictions, (i) people are the organisers of their own religious learning, and (ii) religious education is a work of interpretation of religion. These convictions, which result in a focus on praxis, appropriation, reflexivity and edification, allow for a way of considering the role of theology in the religious education of religion teachers.

Which Theology?

The traditional purpose of theology is to understand the human response to what can be known and understood about God. The task of theology is interpretation which is undertaken from within the context of religious faith. How one goes about this task is shaped by one's ontological and epistemological assumptions. In the early Christian tradition, this relationship was based on a theory to practice epistemology, as evidenced in a variety of catechetical discourses from such figures as John Chrysostom, Augustine and Cyril of Jerusalem, and was consistent with a transmissive and propositional approach to education.

Arguably in the history of religious education, there has been an emphasis on the logical constructs of propositional knowledge but this may be critiqued on the grounds that it does not necessarily include other forms of knowing and may give insufficient attention to human experience. On the other hand, a constructivist epistemology opens up a dynamic and open-ended inquiry of the experience of religion. From such an epistemological stance the purpose of theology therefore is to 'critically unpack the revelation of God that takes place in human experience' (Lane, 2003, p. 15). This turn to experience is arguably the most significant shift in theology in the twentieth century and has had significant implications for religious education. As explicated by Lane, human experience has three basic elements. First, experience involves a human subject capable of seeing, thinking, feeling and discerning. This gives rise to the notion of a conscious encounter between the subject and the external world of matter and spirit. In encountering the external world, the individual receives whatever is there but is not responsible for producing what is received. This encounter with whatever is there leads to a process of interaction between the subject and reality. It is in this process of response, refraction and critical reflection that the person moves beyond a surface engagement to an interpretive mode. The person then interprets the encounter within the overall horizon of understanding that is available to them through their cultural, historical and religious contexts. For Lane then, experience is the living relationship between the subject and reality that shapes both the capacity of the subject to become a constituted self, as well as the identity of the constituted self.

The activity of interpretation is central to this turn to experience. For Tracy (1987), interpretation is unavoidable because to experience anything in other than a purely passive sense is to interpret. He calls such interpretation a critical-correlation theology, as it reflects on the relationship between the two poles of human experience and the Christian tradition. The correlation of these two poles occurs through a critical conversation between the questions and answers of human experience and the theological event or text. This theological approach emphasises a hermeneutics of conversation and recognises the possibility of truth in each text, person, event, discourse and symbol system that is encountered and understood. A correlational approach sees a dialectical relationship between experience and language; language clarifies experience and the original experience clarifies language. Theology is attentive to how experience is named and how that naming affects the interpretation and evaluation of experience. A correlational approach is concerned with the religious dimension of human experience. It takes as its foundational principle that God is co-known and co-experienced in human experience and therefore an appropriate theology is one that reflects on human experience as the mediating locus of God's presence. Tracy argues that a religious interpretation of experience must be consistent with a secular understanding of life, and asks if the religious understanding of experience adds anything to what is already known about human existence. A response to this question may be found in Sullivan's contention:

> The space of RE should convey that, whatever we have learned so far in this subject, from the rest of the curriculum, or from life, is provisional, incomplete, inadequately appreciated, needing further illumination, remaining open to reinterpretation, revision, and enhancement,

even where it seems to us to be reliable, trustworthy, and deserving of implementation. (2017, p. 22)

It is arguably in the area of correlational theology that a contemporary religious education can find a home.

Theological Education—A Reconciling Term

This section introduces the term theological education and interrogates how useful it is in coming to some clarity about the relationship between theology and religious education. The term has its roots in the education of Protestant clergy for ministry as this has developed in North American Protestant institutions. This narrow focus has broadened and there is some level of agreement that theological education should now be conceived of as all education, whatever the institutional locus, which has a theological character. However, the emphasis on much of the discussion still pertains to the relationship between theology and some form of preparation for ministry.

As a preparation for ministry, Catholic theological education has a particular teleology that informs its praxis. Within the seminary tradition, it is this teleology that gives theological education its formative character. Such formation centres on the development of a relationship and communion with God and concentrates on human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation (Pope John Paul II, 1992), and is predicated on preparation for ecclesial ministry. Norbert Mette argues that the fact that the training of priests is the 'binding criterion for shaping theological study' (1994, p. 115) has consequences for how the teaching of theology is to be conceptualised in other contexts. A second issue identified by Mette is that teaching methods and pedagogy are not as a rule regarded as constituent elements of theology, but an appendix for which religious education and Catechetics have responsibility. He argues that 'theology cannot be understood as an objective entity the content of which can be noted and appropriated as knowledge. Rather, knowing, learning, reflecting, and understanding in 'matters' of faith are already genuinely theological processes' (p. 119). Recognising that pedagogy facilitates theological education will require a paradigm shift, so that theology is increasingly thought of as doing theology in a way that connects what someone learns (content) with how they learn (process).

Catholic theologian Cahoy (2002) offers the caveat that what is striking about the literature on theological education is not its focus on mainline Protestantism, but the ease and extent to which the story of mainline Protestant theological education is identified with the story of theological education per se. Catholic theological education has its own particularity and should not be too easily elided into the Protestant discussion (Carey & Muller, 1997). This caveat will be kept in mind but, as this chapter is concerned with the question of how theological education can offer a perspective on religious education, then the value of the early Protestant reflection on theological education is precisely because of its attempt to engage with the question of formation in the preparation for professional ministry outside the seminary con-

text, where the teaching of theology is not necessarily related to a specific ecclesial ministry. Another reason for drawing on this literature is its recognition of a changed student profile with large numbers of lay men and women, a wider age profile and increasing pluralism, the norm in any theology programme. Not all of these students see a connection between Church and theology, or between faith and theology; these relationships no longer hold true for most contexts where theology is taught.

Copeland (1997) argues that in more recent years that this is also true for Catholic theology as the migration of theology from the seminary to the modern university, from the clergy to the laity, and from men to women, presents fresh imperatives to theology itself and to the way of doing theology. When theology moves outside of the seminary and away from ecclesial ministry, what gives it its formative character? What does it mean to do theology from within a shifting context where vocational education sits uneasily alongside university education? Does theology have a formative character in its own right? What is theological about theological education? The enquiry of this chapter parallels this question and asks, what is educational about theological education and in what sense can theological education be religious education? Neither is propaedeutic to the other. This research contends that it is the inherently formative dimension of a theological education that contributes to a religious education that is appropriate for religion teachers.

Perspectives on Theological Education

The development of the conversation about theological education that emerged within the context of the Protestant North American theological schools may be thought of in terms of three phases. The first of these phases emerged in the 1980s from the reflections of a largely homogenous group of white, male, Protestant, North American scholars from the mainline Protestant theological schools, and finds its clearest and most influential expression in the writings of Farley (1988, 1994), and Kelsey (1992, 1993). Arguably, the impetus for this discussion about theological education was a concern about the functionalism inherent in theological education. Such functionalism was challenged by the reflections of Niebuhr, Williams and Gustafson who, on the basis of their 1957 research of seminary education in North America, asserted that

> The greatest defect in theological education today is that it is too much an affair of piecemeal transmission of knowledge and skills, and that, in consequence, it offers too little challenge to the student to develop his own resources and to become an independent, lifelong inquirer, growing constantly while he is engaged in the work of ministry. (1957, p. 209)

In other words, theological education had become a matter of acquiring the skills necessary for ministry, but had lost focus on the formative dimension of an education for independent, lifelong inquiry. The prescience in Niebuhr's words strike a chord in the discussion of twenty-first-century religious education. How can religious education contribute to a person's willingness to take on the challenge to become an

independent, lifelong inquirer? Engaging with these central questions gave rise to a series of sustained reflections on the nature, scope and aim of theological education, the conclusions of which cohere around a number of key themes: the fragmented nature of academic theology, the polarisation of approaches to the theological task, the problems that arise from the theory to practice model that attends much of what is involved in the teaching of theology, the separation of theology from vibrant faith or ecclesial contexts and the privatisation and commodification of theological study.

Running concurrent to this first phase is the work of feminist scholars engaging with similar issues but coming from a wider variety of perspectives and seen most vibrantly in the work of The Mud Flower Collective (1985), a multi-ethnic group of feminist theologians. Significant challenges to traditional understandings of theological education come from the diverse voices of women, people of colour, men and women from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, adult learners, those in non-ordained ministries, the encounter with world religions, global ethics and a growing awareness that theological education cannot be homogenous. What becomes most apparent in this second phase is a clear separation between theology and ministry, as well as between theology and the acceptance of doctrine, and where the study of theology does not necessarily assume faith, or ecclesial commitment, on the part of the student. Chopp critiques any structure of theological education that is largely dependent upon a practice of education 'in which the objective knowledge of specialised fields is handed on by expert professionals to students understood to be empty receptacles' (1995, p. 84). Her conclusion is that to be both theological and educational then theological education is a process in which students participate. It is about the explicit curriculum, the style of teaching and the relationships formed:

> The how of learning is directly related, in this notion of theological education as a process, to the what of learning. Indeed, the task for the subjects of theological education may be as much the doing of new forms of relationships to God, self, others, traditions, and society as it is the articulation of right ideas. (1995, p. 111)

In the twenty-first century, a third phase has begun to emerge that sees theological education as a practical theology that is characterised by a concern for theological literacy and interreligious learning. This concern emerges from the challenges of the second phase to traditional understandings of theological education, and the need for the religions to offer a coherent and compelling rationale in the face of the challenges from scientism, secularism, fundamentalism, humanism and atheism. Petersen describes literacy as, 'knowing how to navigate the conventions of identity, cultural meaning, perspectives on the nature of truth, and rhetoric important to the complexities of contemporary life' (2002, p. 6). He argues that within the early Christian tradition, theology aimed at literacy for communication and leadership; to be literate meant knowing, understanding and 'being shaped by the canon appropriate to the new dispensation' of being Christian (p. xvi). He concludes that 'something basic and intuitive can be lost under the weight of human learning' (p. xvii). Could the weight of human learning that constitutes the study of theology detract from the theological literacy that flourishes from a sense of 'faith seeking understanding'? Perhaps literacy could more properly be thought of as, not just the accumulation

of content, but the ability to engage with the questions raised by the relationships between content and contexts and between content and learner. This gives rise to the concept of fluency which is the ability to communicate meaning in language appropriate to context. McDermott argues that theological literacy is more properly understood as an emancipatory process in and through which a person becomes more fluent about their own faith tradition and literate when speaking between traditions. This process necessitates 'learning new ways to learn', developing more complex forms of consciousness, and 'taking responsibility for, and trusting what one has come to know' (2002, p. 326).

Why and how one learns 'new ways to learn' is a significant theme in Tracy's reflection on theological education (Petersen, 2002). He identifies that the most appropriate forms of theological education invite people into a community of inquiry characterised by conversation and asks whether a community of inquiry and a community of commitment and faith can be united. He acknowledges the difficulty in achieving such unity or coherence due to three fatal separations of modern Western culture: the separation of feeling and thought, the separation of theory and practice and the separation of form and content. Tracy argues that theological education can be a unifying force in so far as it explicitly and systematically brings together action and thought, academy and church, faith and reason and the community of faith and the community of inquiry. Theological education can also bring the personal life of the teacher and the wisdom of the community together.

Arguing that a theological education approach is an appropriate religious education for student teachers of religious education risks the charge that both theology and education are being instrumentalised by religious education. Each discipline has its own area of concern and brings its own insights to bear on religious education. Including theology as a key source for religious education raises the question of whether a theologically educated community of teachers of religious education is required. To that end then, it is possible to concur with Farley that 'theology is the reflectively procured insight and understanding which encounter with a specific religious faith evokes' (1988, p. 64). This definition is predicated on three principles that are consistent with a religious education that is God-focussed, (i) religious faith is historically incarnated and has a determinate character, (ii) understanding is the sort of thing theology itself is and (iii) theology 'occurs in a reflective mode'. This is not simply a 'spontaneous insightfulness' but a 'considered' self-consciousness and understanding with a deliberative and purposive character. Theological understanding occurs therefore in people who reflectively encounter a specific religious faith. Farley links this with habitus, which he describes as a 'disposition of the mind, that has the character of wisdom or understanding' (p. 81, n. 15). It is this reflective mode and the development of habitus that allows for theological education to be considered as an appropriate religious education for student teachers of religious education and is consistent with the vision of the religiously educated person outlined earlier in this chapter.

In this century, theological education is not a homogenous activity. However, despite the changing demographics of where theology is taught and for what purpose, there has been surprisingly little reflection on how theology is taught and what

the term theological education implies when it is cut loose from its original contexts. As this question of theological education has evolved, it has come to be aligned with Practical Theology, understood by Tracy as 'the mutually critical correlation of the interpreted theory and praxis of the Christian fact and the interpreted theory and praxis of the contemporary situation' (1983, p. 62). Such insistence on the primacy of praxis allows contemporary theology to engage with the concerns of religious education as it offers insight into the educational nature of theology when it is not aligned to ministerial formation (Lane, 2013). The shift to a praxis-based, correlational approach to theology brings the question of education into the theological realm, rather than seeing education as the application of theology. It is pertinent to ask which of the words theology or education is the qualifier? Is theological education an education that is theological in nature, or is theology itself educational?

Conclusion

Farley's (1994) observations about the fragmentary nature of theological studies and Tracy's listing of the three fatal separations are characterised in the challenge posed by a student RE teacher who observed: I feel that I have been given lots of pieces of a jigsaw but as there are no edges or an overall design to follow I'm not sure how to fit them all together or even if they are supposed to fit together. In this context, what difference does the study of theology make to a person's way of engaging with the world? A shift to the concept of theological education that moves from a theory to practice approach to a constructivist approach allows teachers to become agents in their own learning, and invites them to engage with theology in such a way that they can appropriate its insights into their own worldview. Such a reconceptualisation of the dialogical relationship between theology and religious education allows for the study of faith and faith claims, as expressed in theology, to be taken seriously. Teachers can approach a determinate religious faith in a way that confronts them with the critical appraisals which attend theology. To teach theology in this mode is not simply to communicate information about theology, but to evoke participation in its claims and to invite students to engage in a way of seeing the world, eschewing the popular notion that one can engage neutrally in theology. It is this hermeneutical mode that allows for theological education to emerge as a significant foundation for an explicit religious education that is appropriate for the teachers in question.

References

Astley, J., & Francis, L. (Eds.). (1996). *Christian theology and religious education: Connections and contradictions*. London: SPCK.

Boeve, L. (2004). Beyond correlation strategies: Teaching religion in a detraditionalised and pluralised context. In H. Lombaerts & D. Pollefeyt (Eds.), *Hermeneutics and religious education* (pp. 233–254). Leuven: Peeters.

Boeve, L. (2011). Communicating faith in contemporary Europe: Dealing with language problems in and outside the Church. In J. Sullivan (Ed.), *Communicating faith* (pp. 293–308). Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press.

Boys, M. C. (1989). *Educating in faith: Maps and visions*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

Cahoy, W. (2002). *Why theology? A Catholic reflection on twenty years of literature on theological education*. Retrieved from http://www.resourcingchristianity.org/research-article/why-theology-a-catholic-reflection-on-twenty-years-of-literature-on-theological-edu-cation.

Carey, P., & Muller, E. (Eds.). (1997). *Theological education in the Catholic tradition: Contemporary challenges*. New York: A Crossroad Herder Book.

Chopp, R. (1995). *Saving work: Feminist practices of theological education*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.

Copeland, M. S. (1997). Theological education of African American Catholics. In P. Carey & E. Muller (Eds.), *Theological education in the Catholic tradition: Contemporary challenges* (pp. 318–339). New York: A Crossroad Herder Book.

Cullen, S. (2017). "Interpreting 'between privacies": Religious education as a conversational activity. In M. Shanahan (Ed.), *Does religious education matter?* (pp. 37–48). London and New York: Routledge.

Farley, E. (1988). *The fragility of knowledge: Theological education in the Church and the university*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Farley, E. (1994). *Theologia: The fragmentation and unity of theological education*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Groome, T. H. (2000). *Educating for life: A spiritual vision for every teacher and parent*. New York: Crossroads.

Jackson, R. (1997). *Religious education: An interpretive approach*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Kelsey, D. (1992). *To understand God truly: What's theological about a theological school?* Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox.

Kelsey, D. (1993). *Between Athens and Berlin: The theological education debate*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Kieran, P., & Hession, A. (2005). *Children, Catholicism and religious education*. Dublin: Veritas.

Kravatz, M. (2010). *Partners in wisdom and grace: Catechesis and religious education in dialogue*. Maryland: University Press of America.

Lane, D. (2003). *The experience of God: An invitation to do theology*. Dublin: Veritas.

Lane, D. (2013). *Religion and education: Re-imagining the relationship*. Dublin: Veritas.

McDermott, B. (2002). Theological literacy: Some Catholic reflections. In R. Petersen & N. Rourke (Eds.), *Theological literacy for the twenty-first century* (pp. 325–334). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans.

Mette, N. (1994). Theological learning and the study of theology from a teacher's perspective. *Concilium, 6,* 112–123.

Moran, G. (1982). From obstacle to modest contributor: Theology in religious education. In N. Thompson (Ed.), *Religious education and theology* (pp. 42–47). Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press.

Niebuhr, R., Williams, D., & Gustafson, J. (1957). *The Advancement of theological education*. New York: Harper and Brothers.

Pope John Paul II. (1992). *Pastores dabo vobis*. London: Catholic Truth Society.

Roebben, B. (2015). How much and which theology in religious education? On the intimate place of theology in the public space of the school. In M. T. Buchanan & A. M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 35–46). Switzerland: Springer.

Roebben, B., & Warren, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Religious education as practical theology*. Leuven: Peeters.

Sullivan, J. (2007). Dismembering and remembering religious education. In M. Felderhof, D. Torevell, & P. Thompson (Eds.), *Inspiring faith in schools: Studies in religious education* (pp. 127–137). Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.

Sullivan, J. (2017). A space like no other. In M. Shanahan (Ed.), *Does religious education matter*? (pp. 7–24). London and New York: Routledge.

The Mud Flower Collective. (1985). *God's fierce whimsy: Christian feminism and theological education*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press.

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977). *The Catholic school*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregtions/ccatheduc/docments/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html.

Tracy, D. (1983). The foundations of practical theology. In D. Browning (Ed.), *Practical theology: The emerging field in theology, church, and world* (pp. 62–82). San Francisco: Harper and Row.

Tracy, D. (1987). *Plurality and ambiguity: Hermeneutics, religion, hope*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

Tracy, D. (2002). On theological education: A reflection. In R. Petersen & N. Rourke (Eds.), *Theological literacy for the twenty-first century* (pp. 13–22), Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans.

Watson, B., & Thompson, P. (2007). *The effective teaching of religious education* (2nd ed.). Harlow: Pearson/Longman.

Dr. Sandra Cullen is Assistant Professor of religious education at Dublin City University and Director of the ICRE (Irish Centre for Religious Education). She is a trustee of Catholic Education in Schools Trust, which has responsibility for over 100 Catholic second-level schools in the Republic of Ireland. Her research interests include the place of Catholic religious education in the public space, the role of conversation in religious education, the religious education of religion teachers and their continuing professional and personal development. Her most recent publication is 'Interpreting "between privacies": Religious Education as a conversational activity'. In M. Shanahan (Ed.), *Does religious education matter?* London and New York: Routledge.

Chapter 8
Moral Formation in Catholic Religious Education: Insights from the Fourth Gospel

Nadia Delicata

Introduction

In chapter seven of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, dedicated to reflecting "Towards a better education of children," Pope Francis (2016) makes a compelling argument that the purpose of true education is the development of the child to become the man and woman of tomorrow.

> Were maturity merely the development of something already present in our genetic code, not much would have to be done. But prudence, good judgement and common sense are dependent not on purely quantitative growth factors, but rather on a whole series of things that come together deep within each person, or better, at the very core of our freedom. Inevitably, each child will surprise us with ideas and projects born of that freedom, which challenge us to rethink our own ideas. This is a good thing. Education includes encouraging the responsible use of freedom to face issues with good sense and intelligence. It involves forming persons who readily understand that their own lives, and the life of the community, are in their hands, and that freedom is itself a great gift. (Pope Francis, 2016, par, 262)

Following the dictum that he developed in his programmatic Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, that "time is greater than space" (see Pope Francis, 2013, par. 222–225), he appeals that all education is about gradually "forming persons" in that very core that reveals their true self, and therefore by mastering their "freedom." This task of ordering human formation which, in its essence, is "moral" formation as the personal appropriation of an ethos or character, is even more crucial for the church, who does not seek to merely form children to become men and women for tomorrow, but of forming them to become witnesses of Christ in their daily life, and therefore in their particular circumstances.

Catholic religious education aims to form responsible citizens, but more specifically, to form young Christians to mediate between faith and culture and therefore to embody a Christian ethos in daily and public life. Its multiple curricular dimensions

---

N. Delicata (✉)
Faculty of Theology, University of Malta, Msida, Malta
e-mail: nadia.delicata@um.edu.mt

that teach about beliefs, doctrines, rituals and morals coalesce for the ultimate aim of "becoming Christ-like". This personally formative aim is not based only on sound theological anthropology: Christ, in being fully divine and fully human, is the *telos* for all humanity, since he embodies the fullness of humanity to which each human being, whether consciously or not, is being called. It is also grounded in a classical understanding of the human as necessitating *paideia* or *humanitas* for a gradual growth in the virtues, in particular in the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, courage and temperance that shape the child to an "exemplary" human who can truly act in full freedom (Delicata, 2016).

Nevertheless, as Religious Educators, we must admit that, notwithstanding this robust theological and philosophical heritage, a rich understanding of religious education as a process of character development is not easily comprehensible, let alone attainable, in a culture and in educational institutions where we are caught between a rock and a hard place. For everything that traditional moral formation would have claimed to do—teach right from wrong, inculcate good habits, or even transform the child into a good man or woman of civic virtue—is today highly contested. As Catholic philosophers like Alasdair McIntyre and Charles Taylor have argued, the moral imaginaries that we have inherited from modernity are insufficient to ground what premodern cultures would have considered to be a process of forming the child to embrace noble character traits. McIntyre (2007) shows how the calamity of modern moral theories like utilitarianism and deontology is that they ultimately deteriorate to individualist emotivism. What might appear to be objective is in fact mere preference that is rationalised. Freedom itself has become construed as merely "freedom to choose" among different desirable goods rather than the "freedom to become" authentically human. But, and this is key, the desires themselves, and being in touch with those desires as a way of grasping one's true self, is raised to become *the* "moral ideal" (Taylor, 1992, pp. 22–23). As Charles Taylor has argued, modernity creates an "ethic of authenticity" that replaces (or at least, risks to replace) objective human flourishing, with narcissistic self-referentiality (2007). Both authors contend that modernity has bestowed on contemporary culture a legacy where "morality" has shrunk to become merely individualist and relativist choices.

At the same time, while modernity systematically undermined classical notions of practical reason oriented to a common human good and left us with an understanding of morality that stresses the rights, or choices, of individuals first and foremost, we have also entered a new era of unprecedented global, collective challenges. Modernity bred a culture of progress that was both humanly and technologically mediated. But if two World Wars have made us disillusioned about the human ability to reason—and in particular, to reason morally—we are as fervent as ever in our belief that technology is the solution to all physical, social and moral ills. Hence, the period after modernity is a truly technological age (Guardini, 2001), marked not just by spectacular technical achievements that have reshaped every single aspect of our daily life, but also by exceedingly complex moral issues that we would prefer to sweep under the carpet. Climate change, capitalism gone rogue, social media that indoctrinate and tribalise, "fake news", emerging issues of who controls the new powers of genetic engineering, artificial intelligence and the like and—underlying all this—disillusionment with the

political process reveal an abyss between our newfound technological power and the moral wisdom to guide it for integral flourishing.

Only a resolute effort in moral formation can heal the "wounds" in moral reasoning inherited from modernity and prepare the next generation to discern wisely and act justly in the face of the most complex moral dilemmas ever encountered by humankind. Moreover, if we are to follow Pope Francis' exhortation to families in the seventh chapter of *Amoris Laetitia*, every child deserves an education that encourages him or her to grow in virtue that enables the expression of authentic freedom. Pope Francis outlines how this education begins with the experience of love in the family, that teaches the child to reach out in solidarity to all. He stresses how discipline is necessary for this formation, but also how every child must be accompanied gently but firmly according to his or her own stage of growth. Throughout the chapter, Pope Francis outlines how our very identity and life story, as son, daughter, mother, father and grandparents, is forged through the relationships that bind us in family life.

But for such a holistic virtue education to be complemented and strengthened even in our schools, the threefold effort outlined in AL—of schooling in and for the ideal of love, of firm but tender disciplining, and of patiently assisting transformative growth in the particular life narrative that emerges from its relational context—it must also be presented in compelling pedagogical exemplars, and especially in stories that inspire and shape the moral imagination of our children. Narrative is the most effective pedagogical tool to teach *ethos* and *nomos* (Phelan, 2014): based on a "plot" that reconfigures daily experience to reshape one's reflection and appropriation of a life event, "story" is also the privileged tool to reconstitute personal and collective experience (Ricoeur, 1984). Thus, as the building blocks of a moral education, stories that raise a moral ideal, that teach the discipline of imitating it and that inspire to sow the seeds for a more integral flourishing, recover classical *paideia* or *humanitas* as a path to growth in virtue or nobility of character.

The early Christian tradition (Marrou, 1982) appropriated this pedagogy through hagiographies, but also the narratives from the scriptures. Even today, popular stories of the saints serve to inspire the child and adult on their path of moral formation. Through contemplating lives of holiness and virtue, catechumens and the baptised are formed morally and spiritually by encountering and identifying with "Christian heroes" to imitate their example.

Yet among the many Christian stories that serve the purpose of Christian moral formation, perhaps none is more noteworthy than the Fourth Gospel. One could argue that the three-stage plot at the basis of its construction as "drama" (Brant, 2004)—of constantly seeking the conversion of those in darkness to choose the light and acknowledge their being "children of God" loved by the Father; of depicting the many different paths of discipleship; but also of the culmination of that process of formation in the absolute joy of abiding in friendship, the ideal of mutual self-giving in community—has become the "blueprint" of all "Christian" formation. More crucially, the Fourth Gospel—which Origen, the master exegete of the tradition, distinguished as "the first fruits of the Gospels" (1989, 1.37) themselves the "first fruits of the Scriptures" (1989, 1.13)—honours discipleship as its core theme, echoing both the Hebrew and Greek traditions of education (Culpepper, 1975). As such, the

Gospel of John is both the earliest, and in many ways, remains the standard for all charters for Christian education. As such, my contention is that it also continues to have much to offer even to the contemporary reflection on the formative intent of Catholic religious education.

I will first unpack how in John, the central theme of discipleship echoes ancient teacher–student relationships that remain foundational to a recovery of character education today. Next, I will present a brief exegesis from key periscopes of the Gospel to highlight the pedagogical stages of inculcating a properly "Christian" moral and spiritual life. I will conclude with brief reflections on how the Johannine narrative of formation can help the Catholic Religious Educator today to navigate wisely between the Scylla and Charybdis of our culture, where we are simultaneously confronted with the most pressing moral dilemmas at the same time that our moral imagination is increasingly impoverished.

Discipleship in the Fourth Gospel

Among the unique features of the Gospel of John, the early twentieth-century Anglican scholar W. H. Griffith Thomas recognised an exceptionally peculiar characteristic: "its *clear* statement of the author's *precise* purpose in writing" (1968, p. 254). Griffith Thomas proceeds to quote Jn 20:30-31, which, like many exegetes both before and after him, he understands to encapsulate the authorial intent of the Fourth Gospel:

> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you *may come to believe* that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you *may have life* in his name.

As the fitting conclusion and original ending of the Fourth Gospel, and consequently, as the symbolic "final word" of the Evangelist through which to read the rest of the gospel, Griffith Thomas interprets the verses as the author's clear disclosure of the formative agenda of the Fourth Gospel. It is almost as if the *semeia* (signs) included in the gospel were a step-by-step curriculum for an incremental knowledge or *gnosis* about Jesus Christ that leads to the fulfilment of "eternal life." As Griffith Thomas concludes, this makes the Fourth Gospel "devotional, spiritual, practical. … John gives us facts in order that we may draw the conclusion he wishes and intends us to draw" (1968, p. 254).

Still, it is not just the "final word" of the evangelist that exposes the Fourth Gospel as a programme of formation. Of particular significance is the gospel's overarching emphasis on discipleship, that recalls the Jewish tradition rooted in the Torah, but perhaps even more strongly—considering the Hellenised context of first-century Ephesus, the setting traditionally associated with the Fourth Gospel's composition—the rich tradition of Hellenistic *paideia*.

The Gospel of John's special interest in the dynamic of being a "disciple" of Jesus can be gleaned in the numerous dialogues between Jesus the teacher and would-

be disciples, through which the various responses to the invitation "to believe into Jesus" (Schneiders, 2003, p. 52)—from enthusiastic acceptance to sheer rejection of Jesus—are explored. However, the gospel also presents key characters among those closest to Jesus who epitomise the very journey of discipleship as understood by John. Two of these key characters are the mysterious Beloved Disciple, alleged to be the charismatic figure behind the Johannine community, and Simon Peter, the representative of the "twelve".

Much ink has been spilled over the question of the identity of the Beloved Disciple. Yet, what is more crucial is how this pivotal role in the Johannine narrative situates the Fourth Gospel within the wider cultural tradition of *paideia*. van Tilborg (1993) writes:

> [V]ia the lexeme of the 'beloved disciple', a reality is imaginarily evoked which has its own structure in classical and Hellenistic antiquity: the teacher who has a special, affectively loaded relationship with one of his pupils and who gives him a special role in the future succession of teacher and pupil. In antiquity, this relationship is more or less an institutional reality… Narratively we see a repetition in the Johannine gospel: as Jesus is being placed in a special position by John (the Baptist), so Jesus also places the beloved disciple in a special position. (p. 59)

van Tilborg (1993) presents the Johannine narrative as unfolding within two book-ends: the testimony of the Baptist, who identifies his favourite disciple as "the lamb of God" (Jn 1:29) and the Beloved Disciple's witness to his master through the Gospel and the Johannine community (Jn 21:24). The overall effect is that the community becomes a participant in the same charged reality of the teacher's love for the favourite disciple. The Johannine community exists as both the medium that creates and maintains the new group of disciples, as well as the message that gives the community its distinct identity bound to the Beloved Disciple. The anonymity of the Disciple, however, guarantees that the focus remains on the true Word of God and the real Teacher who is the Advocate sent in Christ's name. Within this imaginary reality, the Fourth Gospel is thus the document of *Christian* formation par excellence highlighting how the very relational dynamic between teacher and student strengthens the disciple's identity.

Similarly, as narrated in the Fourth Gospel, the relationship between Jesus and "the twelve" as his original community of disciples evokes the tradition of *paideia*. van Tilborg notes: "It is (most probably) an exclusively male group which is narratively presented as a group of friends. It is an imaginary reality which has deep roots in the classical Hellenistic-Jewish culture" (1993, p. 112). It could even be suggested that through the use of the two terms *rabbi* and *didaskalos*, the Fourth Gospel bridges the Jewish institution of the *talmîdh* with the Hellenistic *matheted* creating a profoundly rich sense of discipleship that is distinctly Christian.

Even if, as Wilkins concludes, in John: "*Mathetes* and *talmîdh* appear to be equivalent terms," (cited in van Tilborg, 1993, p. 112), van Tilborg notes how from a Jewish perspective

> the disciples are completely dependent on the teacher. If there is a conflict between the interests of one's father and the interests of the teacher, the latter is given priority. This adds

meaning to the way Jesus calls his disciples *teknia* (little children) (Jn 13:33) … But it gives even more meaning to the title *adelphoi* (brothers), which Jesus uses for them in 20:17 and the implicit author in 21:23. (p. 112)

From a Hellenistic perspective, however, Jesus calls his disciples *philoi* (friends), when

disciples of a *rabbi* are never called 'friends'. The Johannine text deals with a special kind of friendship … In general, one can read the text as a story in which the disciples of Jesus act as friends of an *oikos* (household/family). Remaining self-reliant, they are incidentally together with Jesus. Common meals and discussions play an important role. (van Tilborg, 1993, p. 128)

Accordingly, in John, there is the development of a paradoxical sense of discipleship that is both a total dependence on God the Teacher (hence, the necessity of the act of "believing into" his Icon, Jesus) and an absolute freedom of friendship with the Teacher in Christ. Together, and within the culturally assumed rules of *paideia*, the two understandings of discipleship demand that the pupil-friend also witnesses to the master in order to help his family or circle flourish. This implies a mutuality between the teacher–student relationship, where the student is committed to the pedagogical relationship.

Among "the twelve," the closest disciples of Jesus, the figure of Simon Peter is especially important to illustrate this dynamic. In their gatherings, and in particular in the farewell meal and dialogues with the Teacher, Simon Peter is presented as the spokesperson of the group. However, Simon Peter is paradoxically the disciple who vows to die for Jesus during the very night he betrays his master and friend. In his person, he embodies both the fragility of discipleship and its persistent hope to bear fruit. Therefore all disciples, no matter where they are on their journey, can identify with Simon Peter and follow his example, just as all teachers in the tradition can remember that every student, no matter how weak in character, has the potential for virtue.

In turn, and in order to not only give hope to the disciple but to teach the right disposition of teachers in the church, the way how the Gospel shows Jesus interacting with Simon Peter is symbolic of his unconditional love for all his disciples: a love that accepts and welcomes even those who betray him, misunderstand him, or show lack of trust. Even when the Fourth Gospel pushes the envelope and invites the Christian to flourish further along their journey to become children of God, it also reveals remarkable patience, confidence and trust on the part of Jesus in his disciples, especially since the Gospel constantly depicts the "twelve" as flawed in their believing, understanding and witnessing (see Jn 13:31-17:26). In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus simply never gives up on those whom he calls "friends," implying that even the new Christians, "those who have not seen and yet have come to believe" (Jn 20:29) can hope and trust absolutely in Jesus' mercy. As the author of 1 John writes:

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 Jn 2:1-2)

In this context of *paideia*, the final scene of the book is especially important, for it reveals the culmination of discipleship and how the post-resurrection Jesus challenges the new community of Christians to live a communion ecclesiology. Even if John 21 is an epilogue to the gospel, this final resurrection scene is pivotal to the final redactor's didactic intent in composing the gospel (Breck, 1992; Minear, 1983). Indeed, it can be interpreted as a worthy conclusion to the evangelist's pedagogical project of forming disciples into Jesus through the power of the Spirit, who become witnesses of Christ and children of the Father. Through following the journeys of the two favoured disciples and their companions, the very method of moral and spiritual formation advanced by the Fourth Evangelist—of radical discipleship as the three simultaneous dynamics of conversion, imitation and self-offering love—can be gleaned.

In Chap. 21, we see the return of the two most important characters-disciples in the narrative: the Beloved and Simon Peter. Simon Peter and the Beloved had already appeared at all the crucial moments of the narrative of exaltation: from the last supper to Jesus being lifted up on the cross. Peter is the one who protests when Jesus washes the disciples' feet, while the Beloved lies in the bosom of the master and receives the privileged knowledge of who is to betray Jesus. Peter cuts the high priest's slave's ear when the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, and together with another disciple, who could very well have been the Beloved, follows Jesus when he is taken to the chief priest. Peter denies his master three times while Jesus is being interrogated, and the Beloved Disciple receives the master's mother as his own at the foot of the cross.

Notwithstanding these high profile appearances, however, in the Johannine community and the entire Christian movement, the real test of discipleship was bound to belief in the resurrection. Yet in the first Johannine resurrection narrative (Jn 20:1-18), while the Beloved Disciple and Peter follow the Magdalene to behold the empty tomb, and the Beloved Disciple "believes" the Magdalene's testimony, the author ominously tells us, that "as yet they [Peter and the Beloved Disciple] did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead" (Jn 20:9). Because of their lack of understanding, they simply "returned to their homes" (Jn 20:10), presumably to Galilee, where in Chap. 21, we encounter them fishing. Sandra Schneiders writes:

> It has been suggested that the fact that Peter and the others go fishing, that is, seemingly return to their ordinary occupations, indicates that they have not yet come to faith in the resurrection. Their leaving Jerusalem and taking up their daily work seems strange in view of the joy-filled experiences recounted in chapter 20 and the apparent conclusion of 20:30-31. (2003, p. 228)

Therefore, it can be interpreted that it is only in Chap. 21 that Peter and the Beloved Disciple finally encounter the risen Christ face-to-face. And this encounter is extremely significant for it not only highlights a general mission of the disciples, symbolised in the catching of the fish, but also the specific missions that are to be carried out by the chosen disciples. Discipleship is not just about learning, but ultimately also about living; about being sent into the world to make a difference. Peter is to tend the sheep to the extent of dying for them as the Shepherd died for his own. The Beloved Disciple is identified as the author of the gospel and the charismatic

leader of the Johannine community. Both missions are of witnessing: the witness of martyrdom that imitates the master's self-offering love, and the witness of sustaining a pneumatic community who testifies truthfully to Jesus' tradition through this very written document. The Gospel of John and the Johannine community are understood as fruits of the Beloved Disciple's testimony of Jesus: they are the master's legacy that he leaves to the next generation and indeed the way how he has honoured his master through his discipleship.

Therefore, in their different ways, Simon Peter and the Beloved Disciples are raised as model disciples who have fulfilled their destinies of living as "Christians"—followers and witnesses of Christ. In this final scene, the significance of their role as chosen disciples is fully revealed. If throughout the narrative, the audience has been led to identify with Simon Peter and the Beloved Disciple as heroes of the community, the final disclosure of the fulfilment of their mission as disciples is significant for the audience to desire to imitate them. The text as a whole becomes thus a pedagogical tool, where the overt purpose of nurturing "belief" is exemplified through the process of coming to authentic discipleship as witness of these two special friends of the Lord.

The Threefold Plot of Appropriating a Christian Ethos

If the Gospel of John is the quintessential manual of Christian formation, then the stages of that pedagogy can also be gleaned through its pericopes. I will highlight five pericopes that exemplify the three stages of formation as conversion to coming to belief into Christ; the path of active discipleship; and its culmination as an abiding in friendship with the Lord.

The pericope of Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-15) is paradigmatic for teaching the true meaning of radical "rebirth" in Christ and therefore the necessity for a posture of right belief in response to an encounter with Jesus—even (or indeed especially) among those who are too confident of their faithfulness. Nicodemus is the quintessential symbol of a follower who is devout in his religious practices, desires to be sincere in his search for truth, yet still lacks the courage or deep experience of spiritual awakening to truly and irrevocably become a disciple of the Teacher. However, the reader actually likes Nicodemus and comes to identify with him, even if, quite clearly, Jesus finds Nicodemus' desire for discipleship wanting and even insipid. Yet, as the reader persists in delving into the narrative, they are eventually vindicated, as Nicodemus makes two further appearances in the Gospel: first to defend Jesus with his fellow Pharisees (Jn 7:50-52), and eventually as his fully fletched discipleship is revealed when, with Joseph of Arimathea, he removes Jesus' body from the cross, and through a gesture of intimacy and love, anoints him with spices for burial (Jn 19:39-42). Nicodemus will come a long way from our first encounter with him in this passage, when he comes to Jesus "by night" (Jn 3:2) as an ardent seeker of the truth, but somehow complacent in his commitment. Nicodemus is thus a "type" of

the student who resists the call to conversion, demands gentle persistence on the part of the teacher, but ultimately becomes a committed follower of Christ.

In contrast to the hesitancy of Nicodemus, the encounter with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:1-42) reflects the fruitfulness of discipleship, just as the pericope of the man born blind (Jn 9:1-41) alerts to the dangers of being a follower of Christ. In their distinct ways, both disciples are *alter Christus*, witnesses of Christ, through whom others come to follow him or to further oppose him. The third important pericope to teach about discipleship is the narrative of the rising of Lazarus (Jn 11:1-53) that reveals the true meaning of the "life" that Jesus has brought to the world. These three passages—of Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well, the healing of the man born blind, and the culmination of Jesus' signs, the raising of Lazarus from the dead—have traditionally been understood as "types" of baptism, and consequently of the church's communal life of discipleship. Just like today's Roman liturgy, Lukken notes that:

> In the Ambrosian rite this pericope [of the healing of the man born blind] is read in the fourth Sunday of Lent: it has also given its name to this Sunday 'De Caeco.' In the early liturgy of Rome the story of the healing of the man born blind is also read on a Sunday in Lent. For in Rome, certainly from the end of the fourth century, this pericope—like that of the Samaritan woman (John 4:6-42) and the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-45)—was linked with the Sunday Mass of the baptismal *scrutinia*. (1973, p. 328)

As part of the Rite of the Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), the scrutinies and exorcisms on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent are meant "to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect" and "to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good" (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 1987). They are the final spiritual preparation before the sacraments of initiation seal the catechumen as a Christian. Accordingly, they are the last word, so to say, exemplifying the path of discipleship, and preparing for life in intimacy with Christ.

This life of intimacy is the posture of true friendship that, as the Fourth Gospel teaches, must also be learnt. The pericope of the washing of the feet (Jn 13: 1-20) illustrates the true essence of a community of love abiding in the divine, in contrast to human power relations that hamper our authentic flourishing. In this sense, the Johannine scene of the washing of the feet is the quintessential depiction of Christian ethics, grounded in mutual service. The true power of the Christian lies in revealing a mode of relationality that is generous and even self-offering, even if it always ultimately aims to be reciprocal.

If in any kind of service, and at least temporarily, one person lays aside their own good, goals and interest for the sake of the other, the ultimate expression of such self-abnegation is to offer one's own life for the sake of the served. The crucial twist, however, is that in John's Gospel this self-sacrifice must *always* be an act of love, as expressed in the "new commandment" that accompanies the didactic gesture of self-offering: "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (Jn 13:34). Accordingly, if Jesus' form of love was to die for his own, the fundamental teaching that emerges from the symbol of the washing of the feet is in turn summarised in John 15: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. *You are my friends* if you do what I command you" (15:12-14).

Only in relationships of true equality—the classical understanding of friendship—can service be an authentic expression of generous self-offering for the love of the other. "In perfect friendship, which is indeed rare, the good of each is truly the other's good and so, in seeking the good of the friend, one's own good is achieved … the friend's happiness" (Schneiders, 2003, p. 194). Therefore, friendship mirrors most perfectly the Trinitarian dynamic of love as *kenosis* and *pleroma*, and the Johannine Gospel celebrates service among friends—as epitomised in Jesus' own self-offering for his friends—as a revelation of God's nature as love. The love of friends is the shared wonder at each other's beauty, the mutual delight in each other's presence. Only this love can give of oneself without holding anything back, confident that all will be given back in abundance. Friendship, unlike mere servanthood, is about mutuality. The servant gives without receiving, but the friend receives generously just as she gives generously.

> The foot washing is the Fourth Evangelist's dramatic interpretation of this theme. In the Johannine perspective what definitively distinguishes the community that Jesus calls into existence from the power structures so universal in human society is the love of friendship expressing itself in joyful mutual service for which rank is irrelevant. *By the foot washing Jesus has transcended the only ontologically based inequality among human beings, that between himself and us.* Peter's refusal of Jesus' act of service was equivalent, then, to a rejection of the death of Jesus understood as the laying down of his life for those he loved, and *implying a radically new order of human relationships*. (Schneiders, 2003, p. 195)

From these pericopes, it thus becomes clear that the very process of Christian moral and spiritual formation—from conversion, to ongoing discipleship, to the culmination of communion—is an antidote to moral relativism and a balm for true wisdom, precisely by transforming the Christian into a witness of the truth about the Holy Spirit acting through the human person to accomplish the rebirth and fulfilment of the world. In the Spirit, we are emboldened to become free moral agents and therefore co-creators with God.

Conclusion

The Fourth Gospel emphasises through a literary drama the personal flourishing of the disciple in his relationship with the Teacher to become part of the Lord's community of friends. Indeed, this dynamic of formation is so central to the Christian ethos that it can also be gleaned in the ways in which the universal church has appropriated its general principles as faith expressed in the act of worship and rebirth in the Holy Spirit, of discipleship as the openness to be formed by the Teacher to become his witness and emissary, and of self-offering love that reflects Trinitarian *koinonia* in the praxes of liturgy, doctrine and moral living.

The three praxes also form the backbone of Catholic religious education that prepares the child to appropriate a Christian identity in service to the world. Indeed,

as the process of formation is lived personally and communally in the imaginaries inspired by the Christian scriptures and tradition, it also challenges the crisis of contemporary ethics and can inspire the child to be prudent but also generous in his or her openness to the moral challenges being posed by today's technocratic culture. This ethos is also very much open to invite the whole world to the same path of discipleship, whose culmination is virtue and friendship. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

This universal orientation of the Johannine Gospel, even if often shrouded in dramatic language that shocks and challenges, presents clear models of heroic virtue, but also of what it truly means to be a "villain". For in John, villains are not such because of what they do, but rather because of what they fail to do—most notably, take the initial plunge into the path of discipleship itself. But once one accepts to "be born again", to become a child, then, as Pope Francis teaches in *Amoris Laetitia*, the teacher has the duty to never give up on the progress of the student, but rather to patiently and lovingly nurture his or her progress.

Indeed, perhaps the most crucial lesson that the Fourth Gospel teaches is to the Religious Educator as it models the attitudes the teacher must appropriate to be truly worthy of the title: attitudes of compassion, of sacrifice, of patient waiting, to accompany the child along every step of the way. In this sense, Catholic religious education is a true ministry of discernment and accompaniment to always seek to integrate the student's personal frailties to become a transformed self for others.

References

Brant, J. A. (2004). *Dialogue and drama: Elements of Greek tragedy in the fourth Gospel*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.

Breck, J. (1992). John 21: Epilogue or conclusion? *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, 36*, 27–49.

Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. (1987). *Rite of Christian initiation of adults.* Retrieved from http://www.catholicliturgy.com/index.cfm/FuseAction/documentText/Index/14/SubIndex/0/ContentIndex/540/Start/539.

Culpepper, R. A. (1975). *The Johannine School: an evaluation of the Johannine School hypothesis based on an investigation of the nature of ancient schools*. Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature.

Delicata, N. (2016). Paideia tou Kyriou: From origen to medieval exegesis. *Didaskalia, 27,* 31–64.

Griffith Thomas, W. H. (1968). The purpose of the Fourth Gospel, Part I. *Bibliotheca Sacra, 125,* 254–262.

Guardini, R. (2001). *The End of the modern world*. (Rev. ed.). Wilmington, DE: ISI Books.

Lukken, G. M. (1973). *Original sin in the roman liturgy: Research into the theology of original sin in the Roman sacramentaria and the early baptismal liturgy*. Lieden: E. J. Brill.

MacIntyre, A. (2007). *After virtue: A study in moral theory* (3rd ed.). University of Notre Dame Press.

Marrou, H. I. (1982). *A history of education in antiquity* (Reprint ed.). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Minear, P. S. (1983). The original functions of John 21. *Journal of Biblical Literature, 102,* 185–198.

Origen. (1989, 1993). *Commentary on the gospel according to John*. In *The fathers of the Church* (Ronald E. Heine, trans. Vols. 80 and 89). Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press.

Phelan, J. (2014). Narrative ethics. In *The living handbook of narratology*. Retrieved from:http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/narrative-ethics.

Pope Francis. (2013). *Apostolic exhortation Evangelii Gaudium on the proclamation of the gospel in today's world*. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html#The_joy_of_the_gospel.

Pope Francis. (2016). *Post-Synodal apostolic exhortation Amoris Laetitia, on love in the family*. Retrieved from https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf.

Ricoeur, P. (1984). *Time and narrative* (Vol. 1). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schneiders, S. M. (2003). *Written that you may believe: Encountering Jesus in the fourth gospel*. New York: Crossroad.

Taylor, C. (1992). *The ethics of authenticity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Taylor, C. (2007). *A secular age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

van Tilborg, S. (1993). *Imaginative love in John*. New York: E. J. Brill.

Dr. Nadia Delicata is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Moral and Spiritual Theology of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta. Her research interests include fundamental moral theology, and Christianity and culture, in particular, the emerging context of digital culture. Her doctoral work focused on key challenges to Christian formation in a digital context, in particular, the shifting experience of the real, of the body and of society. Delicata's publications include articles on Christian education in the context of tribalism, augmented reality and the cyborg, but also on the original Christian understanding of formation as *paideia tou kyriou*.

Chapter 9
Von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics Applied to Religious Education

Pauline Dimech

Introduction

Some years ago, Gerard O'Brien made a claim that von Balthasar's scheme of fundamental theology may be applied concretely to Catechetics as a practical discipline. In his doctoral dissertation, he tried to prove that post-conciliar Catechetics could be rooted in, and take its shape from, the scheme of fundamental theology derived from the theological contribution of Hans Urs von Balthasar. He even attempted to elicit the methodological principles that inform Balthasar's Trilogy of Aesthetics, Dramatics, and Logic, investigating his method in its fundamental structure. Finally, he proposed a post-conciliar Catechetics which follows von Balthasar's method in its fundamental structure (O'Brien, 2001).

While accepting that this is helpful, it has to be said that O'Brien's work does not deal with Catholic religious education in schools. It deals more directly with Catechetics. Furthermore, in its attempt to cover the whole of von Balthasar's Trilogy, it sometimes tends to be ambiguous. I would, however, fully agree with O'Brien that there are implications that emerge from applying Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics to the practical transmission of the Christian message.

In this Paper, I will be using Nichols' essay (1999) on "Von Balthasar's Aims in his Theo-aesthetics." I will provide a short overview of what it was that von Balthasar intended to achieve in writing his Theo-aesthetics. This is not naïve on my part. I do realize that von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics has been harshly criticized. As early as 1978, Donald J. Keefe wrote an essay entitled "A Methodological Critique of von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics." In 1994, Larry Scott Chapp stated that "Balthasar's development of his Theo-aesthetics is not without its problems". One criticism brought forward was that "a very large theological edifice is constructed upon a very minimal theoretical apparatus" (Chapp, 1994, p. 326). Another criticism,

P. Dimech (✉)
Faculty of Theology/Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida, Malta
e-mail: pauline.dimech@um.edu.mt

also made by Chapp (1994, p. 330) was that "Balthasar's aesthetic seems to compel him to seek an aesthetic 'wholeness' in various aspects of the Christian tradition that the tradition itself does not always justify". In spite of this, Balthasar's aesthetic was "judged a successful first step in the direction of restoring aesthetics to its proper place within dogmatic theology" (Chapp, 1994, 328). And, as Zordan and Knauss have said, von Balthasar's theology "has had a decisive influence on the development of theology and in particular aesthetic theology" (2013, p. 5).

I will not be offering a critique of von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics. On the contrary, I will be acknowledging its validity, arguing that the concept of Theo-aesthetics is a fitting model for doing religious education, and offering reasons to justify the application of von Balthasar's concept of Theo-aesthetics to religious education. In addition, I will tease out some implications that emerge from the application of von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics to the practice of religious education. Finally, I will make some practical recommendations applicable to the school context.

Hans Urs Von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics

Von Balthasar, as Bychkov (2008, p. xiv) has said "did not invent the discipline, nor is he the only contemporary writer to address the topic" However, "Von Balthasar, perhaps, presents the most systematic conceptualization of what constitutes Theo-aesthetics" (pp. xiv, xii).

Readers will be aware that we are here dealing with a huge enterprise. Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics consisted of more than 3500 pages in the original German *Herrlichkeit*, and it is impossible to do justice to the richness and abundance of von Balthasar's work in a short paper. However, the review which I provide here, though concise, will, hopefully, be sufficient to allow me to make a logical and credible argument concerning the application of Theo-aesthetics to the RE classroom. I will base my summary both on the primary text, namely Hans Urs von Balthasar's multivolume work, but also on the works of Nichols (1998, 1999), the Catholic theologian who spent most of his life translating, working through and interpreting von Balthasar's work. There are many other theologians who provide critiques of Balthasar's aesthetics. Among these, one could perhaps mention G. Ruggieri's essay "Il principio estetico nella teologia di Hans Urs von Balthasar" (1989), and Daniel Bühlmann's book, *Die Ästhetische Dimension in Hans Urs von Balthasar*, published in 2005. However, I find Nichols' depiction to be clear, to the point and more than sufficient for my purpose. Furthermore, I would agree with Nichols that, although von Balthasar did not formally identify the aims for his project, it is possible for us to interpret his work as evidence of his "intentions" (Nichols, 1999, p. 409). I therefore begin by eliciting ten points, which I consider to be relevant to what will follow.

Why We Need "Theo-aesthetics"

As Bychkov (2008, xiv) has said, "the foundation of von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics is his idea of the analogy between aesthetic experience (notably that of beauty) and revelation." Von Balthasar maintained that we no longer see this. He blames neo-Thomist rationality in particular, for driving aesthetics and theology apart. The "lost transcendental of beauty—*pulchrum*—and more especially beauty's biblical correlate … glory," must be rediscovered alongside the *ens* (being as being) and the *verum* (truth). In this scheme, beauty is not a subjective judgment of taste but a transcendental characteristic of all being that raptures the subject away from itself. Glory is "the divinity of the Invisible which radiates in the visibleness of Being of the world" (Von Balthasar, 1982, p. 431). According to von Balthasar, it was beauty which captivated the early witnesses. Consequently, theology must recapture "the reasons why revelation was so captivating in the first place." (Nichols, 1999, p. 410). According to von Balthasar, "all theology that neglects what is beautiful in revelation will finish in a dead end." On the contrary, "all the great theologies of the Church have been in some sense beautiful creations." (Nichols, 1999, pp. 412–3). The core theological question of the Theo-aesthetics is therefore: "How do we distinguish [God's] appearance, his epiphany" from the many "other phenomena in the world?" (Von Balthasar, 1993, p. 116).

Our Capacity to Perceive "The Primordial Phenomenon of the Beautiful"

Von Balthasar's second aim for writing the Theo-aesthetics is to insist that God's revelation of grace can be perceived in the world. Von Balthasar maintains that the visibility of revelation evokes a human response to this gift of divine beauty in the world, and that it is this very capacity to perceive "the primordial phenomenon of the beautiful" which enables us to be evangelized, that is, to receive the gospel. "Becoming, remaining and growing as a Christian depends on our enjoying access to the wondrous beauty of a unique form, Jesus Christ" (Nichols, 1999, p. 411).

The Risk of Idolatry

The third point which the Theo-aesthetics makes concerns the risk of idolatry. As Yves de Maeseneer (2003) has put it, "A beautiful image always risks enclosing itself, becoming a closed circuit" (p. 10). Von Balthasar observes how once we begin to think in aesthetic terms, we have a tendency to glorify the world, rather than God. Von Balthasar insists that the object of marvelling should always be God, and he

cautions revelation and theology to be on the lookout for any "displacement" of glory that may take place (Nichols, 1999, p. 411).

Christianity as the Religion Which Offers the Best Answer

For von Balthasar, the Christ-form is the one concrete historical event in which divine glory is fully present. He thus uses the Theo-aesthetics to portray Christianity as the religion which offers the best answer. He claims that no other religion, besides Christianity, can meet our need, because, he claims, no other religion can return glory to being in the way Christianity does, namely by portraying being as the fruit of the absolute love of the Trinity. In von Balthasar, "the Incarnation and Atonement…resolve the central issue of all aesthetics" (Nichols, 1999, p. 422).

What Happens During the Act of Revelation

Although essentially "invisible" and "unapproachable," "God enters the sphere of creaturely visibleness, not by means of intermediary beings, but in himself." (Von Balthasar, 1982, p. 301). The form of revelation is the main theme of Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics because it is the glorious evidence of divine agency in the world. Von Balthasar also analyses the dynamics of revelation. During the act of revelation, the light which illumines us in faith does not originate in the subject, but "breaks forth from within the revelatory form" (Nichols, 1999, p. 414).

The Consequences Which Ensue Following Our Perception of the Form of God's Self-disclosure

Von Balthasar claims that in all its "objective novelty and originality," the Christ-form has the power "to change our understanding of the world and our habitual sensibility." Thanks to our perception of the form of God's self-disclosure, and having been enraptured by God's self-revelation, we start to see the world and ourselves in relation to God and the world with "new eyes." (Nichols, 1999, p. 415). The Christian, having experienced and actualized God's love is then called to make it visible "within his love for his neighbour", which "wholly transcends man," and "which man cannot ascribe to himself" (Von Balthasar, 1991, p. 649).

The Various Practitioners of Theo-aesthetics in the Church

Von Balthasar also aimed to show that there have been many and varied practitioners of Theo-aesthetics in the Church (Nichols, 1999). Von Balthasar attributes some of the qualitative theological contributions to poets, novelists and dramatists, rather than to theologians. He discusses 12 different theological styles which have a chronological, geographical and thematic basis. What is significant is that, for von Balthasar, Theo-aesthetics need not be limited to theological texts in the narrow sense of the word.

The Rescue of Natural Theology

As Nichols points out, through his Theo-aesthetics, Balthasar also intended to rescue natural theology. Along with Aquinas, he wished to show that revelation does not nullify natural theology but raises and completes it. The beauty of the world and God's beauty "do not compete but collaborate." The beauty of the world reflects "the glory of the infinite subsistent being from whom it receives everything it has" (Nichols, 1999, p. 418).

The Kenotic Nature of All Being

Another important point which von Balthasar makes in his Aesthetics concerns the kenotic nature of all being. Using Aquinas, von Balthasar shows how being keeps back nothing for itself. The fact that being manifests and bestows itself does not make being lose anything of itself. On the contrary, being receives its glory from self-dispossession. In this regard, being finds its fulfilment in the kenotic Christ and in the kenotic Trinity. The persons of the Trinity constitute themselves as who they are through the very act of pouring themselves out for each other (Nichols, 1999).

The Saints as a Sign of Glory

Von Balthasar uses the Theo-aesthetics to present the saints as a sign of glory. "Displaced from the life of the cosmos at large, glory took refuge, so to speak, in the hearts of God-filled persons, which is what von Balthasar has in mind in speaking, as he now does, of the 'metaphysics of the saints'." Von Balthasar aims to show "that the self-abandoned person who relies totally on God—the saint—is a kind of personalized version of *esse* [essential nature or essence] in its outpouring…The saint, not the cosmos, in other words, now becomes the epiphany of glory." According to von Balthasar, mysticism and the saints bring aesthetics and theology together. In von

Balthasar's sight, "the mystics not only guide us to the heart of the biblical revelation but in a sense 'solve' the problem of metaphysics" (Nichols, 1999, pp. 420–1).

The Relevance for Religious Education

Von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics is relevant to the practice of religious education in schools not only because of von Balthasar's atypical use of the concepts of form and beauty, but also because in applying the two concepts, von Balthasar demonstrates that objectivity and subjectivity are interwoven. In von Balthasar, the objective and the subjective overlap and sometimes even coincide. Let us explain. The foundation of Theo-aesthetics is the objectivity of divine revelation instead of the subjectivity of human perception of revelation. Von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics stresses the passive-receptive side of perceiving the form of divine revelation. Revelation becomes an attitude of service to the object. If one truly wants to perceive God in His appearance, he or she will have to eliminate the subjectivity of his desires and feelings and to be unconditionally open to the objective evidence of revelation. Only then does human subjectivity respond suitably to the objectivity of divine revelation. The revealing One must be allowed to be. This is immensely important for religious education which tends to be biased towards one or the other. Focusing too drastically on the objective aspect can turn religious education into a theology made simple course. On the contrary, focussing too much on the subjective can turn it into an exercise of emotivism. Referring to Alisdair McIntyre's work, Walker (2005) argues that to fall into the trap of theological emotivism, is to consider that all "evaluative judgments and more specifically all moral judgments are nothing but expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character," which cannot be impartially evaluated according to universally recognized standards (p. 3).

Theo-aesthetics and Course Content

In this part of the chapter, I wish to elicit a few concepts from von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics, which, I will argue, ought to be incorporated in any religious education course which professes itself as Catholic.

Revelation

Von Balthasar's concept of revelation is Christological. What he means by revelation is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. In his view, men and women can only be shaped through their encounter with the revelatory form itself. Having been enrap-

tured by God's self-revelation, we start to see the world and ourselves in relation to God. In all its "objective novelty and originality" the Christ-form has the power "to change our understanding of the world and our habitual sensibility" (Nichols, 1999, p. 415). The perception and the rapture of the objective form bestows everyday life with its richness and vigour. As such, the study of Christian contemplation, its characteristics and its conditions of possibility is integral to a religious education based on a Theo-aesthetics as formulated by von Balthasar. A religious education based on von Balthasar's *Herrlichkeit* (glory) should do the following. First, it should reflect on the diversity of the Invisible radiating in the visibility of Being in the world. It should, therefore, always start at the level of sensory perception, of light and revelation, and then investigate the meaning and content of the encounter with the form and beauty of divine glory. In emphasizing "form," von Balthasar wishes to insist that we are not merely dealing with the appearance of a being, but claiming that, in every individual being, there is the appearance of the totality of being. The perception of a form, and therefore of the totality in a fragment—no matter how minute—is an experience of glory. Second, it should emphasize that the revelatory form will change the way we look at ourselves and at the world. As a consequence of our perception of the form of God's self-disclosure, we start to see the world and ourselves in relation to God and the world with new eyes. Consequently, examples of God's visibility, and encounters of individuals with the form and beauty of divine glory should be an integral part of the content of our religious education curricula. This would mean being exposed to the canonized saints, as well as to the "holiness found in our next-door neighbours" (Pope Francis, 2018, par. 7). Third, a religious education based on von Balthasar's *Herrlichkeit* should emphasize that the light which illumines us in faith in the act of revelation, "breaks forth from within the revelatory form" (Nichols, 1999, p. 414). It does not originate in the subject, although changes in our subjectivity can be observed. This means that, although teachers and students may—as a result of religious education—experience religious phenomena, noticeable growth in maturity, or even visible transformation, teachers and students are not to forget that their experience is not identical with the revelatory event, which is external to them.

Christianity

In the Theo-aesthetics, von Balthasar also wished to present Christianity as the religion which offers the best answer. The reason which he gives is that, by portraying being as the fruit of the absolute love of the Trinity, Christianity can return glory to being, which is not possible with other religions. Christianity can return glory to being by portraying being as the fruit of the absolute love which the Christ of the Incarnation and Cross has revealed the Trinity to be. No other religion can do this. If Christianity is understood to be the religion which offers the best answer, then the bulk of the content of religious education must be Christianity, rather than Catholicism. In practical terms, this means that the focus is on Christ, and on the demands

made by the Gospel, rather than on the Catholic traditions, institutions and practices. Christianity can return glory to being. No other religion can do this. The message of the closing volumes of *Herrlichkeit* is that the Incarnation and Atonement "resolve the central issue of all aesthetics" (Nichols, 1999, p. 422). The humanity of Jesus, and the Cross of Jesus will never be surpassed or made superfluous. It should be said that Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics is written from the perspective of the believer, and is immersed within a Christological and an ecclesiological frame (Chapp, 1994, p. 321), which makes it difficult for us to apply it to a multireligious context. Von Balthasar frequently leaves one wondering as to the theological status of the various non-Christian religions (Chapp, 1994, 334). In a pluralist and globalized world, von Balthasar's position can only be recommended if it is complimented with a broader approach to religion, where other religions are acknowledged, and also treated in class. But what is certain is that von Balthasar does not restrict himself to Catholic Christianity. This is significant, considering that designers of curricula are often more comfortable wresting with different faiths, than with tackling the differences between Christian churches.

Form

The human mind is capable of seeing in the multitude of perceptions of worldly being a unity of meaning which cannot be deduced from the various elements perceived. As has already been pointed out, von Balthasar calls this meaningful unity "form" (*Gestalt*). A form is not a sign or a reference to something else but a manifestation of that which makes it possible and inspires it. It is a presence rather than a symbol. For von Balthasar, "form" is the contemplated, independently existing totality of fragments and elements which contains the totality of being and as such is a representation or image of the Absolute. In von Balthasar's scheme, Jesus should be called a form, not a sign or a symbol. As a form, He is not a reference to God but a theophany in the concrete history of humans. Jesus Christ is the ultimate, while most concrete form of revelation. Therefore, the individual cannot perceive the image of Christ as an image among other images. Second, in the space of the Church, the community perceives the gestures of Christ. In their roles as mediations and testimonies of Divine Revelation, Scriptures, Tradition and Church are not mere references to the Christ-event, but actual appearances and realizations of the mystery of salvation. Third, there is one image, which according to von Balthasar precedes all the other images in the world and which originates in Christ like no other: the image of the neighbour. Any religious education course which professes to be Catholic must demonstrate this emphasis on the neighbour, whether it is through in-depth exploration of the social teachings of the Church, or through participation in tangible projects designed to improve the circumstances of those in need. Finally, the form of revelation can be perceived in prayer and contemplation. Here again, a religious education course—created in the light of von Balthasar's concept of *herrlichkeit*—would have to integrate several opportunities both for the exploration of the different meth-

ods of prayer, as well as for participation in actual prayer sessions, whatever form these sessions may take. These six forms, namely, (a) Christ, (b) Scripture, Church and Tradition, (c) neighbour, (d) prayer and contemplation, are integral to a Catholic religious education.

Plurality

It has already been said that, according to von Balthasar, revelation has triggered in history a vast array of great theologies, who consequently inspired different forms of Theo-aesthetics in the Church. Second, von Balthasar took seriously the theological contribution made by poets, novelists and dramatists. The consequences of both ideas are immensely relevant for Catholic religious education. First, CRE is meant to reflect the plurality of theologies, as well as the plurality of sources for such a theology. Second, if we are to inspire our young people, not only the plurality of theologies, but also the variety of literary, artistic and digital expressions should have an important place in our curricula. All forms of theological contribution should be taken seriously, and there is no reason why the content may not include the work of poets, novelists and dramatists, as well as different texts that reflect a Theo-aesthetics, whether traditional or contemporary.

Beauty

Balthasar appeals to what Chapp calls, "the inner credibility of works of art as an indication of the self-authenticating authority of God's revelation in Jesus." (Chapp, 1994, p. 355). In von Balthasar, beauty is the appearance of the infinite in finite forms, and hence is not dependent on the perception by the human subject. It only appears to the receptive openness of graced eyes. It is a gift rather than a way of seeing things. Therefore, by "beauty" von Balthasar means the main characteristic of the divine essence appearing in a worldly form, as something that is always greater than the appearance and never fully coincides with it. Just as with theology, all Christian religious education that neglects what is beautiful in revelation will find itself in a dead end, incapable of permanently inspiring anybody, or fructifying anything in an abiding way. As von Balthasar has said, we need new eyes. Through coming to the biblical revelation with new eyes, we may be able to recover the perception of glory again. Beauty and the aesthetic are theological loci. Religious education should not just be a theodicy. It is not just an attempt to answer the question of why a good God permits the manifestation of evil and suffering. It is more of an aesthetics, so that we need to develop our capacity to perceive what has been called "the primordial phenomenon of the beautiful" if we are to be evangelized. In short, there is a dire need for Theo-aesthetics to be an integral part of teaching and learning. The reality is dramatic: The re-Christianization of Western civilization depends on our youth

getting this message (Nichols, 1999, p. 411). Our Catholic religious education must be a Theo-aesthetics, simply because everything "is somehow related to beauty" (Nichols, 1999, p. 410). It must appreciate the process whereby beauty is recognized, understand this process and learn to apply such a process.

Idolatry

It has already been pointed out that the third aim of the Theo-aesthetics was that of showing the imminent risk of idolatry. The means must never become the end. We must be aware of our tendency to glorify the world, and our resources, instead of God. In Balthasar's Aesthetics, the "object of marvelling" is always God (Nichols, 1999, p. 412). A Catholic religious education that is inspired by von Balthasar's aesthetics must show the imminent risk of idolatry. The process of discernment must be ongoing (not just talk about discernment!). Discernment is the way religious education is done. Discernment is not just a theme on the syllabus. Catholic religious education is itself an exercise in discernment.

The Saints

It has already been said that, in von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics, the saint is the self-abandoned person who relies totally on God, and as such is a sign of glory. As Nichols has said, the saint is, then, a kind of personalized version of *esse* in its outpouring, and, as such allow us to see a solution to the problem of metaphysics (p. 421). In Balthasar, the mystics not only guide us to the heart of the biblical revelation but in a sense "solve" the problem of metaphysics. The saints have an important part to play in the process in Catholic religious education. Mystics could be used as a guide for the teaching and learning process. Religious education must incorporate the saints as an integral part of the material treated. As the recipients of God's self-revelation, we receive the call to make the divine visible in charity.

Theo-aesthetics and Pedagogical Method

Having elicited what to me are the more important concepts within von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics, and having argued that these ought to be incorporated within any religious education course which professes itself as Catholic, I now wish to argue that the content explored by a Theo-aesthetics comes with its own specific theological method, and that this theological method could gainfully be applied within the context of an RE classroom. I have come up with five concepts, which I hope the reader will appreciate as pedagogical methods, rather than as thematic content.

Contemplation

We need a method that will help us rediscover beauty, alongside the *ens* and the *verum*. From von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics, we may infer that the process of education must be understood as a contemplative one. It is not just the incarnation and the Cross that require contemplation, it is the whole of reality. Theo-aesthetics requires a theology of rapture, of which von Balthasar speaks. The process of Religious education is a contemplative and a humble exercise, both for the pre-evangelized, and for those who already confess Jesus Christ as their Saviour. As has already been pointed out, having been enraptured by God's self-revelation, we start to see the world and ourselves in relation to God and the world with new eyes. Knowing that, in all its "objective novelty and originality" the Christ-form has the power "to change our understanding of the world and our habitual sensibility," (Nichols, 1999, p. 415) steers us towards a religious education that is based on a theology of perception, of seeing, and of contemplation. A true religious education should train young people to be able to recognize that every being is an appearance of the Absolute.

Creativity

We have seen how von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics intended to manifest some of the many and varied practitioners of Theo-aesthetics in the Church. Certainly, too, von Balthasar wanted us to take seriously the wide-ranging theological contribution made by poets, novelists and dramatists. What von Balthasar said about theology can be applied to the practical theology of religious education. A religious education that "neglects what is beautiful in revelation will finish in a dead end, and be incapable of permanently inspiring anybody, or fructifying anything in an abiding way" (Nichols, 1999, pp. 412–3). We need to help our students develop new eyes, to develop a new capacity to perceive "the primordial phenomenon of the beautiful." Being evangelized, receiving the gospel requires it. Pedagogy must reflect this creativity. Furthermore, a true Catholic religious education appreciates that young people are themselves theologians, whose contribution to theology is important.

Proximity to Nature

Von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics has the form of divine revelation as its object, but it also studies the concept of nature and man's subjective experience of nature in order to find the conditions for perceiving and understanding the form of revelation. The teaching and learning process of religious education also requires a closeness to nature, since the beauty of the world and God's better beauty, grace, collaborate together. The beauty of the finite reflects the glory of the infinite. Although the

divine Essence transcends common being, yet "common being is … irradiated by glory (Nichols, 1999, p. 418). As Walker (2005) has said, von Balthasar's theology "includes a recovery of the notion of nature, whose defence is a hallmark of the universal relevance of a truly Catholic theology" (p. 7). Natural theology must play an important part within religious education. Although the beauty in the world cannot be identified with divine glory, the mystery of all creation, humankind included, is to be interpreted as the hidden presence of God's absolute love.

Love

Walker (2005) has emphasized how Von Balthasar's project was to maintain Christological love as the first principle of theology, while simultaneously developing a philosophy of a "truly metaphysical range" whose intrinsic openness to that love secures the connection between the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and universal human reason in its quest for first principles (p. 5). Walker illustrates and defends von Balthasar's claim that "love alone"—meaning the trinitarian love revealed in Jesus—is the very principle of theological intelligence. Walker underscores how Balthasarian "love alone" is not a recipe for a simplistic reduction of the *intellectus fidei* to enthusiastic piety, but is, on the contrary, a subtle and far-reaching program for a truly Catholic thought that tries to think the world from God and God from the world in light of Christ, the concrete "*analogia entis*" (p. 6). According to von Balthasar, "God's kenotic love triumphs over all forms of human knowledge which seek to tame God's love in either sterile rationalisms, trapping God in human concepts and systems … or in a pious transcendentalism, holding God at a comfortable deistic distance" (n.a., n.d.). A truly Catholic religious education should help students realize that unless there is love, no amount of intelligence can lead to understanding. A faith seeking understanding requires love, or at least a desire for it, if it is to understand anything at all.

Abandoning Oneself to God

We have already seen how, in von Balthasar, Theo-aesthetics develops the theme of abandonment. In its dependence on God, being consolidates itself in giving itself away. The glory of being comes from its self-dispossession. What von Balthasar terms the metaphysics of the saints, presents free will as abandonment (*Gelassenheit*). According to von Balthasar, this abandonment is man's aesthetical attitude to life because he experiences his freedom in harmony with the totality of being. There are at least two things which a truly Catholic Religious education must do. First, religious education must incorporate multiple heroic examples of self-dispossession, kenosis, charity, the specifically Christian love of neighbour. Second, a Catholic religious education should take the form of a self-dispossession. It must assume

kenotic characteristics. Kenosis must become a pedagogical method, and not just a theme that is discussed.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided a short overview of what it was that von Balthasar intended to achieve in writing his Theo-aesthetics. In this respect, most would agree with Chapp's early statement that "the sheer scope and size of [von Balthasar's] theology should not lead one to the false conclusion that Balthasar has achieved any kind of definitive 'last word' on the subject. The road is now open for other theologians to complete the task that Balthasar has so ably begun" (Chapp, 1994, p. 328). I then argued that the concept of Theo-aesthetics is a fitting model for doing religious education, and offered reasons to justify the application of Hans Urs von Balthasar's concept of Theo-aesthetics to religious education, identifying seven themes which I argue that a truly Catholic religious education must concentrate on. I then teased out five pedagogical implications that emerge from the application of von Balthasar's Theo-aesthetics to the practice of religious education. I need to restate that it is impossible to do justice to the richness and abundance of von Balthasar's work in such a short Paper. I hope, however, that I have provided some kind of bridge between the systematic theology of Von Balthasar and the RE classroom, and that this may serve as a basic text for those wishing to reflect on Hans Urs von Balthasar's work, and on the possibility of creating a religious-pedagogical theory that could serve to put von Balthasar's theological principles into the practice of religious education.

References

Bühlmann, D. M. (2005). *Die Ästhetische dimension in Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Norderstedt, Germany: Grin Verlag.

Bychkov, O. V. (2008). Introduction. In O. V. Bychkov & J. Fodor (Eds.), *Theological aesthetics after von Balthasar. Ashgate studies in theology, imagination and the arts* (pp. xi–xxvii). Hampshire, UK: Ashgate.

Chapp, L. S. (1994). *The theological method of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Fordham University, New York. Retrieved from https://fordham.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2958andcontext=dissertations.

De Maeseneer, Y. (2003). St Francis versus McDonald's? Contemporary globalization critique and Hans Urs von Balthasar's theological aesthetics. *Heythrop Journal, 44*, 1–14.

Keefe, D. J. (1978). A methodological critique of von Balthasar's theological aesthetics. *Communio: International Catholic Review*, Volume 05.1.

Nichols, A. (1998). *The Word has been abroad. A guide through Balthasar's aesthetics*. San Francisco: T&T Clark.

Nichols, A. (1999). Von Balthasar's aims in his theological aesthetics. *Heythrop Journal, 40,* 409–423.

O'Brien, G. (2001). *A theological analysis of post-conciliar Roman Catholic catechetics as an aspect of the ministry of the divine word.* Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Glasgow. Retrieved from http://theses.gla.ac.uk/3857/.

Pope Francis. (2018). *Apostolic exhortation: Gaudete et exsultate*. Retrieved from http://w2. vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_ 20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html.

Ruggieri, G. (1989). Il principio estetico nella teologia di Hans Urs von Balthasar. *Humanitas, 44*(3), 338–353.

Von Balthasar, H. U. *The glory of the Lord, a theological aesthetics*. Retrieved from http://www. wordtrade.com/religion/christianity/Balthasar2R.htm.

Von Balthasar, H. U. (1993). *My work: In retrospect.* Communio Books, San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Von Balthasar, H. U. (1982). *The glory of the Lord: A theological aesthetics I: Seeing the form*. San Francisco: T&T Clark by Ignatius Press.

Von Balthasar, H. U. (1991). *The glory of the Lord: A theological aesthetics V: The realm of metaphysics in the modern age*. San Francisco: T&T Clark by Ignatius Press.

Walker, A. J. (Fall 2005). Love alone: Hans Urs Von Balthasar as a master of theological renewal. *Communio: International Catholic Review* 32.

Zordan, D., & Knauss, S. (2013). Following the traces of God in art: Aesthetic theology as foundational theology. An Introduction. *Cross Currents, 63,* 4–8.

Dr. Pauline Dimech has a doctorate in systematic theology. She is currently a lecturer at the Faculty of Theology and the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta. Her research interests include method in theology, evangelization and catechesis, religious education in schools, the language of doctrine, the Society of Christian Doctrine (SDC), St. George Preca, Hans Urs von Balthasar, ecclesial authority, and the saints as authoritative figures. Dimech was a full-time religious educator in state schools and colleges in Malta between 1987 and 2015. As a member of SDC, she has a lifelong involvement in catechesis.

Chapter 10
Primary School Parents' Perspectives on Religious Education

Toke Elshof

Introduction

The parental perspective on Catholic religious education connects with two social domains. The first domain is the Catholic educational world. The processes of religious individualisation, detraditionalisation and pluralisation (Boeve, 2012) do not only characterise societal life but affect school life as well. Due to the religious diversity among the school population, knowledge of and affinity with Catholic faith and church life cannot be presumed within school life (Elshof, 2017a). As a result, the catholicity of the school needs to be reshaped (Roebben, 2016). In the Netherlands, this is mainly done in an implicit, embodied manner. Catholicity is expressed in a religiously founded value structure, rooted in the Catholic Social Teaching with its emphasis on human dignity, justice and solidarity. It is expressed in the intention to serve children's needs and to contribute to the common good (Elshof, 2015). However, the awareness that these value orientation express catholicity is diminishing. As a result, parents of young children who search for a primary school and who share the religious illiteracy of their generation do not recognise the religious roots of the embodied catholicity (Elshof, 2017b, 2018). The perspective of parents on Catholic religious education is also important because of the growing need for parental involvement. Within schools, there is a growing awareness that the education and training of pupils benefit from parents who are positively involved in the school (for an overview of various Dutch and European studies on this subject: see Ter Avest, Kom, De Wolff, Bertram-Troost, & Miedema, 2013, pp. 8–10).

The second domain concerns family life. Studies on religiosity in family life describe the growing importance of the family of origin for the development of children's religiosity (Dillen & Pollefeyt, 2005; Schwab, 1995), partly due to the loss of meaning in other contexts in which religiousness is transferred (Elshof, 2012, 2016;

T. Elshof (✉)
Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands
e-mail: a.j.m.elshof@uvt.nl

Schwab, 1995). Because of the loss of institutional integration of domestic religious formation and the accompanying religious isolation of this formation provided by parents, the example these parents received from their own parents takes on new significance: they pass on what they have been taught at home. Their religious formation they once received is a heritage which does not always answer the challenges of the religious formation they want to give to their own children. This may cause uncomfortableness. In particular, existential questions and experiences within their own and their children's lives evoke the desire for a renewed meaningful religious framework (Elshof, 2016, 2018; Först, 2014; Korsch, 1999; Lämmlin, 2004). This latent religious desire of primary school parents combined with their religious illiteracy is relevant to both Catholic Education in general and to Catholic religious education in particular.

First of all, this research into parents' perspective on Catholic religious education investigates domestic life and the possible role of religion within it. It then explores whether and how domestic life and education and the role of religion within it has an effect on the parental perspective of Catholic Religious education. Does it play a role in their school choice motives and expectations, and if so, how? How do they experience the actual religious education they observe at school? And how do they evaluate their choice of Catholic education?

Methodology

Ter Avest et al. (2013) already mentioned that much research into parental involvement in schools is perceived from the perspective of the school. Parents are subdivided into roles (constituent, client and consumer) or types (partner, participant, transferring, invisible). Research into the process of choosing a school usually focuses on the criteria that parents establish and the prioritisation within these criteria. For example, the quantitative research into inspiring practices on Catholic schools in the Netherlands (De Jong & Metaal, 2009; De Jong & Van der Zee, 2008) indicates seven parental motives to choose a Catholic primary school: distance from school (32.4%), the atmosphere (25.4%), how the school is rated (14.0%), the catholicity of the school (12.1%), acquaintances in school (3.3%), the openness to different religions (1.8%) and other reasons (11.0%). These results clarify the prioritisation of criteria on which the choices are based. For example, they show that for the majority of parents, the religious school identity is not the most important criterion. Because the parents had to choose one item, the research does not provide insight into the way several motives might be connected or into the weight the non-chosen items might have. Moreover, it gives no information about the way Catholicism might be interwoven with other motives. It presumes that Catholicism is a separate entity. Furthermore, no information is provided on what parents mean when they mark the item 'Catholicity'. Additionally, the research assumes that the parental choice is based upon rational arguments, as Ter Avest et al. (2013) and Ter Avest, Bertram-Troost and Miedema (2015) note regarding several studies concerning parental school selection motives.

In order to gain insight into the underlying reasons for the chosen ranking, their interrelationship and relevant cognitive and affective aspects, Ter Avest et al. (2013) and Ter Avest et al. (2015) opted for a qualitative research design in their research into parental school choice motives in Dutch Protestant-Christian primary education. They conducted focus group interviews among groups of parents in three types of Protestant-Christian schools.

This new research into parents in Catholic primary education is of a qualitative nature as well. There is relatively little knowledge about the factors that play a role and how these are related (Baarda, De Goede, & Teunissen, 1995; Maso & Smaling, 1998). Here as well, the conduct of interviews provides an exploration of behaviours, attitudes, relationships and interactions, including the meanings that are involved (Wester, 1995). Because of the specific nature of the religiosity of (former) Catholics, namely the relative difficulty in verbalising a personal religious perspective (Elshof, 2014), individual interviews were opted for. This allows for more individual articulation.

Unlike Ter Avest et al. (2015), this new study did not use existing school typologies in the recruitment of respondents. The Protestant-Christian typology (distinguishing the Tradition School, the Diversity School and the Meaningful Learning School, see Ter Avest et al., 2015) as well as the Catholic typology (distinguishing the Monologue School, the Colourless School, the Colourful School and the Dialogue School, see Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2010) stemmed from research in which the school's perspective was privileged. They are therefore not necessarily fit for exploratory research into the perspective of parents. This is why this new research, which aims to gain insight into the perspective of parents across the board on Catholic Education and Catholic Religious education, has opted for a broad approach and a leading role for self-definition in the recruitment of respondents.

The recruitment of parents came about through schools (board members, directors and identity counsellors), churches (dioceses and parishes) and other, previously interviewed, parents. In the north, east, south and west of the country, two types of schools were selected: schools that, according to themselves, are strongly involved with the Catholic identity, and schools that are not. Within each of these schools, two parent types were then sought: parents who (according to themselves) are strongly involved with the Catholic identity of the school, and parents for whom this catholicity does not play a major role in their lives. The advantage of this self-definition approach is that the parental perspective on catholicity and Catholic religious education can be understood from within.

In the first 6 months of 2017, 36 interviews were conducted, with a total of 44 parents. This included 30 individual interviews with 29 mothers and 1 father, 5 interviews with parent couples and 1 group interview. The interviewees were divided equally between the different regions of the Netherlands, and between rural and urban areas. In each region, eight interviews were conducted, divided equally between the two school types and the two parent types. When it turned out that this resulted in a relatively limited view of the perspective of churchgoing Catholic parents, the research group was extended by two church-associated Catholic parents. In order to gain insight into the perspective of Muslim parents, two interviews were also

conducted with Muslim parents, including one group interview. The research group as a whole includes parents with children in all levels of primary school.

The interview scheme was set up in a semi-structured way; it used topics (Wester, 1995). This left room for the exploration and deepening of themes and connections, but also made it possible to compare the results. The interview diagram divided the research question into five sub-questions/themes. (1) The background of the parents in terms of religious beliefs, country of origin, level of education and age; (2) domestic life and parenting, and the role of religion and philosophy within it; (3) choosing a primary school and the role of the catholicity of the school in that selection process; (4) the actually experienced catholicity of the school and of the (religious) education and (5) the parental evaluation of their own choice for Catholic (religious) education. Questions, which served as a narrative aid to clarify the respondents' own perspectives (knowledge, experiences, insights, attitudes, feelings, connections etc.), were included for each theme.

The interviews were recorded on audio tapes, which were replayed afterwards. For each interview, the broad outlines of the answers were then documented for each subtheme. Afterwards, the answers of all interviews were divided by subtheme. In order to check whether the broad outlines of all interviews were included, the interviews were then replayed a second time. The main elements by each subtheme that emerged from the joint responses form the basis for the conclusions.

The results of this study are not representative in numerical terms: the research group, with a relatively large number of churchgoing and Muslim parents, is not generalisable to the parent population of Catholic primary schools as a whole. This qualitative research did not aim for statistical, but for content-based generalisation (Baarda et al., 1995; Maso & Smaling, 1998). The varied research group and the method of data acquisition allowed the variation in insights, attitudes, motives, etc., to be revealed. This research therefore aims to give insight into the perspective of parents in the breadth of Catholic (religious) primary school education.

Research Results

This chapter makes a selection from the many answers to the sub-questions. It does not thoroughly examine the intertwining of domestic life and parenting, including the domestic religious or worldview orientation on the one hand, and expectations with regard to the educational climate at school on the other. Nor does it pay attention to the decision-making process and the way in which Catholic religious education is interwoven with other considerations. How the parents actually experience Catholic religious education, how they appreciate it and whether the actual practice meets their previous expectations in this respect, is not reflected on either, just like their evaluation of the choice of Catholic school is not taken into account. The question of how the results relate to the school types distinguished by Ter Avest et al. (2015) and Pollefeyt and Bouwens (2010) will also be discussed elsewhere. The structure of this chapter is modest. It first describes the four kinds of expectations parents

attach to religious education in primary schools. Thereafter, it clarifies how these expectations relate to the background of the parents, in which four parent types can be distinguished.

Four Kinds of Expectations

Religious initiation. Religious education should initiate pupils into Catholic-Christian faith and church. Parents expect religious education to correspond with the attention given to faith and church within their family life. They also expect religious education to complement the domestic religious involvement. In that case, parents expect the school to do what they consider themselves incapable of: teaching pupils to pray, telling bible stories, explaining moral values, practicing religious rituals and attending religious services: at school or in parish church. Part of this parental expectation pattern is the open approach towards the Catholic-Christian faith: getting acquainted with this religion takes into account the interest as well as the freedom of conscience of children who are unreligious or profess another religion.

Religious development. Parents expect religious education to contribute to the development of pupils' attention to and appreciation of religions and of the mystery and transcendence religions refer to. This expectation includes the contribution to the pupils' capacity of choosing their own path and developing their personal attitudes towards religious matters. This means that religious education informs pupils about various religions, and that children with another religious background are given space to practice this: by giving the children a day off at the Eid Festival or by telling the class about Ramadan. This serves the purpose of mutual understanding. However, festivities of other religions are not celebrated by the school as a whole. This only happens with Catholic-Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter.

Social-cultural development. Parents expect religious education to contribute to the pupils' awareness of the intertwinement between Catholic-Christian religion and Western culture in terms of history, value orientation, law, science, education, art, etc. This expectation does not concern pupils' religiosity but their awareness of the social relevance of Catholic-Christian and other religions. Parents expect that knowledge on this subject will lead to broader understanding. Religious diversity within the school can also positively contribute to understanding the role of religion in societal events.

Input into domestic religiosity and family life. The religious stories, rituals and services children experience and gain knowledge of at school, are perceived by their parents as interesting for themselves as well. Religious education thus evokes the parental attention to religiosity and increases their motivation and ability of paying attention to religion within domestic life and upbringing. For example, the school can provide information about the background of religious practices such as fasting, through a newsletter or a parent evening. In such ways, school contributes to the domestic conversation about religious and worldview themes. Celebrations where

grandparents are welcome, in which they learn religious songs that can be sung together at home, can contribute to intergenerational family cohesion.

Four Parental Types

The second important outcome of the interviews is that four parent types can be distinguished: churchgoing, religious-nostalgic, unreligious and Muslim parents. Parents with a similar religious or worldview position show similarities in the role of religion and worldview in domestic life and parenting, and in their expectations of Catholic Religious education.

The first parent type is the religious parent who is ecclesiastically involved: Catholic or Protestant and of Dutch, European or non-Western origin. Sometimes their religious and ecclesiastical involvement finds its origins in their own family life and childhood, sometimes church involvement is chosen for personally. Religion plays a prominent role in the domestic life and parenting. For example, through ecclesiastical involvement (children's celebrations, children's choir, children's catechesis), Bible readings and praying (when going to bed, before meal or for a special occasion), but also in attention to other people, involvement in society and nature. Faith plays a role in daily life but also during special and existential experiences such as birth, illness, death, divorce and dealing with bullying or harassment. Faith offers a transcendent perspective which enables parents to search for connectedness, inspiration and trust in their lives and upbringing.

These parents help their children by talking about it, by lighting a candle, reading a Bible story or praying. Religiosity contributes to a mental resilience against current interpretive frameworks of manageability and self-reliance. Like all parents do, these parents strive for a domestic upbringing in which the development of individual and social capacities are in balance. Attention, appreciation and respect for the personality of each child are important, in addition to attention, appreciation and respect for other people, for nature and society. These parents consider the development of the individual and the social qualities closely interwoven. In their perspective, the development of individuality (self-esteem and self-reliance) contributes to the development of others and of society. At home, children learn to stand up for what is worthwhile to them and to others.

Such parents realise themselves to be a minority even in the Catholic primary school. Nonetheless, they hope for a Catholic religious education that is in line with and complementary to their domestic religiousness. They expect that children from non-Catholic families should become acquainted with the Catholic-Christian faith by the school.

This religious initiation serves the second expectation: that of personal religious development. By becoming acquainted with religion 'from within', children are better prepared to make a personal choice on religious matters. The religious diversity within the school is considered an opportunity for the broader religious education of the pupils and a chance of mutual understanding and dialogue. This includes first of all

other Christian variants, but also other religions such as Islam. The third expectation that of social and cultural development is also considered important because of the public role of religions. Just like the fourth one, the input into domestic life. Among these parents, the movement is sometimes reversed: they tend to contribute to the recognisability of the religious identity of the school.

The religious-nostalgic parents consider themselves religious but are no longer church involved. These parents have a Catholic or Protestant background and a Dutch, European or non-Western background. They long for a sheltering society in which their personal and family lives are embedded and secured. They feel nostalgic towards former decades, mainly because of the self-evident influence of Catholic-Christian faith and the sense of community and value orientation which was provided for them. Due to their conventionalism, religion plays a minor role within their domestic life and parenting. This is regretted to a greater or lesser extent by these parents themselves. They would like to pay more attention to it but miss the self-evident embedding of the domestic religiousness in the past. Due to the diminishing of the former obviousness of ecclesiastical engagement, church involvement has become an exception. By going to church, one feels alone and not connected. It no longer responds to the longing for community experience and embedding. Contact with the grandparental religion is an incidental input for the religiosity in domestic life and upbringing, just like church services, which for everyone in the family or neighbourhood, are just centred around special family moments such as birth, marriage, death or Christmas. The role of religion in domestic life and upbringing is gradually fading. Praying, going to church or lighting a candle is becoming less and less common. This causes the conversation about it to disappear. Values and norms are central to domestic upbringing, especially connectedness and a sense of community. The individual feels part of a larger whole and is able to join and contribute to the collective.

Because these parents long for the self-evidence and embedding of the faith and the church of the past, they expect the school to pursue religious initiation. Children should become acquainted with the Catholic-Christian faith: through religious education, through the recognisability of the catholicity of the school and through contact with parish life. Second, these parents have expectations with regard to personal religious development. These parents believe that children should be free to choose their own religious worldview. If the First Communion or Confirmation causes the child to be an exception in the class, this child will be given the choice not to participate. Attention for non-Christian religions within religious education is considered meaningful but raises resistance when the school pays more attention to other religions than to Catholic-Christian faith. The third expectation of these parents is about the sociocultural significance of the Catholic-Christian faith. They focused on the great significance of that religious values had, and to a certain extent still have, for the sense of community within Western society. Fourth, they expect that the school involves them in the Catholic-Christian religion, particularly those that have a liturgical and ritual focus. Religious celebrations and religious festivities at school should contribute to the domestic capacity to pay attention to religion and church life and to the awareness of the intergenerational connection within family life.

The non-religious parents grew up in families that have been non-ecclesiastical for one or two generations, and they often attended a Catholic or Protestant school. Their memories are often quite positive, especially the acquaintance with values, celebrations, rituals, Bible stories and songs. Values such as self-confidence and social responsibility are central to domestic upbringing, particularly the respect that one should have for oneself, for others and for one's environment. Learning what is expected of you goes hand in hand with resilience: one does not have to meet every expectation. Religion plays no role in domestic life except as a theme on which a personal view is required.

These parents mention that they found religious education quite interesting when they were young, or that they have at least not lost anything by this education. Therefore, they consider religious education valuable for their own children as well. Because these parents don't know much about it, they expect the school to introduce children to Catholic-Christian events, rituals and values in an accessible way. However this should not be overemphasised. It should not be given the upper hand, as is the case in Protestant-Christian schools (according to these parents). This acquaintance with the Catholic-Christian faith does not necessarily serve the personal religious development of the children (the second expectation). Such a development is not always considered to be likely or desirable for one's own children. For these parents, religious education should primarily be focused on the children's social education. They must become familiar with religious values, Bible stories and celebrations because such knowledge contributes to their understanding of society. These parents also consider attention to other religions important. Some of them agree with a pivotal role of the Catholic faith while others consider it to be a disadvantage. Yet they understand this prioritisation because of the Catholic nature of the school. In this regard, in their fourth expectation, they expressed the desire that the school informs parents about the way in which the children get acquainted with religious stories and celebrations, and that it enables parents and grandparents to visit a celebration together (e.g. at Christmas), strengthens family cohesion, stimulates parents' interest and promotes discussion at home about religion and worldview. As parents' mental distance from the Catholic faith increases, they are more inclined to nuance and broaden the school's input at home, because they perceive it as too restricted and to be one-sided Catholic.

The Muslim parents who were interviewed came from Morocco and Turkey and went to school in their country of origin. Moreover, they are all professing Muslim. This means that it cannot be assumed that their answers also give insight into Muslim parents who have not been educated or who no longer profess their faith. The interviewed parents face the task of preparing their children for a future in the Netherlands. Faith plays an important role in their domestic life and child-rearing. This is reflected in religious values and rules, particularly in the respect for religious traditions that give structure and support, for the family and the elderly in the family, respect for others and for other religions, development of one's talents and contributing to the world. The religious teaching that children receive from the Arab class or the Koran school is discussed and explained at home. Besides setting a good example, parents talk to their children about how they can be credible Muslim themselves, where at

some point the children's own choice is of value, for instance, to wear a headscarf, or to go to the mosque. Parents also talk about other religions, advocating respect for differences and emphasising the similarities between religions, mainly, presuming a same core, matching values, highlighting important figures and rituals that have a similar meaning and outlining that good and bad play a role in all religions. Their religious-reflective attitude is interwoven with their educational background. These parents attended schools that introduced them to a secular perspective (Turkey) or a French-Western oriented education with a focus on religious diversity (Morocco). However, they observed that there are many Muslim parents who had not followed any education in their country of origin. These parents are less able to explain the rules of Islam at home and to connect with Western culture and other religions.

For these educated parents, the choice of Catholic religious education is in line with their desire to give their children a good starting position. Catholic education familiarises them with Western religion and with Western value orientations. Catholic education is consistent with the attention to religious traditions and rules at home (more than public education, according to these parents) and is open to other religions (more than Christian education, according to these parents). Catholic religious education introduces their children to Catholic-Christian events and rituals. Concerning this first expectation, parents can experience a tension between being Muslim and participating in religious celebrations, such as a Christmas meeting in the Catholic Church. In such cases, the advice of the imam is sometimes sought. When he for instance says that it is contrary to Islam to participate in a Catholic Religious celebration, but that is not forbidden to be in a church building if that is the backdrop for a Christmas musical or for a guided tour, parents tend to follow such guidance.

As for the second expectation that religious education contributes to the personal religious development of children, meant that Muslim parents sometimes experience a lack of familiarity with the Catholic-Christian tradition among the Dutch teachers. As a result, the pupils' acquaintance with Catholic-Christian celebrations sometimes remains rather superficial and lacks substantive depth.

Concerning the third expectation, of the sociocultural role of religions, parents consider it important that their children learn to deal with religious and cultural diversity at school. When their children attend a school with a small number of Muslim children, these Muslim children receive an education that introduces them into Western religious and cultural experiences and that also radiates respect for pupils from other religions. In a school with predominantly Muslim pupils and where Catholic-Christian pupils often also have a non-Western background, Western religious experience and culture are less self-evident as part of the intercultural and interreligious meeting in the classroom.

As for the fourth expectation, parents find it valuable that the school informs parents about the meaning of Catholic-Christian events and rituals and about the connection that can be made with Islam from there. The fact that the school provides parents with such information contributes to their ability to deal with Western religious experience and culture. This enables them to better guide their children in this process. The interest of Muslim parents in such parent meetings depends on their level of education: in terms of mental openness and their ability to understand Dutch.

The statements made by parents show that schools express Catholicity in very diverse ways. The significance parents assign to religious education within primary schools turns out to be influenced by their churchgoing, religious-nostalgic, non-religious or Muslim religious backgrounds. Amongst all parent types, there are parents who think that their school pays a lot or a sufficient amount of attention to it, and that is appreciated among all parent types. Among the first three parent types, there are also parents who feel that their school pays little or no attention to it. In their view, the Catholic school does not distinguish itself from public schools. In those cases, all parents think that their school falls short. The fact that their school is not recognisable as a Catholic one weighs most heavily among parents of the first type. In their view, it undermines the legitimacy of Catholic education. If there is no school that provides Catholic religious education in a recognisable way throughout their region, their constitutional right to such education is undermined. The religiously nostalgic parents generally observe a lack of design of Catholic religious education with acquiescence and resignation; they have already experienced a loss of meaning of religious life before. As their mental distance from the Catholic Christian-Christian religion increases, unreligious parents find the lack of attention paid to religious education at school less important. No great dissatisfaction with the catholicity of education has been observed among Muslim parents.

Conclusion

The most important research result concerns the insight that the religious individualisation, detraditionalisation and pluralisation which can be distinguished within school life and family life, have affected the expectations parents attach to Catholic (religious) education in primary schools. Consequently, parents state that schools should express and develop their Catholicity more outspokenly. Schools seem insufficiently aware of these parental motives and expectations. Within the research, four parent types can be recognised, based on the role that religion plays within their domestic life and upbringing. Within each type, four expectations concerning Catholic religious education play a role. How these expectations play a role and the importance that is allocated to them depends on the parent type. As much as churchgoing, religious-nostalgic, unreligious and Muslim parents may differ sometimes: they are all aware the future of their children will be intercultural and interreligious. Consequently, they expect the school to prepare their children for that. Thus, the differences between parents and their expectations do not take away one similarity: all parents consider open-minded Catholic education important for the religious and the social education of their children, and for the attention they can pay to religion and worldview in their domestic life and upbringing. These results call for better attention within school life.

Concerning the parental perspective that Catholic school life and Catholic religious education should be open-minded towards cultural and religious diversity, one of the last documents of the Congregation for Catholic Education calls the attention.

In 'Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools' (2013), the Congregation mentions that Catholic schools should be considered places where intercultural dialogue can and should be practiced. Three important statements are in line with the parental perspectives. First, the awareness that the religious dimension is important within social-cultural life and within intercultural dialogue (EI 9). The second similarity between the parents and the Congregation concerns the significance of dialogue (EI 15) and the awareness that this requires a familiarity with one's own religion or religious background. Religious literacy contributes to dialogical openness towards other religions (EI 18). The third similarity has to do with the difference between catechesis and Catholic religious education as a school subject; a difference both parents and the Congregation consider important. While catechesis aims at the pupils' personal belief, CRE aims at their knowledge of Christian faith and life. Their capacity to understand and apprehend the religious dimension of social and cultural life contributes to their personal development and school life. It contributes to the development of society as well (EI 74). Both parents and the Congregation for Catholic Education ask Catholic schools to become places where interreligious encounter and dialogue can be practiced.

References

Baarda, D., De Goede, M., & Teunissen, J. (1995). *Basisboek kwalitatief onderzoek*. Houten: Stenfert.

Boeve, L. (2012). Religious education in a post-secular and post-Christian context. *Journal of Beliefs and Values: Studies in Religion and Education, 33*(2), 143–156.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2013). *Educating to intercultural dialogue in Catholic schools. Living in harmony for a civilisation of love.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20131028_dialogo-interculturale_en.html.

De Jong, A., & Metaal, S. (2009). Inspirerende activiteiten en personen op katholieke scholen. In N. Dullemans et al. (Red.), *Katholieke scholen: het vertrouwen waard, deel 4* (pp. 60–73). Den Haag: Bond KBVO.

De Jong, A., & Van der Zee, T. (2008). *Inspireren tot participatie. Onderzoek naar inspirerende activiteiten en leraren op katholieke scholen*. Budel: Damon.

Dillen, A., & Pollefeyt, D. (2005). Family education and adolescents' approaches to religion. *Journal of Empirical Theology, 18*(2), 205–234.

Elshof, T. (2012). Religious heritage: The development of religiosity and religious socialization over three generations of Roman Catholic family life. In D. Owetschkin (Hg). *Tradierungsprozesse im wandel der moderne* (pp. 165–180). Klartekst.

Elshof, T. (2014). Religious narrative and the body. In R. Ganzevoort et al. (Eds.), *Religious stories we live by. Narrative approaches in theology and religious studies* (pp. 157–168). Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Elshof, T. (2015). Catholic schools and the embodiment of religiosity. *Religious Education, 11*(2), 150–161.

Elshof, T. (2016). Diskussion und deutung der gottesfrage: Über die beziehungsreiche Kraft der religiösen Tradition. *Bibel und Liturgie, 89*(1), 51–61.

Elshof, T. (2017a). Religious teachers about biblical teaching and discipleship: An account of a recent exploration. In B. Koet & A. van Wieringen (Eds.), *Multiple teachers in biblical texts* (pp. 225–237). Leuven: Peeters.

Elshof, T. (2017b). Mystagogy, religious education and lived Catholic faith. *Journal of Religious Education, 64*(3), 143–155.

Elshof, T. (2018). The challenge of religious education to deal with past and present Catholicism. *British Journal of Religious Education*. Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/KYsjXmiSaaAY6FqEKiCJ/full.

Först, J. (2014). Was ist der mensch? Pastoraltheologische perspectiven zur synkretischen' sinnsuche in der mpäten Moderne. In M. Bär & M. Paulin (Eds.), *Macht Glück Sinn?* (pp. 150–165). Ostfildern: Grünewald.

Korsch, D. (1999). Weihnachten – Menschwerdung Gottes und fest der familie. *International Journal of Practical Theology, 2,* 213–228.

Lämmlin, G. (2004). „Traumhochzeit", oder „gemeinsam vor Gott treten"? *International Journal of Practical Theology, 8,* 53–71.

Maso, I., & Smaling, A. (1998). *Kwalitatief onderzoek: Praktijk en theorie*. Amsterdam: Boom.

Pollefeyt, D., & Bouwens, J. (2010). Framing the identity of schools. Empirical methodology for research on the Catholic identity of an education institute. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 2*(2), 193–211.

Roebben, B. (2016). *Theology made in dignity. On the precarious role of theology in religious education*. Leuven: Peeters.

Schwab, U. (1995). *Familienreligiosität: Religiöse traditionen im prozess der generationen*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Ter Avest, K. H., Bertram-Troost, G. D., & Miedema, S. (2015). If it feels good: Research on school selection processes motives among parents of young children. *Religion and Education, 42*(3), 357–367.

Ter Avest, K. H., Kom, C., De Wolff, A., Bertram-Troost, G. D., & Miedema, S. (2013). '*Als het goed voelt..' Onderzoek naar schoolkeuzemotieven van ouders van jonge kinderen.* Woerden: Besturenraad.

Wester, F. (1995). *Strategieën voor kwalitatief onderzoek*. Bussum: Coutinho.

Dr. Toke Elshof is Assistant Professor of catechetics, at Tilburg University, in the School of Catholic Theology, The Netherlands. Her research interests and contributions to the discipline of catholic religious education include religious education and church life, religious education and school identity, religious education and family life.

Chapter 11
Examining School and Parish Interaction: Some Implications for Religious Education

Richard Rymarz and Angelo Belmonte

Introduction

This chapter is based on an empirical study that examines the relationship between Catholic schools and Catholic parishes in Australia. Of particular interest is how the relationship between school and parish informs the way religious education is conducted. One of the features of pre-conciliar Catholicism in many countries was the close connection between schools and parishes. Added to this was the influence of family and the synergy between these three agencies gave a strong catechetical dimension to religious instruction and the wider sphere of Catholic life (Dixon, Reid, & Chee, 2013; Smith, Longest, Hill, & Christoffersen, 2014). This triad has not, however, been evident for many decades and it is opportune to re-examine the relationship between parishes and schools to take into account new cultural realities (Hout, 2016; Mason, Singleton, & Webber, 2007). In order to do this a broader conceptualisation of the societal changes is required.

One of the marked features of Catholic life in many post-industrial Western cultures is the decline in regular parish involvement by many Catholics (D'Antonio, Dillon, & Gautier, 2013; Dixon, 2004, 2014; Smith et al., 2014). At the same time, there has been an increased enrolment in Catholic schools (Arthur, 1995; Engbretson, 2014). This has led to a reconsideration of the role of parish and school in the formation of young people. A particular focus is on how school and parish interact in providing religious education (Kennedy, Dorman, & Mulholland, 2011). This discussion takes place, however, in a cultural context where the range of religious and secular choices has multiplied.

R. Rymarz (✉)
BBI-TAITE Sydney, Pennant Hills, NSW, Australia
e-mail: rrymarz@bbi.catholic.edu.au

A. Belmonte
Faith Learning and Teaching Catholic Schools Office,
Bathurst, NSW, Australia

In contemporary society, it is important to emphasise that while people may not be strongly committed they are also able to retain some type of connection with a religious community. Stoltz, Purdie, Englberger, Konemann, and Kruggeler (2015) propose that one way of better understanding the relationship between religion and wider culture is to see it in terms of a dynamic competition. This is evident amongst those who send their children to Catholic schools. The nature of this involvement though is fluid and can be seen as a manifestation of secular religious competition. There are many similarities between this approach and other models such as considering religion in terms of consumption rather than obligation (Davie, 2015).

The exact contours of the interaction can be quite complex and localised depending on circumstances. The basic features though are quite clear. In secular religious competition, individuals select from a range of behaviours, beliefs and social interaction that best meets their needs. For many, one attractive choice is to retain some type of religious affiliation as long as it meets a specified need. Over time this option may seem less attractive as other considerations become more important in determining individual preferences.

Choices of this nature may be a dominant disposition for many parents and students associated with Catholic education (McCarthy, 2016). It is clear that Catholic schools are seen as places which offer a very good education as well as a range of other benefits (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Casson, 2011; Rymarz, 2013). One of these is a connection to the religious community. In the secular religious competition religion paradigm there is great stability as people have arrived at decisions that they see best meet their needs (Dobbelaere, 2002; Lambert, 2005). In addition, these decisions now reflect generational patterns as the days when religion was seen as a much more decisive factor in shaping belief and patterns are now decades past. In many families, this would be the worldview of grandparents or even great-grandparents but parents and their children reflect the new disposition.

Casson (2014) has used a similar term to describe the relationship between those who attend Catholic schools in England and Wales and their connection to parish communities. She describes this relationship as one where many parents are not prepared to "cross the threshold" (p. 13). The threshold here is the parish, or at least participation without a clear link to school activity. While parents are very happy to have their children in Catholic schools and will take part in school-sponsored parish events, this willingness does not extend to being involved in the parish in isolation from the school.

Within a framework of secular religious competition, religious institutions can proclaim their identity. This does not, however, suggest that the underlying commitment of parents is to the wider parish community. Parents are making a choice to send their children to a religious affiliated school and this does not impinge on the wider decision to choose an ongoing connection with a parish. The capacity of the school, therefore, to raise the level of religious exceptions on parents is limited. If we accept that parents are prepared to support the religious ethos of the school this needs to be seen in the sense of a dynamic interaction between secular and religious influences. In this dynamic religion is seen as part of the educational atmosphere that parents choose for their children (Rymarz, 2017). It remains, however, only one aspect and

it may very well be not the most important one. The key here is not so much all the things that parents see as important but rather the order of preference. Flynn and Mok's (2002) longitudinal study of Catholic school communities strongly supports this point. In their study of what parents and students valued in Catholic education, factors were not discounted but they were not as important as other considerations such as strong academic performance and social mobility.

Having established a conceptual framework, the response of participants to the research question will now be presented and analysed in more detail. The aim here is to focus on the relationship between schools and parishes and what implications this has for religious educations. In doing this, the framework that has just been set out will be elaborated on and suggestions for future directions made.

Methodology

Two specific research questions were addressed in this study, namely, what is the nature of the relationship between Catholic parishes and schools and how can this relationship be strengthened? How can religious education be better supported by parishes and schools?

In order to gain a variety of perspectives on the research questions, a range of informants was selected based on their experiences of both Catholic schools and parishes. The three categories of informants were principals, parish priest and religious education coordinators (REC). In the future, it is hoped to extend this study by examining parental perceptions of school parish links. In some small schools, the principal also filled the role of REC (Belmonte & Rymarz, 2017). In the course of this study, 34 semi-structured interviews were conducted. These comprised interviews with 7 priests, 7 principals, 12 RECs (both primary and secondary) and 7 principals/RECs. Participants were invited to take part in the study at the invitation of the regional Catholic Schools Office.

To address these questions a qualitative research methodology was used (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interviews followed a semi-structured pattern with focus probes reflective of the research questions (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, Alexander, & Morgan, 1995). Each participant was interviewed for no more than 1 hour. Interviews were seen as an effective way of gaining insights from participants. Interviews are well suited to this task as they are a means to delve into complex issues (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Wuthnow, 2016). The interviews followed a semi-structured, in-depth pattern (Minichiello et al., 1995). Interviews were conducted during work hours at the school in which the REC or principal worked. Priests were interviewed in either the school or presbytery.

After each interview, participant responses were analysed in detail using contemporaneous notes as well as taped interviews. On the basis of this analysis, thematic response codes were developed (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). These codes were related to common responses and dominant categories identified. These categories then informed the next interview, and response categories became more and more

refined. This discussion of the results is presented as a narrative approach (Yamane, 2000). This places great emphasis on developing the story that emerged from engaging with the research question and does not maintain a strong distinction between results and discussion. This approach is well suited to eliciting responses to complex issues such as the ones in this study (Wuthnow, 2016).

Results and Discussion

A number of dominant response categories were identified and these will be presented, in turn, here.

We are a Catholic School

Principals, in particular, were keen to endorse the religious nature of the school. As one principal powerfully put it, "I tell parents that our school is a religious school and we celebrate this in a number of ways and that they are expected to support this emphasis". Or another expressed a similar sentiment when she noted, "the example I use is that in this school religion is not like icing on the cake … it's actually the cake". This candour was also evident in schools which had a high percentage of non-Catholic enrolments. Witness was also a part of how principals and REC saw their role. When interviewed many of those in these leadership positions strongly expressed the view that personal witness was a critical part of their role in the school. As one principal put it, "for me it [Catholic identity] starts with being able to walk the walk … that means being able to witness to gospel values in the school".

One principal commented that when she speaks to parents, often after they have their children enrolled in the school for some time, many express what has been termed a "medicinal" appreciation of Catholic education. She commented, "Parents often see the Masses we offer, the RE and pastoral care as protective, at the very least they do no harm". And, on occasion, familial engagement can be very significant. In primary school in the words of one parish priest, there is significantly more "buy in" to the explicitly religious aspect of the school. This is due to a combination of factors such as the age of the children and the still significant level of cultural expectation placed on rituals such as First Communion. Parents see occasions like the sacraments of initiation as important but in a limited sense. Confirmation, for example, marks an important rite of passage for children. For events such as this, in the words of one participant, parents, "rise to the occasion".

These occasions are an opportunity for family and friends to accompany a young person as they begin the transition to adult life. It is important enough that people will make it a priority to attend a service that is clearly marked with a range of religious symbols, language and movement. These are integral to the celebration but the most parents do not see it as part of their involvement to help explain this to their children.

As one REC/Principal put it, "it's up to us … we try to get parents involved but there is not much uptake". In terms of the secular religious competition analogy, the commitment is to an event, albeit an important one, in the life of the school. It is not extended to an involvement in a parish community or interest in religious education. A type of deal has been struck. One REC succinctly expressed this idea when she commented, "the parents are signing up for some key things not to the whole Catholic package". The perplexing question is the wider church community encourages those involved in schools to reconsider what seems to be a firm decision?

A strong response from principals and REC was that there was a limited involvement of parents in religious education in the school. Many parents enrol their children in Catholic schools because in the words of one principal "… we offer a great education and our parents understand that religion is part of this, but it is our part". Religious education was seen very much as the "school's job". Parents felt that religious education was a part of the overall education of their child and they were content to leave this to the school. As one principal put it, "in my time in schools which goes back I haven't seen much interest in what we do in RE amongst parents … they are not disinterested, or maybe they are … it's better to describe them as very happy to see us do it".

In secondary school, in contrast, as one REC put it, "RE is flying solo". The implication here is that there are no sacramental programs to bring the parish and school together again. Participants were asked directly about ways in which the school and parish could be better linked but the response was for a variety of reasons that parents were happy to see the "religious stuff" done at school. One priest put this well when he commented, "once the kids leave primary school religion becomes less of a priority … the parents and the children just don't see parish as a part of their lives".

Parish and School

A key person in establishing a link between the school and the parish is the parish priest. This is especially true for primary schools. A common observation was the importance of priests having a presence in schools. As one priest commented,

> the key is to be there. I try to be around as much as I can. Little things like in the morning when parents drop off their kids. It's important to be in the staffroom too. Teachers have to know you are there for them if needed.

This support was often acknowledged by RECs. Many of them commented on the collaborative relationship they had with priests. In many cases, this was elevated to a mentoring role, where the priest gives well-regarded guidance on a range of issues. The basis for this was a sound personal relationship. One REC put it in these terms, "Fr [Father]…. is great, we work together closely and I lean on him a lot … he's great with things like providing reflection and helping with staff prayers".

An important point here is the capacity of the priest to form strong relationship with members of the school community but especially with the religious leaders of the school. One principal made this point by contrasting his previous positions and his current role,

> it's all about the relationship and it's a two-way street. At this school there is a good link with the priest, we just get on well, nothing major but there is a personal connection that in the past I haven't experienced. I'm not saying it's all about the priest. It's about making the link which involves two people.

Many priests also made reference to the human element making the point that some of the confrères found it difficult to make this connection. This was often in reference to priests from other countries who found the Australian Catholic education system not something with which they could naturally accommodate. As one priest put it, "it's harder for Fr … he comes from a different culture and doesn't always 'get' Catholic schools and you need to establish yourself as part of the school community". Often comments such as this were not of a personal nature but reflected different expectations and experiences. Some effort could easily be directed towards accompanying priests who do not have a strong understanding of Catholic schools and assisting them to gain a better sense of the role of the priest in Catholic education.

Priests were aware of the difficulty in reaching out to parents in the school who were not active in the parish. One priest commented on the stable nature of religious commitment when he noted that most parents had "already made up their minds but we still try hard to be open to them". Another noted a similar conservation when he commented that a key part of his ministry was making himself available. This then was a reference to the earlier comment on the priest being present at the school. This is "where the parents are … and we need to respond to their actual needs".

Priests strongly expressed their support of schools and welcomed the efforts made to cultivate Catholic identity and to seek links with the parish. They also realised that this was "hard work". In the smaller schools, the parish often lacked a resident priest and, in these cases, the schools took on an invaluable range of responsibilities that helped facilitate Church ministry. As one principal/REC put it, "if someone wants to contact the priest they get in touch with us first". Schools with higher enrolments as well often played some role in assisting parishes in practical ways but as the parishes associated with these schools were well established such assistance was not as critical.

Strengthening the Links

Many of those interviewed about how parish and school links could be consolidated and expanded made reference to existing practises. It is an important finding of this report that a range of current, established links between schools and parishes not be discounted but be seen as successful practise. Many schools conducted some type of regular liturgical celebration that was linked to the life of the parish. Typically,

this may have been something like a school-centred liturgy or involvement in sacramental celebrations such as First Communion and Confirmation. There are a number of observations that can be made about these occasions. Parents seem willing to be involved and schools put a lot of time and effort into these events. As one Principal/REC commented, "we are doing all we can!" The result of these efforts is that those involved often have a positive experience. It is true, nonetheless, that for most, parental involvement does not extend from these events into regular participation in parish life. There is lack of connection between school-based liturgical events and ongoing parish commitment. It is difficult to see what more schools could do to encourage parish participation from parents who send their children to Catholic schools. Rather a better explanation of this situation can be found a better understanding of religious choice and the competing demands of secular and religious interests.

In considering how to overcome the position of many parents, a number of observations can be made. It would be of great assistance if some future work could be done with parents, hearing their voices on how links between school and parish could be improved. One key finding of this study was that it is important that schools continue their current excellent practises of providing a range of liturgical celebrations that are linked to the parish. Families are warmly invited to these. There is also scope for a more focused outreach to some families who may be more disposed to greater involvement in parish communities. As one principal put it, "at this school we do have a few parents who a bit more interested in the religious side of things". There may be parents in Catholic schools who would welcome opportunities for greater involvement in parish life. In the future, the key issue is how best to identify these families and then to provide further opportunities for them to reengage with parish life. As one priest noted, "in reaching out to families we have to get better at recognising that it's not a one size fits all approach".

Another possible way of deepening links between schools and parishes is to think of students once they have left school. The experience of most students who have attended Catholic schools is positive. Participation in First Communion and Confirmation is widespread and any initiative to make this an even better experience for parents should be encouraged. One area that suggests itself for further development is a focus on sacramental preparation courses. Parents appear to be, in the first instance, invested in sacraments such as Confirmation as it marks an important transition in children's lives. Preparation courses could, therefore, be a powerful way to offer parents a way to reconnect with parishes.

Building on this sacramental experience, avenues for further engagement could be explored as means of offering ongoing religious education along with a chance to reconnect at significant points in the students later lives. One possibility is to develop an outreach program and support resources to encourage students who have attended Catholic schools to reassociate with parishes at key times in their lives such as marriage and the birth of children. This could also be an opportunity to reengage them with ongoing religious education. What was being proposed by one priest was offering something to those who are connected to the school community. To expand on this possibility consider a possible scenario. In this narrative, a person has gone

to a Catholic school. They enjoyed their time there. They are now in a committed relationship and would like to make a public recognition of this. They do not have the religious experience or vocabulary to articulate their desires here but they do know that marriage is a serious affair and one that resonates with their sense of what is encompassed in a Catholic worldview. A welcomed development could be some type of outreach to these former students, offering the opportunity to be assisted in their journey to marriage. The school then would assist them to get in touch with a priest or pastoral associate who can meet with them and help establish a relationship where, once again, the Catholic vision is offered. This can be seen as a very practical form of ongoing religious education. It may be that relatively few former students take up this offer but if even some do, it is an opportunity for reengagement with the parish community at a critical stage of life.

There is also scope for a more collaborative relationship between parishes and schools in relation to sharing educational resources. One priest commented that when it comes to religious education, it is the schools, "where the strength lies". Parishes run a number of programs and in many places these are run by those working in Catholic schools. The key here again seems to be the quality of the personal relationship between school leaders and those involved in the parish. This could be a fruitful area for future planning involving new ways of outreach to parents in parish settings. One example of this provided by a REC was sharing of resources with parishes in specific areas such as helping and encouraging children to read the scriptures. She commented, "We have entire stuff in the school on that, it would be good if we could share this with the parish based groups".

Another example of close cooperation in religious education is where parishes run dedicated programs for school students. One of these mentioned was a "Young Alpha" program for senior primary students. As the parish priest remarked this program depended on teachers in the school making themselves available for an 8-week period after school time. He noted that the teachers he approached to help conduct the program were very keen to be involved. To make the point about how quickly "they agreed he gave a strong click of the figures…" "they came on board, just like that!" The priest also noted that his enthusiastic volunteers were not active members of the parish community.

Participants in the study were well aware of the generational divide in sacramental participation. One priest spoke of this as "an over sixty mentality". This refers to those over 60, who are often grandparents, are much more likely to have maintained an active parish connection. Another priest commented that it was with grandparents that he often had a religious conversation because "they had the language". A principal made a similar point she commented, "It's the grandparents who have the time and the interest". Interest here is a telling point as it well describes religious secular completion. For grandparents often have a great interest in religion as opposed to their own children who sees other things as more important. This greater interest does open up possibilities for a great role of grandparents in religious education.

There were a number of examples reported of schools offering specialised support for grandparents. One principal noted, for example, that the primary school produced material aimed at encouraging grandparents to pray more with their grandchildren.

These should be continued and expanded on. More information on this phenomenon is needed but it appears, at least anecdotally, that many families are more than willing to give a place to grandparents that is akin to that of a religious leader. If the parents do not have a strong commitment to parish, grandparents may and some parents could be happy to accommodate this interest. This is an area worthy of further investigation.

As one principal correctly observed "it's not about being able to put bums on seats, we have to meet people where they are at and accompany them on their journey". Many RECs and principals did make mention of families who had formally entered the Church through their involvement in Catholic schools. This is an important evangelical function of schools, as one principal commented, "we had two brothers baptised last and then another boy in grade 6, it was great". There is no statistical compilation of these figures as far as this author is aware but the absolute number of those who have taken this step is, in all likelihood, not very large in terms of whole school population. These are, nonetheless, significant events and perhaps presage a future mentality for Catholic schools where a multifaceted model to ministry to families is anticipated.

Conclusion

The results of this study are, in general, supportive of seeing the link between Catholic schools and parishes as in accord with a theory of secular religious competition. Parents have chosen Catholic schools for a variety of reasons and in keeping with other research religious factors are part of the overall choice but it does not seem to be a decisive factor. This is one major reason why one of the major contributing factors hindering a closer link between religious education in schools and parishes is that parents are happy to devolve religious education to the school. They see this as the proper domain of the school. It is not something that will alter their decision to become involved again in the parish.

When involvement between school and parish is at its strongest is in primary school during sacramental programs. This is, however, in keeping with an overall theory of secular and religious competition. During these years, parents are more eager to take part in religious rituals as these mark important times in the lives of their children. As part of this, they are prepared to take part in school parish collaboration. The factors that encourage this choice in primary years are, however, absent as children enter high school. In many ways, the parish connection is something that most parents no longer place a high value on.

Within the secular and religious competition theory, there is a place for a diversity of responses and this is one of the strengths of the model. For some parents, the decision that they have made to send their children to Catholic schools may well include a higher consideration of religious factors than is the norm. It is to these parents that the most fruitful effort as engagement with religious education can be focussed. Some families may take advance of other opportunities that are provided by schools and parishes in collaboration. Included here would be programs aimed at

receiving people into the Church. These would be parish based but which a referent to the school as this is the point of contact for many families currently on the periphery of parish life.

References

Arthur, J. (1995). *The ebbing tide: Policy and principles of Catholic education*. Leominster: Gracewing.

Belmonte, A., & Rymarz, R. (2017). Willing to lead: The dual role of principal and religious education coordinator in small rural Catholic schools. *Leading and Managing: Journal of the Australian Council of Educational Leaders, 23*(2), 87–96.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods*. New York: Pearson Education Inc.

Bryk, A. S., Lee, V., & Holland, P. (1993). *Catholic schools and the common good*. London: Harvard University Press.

Casson, A. (2011). The right to 'bricolage': Catholic pupils' perception of their religious identity and the implications for Catholic schools in England. *Journal of Beliefs and Values, 32*(2), 207–218.

Casson, A. (2014). *A case study of Catholic primary school parents in England and Wales*. Retrieved from http://www.cbcew.org.uk/CBCEW-Home/Departments/Evangelisation-and-Catechesis/Crossing-the-Threshold-Non-Churchgoing-Catholics/Case-Study.

D'Antonio, W., Dillon, M., & Gautier, M. (2013). *American Catholics in transition*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Davie, G. (2015). *Religion in Britain: A persistent paradox*. Oxford: Wiley.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 1–32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dixon, R. (2004). Mass attendance trends amongst Australian Catholics: A significant challenge for the Catholic Church. *South Pacific Journal of Mission Studies, 28*(2), 33–143.

Dixon, R. (2014). The changing face of the Catholic Church in Australia: Challenges for Catholic social service organisations. In G. McMullen & J. Warhurst (Eds.), *Listening, learning and leading: The impact of Catholic identity and mission* (pp. 123–139). Ballarat: Connor Court.

Dixon, R., Reid, S., & Chee, M. (2013). *Mass attendance in Australia: A critical moment. A report based on the national count of attendance, the National Church Life Survey and the Australian Census*. Melbourne: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Pastoral Research Office.

Dobbelaere, K. (2002). *Secularization: An analysis at three levels*. Brussels: Peter Lang.

Engebretson, K. (2014). *Catholic schools and the future of the Church*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Flynn, M., & Mok, M. (2002). *Catholic schools 2000: A longitudinal study of Year 12, students in Catholic schools*. Sydney: Catholic Education Commission.

Hout, M. (2016). Saint Peter's leaky boat: Failing intergenerational persistence among U.S. born Catholics since 1974. *Sociology of Religion, 77*(1), 1–18.

Kennedy, J., Dorman, J., & Mulholland, J. (2011). The school choice decisions of Catholic families. *Journal of Catholic School Studies, 83*(1), 6–19.

Lambert, Y. (2005). New Christianity, indifference and diffused spiritualties. In H. McLeod & W. Ustorf (Eds.), *The decline of Christendom in Western Europe* (pp. 1750–2000). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mason, M., Singleton, A., & Webber, R. (2007). *The spirit of Generation Y: Young people's spirituality in a changing Australia*. Melbourne: John Garrett Publishing.

McCarthy, M. (2016). Parental choice of school by rural and remote parents. *Issues in Educational Research, 26*(1), 29–44.

Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. California: Sage.

Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E., Alexander, P., & Morgan, L. (1995). *In depth interviewing*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.

Rymarz, R. (2013). The challenges facing the Church today: Thirty years on. In N. Ormerod & R. Gascoigne (Eds.), *Priest, poet and theologian: Essays in honour of Anthony Kelly CSsR Preston* (pp. 205–218). VIC: Mosaic Press.

Rymarz, R. (2017). The paradox of Catholic schools. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian Catholic schools*. John Garrett: Mulgrave.

Smith, C., Longest, K., Hill, J., & Christoffersen, K. (2014). *Young Catholic America: Emerging adults in, out of, and gone from the Church*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Stoltz, J., Purdie, S., Englberger, T., Konemann, J., & Kruggeler, M. (2015). *(Un) Believing in modern society: Religion, spirituality, and religious-secular competition*. London: Ashgate.

Wuthnow, R. (2016). *Inventing American religion: Polls, surveys, and the tenuous quest for a nation's faith*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Yamane, D. (2000). Narratives and religious experience. *Sociology of Religion, 61*(2), 171–190.

Prof. Richard Rymarz is the head of religious education and director of research at BBI—The Australian Institute of Theological Education. His research interest include: how religious groups pass on beliefs, values and practices; developing pedagogical approaches in religious education; and comparative, international approaches to religious education in Catholic schools.

Dr. Angelo Belmonte is Team Leader Faith Learning and Teaching, Bathurst Catholic Schools. His research has focused on the RE curriculum and leadership in Catholic education. Professor Rymarz and Dr. Belmonte's most recent collaboration is the 2016 publication, *Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools: Exploring the Landscape*.

Part II
Teacher Formation and Professional Development

Chapter 12
The Transmission of Religion: Reconceptualising the Religious Education Leader

Michael T. Buchanan

Introduction

The transmission of the Catholic religion is the responsibility of the Church and all baptised members, as well as Catholic institutions and agencies. The ultimate aim of Catholic schools is to aid the Church in fulfilling her responsibilities. Catholic leaders across many geographical regions engage in critically reflecting on the ways in which their schools transmit a contemporary Catholic religious dimension (Polleft & Bouwens, 2010). Catholic identity is regarded as integral to the transmission of the Catholic religious dimension within a school community and a study undertaken by Convey (2012) involving over 3300 educators in Catholic schools in the United States revealed two features that were significant in enhancing the Catholic identity of the school. The first being the experience of the school as a faith community and the second being the religious education curriculum. Key responsibilities pertaining to these two areas in Australia are the focus of a school's religious education leader. This chapter reports on a diocesan initiative which investigated and introduced subsequent policy reforms pertaining to the role of the religious education leader. The study contributed to the reconceptualisation of the role to further enhance the transmission of a Catholic religious dimension within and beyond the religious education curriculum. To appreciate the implications of the findings and subsequent policy reforms, a brief overview of the literature pertaining to the role of the religious education leaders is outlined followed by an account of the research design which informed this study.

M. T. Buchanan (✉)
Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University,
Melbourne, Australia
e-mail: michael.buchanan@acu.edu.au

Religious Education Leadership

The influence of the religious education leader upon the transmission of the religious dimension of the school is dependent on many factors. The relationship between the principal and the religious education leader is a highly significant factor. Crotty (2005) found that when the principal and the religious education leader are aligned in their beliefs and understanding of Catholic schools as faith sharing communities, the religious dimension of the school has a greater chance of being transmitted through school culture. The ability to lead the religious education curriculum and work with leadership team members and classroom teachers was another factor bearing upon the potential of a religious education leader's ability to influence the transmission of the religious dimension of the school. In situations where collegial support for religious education leader existed amongst a school's leadership team and the religious education leader was involved in the selection and appointment of teachers, a positive school outlook towards the transmission of the religious dimension of the school was shared amongst students and teachers (Buchanan, 2006). Another factor affecting the ability of the religious education leader to transmit the religious dimension of the school is the appointment of the religious education leader. Fleming's (2002) research into perceptions of religious education leaders revealed that, although advertisements for this leadership position stipulated skills relevant to senior curriculum and senior educational leadership, the applicants were seldom interviewed about their abilities and expertise in these areas. Many of the participants in Fleming's study indicated that their interview experiences mainly focused on questions about their skills and ability to organise liturgical and prayer experiences for the school community. The participants in Fleming's study perceived that these biases at the interview stage streamlined them into roles that appeared to limit their potential in leading and transmitting the religious dimensions of the school through the curriculum. A lack of clarity pertaining to the role of the religious education leader extended beyond the scope of the perceptions of individual principals and school leadership teams.

Many dioceses across Australia have developed policies outlining the role and responsibilities of the religious education leader. However, a lack of consistency amongst the dioceses has contributed to confused understandings about the role. Titles given to religious education leadership positions differed among dioceses and schools within the same dioceses and this also contributed to a lack of clarity of the role. In some schools, the position has been referred to as Deputy Principal Religious Education, Assistant Principal Religious Education, Director Religious Education, Head of Religious Education, Religious Education Curriculum Leader and Religious Education Coordinator, to name a few. In some situations, terms such as Formation, Faith or Mission Leader are added to the title or used interchangeably and consequently adding another layer to the lack of consistent agreement about the role (Buchanan, 2013; Fleming, 2002). The absence of a consolidated title across the profession left many religious education leaders unclear about whether to place emphasis on the transmission of religion through providing specific opportunities to

enhance the school as a faith sharing community or through an emphasis on teaching and learning in the discipline of religious education.

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) was a watershed that influenced the emergence of religious education leaders in Australian Catholic schools (Crotty, 2005). Reflecting back on the development of religious education leadership, Crotty (2005) noted the bi-dimensional nature of the role. While other teachings and leadership positions in Catholic schools remain clearly grounded within the sphere of education, Crotty's research suggested that the role was also perceived as a position within the Church. She claimed that within the context of education, the role involved coordinating classroom programmes in religious education to foster high-quality teaching and learning, as well as overseeing the organisational resource and record-keeping aspects of the religious education program. As a position also within the Church, Crotty found the religious education leaders in schools also gave expression to the religious dimension of the role through leadership in the liturgical and faith life of the school. It is a requirement throughout the various state and Church jurisdictions in Australia that religious education leaders in Catholic schools be trained, qualified and registered teachers and preferably with experience in teaching religious education. In addition to fulfilling these educational requirements, it is expected that the religious education leader is a baptised Catholic who witnesses and lives out Catholic beliefs, rituals and values. Religious education leaders, therefore, need to balance responsibilities which are integral to the school while at the same time commit to a personal and leadership orientation that is considered by some to be beyond the school's purview (Sharkey, 2006). To this end, D'Orsa (1999) has argued that religious education leaders are disciples called to share in Jesus' mission. This requires both an ongoing commitment to the development of a relationship with Jesus and an awareness that they are instrumental in the transmission of religion by calling students into discipleship.

This survey of literature highlights a lack of clarity about the role of the religious education leader. A regional diocese in Australia sought to clarify the role through policy reform. While several dioceses in Australia have implemented religious education leadership policies, the unique aim of this diocese was to develop a policy informed by the perspectives of those on the ground; the religious education leaders and associates in schools as well as those in the diocese who support them. Within the context of religious education leadership, this distinct approach to centralised policy development required an investigation to establish an evidence-based account of the perceptions of those on the ground.

Research Background and Design

There are 28 Catholic dioceses throughout Australia and each diocese is headed by a Bishop. Within a diocese, the Bishop is responsible for all things Catholic that are undertaken in the name of the Church. Most dioceses have a centralised Catholic education agency headed by a Director to oversee Catholic education and the agency

is accountable is to the Bishop. These centralised bodies are commonly referred to as Catholic Education Offices and while they aim to ensure that all Catholic schools fulfil their accountability to the Church, they must also comply with the legal requirements of government education authorities. In the Catholic Diocese of Sale where this investigation took place, the Director of Catholic Education oversees approximately 45 schools. The majority of the schools are primary schools (37 in total). The Director of Catholic Education invited an investigation into the role of the religious education leader in the diocese. The aim of the research was to understand the role from the perspectives of its key stakeholders such as members of the Clergy, members of the Catholic Education Office Executive, Religious Education Officers from the Catholic Education Office, School Principals and Deputy Principals, Religious Education Coordinators [Leaders] and those aspiring to leadership in religious education.

Drawing on the perspectives of the key stakeholders, the research approach aimed to identify ways to enhance effective collaboration with the parish priest, principal and other members of the school leadership team, as well as classroom teachers in order to foster and promote the Catholic identity of the school through emphasis on a strong religious education curriculum. The research depended on the participants' willingness to participate in an in-depth semi-structured interview where they were able to share their insights based on their experiences. The research was founded upon the epistemological foundation of constructionism which holds that reality is constructed through human interaction in which meanings are shared in dialogue and new knowledge is developed (Crotty, 1998). A theoretical perspective that complements constructionism is interpretivism and given that the study sought to capture the realities and meanings of individuals closely associated with the role of the religious education leader in Catholic primary schools, symbolic interactionism was an appropriate form of interpretivism underpinning this investigation (Gouldner, 1970). Symbolic interactionism is based on the premise that the self is comprised of two key components, the "I" and the "Me". Bowers (1989) emphasised that "the Me component is the reflector" (pp. 36–37). According to the theory of symbolic interactionism, each individual is comprised of multiple selves or multiple Me's, and therefore "who I am depends on which Me is experienced as the most salient at the time" (Bowers, 1989, p. 37). In-depth semi-structured interviews were used to get access to the insights that cannot be read or observed by the researcher (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1995). The adoption of a semi-structured interview method aimed to encourage the most salient Me in each of the participants to be their distinct role within Catholic education.

Under the direction of the Director of the Catholic Education Office Sale, a written invitation was sent to key stakeholders associated with and including religious education leaders in Catholic primary schools throughout the diocese. There were 37 affirmative respondents averaging out to be one respondent from each school. However, at the time when the interviews took place three potential participants were unable to participate because of competing professional commitments or illness. All potential participants who had agreed to participate were sent a list of areas that would be covered in the interview. The areas included position title, selection criteria, appointment processes and areas of responsibility, as well as ongoing formation

and appraisal. The participants' insights revealed implications for the transmission of the religious dimension within the school.

The use of semi-structured interviews was the gateway for constructing knowledge of how the participants understood their world (Kvale, 1996). The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were used to verify that what the researcher heard was consistent with what the participant had stated thus enabling a clear distinction between the researcher's and the participants' perceptions (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Drawing on approaches to classic grounded theory, a process of constant comparison was adopted (Strauss & Glaser, 1967). After each interview, transcripts were produced and analysed using the constant comparison process to identify emerging themes which were progressively shared with each new participant. This enabled ongoing opportunities for participants to comment upon, critique and clarify data, and thus contribute to the consolidation of emergent themes (Strauss & Glaser, 1967). The process of constant comparison provides an inbuilt mechanism for data to be cross-checked and verified (Dick, 2007).

Findings and Implications

The implications of this study influenced the development of a religious education leader policy entitled, *Primary Religious Education Leader Policy* (Catholic Education Office Sale, 2016). The policy reconceptualised the role throughout the diocese as a senior leadership position with key responsibilities to aid the transmission of the religious dimension and Catholic identity of the school. The establishment of the role as a senior leadership position in all Catholic schools throughout the diocese was a key feature of the reconceptualisation of the role. This required a reconsideration of policy matters such as the tile of the position, selection criteria and areas of responsibility as well as opportunities for ongoing formation and appraisal. Each of these features is explored in the light of the perceptions of the participants who informed this study and the possibilities for the transmission of the religious dimension of the school.

Position Title

The participants involved in the study perceived that the title given to a religious education leadership position has implications for the religious education leader's ability to contribute to the enhancement of the religious dimension of the school. Throughout the diocese, the traditional title given to the religious education leader was Religious Education Coordinator. All the participants involved in this study suggested that this title did not convey the growing significance of the role within present-day Catholic schools. The traditional title portrayed the role as predominantly managerial and the following comment from a participant captures the general perception.

> The title Religious Education Coordinator tends to suggest that it is an administrative role
> where one is involved in practical matters. It is an organisational role with respect to planning
> and allocation of resources for religious education within the school. (Participant 32)

Viewed in the light of a managerial and organisational role the participants perceived that the reach of a religious education leader in terms of the transmission of the religious dimension was limited. Although the role of the religious education leader did involve managerial responsibilities, the participants emphasised that the role was not confined to coordinating tasks. The title should reflect the significance of the position within Catholic education. The participants' concerns are plausible, especially when viewed in light of past studies which have suggested that the traditional title associated with this role has contributed to inconsistent approaches amongst school principals in profiling the position within the school (Crotty, 2005). A study into perceptions of the role of the religious education coordinator by Fleming (2002) revealed that the significance of the role varied from school to school depending on whether the principal considered the role to be a senior leadership position with representation on the school executive or to be a middle management role.

The participants in this study perceived that the title given to the role should reflect leadership hallmarks. The main suggestions for a title were Deputy Principal: Religious Education and Religious Education Leader. Because of the varying sizes of the schools, from approximately 40–1000 students, the latter title was adopted in the drafting of the diocesan policy. The following insight from a participant captures the general sentiment regarding the participants' distinction between leadership and coordination in this leadership space.

> The title Religious Education Leader suggests the significance and importance of the role in a
> Catholic school. It involves participation in school leadership; especially in school planning,
> staff formation and faith development. They have the big picture about the place of religious
> education in the life of the school. The word leader indicates that there are others alongside
> the journey and that the Religious Education Leader has a responsibility to lead and form
> all members of the school community in religion. (Participant 23)

In distinguishing between the terms Religious Education Coordinator and Religious Education Leader, the participants conveyed the leadership significance of the role arguing that religious education is the mainspring for all that is undertaken in a Catholic school. The transmission of the religious dimension of the school should be apparent in all expressions of the school community and the religious education leaders have a key role to play in this space.

> It is vital that religious education underpin all that we do in the school. It is integral to
> the vision and mission of the school and it must also have a visual presence. The religious
> education leader is concerned with how to lead and grow the religious dimension of the
> school and how to improve religious education. It is a leadership role and the title should
> reflect this for the benefit of all concerned. (Participant 13)

Reconceptualising the role from coordinator to leader also acts as an educative function within schools and across the diocese. The insights from the participants involved in the investigation suggested that, for those fulfilling the role, the person must act as a leader rather than a coordinator. Furthermore, they believe that the

expectations of teachers and principals are oriented towards receiving leadership in the religious dimension of the school from the religious education leader.

> Since being referred to as a Religious Education Leader in my school, I find that I am more attentive to what is required in leading the school than on the organizational tasks. I think the classroom teachers are more open to being led as opposed to expecting me to have everything organized for them. It has changed our thinking and recently the principal discussed plans to have me on the leadership team. (Participant 9)

There is an educative function associated with the title given to the role. The title Religious Education Leader suggests to all stakeholders associated with Catholic education that responsibility for the religious dimension requires a position of leadership. The participants in this study hold that it is a leadership position because the religious dimension should be transmitted through all structures and processes within the Catholic school. While a change in the title is significant in reconceptualising the role, other aspects can also influence the potential for the religious education leader to affect the transmission of the religious dimension of the school. In selecting the right person for the position of religious education leader, the participants suggested that selection criteria consider one's suitability for senior leadership, a commitment to Catholic education, as well as be a Catholic witnessing and living out Catholic beliefs, rituals and values.

Selection Criteria

The participants involved in the study perceived that the selection criteria for a Religious Education Leader should be oriented towards applicants qualified in religious education with extensive educational experience suitable for senior leadership in a school, committed to Catholic education and be a Catholic who witnesses and lives out Catholic beliefs, rituals and values. They felt that a person who satisfied these criteria would be suitable for senior leadership, and therefore able to play a significant role in transmitting the religious dimension throughout the entire school.

> To lead the faith and religious dimension is very important and the religious education leader and the principal need to set the example from the top. It is essential that the religious education leader is a member of the leadership team because so many teachers find it hard grappling with the religious dimension of the school. Having good and united leadership makes all the difference to how the teachers and students engage with the religious dimension of the school. (Participant 27)

The perceptions of the participants reflected in this comment align with Crotty's (2005) study. She found that when the principal and the religious education leader are aligned the religious dimension flourishes. Another expectation was that a person appointed to the position of religious education leader should be able to demonstrate a commitment to Catholic education and the capacity to work collaboratively to enhance school improvement, especially in the Catholic identity and religious education domain of the school.

> If the religious education leader is not committed to Catholic education then the rest of the staff will see right through that person. Their potential to promote and transmit the religious dimension that expresses the Catholic identity of the school will be limited. When they are committed it shows in many ways – in their knowledge and beliefs and in their practice. (Participant 17)

The appointment of a religious education leader who is committed to Catholic education is a vital instrument for modelling as well as supporting the teachers "who will substantially determine whether or not a school realizes its aims and accomplishes its objectives" (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, par. 1). In addition to expressing a commitment to Catholic education, the participants felt that in selecting a religious education leader consideration should be given to appointing religious education leaders who are Catholic and comfortable in publicly witnessing and living out of Catholic beliefs, rituals and values.

> The religious education leader is required to witness what it means to live out a Christian life in the public domain of school based religious education leadership. (Participant 27)

Schools play a crucial role in the transmission of Christianity and their existence is significant to the evangelising mission of the Church (McGrath, 2012). Examined in this light, the participants' insistence that the selection criteria for a religious education leader who have this quality seem vital. This is, especially, so when viewed in the light of the apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses" (1974, par. 41).

Areas of Responsibility

Across Australia, the key areas of responsibility traditionally associated with coordination in religious education have centred on curriculum planning as well as planning school-based liturgical and sacramental celebrations (Healy, 2006). The participants involved in this study described these curriculum planning responsibilities within and beyond the classroom as basic managerial tasks. They felt that the person overseeing the religious dimension of the school should undertake leadership responsibilities in other areas.

> We are becoming very concerned with the Catholic identity of our schools and the quality of religious education has a big part to play in enhancing this. Religious Education Leaders need to lead the curriculum and build teacher capacity in this area. They need to have a vision for the way in which pastoral relationships are developed and nurtured. They need to offer leadership in formation of staff in religious education and in enhancing the Catholic identity of the school. (Participant 30)

The participants' vision for the role of the Religious Education Leader was captured in the development of the *Primary Religious Education Leader Policy* (Catholic Education Office Sale, 2016). The policy outlines leadership responsibilities pertaining to the strategic plan for school improvement in the areas of Catholic identity

and religious education. Furthermore, responsibilities for curriculum extend beyond planning, to develop the capacity of all teachers to plan and teach the religious education within and beyond the classroom curriculum. Their leadership responsibility also entails ensuring enriched pastoral relationships among students, teachers, parents and members of the parish community. Responsibility for building capacity amongst teachers and enriching pastoral relationships has the potential to contribute to the effective transmission of the Catholic identity of the school (Schuttloffel, 2016). These responsibilities are distinct features of the reconceptualised role of the religious education leader and have implications for the formation of individuals.

Formation

Formation plays a significant part in the transmission of the religious dimension of the school (Schuttloffel, 2016). The participants involved in this study suggested that religious education leaders need to be committed to ongoing formation to support them in their role. Furthermore, they need to be effective in promoting learning and formation opportunities for all members of the school community in the areas of Catholic identity and religious education.

> We expect our religious education leaders to publically express their faith with the entire school community yet we don't factor in that this outpouring will take its toll on them. We need to put safeguards in place. We need to make sure that we do not spiritually bankrupt religious education leaders. It should be compulsory for religious education leaders to see a spiritual director once a month or to participate in some other form of spiritual formation. (Participant 13)

Every Catholic schools' mission is based on two significant aspects: faith formation and academic excellence. Therefore, a commitment to ongoing faith formation is not an option but an obligation, especially for faith leaders including religious education leaders (Rieckhoff, 2013). Faith formation in the context of the Catholic school is not the exclusive obligation of religious education leaders. Their commitment to ongoing faith formation is a communal concern and they have a responsibility to ensure the ongoing faith formation for all members of the school community.

> A religious education leader must have regular opportunities to attend to their own faith formation as they need to be formed in our religious tradition and spirituality, if they are to lead the religious life of the school. Our staff too, need to be formed and a well formed religious education leader should have the experience to engage teachers in their faith formation. Without formation the religious dimension of the school will be minimal. (Participant 33)

These perceptions of those involved in this study were echoed in the expectations in the *Primary Religious Education Leader Policy* (Catholic Education Office Sale, 2016) stipulating that ongoing faith formation of the religious education leader and attention to the faith formation of teachers and students as a significant undertaking required in the transmission of the religious dimension and Catholic identity of the school. The role of the religious education leader impacts on all members of

the school community, and therefore should be subjected to a process of review and/or appraisal. Feedback offered in this way has become a significant feature in educational leadership (Buchanan, 2015). The participants involved in this study echoed these sentiments.

Appraisal

There are several benefits associated with performance appraisal and the participants perceived it as an opportunity to support religious education leaders and to minimise the incidents of leadership loneliness (Stern, 2013). Research has indicated that experiences of aloneness are encountered by religious education leaders (Buchanan, 2013).

> You are the only religious education leader in the school and there is no else doing the job to bounce ideas off. An appraisal process is fundamental especially in this role [religious education leader] where you sometimes feel very much alone. (Participant 5)

The participants felt that an appraisal process could contribute to the professional growth of the religious education leader as well as provide an opportunity for professional mentoring and reflection on performance. The inclusion of an appraisal process was also regarded as a benefit to both the individual and the entire school community as it provided an opportunity to set future directions pertaining to the transmission of the religious dimension of the school and the enhancement of its Catholic identity.

> Religious education leaders like all leaders need support and an annual appraisal is one way of supporting the leader to reflect on the role and their performance. It can help them to grow and also celebrate the achievements they have accomplished. It can help them to articulate the direction for the next appraisal period. An appraisal process can help the religious education leader grow and this in turn benefits the entire school community. (Participant 29)

This study revealed that the role is pivotal and religious education leaders who have committed themselves to this highly demanding role require structured support. An appraisal process was also seen as one of the support for religious education leaders, especially in situations where they might feel challenged or overwhelmed.

> An appraisal can get to the bottom of the challenges impacting on one's performance. We need to support religious education leaders especially if they are not doing too well. An appraisal needs to be sensitive to identifying and addressing the issue with compassion and care for the individual as well as the school community. Once identifying the issue or issues strategies can be put in place to help the religious education leader get on track. (Participant 28)

The religious education leader needs to function effectively in their role since it has a significant impact on the religious dimension and Catholic identity of the school. Therefore, an opportunity for ongoing appraisal is regarded as one way to support leaders in improving their performance. It is vital that an appraisal process

is in place to enhance effective leadership because religious education leaders, like other education leaders, have a significant impact on the institutional culture of a school.

Conclusion and Implications

The research initiative undertaken by the Catholic diocese of Sale was unique in that it sought to gain insights and understandings pertaining to the role from the ground up—from the key stakeholders within Catholic schools. The implications of this study contributed to a reconceptualisation of the role reflected in the *Primary Religious Education Leader Policy* (Catholic Education Office Sale, 2016). The policy established the role as a senior leadership position with representation on the school leadership body of all Catholic primary schools. The title change, criteria for selection and areas of responsibility are all geared towards enabling the religious education leader to effectively transmit the religious dimension of the school in a way that will contribute to enhancing the Catholic identity of the school. The policy also reconceptualises the role as one where priority needs to be given to directing resources towards ongoing formation and appraisal of the religious education leader. This policy reform has the potential to advance an institutional culture oriented towards the effective transmission of the religious dimension and in so doing contribute to enhancing the Catholic identity of the school.

References

Bowers, B. (1989). Grounded theory. In B. Starter (Ed.), *Paths to knowledge: Innovative research methods in nursing* (pp. 33–59). USA: National League of Nursing.

Buchanan, M. T. (2006). Curriculum management: Influencing school outlook towards religious education. *Journal of Religious Education, 54*(2), 71–78.

Buchanan, M. T. (2013). Learning for leadership in religious education in schools through continuing education. *International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning, 6*(1), 119–135.

Buchanan, M. T. (2015). Supporting religious education leaders. In M. T. Buchanan & A. M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 91–102). Netherlands: Springer.

Catholic Education Office Sale. (2016). *Primary religious education leader policy*. Victoria: Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Sale.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1994). Personal experience methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Convey, J. (2012). Perceptions of Catholic identity: Views of Catholic school administrators and teachers. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 16*(1), 187–214.

Crotty, L. (2005). The REC and religious leadership. *Journal of Religious Education, 53*(1), 48–59.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. NSW, Australia: Allen Urwin.

Dick, B. (2007). What can grounded theorists and action researchers learn from each other? In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 370–388). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

D'Orsa, T. (1999). The religious education coordinator as leader. *Australasian Catholic Record, 76*(2), 190–198.

Fleming, G. P. (2002). An analysis of religious education coordinators perceptions of their role in Catholic secondary schools in the archdiocese of Melbourne. *Unpublished doctoral dissertation*. Australia: Australian Catholic University.

Gouldner, A. (1970). *The coming crisis in western sociology*. New York: Basic Books.

Healy, H. (2006). Leadership for learning in religious education. In R. Rymarz (Ed.), *Leadership in religious education* (pp. 47–79). Strathfield, NSW: St. Pauls Publications.

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand oaks, CA: Sage.

McGrath, J. (2012). Befriending context and tradition: Evangelisation and Catholic schools. *The Australasian Catholic Record, 89*(3), 283–298.

Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E., & Alexander, L. (1995). *In-depth interviewing: Principles, techniques, analysis* (2nd ed.). Australia: Longman.

Polleft, D., & Bouwens, J. (2010). Framing the identity of Catholic schools: Empirical methodology for quantitative research on the Catholic identity of an education institute. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 2*(2), 193–211.

Pope Paul VI. (1974). *Evangelii Nuntiandi.* Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html.

Rieckhoff, B. S. (2013). The development of faith leadership in novice principals. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 17*(2), 25–56.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1982). *Lay Catholics in schools: Witnesses to faith.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html.

Schuttloffel, M. J. (2016). Introduction to the focus section: School leaders and contemplative practice. *Journal of Catholic Education, 20*(1), 177–189.

Sharkey, P. (2006). Leadership in religious education: Intelligence, courage and balance. In R. Rymarz (Ed.), *Leadership in religious education* (pp. 80–97). Strathfield, NSW: St. Pauls Publications.

Stern, J. (2013). Loneliness, solitude and inclusion for leaders. In M. T. Buchanan (Ed.), *Leadership and religious schools: International perspectives and challenges* (pp. 109–126). New York, USA: Bloomsbury Academic.

Strauss, A., & Glaser, B. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Adeline.

Prof. Michael T. Buchanan is an Associate Professor in religious education at Australian Catholic University. He is a member of the LaSalle Academy for Religious Education and lectures at postgraduate level in religious education curriculum development and in leadership in religious education. He has published widely in international scholarly journals and his book publications include: *Global Perspectives on Catholic Religious Education in Schools*, *Leadership and Religious Schools: International Perspectives and Challenges.* Michael is the immediate past editor of *Religious Education Journal of Australia.* He is a research fellow at York St. John University, UK and an affiliate Associate Professor at the University of Malta.

Chapter 13
Confident Student to Confident RE Teacher: A Perspective from Scotland

Roisín Coll and Stephen Reilly

Introduction

The document, *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014), highlights the importance of supporting 'Catholic Teachers' 'lifelong learning'. It stresses that unless Catholic teachers are subjected to 'rigour and depth' in their learning then their teaching would be considered as 'not credible, unreliable and, therefore, unnecessary' (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014, III(j)).

Globally, many teachers of Religious Education in Catholic schools are not 'specialists' but rather 'generalists'. This means that in addition to their own subject specialisation (that is, secondary school teachers) or as part of a range of curricular areas (that is, primary teachers), they are expected to deliver a robust, theologically and doctrinally sound RE syllabus that has been approved by the Church. Appropriate 'lifelong learning' for these teachers of Catholic Religious Education is essential to support them in their work.

Seven years after the implementation of the new Religious Education syllabus in Catholic schools in Scotland, *This Is Our Faith* (TIOF) (Scottish Catholic Education Service, 2011) which, it has been argued, has repositioned Religious Education in schools, this chapter considers the experiences and views of final year student Religious Education teachers in Scotland. It focuses on their experiences of teaching RE in the Catholic school, their confidence levels and their perceived needs in relation to the effective realisation of the goals of the RE syllabus. It compares their

R. Coll (✉) · S. Reilly
University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland, UK
e-mail: Roisin.Coll@glasgow.ac.uk

perspectives with the views and expectations of their leaders, the head teachers of Catholic schools in Scotland. The research question being explored was 'How confident are final year student teachers of Catholic RE in delivering the TIOF curriculum and what are their perceived professional needs in relation to their future teaching of this syllabus?'

Literature

How aspiring teachers learn to teach has been, and continues to be, the focus of a substantial volume of literature. A body of first-rate research exists which has been conducted across fields such as the induction year of teaching; the attrition rates of newly qualified teachers (Ma, 2017); and the confidence levels of new teachers in subjects such as Maths (Dossel, 2016), Science (Menon & Sadler, 2016) and Modern Languages (Barnes, 2006).

There is, however, very little research exploring the perspectives of new teachers of Religious Education in general or of those teaching RE in a Catholic school in particular. It is widely recognised that 'new teachers join the teaching force with different levels of knowledge, skills, and understandings regarding content and pedagogy' (Turley, Powers, & Nakai, 2006, p. 28). However, the potential impact that such variations can have on confidence levels which, in turn, affect the delivery of a subject such as RE in a Catholic school, should not be underestimated. With very little research in the field, it is difficult to assess the current situation in schools. However, Startin and Webster claimed that 'with respect to those beginning to teach RE, there are no recent academic studies of any significance to consult' (1996, p. 103). With the exception of two or three papers since then (see, for example, Coll, 2009, 2015; Dadley & Edwards, 2007), the situation remains the same.

There is also a growing body of research tracing the development of teachers from their time at Higher Education Institutions through to the end of their first year of teaching (see, for instance, Barnes, 2006; Burn, Hagger, & Mutton, 2003; Coll, 2015; Fuller & Brown, 1975). Much of this has focused on teachers' concerns and confidence levels and there has been a significant shift in thought from initial claims that teachers' preoccupations move sequentially from stage to stage, corresponding to their exposure to, and experience in, the classroom (Fuller & Brown, 1975) to a more generally held belief today that such concerns relating to learning-to-teach do not proceed along sequential stages but involve a more complex process of development. Barnes refers to such a process as being multifaceted and organic rather than linear. He suggests that 'beginning teachers learn and develop both in their Higher Education Institutions and during teaching placement and draw on the influences of a range of people as well as their own store of experiences' (Barnes, 2006, p. 43).

Bubb (2003) has argued that the transition from being a student on an initial teacher education programme to being a qualified teacher is difficult, and always has been. There is the expectation that these new professionals develop and enhance their teaching skills while simultaneously dealing with new interpersonal

relationships in their school. This is a daunting challenge for any new teacher. In essence, newly qualified teachers face the challenge of a 'transformation' in identity while developing a confidence and competence in their teaching capability.

The relationship between school mentors and newly qualified teachers has been vented in much educational literature. According to Wang, Odell and Schwille (2008), new teachers' school mentors require a particular kind of vision, disposition and skill set in order to support them through their induction year, enabling them to adapt to school life and the task of becoming a fully registered teacher. Soares, Lock and Foster (2008) suggest that a good and effective mentor should have a specialist background that is similar to that of the new teacher, enabling them to offer support in relation to subject knowledge and subject-based instruction. While it is argued that an effective and empathetic mentor is instrumental in easing a newly qualified teacher's transition to the workplace, there are other factors considered to be high priority. For example, when discussing attrition in the first few years of teaching, McCormack and Thomas (2003) highlight that new teachers, with high levels of satisfaction, record appropriate support, respect, opportunities for professional development and a good relationship with pupils and colleagues as key contributing features. There is also evidence to suggest that school leaders have a major impact on the socialisation of their new teachers. Engvik and Emstad (2017) discovered that when it comes to new teachers' well-being, and their consequent decisions on whether to remain in the profession, the quality of the leadership of the head teacher has a very significant influence.

There is, however, a different view that considers the whole teacher induction process as an 'expensive and unnecessary luxury' (Startin & Webster, 1996, p. 108). The teacher is considered a skilled technician who should be able to teach what is predetermined within an agreed curriculum and if teachers do not have the skills and knowledge to do this then induction can become a very 'costly and time-consuming process' (ibid).

Three studies focusing specifically on RE teachers in relation to teacher induction and attrition are worthy of mention. The first explored the perceived needs and experiences of secondary school RE teachers after their initial year of teaching (Startin & Webster, 1996), the second focused on the retention of secondary school RE teachers and factors contributing to this (Dadley & Edwards, 2007) while the third explored the experiences of Catholic teachers in their probation year (Coll, 2009). A number of interesting points arise from these works that are of interest to the present research. The first is that many of the newly qualified teachers in the first two studies recorded concern relating to the lack of support experienced from their mentor or senior management team in their first year of teaching. Dadley and Edwards (2007) claim that such 'vulnerability of newer teachers raises the issue of how new Religious Education teachers are supported' (p. 264). Another theme repeated across both studies was the matter of non-specialist RE teachers in the secondary school and the negative impact that this was having on experiences of RE newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in relation to peer support and the quality of teaching to which pupils were being subjected. A further observation shared by two studies was that NQTs considered the 'status of their subject was low' (Startin & Webster, 1996,

p. 109) and that there was a devaluing of it by institutions in general and by peers and pupils within. 'Teachers perceive that pupils do not come into the classroom with a belief in the value of Religious Education' (Dadley & Edwards, 2007, p. 265). In relation to NQTs' concerns and confidence levels, Startin and Webster's (1996) research suggested that while RE teachers' anxieties were occasionally related to teaching some challenging subject content, 'it was clear that the major needs of the newly qualified RE teachers were not related specifically to their subject area; they were more general' (p. 110). Finally, Coll (2009) recorded the significant positive impact that strong faith leadership and witness can have on the socialisation process of those making the transition from student to teacher.

In Scotland, Catholic RE teachers at all stages in their career (from student teacher to head teacher and beyond) are expected to engage in Career-Long Professional Learning. The publication by the Scottish Catholic Education Service, *Companions on the Journey* (2016) is a strategy designed to encourage teachers, school leaders and others in a Catholic school to 'nurture a particular culture of professional development for teachers. This culture is distinguished by its recognition of teachers' personal religious needs being part of their 'professional learning needs within schools which are communities of faith and learning' (p1). There is the expectation that Catholic teachers in their induction year in Scotland will be provided with a range of opportunities, from a variety of sources, to support them in the teaching of Religious Education.

Aims and Methodology

This study aimed to discover the confidence levels and perceived needs of final year student teachers of Catholic RE with regard to the implementation of the RE syllabus, *This Is Our Faith* and their expectations of the support they will receive in their first year of teaching as well as compare these with the views and expectations of their leaders, the head teachers of Catholic schools in Scotland.

A mixed methods research design was implemented using two research tools. The first was a questionnaire administered to two cohorts of students, both completing their studies onsite at the University of Glasgow. One cohort consisted of undergraduate primary teachers in their final year with the responsibility of teaching RE in the Catholic school. Postgraduate students at the end of their first year teaching qualification (which includes a generalist Certificate for teaching RE in the Catholic primary or secondary school) made up the second cohort. In total, 37 students participated in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is a tool used to obtain information about the thoughts and feelings, attitudes and beliefs of participants, and therefore many kinds of characteristics can be measured using it. In addition, significant volumes of information can be collected from a large number of people in a short period of time. For both reasons, this was considered a useful tool for use in the context of this study.

The focus group interview was the other data collecting tool and involved 10 Catholic head teachers of Catholic schools from a local authority in Scotland. Wilson (1997) states that for many involved in qualitative research, the focus group can provide the best illuminative data on the manner in which those being interviewed interact with one another outside naturally occurring events. However, awareness on the part of the interviewer is called for since 'there is literally no place for a researcher to hide within a focus group: language, values, feelings and ability to interact with respondents soon become apparent-a unique challenge both personally and professionally for the researcher' (ibid., p. 222). Therefore, the focus group interview was audio recorded.

Purposive criterion sampling occurred when selecting those to be interviewed for the focus group. The strategy adopted was 'homogeneity' (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, & Hoagwood, 2013) since embedded in this approach is the 'ability to compare and contrast, to identify similarities and differences in the phenomenon of interest' (ibid). Therefore, the homogeneous approach meant those interviewed had to be Roman Catholic and a head teacher of a Catholic primary school in Scotland. The chairperson of the Catholic Head teachers' Association of Primary Schools in Scotland sent a request to all head teachers inviting them to be involved in the research and, as a result, ten volunteered and agreed to participate and all ten were interviewed.

Results and Discussion

In Scotland, there is the expectation that Catholic teachers wishing to teach Religious Education in the Catholic sector obtain their 'Catholic Teachers' Certificate. Teachers in Scotland wishing to gain this certificate usually choose to study their Initial Teacher Education course (either 4-year undergraduate honours degree courses or a 1-year professional diploma) at the School of Education at the University of Glasgow. This institution is the only one in Scotland that has the formal responsibility for providing Catholic teachers for Catholic schools. The University of Glasgow now delivers the Certificate to Initial Teacher Education students in other Universities in Scotland (at the time of writing, Edinburgh, Strathclyde and Aberdeen), however, those wishing to teach in the Catholic sector are encouraged to study at Glasgow owing to the onsite formation programme existing there. Due to this unique situation, the Religious Education component of these courses at the University of Glasgow is primarily focused on the Catholic faith. Upon satisfying the subject's academic requirements (which includes being observed teaching Religious Education in a Catholic school), and completing the Catholic teacher formation course, students are awarded the Catholic Teachers' Certificate. The certificate is also offered through Certificate in Religious Education by Distance Learning (CREDL), a distance learning course offered by the same educational institution. Catholic Teacher Education is overseen by the St. Andrew's Foundation situated in the School of Education.

The student teachers participating in this research (both postgraduate and undergraduate) were all completing their Catholic Teachers' Certificate onsite at the

University of Glasgow. For the purpose of analysis, students' responses were grouped as high, medium and low confidence, to observe commonalities across students with similar levels of confidence. The numbers in brackets indicate how many gave the same response.

High Confidence (10 Students)

Those in this category describe themselves as very confident, confident, high confidence or well prepared in relation to teaching Religious Education. Typical comments include, 'From the Catholic education the university has provided I believe I will be a successful Catholic primary teacher'. The predictors for students in this category were considered. The most prominent feature is a positive attitude towards the RE syllabus (7), *This is Our Faith* (Scottish Catholic Education Service, 2011). Many comment on the clear layout, and the level of guidance given to teachers, e.g. 'TIOF is laid out very well and is easy to access. It is split into simple sections that can be easily followed'. It is not obvious how this positive attitude has come about: there is scant mention among this group of having taught using TIOF during school experience: is this presumed? Unsurprisingly, a predictor in the most confident group is a perceived positive experience of the University Catholic teacher formation courses (8). One commented, 'I feel we have been given a broad and useful array of teaching strategies to be used in RE'.

Among the most confident, there is still a worry about the teaching of the sacraments (3) and assessment (2).

This group looks towards the school and its leadership for future support (8), and many have high expectations of support from the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES) (5). This latter is very interesting: SCES features much higher than the local diocese (1), RE advisers (0) and indeed the university itself (1), despite their positive experience of their university courses.

Medium Confidence (18 Students)

Those in this numerous category speak of themselves as fairly/quite/relatively/sort of confident, or express a confidence with teaching younger pupils but not upper years of primary school, or difficult areas of Church teaching. What are the features of this group? One recurring theme is unique to this group: 10 of them expect to grow in confidence once they are teaching and gaining experience in RE, something mentioned by no one from the most or least confident groups. One student sums up this group's perception with the comment, 'I feel sort of confident—I think the knowledge and approaches I have learned will be really helpful—I feel I will grow in confidence as I teach'.

Another feature of this group was their positive view of the university course: significantly, this was mentioned by 15 respondents. They have a mixed view of TIOF, being mostly happy with its structure, colour coding, etc., while feeling they might struggle with the amount of content. 7 express some reservation based on never having seen TIOF used during their school experience. Once again, the teaching of the sacraments (3) as well as the Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood materials (4) are sources of anxiety for a few.

This group is distinguished by the very high expectation of the local parish, and, in particular, the Parish Priest, to support them (11), as well as the school and its leadership (13). These students are the only ones to mention the role of the mentor (3). A typical comment is 'I feel there will be a lot of continuing support within schools and from the Church'. SCES once again features as the highest ranking outside agency (7), significantly above the university (2) and diocese (0).

Low Confidence (9 Students)

Those who fall into this category identify as apprehensive, mediocre, nervous, not particularly confident, etc. in relation to teaching Religious Education. One student commented, 'I feel still apprehensive about teaching RE primarily down to a lack of experience of it from school experience and the challenging questions I may face'. There are some features of those who demonstrate the least confidence in teaching RE. The only recurring theme from a few is an anxiety not to offend, whether pupils of other faiths (2) or children in family situations which do not reflect Church teaching (2). The perception of TIOF itself is much more mixed than in the confident group, but features some positives. The greatest commonality is an expressed desire to have had more practical 'how to teach RE'-style help from the university (4). Representing these students, one said, 'There were some useful ideas given however I feel it would have been more beneficial if we focussed on particular issues and more about the curriculum and how it could be taught'. 3 also cited a lack of observed RE teaching/use of TIOF in school as a factor in their lack of confidence. In this sample, the expectation of support from the school and its leadership is clear (8). SCES is mentioned only once as a source of future support, and the diocese and university do not feature at all.

Analysis of Student Responses

Several clear features emerged from the student responses. First, the students with lowest confidence are more dissatisfied by the current Catholic teaching formation courses, and would like more practical curricular help, while those with high/medium confidence are more satisfied with the current balance. Second, for a significant

proportion of students, sacramental preparation, relationships, sexual health and parenthood, and difficult moral questions are areas of concern.

It has also emerged that students are hampered when they are not exposed to RE and/or TIOF on school experience, although there is an expectation that this can be partly balanced by more attention to the curriculum in the Catholic teaching formation courses.

In terms of future support, the national profile built up by the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES), a numerically very small organisation, and the message given at the sole lecture given by its director, seems to have had a real impact on students and their expectation of future support. By contrast, with SCES, the perception of the University of Glasgow and the dioceses/RE advisers as sources of future support are very low. The expectation of support from parishes and priests is high, especially among those who expect to make progress in confidence once they are teaching RE. Finally, the most crucial factor in the raising of confidence in the future is the support given by the school staff and leadership.

Discussion of Interview with Head Teachers

The group of head teachers interviewed echoed many of the themes which emerged from the students, while offering both hope and challenge to the mix.

Leadership

Head teachers were very aware of their role as leaders in supporting newly qualified teachers as RE practitioners, and welcomed the enthusiasm of the current student body towards RE. It is clear that they would welcome committed, enthusiastic young Catholic teachers who would support them in their mission as 'chief catechist' in the school, and anticipate a continuing positive effect upon their current staff. This is especially true as many are struggling to have a sufficient number of Catholic teachers, even to teach the sacramental preparation classes. They also highlighted the importance of having a supportive culture in the school for the flourishing of the Catholic ethos, including Religious Education. It would seem that the students' expectation of their senior management is well founded, at the very least in theory.

Role of the Priest and Parish

Head teachers spoke warmly of their relationship with the local priest and parish, although the experience was varied. It was obvious that where this relationship functions, it can have a profound effect on the teachers and the wider school. In one

particular case, a retreat and meal in the parish house were shown to have had a quite transformative effect on staff morale and openness to Catholicity. This story, indeed, elicited a degree of admiration and even jealousy on the part of other head teachers present. The expectations of students that the school/parish relationship will be crucial are well founded, therefore. Priests and parish communities have a profound opportunity to boost the Catholic ethos and culture of the school which will have a direct influence on NQTs' confidence. The lack of such a positive relationship has a potentially crucial influence, too.

Conditions for Confident RE Teaching

The head teachers interviewed reflected upon the factors which favour, and those which may mitigate against, the teaching of RE in their school. Teachers face many pressures, and they too may lack confidence. Some remain unsure about how to uphold Church teaching in a class of children with varied family and faith background. The importance of confidence for practising teachers emerged strongly, too: where teachers are supported, motivated and skilled, RE is more likely to take place, while a lack of inspiring resources, direction from leadership, understanding of Church teaching, and support can often result in Religious Education fading from the list of daily priorities. While both the Curriculum for Excellence and Catholic educational documents encourage teachers to use their own creativity and faith witness as the primary resource, having access to good ideas and resources (and the ability to share these in a collaborative way) can tip the balance between productive RE, and no RE at all.

This Is Our Faith

The group shared the students' mixed views of TIOF, praising its clarity of presentation and content but wary of the volume of content expected to be covered in an already packed curriculum. Indeed, they felt that teachers select parts of the document to deliver in class, rather than trying to cover it all. They focussed on the teacher's own faith knowledge and commitment as crucial to the successful delivery of TIOF, which requires more preparation and confidence than the resource-based programme which preceded it.

Diocesan Support

The head teachers diverged from the students in their awareness of the support offered at diocesan level by the Religious Education advisers and the diocesan pastoral

centres. There was a general positivity towards diocesan initiatives, whether CLPL, sacramental courses, retreats/talks or planning tools, although this was perceived as having been stronger in the fairly recent past than in the immediate present. It can be hoped that students will be pleasantly surprised to discover this new source of support in addition to the ones they anticipate. The head teachers also spoke warmly of the support afforded by SCES.

Mentor

The head teachers shared the students' confidence that they can learn quickly 'on the job'. In this regard, some students in the medium confidence grouping mentioned the importance of the mentor. The mentor's role was highlighted more fully by the head teachers: this is perhaps understandable given the head teachers' greater practical understanding of the role than students who may not have encountered this figure yet. Head teachers have high expectations of the mentor, and clearly conceptualise their role also as it relates to Religious Education, speaking of the need for mentors to be trained in RE. It is to be hoped that the mentor's advice will contribute to the expected growth in confidence which the students anticipate as they become practitioners. This head teachers' awareness also gives hope that the mentor will be chosen, at least in part, with an eye for their ability to support the NQTs in their growth as teachers of Religious Education.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Much of the data collected for this short study echoes the literature in this field. The confidence levels of students have been exposed in relation to the teaching of RE in the classroom and unsurprisingly, key themes such as concern about knowledge base (Eisenschmidt, Heikkinen, & Klages, 2008), expectation of school/mentor support (Engvik & Emstad, 2017) and the perception of a 'devaluing' of the subject owing to lack of experience of seeing it being taught while on placement have been recorded (Startin & Webster, 1996). These, it is argued here, are not necessarily surprising and were expected to some extent, however, what has been identified as a result of this study are areas or factors that have the potential to positively impact on teacher confidence that can easily be adapted or addressed. These are listed below.

For Initial Education Catholic Teacher Formation Courses

The St. Andrew's Foundation, and others responsible for teacher formation internationally, should continue to consider the proper balance between faith formation,

theological learning and curriculum-based practical advice in its courses. Formators should not presume that students will encounter the teaching of RE or the specific RE syllabus during their school experience, and should consider more practical curricular support for planning, resourcing and assessment.

The Foundation and dioceses should explore more strenuous cooperation in introducing the students to the work of the diocese and the supportive role of the Religious Education advisers. One example would be to invite advisers to speak to students, and to connect with those from their dioceses on a more personal basis, as part of the Catholic teacher formation courses, in order to complement the support of SCES.

The Foundation, dioceses and SCES should explore new avenues of collaboration, recognising the continuum from Catholic education students to newly qualified Catholic teachers, to ensure a smooth transition and a joined-up approach. Formators worldwide could also take note of the value of such as holistic approach.

For Alumni Relations

Formators could make clearer their desire to retain a role in supporting students after graduation. One example would be to extend St. Andrew's Foundation membership to alumni, and offer ongoing support and continuing lifelong professional learning opportunities.

For Schools

Schools should consider carefully the importance of allowing to students to observe Religious Education lessons and to engage with the national RE syllabus during school experience as an important aspect of building student confidence, as well as having a general awareness of the central role which they have in the students' future development.

In particular, mentors have a crucial role to play in early career development. If head teachers are to maintain the momentum of enthusiasm and confidence of the already confident students, and effect a smooth transition into confident and committed teachers of RE, the careful choice of mentors for their ability to support this area of the curriculum, as well as their human and pedagogical skills, is crucial. Head teachers should be especially aware of the need to have a strong and supportive mentor for those who currently lack confidence, aware that students may have had a limited exposure to the RE curriculum in practice through no fault of their own. Appropriate training given to the mentor in Religious Education pedagogy would help in this task.

For Parishes and Priests

Parishes and priests clearly make a positive impression on students, and should in every way be encouraged to be a continuing live presence in the professional development of emerging practitioners. Their role is also important in terms of nurturing the strong Catholic school culture which is vital to the growth of newly qualified teachers in their vocation as Catholic teachers.

For Dioceses

In the Scottish context, the St. Andrew's Foundation would provide a valuable service to the dioceses by making them aware that the perception of their supportive role is currently weak among Catholic Initial Teacher Education students. In addition to the collaboration with the Foundation outlined above, dioceses might prioritise opportunities to engage with students in their initial year.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The authors of this chapter are aware of the small-scale nature of the study, given the small sample group, and consider this to be an indicative study only. However, it has made some interesting tentative suggestions, and could become the basis for future study in what is an area ripe for further consideration. In particular, it would be fruitful to study the experience, perceptions and confidence of the same students in a longitudinal study as newly qualified teachers and early career teachers, in order to compare with their experience as students. It could also be helpful to undertake a comparative study with Catholic Initial Teacher Education students in one or more other countries, in order to facilitate comparison. However, it is hoped that this small study has contributed something to the ongoing reflection upon how best to support students to become the authentic faith witnesses which their vocation asks of them.

References

Barnes, A. (2006). Confidence levels and concerns of beginning teachers of modern foreign languages. *Language Learning Journal, 34*(1), 37–46.

Bubb, S. (2003). From training to induction—Fasten your seatbelts, there will be turbulence. *Education, 31*(2), 19–25.

Burn, K., Hagger, H., & Mutton, Y. (2003). The complex development of student teachers' thinking. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 9*(4), 309–331.

Coll, R. (2009). From theory to practice: The experiences of Catholic probationary teachers. *Journal of Research on Christian Education, 18*(2), 140–159.

Coll, R. (2015). Catholic religious education in Scotland: bridging the gap between teacher education and curriculum delivery. In M. T. Buchanan & A. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 179–194). Dordrecht: Springer.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014). Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion. Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.html.

Dadley, E. M., & Edwards, B. (2007). Where have all the flowers gone? An investigation into the retention of Religious Education teachers. *British Journal of Religious Education, 29*(3), 259–271.

Dossel, S. (2016). Maths anxiety. *Australian Mathematics Teacher, 72*(3), 40–44.

Eisenschmidt, E., Heikkinen, H. L. T., & Klages, W. (2008). Strong, competent and vulnerable. Experiences of the first year as a teacher. Newly qualified teachers in Northern Europe. *Comparative Perspectives on Promoting Professional Development, 19*(3), 125–147.

Engvik, G., & Emstad, A. B. (2017). The importance of school leaders' engagement in socialising newly qualified teachers into the teaching profession. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 20*(4), 468–490.

Fuller, F., & Brown, O. (1975). Becoming a teacher. In K. Ryan (Ed.), *Teacher education: seventy-fourth yearbook of the national society for the study of education* (pp. 25–52). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ma, R. (2017). A Comparison of teachers' experiences of the induction year in Scotland and China. *Masters Dissertation*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow.

McCormack, A. N., & Thomas, K. (2003). Is survival enough? Induction experiences of beginning teachers within a New South Wales context. *Asia-Pacific Journal of teacher education, 31*(2), 125–138.

Menon, D., & Sadler, T. D. (2016). Preservice elementary teachers' science self-efficacy beliefs and science content knowledge. *Journal of Science Teacher Education, 27,* 649–673.

Palinkas, L. M., Horwitz, S., Green, C. W., & Hoagwood, K. (2013). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy In Mental Health, 42*(5), 533–544.

Turley, S., Powers, K., & Nakai, K. (2006). Beginning teachers' confidence before and after induction. *Action in Teacher Education, 28*(1), 27–39.

Scottish Catholic Education Service. (2011). *This is our faith*. Glasgow.

Soares, A., Lock, R., & Foster, J. (2008). Induction: The experiences of newly qualified science teachers. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 34*(3), 191–206.

Startin, R. J., & Webster, D. H. (1996). Religious Education in secondary schools: The initial year of teaching. *British Journal of Religious Education, 18*(2), 103–113.

Wang, J., Odell, S. J., & Schwille, S. A. (2008). Effects of teacher induction on beginning teachers' teaching: A critical review of the literature. *Journal of Teacher Education, 59*(2), 132–152.

Wilson, V. (1997). Focus groups: A useful qualitative method for educational research? *British Educational Research Journal, 23*(2), 209–224.

Dr. Roisín Coll is the Director of the St. Andrew's Foundation for Catholic Teacher Education at the University of Glasgow. Her research interests include: religious education, faith-schools, prayer, continuing professional development of RE teachers, faith development of teachers, comparative religious education in the Catholic school. She has written widely on the discipline of Catholic RE and has been invited to give conference keynotes in the field. Roisín was a member of the Scottish national RE development group which produced the RE syllabus for Catholic schools in Scotland. She has oversight of the initial teacher education of Catholic RE teachers in Scotland.

Rev. Stephen Reilly is coordinator of spiritual and pastoral formation for the School of Education at the University of Glasgow. His research interests include: Catholic religious education, faith formation of student teachers and practitioners, student experience and internationalisation, and career-long professional learning for teachers of RE. His contributions to the discipline of Catholic religious education include his past work as school chaplain in primary and secondary schools; diocesan religious education adviser; member of national RE development group for curricular development; director of diocesan pastoral centre with a focus on retreats for school pupils and staff. He currently works on development and delivery of Catholic teacher formation courses for initial teacher education students.

Chapter 14
Formation for Mission: A Systems Model Within the Australian Context

David Hall and William (Bill) Sultmann

Introduction

The profile of the Catholic school in Australia is complex, multicultural, diverse and interdependent. While the mission of Catholic schools remains unchanged, Catholic employing authorities and Catholic entities are challenged to provide formation which is responsive to a new Catholic school community while being authentic to Church Tradition. Formation in this context cannot presume Baptism into a Christian community nor the practice of a Catholic faith Tradition. Rather, formation provides access and invites participation in processes that support an understanding of what is happening in the school, Church and in the world. It is centred in a commitment to a shared moral purpose and an understanding of participant openness to the movement of the Spirit through meaningful encounters in ways that make a difference (O'Leary, 2008; Whelan, 2015). This is formation into a new consciousness, integrated with 'heart' and witness experiences that are life giving, life skilling, life long and life wide. It is formation that endeavours to be personally meaningful, ecclesially relevant and strategically effective (Gowdie, 2017a).

Overview and Description of Terms

The systems model is offered for critique and development. It is a work in progress. It is an attempt to dissect and connect aspects of formation as profoundly personal, relational, professional and community centred. It is proposed as fundamental to Catholic school mission and is supported by University experiences that are compelling and unique. Within the paper, the elucidation of a new course specialisation,

D. Hall (✉) · W. Sultmann
La Salle Academy, Australian Catholic University, Sydney, NSW, Australia
e-mail: david.hall@acu.edu.au

nominated as Catholic School Foundations, provides the vehicle for the application of the systems model of formation in support of the role of the religious educator.

A Religious Educator is defined as possessing a relationship with the transcendent (Groome, 1980). In this context, the Religious Educator is expected to develop an appreciation of religion and being religious (Moran, 1991), pursue a professional role as vocational in nature (Sultmann & Brown, 2011) and exercise a commitment to the development of Catholic school identity (Gleeson, Goldburg, O'Gorman, & O'Neill, 2018). A Religious Educator is, therefore, one who encounters, to varying degrees, formal religious instruction; the religious dimension of the overall curriculum; the religious traditions of the school and culture in relationships, organisational structures and system processes. Notably, where the role of the religious educator is defined solely by the teaching of Religion, this learning area is argued as inseparable from the overall mission of the Catholic school as it engages and responds to changing social, ecclesial and educational contexts (Pope John Paul II, 2001, par. 115). More precisely, the role of the Religious Educator engages the religious life of the school, family, parish and the broader society. It is also sensitive to 'The nature of the learners, the characteristics of the teachers of Religious Education and the organisation of the curriculum' (NCEC, 2018, p. 1). This comprehensive and challenging role is highlighted by Hindmarsh (2017) as the heartbeat of the whole curriculum. It involves the formation of the religious educator as engaging not only curriculum competency, but also inviting an encounter with mission that involves humility and openness of mind and heart; engaging a sense of mystery and sacredness in life; a passion like Jesus to heal the wounds of the world; respect and love for every person made in God's image; cherishing the natural order and web of life and expressing gratitude for the gifts of God.

The paper profiles the contemporary Catholic school in Australia and introduces a systems model (Senge, 1990) of formation as the primary strategy in advancing the role of the religious educator. Four subsystems: Alignment, Engagement, Empowerment and Integration are developed to expand and explore the nature and extent of formation, specifically in terms of the proposed specialisation. The paper concludes with a summary of the model and identifies implications as communicating formation as an evolving and complex strategy; provision of a framework to link ongoing research; articulation of key principles for the development, delivery and assessment of the specialisation proposal; and identifying formation elements for consideration in wider pastoral contexts.

A Changing Religious Culture

The profile of Australian culture generally, and within the Catholic Church more particularly, is undergoing change of a dramatic nature. The most recent census of the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2016, reported in 2017, revealed that within the overall population, the percentage of Christians reduced to 52.2%, whereas for Hinduism and Islam, growth was experienced. The only Christian tradition to

experience any growth was the Pentecostals. The Australian Catholic community is now 22.6% of the population; down from 25.3% 6 years ago. Moreover, while 60.3% of Australians report an association with some religion, some 31.1% indicate 'no religion' and the remainder of respondents did not complete the optional question. The percentage of respondents in the 'none' (no religion category) rose dramatically from 22.3% 6 years ago.

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) Report of 2015 reveals that 69% of students in Catholic schools identify as Catholic and 31% 'other than Catholic'. The percentage of other than Catholic in secondary schools is 33% compared with 29% in primary schools. With regard to staff, the NCEC reports that 80% of primary school teachers and 61% of secondary school teachers identify as Catholic. Moreover, the NCEC advances that just 25% of the Catholic staff are engaged in regular worship and parish leadership activities. 'For most staff, the Catholic school is their only regular experience of the mission and life of Catholicism. This includes the 29% nationally who are not Catholic or whose religious affiliation is not recorded' (NCEC, 2017a: 11). Commentary on these statistics (Arbuckle, 2017) speaks to the need for more detailed information as to the quality of the engagement and the extent to which the statistics reflect a more general response to an overall enquiry. What is left unspecified is the nature, rate of change and depth of commitment that informs life and culture in the Catholic school (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017); leaving open ended the nature of formation that may or may not address the significance of Catholic school mission across communities, context and time.

Contemporary Formation

Drawing from recent, focused and sequenced research, (Neidhart & Lamb, 2016) summarise the significance of formation as 'a matter of urgency for the success and sustainability of the Catholic school'. However, while it is critical to engage formation for mission, this formation is not an attempt to preserve the 'old' through a return to the 'past'. Rather, it is an opportunity through dialogue 'to provide a privileged environment for the complete formation of her members' (Congregation of Catholic Education, 1977, p. 16) within a new context where education is grounded in fraternal humanism in the 'creation of a civilisation of love' (Congregation of Catholic Education, 1977). Humanising education means putting the person at the centre of education, in a framework of relationships that make up a living community, which is interdependent and bound to a common destiny. The process of 'fraternal humanism' (ibid. 2017, p. 7) entails:

> Building co-operation networks, from the educational, didactic and academic points of view, means enabling inclusive dynamics, constantly looking for new opportunities to integrate different people in one's learning and teaching circle, especially those for whom it is difficult to find a formation programme appropriate to their needs. (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2017, p. 23)

Dialogue is the means by which humanising education pursues its goals. This is manifested in not only an exchange of views that seeks to learn the position of another, but genuinely takes place 'within an ethical framework of requirements and attitudes for formation, as well as social objectives' (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2017, p. 11). Within dialogue, not only are perspectives shared, but participants experience dignity. 'It is a grammar of dialogue … able to build bridges and … find answers to the challenges of our times' (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2017, p. 11). Evidence of process authenticity is seen in characteristics of spontaneity, freedom, equality, consistency, peace and the common good. The disposition of dialogue is said to offer hope, to be a sign of the saving grace of Christ and the expression of what it means to share love. It involves an encounter with the living Jesus Christ; a Spirit-filled community; imparting a Catholic worldview through curriculum; assisting students to become free and sending students out as missionary disciples to transform the culture (Olmstead, 2017).

Formation: A Systems Model

Systems Theory enables the modelling of formation experiences from a holistic perspective. The theory allows for an analysis of relationships within and beyond organisational practice and provides for dialogue and integration of principles which balance holism and reductionism (Mele, Pels, & Polese, 2010). The value of systems theory lies in its capacity to map and model operations in order to build sustainability and nurture quality performance. In this light: 'a system can be detailed in terms of its components, composed of people, processes and products; its attributes, composed of the input, process and output characteristics of each component; and its relationships, composed of interactions between components and characteristics' (Tien & Berg, 2003, p. 23). The essence of systems modelling lies in the identification of subsystems that detail its complexity and the processes of connection that link the specific subsystems to the overall process.

Alignment Subsystem

The subsystem of alignment confirms what is important to all parties in the provision of formation. It begins with a common understanding of the formation process, the elucidation of expectations of employing entities, and the principles and capacities of formation providers to support these expectations.

The Congregation for Catholic Education argues for a personal and professional connection with the mission of the Catholic school 'It is the choice of the lay faithful to live their educational commitment as a personal vocation in the Church and not simply as an exercise of profession' (2007, par. 6). The challenge is clear: to not only participate in mission but to also be caught up in its intentions. It is the challenge

for all within Catholic schools to work with and be influenced by mission as the formative process unfolds.

> Schools can and must be a catalyst, it must be a place of encounter and convergence of the entire educating community, with the sole objective of training and helping to develop mature people who are simple, competent and honest, who know how to love with fidelity, who can live life as a response to God's call, and their future profession as a service to society. (Congregation of Catholic Education, 2013, par. 18)

In this light, formation is fundamental to education in the Catholic school for it entails forming others while being open to being formed from the experience. Within the mission, life and culture of the Catholic school, formation becomes 'an ever-clearer discovery of one's vocation and the ever-greater willingness to live it so as to fulfil one's mission' (Pope John Paul II, 1988, par. 58). Moreover, the Synod of Bishops has appealed to Catholic schools and universities to share this privilege through service and witness. In this way, the post-synodal apostolic expectation concludes with the view that 'formation is not the privilege of a few, but a right and duty of all' (Pope John Paul II, 1988, para. 63).

The contemporary profile of the Catholic school is evidenced in new and renewed strategies by Catholic employing authorities in regard to the promotion of Catholic school identity and mission. The strategies identified in consultation with these authorities identify the priority of all professional learning and the primary significance of formation for mission and ministry. Practices identified as significant in meeting these expectations are argued to include: nurturing respectful and complementary partnerships; ensuring the inclusion of Catholic identity in graduate education programs; incorporating 'the basics'—from traditional disciplines within formation experiences; recognising the value and relevance of experiential learning; resource support for Religious Education and the Religious traditions of the school; nurturing practices and skills (being witness) to vision and mission; aligning assessment and reporting with participant, school and authority needs; utilisation of adult learning principles in meeting diverse learning expectations; articulating learning into other forms of formal experiences or for audit purposes and acknowledging the breadth of participant capacities and commitments across personal, social, professional and ecclesial environments.

A proactive response by employing authorities to the above priorities is evident in a move from a traditional and comprehensive reliance on Catholic university services to more flexible and variable arrangements. These include the management of professional activities within particular Church entities along with engaging a range of service providers. In addition, provincial and national commissions have supported formation practices through position statements and the specification of accreditation guidelines to teach, and specifically to teach Religious Education in the Catholic school. Clearly, continuous renewal based on dialogue around new priorities bring to the fore the questions of the necessity and appropriateness of formation experiences. Presumptions as to what might be needed or what might work, now give way to dialogue, negotiation and service partnerships based on system priorities, participant needs and quality practices.

Within a context of Catholic employing priorities, the La Salle Academy, within the Vice Presidential portfolio of Identity and Mission, was established to give explicit support to formation in areas of Faith Development, Religious Education and Educational Leadership. Integral to this initiative is the continuing consultation with employing authorities and faculties within the University, mindful of key principles of operation arising from its establishment priorities of: Engagement: being attentive to the readiness levels of participants and the strategic and operational priorities of Catholic Education authorities and participant schools and colleges; Tradition: supporting the vocation of teaching through the provision of learning that is theologically centred and educationally contextualised within the revelation and person of Christ; Creative Pedagogy: balancing direct instruction with experiential learning and providing an emphasis on capabilities (knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions) reflective of academic priorities and authentic witness; Community: encouraging a community of learners' model through collegial relationships supported by shared practice partnership arrangements and Outcomes: developing the whole person (head, heart and hand) through processes that support the integration of faith, life and culture through processes of dialogue.

One Academy initiative, complementary with other University initiatives and auspiced under the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, is a new specialisation (Catholic School Foundations) within the Graduate Certificate Catholic Studies. The proposal endeavours to be

> compelling and unique' to participants and employing authorities and so advance engagement, development and further research within and for the Catholic school community. In this way, it is aligned with university wide processes that evidence "richness, complexity, culture, connection and practicality. (Craven, 2016)

Engagement Subsystem

The subsystem of Engagement focuses on the development and delivery of formation. The subsystem entails quality formation practices, design expectations of the University as the accountable authority of certification and the promotion of engaged practice partnerships with the sponsoring authority.

Quality formation practice is argued to be characterised by intentionality, engagement and reflection (NCEC, 2017b). It has as its focus the formation of the whole person, the development of the community, the integration of faith, life and culture informed by Catholic anthropology and the universal goals of Church: 'living a spirituality of communion (koinonia); preaching Christ (kerygma); witnessing to Christ (martyria); serving Christ (diakonia); engaging in worship (leiturgia)'. In essence, it is a process of wholeness that applies equally to the educator and the educated: 'It is only when our students have become completely human, only when their religious experience has been fully nourished—in the body, heart and mind, can we expect to see a living faith in living human beings' (O'Shea, 2017, p. 205).

Historical and contemporary models of formation are evidenced by Gowdie (2017a). Notwithstanding this breadth of coverage, shifts from traditional to contemporary perspectives are discernible and registered in the National Catholic Education principles of Catholic formation for mission (NCEC, 2017b). It is within this context of emerging quality practice that the course specialisation seeks to recognise emerging emphases; the subtle and not so subtle shifts, which include: Formation for the Mission of God already present; Knowledge and relationship with Christ as foundational to service of the world; the advocacy by the employer as a strategic and systematic encounter; Interdependent and co-responsible relationships in the provision of experiences; Creative pedagogies within adult learning experiences; Capabilities aligned with school, community and system practices and priorities; Individual and collegial learning; Assessment and reporting of outcomes; Mutual transformation of participants and facilitators through dialogue.

Subject to the priorities of employing authorities and in keeping with University processes, the Graduate Certificate Catholic Studies (Catholic School Foundations) is planned to be implemented in 2018 based on the design elements of Outcomes, Content, and Learning and Teaching processes (inclusive of Assessment).

Learning outcomes identify 'end-point characteristics' to which content, pedagogy and support processes are directed. Participant outcomes include: Recognition and application of professional capabilities (knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions); Resource support for religious instruction, the religious dimension of the curriculum, the religious traditions of the school, relationships and school culture evidenced in systems, structures and processes and preparation of a professional profile aligned with ministry. The learning units in support of the outcomes include foundational studies in Christology, Introducing Church Life, Identity and Mission and a workplace practical unit on the integration of capabilities. The opportunity to reflect upon and promote the integration of ideas is addressed within each unit and through collegial learning and accompaniment between the formal deliveries of each unit. Pedagogical practices within units will include ministry profiling, digital learning, direct and indirect instruction, literature support, case study applications, collegial inputs, resource development, personal journaling and skills and behaviours training.

Engaged Practice Partnerships

The course invites the sponsoring authority to facilitate local community learning through mentoring and dialogue on unit content and implications, contextual challenges and assessment applications. The range of initiatives in support of learning prior to, between and after the delivery of core units is expected to incorporate the following strategies: Ministry profiling: on mission familiarity and professional expectations; Accompaniment: both personally and collegially; Accountability: to participants, school and employing entities; Resourcing support: collegial

development of a 'teacher bookshelf'; Communication: a memorandum of agreement confirming intentions and commitments.

Empowerment Subsystem

The subsystem of empowerment identifies the scope of formation in terms of participant outcomes. This involves the articulation of relevant formation fields, participant capabilities and assessment practices on which formation is focused.

The specification of overall formation fields is drawn from an analysis of literature selected on the basis of relevance to formation activities within Catholic schools. The process of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to 'unravel the meaning contained in accounts through a process of interpretative engagement with the text of transcripts' (Smith, Jaman, & Osborn, 1999, p. 218). The stages involved data observations, generating theme titles and connecting themes to record an overall superordinate element. A breakdown of the research is registered in the overall fields of formation nominated as The Self, Relationships, Professional Situation and Community Context. Within each of these fields, a further task of identifying participant capabilities was pursued.

The elements of participant capabilities were drawn from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) documentation of national curriculum expectations. These include knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions (ACARA, 2013). The knowledge capability covers the necessary technical information to operate effectively; the skills dimension identifies the abilities central to the carriage of responsibilities; behaviours indicate the observable characteristics and dispositions reflect an overall integration of these learning domains. The specification of the knowledge, skills and behaviours identified in the research is outside the scope of this paper. However, the outcome dispositions are suggestive of what is explored within the nominated fields: The Self: 'Personal awareness and engagement with meaning, affect and behaviour grounded in a Catholic Christian view of life and living'; Relationships: 'Respect for the inherent dignity of self and others and encountering the life of the Spirit in social and group situations'; Professional Situation: 'Engagement in mission through authentic curriculum practices, participation in the religious life of the school, and personal witness' and Community Context: 'Dialogue about beliefs, values, structures, systems and processes congruent with school, Church and wider community expectations'.

Formation fields and capabilities provide a background canvas to explore the influence of formation experiences. They reveal the breadth, subtlety, complexity and opportunity that the vocation of teaching holds and mirror the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2014) call to all educators to go beyond knowing the content and how to teach. More particularly, they permit formation to be explored in terms of developmental outcomes and offer the substance for inclusion in respective instrumentation in registering awareness and expectations in terms of individual development in support of school mission.

The development of an effective instrument in support of formation practices typically begins with the needs and priorities of participants (Anderson & Simester, 2011). The 'rules' of instrument construction include: a focus on immediate concerns of participants; keeping it simple and allowing for ease of instrument usage; attention to key concepts; analysing data to build the information base; trying 'out of the box' thinking to generate ideas; measuring everything that matters and looking for natural expressions for the generation of information. The processes advocated are suggested to replace the seduction of making decisions by intuition; proceeding with identified goals but without expecting perfection, generating performance information of significance and utilising an information system integrated with strategy and purpose (Drucker, 1998).

A Self-Report Questionnaire will facilitate the identification of needs and priorities across the designated fields and capabilities within the proposed model of formation. Described as the Catholic School Formation Index (CSFI), the instrument provides pre- and post-course data integrated from three interdependent processes: a self-reporting quantitative assessment of mission and associated formation needs; shared collegial reflection of quantitative responses and a personal reflection on prior formative experiences (formal and informal) which were of most significance. The aggregation of responses within each process is summarised as a preliminary 'formation profile' utilised to support teaching and as a benchmark for reporting outcomes.

Integration Subsystem

The integration subsystem addresses strategies that connect the specific subsystems to provide a holism respectful of the interests of all parties. The elements include ensuring a 'balanced curriculum', process authenticity and local community engagement.

The selection of units within the balanced curriculum combines introductory theological and ecclesiological content with educational philosophy and practice. The Units in Theology and Ecclesiology provide foundations in concepts and language which are then applied further within the units on Catholic schooling, specifically in areas of Identity and Mission and personal professional practice within the workplace situation. In support of this final and complementary aspect of the course, students are encouraged to journal insights and build a portfolio of resources leading to a final integrative assessment as a personal ministry profile.

The *NCEC Formation Framework Guidelines* provide a basis for assessing best practice. Integral to nominated principles are a series of probing questions that permit a review of programs in terms of: Is the suite of programs and their content explicitly christological, scripturally rich and ecclesially grounded? Does it invite staff into a personal relationship with Jesus and deeper or renewed participation in the Eucharist and a faith community? Is it purposeful, strategic, developmental and sequential? Is formation of the heart characterised by prayerfulness, reflection and celebration of the Eucharist? Is there differentiation according to individual backgrounds, needs

and roles? Does it build communal Catholic identity and culture? Is it respectful, experiential and relevant, building on participants' personal story and everyday reality? Is there an affective focus on a person's faith journey and discipleship? Is there substantive theological content? Are personal vocation and responsiveness to mission promoted? And, does it seek to develop the willingness, confidence and capacities of participants to serve the evangelising mission of Catholic school education? While difficult to assess prior to trial and development of the initiative, the questions seek to understand participant needs and priorities along with prompting service providers as to content and process considerations.

A key element of the specialisation is its delivery within a local learning community where members share a common purpose in mission. The importance of local learning communities is that they create a distinctive culture whereby learning is dynamic, relational and dialogical. Within the context for formation, learning communities enable a search for truth and give expression to love, trust and solidarity. Participants grow as witnesses, moderators, specialists, co-inquirers and designers of their own learning which integrates the professional input from others with personal and social capacities inherent within the group (Madden, 2017). The outcomes are the creation of a vibrant learning community, enhancement of potential for all members and the expectation that new knowledge and collaborative experiences will be forthcoming (Kilpatrick, Barrett, & Jones, 2003, p. 11). In short, learning communities seek to balance individuality with social connectedness.

Summary and Implications

This paper adopted the view that the vocation of the educator in a Catholic school is that of a religious educator whose responsibilities are challenged by capabilities centred on understanding, pedagogical application and personal witness to the mission, life and culture of the Catholic school. The significance and nature of formation for this mission are argued to be foundational as the profile of the Catholic school community reflects substantial change.

A systems model of formation within the contemporary Catholic school incorporates the integration of faith, life and culture within a community of dialogue inspired by fraternal humanism. The model addresses the key principles of advancing personal meaning, addressing ecclesial expectations and supporting school and system strategic initiatives. The development of the specialisation (Catholic School Foundations) responds to this vision through the identification of the overall priority of formation and the essential elements of its subsystems: alignment, engagement, empowerment and integration. The nominated specialisation demonstrates the value of priority to Catholic authority strategy, inter-agency support, maintenance of university processes and pathways for higher learning for participants. The particular implications within an Australian setting are that a new profile of the Catholic school community is being responded to through intentional, authentic and realistic formation that places the constants of mission as central, partnerships as vital and

respectful dialogue as the platform for personal development and mission improvement.

Modelling formation in system terms establishes the relevance, connection, breadth and depth of its centrality to mission. More specifically, it facilitates an understanding of its key elements; provides a variety of interconnected entry points for research; establishes foundations for the development, delivery and evaluation of contemporary practices; evidence quality professional learning experiences replicated in other areas of professional life and enables a platform for discussion, application and critique within wider national and international forums.

References

Anderson, E. T., & Simester, D. (2011). A step-by-step guide to smart business experiments. *Harvard Business Review, I89*(3), 98–105.

Arbuckle, G. (2017). Building intentional faith communities. In *Catholic Mission and Identity Symposium: Honouring the Call to Prophetic Leadership in Catholic Education.* Broken Bay Institute: The Australian Institute of Theological Education, Brisbane, October, 26.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). Schools, Australia 2016. In *Summary of Findings.* http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4221.0.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2013). https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2014). https://www.aitsl.edu.au/.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977). *The Catholic school*. Rome, Vatican City.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2007). *Educating together in Catholic schools: A shared mission between consecrated persons and the lay faithful*. Rome, Vatican City.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2013). *Educating to intercultural dialogue in Catholic schools: Living in harmony for a civilization of love*. Rome, Vatican City.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2017). *Educating to fraternal humanism. Building a civilization of love 50 years after populorum progressio*. Rome, Vatican City.

Craven, G. (2016). *Introducing ACU research on vision and mission*. Sydney: Australian Catholic University.

Drucker, P. (1998). The information executives truly need. In *Harvard Business Review on Measuring Corporate Performance*, pp. 1–24. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Franchi, L., & Rymarz, R. (2017). The education and formation of teachers for Catholic schools: Responding to changed cultural contexts. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 9*(1), 2–16.

Gleeson, J., Goldburg, P., O'Gorman, J., & O'Neill, M. (2018). Characteristics of Catholic Schools as seen by teachers in the USA and Queensland, Australia. *Journal of Catholic Education* (in press).

Gowdie, J. (2017a). *Stirring the soul of Catholic education: Formation for mission*. Mulgrave, VIC: Vaughan Publishing.

Gowdie, J. (2017b). Formation and leadership. In *Catholic mission and identity symposium: Honouring the call to prophetic leadership in Catholic education.* Broken Bay Institute: The Australian Institute of Theological Education, Brisbane, October, 26.

Groome, T. H. (1980). *Christian religious education: Sharing our story and vision*. San Francisco, USA: Harper and Row Publishers.

Hindmarsh, P. (2017). RE as the heartbeat of the whole curriculum: RE transcends RE. In *Catholic mission and identity symposium: Honouring the call to prophetic leadership in catholic education.* Broken Bay Institute: The Australian Institute of Theological Education, Brisbane. October, 26.

Kilpatrick, S., Barrett, M., & Jones, T. (2003). *Defining learning communities*. Hobart, Tasmania: Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania. Retrieved from https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2003/jon03441.pdf.

Madden, R. (2017). Leading learning communities. In *Catholic mission and identity symposium: Honouring the call to prophetic leadership in Catholic education*. Broken Bay Institute: The Australian Institute of Theological Education, Brisbane, October, 26.

Mele, C., Pels, J., & Polese, F. (2010). A brief review of systems theories and their managerial applications. *Service Science, 2*(1), 126–135.

Moran, G. (1991). Understanding religion and being religious. *Professional approaches for religious educators (PACE)., 22,* 249–252.

National Catholic Education Commission. (2015). *Annual report*. Canberra: National Catholic Education Commission.

National Catholic Education Commission. (2017a). *Home—Preamble.* Retrieved from http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid=16.

National Catholic Education Commission. (2017b). *A framework for formation for mission in Catholic education*. Canberra: National Catholic Education Commission.

National Catholic Education Commission. (2018). *Framing paper: Religious education in Australian Catholic schools, Draft version*. Canberra: National Catholic Education Commission.

Neidhart, H., & Lamb, J. (2016). Australian Catholic schools today: School identity and leadership formation. *Journal of Catholic Education, 19*(3), 49–65.

O'Leary, D. (2008). *Begin with the heart: Recovering a sacramental vision*. Dublin, Ireland: Columba Press.

O'Shea, G. (2017). Confronting dualism in religious education. *Journal of Religious Education, 64*(3), 197–206.

Olmstead, T. J. (2017). *Evangelizing through Catholic schools: An apostolic letter*. Retrieved June 23, 2017 from https://dphx.org/evangelizing-through-catholic-schools/.

Pope John Paul II. (1988). *Christ's faithful people*. Rome, Vatican City. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html.

Pope John Paul II. (2001). *Post-synodal apostolic exhortation: Ecclesia in Oceania.* NSW: St. Paul Publications. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20011122_ecclesia-in-oceania.html.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization, Kindle Edition*. Random House: Century Business.

Smith, J. A., Jaman, M., & Osborn, M. (1999). Doing interpretative phenomenological analysis. In M. Murray & K. Chamberlain (Eds.), *Qualitative health psychology: Theories and methods* (pp. 218–240). London: Sage.

Sultmann, W. F., & Brown, R. (2011). Modelling pillars of Catholic school identity: An Australian study. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 3*(1), 73–90.

Tien, J. M., & Berg, D. (2003). A case for service systems engineering. *Journal of Systems Science and Systems Engineering, 12*(1), 13–38.

Whelan, M. (2015). *Developing your own spirituality*. Sydney, NSW: Aquinas Academy.

Prof. Br. David Hall fms is a Marist Brother and the founding Dean of La Salle Academy of the Australian Catholic University. Br. David has over 30 years' experience as a teacher, religious education coordinator, deputy principal and principal of both (elementary) primary and secondary (high) schools. He has held the position of Executive Director of the Marist Ministries Office; responsible for ministries of the Marist Brothers: Schools, welfare agencies, young adult ministry and overseas solidarity works and where he continues to fulfil responsibilities within governance. Br. David is currently holding membership on Catholic school boards and dioceses.

Prof. William (Bill) Sultmann is an Associate Professor and Director of Catholic school identity and mission within the La Salle Academy of the Australian Catholic University. His qualifications include research doctorates in educational psychology and pastoral theology. As a teacher, psychologist, theologian and administrator he has developed extensive executive and governance leadership experience in education, health and welfare in government and Catholic sectors.

Chapter 15
Catholic Teachers, Theological Literacy and Engagement with Biblical Texts

Ros Stuart-Buttle

Introduction

The nature and role of the Bible have been subject to much debate as exemplified in UK school religious education (RE). Research literature across public and church school sectors suggests not only student difficulties in engaging with biblical material but also serious weaknesses in teacher biblical literacy (see Bowie, 2018; Conroy et al., 2013; Cooling, Green, Morris, & Revell, 2016; Copley, 1998; Goldman, 1965; Ipgrave, 2013). This carries consequences for the quality and provision of RE in our schools.

The research question underpinning this chapter asks what sort of engagement with the Bible is evident among those training or serving as teachers in Catholic schools across England and Wales. To explore this topic, the chapter first considers the role of the Bible in Catholic RE before turning to examine how teachers evaluate their own engagement with biblical material. The evidence for the latter is drawn from a national research investigation conducted by the author, examining the wider provision of adult theological education and professional development across England and Wales.

The chapter represents a UK context where the Catholic school RE curriculum is determined by the local diocese, with options for Catholic Christian specification at public examination level. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Department of Education and Formation set out guidelines in a Religious Education Curriculum Directory (3–19) for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales (2012). This provides an overview of recommended content for local syllabi and outlines four key areas as foundational to all levels and key stages. The place of the Bible is held as paramount within Area One: Revelation.

R. Stuart-Buttle (✉)
Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, UK
e-mail: stuartr@hope.ac.uk

> The Scriptures reveal for our pupils the unfolding history of the covenant relationship and the variety of human response. Both Old and New Testament Scriptures are presented as the living Word of God, written through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There is the continued emphasis that Scripture has been received and handed on through the generations as the Tradition and teaching of the Church. (Directory, 2012, p. 14)

The Bishops recommend that RE forms the heart of the curriculum in Catholic schools. They state that 10% of overall curriculum time is to be allocated for RE, with rigorous and academically challenging educational outcomes for all pupils (see http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk). However, there is acknowledgement of the changing profile of teachers in Catholic schools and recognition of varying levels of theological formation for carrying out the role. The importance of professional development for the religious education classroom is clearly stated (Directory, 2012, p. 5) and has also been echoed by scholars working in the UK field (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017; McKinney & Sullivan, 2013; Stuart-Buttle, 2016).

Teaching the Bible in Catholic RE

All religions introduce students to the sacred texts of their tradition (Roebben, 2016). The study of sacred texts is indispensable to the content and process of RE (Liddy, 2006). The Bible underpins the Judeo-Christian tradition and is a pivotal source for teaching Christianity and understanding God's revelation and salvation history. The Catholic approach states that God is the author of sacred scripture, whose Word, revealed in fullness in the person of Jesus Christ, has been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The sacred texts themselves have been composed by human authors but speak a divine Word that is 'incarnate and living' and gives the fullness of truth (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, par. 108). To understand the scriptures means to acknowledge that:

> In Sacred Scripture, God speaks to the person in a human way. To interpret Scripture correctly, the reader must be attentive to what the human authors truly wanted to affirm and to what God wanted to reveal to us by their words. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, par. 109)

This places responsibility on the RE teacher but the availability of various translations, vernacular languages and different cultural readings invite hermeneutical conundrums and challenges. Theological controversies such as disputed views on human sexuality, the role of women and beliefs about creation can give rise to different ways of understanding and interpreting biblical tradition (Balia & Kim, 2010). Meanwhile, there is a need to find relevance in God's Word for the social and cultural realities of the twenty-first century, including intercultural dialogue and interfaith learning. Teachers, faced with presenting the biblical text to their students, have to penetrate layers of culture, archaeology, language, context and genre in order to discern the meaning that the biblical authors intended (Engebretson, 2014). They also need to make connections with their pupils for life experience and personal appropriation and set this within the living tradition of Church teaching in order to bring forth

its meaning as God's Word for today. All this suggests that teachers themselves may require strategies and approaches to read and engage with biblical material alongside theological, hermeneutical and pedagogical skills for interpreting the sacred texts in the classroom (Roebben, 2016).

To understand the Bible, therefore, is to understand that God speaks in human language through the biblical text. As Petersen (2002) suggests this gives rise to questions about the nature of revelation, divine inspiration, authenticity and truth. Such questions cannot be sidestepped, particularly in today's classroom where an infinite number of meanings can be attached to any text, including the texts of scripture. Catholic tradition holds that divine revelation is authoritative and inspired, even though this has been shown to be commonly misinterpreted by some teachers (Cooling et al., 2016). But approaching the Bible as divine revelation and God's truth requires an interpretive paradigm. It has to draw meaning from the anthropological, historical, literary and religious contexts and, under the guidance of the Spirit, respect and adapt this as God's Word for today (Liddy, 2006). Such interpretative task rejects simplistic or non-critical approaches to biblical reading and understanding. It suggests that both hermeneutic criticality and pedagogical capacity are needed when teaching bible texts as core components and sources within Catholic RE.

Teaching the biblical text for Catholic religious learning is not straightforward. The Bible cannot be approached from a position of ignorance. Nor should it be interpreted from a literal or fundamentalist viewpoint which risks overstressing the nature of biblical authority and inerrancy and ignoring the human response. Biblical meaning is threatened when a text becomes separated or autonomous from what was intended by its author (Petersen, 2002) or when sceptical or stereotypical interpretation is made. This can risk 'objectifying, antiquating, and privatising Scripture' in the individualistic and relativistic discourses of (post)modernity (Fiorenza, 2002, pp. 218–19). To overcome such challenges, biblical scholars affirm the need to approach scripture critically, using recognised methods such as the historical-critical method and literary analysis (Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993). For Religious Educators, this invites a three-world approach to the biblical text that involves search for meaning in the world behind the text (historical context); search for meaning in the world of the text (literary analysis); and search for meaning in the world in front of the text (religious and human dimensions) (Liddy, 2006). These three loci have contributed to Catholic approaches to the Bible across educational and pastoral settings in recent years.

So, for Catholic Religious Educators there is the challenge of communicating biblical theology to portray authentic meaning about God yet simultaneously using professional skills and pedagogies that speak to the actions, practices and daily lives of their students. This opens the text to a human search for meaning, which also seeks to uncover God's Word, before then inviting a response in faith. This pattern is outlined both in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory which states that 'Teaching in Religious Education…. should help people be attentive to the meaning of their experiences, illumined by the light of the Gospel, so that they may respond to God more fully' (2012, p. 7). For Roebben, this creates space for a potentially 'exciting theological discourse' that

invites understanding of deeper meanings and contexts of the biblical text along-side making connections with personal and human life experience to open up 'the hermeneutical space of the grand story' so that the faith tradition is honoured as well as the small stories of individuals themselves (2016, p. 114). For Wright (1992), this is a theological–pedagogical task. Teachers need to understand, discern and translate the authoritative voice of God speaking through the biblical narrative and improvise this into classroom experience for learners. For this to happen, they need solid biblical grounding and possible realignment or deconstruction of previously held ideas or assumptions. According to Cooling et al., '…teachers must bring their professional understanding as pedagogues to bear so that there is dialogical and open conversation between theology and pedagogy' (2016, pp. 157–158).

Teacher Theological Literacy and Engagement with Biblical Texts

The second part of this chapter explores biblical literacy and teacher education through analysis of research data gathered from Catholic adults in the UK. It reports from a national survey conducted by the author for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Board of Religious Studies during 2015–2018. The Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) has existed since 1991 to provide adult theological education across dioceses and Catholic universities. The CCRS is open to anyone over the age of 18 years but is predominantly taken by those employed in Catholic schools. It is a benchmark qualification for a teaching or leadership role in a Catholic school, viewed as an essential or desirable specification for employment depending on local diocese and educational situation. Many teachers are asked to take up study following their appointment to role. The curriculum framework consists of six core compulsory theological modules with two elective specialist modules that adopt a more practical school-based or lay ministry focus. The core theological modules on Old Testament and New Testament require 20 taught contact hours and two assessment tasks. Learning aims, outcomes and syllabus outline can be found at http://www.brs-ccrs.org.uk.

The CCRS national research project was set up in light of its 25-year anniversary since inauguration (although it replaced the previous Catholic Teaching Certificate required of all teachers in Catholic schools). The rationale behind the research recognised declining levels of theological knowledge, understanding, identity and practice, including among those presenting for professional or pastoral roles in schools and parishes. As a result, the research project set out to investigate what it means to be theologically literate in the Catholic tradition today and whether the CCRS enables this or not. The research has been conducted in two phases. Phase One involved a national online survey, attracting just short of 1500 responses from past and current

course participants across the country. Phase Two consisted of stakeholder interviews with bishops, diocesan education directors, CCRS tutors and school head teachers but interview data has not been included in this chapter. Presentation of the whole research project is available (Stuart-Buttle, 2019).

The Phase One participant survey asked 34 questions concerning the perceived role and purpose of CCRS, the theological learning that occurs, reasons why people choose to study and what impact has been made in terms of personal, professional and spiritual formation. Ethical permission according to British Educational Research Association guidelines (2014) was secured for participant involvement and data reporting purposes. The survey gathered both quantitative and qualitative data, the latter receiving a wide range of open-ended comments. Quantitative data was statistically analysed while qualitative responses were coded into key categories using thematic and content analyses. Two specific questions asked which CCRS modules most and least impacted on the learning experience. Data from these two questions has been extrapolated for this chapter but two limiting factors must be acknowledged. First, the data reported here belongs to a larger and more comprehensive research project. Furthermore, it is recognised that what follows is not necessarily representative of all teachers in UK Catholic schools.

The survey respondents were predominantly female (81%) and ranged from 18 years to over 65 years, with the majority aged between 26 and 55 years. The total sample included 41% teachers in Catholic primary schools, 13% teachers in Catholic secondary schools, 16% Catholic school leaders and 16% who declared another educational role including teaching in a non-Catholic school, Catholic school governor or chaplain. Most respondents (80%) identified as practising Catholic but the term 'practicing' was deliberately left unqualified in the survey rubric. A minority of 8% respondents identified as Catholic but non-practising, with the remaining respondents belonging to another Christian denomination or declaring no religious affiliation. Thus, the normal position appears to be one where some Catholic background is present but this does not make clear the extent of being an active member of the faith community. A total of 60% respondents stated they had never studied Catholicism previously, although the overall educational level was high, with only 8% not holding a university degree. The high percentage of those declaring they had never previously studied Catholic theology was surprising given the high number of teacher professionals following the course.

Engaging with the Old Testament

When asked which of the eight modules most impacted on learning, the highest ranked module was the Old Testament with 18% of respondents reporting it such. This included both Catholic primary and secondary teachers, who primarily acknowledged their own lack of previous biblical awareness and spoke of gaining enhanced scriptural knowledge and understanding. The following was typical and repeated across a number of responses:

> I had never studied the Old Testament before. A lot of things I was taught as a child and previously believed were totally blown out of the water. I do not recall ever being taught how the bible came to be or understand exactly the journey of the Jewish people through the Old Testament. [SP 37]

Specific Old Testament topics, including Covenant, Prophets and Genesis, were signalled as particularly valuable by participants, with genuine appreciation expressed over the opportunity to discover what these were all about:

> The module reiterated to me the centrality of prophecy to our Catholic faith. I was never even aware of the Book of Amos, which is ironic as I think everything he speaks about is exactly what is wrong in society today. [SP 775]

> I enjoyed learning about Jeremiah and reading parts of the Old Testament which I'd never even seen before. [SP 612]

For a number of respondents, the Old Testament module gave insight into salvation history, a previously heard of but little understood theological concept:

> Although I was aware that the testaments are linked and the story runs through both, I had not realised how huge the links between the Old and New Testaments were. It has opened my eyes to the continuity of God's message and the impact Jesus Christ had on bringing God's message to life. [SP 164]

> To have an in depth study into the beginning of everything and the story of God's People was fantastic. [SP 1432]

Alongside this, there was a heightened awareness and appreciation of the historical, geographical and literacy contexts behind the Old Testament texts and the opportunity to enter an ancient worldview and grasp its cultural relevance and application for today:

> Previously I did not know or understand the Old Testament and so wrote it off in many ways. Studying it helped me understand the historical and cultural referencing and significance – and how we can apply it to our lives today. [SP 981]

> I never gave the Old Testament any thought other than to listen to the readings on a Sunday. I know this sounds odd but learning to contextualise the Old Testament historically, geographically and politically, I now have a new perspective on my faith. [SP 277]

> I do not recall ever being taught how the bible came to be or understand the journey of the Jewish people through what we call the Old Testament. [SP 37]

Such comments demonstrate that many participants greatly valued their study of the Old Testament scriptures. They affirm the role and place of the Old Testament within the canon of scripture and the permanent and abiding value of the Old Covenant that has never been revoked (see Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, par. 121).

In addition to enhanced biblical knowledge and understanding, those who valued the Old Testament module also witnessed to greater professional confidence and pedagogical ability to introduce its texts into the religious education classroom:

> The Old Testament is a collection of books that I enjoy and value, but if I'm honest, I have struggled in the past to bring the stories and teachings to the level of the age appropriate lessons in school. By picking apart the stories and looking at the bigger biblical picture, I have been better equipped to do this. [SP 397]

I really enjoyed working through the different elements of the Old Testament. Personally, I find it harder to access so it was good to dedicate some time to studying it and this has helped me to convey this to the children I teach. [SP 1347]

What was particularly clear in the survey comments was that how participants themselves were introduced to the biblical narrative mattered, and many singled out the role of the module tutor in this:

We had an excellent tutor who made the Old Testament come alive. I found it completely fascinating as a result. [SP 85]

However, the survey also delineated the Old Testament module as least impactful for adult learning and professional education by over a third of the overall sample. The respondent age profiles demonstrated that it was primarily the younger generation who gave the module a lower ranking (76% 18–25 year olds as compared with 5% aged 65+ years). This suggests that difficulties with studying the Old Testament or finding relevance or meaning might be heightened for younger adults and indicative of their own lack of prior experience, engagement or exposure to the biblical text. For Catholic primary teachers, 32% reported the module as least impactful for their theological learning and professional development while 28% of secondary teachers reported likewise. For Catholic school leaders, 30% said it was least impactful of all the eight modules. While there might be other reasons attributable for this low ranking, the data does indicate that including the Old Testament within professional education requires careful handling in terms of securing its potential to enhance adult biblical-theological literacy and enrich hermeneutical skills and pedagogical practice.

Some respondent feedback that reported the Old Testament module as least impactful makes for challenging reading. It was seen as holding little relevance for professionals in today's Catholic schools:

Catholic schools don't teach much about the Old Testament in my experience. So I found it the most difficult to understand. It is hard to grasp the relevance for today's society – and for my day-to-day professional role. [SP 154]

It is not easy to relate to and least useful in school as it is hard to convey to children. It has little professional relevance. [SP 375]

Furthermore, some people questioned its place and status within the RE classroom. This is significant given the role of scripture as theological source for underpinning Catholic RE and it calls into question how the books of the Old Testament can bear witness to the whole divine pedagogy of God's saving love (see Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, par. 122):

The Old Testament has little relevance to the curriculum. It is not relevant for teaching primary school children. Most of the curriculum I teach is related to Jesus' teachings. Some of the theological underpinnings are not appropriate for my pupils. [SP 397]

Studying the Old Testament was reported by other participants as dull in content, boring in pedagogical approach and containing too much theology or history. Rather than being a storehouse of God's teaching or wisdom on human life (see Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, par. 122):

> It is hard to understand. And it is just not relevant to today's society. I find the teachings of the Old Testament somewhat outdated. And it is too theological. [SP 364]

Other comments refer to an inability to find personal meaning or a lack of pedagogical skills to convey to pupils, while some repeatedly spoke of having a limited faith language and theological vocabulary to comprehend or critically evaluate the biblical text and context:

> This module was too difficult to understand and there was unique and ancient vocabulary and theological ideas that I just didn't understand. [SP 127]

> Although it lies at the basis of Catholic faith, I found it the hardest to understand and get to grips with. I rarely focus on the Old Testament in my everyday teaching of RE and it does not link with the diocesan scheme we are following. [SP 428]

> I found it hard to understand and know which passages are just stories and which are real. [SP 7]

For a minority of participants, there was dismissal of any need to know about the Old Testament as 'Catholics are really New Testament people' [SP 112]. Another reported, 'Our faith is fully rooted in the New Testament and this is where the truth about our faith is' [SP 314]. For others, the ancient texts are a theological stumbling block in that the images and actions of the Old Testament God are judged problematic:

> The New Testament is the fulfilment of the Old Testament. I struggle to see lots of killings and outright vengeance in its scriptures. What idea of God are we giving our pupils? The Old Testament feels removed from the God we think of nowadays as benevolent. [SP 227]

Such comments indicate challenges in recognising the economy of the Old Testament oriented as salvation history towards the coming of Jesus Christ. Two responses, in particular, jolt the reader. One Catholic primary teacher stated:

> It has most impacted my learning as it totally put me off Christianity. Having now read the Old Testament in a lot of detail, I have come to the conclusion that it is the most frightening piece of fiction that I have ever read. [SP 802]

Another reported, 'It was written by Jews for Jews, advocating superiority over other people' [SP 89]. Here, one wonders how the Old Testament would be approached as sacred scripture in the classroom and communicated as true and inspired Word of God. It also calls into question how Judaism might be taught as this is now a requirement for the Catholic RE curriculum in England. Such responses are evidence of the need for critical study of scriptural texts that enables teachers to identify text type and genre features as well as explore context, characters, structure and function both of the text itself as well as the Bible as a whole. This is surely necessary preparation for using biblical texts in the classroom.

Engaging with the New Testament

Survey responses for the New Testament module also provide a window into teacher engagement with biblical material. According to role profile, 15% Catholic primary

teachers viewed the New Testament module as most impactful for their personal for-
mation and professional education while 14% secondary teachers and 17% Catholic
school leaders declared likewise. Their qualitative comments represent less extreme
views in comparison with those expressed for the Old Testament. Many respon-
dents who gave a positive evaluation saw its relevance in terms of teaching religious
education and their own school practice:

> The New Testament is most relevant to the teaching of RE in schools. It is more relevant
> with today's understanding of why Jesus came down to earth and the Kingdom values we
> should follow. [SP 111]

> The New Testament fitted in with the curriculum I teach. Having said that, I learned things
> I never knew before. I have gained increased knowledge for school and I can relate it to
> everyday life. [SP 1121]

Other respondents articulated the relevance of the New Testament in terms of its
role and contribution to school liturgy and collective worship as well as its signifi-
cance for promoting Gospel faith and values in school:

> We come across the New Testament in prayer and at Mass. That is why our pupils need to
> know about it. [SP 185]

Much of the feedback reported that studying the New Testament as an adult learner
was personally or spiritually significant. The study of the Gospels for the life and
teaching of Jesus was especially singled out as the heart of all scripture:

> Learning about the differences between the writers of the Gospels has enabled me to under-
> stand the Bible and the formation of the New Testament to greater depth. I hadn't considered
> this before. [SP 491]

> It was very interesting to look at the Gospel books and identify the differences and similarities
> within them, as well as their major themes. It gave me an historical understanding of the
> gospel writers and their intended audiences. It made Jesus more accessible by helping me
> understand more about his humanity. [SP 1291]

> Learning about the person of Jesus and how the Gospels portray him and why was really
> interesting and inspirational. [SP 1474]

For some participants, the module brought new knowledge and understanding
about the central events of the life and death of Jesus, including the significance of
the Resurrection, something that we might think would be already known by those
teaching in Catholic schools:

> I hadn't realised how important the act of resurrection was to the Christians and that if you
> don't believe in this then you will not be resurrected at the end of the world. [SP1210]

> It made me aware for the first time that my understanding of who Jesus is has never been clear-
> cut and has been questioned in terms of his resurrection. I had previously had a simplistic
> understanding of 'gospel truth'. This was scary stuff. [SP 543]

There was also appreciation for learning more about Paul and the growth of the
early Christian church:

> I loved learning about the journeys that Paul undertook. I had no previous real conception
> that the New Testament grew from the experience of the first Church and not the Church
> from the Bible. [SP 352]

Indeed for a number of respondents, the New Testament gained a new or revised appreciation in being recognised and valued as the primary source to underpin Catholic theology and teaching:

> I'm amazed that I lived thirty years as a Catholic – and a well-educated one or so I thought – but without being taught all this at some stage. I thought I knew the New Testament scriptures but clearly I didn't. [SP 781]

For some of the 10% of the sample who ranked the New Testament module as least impactful for learning, their responses indicated that they felt they already possessed prior levels of knowledge and understanding and so the module was unnecessary:

> I knew lots about the New Testament already being a primary school teacher and having to teach it. [SP 398]

Other comments reported previously held assumptions about an interpretation of the New Testament text seen as that allowed by the Church or gained from childhood religious experience. Some participants had never encountered a critical reading of the biblical text and so felt uncomfortable, exposed or challenged by this:

> I was Catholicly educated and felt that my RE in school had only presented one view of the text and never stretched my understanding or give rise to the possibility that there can be more than one 'correct' interpretation of the bible text. [SP 207]

Further comments related to poor module delivery and pedagogy (dry sessions, inaccessible language, boring content and poor teaching methods) as well as difficulty in understanding content and finding meaning from original historical context and literary genre in terms of relevance and accessibility for today:

> The New Testament was the module I was most looking forward to. But the tutor managed to make it one of the driest learning experiences of any course that I have even undertaken. I absolutely hated it! [SP 284]

Despite this, the overall evaluation of this module showed greater regard among school professionals concerning its place within the RE classroom and the life of a Catholic school. Many respondents reported their study of the module had nourished not only their professional knowledge and understanding but given genuine insight and renewed appreciation for the unique place of the New Testament scriptures in the faith tradition of the Church.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated how teachers are impacted by their study of Old and New Testament scriptures while undertaking professional development in Catholic theology. Evidence shows their concerns about finding meaning and relevance in biblical texts and their challenges and uncertainties concerning their own critical receptivity and appropriation alongside the skills and pedagogy needed for the classroom.

At the same time, they acknowledge responsibility to open up the scriptures with commitment and authenticity, not just for educational reasons for promoting student learning but to share in the life and ethos of a Catholic school amid the social and cultural realities of today's world.

Analysis of data from the two survey questions confirms that many teachers working in Catholic education are keen to develop biblical literacy through acquisition or enhancement of knowledge and understanding of key texts, salvation history events, people, historical contexts and literary genres across both Testaments. If this learning is to go beyond professional résumé theology (Stuart-Buttle, 2018) then it should include resources to support development of critical skills for reading and interpreting the Bible, alongside pedagogical approaches that invite open, honest and attentive dialogue with both the theological curriculum and contemporary life experience. The survey data demonstrates the importance of recognising the impact of teacher perceptions and theological viewpoints with respect to their reception and evaluation of biblical material, especially the Old Testament scriptures. Professional development that encourages connection with and critical reflection on knowledge, beliefs and assumptions about both Testaments and the challenges of interpretation is fundamental for the provision of Catholic RE in our schools today.

> In order to support, guide and promote deeper knowledge and love of the Scriptures…we encourage those involved in the on-going religious formation of adults to provide more resources so that the word of God may become more and more accessible, more and more understood, more and more cherished. (Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 2005, p. 57)

References

Balia, D., & Kim, K. (2010). *Edinburgh 2010 volume II witnessing to Christ today*. Oxford: Regnum Books International.

Bowie, R. (2018). Interpreting texts more wisely: A review of research and the case for change in English religious education. In R. Stuart-Buttle & J. Shortt (Eds.), *Christian faith, formation and education* (pp. 211–228). Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan/Springer.

British Educational Research Association. (2014). *Ethical guidelines for educational research*. Retrieved from https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/resources-for-researchers.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. (1993). Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. (2005). *The gift of scripture*. London: Catholic Truth Society.

Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales. (2012). *Religious education curriculum directory (3-19) for Catholic schools and colleges*. London: Department of Catholic Education and Formation of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Conroy, J., Lundie, D., Davis, R., Baumfield, V., Barnes, L. P., Gallagher, T., et al. (2013). *Does religious education work? A multi-dimensional investigation*. London: Bloomsbury.

Cooling, T., Green, B., Morris, A., & Revell, L. (2016). *Christian faith in English church schools: Research conversations with classroom teachers*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Copley, T. (1998). *Echo of Angels. The first report of the Biblos project*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

Engebretson, K. (2014). *Catholic schools and the future of the Church*. New York: Bloomsbury.

Fiorenza, E. S. (2002). The ethos of interpretation: Biblical studies in a postmodern and postcolonial context. In R. Petersen (Ed.), *Theological literacy for the twenty-first century* (pp. 211–228). Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Franchi, L., & Rymarz, R. (2017). The education and formation of teachers for catholic schools: Responding to changed cultural contexts. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 9*(1), 2–16.

Goldman, R. J. (1965). *Readiness for religion: A basis for developmental religious education*. London: Routledge.

Ipgrave, J. (2013). From storybooks to bullet points: Books and the Bible in primary and secondary religious education. *British Journal of Religious Education, 35*(3), 264–281.

Liddy, S. (2006). Teaching scripture in religious education. In M. De Souza, G. Durka, K. Engebretson, R. Jackson, & A. McGrady (Eds.), *International handbook of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions in education* (pp. 1361–1376). Netherlands: Springer.

McKinney, S., & Sullivan, J. (2013). *Education in a catholic perspective*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.

Petersen, R. (2002). *Theological literacy for the twenty-first century*. Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans.

Pontifical Biblical Commission. (1993). *The interpretation of the Bible in the church.* Retrieved from https://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/pbcinter.htm.

Roebben, B. (2016). *Theology made in dignity*. Leuven: Peeters.

Stuart-Buttle, R. (2016). Does RE matter: What do teachers think? In M. Shanahan (Ed.), *Does religious education matter?* (pp. 51–64). Abingdon: Routledge.

Stuart-Buttle, R. (2018). Theological education and professional practice. In R. Stuart-Buttle & J. Shortt (Eds.), *Christian faith, formation and education* (pp. 131–146). Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan/Springer.

Stuart-Buttle, R. (2019). *CCRS Twenty five years on: One size fits all? Stockport*. UK: Rejoice Publications, Matthew James Publishing Ltd.

Wright, N. T. (1992). *The new testament and the people of God*. London: SPCK.

Dr. Ros Stuart-Buttle is Senior Lecturer in theology and education and director of the Centre for Christian Education, Liverpool Hope University, UK. Her research publications explore theological literacy for teacher professional development, educational technologies for adult theological learning and religious education in Catholic schools—see, for example, her chapter 'Does RE Matter: What Do Teachers Say' in Shanahan, M. (ed.), (2017) *Does Religious Education Matter?*, Routledge. Dr. Stuart-Buttle teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses in religious education and Catholic theology and is a longstanding member of the Board of Religious Studies for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Chapter 16
Teacher Readiness: A Pedagogy of Encounter

Linda Di Sipio

Introduction

Curriculum reform in religious education is more likely to be successfully implemented in schools when those responsible for its implementation know and understand the theory underpinning the reforms and their implications (Buchanan, 2010). The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne is undergoing a major curriculum innovation in the discipline area of religious education. This reform is referred to as the Pedagogy of Encounter (Religious Education Curriculum Framework Archdiocese of Melbourne, 2017). One of the key features of this curriculum approach requires religious education teachers to engage in religiously motivated dialogue for the purposes of bringing their own thinking and engagement into the planning and development of classroom learning and teaching programs.

This paper sought to discover the potential contribution of an imaginative contemplation approach could make towards enhancing religiously motivated dialogue amongst religious education teachers involved in the implementation of the Pedagogy of Encounter. A context for understanding the curriculum innovation is outlined followed by an overview of the literature that informed this study and prior to reporting on the implications and recommendations emanating from the professional learning experiences, an outline of the research approach is presented.

Context

The Pedagogy of Encounter has emerged in response to the Enhancing Catholic Identity School Project (ECISP). This project involved a collaboration in research

L. Di Sipio (✉)
St Columba's College, Essendon, VIC, Australia
e-mail: disipiol@columba.vic.edu.au

between the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) and the Catholic University of Leuven. The research aimed to allow Catholic leaders to understand what was happening culturally within their school community through the analysis student and teacher participant survey data. The ECISP findings offered direction for leaders and curriculum writers regarding the development of the new RE curriculum framework (Sharkey, 2017).

The renewed RE curriculum framework, Pedagogy of Encounter was introduced in the Archdiocese of Melbourne in 2016 and requires religious education teachers to create learning material based on the contents of the mandated student textbook series *To Know Worship and Love.* In preparing lessons, teachers are required to develop questions of inquiry based on the lives of students and their cultural context (Madden, 2017). The Pedagogy of Encounter encourages teachers to engage in religiously motivated dialogue by exploring religious content or issues through a process of inquiry, knowledge gathering and deconstruction and reconstruction, as well as a search for personal meaning (Ricoeur, 1965; Sharkey, 2017).

The renewed RE curriculum shares a history with a variety of pedagogical approaches used in Australia. It does not stand alone but it emerges through a process of pedagogical drift (Buchanan, 2005). It involves different pedagogical approaches existing independently and then drifting into their reconceptualised forms as the needs of learning communities change due to social and cultural shifts. The rural dioceses throughout Victoria while involved in ECISP all have religious education curriculum based on adaptations of Shared Christian Praxis (Groome, 1991). This approach invites dialogue where people reflect critically on their own historical background and sociocultural community and make links with that of Church teachings and the Christian story (Groome, 1991). Whereas, in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, a text-based curriculum underpinned by a textbook series, entitled *To Know Worship and Love* has underpinned religious education in Catholic schools throughout the twenty-first century. The orientation of the renewed RE curriculum, Pedagogy of Encounter, is distinct but features of the Shared Christian Praxis and text-based curriculum approach in Melbourne are not foreign.

The focus on personal, spiritual and faith development is pedagogically intertwined in the design and delivery of the RE renewed curriculum Pedagogy of Encounter. It requires the religious education teacher to give a credible account of what Catholic faith means from their perspective as well as create a relational space between believers and enquirers so that a dialogical encounter can occur (Castelli, 2012). The role requires the teacher to navigate the many different views held in a classroom by students. Teachers need to provide opportunities through structured dialogue to explore how this can link or sit beside the Catholic faith traditions.

The findings from the ECISP highlighted that the religious education teachers should work towards creating a curriculum, which supports a Dialogue School (Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2014). However, the ECISP found that both adolescent students and teachers held worldviews that did not know how to engage with religiously motivated dialogue (Sharkey, 2017). The Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) recognised a challenge for teachers in this space and devised a teacher Dialogue Tool Kit (Religious Education Curriculum Framework Archdiocese of Melbourne, 2017) to support the

teachers. Some schools volunteered to trial the tool kit and this involved exploring the big questions of life, God and culture as a way to assist with curriculum planning.

The Dialogue Tool Kit features a range of questions to prompt teachers to think deeply about the religious issues and concepts underpinning a unit before planning a learning pathway for students (Religious Education Curriculum Framework Archdiocese of Melbourne, 2017). According to Madden (2017), dialogue is the way forward for working in the renewal process. The Dialogue Tool kit was created in anticipation that schools recognised that if time was given to this religiously motivated dialogue, teachers are greatly benefitted by developing confidence amongst themselves before trialling it with their students (Madden, 2017).

To encourage curriculum implementation religious education teachers in one school were invited to engage in religiously motivated dialogue through a process of imaginative contemplation. The practice of imaginative contemplation in Scripture has been utilised as a method of prayer (Alvarez, 2015; Der Pan, Deng, Tsai, & Yuan, 2015). This practice was adapted in the professional learning context of the school to engage teachers in the implementation of the renewed RE curriculum.

Contemplating passages from the Scriptures provided teachers with an opportunity to align their own stories with that of the Gospel and to foster personal connection in identification biblical characters and events (Gallagher, 2001). The opportunity to use imaginative contemplation with stories from the Bible does not impose Catholic worldviews on individuals, so it suits the pluralised audience of a Dialogical school. However, it invites individuals to use contemplative methods to unlock the innate yet often unexplored capacity for intuitive knowledge, expanded consciousness, unconditional compassion for self and others, appreciation for beauty and creative fulfilment (Coburn et al., 2012). It allows individuals to use the Scripture passages as points of reference from which religiously motivated dialogue can be initiated.

Literature Review

The potential for teachers to engage in religiously motivated dialogue, which is a key skill necessary for the implementation of the Pedagogy of Encounter curriculum and is dependent on certain foundations. These foundations include the ability and willingness of teachers to engage in imaginative contemplation, as well as the time to reflect on the requirements needed to implement the curriculum, and also an openness to formation in religious education. Literature pertaining to imaginative contemplation is reviewed in the light of its potential to motivate teachers in religious education to engage in religiously motivated dialogue. In the following section, an exploration of the literature surrounding these areas will be discussed.

Imaginative Contemplation

Imaginative contemplation is a way of praying with our imagination, which is far from fantasising (Alvarez, 2015). It is a dynamic activity that enables the Bible to speak to us (Ricoeur, 1995). Skills in biblical interpretation expose the reader to encounter scholarly truths in the Scripture. However, engagement through imaginative contemplation requires one to be aware of the influence of their own context and preconceptions bring to bear on their interpretation of the passage (Johnson, 1998).

Contemplative practices are not restricted to religion only. However, they do provide a language and/or a sensation where the conscious awareness of an individual's knowing may be heightened, thus realising there are ways of knowing which is in addition to the academia (Coburn et al., 2012; Wessels 2015). This first-person knowledge can then be used to verify knowledge gained in academia. The imaginative contemplation experience provides this wrestling with the inner self and then allows teachers to consider making connections with how it can be used in their work. It elevates first-person knowledge (Coburn et al., 2012). Contemplative practice facilitates individuals to experience the intentionality of actions (Wessels, 2015). Intentionality allows for a greater scope of problem-solving and innovation and it assists with the engagement of dialogue where it involves a deep awareness of one's self before the encounter with the other can occur (Castelli, 2012; Schihalejev, 2009). This study sought to discover the extent to which an adaptation of imaginative contemplation could be used to motivate religious dialogue amongst teachers of religious education.

Time to Reflect

Contemporary studies on the implementation of curriculum change in religious education have highlighted the importance of enabling time for teachers to reflect (Buchanan, 2006a, 2008; Buchanan & Engebretson, 2009; Dowling, 2012). Time to reflect using a contemplative practice such as imaginative contemplation is a difficult concept to engage in during the demands of school life (Coburn et al., 2012; Wessels, 2015). Being alone is not always valued and understood as an opportunity to foster self-awareness and growth (Stern, 2013).

According to Gallagher (2001), the use of contemplation and imagination is necessary to understand the Bible on a non-doctrinal level. To connect with the stories in the Bible in an imaginative and spiritual way allows individuals to connect to faith through ordinary life and especially through the various realms of relationships, which God enters through the stories. Providing teachers with an opportunity to find expressions in the Scripture passage connecting with their own lives contributes to the formation of teachers in Catholic schools (A Framework for Formation for Mission in Catholic Education, 2016). It also contributes to assisting with the role of witness as a religious education teacher in the renewed RE curriculum (Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith, 1982).

When teachers are provided with time to link theory with practice it assists the management of curriculum change as it provides teachers space to reflect on their needs relevant to their real work situation (Buchanan and Engebretson, 2009; Coll, 2015). This literature sought to discover the significance of time in the process of implementing the Pedagogy of Encounter.

Openness to Teacher Formation

A key feature of RE teacher formation is that teachers collaborate using reflection and feedback (Dowling, 2012). Dialogue is a complex phenomenon and consists of three components: exploration of one's ideas; discovery of the ideas of another human being and examination of the subject (Schihalejev, 2009). For teachers, it is vital to have time to develop their professional and theological content knowledge and make these connections through guided dialogue (Madden, 2017). Guided dialogue can have the potential to trigger a stronger awareness of faith, to shape individuals' views and even to alter their personal frames of reference (Madden, 2017). The opportunity for teachers to explore what a commitment to faith has on them personally has a direct effect on curriculum delivery (Coll, 2015).

Teacher formation in disciplines such as religious education and spirituality should not be confined to the achievement of academic outcomes. The investment of self in the implementation of religious education contributes to the spiritual formation of the individual (Buchanan, 2008). Forming Religious Educators enables them to make links with theory and practice through the alignment of reflection, analysis and content (Bentley & Buchanan, 2017; Buchanan & Engebretson, 2009; Jara & Dagach, 2015). When teachers are involved in the implementation of RE curriculum, it has the potential to contribute to the teacher formation in the religious tradition (Buchanan & Stern, 2012). The interplay between formation and curriculum knowledge and implementation has been explained in the Scottish and British contexts. The conversations that take place support teachers in developing curriculum. In these conversations, teachers knowledge is enhanced as well as personal frames of reference become aligned (Buchanan & Stern, 2012; Coll, 2015). This research sought to investigate the significance of dialogue in creating curriculum change.

Research Design

This paper sought to discover the contribution that imaginative contemplation makes to enhancing religiously motivated dialogue as a means for fostering a professional learning community of religious education teachers. The epistemological foundations of constructivism (Crotty, 1998) underpinned this qualitative study. It sought to construct meaning from the perceptions of religious education teachers about the benefits of imaginative contemplation to assist with the implementation of the

renewed RE curriculum. The perceptions were conveyed in their responses to a questionnaire. The analysis of the data involved a process of constant comparison and further analysis in the light of the existing body of literature. The original approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967) to grounded theory guided the conceptualisation of the participant's responses to the questionnaire. Particular categories of findings began to emerge due to investigation of the data (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998). Using data in this way allowed the data to tell its own story (Goulding, 2002). This approach was appropriate because little is known about the use of imaginative contemplation with religious education teachers and implementing curriculum change. If little is known and understood about a particular phenomenon, one needs to ask those who are involved, and in this case, the religious education teachers themselves (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The insights and meanings they constructed are the foundations underpinning the rich data informing this study.

This was a small-scale study of 10 participants. The qualitative research was not concerned with numbers of participants but more the in-depth insights gained from the perceptions of the participants (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The category saturation occurred when no new information or categories emerged from the data. Close adherence to the process of category saturation contributed to the plausibility of the study (Glaser, 1998).

Activity

Religious education teachers were invited to participate in four professional learning workshops exploring the use of imaginative contemplation with Scripture. The space for the workshop was the school drama room. This choice was intentional and aimed at providing a new context and fresh connotations of coming together dissociated with traditional meeting places. Each workshop explored a Scripture passage, which underpinned the theme of the professional learning. Participants were guided through the imaginative contemplation, first, by reading the chosen Scripture passage. This reading was then accompanied with a music score of a similar theme as well as visual stimuli in the form of images or film clips. After exposure to the passage and supporting materials, participants were then invited to express their personal contemplative experience using a variety of artistic mediums of their choice. An integral part of each workshop was the space to share and dialogue about the contemplative experience with each other. The following section outlines the theme, Scripture passage and guided questions used in each workshop.

First theme: My life in light of God's boundless love for me.
Scripture passage: Gerasene Demoniac Luke 8: 26–37.
Guided questions for contemplation:

  Picture the face of the demon when Jesus confronts the demon.
  Picture the face of Jesus when he confronts the demon.
  Picture the face of Jesus when he meets the man from Gerasene.

Picture the reactions of the family of the man from Gerasene when he is no longer possessed and he returns to them.

Second theme: How do I follow Christ as his disciple?
Scripture passage: The Annunciation Luke 1: 26–38.
Guided questions for contemplation:

What can we learn about discipleship from this?
Share your own journey of discipleship with the person next to you.
What does discipleship look like for the religious education teacher?

Third theme: The suffering of Christ is his ultimate expression of his love for me.
Scripture passage: The Garden of Gethsemane Luke 22: 39–46.
Guided question for contemplation:

To think about their own experiences as an educator and to reflect on a time where their own emotional state of being was similar to that of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane?

Fourth theme: I walk with the Risen Jesus and set out to Love and Serve Him in all I that I do.
The Scripture passage: The Road to Emmaus Luke 24: 13–35.
Guided question for contemplation:

A special time in your vocation as an educator where you met Jesus and you felt like your heart is burning within you. What was it like for you?
All participants were invited to respond to the following questions after the completion of the workshops.
As a teacher of religious education, outline two benefits gained from your engagement in imaginative contemplation.
What contributions do you envisage imaginative contemplation of the Scriptures would make to the formation of religious education teachers?

The new curriculum framework is oriented towards a Pedagogy of Encounter. This pedagogy encourages dialogue amongst religious education teachers as an integral part of curriculum planning. In what ways might your engagement with imaginative contemplation open up opportunities for dialogue?

Research Findings

Three key implications emerged from this study. First, teachers' use of time together to implement curriculum was crucial. Second, that specific strategy is required to engage in religiously motivated dialogue and lastly, an opportunity for ongoing teacher formation is beneficial.

Time to Implement

One of the participants expressed that the benefit of engaging in imaginative contemplation as being able to "Apply my experience of imaginative contemplation to the classroom. Experiment with student encounters and interactions with Scripture. To allow them the same space for encounter" (Participant A).

Participants realised that the space created in the workshop allowed for reflection and stillness. The teachers became aware that the power of silence and solitude in this experience was a powerful tool for gathering knowledge and understanding (Stern, 2013). The time was, in fact, an experiential and productive space as the participants made links with the potential use of this method in the classroom as well as considering it as a form of understanding for their own personal relationship with Scripture.

Participant B explained that, "It allows you to learn from your colleagues and provide a space, which is safe and comfortable for sharing something deep within us."

Teachers are more motivated to participate in professional learning experiences designed to improve learning and teaching that will benefit students (Dowling, 2012). This experiential time for teachers allowed them to make personal connections with the material as well as create a safe and trusting community (Bentley & Buchanan, 2015; Buchanan, 2008). It allowed connection with the material, creating an interest to engage with curriculum change as a result of this connection (Bentley & Buchanan, 2015; Buchanan, 2008). Participant C explained that, "It allowed me to develop a different relationship to scriptural texts from a historical-critical method. It challenges me to slow down and find my own place within the text", and Participant D stated that *"It allows teachers to find their voice and to develop confidence and ability to share reflections and experiences at a faith level and through scripture".

Dowling (2012) suggested that professional learning is best suited when it meets the needs of the teachers. The participants explained that they had difficulty with the teaching of Scripture due to lack of confidence in exploring it. They had felt that the only way to tackle Scripture stories was through the historical-critical method, meaning that teachers felt inadequate doing this with students. The time provided by this professional learning provided participants with an ability to use the topic of Scripture to underpin their dialogue about how to use it in the classroom. The use of guided questions allowed for teachers to have some structure to begin the process and grow in confidence as they practiced with each other (Madden, 2017).

Furthermore, participants felt safer to engage in religiously motivated dialogue amongst their peers rather than with an external provider or a leader (Buchanan, 2006b; Dowling, 2012). It is important to note that members of the leadership team also participated in the professional learning. Their contributions in the religiously motivated dialogue further supported the formation of safe and trusting learning communities, because they did not lead the experience, rather they entered into the space in dialogue with the other participants enhancing the formation of the dialogical learning community (Dowling, 2012).

Imaginative Contemplation as a Strategy Creating Religiously Motivated Dialogue

Reflecting the view of most participants one stated that, "The creativity and curiosity around this process was outside our normal professional learning" (Participant E). It is common for such experiences to enable participants to develop insights as they became familiar with the process and engage in dialogue (Buchanan & Stern, 2012). Teachers continued after the workshops to make links through dialogue with teaching and learning in formal curriculum planning meetings. They began to question how a unit might be underpinned by passages from Scripture. Participant H stated that, "through Scripture, we encounter God, and when we contemplate Scripture, we engage in a conversation with Scripture and the tradition itself".

It is evident that contemplative practice encouraged collaboration amongst staff and it built stronger professional relationships (Wessels, 2015). The religiously motivated dialogue promoted by the guided questions assisted these relationships as it invited dialogue. Participants became more aware of the meaning and purpose of the Scripture story through their contemplative experience. Participants became aware of other knowledge, which could be used to understand Scripture (Coburn et al., 2012). They realised that the contemplative practice was about cultivating less belief and more about direct experience. It provided a laboratory, where you can understand Scripture in the context of a first-person inquiry. This is an inquiry that examines one's assumptions and qualifies one's own views (Coburn et al., 2012). The contemplative experience allowed staff to bring to the story their own context and preconceptions so that they did not get distracted by the notions that they were expected to understand the story through historical-critical methods.

Contemplative practices facilitate individuals to experience the intentionality of actions through assisting humans to create meaning through narrative (Wessels, 2015). Humans create meaning in a relational manner (Coll, 2015; Madden, 2017). The contemplative practice is able to assist participants to create meaning with the Scripture story and then share this with their learning community. The ability to practice contemplation enhances the skill of meaning making which then supports groups to create change in their behaviour because they are able to have a deeper understanding and awareness of others (Wessels, 2015). This assists with the formation of dialogical practices, which involves a great awareness of one's self before the encounter with another can occur (Castelli, 2012; Schihalejev, 2009). If teachers model this amongst themselves, they will be better equipped to create curriculum suited to assisting students in meaning making. It is for this reason that the creation of meaning making is pivotal to the renewed RE curriculum, Pedagogy of Encounter (Sharkey, 2017).

Opportunities for Ongoing Teacher Formation

The data from the questionnaire suggests that the imaginative experience allowed for a new sense of curiosity around Scripture. Participants reflected on this enhanced state of understanding, "You took me on a journey in my mind's eye. I was able to create a filmic representation of the stories and connect them deeply to my own personal experiences, life and relationship with God" (Participant I).

Guided dialogue has the potential to create an openness to teacher formation through the development of safe and trusting learning communities. Bentley and Buchanan (2017) conducted studies on students who were preparing for the role of spiritual directors. They found that when attention was paid to academic outcomes as well as creating space among the students to acquire the knowledge on a personal level using guided dialogue, there was an increased level of collegiality and collaboration amongst the participants in this study. "The nature of this exercise is steeped in dialogue. It is part of the richness of and in the sharing that we grow and develop new perspectives and insights into relational, metaphoric characters within these passages" (Participant J).

When teachers see themselves as researchers of their own practice through constructive dialogue, it may be used as a vehicle for professional growth and enhancing the learning community (Buchanan & Stern, 2012; Coll, 2015; Jara & Dagach, 2015). Pre-service teachers were encouraged to be willing to open to each other by using peer reviews (Buchanan & Stern, 2012). When pre-service teachers experienced this with their peers, it is easier for them to transfer this into the school culture that they will enter into.

Conclusion

This small study explored the perceptions of Catholic religious education teachers' experiences with imaginative contemplation and the implications of their experiences upon the confidences to participate in religious motivated dialogue, which is fundamental to the successful implementation of the Pedagogy of Encounter. The responses from the surveys indicated that teachers benefitted from the learning experience because of the time allocated to align theory to practice, as well as the opportunity for guided dialogue, which assisted with engaging in religiously motivated dialogue about Scripture. The dialogical nature of the experience also allowed teachers to create safe and trusting learning communities (Bentley & Buchanan, 2017), which contributed to collegiality and further enhanced teacher collaboration which assists with the implementation of the renewed RE curriculum.

This research shows that religious education teachers in Catholic Schools would benefit from learning the skills of imaginative contemplation to enhance the opportunities for religiously motivated dialogue to support the communities in Catholic schools who belong to the smorgasbord of spiritual world views which are not clearly articulated (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017). Further research could be conducted to use

imaginative contemplation with the whole Catholic school community with the view of engaging in religiously motivated dialogue to assist with the formation of teachers in Catholic schools.

References

Alvarez, F. D. (2015). Ignatian contemplation in the classroom: Fostering imagination in scripture study [Online PDF]. Retrieved from https://www.religiouseducation.net/papers/rea2015-alvarez.pdf.

Bentley, P. S., & Buchanan, M. T. (2015). Bridging further education and higher education in the formation of spiritual directors. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 39*(6), 777–792.

Bentley, P. S., & Buchanan, M. T. (2017). The significance of formation agendas in a Christian higher education program for spiritual directors. *Religious Education, 121*(4), 351–364.

Buchanan, M. T. (2005). Pedagogical drift: The evolution of new approaches and paradigms in religious education. *Religious Education, 100*(1), 20–37.

Buchanan, M. T. (2006a). Factors that assist curriculum change. *Journal of Religious Education, 54*(1), 19–26.

Buchanan, M. T. (2006b). Textbooks in religious education. In M. De Souza, G. Durka, R. Jackson, K. Engebretson, & A. McGrady (Eds.), *International handbook of religious, moral and spiritual education* (pp. 749–761). Netherlands: Springer.

Buchanan, M. T. (2008). Holistic engagement in curriculum innovation: Attending to the spiritual dimension. *Religious Education Journal of Australia, 24*(1), 3–7.

Buchanan, M. T. (2010). Attending to the spiritual dimension to enhance curriculum change. *Journal of Beliefs and Values, 31*(2), 191–201.

Buchanan, M. T., & Engebretson, K. (2009). The significance of theory in the implementation of curriculum change in religious education. *British Journal of Religious Education, 31*(2), 141–152.

Buchanan, M. T., & Stern, J. (2012). Pre-service teachers' perceptions of the benefits of peer review. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 38*(1), 37–49.

Castelli, M. (2012). Faith dialogue as a pedagogy for a post secular religious education. *Journal of Beliefs and Values: Studies in Religion and Education, 33*(2), 207–216.

Catholic Education Office. (2017). *Religious education curriculum framework archdiocese of Melbourne.* Melbourne: Catholic Education Office. Retrieved from: http://www.resourcemelb.catholic.edu.au/ckfinder/userfiles/files/RE%20Curr%20Framework%20-%2024%20Jan%202017.pdf. 9/12/2017.

Coburn, T., Grace, F., Klein, A. C., Komjathy, L., Roth, H., & Simmer-Brown, J. (2012). Contemplative pedagogy: Frequently asked questions. *Teaching Theology and Religion, 14*(2), 167–174.

Coll, R. (2015). Catholic religious education in Scotland: Bridging the gap between teacher education and curriculum delivery. In M. T. Buchanan & A.-M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in Schools* (pp. 179–194). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin.

Dowling, E. (2012). An investment in our future: Reimaging professional learning or religious education. *Religious Education Journal of Australia, 28*(1), 23–29.

Education Congregation for Catholic. (1982). *Lay Catholics in schools: Witnesses to faith*. Homebush, NSW: St Paul.

Faith Formation and Religious Education Committee. (2016). *National Catholic education commission. A framework for formation for mission in Catholic education.* Sydney NSW: National Catholic Education Commission.

Franchi, L., & Rymarz, R. (2017). The education and formation of teachers for Catholic schools: Responding to changed cultural contexts. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 9*(1), 2–16.

Gallagher, M. P. (2001). *Dive deeper the human poetry of faith*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd.

Glaser, B. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis: Experience vs forcing*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. (1998). *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory; Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Adeline.

Goulding, C. (2002). *Grounded theory: A practical guide for management, business and market researchers*. London: Sage.

Groome, T. (1991). *Sharing faith: A comprehensive approach to religious education and pastoral ministry*. San Francisco: Harper.

Jara, R. F., & Dagach, P. I. (2015). Let's talk about teacher professionalism: The teaching of Catholic religion in Chile. In M. T. Buchanan & A.-M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education* (pp. 293–303). Switzerland: Springer.

Jen der Pan, P., Deng, L. Y. F., Tsai, S. L., & Yuan, S. J. (2015). Perspectives of Taiwanese pastoral counsellors on the use of scripture and prayer in the counselling process. *Psychological Reports: Mental and Physical Health*, *116*(2), 543–563.

Johnson, H. (1998). The role of the religious education coordinator: Mission and ministry. *Journal of Religious Education, 42*(2), 44–46.

Madden, R. (2017). Curriculum overview religious education curriculum in Melbourne. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian schools. Exploring the landscape* (pp. 223–241). Mulgrave, Victoria: Vaughan Publishing.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, M. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pollefeyt, D., & Bouwens, J. (2014). *Identity in dialogue*. Zurich: Lit Verlag.

Ricoeur, P. (1965). *Freud and philosophy: An essay on interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ricoeur, P. (1995). *Figuring the sacred: Religion, narrative and imagination.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Schihalejev, O. (2009). Dialogue in religious education lessons—Possibilities and hindrances in the Estonian context. *British Journal of Religious Education, 31*(3), 277–288.

Sharkey, P. (2017). Better understanding the context of religious education: The CECV Leuven research. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian Catholic schools. Exploring the landscape* (pp. 53–76). Mulgrave, Victoria: Vaughan Publishing.

Stern, J. (2013). Loneliness, solitude and inclusion for leaders. In M. T. Buchanan (Ed.), *Leadership and religious schools. International perspectives and challenges* (pp. 109–126). London: Bloomsbury Academic.

The Spiritual Exercises. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-spiritual-exercises/what-are-the-spiritual-exercises.

Wessels, F. (2015). Getting to why? Contemplative practice as reflection on intentionality. *Hervormde Teologiese Studies, 71*(1), 1–7.

Linda Di Sipio has more than 20 years' of experience as a leading teacher of religious education and has been a religious education leader in two secondary schools. Her higher degree research investigated the approaches of religious education teachers towards the implementation of curriculum change. Linda currently teaches at St Columba's College and her interests include the faith formation of religious education teachers in the Ignatian tradition. She has published ideas for religious education practitioners in *Religious Education Journal of Australia.*

Chapter 17
Pilgrimages: Fruitful Sources of Faith Formation for Catholic Student Teachers?

Check for updates

Stephen Reilly, Hazel Crichton and Mary Lappin

Introduction

The School of Education at the University of Glasgow has a mission to Catholic education in Scotland, and is sole provider of teachers for the large Catholic state school sector. As an element of the faith formation of Catholic initial teacher education (ITE) students, several pilgrimages took place in academic session 2016–2017: two to Rome and three to Lourdes (with HCPT—The Pilgrimage Trust), involving 45 students, accompanied by the Coordinator of Spiritual and Pastoral Formation and other staff.

The pilgrimages were considered a success by all who took part, but deeper questions remained. What is the aim of faith formation for ITE students, and how does pilgrimage contribute to it? Is pilgrimage the most effective use of limited resources, and should it be given pastoral priority? This small-scale study aimed to answer these questions by exploring student participants' perceptions of their experiences on the pilgrimages. The results will shape future formational approaches in the University of Glasgow, and contribute to the international literature on the impact of pilgrimage upon young Catholics.

What is Pilgrimage?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* speaks of pilgrimage within its teaching on prayer, whereby "Pilgrimages evoke our earthly journey toward heaven and are traditionally very special occasions for renewal in prayer. For pilgrims seeking living water, shrines are special places for living the forms of Christian prayer in Church".

S. Reilly (✉) · H. Crichton · M. Lappin
University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland
e-mail: Stephen.Reilly@glasgow.ac.uk

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, par. 2691). The New Testament presents believers as metaphorical pilgrims who are wanderers through an alien and foreign land (1 Pt 1:1) as they travel their earthly journey towards the "heavenly Jerusalem" (Hb 12:22–24). The concept, and indeed the practice of pilgrimage, is deep in the psyche of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Once the temple was built at Jerusalem (ca. 957 B.C.), all Jewish men were obliged to present themselves for the three major feasts: Pesach (the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or Passover), Shavu'ot (the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost) and Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles), as requested in Deuteronomy 16:16–17.

In medieval literature, Chaucer's famous literary classic The Canterbury Tales (c. 1387) is set within the cultural and social phenomenon of pilgrimages. The narrative depicts a varied group of people assembling to journey to the shrine of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury. The pilgrims are presented as a representative group of people exhibiting all humanity's virtues and vices. Augustine's Peregrinatio is a description of as a self-imposed exile of the pilgrim in which he searched for truth and encounter with God. Emilio Estevez's well-known contemporary screenplay *The Way* starring Martin Sheen depicts a father on his pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago, who encounters fellow pilgrims in search of meaning, purpose and spiritual guidance.

Reasons to make a pilgrimage generally focus on the spiritual. For many, it is like a retreat, a time away from the regular routine to concentrate on the spiritual life—a time for prayer and meditation, learning and enrichment. For others, it is a time of intercession, an opportunity to pray for a special intention or an occasion to offer thanksgiving for blessings received. Centuries ago, a pilgrimage was commonly assigned as a penance to make satisfaction for sins committed. It is steeped in religious history and literature, and in the devotional life of generations from the early Christians of the fourth century who travelled to different places that were part of Jesus' life, or in the tombs of martyrs and saints. Visiting these sites and tombs serve today, as in the past, as a deep expression of reverence and honour for God, as well as immersing the self in the cultural, historical and spiritual aspects of the life of Jesus and the saints.

What Is Faith Formation for ITE Students?

Pope Paul VI's lapidary statement in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses" (1975, par. 41), has occasioned much attention in official Church documents since (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, 1988, 2007) shining a light upon Catholic teachers as faith witnesses as well as educators (indeed educators because witnesses). How can they equip themselves for this privileged but daunting task?

Grace (2002, 2010) advocates the need for faith formation of Catholic teachers, helping them to witness to their faith and the values of Catholic education, regarding this as urgent priority two generations on from the widespread withdrawal of religious

orders from leadership roles in Catholic schools. Building on Bourdieu's writings on the forms of capital (economic, social and cultural), he has long advocated the influential idea of the spiritual capital possessed by Catholic educators. In 2010, he enunciated the characteristics of spiritual capital most clearly:

> resources of faith and values derived from a vocational commitment to a religious tradition…; a source of vocational empowerment…; a form of spirituality in which the whole of human life is viewed in terms of a conscious relationship to God…which has been the animating, inspirational and dynamic spirit which has empowered the mission of Catholic education…and which needs to be reconstituted in lay school leaders and teachers by formation programmes which help them to be Catholic witnesses for Christ … (2010, p. 125)

In the Scottish context, Coll's (2009, 2015) studies of newly qualified teachers demonstrate their expressed need of confidence in the teaching of religious education, and the increased faith knowledge required to build this confidence. The studies also, however, highlight the personal faith journey and commitment of the teacher, a central emphasis of *This is Our Faith*, the national Scottish religious education syllabus: "[*This is Our Faith*] highlights the requirement [of teachers] to take time to reflect upon their own faith journey and seek opportunities to recognise the Holy Spirit at work in them" (2015, p. 181). Coll also recognises the time limitations of the mainly classroom-based ITE Catholic teacher formation programme, which can only begin to address the broader formational journey required. Furthermore, Franchi and Rymarz (2017) recognise that the loss of a thick Catholic culture which underpinned faith commitment in past decades, and is now severely weakened, can be expected to have affected the faith commitment of young aspiring Scottish Catholic teachers too. They agree with Coll that a stronger theological formation is needed, but similarly widen the focus to the affective, drawing upon the recent Church document *Educating for Cultural Dialogue*, "Catholic teachers need pastoral and spiritual care to offer their own heart to the school." (2017, p. 9).

This latter emphasis accords with the teaching of Pope Francis:

> It would not be right to see this call to growth [as evangelisers] exclusively or primarily in terms of doctrinal formation. It has to do with "observing" all that the Lord has shown us as the way of responding to his love. (2013, par. 161)

Thus, a working outline of faith formation of Catholic ITE students could be summarised in the following way. Faith formation is that which contributes to the strengthening of spiritual capital, understood as a vocational commitment to Christ and the Catholic teaching vocation which empowers and inspires. It is an intensive reflective process which invites to a faith journey and builds confidence in one's ability to be a witness to the faith. Faith formation is a process which, ideally, stretches beyond formal classroom input. It is an aid to theological growth which increases faith knowledge. Finally, it is a pastoral process which allows students to give their heart to the schools in which they will serve.

Methodology

As mentioned above, the study aimed to explore students' perceptions of the effect of pilgrimages on their faith formation. Online questionnaires were used to obtain students' initial perceptions of the pilgrimages and any impact they had experienced. Forty-five students from years 1–4 of study in their undergraduate degree, or 1-year postgraduate teaching certificate, who had taken part in one or more pilgrimages were contacted by email and provided with a link to the online survey. Details of the purpose of the research were provided in the email and consent was implied by the completion of the survey. All responses could remain anonymous, as there was no need to log into the survey site using a user name or password and there was nothing on the survey website which could identify respondents' email addresses.

While there are a number of benefits to the use of online surveys, such as reducing the cost of contacting potential participants (Kaplowitz, Hadlock, & Levine, 2004), speed and ease of response (Evans & Mathur, 2005) and convenience for respondents (Hogg, 2003), there are also disadvantages. Given the volume of mails arriving in students' inboxes, it was possible that the request would be ignored or a response postponed until out of mind (Doherty, Carcary, Ramsay, & Ibbotson, 2015). Although sent to 45 students, participants were inevitably self-selecting and may have had a particular bias (Khazaal et al., 2014). Thirteen students completed the questionnaires, a response rate of 29%, slightly lower than the average rate for online surveys (Watt, Simpson, McKillop, & Nunn, 2002). The limitation of number of characters to 100 for each answer within the survey instrument (SoGo surveys, https://www.sogosurvey. com/) meant that responses had to be short. Nonetheless, this could be seen as an advantage as it allowed the participants to highlight what they felt was most important and did not place a burden on the respondent to write full answers.

Twelve of the questions were open and related to participants' perceptions of their own faith and experiences before, during and after the pilgrimage. The last question asked for volunteers to take part in a follow-up focus group interview. Ten students volunteered and were interviewed in two groups of five.

The questionnaire responses were analysed individually by each researcher, before coming together to discuss and agree the main themes and issues arising. In qualitative research, inter-coder reliability is seen as an important aspect of data analysis (Cavanagh, 1997). Since three researchers were involved, it seemed unlikely that any potential themes would be missed. Also, the three-way discussion reduced chances of the influence of one view on another, thus increasing trustworthiness of the findings (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999).

The focus groups allowed the researchers to probe more deeply into issues which had been identified in the surveys. Students were asked to reflect on their experiences and describe specific events or situations that seemed significant during the pilgrimage(s). Care was taken to ensure that no one person dominated the discussion so that all views could be heard (Krueger & Casey, 2015). As most of the participants had been on the same pilgrimage(s), the prevailing atmosphere appeared similar to a reunion, with participants sharing experiences which stimulated further perspectives.

The focus groups were recorded and, as with the questionnaire data, each researcher noted any recurring themes which could be considered relevant. The researchers then agreed the final codes. There was a great deal of congruence between the questionnaire and focus group data in the findings, which are discussed below.

Findings

Several themes emerged from the questionnaires and interviews, of which the following six interrelated themes featured most prominently.

A Strengthening of Faith

Across the group as a whole, a widespread strengthening of faith commitment was reported as a result of the pilgrimage. Words such as develop, strengthen, reaffirm and enlighten featured. One typical comment summed up the responses well, "I discovered that I am still catholic at heart and my belief is stronger than I first thought". Another comment highlighted the influence of community: "strengthened it [faith] due to having shared faith with others".

Community as the Locus of Pilgrim Faith Formation

A large majority of students expressed a very strong and positive experience of community on pilgrimage, which can be described as both a micro- and macro-community experience.

The former regards the pilgrim groups in which they travelled, which are described variously as inclusive, open and like a family. As well as sharing a common teaching vocation, many noted the importance of a common purpose: as one pilgrim said, "we were a group of students, training to teach in Catholic schools, travelling to the heart of the church". One student noted the practical importance of communal meals in the formation of the group. These findings echo the work of Edith and Victor Turner (1978), in their much-quoted notion of pilgrim communitas. Their influential writings describe communitas as a temporary liminoid experience of community born of stepping outside everyday life, allowing an equality across class, gender and age as pilgrims travel to a sacred centre, and in which normal hierarchies are broken down (pp. 29–39). Indeed, of particular importance to the student pilgrims was the breaking down of barriers between them, which they perceived by virtue of the diversity of programmes/year groups in which they study. The newly found sense of community positively impacted their sense of belonging to the Catholic

teaching formation pathway and to the School of Education beyond their immediate friendship or classmate groups.

The macro-community was expressed as a feeling of belonging, "being connected", to a universal church, "being part of something so much bigger". Powerful events such as the Torchlight Procession at Lourdes and the Papal audience in St Peter's Square were highlighted: the singing, flags and languages, but also the individual conversations with fellow pilgrims from other nations. Such findings confirm Coleman and Elsner's (1995) emphasis on the ability of pilgrimage sites to, "link geographically dispersed peoples by giving travellers the possibility to perceive a common religious identity which transcends parochial assumptions and concerns" (p. 205).

Community as a positive influence on faith development is attested to consistently in faith formation literature. Franchi and Rymarz (2017), in their discussion of a "thickly Catholic culture" noted above, list communal solidarity, socialisation into faith and a sense of communal identity among its characteristics (p. 3). In his study of World Youth Day participants, Singleton (2011) notes the importance of an intense and supportive social environment to young people's faith. Both Rymarz (2009) and Singleton (2011) discuss the centrality of a supportive social network for the plausibility structures which support faith, so essential to young people in an era of widespread apathy or hostility to faith. Rymarz summarises, "Legitimisation arises from strong plausibility structures which are rooted in supportive communities" (2009, p. 250).

Peer Influence on Faith Formation

One intriguing feature of the study was the relatively small mention of the role of leaders in the faith development on pilgrimage, which instead focussed largely on the students' peers. This seems at odds with Rymarz (2009) and Singleton (2011), who both highlight the importance of mentors and role models in faith formation. Is there a hint here of the disruption of hierarchy within pilgrimage described by Turner and Turner (1978)? Indeed, one student described the staff as being at the students' level: "it wasn't a 31+3" (a reference to the number of students and staff on the Rome pilgrimage in May 2017).

In any case, the students clearly had an influence on each other, in the witness which they gave and the informal discussions which took place among them, with one commenting, "Being with other people of high level faith helped me develop my faith completely". The faith witness of fellow pilgrims, reported another, "gave me an extremely positive impact, made me want to be the same". The unique opportunities afforded by pilgrimage allow unexpected forms of peer-to-peer formation, echoed in many responses and summed up in two quotes, "It was inspiring to see friends practice their faith as it is a side of them I don't normally see", and "I enjoyed speaking about faith with friends as it usually doesn't come up in conversation".

It would seem that on a successful formational pilgrimage, the creation of conditions in which peer formation can take place is key, as much as the official or formal pilgrimage content organised by leaders. Are the leaders more like midwives of faith formation, at the service of the, "unruly freedom of the word [of God], which accomplishes what it wills in ways that surpass our calculations and ways of thinking" (Pope Francis, 2013, par. 17).

As an old Welsh saying puts it, "He who leads must become a bridge": this would be a fitting discovery in the city of the Pontifex Maximus.

Catalysts for Peer Formation

The optimal conditions for religious experience, peer witness and discussion to flourish on pilgrimage are not controllable, as attested to in multiple key studies on pilgrimage. In their seminal work, Eade and Sallnow (1991) warned us that the meaning constructed by pilgrims is often at odds with the officially imposed description of the sacred sites (p. 2), while a more recent study of the pilgrimage to Chimayo in New Mexico (Holmes-Rodman, 2004) demonstrated how the pilgrims entirely ignored its official diocesan designation as a pilgrimage for vocations to priesthood and religious life. Leaders, while providing essential structure, should be open to the unexpected: "the spontaneity of interrelatedness, the spirit which bloweth where it listeth" (Turner & Turner, 1978, p. 32).

The students in this study talked of unexpected and unscripted moments of personal religious experience, reflection and discussion, which seem tangential to the organised pilgrimage. For some, it was a particular event, such as a Mass which focussed on mothers, after which one student was able to share about her own mother's illness and be reassured of the support of her peers. For many, the Papal audience featuring many nationalities and ages led to reflection that, "so many people have this [faith] in their life". For others the experience of beauty, a "via pulchritudinis". Pope Francis, especially in the churches which, "provoke people to think in kind of a spiritual way" (2013, par. 167). One student, when talking about a church visit which inspired deeper discussion with her peers said, "the actual chapel kinda brought it out of you". Others highlighted places and moments of silence, especially at night-time, such as the torchlight procession or candle stands in Lourdes, or the Spanish Steps in Rome, which invited them naturally to individual prayer, reflection or shared silence. Perhaps what these experiences have in common is the ability to touch a pilgrim on the emotional level, even more than the intellectual. Pilgrimage organisers, in their wise and discerning choice of activities, can optimise the conditions in which the grace-filled unexpected can take place.

A theme which emerged across the pilgrimages was the key role played by various children encountered. As the pilgrims are student teachers, this is heartening. We have already mentioned the fruitful outcome of the Mass focussed on mothers, which was partly occasioned by one of the student pilgrims being 7 months pregnant herself. An emotional response in students was occasioned by Pope Francis

taking a baby in his arms at the Papal audience. In Lourdes, the pilgrims' experience was transformed by working with children and seeing the sacred sites as a shared helpers/children experience, with the baths proving especially powerful. As one said, "There's something completely different when there's children involved: seeing their reactions and the experience they're having affects you, your own faith as well". In Rome, younger students appreciated discussions with older students about their own children and the way in which they are seeking to pass on their faith to them.

It is no surprise, then, that several respondents mentioned a growth in their sense of vocation as Catholic teachers as a result of the pilgrimages. Typical comments include, "I now feel more excited at being part of Catholic Teaching Community than I did before", and "Affirmed that Catholic teaching is my vocation in life". It seems that growing into the role of the Catholic teacher and embracing one's vocation is a fruit of the confidence which is gained in multiple ways on pilgrimage.

The Return Home

Frey (2004) analysed returning pilgrims from the Camino de Santiago, arguing that the return home of the pilgrim is often neglected, especially in Christianity. She contrasts this with Islam, where a pilgrim returning from the hajj has an enhanced status in the community, and a new title: hajji. By contrast, "in the Christian context there are few rites of return or reincorporation that greet a returning pilgrim" (p. 96).

In addition, pilgrims often return straight to work, and can experience the isolation of being surrounded by incomprehension. Even the Judeo-Christian notion of time as linear, and pilgrimage as being a journey to a holy site (as opposed to, e.g. traditions of circumambulation) mitigate against the idea of a cyclical return home. Coleman and Elsner (1995) are more optimistic: "In returning home, the pilgrim can act as the agent of change, by spreading new ideas gleaned on the journey" (p. 206).

Many students reported a generally increased awareness of their faith or openness to reflection: "I [now] make time to kind of reflect on things" while for others the awareness was more specific, e.g. an appreciation of religious art studied in class or an awareness of the detail and symbolism of their own parish church.

A common theme revolved around what they had brought back, and how this affected their confidence in the classroom. McCluskey (2006) has argued that nineteenth-century Scottish pilgrimages to Rome were deeply educational, occasioning much adult formation led by returning pilgrims is this borne out today by contemporary Scottish educators?

All shared stories of sacrifice and discomfort, whether an unscheduled 21-hour trip to Lourdes via Gatwick, very early rises, or a climb up St Peter's Dome (although most, in keeping with modern packaged pilgrimage, had lived a degree of comfort quite unlike the medieval pilgrim experience). The storytelling allowed them to grow in confidence in their ability to share their faith, giving them the tools to do so. This mirrors Aziz's (2015) findings about Indian pilgrims, who gained confidence from the immediacy of their owned experience: "Pilgrimage seems to be an experience

which generates an extraordinary drive to give personal testimony. It is different from other religious matters where I found my enquiries invariably referred to a specialist. The pilgrim, however, does not shy away" (p. 58).

Students who soon afterwards took part in school practicum experience quickly incorporated the songs, dances, stories and photos from their experience into their classroom practice. With a strong sense of immediacy, they reported that they were no longer, "standing up there blind", to explain a pilgrimage site that they had seen before only on a screen. Others looked forward to showing their pupils photos of themselves at the pilgrimage sites, in order to share their experience with the pupils. As Coleman and Elsner (1995) write, "as the pilgrim encounters a holy place, he or she experiences physically what had previously been known only through sacred narrative or its visual illustrations" (p. 204).

The storytelling to family, friends and pupils was also facilitated by souvenirs, which were often bought for classroom display. Ward (1982) informs us that pilgrims to Rome, in particular, have always brought back souvenirs, originally pieces of cloth lowered onto St Peter's tomb, or vials of oil from the lamps of the martyrs' tombs, and the student pilgrims continued this souvenir tradition in updated form.

From Periphery to Centre

As we have seen, pilgrimage involves the journey of geographically dispersed peoples to a sacred centre, accompanied by a renewed spiritual centring and wholeness for the pilgrim him/herself. Arguably for Scottish people, the sense of being on the geographical margins is particularly strong in relation to Rome and Europe, generally perched as we once were on the wild edge of the Roman Empire, and still located at the geographical edge of Europe. Indeed, McCluskey (2006) informs us that late nineteenth-century Scots pilgrims visiting Rome referred to themselves, perhaps for dramatic effect, as having travelled from "Far-off Scotland, the ultima Tule" (p. 185), that is, the edge of the medieval known world, usually a reference to Greenland.

The geographical movement from periphery to sacred centre mirrors a final surprising and interlinked theme. First, the movement from margin to centre was experienced by individuals and small friendship groups, within each pilgrimage, since they were gradually integrated into the wider group, as we have seen. One student commented in relation to other pilgrims, "they would never leave you out, if you were on your own they would come over and talk to you".

Second, students studying in small cohorts and courses felt a sense of being brought into the mainstream of the School of Education, dominated (in their perception) by primary school colleagues in the postgraduate (PGDE) and undergraduate Masters (M.Educ) courses. As one said, "we're like the wee lost sheep at the side, it was good to come in from the outside", indicating they had discovered a new sense of respect and belonging.

Third, one student reflected on the effect of seeing the worldwide Catholic church showcased at an event like the papal audience on themselves as Scots Catholics

who have grown up as a religious minority. Having heard much about the reality of anti-Catholic sectarianism in Scotland (he did not mention it having affected them personally), he now felt part of the mainstream, "not part of some wee minority group", in which Catholicism is normal, popular and able to be freely expressed.

Lastly, as young people living in a highly secularised society in which a majority of their peers are apathetic to faith and its practice, the pilgrims valued being with other young people practising their faith. This too was expressed as a movement out of the shadows, in which faith practice is hidden, "the generation that we're in, having a faith can be more of an unpopular thing…going somewhere with people your age reaffirms your faith and strengthens it as well". The ability to celebrate their faith in a public way, and being reassured that faith is a vital and normal part of the lives of people of all ages, was reported as an inspiration. This accords with the findings of Rymarz (2007) in relation to World Youth Day, the experience of which, "makes strong religious expression more plausible…Many pilgrims commented on the peer support they received at the event…often in contrast to the situation at home (p. 394)".

The fact that many of the events took place in outdoor spaces, literally in the public square, appears to have added to this sense.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to gauge the value of pilgrimage as an element of faith formation of Catholic ITE students. The introduction outlined a list of the key elements of faith formation: have these been reflected in the experience of the student pilgrim participants?

The study uncovered a growth of a sense of vocation—both as a disciple and as a Catholic teacher—as a fruit of pilgrimage, strengthened by a renewed sense of belonging. It has highlighted the ability of pilgrimage to provide opportunities for silence and personal reflection, as well as deep discussion among peers, which can be inspired by events, beautiful places and unexpected moments of quiet on pilgrimage. The findings demonstrated the growth in confidence which comes from the personal experience associated with pilgrimage, buttressed by tools for the transmission of faith to family, peers and pupils. Student pilgrims, further, experienced an affective, emotional and experiential immersion which can complement the knowledge necessary for teaching and witness to the faith.

However, while the study has uncovered a greater appreciation of some elements of faith and the related culture among students, there was no apparent appreciable growth in specifically theological competence. We recommend that future pilgrimages incorporate a follow-up itinerary which includes spiritual and theological reflection upon the experience, allowing a deeper engagement and a more rounded formational process.

We are well aware of the limitations of the present small-scale study and its tentative findings. A comparative study of other student pilgrimages would allow

fruitful comparison, while a longitudinal study of the students would test the longer term impact on both faith commitment and teaching. However, we are confident that the pilgrimage experience does have a significant positive formational impact on the students, worthy of the resources necessary for its implementation in the wider Catholic teacher formation programme. We therefore aim to continue with an intensive focus on pilgrimage as an element of faith formation at the School of Education, and encourage others engaged in faith formation of student teachers to consider doing the same.

References

Aziz, B. N. (2015). Personal dimensions of the sacred journey: What pilgrims say. In A. Norman & C. M. Cusack (Eds.), *Religion, pilgrimage and tourism: Critical concepts in religious studies* (Vol. 1, pp. 56–70). London: Routledge.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. (1993). Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Cavanagh, S. (1997). Content analysis: Concepts, methods and applications. *Nursing Research, 4,* 5–16. Retrieved from http://journals.lww.com/nursingresearchonline/pages/default.aspx.

Coleman, S., & Elsner, J. (1995). *Pilgrimage: Past and present: Sacred travel and sacred space in the world religions*. London: British Museum Press.

Coll, R. (2009). From theory to practice: The experiences of catholic probationary teachers. *Journal of Research on Christian Education, 18*(2). https://doi.org/10.1080/10656210903046408.

Coll, R. (2015). Catholic religious education in Scotland: Bridging the gap between teacher education and curriculum delivery. In M. T. Buchanan & A.-M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 179–192). Heidelberg: Springer.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988). *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2007). *Educating together in Catholic schools: A shared mission between consecrated persons and the lay faithful*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20070908_educare-insieme_en.html.

Doherty, E., Carcary, M., Ramsay, E., & Ibbotson, P. (2015). The importance of 'e' in mixed methods research: Development of an SME framework to leverage value from IT. In V. Cassar & F. Bezzina (Eds.), *ECRM2015 Proceedings of the 14th European Conference on Research Methods*. Reading, UK: Academic Conferences and Publishing International Ltd.

Eade, J., & Sallnow, M. J. (1991). *Contesting the sacred: The anthropology of Christian pilgrimage*. London: Routledge.

Evans, J. R., & Mathur, A. (2005). The value of online surveys. *Internet Research, 15*(2), 195–219. https://doi.org/10.1108/10662240510590360.

Franchi, L., & Rymarz, R. (2017). The education and formation of teachers for Catholic schools: Responding to changed cultural contexts. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 9*(1), 2–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/19422539.2017.1286905.

Frey, N. L. (2004). Stories of the return: Pilgrimage and its aftermaths. In E. Badone & S. Roseman (Eds.), *Intersecting journeys: The anthropology of pilgrimage and tourism* (pp. 89–109). Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press.

Grace, G. (2002). *Catholic schools: Mission, markets and morality*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Grace, G. (2010). Renewing spiritual capital: An urgent priority for the future of Catholic education internationally. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 2*(2), 117–128. https://doi.org/10.1080/19422539.2010.504017.

Hogg, A. (2003). Web efforts energize customer research. *Electric Perspectives,* September–October, pp. 81–83. Retrieved from http://www.eei.org/resourcesandmedia/magazine/Pages/default.aspx.

Holmes-Rodman, P. E. (2004). They told what happened on the road. In E. Badone & S. Roseman (Eds.), *Intersecting journeys: The anthropology of pilgrimage and tourism* (pp. 24–48). Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press.

Kaplowitz, M. D., Hadlock, T. D., & Levine, R. (2004). A comparison of web and mail survey response rates. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 68*, 94–101. Retrieved from https://academic.oup.com/poq/pages/about.

Khazaal, Y., van Singer, M., Chatton, A., Achav, S., Zullino, D., Rothen, S., et al. (2014). Does self-selection affect samples' representativeness in online surveys? An investigation in online video game research. *Journal of Medical Internet Research, 16*(7). https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.2759.

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2015). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (5th ed.). Singapore: SAGE.

McCluskey, R. (2006). Scots pilgrimages to Rome (1877–1903): Educational fieldwork for Victorians and Edwardians? *The Innes Review, 57*(2), 182–205. https://doi.org/10.3366/inr.2006.57.2.182.

Pope Francis. (2013). *Evangelii Gaudium: The joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Pope Paul VI. (1975). *Evangelii Nuntiandi: On evangelisation in the modern world*. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html.

Potter, W. J., & Levine-Donnerstein, D. (1999). Rethinking validity and reliability in content analysis. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 27*(3), 258–284. https://doi.org/10.1080/00909889909365539.

Rymarz, R. (2007). The impact of world youth day: A twelve month follow-up of under-18 Australian WYD 2005 participants. *Australasian Catholic Record, 84*(4), 387–400.

Rymarz, R. (2009). Nurturing well-being through religious commitment: Challenges for mainstream Christian churches. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 14*(3), 249–260. https://doi.org/10.1080/13644360903086521.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1982). *Lay Catholics in schools: Witnesses to faith*. Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html.

Singleton, A. (2011). The impact of world youth day on religious practice. *Journal of Beliefs and Values, 32*(1), 57–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2011.549310.

SoGo surveys. https://www.sogosurvey.com/.

Turner, V., & Turner, E. L. B. (1978). *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture: Anthropological perspectives*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Ward, B. (1982). *Miracles and the medieval mind: Theory, record, and event, 1000-1215*. Aldershot: Scolar Press.

Watt, S., Simpson, C., McKillop, C., & Nunn, V. (2002). Electronic course surveys: Does automating feedback and reporting give better results? *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 27*(4), 325–337. https://doi.org/10.1080/0260293022000001346.

Rev. Stephen Reilly is coordinator of spiritual and pastoral formation for the School of Education at the University of Glasgow. His research interests include: Catholic religious education, faith formation of student teachers and practitioners, student experience and internationalisation and career-long professional learning for teachers of RE. His contributions to the discipline of Catholic religious education include his past work as school chaplain in primary and secondary schools; diocesan religious education adviser; member of national RE development group for curricular

development; director of diocesan pastoral centre with a focus on retreats for school pupils and staff. He currently works on development and delivery of Catholic teacher formation courses for initial teacher education students.

Dr. Hazel Crichton worked as a teacher of modern languages for many years. She has worked at the University of Glasgow as Lecturer in Modern Languages Education since January 2006, where she teaches on a range of postgraduate courses and supervises Masters and Ph.D. students investigating a variety of topics, mostly, but not exclusively, related to language learning and teaching and teacher education. She has published widely on aspects of language learning and reflection. She has taken part in a number of pilgrimages with student teachers, most recently to Rome and The Holy Land.

Mary Lappin has been involved in education for over 20 years, both in schools and in higher education. She is a Lecturer in Religious Education and theology at the University of Glasgow. She is programme leader of the Postgraduate Diploma in Education course and teaches on undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Chapter 18
Teacher as Expert: Using Teacher Knowledge to Engage Students

Adrian Lacey

Introduction

In Australia, as well as other regions of the world, educational research has highlighted the importance, and challenge, of engaging students in discipline areas such as religious education (RE) (de Souza, 1999; White, 2004), literacy and mathematics (Culican, Emmitt, & Oakley, 2001; Siemon, Virgona, & Corneille, 2001). Pedagogical and curricula factors have been correlated with both engagement and disengagement of students in RE (Lacey, 2011). This chapter reports on a key finding of a qualitative study, the role of the teacher in engaging upper Primary (aged 10–12 years) students in RE. The impetus for this study stemmed from data collected from the centralised Catholic education authority (Catholic Education Office, Melbourne, 2006) which revealed that a cohort of upper Primary students wanted to do academically well in RE, however, they were not engaged in the classroom. A significant finding arising from this study, which will be the focus of this chapter, indicated that students were engaged when the teacher used content and pedagogical knowledge to enhance student-centred discourse with small groups of students. Teachers used two key pedagogical strategies to enhance this discourse: open-ended questions and scaffolded conversations.

Three interrelated dimensions—affect, behaviour and cognition—constitute a prevalent view of engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Whilst these three dimensions have been defined in various ways, the following definitions have been applied in this chapter. Affective engagement relates to such emotional responses as enthusiasm and interest in a task (Fredricks et al., 2004). Behavioural engagement refers to student involvement in a learning task, which may be evident in attributes such as student effort and persistence (Russell, Ainley, & Frydenberg, 2005). Cognitive engagement involves "deliberate task-specific thinking" (Helme &

A. Lacey (✉)
Catholic Education Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia
e-mail: alacey@cem.edu.au

Clarke, 2001, p. 136). Following the clarification of some essential contextual issues in this introduction, and prior to reporting on the insights from this study, the literature regarding the impact of classroom discourse on student engagement is discussed as it provides a context in which to situate these findings.

Mindful that within our global context "No universal language of religious education currently exists" (Scott, 2015, p. 48), it is, first, necessary to situate the findings of this case study in Melbourne, Australia within the RE framework used in the Melbourne Archdiocese.

Several forces may be noted for causing a paradigmatic change (Buchanan, 2005) in the teaching of RE in Catholic schools over the past 50 years. These include official writings of the Catholic Church, viewpoints of RE theorists and developments in the field of education.

The Congregation for Catholic Education has stated that catechesis (sharing of faith between believers) and religious instruction were complementary yet distinct from each other (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1990, par. 55). It was argued that RE could be considered from two viewpoints. First, RE is about an education in faith, wherein the approach was catechetical, the aim was spiritual maturity and the likely context was the local church community. Second, RE in the school context was to be different as "the aim of the school, however, is knowledge" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1990, par. 55). The Congregation for the Clergy (1997) nuanced this further by advocating for an intellectually demanding RE that should "appear as a scholastic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines" (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, par. 73). In this context, the teacher of RE must have "adequate knowledge" (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1965, par. 8) and appropriate qualifications to teach this discipline (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, par. 65).

In contemporary RE, an education in faith and catechesis are not excluded or denied, rather the emphasis is on the educational elements (Buchanan, 2015; Engebretson, Fleming, & Rymarz, 2002). A creative tension between these two viewpoints of RE has been sought (Rossiter, 1981). This creative tension or "paradox" (Scott, 2015, p. 47) was realised in the Archdiocese of Melbourne through the production of the curriculum framework *Coming to Know, Worship and Love. A Religious Education Framework for Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne* (CEO, 2008). Whilst catechesis remained as the broad goal of RE, this framework was underpinned by an educational approach (Buchanan, 2012).

With the introduction in Australia of outcomes-based education, learning in all areas of the curriculum has become more focused on knowledge outcomes and the cognitive aspect of learning (Rossiter, 1999). In RE too, the need for an approach that was more cognitive was being called for (de Souza, 2005; Rymarz, 2007). According to a report by Australia's National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), many Australian diocesan RE programs in recent years have emphasised the cognitive domain (NCEC, 2008). Melbourne's RE Framework is aligned with the educational approach of all other disciplines in the Victorian state curriculum and is a knowledge-centred, outcomes-based approach.

In this chapter, how teachers used knowledge to enhance student-centred discourse and facilitate the engagement of year 5/6 students in RE learning is explored. Three forms of teacher knowledge are important for learning and teaching: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (O'Donnell et al., 2016). Content knowledge is about knowing the subject matter. Pedagogical knowledge is about knowing how to teach. Pedagogical content knowledge is about knowing how to make content understandable to students (O'Donnell et al., 2016). A significant finding from this research was that students were engaged through the teacher's knowledge. Teachers used content and pedagogical knowledge to interact with small groups of students through open-ended questions intended to promote student-centred discourse, and scaffolding conversations using probing and cuing questions designed to build student knowledge. Prior to an exploration of this key finding, it is necessary to survey relevant literature and outline the underlying research method as these provide a context for understanding the findings presented later in this chapter.

Classroom Discourse Fosters Student Engagement

The role of the teacher is pivotal to student learning outcomes and engagement in learning (Buchanan & Hyde, 2006; Shostak, 2011). Teachers use their pedagogical knowledge to select from a range of learning strategies such as classroom discourse that has been shown to effectively engage students in the classroom (Shostak, 2011; Smart & Marshall, 2013). A key aim of this study was to investigate teachers' use of such strategies to support student engagement in RE. Classroom discourse facilitated student engagement both in the literature and in this research study. This is explored in the following section.

Classroom Discourse

Students across the primary and middle years were more interested in learning when tasks involved interacting with peers (Ames, 1992; Gambrell, 2011). Social interaction supports affective engagement as the comments of peers may pique their interest, and working with peers may make tasks more appealing (Faircloth, 2009; Turner & Paris, 1995). Interacting with peers also promoted the cognitive engagement of middle years' students in the maths classroom (Helme & Clarke, 2001).

With its origins in Vygotsky's social constructivism, contemporary teaching and learning have been conceptualised as a social and interactive process (O'Neill, Geoghegan, & Petersen, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978). In this view, learners are actively involved in the process of constructing knowledge through classroom discourse (Shostak, 2011). Classroom discourse entails the interaction between students and their teacher through which perspectives give rise to meaning. This learner-centred

discourse supports student engagement when the learning process includes "learning-through-interaction" (Edwards-Groves & Hoare, 2012, p. 98). Teachers guide this interactive process through discourse that utilises scaffolding strategies such as clarifying ideas and challenging opinions (Kiemer, Groschner, Pehmer, & Seidel, 2015; O'Neill et al., 2013). However, rather than the focus being on the teacher, contemporary pedagogy shifts the emphasis to the learner.

A Learner-Centred Pedagogy

Two major approaches to a learner-centred pedagogy are clarifying discourse and the scaffolding of student ideas (Walshaw & Anthony, 2008). The objective of clarifying discourse is to engage students in classroom conversations. Teacher questioning can be used to achieve this goal. Open-ended questions, which give students scope to explore their thinking and understandings, support student engagement (Jurik, Groschner, & Seidel, 2014). Scaffolding involves the teacher giving feedback to students' ideas which moves them forward in their thinking or providing students with strategies which support their thinking and involvement in the learning process (Ferguson, 2012a, 2012b). In the primary mathematics classroom, two of the key factors, which supported teachers' effective use of scaffolding conversations, were teacher knowledge and teachers' response to students' prior knowledge (Ferguson, 2012b). Quantitative studies of inquiry-based science teaching affirm that student engagement is promoted through both clarifying discourse and student scaffolding (Furtak, Seidel, Iverson, & Briggs, 2012).

Students were engaged through a learner-centred classroom discourse. Teachers used discourse to extend student understanding and to assist them to construct knowledge. Teachers guided classroom discourse through scaffolded strategies (Ferguson, 2012b; Wilson & Smetana, 2011; Zhang & Dougherty Stahl, 2012). Interviews and observations of classroom practice revealed how teachers used discourse and their knowledge to engage students in the RE learning. Prior to an exploration of this, an outline of the research design that informed this study will be provided as this also provides a context for understanding the findings presented later in this chapter.

Research Design That Informed This Study

This research was underpinned by a case study methodology. A case may be defined as a "phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (Punch, 2009, p. 119). In this study, the case was six composite classes of year 5/6 students (aged between 10 and 12 years) and their teachers within a particular Catholic primary school.

The participants and the setting were purposefully chosen by the researcher because they "provide(d) maximum insight and understanding" of the research ques-

tion (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorenson, 2010, p. 428): what are the factors that enhanced the engagement of year 5/6 students in an RE curriculum?

Situated within a constructivist epistemology, it is posited in this study that knowledge is constructed through social interaction between humans and their experience of the world, negotiated through language and developed in a social context. This required understanding the meaning constructed by participants (Ary et al., 2010). These perspectives were then explored "within the contexts of their natural occurrence" as observed in the classroom (Hatch, 2002, p. 7). This theory of knowledge and a case study methodology supported use of semi-structured and focus group interviews, and direct observation in classrooms.

Interview scripts with some predetermined open-ended questions characterise semi-structured interviews (Kervin, Vialle, Herrington, & Okely, 2006). These questions are used to guide the interview. Prompts and probes were used during the interview to encourage participants to answer at a deeper level, provide elaboration or give examples (Basit, 2010).

Gathering data through a focus group interview involves interviewing groups of approximately four people. These interviews were chosen as they have advantages with regard to "group support and group dynamics" which increase both participation and discussion (Morgan, Gibbs, Maxwell, & Britten, 2002, p. 16).

Cases respond differently according to complex situational factors within which they are bound; these contexts require the scrutiny of observation to facilitate depth of understanding of their complex nature (Kervin et al., 2006). Observation assisted the researcher to gain an understanding of the case from the perspective of those being observed (Hatch, 2002).

Data collected through interviews was analysed using Constant Comparison Method (CCM). CCM is about the systematic comparison of data, whereby every line, sentence and paragraph of transcribed interviews are reviewed and compared (Bowen, 2008). Through CCM, commonalities, differences, repetitions and patterns were discerned. Similar categories were noted and further explored for differing/similar underlying factors, or differing/similar experiences or examples within the category.

The analysed data from interviews provided a lens through which the researcher sought to understand and interpret the most salient "Me" of the participants, as student in the RE classroom or teacher of RE (Blumer, 1969; Bowers, 1988, p. 37; Mead, 1934). Field notes from observations were compared with data from interviews to confirm perceptions, examine areas of dissonance, to note any new data and to guide the researcher to a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions.

This approach involved several levels of data collection including 30 semi-structured interviews (24 students and 6 teachers), seven focus group interviews (a teacher group and 6 student groups—involving 30 students) and 30 classroom observations involving 150 students. Each of these methods required a substantial amount of time in the field that added to the gathering of rich, deep data. In the next two sections, the emerging insights of students and teachers are presented. These provided a lens for subsequent classroom observations.

Student Interviews: Clear Explanations, Meaningful Examples and Classroom Discourse

The curriculum, *Coming to Know, Worship and Love* (CEO, 2008), emphasises the cognitive aspects of RE. To immerse students in learning, their understanding of content was essential. The data from student interviews indicated that engagement was enhanced when teachers used their knowledge of content to support student understanding. Students perceived that teachers used their content knowledge to facilitate understanding in two key ways: through use of clear explanations and meaningful examples and by enabling student-centred discourse through interactions with students using open-ended questions and discussion. The resultant student understanding supported the immersion of students in RE learning.

Teacher Interviews: Knowledge of Key Content and Interaction Involving Questioning and Discussion

Teachers stressed the importance of knowing RE content. They saw a direct link between their knowledge and effective pedagogy; knowledge enabled them to facilitate student understanding and participation. Teachers suggested that they used their knowledge to facilitate student learning through discussions and clarifying questions. For students having difficulty understanding concepts, they indicated that they guided the discussion in a way that built up student understanding. They also perceived that they actively led interactions with students, and used questioning to stimulate, guide and deepen thinking.

Students and teachers constructed their understanding of how teacher knowledge and classroom discourse engaged students in an RE curriculum (their perspectives or voice) through semi-structured and focus group interviews. The researcher then sought to make sense of (interpret) student and teacher voice. These emerging insights from student and teacher interviews (the voice of the researcher) provided the context from which the researcher observed in the RE classroom.

Researcher Observation: The Role of Teacher Knowledge in Student-Centred, Small Group Discourse

Classroom observations revealed that teachers used their knowledge to interact with small groups of students through open-ended questions and scaffolding conversations. These interactions generally supported student engagement. Teachers were observed using open-ended questions; the construction of these questions indicated that they had textual, thematic and historical knowledge. Whilst such questions prompted further discourse amongst many groups, they were not as successful with

others. Some groups struggled to respond to the question; when the teacher left them, they generally ceased conversation on the teacher's question. On one occasion, a teacher stayed with a group and used their content knowledge to have a scaffolding conversation.

The teacher used their knowledge to lead a group of students through a scaffolding conversation. They used open-ended probing questions such as "How do they describe this place of peace, justice and harmony?" They used these questions to ascertain student knowledge. When it appeared that students were unsure or lacked key knowledge, the teacher provided cuing questions (Sadker, Zittleman, & Sadker, 2011); these are designed to lead students to the right answer and contain hints or more information. The teacher used cuing questions such as the following: "The Jewish people were slaves in Babylon - Where is the messiah going to lead them?" The teacher used their knowledge, and probing and cuing questions to guide this conversation and facilitate students' responses.

In the next section, the emerging insights from student and teacher interviews and the researcher's direct observations in RE classrooms are discussed and analysed.

Analysis and Discussion: The Teacher's Knowledge and Student-Centred Discourse

Analysis of student and teacher interview scripts and the classroom observations of the researcher revealed that students were behaviourally and cognitively engaged through the teacher's content knowledge. Teachers tried to use this knowledge to engage small groups of students in student-centred discourse in two key ways: through the use of open-ended questions and through the use of scaffolding conversations using open-ended probing and closed cuing questions. Scaffolding conversations required more extensive teacher content knowledge than open-ended questions and were more effective in fostering student engagement. In the following section, these two key actions are analysed and discussed.

Open-Ended Questions and Student-Centred Discourse

Teachers in this case study emphasised a learner-centred pedagogy by facilitating student-centred discourse in small groups. They used their content knowledge to create open-ended questions designed to encourage discussion amongst students. This approach to RE reflects a contemporary learner-centred pedagogy (Wilson & Smetana, 2011). Open-ended questions facilitated student-centred discourse on some occasions, and on others they did not. The type of question used by the teacher impacted on student discourse and engagement.

With some groups of students, teachers' use of open-ended questions encouraged group discussion and gave students scope to explore their thinking and understandings. This aligns with the findings of Jurik et al. (2014). However, teachers often used a form of open-ended questions called probing questions, and these did not always enhance student-centred discourse. Probing questions are designed to ascertain what students know and do not know (Sadker et al., 2011). In other curriculum areas, teachers have used this type of questioning to ascertain what students know, and then used this knowledge to extend their understanding (Ferguson, 2012b). However, rather than guiding, supporting and assisting students to reflect more deeply through questioning, as suggested by teachers in the focus group discussion, they generally asked a question and then left groups of students to discuss this amongst themselves. This approach did not enhance student discourse when groups lacked understanding.

As the curriculum framework, *Coming to Know, Worship and Love* (CEO, 2008), emphasises knowledge and understanding through a constructivist pedagogy, it is important that teachers ascertain what students know so as to inform future teaching and build upon their current understandings. With its origins in Vygotsky's social constructivism, contemporary teaching and learning have been conceptualised as a social and interactive process (O'Neill et al., 2013; Vygotsky, 1978). Use of probing questions was an opportunity for teachers to interact with students, ascertain current knowledge and to build upon this through appropriate teacher instruction. The explicit and systematic teaching of key RE content provides students with the opportunity to be "exposed to some key understandings that could deepen and extend their thinking" (Rymarz, 2007, p. 68). Teachers, however, did not generally use probing questions and their subject-specific knowledge in this way.

Although teachers were emphatic that knowledge of RE content was essential, they found it difficult to articulate their role in a knowledge-centred curriculum. This was reflected in their teaching practice. They appeared to be either reluctant to share their content knowledge through direct instruction of students due to an overemphasis on student-centred discourse, or lacked confidence in their ability to impart key RE content knowledge. As a result, they sometimes missed the opportunity to extend students' knowledge and facilitate their engagement. Classroom observations indicated that scaffolding conversations were a more effective way of using questioning to engage students in an RE task.

Scaffolding Conversations Using Probing and Cuing Questions

According to teachers, student understanding was enhanced when they led questioning and discussions with students. Teachers described these interactions in general terms such as "discussing, guiding and supporting" students (F/T). These discussions did not follow a set process or use any identified strategies; they were informal

conversations. Although teachers did not use this term or describe this process, classroom observations revealed that when a teacher confidently used their knowledge of RE content in a scaffolded conversation with a group of students, they facilitated cognitive engagement.

A teacher used a scaffolded conversation to ascertain what students knew and to try to develop their thinking. They used open-ended probing questions to find out students' current level of understanding. Then, they used closed cuing questions to respond to and extend student thinking. These questions were underpinned by the teacher's historical and textual knowledge. While primary teachers in the state of Victoria undergo teacher training as generalist classroom teachers, subject-specific teacher knowledge is necessary if teachers are to be able to offer clear explanations of complex concepts and teach for understanding in specific curriculum areas (Grossman, Stodolsky, & Knapp, 2004; O'Donnell et al., 2016; Stodolsky, 1988). Knowledge of the Christian tradition is also necessary for effective teaching and learning in RE (CEO, 2008; Rymarz, 2007). The scaffolded conversation between the teacher and the students showed that the teacher had a good grasp of key RE content for this topic, and had the confidence to share this with students. In the classrooms of this case study, teachers used textual and historical knowledge, and open-ended probing and closed cuing questions to extend students' thinking and understanding through a scaffolded conversation.

Year 5/6 students and their teachers recognised the importance of teachers' content knowledge for student engagement. When teachers had a clear understanding of key concepts, they were able to explain these and use examples that were intelligible to students. In the RE classroom, students needed an understanding of key concepts so that they could immerse themselves in tasks and discussions. One way of supporting student understanding and engagement in the RE classroom is to use direct instruction to explicitly teach key RE concepts (Rymarz, 2007). According to the curriculum framework (CEO, 2008), an important implication for teaching and learning for year 5 and 6 students is "providing an informed and in-depth presentation of our faith tradition" (CEO, 2008, p. 21). However, teachers were not observed teaching key RE concepts to students in such ways. They emphasised a learner-centred pedagogy using discourse.

Teachers promoted student-centred discourse. They actively led interactions using open-ended questioning to facilitate and enhance this discourse. In this way, they sought to assist all students to deepen their own thinking and learning through interaction with each other. Whilst this approach reflects contemporary pedagogical practice (Wilson & Smetana, 2011), it had mixed success in terms of student engagement. It was when teachers confidently used their knowledge of RE content and a combination of open and closed questions to involve students in a scaffolded conversation that cognitive engagement was enhanced. In this approach, teachers used their content knowledge and different types of questions to actively guide student-centred discourse. Teachers directed classroom discourse in middle years English classes through scaffolding useful strategies such as clarifying ideas and challenging opin-

ions (Zhang & Dougherty Stahl, 2012). In this case study, teachers used their content knowledge, open-ended probing questions and closed cuing questions to scaffold a conversation which guided student-centred discourse and facilitated the engagement of year 5/6 students.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Year 5/6 students were engaged in tasks when the teacher used content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge to enhance student-centred discourse with small groups of students. Teachers used two key pedagogical strategies to enhance this discourse: open-ended questions and scaffolded conversations. Whilst open-ended questions facilitated engagement for some groups of students, they were not successful with others. A more effective practice involved teachers confidently using content knowledge in a scaffolded conversation to guide student-centred discourse.

Teachers were adamant that content knowledge was essential for the teaching and learning process in RE. This knowledge underpinned and informed their use of open-ended questions and scaffolded conversations. Current trends in classroom RE learning place a certain emphasis on the achievement of knowledge-centred outcomes (Buchanan, 2003; CEO, 2008). Knowledge of the Christian tradition is regarded as a vehicle to faith formation (Buchanan, 2009; Durka, 2004). However, teacher knowledge was not imparted to students in a systematic and explicit manner such as through the use of direct instruction. Teachers seemed to have limited understanding of effective ways to use content knowledge in RE learning.

Teacher content knowledge has been used successfully to engage students through scaffolded conversations in the maths classroom (Ferguson, 2012b). Scaffolded strategies such as Questioning as Thinking and Collaborative Reasoning have been used to engage middle years' students in reading comprehension and discussions of a text (Wilson & Smetana, 2011; Zhang & Dougherty Stahl, 2012). It is recommended that Catholic education systems authorities set up religious education networks to explore the effectiveness of scaffolding conversations and other strategies used successfully in other curriculum areas.

References

Ames, C. (1992). Classrooms: Goals, structures and student motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 84*(3), 261–271. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/edu/.

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Sorensen, C. (2010). *Introduction to research in education* (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Basit, T. N. (2010). *Conducting research in educational contexts*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bowen, G. (2008). Naturalistic inquiry and the saturation concept: A research note. *Qualitative Research, 8*(1), 137–152. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794107085301.

Bowers, B. (1988). Grounded theory. In B. Starter (Ed.), *Paths to knowledge: Innovative research methods for nursing* (pp. 33–59). New York: National League of Nursing.

Buchanan, M. T. (2003). Survey of current writing on trends in religious education. *Journal of Religious Education, 51*(4), 22–30.

Buchanan, M. T. (2005). Pedagogical drift: The evolution of new approaches and paradigms in religious education. *Religious Education, 100*(1), 20–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344080590904662.

Buchanan, M. T. (2009). Religious education in Australian Catholic schools: Past and present. *Religious Education Journal of Australia, 25*(2), 30–37.

Buchanan, M. T. (2012). What has faith got to do with classroom religious education? *Journal of Religious Education, 60*(1), 23–30.

Buchanan, M. T. (2015). Leadership sustainability: Supporting religious education leaders in the school context. In M. T. Buchanan & A.-M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 91–102). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Buchanan, M. T., & Hyde, B. (2006). The role of the religion teacher: Ecclesial and pedagogical perceptions. *Journal of Christian Education, 49*(2), 23–34.

Catholic Education Office. (2006). *Student survey—Education in faith/learning and teaching religious education.* Melbourne: Catholic Education Office. Retrieved from www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au.

Catholic Education Office. (2008). *Coming to know, worship and love. A religious education framework for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.* Melbourne: James Goold House.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1990). *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school*. Homebush: St Paul Publications.

Congregation for the Clergy. (1997). *General directory for catechesis*. Strathfield, NSW: St Paul Publications.

Culican, S. J., Emmitt, M., & Oakley, C. (2001). *Literacy and learning in the middle years. Major report on the middle years literacy research project.* Burwood: Deakin University, Faculty of Education Consultancy and Development Unit.

de Souza, M. (1999). *Students' and teachers' perceptions of year 12 religious education programs in Catholic schools in Victoria: Implications for curriculum* (Doctoral dissertation). Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved from https://www.acu.edu.au.

de Souza, M. (2005). A discussion of some Australian research studies that have influenced the practice of religious education in Catholic schools in the past few decades. *Journal of Religious Education, 53*(2), 60–69.

Durka, G. (2004). Through the looking glass: Reflections on a gift to religious educators. *Religious Education, 99*(4), 422–426. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344080490513081.

Edwards-Groves, C. J., & Hoare, R. L. (2012). 'Talking to learn': Focussing teacher education on dialogue as a core practice for teaching and learning. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(8), 82–100. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2012v37n8.8.

Engebretson, K., Fleming, J., & Rymarz, R. (2002). *Thriving as an RE teacher*. NSW: Social Science Press.

Faircloth, B. S. (2009). Making the most of adolescence: Harnessing the search for identity to understand classroom belonging. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 24*(3), 321–348. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558409334248.

Ferguson, S. (2012a). *Like a bridge: Scaffolding as a means of assisting low-attaining students in mathematics during cognitively challenging tasks* (Doctoral dissertation). Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved from https://www.acu.edu.au.

Ferguson, S. (2012b). The impact of two teacher's use of specific scaffolding practices on low-attaining upper primary students. In L. Sparrow, B. Kissane, & C. Hurst (Eds.), *Shaping the future of mathematics education: Proceedings of the 33rd annual conference of the Mathematics*

Education Research Group of Australasia (pp. 191–198). Fremantle: MERGA. Retrieved from http://www.merga.net.au/publications/conf_display.php.

Fredricks, J., Blumenfeld, P., & Paris, A. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(1), 59–109. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059.

Furtak, E. M., Seidel, T., Iverson, H., & Briggs, D. C. (2012). Experimental and quasi-experimental studies of inquiry-based science teaching: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 82*(3), 300–329. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654312457206.

Gambrell, L. B. (2011). Seven rules of engagement: What's most important to know about motivation to read. *Reading Teacher, 65*(3), 172–178. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.01024.

Grossman, P., Stodolsky, S., & Knapp, M. (2004). *Making subject matter part of the equation: The intersection of policy and content.* Retrieved from http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/SubjectMatter-GSK-12–2004.pdf.

Hatch, A. J. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Helme, S., & Clarke, D. (2001). Identifying cognitive engagement in the mathematics classroom. *Mathematics Education Research Journal, 13*(2), 133–153. https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03217103.

Jurik, V., Groschner, A., & Seidel, T. (2014). Predicting students' cognitive learning activity and intrinsic learning motivation: How powerful are teacher statements, student profiles, and gender? *Learning and Individual Differences, 32,* 132–139. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2014.01.005.

Kervin, L., Vialle, W., Herrington, J., & Okely, T. (2006). *Research for educators*. South Melbourne, Victoria: Thomson, Social Science Press.

Kiemer, K., Groschner, A., Pehmer, A., & Seidel, T. (2015). Effects of classroom discourse intervention on teachers' practice and students' motivation to learn mathematics and science. *Learning and Instruction, 35,* 94–103. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2014.10.003.

Lacey, A. (2011). From catechisms to texts: Engaging students in religious education in Australian Catholic primary schools. *Religious Education Journal of Australia, 27*(1), 16–22.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Morgan, M., Gibbs, S., Maxwell, K., & Britten, N. (2002). Hearing children's voices: Methodological issues in conducting focus groups with children aged 7-11 years. *Qualitative Research* (2), 5–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794102002001636.

National Catholic Education Commission. (2008). *Religious education in dialogue: Curriculum around Australia.* Australia: National Catholic Education Commission.

O'Donnell, A., Dobozy, E., Bartlett, B., Nagel, M., Spooner-Lane, R., Youssef-Shalala, A., … Smith, J. (2016). *Educational psychology* (Second Australian edition). Milton, Queensland: Wiley.

O'Neill, S., Geoghegan, D., & Petersen, S. (2013). Raising the pedagogical bar: Teachers' co-construction of explicit teaching. *Improving Schools, 16*(2), 148–158. https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480213493709.

Punch, K. (2009). *Introduction to research methods in education*. London: Sage Publications.

Rossiter, G. (1981). *Stifling union or creative divorce.* Retrieved from http://rel-ed.acu.edu.au/ren2/gr19.doc.

Rossiter, G. (1999). Historical perspective on the development of Catholic religious education in Australia: Some implications for the future. *Journal of Religious Education, 47*(1), 5–18.

Russell, V., Ainley, M., & Frydenberg, E. (2005). *Schooling issues digest: Student motivation and engagement*. Retrieved from http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/schooling_issues_digest_motivation_engagement.htm.

Rymarz, R. M. (2007). Who is this person Grace? A reflection on content knowledge in religious education. *Religious Education, 102*(1), 62–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344080601117697.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1965). Declaration on Christian education. In *Church documents on Catholic education*. Strathfield, NSW: St Paul's Publications.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1982). Lay Catholics in schools: Witnesses to faith. In *Church documents on Catholic education*. Strathfield, NSW: St Paul's Publications.

Sadker, D., Zittleman, K. R., & Sadker, M. (2011). Questioning skills. In J. M. Cooper (Gen. Ed.), *Classroom teaching skills* (pp. 119–167). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Scott, K. (2015). Problem or paradox: Teaching the Catholic religion in Catholic schools. In M. T. Buchanan & A.-M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 47–60). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Shostak, R. (2011). Involving students in learning. In J. M. Cooper (Gen. Ed.), *Classroom teaching skills* (pp. 82–106). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Siemon, D., Virgona, J., & Corneille, K. (2001). *The middle years numeracy research project: 5-9*. Bundoora: RMIT University.

Smart, J. B., & Marshall, J. C. (2013). Interactions between classroom discourse, teacher questioning, and student cognitive engagement in middle school science. *Journal of Science Teacher Education, 24,* 249–267. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10972-012-9297-9.

Stodolsky, S. (1988). *The subject matters: Classroom activity in math and social studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Turner, J. C., & Paris, S. G. (1995). How literacy tasks influence students' motivation for literacy. *The Reading Teacher, 48,* 662–673. Retrieved from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/jour-nal/10.1002/%28ISSN%291936-2714.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher mental processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Walshaw, M., & Anthony, G. (2008). The teachers' role in classroom discourse: A review of recent research into mathematics classrooms. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(3), 516–551. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308320292.

White, D. (2004). *Pedagogy—The missing link in religious education: Implications of brain-based learning theory for the development of a pedagogical framework for religious education* (Doctoral dissertation). Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved from https://www.acu.edu.au.

Wilson, N. S., & Smetana, L. (2011). Questioning as thinking: A metacognitive framework to improve comprehension of expository text. *Literacy, 45*(2), 84–90. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4369.2011.00584.x.

Zhang, J., & Dougherty Stahl, K. A. (2012). Collaborative reasoning: Language-rich discussions for English learners. *The Reading Teacher, 65*(4), 257–260. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.01040.

Adrian Lacey has taught in Catholic primary schools for the past 30 years. As well as classroom teaching, he has been Religious Education Leader and Deputy Principal in various schools in the south east of Melbourne, Australia.

In 2016 he completed a doctorate in education. The title of this research was: *Factors that Engaged Year 5/6 Students in an RE Curriculum.*

Adrian is currently employed by Catholic Education Melbourne as Education Officer, Religious Education Learning and Teaching and works throughout the Archdiocese of Melbourne in this role.

Chapter 19
CPD and RE: What Do RE Teachers in Irish Catholic Schools Say They Need?

Gareth Byrne and Bernadette Sweetman

Introduction

Continuing professional development (CPD) or career-long professional learning as it is sometimes referred to is of interest to all those involved in education around the world (Day & Sachs, 2004). The leading and managing of ongoing professional development for teachers is therefore of the greatest significance in developing the teachers themselves and in developing schools (Earley & Bubb, 2007). Quality CPD can enhance the teacher's impact on student learning and encourage teachers as professionals and in their commitment to their role.

The implications for teacher education are clear. Not everything in the professional life of a teacher can be provided for during an initial teacher education programme. New issues, and perhaps old questions in new guises and contexts, will need to be responded to imaginatively as the teacher engages in his or her role. Teachers will become aware of new knowledge, pedagogies and skills they will need to develop continuously in responding to the educational requirements of young people in the ever-evolving global culture to which we belong. School managers, too, should take active steps to provide appropriate ongoing educational support for their staff (Coll, 2006; Irish National Teachers Organisation, 2014).

The ongoing educational needs of teachers involved in religious education (RE) in the Republic of Ireland was the particular research question engaged with in the survey being reported on here. The majority of schools operate under denominational patronage, particularly that of the Catholic Church (approximately 90% of primary schools and 50% of post-primary schools). The focus in this paper is specifically on areas in which religious educators teaching in schools under Catholic patronage expressed confidence and areas in which they felt they would welcome CPD.

G. Byrne (✉) · B. Sweetman
Institute of Education, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland
e-mail: gareth.byrne@dcu.ie

Ongoing Adult Religious Education and Faith Development

There is some engagement within the Catholic Church in Ireland about the need for ongoing adult religious education and faith development (Byrne, 2008; Devitt, 1991). The Irish Catholic bishops in their national directory for catechesis, Share the Good News, following the prompt given in the *General directory for catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997; Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010), addresses the religious education and faith development of adults first (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010). Only then do they look at the question of how committed adults can support young people in engaging with faith (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010). Subsequently, an adult catechism for Ireland has been published (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2014). A number of programmes have been developed helping parents and parishes to celebrate family masses and support young people and their families prepare for first Eucharist and Confirmation (Mahon, 2009; Mahon & Delaney, 2004, 2005, 2006; Sweetman, 2010, 2011, 2012). Convincing adults, generally, of the value of engaging in their own ongoing religious education and faith development, however, remains difficult. As Pope Francis has said: 'The formation of the laity and the evangelisation of professional and intellectual life represent a significant pastoral challenge' (Pope Francis, 2013, par. 103).

Religious Education and Catechesis

The Irish bishops indicate, in conformity with Vatican documents (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) that catechesis and religious education are 'distinct but complementary activities' (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010, par. 39). Catechesis is defined, by the bishops, as the bringing of members of the Christian community to a maturity of faith, encouraging prayer and active participation in the mission of the Church, building up the local community and reaching out to those in most need. It presupposes some level of Christian faith and a journey into a deepening of that faith (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010). Religious education in schools, the bishops note, is more broadly conceived of and may be open to a variety of pupils of different faiths and convictions (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010). Religious education can be defined variously in accordance with the particular school population, context and needs, and is not defined, necessarily, as an activity of the Christian community, although it can be such too (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010). Religious educators, then, must be aware of the complexity of their role and of the intricacy of the relationships they seek to build with their pupils.

Primary and Post-primary Religious Education

The reader should note the developmentally appropriate differences between religious education in Catholic schools in Ireland at primary level, 4/5–12 years of age, and at second-level, referred to in Ireland as post-primary, 12–18 years (Byrne, 2018). Religious education in Catholic primary schools is provided by the Church as patron of these schools. It is largely focused on helping Catholic children to engage with, cherish and belong to the faith of their parents (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2015; Irish Episcopal Council for Catechetics, 2015, 2016, 2017). In post-primary schools, State-sponsored RE syllabuses for junior cycle (12–15 years) and senior cycle (16–18 years), approved also by the Catholic bishops for use in Catholic schools, seek to help all young people engage with religion and belief, contributing 'to the spiritual and moral development of the student' (Department of Education and Science, 2000, p. 5, 2003, p. 5). All students, whatever their religious affiliation or worldview, can participate. The Catholic Church understands these syllabuses as opportunities to help young people reflect on religious and moral questions, encouraging young Catholics to grapple with questions of faith and life (Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, 1999, 2006) The present syllabuses are under review by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2017; National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2017).

The Plural Reality of Ireland Today

It will be clear at this stage that the plural reality of Ireland today needs to be taken into account in any discussion about religious education, and its support systems, in contemporary Ireland (Anderson, Byrne, & Cullen, 2016). According to results of the recent 2016 National Census, the percentage of the population who identified as Catholic fell sharply from 84.2% in 2011 to 78.3% in 2016 (Central Statistics Office, 2016). While a cultural exposure to Christianity still remains, many young people have had little or no experience of participation in a faith community. This means that the religious education component of initial teacher education itself needs to be deepened if teachers are going to be fully able to help others grapple with the mystery of life (Cullen, 2013). All teachers, it has been suggested, 'must be educated and trained to support young people in reflecting on all of life and therefore, to be able to create an atmosphere where religion, spirituality and ethics are considered fully part of the conversation' (Byrne, 2013, p. 220). If this is so, then the need for those who teach religious education to have access to ongoing professional development, seems to be essential, keeping them alive to the variety of their students' contexts, beliefs and needs, but also opening themselves up to the possibility of an ever-deepening connection with their own religious education material.

Research Question

The research question addressed by this paper concerns assessing the needs for CPD among RE teachers teaching in Catholic schools at primary and post-primary levels. Their degree of confidence as well as expressed need for CPD in RE content areas and in RE educator skills will be quantified and examined for significant differences according to gender, age, number of years qualified and, in the case of post-primary teachers, whether RE is considered to be the respondent's core teaching subject. The research question addresses also the preferred forms of delivery of such CPD as identified by RE teachers in primary and post-primary Irish schools under Catholic patronage.

Method

Procedure

A research study on CPD and RE in Ireland was conducted by researchers in Initial Teacher Education at the Institute of Education, Dublin City University to examine the needs and opportunities for CPD among primary and post-primary RE teachers. This research was funded by the DCU Institute of Education Shared Research Fund. Using a self-selecting snowball sampling strategy, primary teachers and post-primary RE teachers were invited to complete an online survey in May/June 2017. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity, and were given the choice not to take part. Within the Republic of Ireland, 253 responses were collected. 214 of these were from teachers working in schools under Catholic patronage. 49 responses were received from teachers in primary schools and a further 165 from the post-primary sector.

Instrument

An original instrument (online survey containing 138 variables) was constructed and hosted on a purpose-built website. The instrument contained four main sections. The first collected demographic information on the participants in terms of gender, age, qualifications and teaching experience. The second section focused on the level of confidence of teachers in RE content areas based on the primary and post-primary curricula (these content areas will become apparent in the analysis part of this paper). Generally acknowledged teaching skills appropriate to RE in the Irish context are similarly measured. In this paper, these are termed RE educator skills. The third section focused on the need for CPD expressed by teachers in the same RE content areas and RE educator skills. The final section was concerned with the forms and

modes of delivery of CPD in RE. The survey was designed for self-completion, using mainly multiple–choice and short statements rated on a four-point Likert scale, namely, not confident, a little confident, confident and very confident. The need for CPD was assessed by simple yes/no/other responses. In the present analysis, items were identified from the questionnaire to map the following areas: RE content areas in which teachers felt confident; RE educator skills in which teachers felt confident; RE content areas in which teachers said they required CPD; RE educator skills in which teachers required CPD; preferred forms of CPD in RE.

Participants

253 teachers in the Republic of Ireland completed this initial online survey. While such a small sample cannot be seen to be representative of the whole population, the study nonetheless provides a platform on which further detailed studies could build. In the present analysis, only teachers who self-identified as working in a school under Catholic patronage were included ($N = 214$). 49 were in the primary sector. 165 were in the post-primary sector.

Analysis

Participants at primary level were grouped according to three categories: gender, age (under 25; between 26 and 34; between 35 and 44; between 45 and 54; over 55) and number of years teaching (under 5; between 6 and 10; between 11 and 15; between 16 and 20; over 21).

Participants at post-primary level were grouped in the same way with the additional category of whether RE was considered to be their main teaching subject. Frequencies were calculated to measure overall levels of confidence in RE content areas and RE educator skills with the two upper categories of 'very confident' and 'confident' being combined to represent 'confident'. Frequencies were also calculated for the corresponding need for CPD in both content and skills as well as preferred forms of CPD in RE. Responses were cross-tabulated with each of the four categories to ascertain significant differences. The data were analysed using the online statistical software package known as PSPP commonly used as an alternative to IBM SPSS Statistics.

Results and Discussion

Primary Level

Among the 49 primary teachers in Catholic schools who responded to the survey, 94% of respondents at primary level were female ($N = 46$). The 35–44 age group accounted for the highest proportion (33%) of respondents ($N = 16$). Those who had been qualified for over 21 years ($N = 19$) were the largest group of respondents according to experience (39%). Of the six RE content areas at primary level, Knowledge of Christian faith (90%) and Moral/ethical education (88%) were the areas in which most respondents expressed confidence. The area in which the lowest level of confidence was expressed was Knowledge of world religions (39%). It was in this area in which most respondents expressed a need for CPD (80%). However, despite high levels of confidence in Moral/ethical education, this was the second area in which most respondents expressed a need for CPD (78%).

At primary level, the RE educator skills in which most respondents expressed confidence were Implementing the RE curriculum/programme in my school (92%), Lesson planning and resourcing in RE (92%) and Sacramental preparation (90%). The RE educator skill in which fewest respondents expressed confidence was Ecumenical, interreligious and intercultural dialogue (32%). Correspondingly, this skill was rated highly in terms of need for CPD (76%), second only to Teaching critical thinking skills in RE (80%).

There were no significant differences according to gender in levels of confidence expressed in either RE content areas or RE educator skills or the need for CPD generally.

Some significant differences were identified when cross-tabulating levels of confidence in RE educator skills at primary level with the age of the respondent. Greater proportions of older respondents expressed confidence in the RE educator skills of Dealing with issues relating to RE with parents ($x^2(12, N = 49) = 23.30, p = .025$) and Engaging in RE in a classroom including students with special educational needs ($x^2(12, N = 49) = 33.91, p = .001$). The older age group was also the group in which the highest proportion of respondents (90%) expressed a need for CPD in the primary content area of Knowledge of world religions ($x^2(8, N = 49) = 20.71, p = .008$).

The middle age groups of 35 and 44 and 45 and 54 reported lower levels of confidence across a number of RE educator skills. These were Lesson planning and resourcing in RE ($x^2(12, N = 49) = 33.91, p = .001$), Nurturing my own spirituality ($x^2(8, N = 49) = 20.35, p = .009$), Teaching critical thinking skills in RE ($x^2(12, N = 49) = 26.57, p = .009$) and Using creative methodologies for RE ($x^2(12, N = 49) = 23.54, p = .023$).

Some significant differences were identified when cross-tabulating levels of confidence in RE educator skills at primary level with the number of years the respondent has been teaching. As with the middle age groups who reported lower levels of confidence in some areas, this pattern also emerged among the group of respondents in the middle range of number of years qualified. Those qualified between 11 and 15 years

reported lower levels of confidence in two primary content areas. 57% reported as being confident or very confident in Knowledge of Christian faith ($x^2(8, N = 49) = 20.18, p = .010$). Only 14% reported as being confident or very confident in Scripture ($x^2(12, N = 49) = 28.94, p = .004$). This group also had lower levels of confidence in some RE educator skills areas. 14% reported as being confident or very confident in Dealing with issues relating to RE with parents ($x^2(12, N = 49) = 22.60, p = .031$). 57% did the same in the skill of Engaging in RE in a classroom including students with special educational needs ($x^2(12, N = 49) = 23.21, p = .026$). While only 28% of this group stated they were either confident or very confident in Teaching critical thinking skills in RE, no respondent qualified less than 5 years did so ($x^2(12, N = 49) = 24.84, p = .016$).

At primary level, the forms of CPD in RE that most appealed to respondents were blended (online and occasional meetings of the group) (43%), summer school (37%) and teacher-driven event (e.g. Teach Meet) (37%).

Post-primary Level

73% of the 169 respondents at post-primary level from Catholic schools were female ($N = 120$). The 35 and 44 age group accounted for the highest proportion (41%) of respondents ($N = 67$). Those qualified for over 21 years ($N = 42$) were the largest group of respondents according to experience (25%). 67% of post-primary respondents consider RE to be their main teaching subject ($N = 111$).

Of the sixteen RE content areas at post-primary level, Foundations of Religion—Christianity (94%) and Communities of Faith (91%) were the areas in which most respondents expressed confidence. Notably the top six RE content areas in which respondents at post-primary level expressed confidence are the six content areas designated at junior cycle level, with the areas of lower levels of confidence belonging to the Leaving Certificate syllabus. It was in these Leaving Certificate RE content areas in which most respondents expressed a need for CPD, with Religion and Gender (84%) and Religion and Science (81%) being rated most highly in need. In one departure from this pattern, however, despite low levels of confidence in the Leaving Certificate RE content area The Bible: Literature and Sacred Text (61%), this was not an area in which most respondents expressed a need for CPD (61%).

At post-primary level, the RE educator skills in which most respondents expressed confidence were Respectfully articulating one's religious beliefs and values as an active citizen (81%) and Nurturing my own spirituality (80%). Overall, the percentage levels of confidence in RE educator skills were lower than those in RE content areas. The RE educator skill in which fewest respondents expressed confidence was Ecumenical, interreligious and intercultural dialogue (56%) which was also the case at primary level. This skill was rated highly in terms of need for CPD (75%), but not as highly as Using creative methodologies in RE (82%) and Optimising student engagement in non-exam RE contexts (78%).

Some significant differences were identified when cross-tabulating both the levels of confidence in post-primary RE content areas and RE educator skills with the gender of the respondent. Male respondents expressed higher levels of confidence than their female counterparts. 98% of males and 92% of females were confident in Foundations of Religion—Christianity ($x^2(2, N = 165) = 6.19, p = .045$) while 75% of males and only 57% of females were confident in The Bible: Literature and Sacred Text ($x^2(3, N = 165) = 18.78, p = .000$). The gap was even greater in Religion and Science with 80% of males and only 49% of females expressing confidence in this RE content area ($x^2(3, N = 165) = 16.97, p = .001$). On average 20% more males than females expressed confidence in the RE educator skills Ecumenical, interreligious and intercultural dialogue ($x^2(3, N = 165) = 13.03, p = .005$) and Fostering the spirituality of the student ($x^2(3, N = 165) = 9.02, p = .029$).

Some significant differences were identified when cross-tabulating levels of confidence in three RE content areas at post-primary level with the age of the respondent. In each case 100% of respondents aged over 55 expressed confidence in Religion: The Irish experience ($x^2(12, N = 165) = 23.25, p = .026$), 100% of respondents under 25 also expressed confidence, with the lowest scoring age group being those between 25 and 34 (58%). The under 25s (83%) were the second highest scoring age group in level of confidence in Issues of justice and peace ($x^2(12, N = 165) = 39.92, p = .000$), with the lowest scoring group being those between 34 and 45 (67%). However, in Worship, prayer and ritual ($x^2(12, N = 165) = 35.08, p = .000$), both under 25s (66%) and those between 34 and 45 (66%) expressed lowest levels of confidence.

Some significant differences were identified when cross-tabulating levels of confidence in two RE educator skills at post-primary level with the age of the respondent. In Dealing with issues relating to RE with parents ($x^2(12, N = 165) = 21.21, p = .047$), the over 55s rated highest in confidence (88%) with the under 25s as the lowest group (50%). In Lesson planning and resourcing in RE ($x^2(12, N = 165) = 23.23, p = .026$), the over 55s (94%) again expressed most confidence. The lowest scoring age group was the between 35 and 44 group (70%).

Whilst the RE educator skill Respectfully articulating one's religious beliefs and values as an active citizen was the skill in which most post-primary respondents expressed confidence, it was in the need for CPD in this skill where a significant difference emerged when cross-tabulated with the age of the respondent. While only 33% of under 25s and 31% of over 55s expressed a need for CPD, the percentage rose to 48% among those aged between 25 and 34, 63% of those between 35 and 44 and peaked at 74% of those between 45 and 54 ($x^2(4, N = 165) = 11.88, p = .018$).

Some significant differences were identified when cross-tabulating levels of confidence in five RE content areas at post-primary level with the number of years the respondent has been teaching.

While 100% of both those qualified over 21 years and between 6 and 10 years expressed confidence in Foundations of Religion—Christianity, only 78% of those qualified less than 5 years did so ($x^2(8, N = 165) = 18.33, p = .019$). 67% of both those qualified over 21 years and between 6 and 10 years expressed confidence in Religion and Gender ($x^2(12, N = 165) = 24.36, p = .018$). The lowest scoring group

was those qualified between 16 and 20 years (38%). In three further post-primary RE content areas, those qualified over 21 years expressed highest levels of confidence while those qualified between 11 and 15 years expressed lowest levels. These were Issues of justice and peace ($x^2(12, N = 165) = 29.80$, $p = .003$), Worship, prayer and ritual ($x^2(12, N = 165) = 34.96$, $p = .000$) and Religion: The Irish experience ($x^2(12, N = 165) = 22.35$, $p = .034$).

Some significant differences were identified when cross-tabulating levels of confidence in five RE educator skills at post-primary level with the number of years the respondent has been teaching. In Faith development ($x^2(12, N = 165) = 22.78$, $p = .030$), 78% of those qualified over 21 years expressed confidence in comparison with just 46% of those qualified between 6 and 10 years. This latter group (46%) also expressed lowest levels of confidence in Using creative methodologies in RE ($x^2(12, N = 165) = 26.66$, $p = .009$) whilst those qualified less than 5 years (85%) scored highest for this skill.

Differences were identified when cross-tabulating the need for CPD with the number of years the respondent has been teaching. In the RE educator skill Cross-curricular planning ($x^2(8, N = 165) = 16.28$, $p = .039$), only 50% of those qualified over 21 years expressed a need for CPD in this skill in comparison with 76% of those qualified between 16 and 20 years. In the RE content area World Religions ($x^2(8, N = 165) = 15.97$, $p = .043$) only 48% of those qualified over 21 years expressed a need for CPD in this area in comparison with 85% of those qualified less than 5 years.

Some significant differences were identified when cross-tabulating the levels of confidence in post-primary RE content areas and RE educator skills with whether the respondent considered RE to be their main teaching subject.

99% of those who considered RE to be their main teaching subject expressed confidence in the RE content area Foundations of Religion—Christianity ($x^2(2, N = 165) = 29.89$, $p = .000$) in comparison to 81% of those who did not consider it to be their main teaching subject. In the following RE educator skills, confidence was expressed by at least 15% more and up to 32% more by those who considered RE to be their main teaching subject compared to those who did not consider it their main teaching subject:

Cross-curricular planning in RE, 75% in comparison to 43% ($x^2(3, N = 165) = 9.19$, $p = .027$).

Dealing with issues relating to RE with parents, 70% in comparison to 50% ($x^2(3, N = 165) = 14.47$, $p = .002$).

Ecumenical, interreligious and intercultural dialogue, 61% in comparison to 46% ($x^2(3, N = 165) = 23.31$, $p = .000$).

Faith development, 69% in comparison to 54% ($x^2(3, N = 165) = 17.87$, $p = .000$).

Fostering the spirituality of the student, 71% in comparison to 50% ($x^2(3, N = 165) = 14.13$, $p = .003$).

Lesson planning and resourcing in RE, 83% in comparison to 64% ($x^2(3, N = 165) = 9.04$, $p = .029$).

One significant difference was identified when the need for CPD was cross-tabulated with whether the respondent considered RE to be their main teaching subject. Only 26% of those who considered RE to be their main teaching subject expressed a need for CPD in the RE content area Foundations of Religion—Christianity in comparison to 43% of those who did not consider it their main teaching subject.

The forms of CPD in RE that appealed most to post-primary respondents were blended (online and occasional meetings of the group) (58%), online (54%) and evenings during the week (44%).

Conclusion

This study was established within the context of discussion of CPD for teachers in the Republic of Ireland with a view to hearing the voices of teachers of religious education. A number of conclusions arise from the findings described above and are worthy of particular attention by those who might consider providing CPD for RE teachers in Ireland.

The first conclusion emerges from the response rate of primary school religion teachers. The number of primary teachers who participated in this online survey was poor as compared to post-primary teachers. A possible reason for this may be that while primary teachers generally teach religion they do not perhaps classify themselves as RE teachers in the way specialist religious education teachers at post-primary level do.

Secondly, there was clarity among those primary teachers who did participate, about their lack of confidence in the RE content area World Religions and the RE educator skill Ecumenical, interreligious and intercultural dialogue. This consistent demonstration of needs indicates a theme that can be taken as worthy of immediate attention at primary level.

The third conclusion depends on a critical divide observed in what post-primary religious educators have said. A great deal of confidence was expressed in all the content areas associated with junior cycle RE. Considerably less confidence and a greater need for CPD were recorded in senior cycle content areas generally.

A fourth conclusion is that age and length of service are indicated by the research as significant variables. The older cohort, those also who have been longest in service as teachers, has more confidence in their knowledge of content and in certain educator skills. The middle age group emerges as having least confidence in RE content and RE educator skills, suggesting that particular attention should be paid to this cohort of teachers and their needs. The youngest teachers indicate themselves as having a great deal of confidence, generally, both in their material and in their skills, most notably in teaching World Religions, an area in which others are less secure. Their request for CPD in Foundations of Religion—Christianity probably confirms they belong to a newer cultural context, happy to provide information about religions and other beliefs, but less fully connected with the meaning of religion in people's lives.

Offers of CPD for teachers should consider providing something different according to age and length of service.

The fifth conclusion is that whether or not religious education is a teacher's main subject at post-primary is significant in the results analysed. Those teachers who do not consider it as their main subject, perhaps due to a lack of formal RE teaching qualification, are generally less at ease across a range of RE educator skills.

A sixth conclusion highlights the forms of CPD preferred by RE teachers. Both groups favoured blended learning, 43% at primary level and 58% of post-primary religious educators. While primary teachers then suggested summer schools and teacher-driven events as alternatives, post-primary teachers recommended online engagement or face-to-face meetings on a succession of evenings during the week.

A seventh and final conclusion is to recognise a lack of clarity in how RE teachers understand CPD and what are their main motivations for seeking it. As evidenced in this research, there was not always a clear correlation between the level of confidence voiced in a content area or educator skills area and an expressed need for CPD. A low level of confidence in a particular topic or skill did not always produce a keen desire for CPD in that area at either level. Whether particular CPD might be freely chosen, considered achievable and valued as worthwhile, may provide explanations of motivations at play. It would be good to investigate further whether RE teachers are interested in CPD for their own personal development and/or for the benefit of their pupils as some of the responses seem to indicate.

This initial baseline research study does not claim to be generalizable but indicates a certain urgency in addressing the gap in CPD provision for religious educators in the changing reality that is Ireland today. From the perspective of the Catholic Church, the ideal would be an integrated approach that sees the local Church, parents/guardians, primary and post-primary teachers, parishes and dioceses working together. The value of having RE teachers fully involved in developing their own career-long professional learning is supported by what teachers themselves have to say in the research findings detailed in this paper.

References

Anderson, B., Byrne, G., & Cullen, S. (2016). Religious pluralism, education and citizenship in Ireland. In E. Aslan, R. Ebrahim, & M. Hermansen (Eds.), *Islam, religions, and pluralism in Europe* (pp. 161–172). Dordrect: Springer.

Byrne, G. (2008). Lifelong faith development in the home, parish and other educational environments. In P. Kieran & A. Hession (Eds.), *Exploring religious education: Catholic religious education in an intercultural Europe* (pp. 35–41). Dublin: Veritas.

Byrne, G. (2013). Encountering and engaging with religion and belief: The contemporary contribution of religious education in schools. In G. Byrne & P. Kieran (Eds.), *Toward mutual ground: Pluralism, religious education and diversity in Irish schools* (pp. 207–224). Dublin: Columba.

Byrne, G. (2018). The place of religious education in the changing landscape that is Ireland today. In S. Whittle (Ed.), *Religious education in Catholic schools: Perspectives from Ireland and the UK*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Central Statistics Office. (2016). *Census of population, 2016—Preliminary results*. Retrieved from http://www.cso.ie.

Coll, R. (2006). Faith formation in the context of continuing professional development for Catholic teachers: Understanding the views of managers. *Journal of In-service Education, 32*(4), 431–450.

Congregation for the Clergy. (1997). *General directory for catechesis*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Cullen, S. (2013). *Toward an appropriate religious education for future teachers of religious education: Principles for a theological education approach* (Ph.D. thesis). Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University.

Day, C., & Sachs, J. (Eds.). (2004). *International handbook on the continuing professional development of teachers*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Department of Education and Science. (2000). *Junior certificate religious education syllabus*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science. (2003). *Leaving certificate religious education syllabus*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Devitt, P. M. (1991). *How adult is adult religious education?* Dublin: Veritas.

Earley, P., & Bubb, S. (Eds.). (2007). *Leading and managing continuing professional development: Developing people, developing schools* (2nd ed.). London: Paul Chapman.

Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. (1999). *Guidelines for the faith formation and development of Catholic students.* Dublin: Veritas.

Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. (2006). *Guidelines for the faith formation and development of Catholic students at senior cycle.* Dublin: Veritas.

Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. (2017). *Religious education and the 'Framework for junior cycle'*. Dublin: Veritas.

Irish Episcopal Conference. (2010). *Share the good news: National directory for catechesis in Ireland.* Dublin: Veritas.

Irish Episcopal Conference. (2014). *Irish Catholic catechism for adults*. Dublin: Veritas.

Irish Episcopal Conference. (2015). *Catholic preschool and primary religious education curriculum for Ireland*. Dublin: Veritas.

Irish Episcopal Council for Catechetics. (2015, 2016, 2017). *Grow in love* (Vol. 1–6). Dublin: Veritas.

Irish National Teachers Organisation. (2014). *Continuing profession development*. Dublin: Irish National Teachers Organisation. Retrieved from https://www.into.ie/ROI/NewsEvents/LatestNews/Downloads/Continuingprofessionaldevelopment.pdf.

Mahon, M. (2009). *You shall be my witnesses.* Dublin: Veritas.

Mahon, M., & Delaney, M. (2004, 2005, 2006). *Do this in memory: A parish-based preparation programme for first Eucharist.* Dublin: Veritas.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (2017). *Background paper and brief for the review of junior cycle religious education: For consultation*. Retrieved from http://www.ncca.ie.

Pope Francis. (2013). *Evangelii gaudium: On the proclamation of the gospel in today's world.* Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

Sweetman, B. (2010, 2011, 2012). *Our family mass: Resources for the family Sunday liturgy* (Three volumes: Years A, B, and C). Dublin: Veritas.

Dr. Gareth Byrne is Associate Professor of Religious Education and Director of the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education, Dublin City University, Ireland. His primary areas of teaching and research are second-level religious education and faith development more generally. He was the founding coordinator of the Irish Centre for Religious Education (ICRE) and the writer for the Irish Episcopal Conference of *Share the good news: National directory for catechesis in Ireland* (Veritas: Dublin, 2010). His recent contributions include an edited volume with Patricia Kieran,

Toward Mutual Ground: Pluralism, Religious Education and Diversity in Irish Schools (Columba: Dublin, 2013).

Dr. Bernadette Sweetman is a researcher in the Institute of Education, Dublin City University. She is the author of *Our family mass: Resources for the family Sunday liturgy* series (Veritas, 2012–2014) and was part of the writing team for the *Credo Series* (Veritas 2013–2015) used in Catholic high schools across the USA. She was a research and development officer for the Irish Centre for Religious Education from 2013 to 2016. Currently a post-doctoral researcher at the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education at Dublin City University, her research interests focus on adult religious education and faith development.

Chapter 20
Pedagogical Content Knowledge: A Missing Piece in the Puzzle that Is Religious Education in Catholic Schools

Peta Goldburg RSM

Introduction

Religious Education (RE) is considered a key learning area in Australian Catholic schools. Since the establishment of a separate faith-based education system in the 1850s, Religious Education has largely been the vehicle by which the Church has transmitted the Catholic Christian tradition across generations. Religious Education in Australian Catholic schools involves learning about religion and participating in the Catholic tradition with the aim of developing students as religiously literate people of faith. As part of the formal school curriculum, Religious Education, in line with the requirements of the General Directory for Catechesis (1977, par 73), is allocated equivalent time to other humanities disciplines within the timetable, namely, 2.5 h per week. As well as the formal classroom teaching of Religious Education, retreats, Mass, liturgical singing practice, faith and service activities, personal development and life skills are encouraged and considered as part of the religious life of the school.

The task of religious education within Catholic schools is complex. It is education into a specific religious tradition, Catholic Christianity, where one religious tradition is studied in depth and where a well-developed and comprehensive grounding in Catholic Christianity takes place. Religious Education may also include learning about religions other than the home tradition in a way which enables communities of faith to educate people to engage with religious diversity and with people who are religiously other. Finally, effective Religious Education also enables people to learn from religion. Learning from religion requires a deep connection to one's religious tradition as well as a desire to learn from differences without adopting or absorbing the other.

P. Goldburg RSM (✉)
Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University, Brisbane, Australia
e-mail: peta.goldburg@acu.edu.au

Australian Contexts

Each diocese in Australia has specific requirements for employment in a Catholic school and for teaching Religious Education. In general, to teach Religious Education, a person must be a baptised Catholic which assumes a personal commitment to the Catholic Christian tradition. In Catholic primary schools, Religious Education is taught by the classroom teacher whose initial teacher education is generalist in nature. With only two Catholic universities in Australia, it is common for teachers in Catholic schools to be graduates of secular universities where Religious Education is not studied as part of undergraduate teacher education. To compensate for this lack of discipline knowledge and teacher formation in the area of Religious Education, Catholic Education systems provide in-service professional learning programmes for teachers. In addition to in-service programmes, dioceses also require teachers to meet minimum standards for accreditation to teach Religious Education. While the content of accreditation programmes varies from diocese to diocese, the minimum academic requirement nationwide is a four-unit postgraduate qualification, namely, a Graduate Certificate in Religious Education or Theology. This postgraduate qualification is generally completed part-time while teachers are teaching Religious Education, that is, teachers learn about the discipline and how to teach it 'on the job'. In secondary schools, there are some Religious Education specialist teachers, but on the whole, most teachers of Religious Education simultaneously complete RE accreditation and postgraduate study while teaching. The postgraduate programmes attempt to provide foundational content knowledge for teaching religious education, some approaches to learning and teaching and faith formation, as well as knowledge of the local diocesan Religious Education syllabus. Religious Education consists of multiple sub-disciplines requiring knowledge of fields including scripture, theology (including sacramental theology), Church history, Catholic Christian morality, social justice and Catholic Social Teaching, prayer and liturgy, and world religions. Teachers in Australian Catholic schools bring varying levels of competence in these sub-disciples and in ways of knowing and communicating Religious Education. Measured against the depth of knowledge required to teach Religious Education, regrettably, many teachers possess only a superficial knowledge of content related to the discipline.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Religious Education

Teaching and learning in any discipline is a multifarious activity and attempts to understand the complexity of teaching have generated a variety of metaphors and models. In 1986, Lee Shulman, in his presidential address to the American Educational Research Association, introduced the term Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) arguing that research in education had ignored questions of content related to teaching. He subsequently established a model to probe the complexities of teacher understanding and transmission of content knowledge. When exploring the domains

and categories of content knowledge in the minds of teachers, he investigated how content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge were related. Focusing on content knowledge in teaching, he identified three categories: subject-matter content knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and curricular knowledge. Content knowledge requires going beyond knowledge of facts to understanding the structures of the subject matter. Teachers must not only understand that 'something is so, but they must also understand why it is and on what grounds its warrant can be asserted, and under what circumstances belief in its justification can be weakened and even denied' (Shulman, 1986b, p. 9). In addition, Shulman says that we also expect teachers to understand 'why a given topic is particularly central to a discipline, whereas another may be somewhat peripheral' (Shulman, 1986b, p. 9). Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) goes beyond knowledge of subject matter and includes knowledge for teaching. It is a particular form of content knowledge that embodies the aspects of content most 'germane to its teachability' such as powerful analogies, examples, demonstrations and ways of making the content comprehensible to students. PCK also includes what makes learning about specific topics easy or difficult as well as the conceptions and preconceptions that students of varying ages bring to the learning. Curricular knowledge includes familiarity with the curriculum materials to be studied and their connection to and relationship with other subjects: it has both horizontal and vertical applications requiring teachers to know how it connects to other subjects at the nominated year level as well as knowing what has been taught in previous year levels and what is to be taught in subsequent year levels (Shulman, 1986a, b).

Later, Shulman (1987) extended and developed understandings of PCK describing it as a distinctive body of knowledge for teaching representing:

> …the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction. PCK is the category most likely to distinguish the understanding of the content specialist from that of the pedagogue. (Shulman 1987, p. 8)

Thus, PCK is a specific form of knowledge for teaching which refers to the transformation of subject-matter knowledge in the context of facilitating student understanding.

Today, PCK is a commonly accepted construct in the educational lexicon and is used as a major organising paradigm in reviews of literature on teachers' knowledge. Over the past 25 years, studies on PCK have taken place in various subject areas including English, mathematics, science and social science but there are no research studies on PCK in Religious Education. Shulman's insights into the major forms of knowledge can inform those who teach Religious Education and those who work with pre-service and in-service teachers of religious education. This chapter provides a brief review of how PCK has been conceptualised in the research literature, how it develops and the factors influencing this. The information is then used as a foundation to review an in-service programme provided by one diocesan employing authority which focuses on developing and improving the religious education content knowledge of teachers and PCK for religious education.

PCK is particular to teaching and essential for teaching subject matter well. One of the key aspects of PCK is the ability to comprehend students' disciplinary thinking and to anticipate, recognise and respond to students' conceptions of the subject (for instance, many students mistakenly think Religious Education is about values). As emphasis on student thinking has increased in teacher education literature, there is evidence to support the case that novice teachers or teachers new to a discipline such as Religious Education do not focus on developing students' thinking (Levin, Hammer, & Coffey, 2009). However, Franke and Kazemi (2001) found that paying attention to students' thinking not only improved students' performance but also helped veteran teachers learn to teach more effectively by inquiring into the process of higher order thinking.

Fenstermacher (1994) argues that the goal of education is not simply to train teachers to behave in prescribed ways, but to educate teachers to reason about their teaching and to perform skilfully. Reasoning requires teachers to think about what they are doing as well as having an adequate base of facts, principles and experience from which to reason. Teachers then learn to use their knowledge base to provide the grounds for choices and actions.

There is an assumption that to teach all that teachers require are basic skills, content knowledge and general pedagogical skills. This assumption is particularly evident in discussions about the teaching of RE as many consider that if people are qualified teachers, then they already know how to teach, it is just a matter of providing them with theological content for them to teach Religious Education. Such an assumption fails to recognise the distinctive nature of Religious Education and how PCK is core to effective learning and teaching in RE. The bifurcating of content and teaching processes has had a significantly detrimental effect on the teaching of Religious Education in Australian Catholic schools. Quality teaching in Religious Education is not simply a matter of possessing large amounts of theological information. Instead, what teachers require is a way and means of developing PCK in Religious Education so that they are able to teach children and adolescents complicated theological concepts in age-appropriate and accessible ways without trivialising the significance of the content.

Shulman (1987) identified various types of knowledge which he considered essential for all teachers. These include content knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge with special reference to broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organisation that appear to transcend subject matter; curriculum knowledge with a focus on the materials and programmes that serve as 'tools of the trade'; pedagogical content knowledge that is uniquely the province of teachers; knowledge of learners and their characteristics; knowledge of educational contexts; knowledge of educational ends, purposes, values and their philosophical and historical grounds. Teaching is a unique relationship between the teacher and the students: the teacher knows something which is not understood by the students. The challenge for the teacher is to transform their understanding into pedagogical representations and actions (Fenstermacher, 1994). The teacher's way of talking, showing, enacting and representing ideas should enable students to come to know, comprehend and discern so that they can critically engage with the subject matter. For Shulman (1987), teach-

ing begins with a teacher's understanding of what is to be learned and how it is to be taught. The teacher proceeds using a series of learning opportunities to provide students with specific instruction and opportunities for learning so that teaching ends with new comprehension for both the teacher and the student.

Shulman's focus on the knowledge that teachers use and need to teach specific content is in some way connected to the German word *Fachdidaktik* (Van Driel & Berry, 2010) sometimes translated as the pedagogy of subject matter. However, the *Fachdidaktik* tradition 'has not provided detailed insights into the ways in which teachers transform subject-matter knowledge, and how they relate their transformations to student understanding during classroom communication in order to overcome student misconceptions, thus contributing to meaningful learning' (Van Driel & Berry, 2010, p. 1). PCK, on the other hand, is about transforming content and knowledge into a form that is teachable and learnable in education. Cochran, DeRuiter, and King (1993) extend Shulman's original understanding of PCK to include how teachers critically reflect on and interpret subject matter; the ways they represent information as analogies, metaphors, examples and demonstrations, and in classroom activities the ways they adapt material to students' abilities and prior knowledge as well as tailoring the material to those specific students to whom the information will be taught. PCK has a significant impact on teachers' classroom actions (Grossman, 1990).

A significant element of PCK is understanding how to translate subject matter into comprehensible forms for students. Teachers are required to create learning experiences that convey the nature of the discipline and make expert ways of thinking in the discipline accessible for students. While some new teachers are able to make pedagogical choices which require students to think deeply, local school contexts influence the extent to which teachers' lessons reflect the discipline and meet students' needs. In Religious Education when teaching scripture, for example, the theme-based approach of selecting biblical texts common in some diocesan RE curricula precludes deep investigation of a whole passage and the sacred nature of such texts. Theme based selections of scripture texts do not enable teachers and students to make real intertextual connections and to see and understand the relationship between texts and how one text 'talks to' and influences another. Theme based approaches to teaching scripture do not facilitate deep thinking on behalf of the teacher or students.

PCK literature highlights an increased emphasis on the distinction between generalised strategies for teaching and specific processes required for teaching specialised topics within a discipline (Baumert et al., 2010; Gess-Newsome, 1999; Monte-Sano, 2011). The same can be said of Religious Education. Teaching scripture by applying the Three Worlds of the Text, for example, requires quite a specialised and extensive knowledge base in biblical studies while, on the other hand, a unit on praying with scripture requires both a knowledge of scripture and a knowledge of prayer and how to approach both of these in a classroom.

Teaching, as Shulman (1987) reminds us, is a learned profession. The teacher must understand the structure of subject matter, the principles of conceptual organisation, as well as have knowledge of substantive and syntactic structures. The teacher not only requires a depth of knowledge in the subject but also a willingness to ensure that the knowledge is communicated to students in a way that enables understanding.

Teachers communicate implicitly and explicitly via their attitudes and enthusiasms what is essential within the subject and what is peripheral. Expert teachers demonstrate a well-organised and well-connected structure thereby exhibiting a higher degree of cognitive connectedness between PCK and content knowledge (Krauss et al., 2008). In addition, König, Blömeke, and Kaiser (2015) found that early career teachers' skill in interpreting classroom situations is dependent on the amount of time spent on teaching rather than on other teacher tasks. Researchers agree that experts and novices think differently and that addressing the divide is key to improving students' understanding.

Shulman (1987) assumes that most teaching is initiated by some form of text whether it is a curriculum, textbook, syllabus or unit of work. Prior to teaching, the teacher has to apply pedagogical reasoning to the text. Shulman (1987) provides a model for pedagogical reasoning and action consisting of comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection and new comprehensions. The teacher is expected to comprehend critically the ideas to be taught and how these ideas relate to this subject and to other subjects. Transformation involves four phases: preparation which requires critical analysis of the texts and developing a pedagogical repertoire; representations including examples and analogies; selection from the pedagogical repertoire of modes of teaching and organising; and adaptation and tailoring according to students' ability, culture, conceptions, interests and gender. Instruction involves active teaching and interacting with the students, and evaluation involves checking for student understanding throughout the lesson as well as evaluating one's own performance and adjusting it where appropriate. Reflection requires the teacher to review and critically analyse, using evidence, their own performance and the students' performance. From this flows new comprehensions related to subject matter, students and self-purpose. The process of the model is not linear but rather circular moving backwards and forwards as required. The important point is that teachers should demonstrate the capacity to engage with the model in order to enhance their pedagogical performance. Such frameworks can be used as a guide for teachers whether they be considered expert or novice teachers.

The intersection of content and pedagogy is key to distinguishing the knowledge base of teaching. Essential also is the capacity of a teacher to transform the content knowledge s/he possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to variations in ability and background of students. Morine-Dershimer and Kent (1999) suggest that the most important aspect of generic knowledge that impacts teaching is context-specific pedagogical knowledge. Context-specific knowledge is created through reflection, active processing and the integration of general pedagogical knowledge and personal pedagogical knowledge. General pedagogical knowledge, including instructional models and strategies, classroom communication and discourse, is ultimately combined with personal pedagogical knowledge, which includes personal beliefs and perceptions about teaching. A critical and integrating aspect of pedagogical knowledge is teaching experience, where the subtleties of applying general pedagogical knowledge to classroom situations are learned. The result, context-specific pedagogical knowledge, assists in teacher decision-making and contributes most directly to PCK. One of the difficulties for novice teachers is

how specific religious education content knowledge within one sub-discipline area relates to other sub-discipline areas and ideas within the subject. In Religious Education, the interrelationship of foundational scriptural texts such as the first Genesis creation account with its underlying theological understanding of the dignity of the human person is fundamental to sacramental education, the social justice tradition of the Church, and moral decision-making. Novice teachers may well understand the idea of dignity of the human person but they may be unable to make links across other sub-disciplines.

PCK and its related knowledge domains represent efforts to improve and develop teacher knowledge and pedagogy. PCK is important in Religious Education because content knowledge is grounded in complex theological concepts and teachers are required to be skilled pedagogically to teach these concepts to students. In addition, many concepts are subsequently revisited within the spiral curriculum of Religious Education where understandings are deepened and further developed. If teachers are incapable of transforming the content knowledge and making it meaningful for students, then the danger is that content areas such as sacraments are only ever treated superficially with a concentration on symbolism and ritual action.

One Diocesan Programme Seeking to Develop PCK

As a way of assisting beginning Religious Education teachers and experienced teachers teaching Religious Education for the first time to better teach Religious Education, one diocesan employing authority has developed an in-service programme specifically for novice teachers of Religious Education. The employing authority has responsibility for 139 schools, educating approximately 70,000 students in primary and secondary schools. The in-service programme is also accredited by the local Catholic university as a pathway into study for a Graduate Certificate in Religious Education or Master of Religious Education. The programme commenced in 2011 and, in 2016, the diocesan employing authority invited this author to conduct a formal review of the programme. The review, a qualitative case study, involved three phases of data collection: questionnaire and observation of input sessions, interviews (group and individual), and document analysis of materials used in the programme.

The in-service programme has had wide reach and influence within the archdiocese with 475 teachers completing the programme between 2011 and 2016. The programme, organised and presented by members of the diocesan office Religious Education support team, is a 4-day face-to-face intensive programme comprising lectures, workshops, reflection and teacher modelling. Teachers within the archdiocese apply for the programme and, if accepted, relief teachers are employed for the period of the in-service programme. Teacher replacement costs to the system are quite significant and this is one indication of the employing authority's commitment to improving the quality of teaching in Religious Education. The programme is presented to a mixed group of primary and secondary teachers. The central focus of the in-service programme is the diocesan RE curriculum which seeks to develop

the religious literacy of students so that they are able to participate critically and authentically in contemporary culture. The Religious Education curriculum is presented within an educational framework and clearly articulates the philosophical positioning of Religious Education grounded in Gabriel Moran's definition of religious education. Moran (1991) defines two distinct but complementary forms of RE: teaching people about religion which takes place predominantly in the RE classroom; and teaching people how to be religious in a specific way which is the task of the whole school community, family and parish. In this diocese, the two forms are labelled the Religious Education Curriculum and the Religious Life of the School.

The in-service programme is specifically designed to address PCK for Religious Education and in doing so focuses on the knowledge base and pedagogical process involved in the teaching of Religious Education and its sub-disciplines, and the complexities of the pedagogical processes related to teaching the subject. The substantial focus for the programme is the teaching of the four strands and sub-strands of the Religious Education curriculum, namely: Sacred Texts (Old Testament, New Testament, Spiritual Writings and Wisdom); Christian Life (Moral Formation, Mission and Justice, and Prayer and Spirituality); Beliefs (Trinity, Human Existence, and World Religions); and Church (Liturgy and Sacraments, People of God, Church History). In selecting the topics and subtopics to be addressed, the Religious Education team identified topics which teachers previously indicated as being difficult to teach or where they lacked substantial knowledge. For instance, there is a significant concentration on the teaching of Scripture with a particular focus on the Three Worlds of the Text.

Data Collection

The first phase of data collection was an online questionnaire sent to all Principals and Assistant Principals Religious Education (APRE) as well as to the 428 teachers who had completed the in-service programme and who were still employed within the system ($N = 706$). 157 people responded to the questionnaire giving a 22% response rate.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit information regarding the quality of the in-service programme and whether it met the needs of participants in improving their knowledge base and PCK for teaching RE. The questionnaire was electronic, constructed in an online platform for ease of access and distributed via a link to school email addresses and via the employing authority's Religious Education weekly newsletter. Of the 157 respondents, 90 (57%) were primary teachers and 67 (43%) were secondary teachers. After completing demographic information, participants were asked to rank on a scale of 1–10, with 10 being the most important, the extent to which they agreed with the five following statements: The in-service programme was relevant to my teaching context; The in-service programme improved me as a religious education teacher; The in-service programme was well structured; The in-service programme provided an introduction to the theological concepts I need to

understand in order to teach RE;. The in-service programme provided teaching ideas and strategies I could implement on my return to the classroom.

All of the responses ($N = 157$) ranked the statements between 8.00 and 8.65 with the highest ranking (8.65) assigned to 'the in-service programme improved me as a religious education teacher'. The rankings indicate that when teachers understand the structure, conceptual organisation, foundational knowledge and pedagogical approaches to a topic they are better able to communicate it to students (Shulman, 1987).

Participants were also asked to rank on a scale of 1–10 the extent to which the in-service programme improved their knowledge of the following sub-discipline topics and how to teach them: New Testament, Old Testament, Planning in Religious Education, Christology, Religious Life of the School, Sacraments, Liturgy, Social Justice. Teachers ranked the topics as follows: Religious Life of the School 8.27; Planning in Religious Education 7.85; New Testament 7.62; Social Justice 7.48; Old Testament 7.47; Christology 7.35; Sacraments 7.10; Liturgy 7.06. The rankings support the findings of Monte-Sano (2011), Gess-Newsome (1999), and Baumert et al. (2010) and indicate that teachers benefit from focusing on the distinction between generalised strategies for teaching and specific processes required for teaching specialised topics within a discipline. Understanding the discipline includes teachers' epistemic beliefs and conceptions of the discipline as well as their understanding of the ways of thinking central to 'doing' the discipline. In Church history, for instance, disciplinary understanding includes a concept that historical knowledge comes from the analysis of primary sources, which leads to the construction of evidence-based interpretations of the past.

When asked to rank on a scale of 1–10 the extent to which participants agree with a series of statements the statement 'the in-service programme improved me as a RE teacher' ranked 8.73 indicating that it not only provided foundational understandings of the RE curriculum but also assisted teachers to improve their teaching in RE classrooms. Such responses indicate that when teachers have a deeper understanding of the discipline they are more able to design lessons that are challenging for students (Shulman, 1987). The in-service programme spends a significant amount of time assisting teachers to understand the discipline of Religious Education and providing examples of how to 'do' Religious Education. Another part of 'knowing the territory' of teaching is being familiar with and having reflected on the curricula and the choices which have been made regarding the construction of the curricula. The first morning of the in-service is spent interrogating the curriculum so that teachers are better able to understand and critique the choices made rather than simply accepting them on face value.

Presenters in the programme model pedagogies for participants involving them in tasks requiring critical thinking and using of evidence to support claims thereby modelling approaches to learning and teaching valued in Religious Education. Through extending general pedagogical knowledge and inviting participants to apply their knowledge to learning and teaching simulations, teachers' personal pedagogical knowledge is enhanced.

Phase two of the review consisted of group and individual interviews. A total of 39 teachers volunteered to participate in a group interview or individual interview. The interviews enabled the reviewer to probe more deeply the responses given in the questionnaire and to seek examples of how PCK was enhanced through participation in the in-service programme. One of the strengths of the programme spoken about on multiple occasions was that the learning community consisted of both primary and secondary teachers. Comments such as '…you see the different focus from Prep to year 10', and '…It was good with the primary, secondary together…you can see the different approaches'.

The in-service programme not only addresses Shulman's (1986a, b) three categories of learning essential for teachers, namely, subject-matter content knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and curricular knowledge but also highlights for teachers the horizontal and vertical applications of knowledge across the strands enabling them to make connections to other subjects as well as becoming aware of what has been taught in previous year levels and what is to be taught in subsequent year levels. The initial focus on the Religious Education curriculum also responds to Schulman's (1987) mantra that teaching begins with a teacher's understanding of what is to be learned and how it is to be taught.

The third phase of data collection involved a document study of some of the materials used by the presenters. The materials used with participants were found to be of high quality demonstrating powerful pedagogies and challenging teachers to develop higher order thinking. Other documents analysed included statistical information related to how many of the participants continued into postgraduate study in the area of Religious Education. From 2011 to 2014, 169 teachers transitioned from the in-service programme to postgraduate study in Religious Education and completed a Postgraduate Certificate or a Master's degree. In 2015, 105 teachers transitioned from the in-service programme into postgraduate study in Religious Education and 2016, 68 teachers enrolled in a postgraduate programme. If the students enrolled in 2015 and 2016 complete their postgraduate study, a total of 354 (82%) teachers who participated in the in-service programme would have completed a postgraduate qualification in Religious Education. Through the questionnaire responses and interview data many teachers commented that if they had not completed the in-service programme they would not have had the confidence and motivation to enrol in postgraduate study.

The in-service programme provided by the local employing authority has been able to focus on developing teachers' PCK in Religious Education while at the same time promoting a renewed rigour for the subject. This study has revealed the benefits of focusing on PCK for beginning teachers of Religious Education and importantly, that all pre-service and in-service teacher education in Religious Education should not be limited to transfer of knowledge but should address the application PCK in Religious Education. The key as Shulman (1986a, b, 1987) points out is the intersection of content and pedagogy and the capacity of teachers to transform content knowledge into forms that are pedagogically powerful and adaptive to the variation in ability and background of the students.

References

Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voss, T., Jordan, A., et al. (2010). Teachers' mathematical knowledge, cognitive activation in the classroom, and student progress. *American Educational Research Journal*, *47*(1), 133–180.

Cochran, L., DeRuiter, J., & King, R. (1993). Pedagogical content knowing: An integrative model for teacher preparation. *Journal of Teacher Education, 44*(4), 263–272.

Fenstermacher, G. D. (1994). The knower and the known: The nature of knowledge in research on teaching. *Review of Research in Education, 20*(1), 3–56.

Franke, M., & Kazemi, E. (2001). Learning to teach mathematics: Focus on student thinking. *Theory into Practice, 40*(2), 102–109.

Congregation for the clergy. (1977). General Directory for Catechesis. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

Gess-Newsome, J. (1999). Pedagogical content knowledge: An introduction and orientation. In J. Gess-Newsome & N. G. Lederman (Eds.), *PCK and science education* (pp. 3–17). Netherlands: Kluwere Academic Press.

Grossman, P. (1990). *The making of a teachers: Teacher knowledge and teacher education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

König, J., Blömeke, S., & Kaiser, G. (2015). Early career mathematics teachers' general pedagogical knowledge and skills: Do teacher education, teaching experience, and working conditions make a difference? *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education, 13*(2), 331–350.

Krauss, S., Brunner, M., Kunter, M., Baumert, J., Blum, W., Neubrand, M., et al. (2008). Pedagogical content knowledge and content knowledge of secondary mathematics teachers. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100,* 716–725.

Levin, D., Hammer, D., & Coffey, J. (2009). Novice teachers' attention to student thinking. *Journal of Teacher Education, 60*(2), 142–154.

Monte-Sano, C. (2011). Learning to open up history for students: Preservice teachers' emerging pedagogical content knowledge. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(3), 260–272.

Moran, G. (1991). Understanding religion and being religious. *PACE, 21,* 249–252.

Morine-Dershimer, G., & Kent, T. (1999). The complex nature and sources of teachers' pedagogical knowledge. In J. Gess-Newsome & N. G. Lederman (Eds.), *Examining pedagogical content knowledge* (Vol. 6, pp. 21–50). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic.

Shulman, L. (1986a). Paradigms and research programmes in the study of teaching: A contemporary perspective. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 3–36). New York: Macmillian.

Shulman, L. (1986b). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Education Researcher, 15*(2), 4–14.

Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations for the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review, 57*(1), 1–22.

Van Driel, J. H., & Berry, A. (2010). *Pedagogical content knowledge*. International Encyclopaedia of Education (pp. 656–659).

Peta Goldburg RSM is Professor of Religious Education and Director of Postgraduate Studies in the Faculty of Education and Arts at Australian Catholic University. She is President of the Australian Association for Religious Education. Her research interests and publications include religious education and pedagogy; religion and the arts; and teaching scripture. In Queensland, Peta has chaired the Study of Religion Syllabus Development Committee since 2001 and her publica-

tions have been prescribed as the main texts across Queensland and the ACT. She has received excellence in teaching award from Australian Catholic University and an Australian Government citation for excellence in teaching.

Part III
Pedagogical and Content Issues

Chapter 21
Early Childhood Religious Education: It Matters, but What Is Its Matter?

Jan Grajczonek

Introduction

Compared with the establishment of Catholic primary and secondary schools in Australia, Catholic early childhood education has been a much more recent phenomenon, particularly since the introduction of the Australian Government's mandated *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (EYLF) (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2009). Within the Catholic early childhood sector, early childhood religious education is still emerging as a distinct area. Certainly, religious education programmes in various formats had been integrated into Catholic early years school settings before the 1990s, but the introduction of the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) document has initiated more formalised and determined curriculum development (Grajczonek, 2017). As Catholic dioceses have sought to address the increasing emphasis on early childhood, they have approached the area of religious education in a variety of ways. Such approaches, models and frameworks including Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Cavalletti, 1992) Godly Play (Berryman, 1991) multifaith approaches influenced by the United Kingdom, young children's spirituality influences (Hay & Nye, 2006) and so on have been adopted and adapted from overseas.

However, to what extent can one specific approach, model or framework originating in a different place and time be overlaid or superimposed onto an entirely different context? Religious education in early childhood is not a matter of 'either or' or 'a one size fits all'. Such approaches perhaps met initial requirements in those embryonic stages of early childhood religious education. It is now time that a more relevant, intentional religious education underpinned by contemporary early childhood theory and practice, which respects and advocates each child's background while at the same time remaining true to the Catholic tradition, is developed. The

J. Grajczonek (✉)
The University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, WA, Australia
e-mail: janice.grajczonek@nd.edu.au

question is: what contexts need to be considered and how can they effectively contribute to a relevant early childhood religious education in Australia? This chapter surveys the development of early childhood religious education (hereafter ECRE) in terms of its nature and purpose, its substance, and seeks to clarify the matter of early childhood religious education. Early childhood education matters. Religious education in early childhood matters. What is the matter itself of early childhood religious education?

It is important to identify the characteristics of the matter of ECRE as explored in this chapter. The broadest understanding of what that might be is ECRE curriculum. However, early childhood education curriculum itself is contentious (Wood & Hedges, 2016), understood in a variety of ways. For the purpose of this chapter, the EYLF's (DEEWR, 2009) definition of curriculum adapted from New Zealand's *Te Whãriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) is used, 'In the early childhood setting curriculum means "all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development"' (p. 9). The EYLF document goes on to state that 'The emphasis in this Framework is on the planned or intentional aspects of the curriculum' (p. 9). In light of the all-encompassing activities, interactions and so on, that are included in a curriculum, the matter of ECRE as explored in this chapter, is taken to mean the planned or intentional aspects of curriculum, that is, the specific substance including aims/objectives/outcomes, and content or learning development areas. This meaning in no way suggests or implies that other aspects of curriculum, such as young children's learning in ECRE and teachers' responding pedagogies, are less important, but these have been addressed (Grajczonek, 2013a). The decision to describe the matter of ECRE in terms of specific aims/outcomes/objectives and content or learning development areas comes from the many conversations with Australian early childhood religious educators over the last 10 years, all of whom deliberate intently on ECRE. Further, the matter as understood in this way is a major consideration for early childhood educators who feel this is the greatest unknown of all aspects of any religious education curriculum which might be proposed (Grajczonek, 2013b).

Young Children's Contexts

Young children's contexts play pivotal roles in their learning. Contemporary early childhood education theory and practice underpinned by a reconceptualised view of childhood (MacNaughton, 2003; Arthur, Beecher, Dockett, Death, & Farmer, 2015) criticises the universal child construct, that is, the one child as representing all children (James & James, 2004). Two theories which contributed to the reconceptualised view of childhood were Vygotsky's (1967) sociocultural theory and Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological theory. Both theories emphasise children's backgrounds and contexts in their sense of belonging, which in turn directly affect their well-being and learning. Children's learning is determined more by their cultural construction than by their development (Hall et al., 2010).

Overall, early childhood educators advocate children's diverse sociocultural contexts seeking to ensure that their pedagogies reflect and promote children's sense of belonging. However, while this is evident in most aspects of early childhood curriculum and educators' pedagogies, the same cannot be said of the religious education curriculum and pedagogy (Grajczonek, 2012). Educators are seemingly caught between legitimating the realities of children's diverse sociocultural contexts and delivering the religious education curriculum.

Australia's population is an increasingly multicultural and multireligious one. The 2016 Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016) reported that 33.3% (one-third) of Australians were born in another country (in the 2011 Census 31.2% of the population was born in another country). Further, 22.2% of the population speaks a language other than English at home. These data indicate that a significant number of young Australian children have diverse sociocultural backgrounds. They also come from a diverse range of religious backgrounds. The 2016 Census religion statistics (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017a) confirmed the increasing religious diversity of the Australian population. Of particular relevance for Catholic early childhood settings is the insight that although Christianity remains the most common religious group with 52% of the population identifying as such, this figure is decreasing (in 1966 Christianity accounted for 88% of the population). Other significant religions reported included 2.6% of Australia's population identified themselves as Muslims, 2.4% as Buddhists, and 1.9% as Hindus. 'Australia now has more Muslims and more Buddhists than Presbyterians; more Hindus than Baptists or Lutherans; and nearly as many Sikhs as Lutherans' (Bouma, 2017). Within Christianity, Catholicism is the largest grouping accounting for 22.6% of the Australian population, Anglicanism 13.3% and the Uniting Church 3.7%.

One of the remarkable statistics revealed in the 2016 Census Religion report (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017a) was that 29.6% of the population identified themselves as having no religion; almost one in three people, which equates to an additional 2.2 million people since 2011. For the first time, people identifying themselves as having no religion are more than anyone identifying themselves as having a specific religion. To enable a deeper understanding of what these figures actually mean for religious education, it is helpful to take a closer look at the age distributions for religious affiliation in the 2016 Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017b). Parents of children in early childhood settings both prior-to-school and school are likely to sit in the two age groups 18–34 and 35–49 years. Almost two-thirds of Australians (66.6%) aged between 18 and 34 years were less likely to be Christian (39.4% identifying themselves as Christian) with 50.3% identifying as either having no religion (38.7%) or affiliated with other religions (11.6%). While in the age group 35–49 years, half of Australia's population was more likely to be Christian (50.4%). However, at the same time, 40% of this age group identified themselves as either having no religion (30.9%) or religion other than Christianity (9.3%). Statistics from both age groups indicate that young children in Australian prior-to-school and school early childhood settings, are more likely not to be Christian and an increasing number are more likely not to have any religion.

It is also important to pay attention to Australia's indigenous population statistics. The 2016 Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017c) reported that 2.8% of the population identified themselves as Indigenous (Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander) which is a 17.4% increase since the 2011 Census. Similar to Australia's non-Indigenous population, the 2016 Census: Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017a) reported a Christian affiliation (54%). However, the number of Indigenous people reporting no religious affiliation increased from 24% in the 2011 Census to 36% in the 2016 Census. Less than 2% of the Indigenous population reported adherence to Australian Aboriginal Traditional religions or beliefs. This has remained steady over the last 20 years.

In summary then, the number of young children in Australia coming from another country, speaking a different language at home and identifying as a religion other than Christianity or have no religious affiliation, is increasing. It is the latter statistic that is of relevance to ECRE. The most recent data regarding religious diversity in Australian Catholic schools show that almost one in three students (29%) in Australian Catholic schools are not Catholic, a figure that has increased by 1% annually since 2006 (National Catholic Education Commission, 2013, p. 32). At present, there are no figures for young children's religious affiliations in Catholic prior-to-school settings, but educators in Catholic kindergartens and long day care centres reported significant diversity in children's religions (Grajczonek, 2013b).

An equally important statistic to consider in terms of religious diversity is that of non-practising members of the various religions. According to the National Church and Life Survey (Powell & Pepper, 2017), less than one in five Australians (18%) attend church at least monthly. The Australian Catholic Bishops also reported on, and are concerned with the falling numbers of practising families (Bishops of NSW and the ACT, 2007). Australia's religious diversity poses challenges for ECRE and whether acknowledged or not, does impact its matter.

Educators' Contexts

Educators' contexts also have a bearing on the matter of early childhood religious education. While teachers in Australian Catholic primary schools must be accredited, that is, have a tertiary qualification in religious education and/or theology, as well as maintain that accreditation by participating in professional development annually, educators in non-compulsory Catholic early childhood settings are not required to have such accreditation. In most city dioceses, teachers in Catholic schools are required to be Catholic, whereas in more regional dioceses they are not. However, early childhood educators in both non-compulsory education in off-school-sites and on-school-sites are not required to be Catholic. The findings from a study conducted in 2012 with 17 early childhood educators in Catholic kindergartens and early learning centres in two Australian dioceses, highlighted further telling insights into educators' contexts regarding ECRE (Grajczonek, 2013b).

Although not specifically asked, 52% of the participants in this study volunteered their religious backgrounds: 35% identified as not being Catholic, 12% identified as having no religion and not being religious in any way, and 5% identified as Catholic but did not go to church. Ten of the 17 participants (almost 60%), stated that the aim of ECRE should focus on values such as kindness, compassion and respect. Other aims suggested included introducing young children to spirituality and focusing on the individual, each child's uniqueness which he/she brings to the setting. Six participants stated that another aim should assist children to learn about and respect difference in terms of culture and religion, help them know what it means to be religious, and understand others' points of views. Only three participants' aims focused specifically on the place of a Catholic curriculum in terms of assisting children to know God's message in a way that they understand and respond to, which in turn, would help children who do not go to church.

In terms of the content of the proposed curriculum, many emphasised that it should include values such as compassion, kindness, generosity, respect and forgiveness. Others reinforced this adding that such values be linked to Bible stories, as this was important in the Catholic childcare centre and kindergarten, particularly for those children who would be going to Catholic schools. Many also expressed the desire for a multifaith curriculum, that is, to represent all children's religious beliefs, how others celebrate their traditions, as well as how different traditions are celebrated in the one culture. Also, to ensure the content includes how to talk about God, the specific language to use about God, Jesus and heaven and a list of basic Bible stories rather than beliefs of any one religion. In terms of specific knowledge related to church literacy, some suggested including the Church's key celebrations across the year.

Another insightful finding concerned educators' anxiety about their own limited background in religious education. Overall, educators' views regarding the aim and content of religious education ranged between a more secular one emphasising values' education and a more religious one that focused intentionally on biblical education and the Church. They also emphasised the inclusion of a multireligious perspective.

Implications Children and Educators' Contexts Pose for Early Childhood Religious Education's Matter

A critical characteristic of both children and educators' contexts was that of diversity. Although Australia's population is multicultural and multireligious, it is increasingly less religious. These demographics are reflected in the Catholic early childhood prior-to-school and school settings. The reality is that early childhood educators can no longer presume first, that all children in Catholic settings are Catholic and second, that even those who are Catholic are practising Catholics who experience, celebrate and know their religion. Australian Catholic school religious education curricula

have responded to these demographics in a variety of ways (National Catholic Education Commission Religious Education Committee, 2008). A number of the dioceses approach their school religious education curriculum in an educational manner which does not presume religious faith. Other dioceses have revised their previous catechetical or confessional curricula to include a more educational approach and sit somewhere along a continuum between educational and catechetical approaches, such as in the Sydney *Religious Education Curriculum K-12* (Catholic Education Office, Archdiocese of Sydney, 2006). However, the stated objectives in some of these latter curricula still include presumptions that all children are Catholic, for example, in one of the Sydney curriculum's principal objectives, 'Its principal objectives are that students will be provided with opportunities to develop: an awareness of, and commitment to their role in the life of the Church community' (Cleary & Moffatt, 2017, p. 306). This particular principal objective dismisses and disregards those students who are not Catholic. The language used to describe objectives (or outcomes) in ECRE needs to reflect and respond to children's diverse religious contexts.

A second characteristic of ECRE matter relates to the choice of specific programmes used in the setting, as they determine the content. A number of Australian dioceses implement the programme, Godly Play (Berryman, 1991) in their early childhood religious education curricula following the formula closely (Cleary & Moffatt, 2017). This programme was developed by Berryman for his Episcopalian Church as a Sunday School programme for young children. It is a catechetical programme which aims to develop children's faith; most appropriate within a church community, but not as appropriate in an educational setting (Grajczonek & Truasheim, 2017). Other dioceses take aspects of this programme, particularly the storytelling and use Berryman's scripts along with accompanying 3D materials. There is no denying storytelling, particularly when using 3D materials, is a worthwhile and effective pedagogical tool in the early childhood setting, but it is also essential that two further elements of biblical education are considered: adapting biblical texts appropriately and including biblical scholarship.

Adapted versions or stories of biblical passages used to tell a biblical passage, need to remain faithful to that biblical text (Stead, 1996). This is not always achieved in the Godly Play programme. For example, the two Infancy Narratives (Matthew 1:18-2:12 and Luke 2:1-20) are combined into the one story in Godly Play (Berryman, 2002, pp. 52–55) thus compromising the distinct and profound message of each gospel writer, that of Matthew and Luke (Crotty, 2009, p. 174).

Further, contemporary religious education argues that biblical storytelling must be accompanied by the historical, cultural, social, religious and literary contexts of the story (Carswell, 2017; Stead, 1996). Unfortunately, Godly Play's biblical scripts and formulae do not include biblical scholarship and indeed some of the 3D materials used, teach young children misinformation, such as in the script for the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Berryman, 2002, pp. 77–86) which is told using twelve brown felt strips to construct the sheepfold, implying a timber fence as the barrier. During the time of Jesus, sheepfolds were constructed from rocks, not wooden fences. An essential principle of any curriculum, including religious education, is not to teach anything that has to be untaught later (Stead, 1996).

Educators' contexts also raise key implications for ECRE matter in the area of biblical education. Their views on content (Grajczonek, 2013b) revealed significant insights into these educators' own knowledge and understanding of religious education in the Catholic early childhood setting. While they were all comfortable with a values' education being introduced, not all educators saw the need to link these values with the Bible and not one specifically linked them with the gospel values as lived and taught by Jesus. It is to be kept in mind that some of these educators were in centres in which religious education in any form was not part of those settings' routines. That being stated, this insight raises concern for the integrity of the Catholic identity of those settings. It would appear that for these educators teaching in the Catholic early childhood setting, their position and place in that setting were not substantially influenced or shaped by its Catholic identity. In response to this situation then, that is, educators' contexts, it would be important that ECRE matter focuses on the person of Jesus Christ and gospel values in relation to the Catholic tradition. Early childhood religious education in the Catholic setting cannot be so neutral that the Catholic identity of that setting is unrecognisable.

All early childhood settings in Australia focus on values such as compassion, kindness, forgiveness and respect but what is distinct about those values in the Catholic educational setting is that they are grounded in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. It is essential that young children come to know that it is important to be compassionate in the way that the Good Samaritan was compassionate. It is important to be forgiving in the way that Jesus was forgiving of Zacchaeus. It is important to be humble in the way Jesus' birth according to Luke was humble. Young children in the Catholic early childhood setting should come to know and be familiar with the person of Jesus Christ. It is also important that they know and understand how their early childhood setting is shaped by Jesus' life and teachings, that is, that relationships between children themselves, between children and educators, between educators themselves, between educators and families are all respectful, life-giving and accepting, informed by Jesus' own commandment, 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another' (John 13:34). Young children can come to know Jesus and should be able to articulate his life, albeit in simple terms. Important aspects of the gospels to include then in ECRE include Jesus' birth, his life in terms of who were his friends leading to children's understanding of community and disciples, his teachings, and Jesus as Son of God who was crucified but overcame death and rose to be in heaven; exploring that concept of new life in terms of transformation. They can explore and learn about the local Catholic parish community which represents Jesus' community here among them today. Visiting the local Catholic church and meeting the priest and other parishioners are also important inclusions. It is worthwhile too that young children learn about God's creation and humanity's role in caring for creation, specifically the Six Days of Creation and the Sabbath (Genesis, 1:1-2:4a). Rather than organising content to reflect topics of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1993) such as Beliefs, Church, Christian Life, Morality, Sacred Texts and such like, organise the content around the Church's liturgical year. In this way, young children can learn about, and for those who are Catholic, be part of, the Christian life, understanding

how it is informed by Jesus' life in a more concrete manner. In exploring and investigating these areas, children can also learn how Jesus' life and teachings inform and shape the way of life, relationships and interactions within the Catholic early childhood setting.

The relevance of religious education in early childhood has been questioned and challenged on the basis of children's age and circumstances including their religious diversity. Criticisms about children's age and circumstances reflect an outdated view of the child, such as was posed by Goldman (1964) who questioned and challenged the idea of exposing young children to the Bible and to biblical education. This was a time when developmental psychology shaped early childhood education theory and practice; when the concept of the universal child understood to pass through designated developmental stages, determined the matter of all early childhood education.

We no longer live in Goldman's times and our understanding of children and childhood has deepened critically. Young children are much more capable than had been previously thought. Since 2015, one Australian Catholic education office has been developing an early childhood religious education curriculum which at its heart is the person of Jesus Christ (the curriculum is accompanied by complementary liturgical celebrations). The framework of the curriculum document is underpinned by inquiry learning and the investigation into Jesus' life reflects the Church's liturgical cycle. Early childhood educators in this diocese are provided with professional development specifically in ECRE four times a year and during these sessions engage with the necessary background knowledge to teach the learning development areas within a contemporary early childhood education pedagogy. During 2017, a more rigorous focus was placed upon educators' evaluations of the nature and relevance of the content, the pedagogy employed, children's engagement and learning, as well as the depth of their own content knowledge and understanding. While changes responding to those evaluations have been made to some of the learning development areas, as well as to their depth, educators report children's engagement as active and engaged, confirming them as capable in this area.

Regarding the criticism of young children's religious diversity, it is important that the matter of religious education does include space for investigation of other religions represented in the setting. For example, if one of the children was a Buddhist or Hindu, then all children could explore some of the key elements of that religion such as important festivals, people and deities. Comparisons could be made between how Jesus assists Christians to live in certain ways with how Buddha assists Buddhists to live. The children themselves or family members could share their own lived experiences of the religion. It is also important that Australian Aboriginal Traditional religions or beliefs are part of religious education matter. For example, an exploration of the Six Days of Creation and the Sabbath (Genesis 1:1-2:4a) could commence with an investigation of Aboriginal Dreaming stories, noting their key features. The most important aspect within such explorations is that all children come to understand and appreciate how a person's religion informs and shapes how they live. A British approach specifically developed for young children, A Gift to the Child (Grimmit et al., 1991, as cited in Hull, 1996) offers a worthwhile, engaging and concrete exploration into the religious experiences, symbols and rites of other religions. At

the heart of the inclusion of exploring other religions represented in the setting, is that all children's voices are heard and all children are validated in their beliefs thus ensuring that the principles of contemporary early childhood education theory and practice inform and shape ECRE.

Given young children's religious diversity including those who are Catholic but whose experience and knowledge of Catholicism may be negligible or limited, the actual starting point for religious education requires deliberation. It is argued that the starting point for religious education should be with children's innate spiritualities (Liddy, 2007; Nye & Hay, 1996). Hay & Nye's (2006) research led them to claim that all children are born with an innate spirituality which is not dependent on any religious affiliations. They focused on children's sensory awareness rather than a cognitive awareness and proposed that children's spiritual sensitivity comprises three categories: awareness sensing, mystery sensing and value sensing all of which are made available as they go about their daily activities. Bradford (1999) argues that nurturing 'human spirituality' that is, the essential needs of children which can be simplified as love, peace, wonder, joy and relatedness, can lead to the development of a more religious or 'devotional spirituality'. According to Bradford, these essential needs or categories are fundamental to religious identity of all kinds. The characteristics of children's innate spirituality include their sense of self, relationships and connectedness, their sense of awareness and of mystery, their sense of transcendence, sense of value and of wisdom or knowing. All of these characteristics, many of which are already stipulated outcomes in Australian early childhood curricula, offer relevant starting points for early childhood religious education. An example of this is with children's sense of connectedness, one of the five learning outcomes specified in the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) document. Educators actively promote the lived experiences of children's relationships at home, in their communities and in the setting, itself. Once they have developed an understanding of themselves in relation to others, children's investigations of Jesus' relationships, his community and the parish community then have greater relevance for them.

Conclusion

Recent years have witnessed a more intentional process to specify, to make visible, the actual matter of early childhood education, its planned and intentional aspects including its outcomes, learning development areas and educators' pedagogies. It is equally as important that ECRE as it comes of age in Australia, does not seek to 'force fit' programmes from overseas that do not reflect Australian contexts; that it becomes more intentional about its matter, its planned and intentional aspects, within a contemporary early childhood reconceptualised view of the child as capable, strong and active. Each child's sociocultural context, plays a pivotal role in the determination of such matter, as do educators' contexts. This chapter focused on two aspects of the planned and intentional aspects of early childhood religious education: its outcomes or objectives (as it is named in some diocesan curricula) and learning

development areas or content. At the heart of this matter must be the person of Jesus so that young children know and understand his life and teachings and why he is central to Christianity as it is lived and celebrated. It must not only nurture children's innate spiritualities which offer starting points for religious education, but at the same time, it must make links between children's 'human spiritualities' and religion. It must also recognise, acknowledge and validate the voices of children from other religions, enabling those children to share their sacred stories, religious beliefs and practices. This matter must not only contribute to, and strengthen, the Catholic identity of the Catholic early childhood setting, but also strengthen young children's understandings of religion and what part it can, and does play, in our contemporary world. Early childhood religious education matters; the matter of early childhood Religious Education matters.

References

Arthur, L., Beecher, B., Dockett, S., Death, E., & Farmer, S. (2015). *Programming and planning in the early childhood settings* (6th ed.). Melbourne: Cengage Learning Australia.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017a). *2016 Census: Religion*. Retrieved from Australian Bureau of Statistics: http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mediareleasesbyReleaseDate/7E65A144540551D7CA258148000E2B85?OpenDocument.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017b). *Census of population and housing: Reflecting Australia—stories from the census, 2017*. Retrieved from Australian Bureau of Statistics: http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2071.0~2016~Main%20Features~Religion%20Data%20Summary~70.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017c). *Census: Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander population*. Retrieved from Australian Bureau of Statistics: http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/MediaRealesesByCatalogue/02D50FAA9987D6B7CA25814800087E03?OpenDocument.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). *2016 Census QuickStats*. Retrieved from Australian Bureau of Statistics: http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/036.

Berryman, J. (1991). *Godly play: An imaginative approach to religious education*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

Berryman, J. (2002). *The complete guide to Godly play: Volume 3*. Denver, CO: Morehouse Education Resources.

Bishops of NSW and the ACT. (2007). *Catholic schools at a cross roads*. Sydney, NSW: The Bishops of NSW and the ACT with assistance from the Catholic Education Office, Sydney.

Bouma, G. D. (2017). *Census 2016 shows Australia's changing religious profile, with more 'nones' than Catholics*. Retrieved from The Conversation: https://theconversation.com/census-2016-shows-australias-changing-religious-profile-with-more-nones-than-catholics-79837.

Bradford, J. (1999). The spiritual needs and potential of the child and young person: A rationale for discussion. *Muslim Education Quarterly, 16*(4), 3–14.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Carswell, M. (2017). Between desire and reality: The presentation of scripture in religious education. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian Catholic schools: Exploring the landscapes* (pp. 119–139). Mulgrave, Vic: Vaughan Publishing.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. (1993). Retrieved from The Holy See: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM.

Catholic Education Office, Archdiocese of Sydney. (2006). *Religious education curriculum K-12.* Sydney: Catholic Education Office.

Cavalletti, S. (1992*). The religious potential of the child: Experiencing scripture and liturgy with young children* (P. Coulter, Trans.). Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications.

Cleary, A., & Moffatt, S. (2017). Curriculum focus: K-2 religious education in the Archdiocese of Sydney. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian Catholic schools: Exploring the landscapes* (pp. 305–325). Mulgrave, Vic: Vaughan Publishing.

Crotty, R. (2009). That holy night: Reflections on the infancy narratives. In M. Ryan (Ed.), *Reading the bible: An introduction for students* (pp. 159–174). Hamilton, Qld: Lumino Press.

Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations. (2009). *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia.* Retrieved from https://docs. education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_ learning_framework_for_australia.pdf.

Goldman, R. (1964). *Religious thinking from childhood to adolescence*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Grajczonek, J. (2012). Acknowledging religious diversity and empowering young children's agency and voice in the religion classroom. In S. Parker, R. Freathy, & L. J. Francis (Eds.), *Religious education and freedom of religion and belief*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Grajczonek, J. (2013a). The early years religion program: Placing the emphasis on how young children learn. *Religious Education Journal of Australia, 29*(2), 3–8.

Grajczonek, J. (2013b). *What do you say is effective early years religious education? Giving voice to early years educators in curriculum design.* Unpublished Report, Australian Catholic University.

Grajczonek, J. (2017). Developing religious education curricula for early childhood in Australia. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian Catholic schools: Exploring the landscapes* (pp. 99–118). Mulgrave, Vic: Vaughan Publishing.

Grajczonek, J., & Truasheim, M. (2017). Implementing Godly Play in educational settings: A cautionary tale. *British Journal of Religious Education, 39*(2), 172–186.

Hall, K., Horgan, M., Ridgway, A., Murphy, R., Cunneen, M., & Cunningham, D. (2010). *Loris Malaguzzi and the Reggio Emilia experience*. London: Continuum International Publishing Company.

Hay, D., & Nye, R. (2006). *The spirit of the child* (Revised ed.). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Hull, J. M. (1996). A gift to the chid: A new pedagogy for teaching religion to young children. *British Journal of Religious Education, 91*(2), 172–188.

Grimmitt, M. H., Grove, J., Hull, J. M., & Spencer, L. (1991). *A gift to the child: Religious education in the primary school*. Hemmel Hempstead: Simon and Schuster.

James, A., & James, A. L. (2004). *Constructing childhood: Theory, policy and social practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Liddy, S. (2007). Spirituality and the young child. In J. Grajczonek & M. Ryan (Eds.), *Religious education in early childhood: A reader* (pp. 5–17). Brisbane, Qld: Lumino Press.

MacNaughton, G. (2003). *Shaping early childhood: Learners, curriculum and context*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa/Early childhood curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.

National Catholic Education Commission. (2013). *Australian Catholic Schools 2012.* Retrieved from National Catholic Education Commission: http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/resources/ research/221-australian-catholic-schools-2012/file.

National Catholic Education Commission Religious Education Committee. (2008). *Religious education in dialogue: Curriculum around Australia*. Canberra: NCEC.

Nye, R., & Hay, D. (1996). Identifying children's spirituality: How do you start without a starting point? *British Journal of Religious Education, 18*(3), 144–154.

Powell, R., & Pepper, M. (2017). *Local churches in Australia: Research findings from NCLS Research 2016.* Retrieved from 2016 National Church Life Survey: http://www.2016ncls.

org.au/resources/downloads/Local%20Churches%20in%20Australia-Research%20Findings%20from%20NCLS%20Research(2017).pdf.

Stead, B. (1996). *The influence of critical biblical study on the teaching and use of scripture in Catholic primary schools in Victoria*. Unpublished Thesis, Latrobe University, Bundoora, Vic.

Vygotsky, L. (1967). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wood, E., & Hedges, H. (2016). Curriculum in early childhood education: Curriculum questions about content, coherence, and control. *The Curriculum Journal, 27*(3), 387–405.

Dr. Jan Grajczonek is Adjunct Professor at the University of Notre Dame, Fremantle. Before being appointed to this position, she had been Senior Lecturer in Religious Education in the Faculty of Education and Arts at the Australian Catholic University, Brisbane Campus from 2000 to 2015. Her research interests are religious education in early childhood, young children's spirituality and children's literature. She has authored several books, book chapters and academic papers. Jan continues to work in developing curriculum in religious education, as well as providing professional development for early years and primary teachers of religion with Catholic education offices across Australia.

Chapter 22
Catholic Early Years Educators' Dilemma: Remaining Faithful to Children's Spiritualities

Christine Robinson and Jan Grajczonek

Introduction

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia [EYLF] (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009), a nationally mandated document, requires educators to consider the spiritual aspects of children's lives and learning within a holistic approach to the early years. In addition, this document requires that educators' own practices be culturally competent, that is, they are to value 'the cultural and social contexts of children and their family' (p. 14). The EYLF then argues that cultural competence is much more than an awareness of cultural differences,

> It is the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures. Cultural competence encompasses:
>
> - being aware of one's own world view
> - developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences
> - gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views
> - developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures (p. 16).

However, it is further argued that children's religious backgrounds also be encompassed within cultural competence 'world views and cultural practices can also emerge from, and be shaped by families' religious traditions' (Grajczonek, 2012a, p. 157).

This chapter discusses a key finding from a recent investigation into educators' practices for promoting children's spirituality within the context of Catholic childcare which falls within the jurisdiction of Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) (Robinson, 2017). The key finding pertains to educators' understandings of spirituality as a specifically Christian construct and one that is nurtured through

C. Robinson (✉) · J. Grajczonek
The University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, WA, Australia
e-mail: christine.robinson@nd.edu.au

religious education. Data gathered through interviews with educators, their planning documents and observations of their practice supported this finding, suggesting a dilemma for educators: How do early years educators in Catholic settings teach religious education in ways that acknowledge, respect and nurture children's spiritual and religious diversities?

Background and Context

Although CEWA states that the childcare centres operate as extensions of the Catholic school, it is not explicit in stating how the mission of the Catholic school is reflected in the practices that occur for young children in the centres. The policy *Early Childhood Education Care Policy 2-B6* published by the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA, 2013a) that addresses the centres specifically, outlines that entry into the 3-year-old programme is open to non-Catholic families, with priority given to Catholic families from the local parish. A key aim of Catholic education is evangelisation which proclaims the Gospel rather than imposes (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, par. 6). Respecting diversity is an important issue in Australia where 30% of children enrolled in Catholic schools identify as non-Catholic (The National Catholic Education Commission, 2016). This statistic provides some insight into the possible religious diversity at Catholic childcare centres.

Religious education, as outlined in the policy *Religious Education 2-B5* (CECWA, 2013b), applies to all Catholic schools commencing from pre-primary, the first year of compulsory schooling. This policy states that, 'in three year and four-year-old programs, teachers are required to plan to raise the religious awareness of children through providing an atmosphere where "God talk" permeates all' (par. 1). This is the only reference to the 3–4-year-old setting and the only mention of religious awareness—spirituality is not explicitly stated. In 2014, CEWA released the support document, *Let the Little Children Come to Me* to assist educators promote religious awareness in children's early years. This document also does not specifically address spirituality. However, it does outline practical strategies for assisting educators in raising children's religious awareness.

The Relationship Between Spirituality and Religiosity

A key factor of early childhood educators' dilemmas linked to nurturing young children's spirituality in Catholic prior-to-school and early childhood settings and classrooms, is the level of their understandings of the nature of the relationship between spirituality and religiosity. Contemporary literature recognises that spirituality is not confined to particular religious traditions or cultural beliefs; it transcends cultural and religious boundaries (Bloom, 2009). While they may be related, each is distinct (de Souza, 2009; Rossiter, 2010; Tacey, 2000). It could be said that a religious person

is spiritual in a specific way determined by their religiosity. Rossiter (2010) offers clear insights into these two terms:

> The spiritual is the natural dimension to life that includes thinking and feelings about transcendence; ideas about a creator or creative force in the cosmos; human values; sense of meaning and purpose in life; love and care for self and others; sense of stewardship for the earth and its flora and fauna; the aesthetic. Spirituality is the way in which a spiritual/moral dimension enters into, or is implied in, the thinking and behaviour of individuals. (p. 7)

Rossiter explains religiosity as, 'a measure of one's religious behaviour such as attendance at church/mosque, frequency of prayer, engagement in a local community of faith' (p. 7).

Young Children's Spirituality

Research that intentionally focused on children's spirituality was initiated by Coles (1990) who concluded that children are interested in the meaning of life, understand life as a journey and are able to ask questions of ultimate meaning. Later research conducted by Hay and Nye (1998) found that spirituality is innate to all children and essential to this is children's 'relational consciousness' (Nye, 1998). Others who have explored this 'relational consciousness' further, argue that linked to it are children's identity and sense of belonging as they both come to know themselves in relationship with others and find their place in the world and with others (Adams, 2009; Adams, Hyde, & Woolley, 2008; Eaude, 2009).

Important aspects of young children's lives include their meaning and searching as they seek to find significance in the many experiences they encounter both joyful and painful (Eaude, 2009; Hay & Nye, 1998, 2006). Other aspects of children's spirituality are their sense of mystery, transcendence, awe and wonder, creativity, wisdom and knowing (Grajczonek, 2010a).

Nurturing Young Children's Spirituality

It is claimed that if children's spirituality is not intentionally nurtured, then their capacity for the spiritual will fade and be lost (Crompton, 1998; Eaude, 2003). Educators' roles are critical to nurturing children's spiritualities (Adams, Bull & Maynes, 2016). They are urged to attend to the affective (the felt sense) and spiritual domains (de Souza, 2004) by providing time and silence for inner reflection, for creative, imaginative and intuitive responses and for transformed action (de Souza & Hyde, 2007). Not only do they need to reflect on their own spirituality, but also be attentive to the spiritual (Adams, 2009). Educators are also encouraged to emphasise the value of being, connecting and relating, routines and ritual, connecting with the natural world and cultivating compassion (Thomas & Lockwood, 2009). The *Framework for Early*

Years Spiritual Development in the Catholic Tradition (Grajczonek in collaboration with Queensland Catholic Education Commission Pre-Prep Taskforce, 2010b) provides generic guidelines across five areas of children's spirituality to be implicitly and explicitly nurtured by early years educators in terms of,

i. Children's relationships, sense of connectedness, identity and sense of belonging by, for example, 'Creating a community of friends, a network of kind, compassionate and respectful relationships' (p. 4);
ii. Their sense of transcendence by 'encouraging children to wonder about God; explore images of the Divine from other religious traditions represented in the setting' (p. 4);
iii. Their sense of awareness by 'giving time for children to become conscious of, and express their likes, dislikes, gifts, responses to a variety of stimuli' (p. 5);
iv. Their sense of mystery by 'creating an awareness and appreciation of the unknown nurtured when curiosity is encouraged' (p. 5); and
v. Their sense of value by 'giving children the opportunity to explore values and religious beliefs, particularly Christian beliefs and gospel values, as well as those representing children from other religious traditions, and the ways in which those beliefs and values affect people's lives' (p. 5).

For children who are not religious, many argue that the starting point for religious Education should begin with, and seek to nurture their spirituality rather than with a more formal religious education (Liddy, 2007; Nye & Hay, 1996). Nye and Hay suggested three categories of children's spirituality including awareness sensing, mystery sensing and value sensing as starting points for nurturing their spirituality. Bradford (1999) argued that in nurturing and satisfying children's fundamental needs, that is, their 'human spirituality' can lead to a more 'religious (devotional) spirituality' (p. 4). Bradford named the fundamental human-spiritual aspects of the essential needs of children as love, peace, wonder, joy and relatedness all of which are fundamental to religious identity of all kinds.

In the specific context of Catholic early childhood education in Australian prior-to-school and early years settings, the distinctions between spirituality and religiosity are important to note, as children in these settings reflect Australia's increasingly pluralist population. While all children in such settings are spiritual, they may not be religious or may come from religious backgrounds other than Christian. When the characteristics of children's innate spirituality such as identity and belonging, connectedness, imagination, wonder and awe, and mystery are promoted, all children's religious backgrounds are acknowledged and respected, a requirement of both the Catholic Church (CCE, 1988, para. 6) and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1989).

Research Design

The research design of this study was informed by a qualitative approach with a social constructivist theoretical perspective. As the research aimed to understand the experience of educators in promoting children's spirituality, a phenomenological approach with an interpretivist paradigm was most appropriate (Langdridge, 2007). Interpretivist Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was specifically selected as it brought together the components of the research design whilst providing a structure for the analysis of data. IPA is frequently selected for phenomena that are not easily measurable (Bonner & Friedman, 2011), as was the case for spirituality within this research.

Data were gathered through the use of semi-structured interviews, educators' planning documents and observation. Interview transcripts and observational records were analysed using IPA (Bednall, 2006). Educators' planning documents were analysed using qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012). The participants in this research included nine educators working with 3- and 4-year-olds in three Catholic centres operated by Catholic Education Western Australia. Educators' qualifications ranged from teacher (4-year university teaching degree) to educators holding a Certificate III (6-month traineeship completed through a TAFE/Vocational Education Training Centre and undertaken while working at a childcare centre). To ensure commonality of experience across educators, the most qualified educator for each room, referred to as the lead educator, was selected to form the participant sample. In all cases, the lead educator held responsibility for the planning, documentation and implementation of the 3–4-year-old programme. Participants in the research were provided with a pseudonym, such as *Educator 1: Centre B*, to de-identify the data.

Findings and Discussion

Educators' Experiences and Understandings of Spirituality

All nine educators had difficulty recalling or describing a spiritual experience during the interview and were prompted for more detail. Through the analysis of their descriptions, four themes emerged: a religious experience, a personal experience within community, experiences of nature and reflection. The most common experience described by educators (8) included religious beliefs and practices. Some of the responses that contributed to the religious experience theme included, for one educator praying with her family during the time of her sister's serious illness, while another recalled the moment her family came together at the church for her Pa's funeral. The same number of educators (8) also spoke of a spiritual experience as being personal yet simultaneously evoking a sense of community. For example, educators described a personal feeling of spirituality when gathered with others to celebrate Mass. For one of the participants, this was a powerful recollection as she

recalled being in front of the church singing and suddenly became so overcome that she cried. Experiences that involved nature were described by five educators as being connected to the natural environment, such as the ocean or seeing birds fly overhead. Finally, four educators named elements of reflection in their descriptions, such as having time to think, being in a quiet space or listening to reflective music.

To articulate their understanding of the term spirituality, educators referred to features, characteristics or feelings associated with spirituality for them personally. The following themes emerged from educators' responses: belief based, innate and personal, being a good person, sense of purpose and peaceful. Given that many educators (8) recounted a religious experience in their description of a spiritual moment, it was consistent that aspects of religious beliefs would feature in educators' articulations of their understandings of spirituality. As opposed to referencing a particular religion, educators (8) used the term 'beliefs' as a way to describe spirituality. For example, Educator 1: Centre B described spirituality as a 'connection with something more. I would call it God but other people would call it something different'. Although some educators initially spoke broadly about spirituality being something more, their elaborations resulted in an explanation of their belief in one God, that is, the Christian God. All educators (9) noted that spirituality was a personal matter. Eight of the nine educators implied that spirituality is innate. Although the educators did not specifically use the word 'innate', they connected to this notion by explaining that spirituality was for everyone. The theme, being a good person, emerged from four educators' descriptions being about 'doing good' and 'being kind'. Three educators described spirituality as being concerned with a sense of meaning and purpose in life, responding with statements regarding spirituality as being connected to knowing who you are and who you want to be. Educators' descriptions (5) of how they felt during the spiritual experience resulted in the emergent theme, peaceful. For example, educators used the words 'peaceful', 'content' and 'relaxed' to describe how they felt while in the spiritual moment they had previously shared.

Most educators clearly articulated a sense of religiosity, rather than a secular understanding of spirituality. It is to be recognised that the Catholic context of the centre possibly influenced such responses and further, participants might have felt compelled to respond in a religious manner. While recognising these possibilities, it can be concluded that these responses suggest what Rossiter (2011) articulated as religiosity, that is, a spirituality clearly referenced to religious beliefs. Educators' understandings of spirituality as connected to religious beliefs, and more specifically Christian religious beliefs, present several limitations: that, for educators, spirituality existed, not in a secular sense, but in a religious sense and second, that their understanding of spirituality in this religious sense did not recognise other world religions; it pertained only to Christianity. Additionally, as the overwhelming response to understanding spirituality related to religious beliefs, no connections were made to cultural beliefs and this emerged as the third limitation within educators' responses. In emphasising a Christian understanding of spirituality, educators provided no elaboration on spirituality in connection to other world religions nor to cultural competence. Cultural competence is a required pedagogical practice for educators (DEEWR, 2009), yet it was evident that educators did not perceive this practice encompassing spirituality.

Participants' hesitancy and limited nature of their responses suggested that they either had not been provided with, or sought, opportunities to develop and reflect upon their own spirituality. Educators' understandings of spirituality were almost solely based on their own life experiences, as opposed to any formal professional development on the subject. One educator recalled the topic of spirituality from an undergraduate unit of study but no professional development opportunities were reported. If educators are not provided with formal opportunities to develop and reflect on their own spirituality and additionally, if they themselves do not seek personal opportunities to do so, the task of attending to children's spirituality, as articulated in the literature (Adams, 2009; Champagne, 2001), is a challenging one.

Educators' Practices for Promoting Children's Spirituality

Documented Planning

Documentary data obtained through qualitative content analysis of educators' planning documentation provided insight into their intentional practices in promoting children's spirituality. These documents were organised as a series of activities and resources within the room, such as 'dramatic space' and 'block corner'. In almost all of the planning documents, these activities and resources were not explicitly linked to the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) principles, practices or learning outcomes. Further, it was evident that spirituality was not explicitly planned for outside of a Christian religious perspective. However, although not explicitly connected to spirituality in the planning documents, many of the activities and resources included characteristics or components of spirituality, such as belonging and cooperation, identity development and caring for nature. For example, one educator had planned to create a class friendship tree which contributes to children's sense of belonging. Another educator had planned for children to share information about their likes and dislikes of different foods, which connects to the development of identity. At one centre, educators had planned opportunities for children to clean out the vegetable garden to help the veggies grow, assisting children in connecting with nature.

Religious Education featured in the educators' planning documentation and included activities such as sharing the story of the birth of Jesus. Raising children's religious awareness through sharing this story is outlined in the mandated curriculum document *Let the Little Children Come to Me* (CEWA, 2014). However, on the occasions where educators included this in their documentation, no explicit links were made to that curriculum or to Scripture. God was specifically mentioned, for example, Educator 5: Centre A included the following in her documentation: 'Talk to children about Jesus as a baby. Relate to God, Mary and Joseph'. Prayer also featured in documentation, included as morning, lunch and end of the day prayer. Dramatic experiences that were structured, educator-directed re-enactments of the story of Jesus' birth were also included. Wonder questions featured in the documen-

tation and these related to the story of the birth of Jesus. However, the questions were focused on knowledge and recall, such as 'I wonder if Mary will find somewhere to have her baby?' (Educator 9: Centre A).

Overall, activities or intentions included in educators' planning that promoted children's spirituality were of an implicit nature, with connections to themes in the literature being made available only through the data analysis, as opposed to the explicit mention of spirituality. Early childhood educators have a key role in embedding spirituality when planning the classroom curriculum (Grajczonek, 2012a). If educators do not plan for children's spirituality it is likely to result in missed opportunities. Given educators' own personal experiences and understandings of spirituality illustrated a specific Christian perspective, it is not surprising that a key finding from their planning was the explicit reference to spirituality through a connectedness to a transcendent, God. Essentially educators planned for spirituality in the way that they personally understood spirituality; as religiosity. Educators' overall lack of detail in their planning for children's spirituality suggests that educators are, at the very least, unsure of how to intentionally promote children's spirituality.

Interview Responses

Five of the nine educators' responses regarding how they promoted children's spirituality related to the beliefs and practices of the Catholic religion. Educators explained that they promoted children's spirituality when they spoke about God and when they made children aware of God's creation. Prayer was also specifically mentioned. Two educators conveyed that while they did focus on the Catholic religion, they were aware that there were a number of children in their room who either were from other religious traditions or had no religious affiliations. Despite describing this context, neither educator indicated that this knowledge changed their practice. Five educators commented on facilitating children's development of social skills, such as how to interact with each other, as a practice that promoted children's spirituality. In addition, three educators referred to the importance of providing time to talk with children, naming conversation as a key practice. Three educators mentioned play as a practice for nurturing children's spirituality, although little elaboration was provided. Four educators noted the requirement for educators to be skilled and knowledgeable, if they are to be able to nurture children's spirituality. At times (3), this knowledge referred to religious knowledge, as opposed to an understanding of spirituality. Two educators referred to promoting identity as a practice by describing their focus on children's individual development and assisting them to develop their own sense of self.

The interview findings illustrated that educators did know something about promoting children's spirituality. Furthermore, what they did know was developed from their own experiences. Educators were able to identify but not explain or describe their practices for promoting children's spirituality. This suggests they did not possess the knowledge or language to effectively articulate their understandings, or to

connect their understandings of how to promote children's spirituality with their understandings of early years pedagogical practices. Relationality is the essence of spirituality (de Souza, 2016) and educators emphasised the relational nature of spirituality in the interview. They spoke of the importance of initiating and facilitating conversation and social skill development, which connect to relationality, as practices for promoting children's spirituality. Specifically, Christian religious practices were also identified, as was 'God', further illustrating educators' religiosity and the promotion of such. The interview data also illustrated educators' identification of the connection between the development of identity and the promotion of children's spirituality. However, little depth to their understanding of this connection was provided during the interview. Although the intention driving educators' practices relating to identity cannot be assumed, it was evident that they were intentional in this practice. While attending to children's identity, educators were promoting children's spirituality, albeit unintentionally.

Observed Practice

The data obtained through observing educators' practices made available both incidental and intentional experiences that occurred. Four themes emerged through the analysis process: relationships, wonder, identity and transcendence. The observational data highlighted the central role of relationships within the educators' day, both in creating and maintaining relationships with children and in facilitating relationships between children. For example, observations showed educators facilitating conversations, creating a sense of belonging and encouraging friendships among children. Wonder featured in the observational findings in two ways: educators facilitated children's wondering when they posed open-ended questions and also when educators encouraged children to imagine possibilities and be creative, such as through the provision for imaginative play scenarios in the room. Educators were observed attending to the development of children's sense of identity in a range of ways including, through facilitating resilience, children's development of self-regulation and well-being, as well as encouraging children's independence. The transcendence theme emerged from observations of educators initiating discussions about an Ultimate Other, referred to as God, as well as including practices that were particular to Christianity, contributing to children's connectedness to God. These practices included, for example, children being led in prayer and educators sharing scripture stories.

Practices that were observed promoting children's spirituality occurred incidentally, rather than intentionally, through planned opportunities. Findings from the analysis of the observational data revealed that religious education was a key means of promoting children's spirituality. Although all three centres accepted enrolments from children of a variety of faiths, a Christian religious context was clearly evident in the observational data. Educators were observed explicitly talking with children about Christianity, although with no overt mention of Catholicism. As observations

were undertaken in the final two months of the year, the story of the birth of Jesus, was the focus. In the occasions observed, the source used for the infancy narratives was a literary text, as opposed to either one of the Scripture passages (Mt. 1:18-2:12 or Lk. 2:1-20). On one occasion, an educator was observed telling the children the story of Jesus' birth without a script, while holding a Bible. Educators' practices demonstrating a focus on a Christian religious context resonated with educators' understandings about how children's spirituality could be promoted.

Summary of Findings and Discussion

It is important that educators have an understanding of spirituality that reaches beyond their own personal perceptions if they are to promote *all* children's spirituality. Across all three data sets (interview, observation and documentation), it was evident that educators understood spirituality and included practices for promoting children's spirituality that were particular to a sense of religiosity, rather than spirituality in a broad sense. Educators' understandings of spirituality as a connectedness to a transcendent, named 'God', was consistent across the findings. Findings also suggest that educators need to have developed a personal sense of spirituality, that is, to have experienced spiritual moments in their own lives and also have the knowledge and skills to enable them to understand and promote spirituality in its broadest sense. Educators can then be enabled to use these experiences, alongside their early years pedagogical practices, to create and facilitate spiritual opportunities for children. Educators require an understanding of spirituality that is both human and religious within the context of Catholic childcare and this is crucial to educators' ability to attend to all children's spirituality, while also demonstrating cultural competence, as mandated by the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009). These findings are not intended as criticisms of educators as they are in a Catholic context that mandates evangelization of the Catholic faith (CECWA, 2013b). Further, this paper recognises and acknowledges that educators are instrumental, and indeed pivotal, in promoting the Catholic identity of their centres. However, equally, educators need to be aware of the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) requirements, by acknowledging other world views, including diverse cultural views which also encompasses religious views if they are to give voice to all children (Grajczonek, 2012b).

Implications

Four implications emerge from the findings presented in this paper. First, professional development for educators that explicitly addresses the knowledge and understandings of spirituality, and its connection to religious beliefs, is recommended. The second implication also pertains to professional development. When educators have a personal understanding of spirituality, then professional development that assists

educators in understanding how spirituality can be promoted and expressed in the early years is necessary. Third, undergraduate programmes are well placed to embed spirituality within their units and doing so would enhance the view of spirituality as an interfaith and multicultural construct. Finally, the findings discussed in this paper also suggest that educators in Western Australia would benefit from an early years Religious Education that clearly provides information about children's spirituality. To assist educators in Catholic contexts that are interfaith and multicultural, this recommended curriculum must address worldviews represented in educators' own settings (Grajczonek, 2015), being inclusive of all religions whilst upholding the Catholic faith tradition.

Conclusion

The EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) outlines the role of the educator in attending to children's spirituality and existing literature espouses the need for children's spirituality to be nurtured (Adams, Bull & Maynes, 2016). The EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) also outlines that educators' own practices must be culturally competent (p. 14). In addition, Catholic centres and schools are tasked with raising children's religious awareness (CECWA, 2013a, 2-B5). Herein lies the dilemma: How do early years educators in Catholic settings teach Religious Education in ways that acknowledge, respect and nurture children's spiritual and religious diversities? Findings presented in this paper suggest that educators require professional development to assist with their own personal understandings of spirituality and to gain knowledge on practices they can implement to promote the spirituality of all children. Although the findings suggest educators do know something about spirituality, it was also evident that more depth in their knowledge and practice was needed. In particular, educators in Western Australia would benefit from an early years religious education that clearly provides information about children's spirituality, to assist them in navigating the interfaith and multicultural landscape of Catholic childcare whilst remaining aligned with the mission of the Catholic education system.

References

Adams, K. (2009). The rise of the child's voice: The silencing of the spiritual voice. *Journal of Beliefs and Values, 30*(2), 113–122.

Adams, K., Bull, R., & Maynes, M. L. (2016). Early childhood spirituality in education: Towards an understanding of the distinctive features of young children's spirituality. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 24*(5), 760–774. https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2014.996425.

Adams, K., Hyde, B., & Woolley, R. (2008). *The spiritual dimension of childhood*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Bednall, J. (2006). Epoche and bracketing within the phenomenological paradigm. *Issues in Education Research, 16*(2), 123–138.

Bloom, W. (2009). *The complete encyclopaedia of mind, body and spirit.* Retrieved from http://www.f4hs.org/education/contemporary-spirituality-paper.htm.

Bonner, E., & Friedman, H. (2011). A conceptual clarification of the experience of awe: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 39*(3), 222–235.

Bradford, J. (1999). The spiritual needs and potential of the child and young person: A rationale for discussion. *Muslim Education Quarterly, 16*(4), 3–14.

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia [CECWA]. (2013a). *Early childhood education and care policy 2-B6.* Retrieved from http://internet.ceo.wa.edu.au/AboutUs/Governance/Policies/Documents/Education/Policy%202B6%20Early%20Childhood%20Education%20and%20Care.pdf.

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia [CECWA]. (2013b). *Religious education policy 2-B5.* Retrieved from http://cms.ceo.wa.edu.au/policies/policy_statements/education_policies.jsp.

Catholic Education Office of Western Australia. (2014). *Let the little children come to me: A resource for aising the religious awareness of children in the early years.* Leederville, WA: Author.

Champagne, E. (2001). Listening to…listening for…: A theological reflection on spirituality in early childhood. In J. Erricker, C. Ota, & C. Erricker (Eds.), *Spiritual education: Cultural, religious and social differences, new perspectives for the 21st Century* (pp. 76–87). Brighton: Sussex Academic.

Coles, R. (1990). *The spiritual life of children*. London: HarperCollins.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988). *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school*. Homebush, NSW: Paulist Press.

Crompton, M. (1998). *Children, spirituality, religion and social work*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

de Souza, M. (2004). Teaching for effective learning in religious education: A discussion of the perceiving, thinking, feeling and intuitive elements in the learning process. *Journal of Religious Education, 53*(3), 22–30.

de Souza, M. (2009). Religion and spirituality: Why religious educators need to note the difference. *Religious Education of Australia, 25*(1), 3–10.

de Souza, M. (2016). *Spirituality in education in a global, pluralised world*. New York: Routledge Research. in Education.

de Souza, M., & Hyde, B. (2007). Editorial: Spirituality of children and young people: A consideration of some respectives and implications from research contextualised by Australia. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 12*(2), 97–104.

Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations. (2009). *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia.* Retrieved from https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf.

Eaude, T. (2003). Shining lights in unexpected corners: New angles on young children's spiritual development. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 8*(2), 151–162.

Eaude, T. (2009). Happiness, emotional well-being and mental health: What has children's spirituality to offer? *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 14*(3), 185–196.

Grajczonek, J. (2010a). *Spiritual development and religious education in the early years: A review of the literature.* Retrieved from Queensland Catholic Education Commission: http://qcec.catholic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Final_Spiritual-Development-Religious-Education-in-the-Early-Years_A-Review-of-the-Literature.pdf.

Grajczonek, J. (2010b). *Framework for young children's spiritual development in the Catholic tadition.* Retrieved from Queensland Catholic Education Commission: http://qcec.catholic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Framework-for-Early-Years-Spiritual-Development-in-the-Catholic-Tradition.pdf.

Grajczonek, J. (2012a). Interrogaing the spiritual as constructed in belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 37*(1), 152–160.

Grajczonek, J. (2012b). Acknowledging religious diversity and empowering young children's agency and voice in the religion classroom. In S. Parker, R. Freathy, & L. J. Francis (Eds.), *Religious education and freedom of religion and belief*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Grajczonek, J. (2015). To thine own self be true: Respecting both religious diversity and religious integrity in contemporary Australian early childhood religious education. In M. T. Buchanan, & A.-M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on catholic religious education in schools*. Springer International Publishing.

Hay, D., & Nye, R. (1998). *The spirit of the child*. London: HarperCollins.

Hay, D., & Nye, R. (2006). *The spirit of the child* (Revised edition ed.). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Langdridge, D. (2007). *Phenomenological psychology: Theory, research and method*. London: Pearson.

Liddy, S. (2007). Spirituality and the young child. In J. Grajczonek & M. Ryan (Eds.), *Religious education in early childhood: A reader* (pp. 5–17). Brisbane, Qld: Lumino Press.

National Catholic Education Commission [NCEC]. (2016). *Catholic schools in Australia.* Retrieved from http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/resources/publications/401-catholic-schools-in-australia-2016/file.

Nye, R. (1998). Identifying the core of children's spirituality. In D. Hay, & R. Nye (Eds.), *The spirit of the child* (pp. 112–137).

Nye, R., & Hay, D. (1996). Identifying children's spirituality: How do you start without a starting point? *British Journal of Religious Education, 18*(3), 144–154.

Robinson, C. (2017). *Educators' practices for promoting 3 and 4 year old children's spiritual development in Catholic childcare in Western Australia.* Unpublished Ph.D., The University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, WA, Australia.

Rossiter, G. (2010). A case for a 'big picture' re-orientation of K-12 Australian Catholic school religious education in the light of contemporary spirituality. *Journal of Religious Education, 58*(3), 5–18.

Rossiter, G. (2011). Reorienting the religion curriculum in Catholic schools to address the needs of contemporary youth spirituality. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 3*(1), 57–72.

Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in action*. London: SAGE.

Tacey, D. (2000). *ReEnchantment: The new Australian spirituality*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Thomas, P., & Lockwood, V. (2009). *Nurtung the spiritual child: Compassion, connection and a sense of self*. Watson, ACT: Early Childhood Australia Inc.

United Nations. (1989). *Convention on the rights of the child.* Retrieved from United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx.

Dr. Christine Robinson is the coordinator of the undergraduate and postgraduate early childhood programmes at the University of Notre Dame, Fremantle. Christine recently completed her Ph.D. investigating educator's practices for promoting young children's spirituality in the context of Catholic childcare. Her research interests are in the areas of religious education and early childhood. A particular focus of Christine's research is the construction of spiritual and religious capabilities within Catholic schools. In addition, as an outcome of her Ph.D. studies, Christine is engaged with local Catholic schools to develop their spiritual and religious awareness.

Chapter 23
God, the Church and Today's Child: Cavalletti in the Classroom?

Anne-Marie Irwin

Introduction

In our twenty-first century, Western society's paradigm shift is well underway, with its fragile families, crises of belief, and well-entrenched tyranny of social media. For many of today's adults, faith itself has lost its relevance, with this having a flow-on effect in children's own faith knowledge and understanding. These issues present educators with deep and real challenges. Employing effective and appropriate methods for teaching the Catholic faith within the context of Catholic schools are keenly debated.

Can a method built on Montessorian principles present a viable option for Catholic religious education? Maria Montessori was deeply committed to Catholic religious education (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Sofia Cavalletti explored Montessorian principles, applying them in parish settings (Cavalletti, 1983), observing and analysing them across countries and socio-economic settings. She named her method the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Cavalletti & Gobbi, 1964). Cavalletti's kerygmatic approach aimed to bring awareness of the Good News of Salvation freshly to each child (Cavalletti, 1983). The approach focused on the key events at the heart of Christianity. The adult's role was to introduce the child to God through words, life and example (Cavalletti, 2002).

The Background

Elements of Cavalletti's (1983) approach have been introduced across Australian Catholic schools, in a variety of ways such as Jerome Berryman's Godly Play

A.-M. Irwin (✉)
University of Notre Dame, Sydney, Australia
e-mail: anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au

(Berryman, 1994), and Parramatta's Exploring Scripture. Berryman's Godly Play has become more dominant since it provides detailed manuals and does not require extensive training. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd provides fewer guidelines for the untrained, requiring teachers to build their own resources, and necessitating substantial training.

My first substantial encounter with Cavalletti's (1983) work was in 2012 when I became an academic tutor at the School of Education of the University of Notre Dame, Sydney. There, Professor Gerard O'Shea's interpretation of Cavalletti's work formed the basis of the religious education courses (O'Shea, 2018).

Teaching these courses, led to familiarity Cavalletti's (1983) approach, and I could see its benefits. However, I wondered how comprehensively O'Shea's adaptation of Cavalletti's work could fulfil the religious education requirements in Catholic schools. It had not been trialled in an empirical study and this led me to undertake a doctoral study, adapting Cavalleti's approach within a school setting and formally recording evidence of its effectiveness. Montessori (1870–1952) and, to a lesser degree, Cavalletti (1917–2011) worked within societal settings quite distinct to that found in Australia today. How effectively would their principles and practices transfer across to Australian Catholic school settings today, given the beliefs and understandings of students, parents and teachers, the demands on teachers and the outcomes-based learning approach? Since there were no schools or teachers, in Sydney at least, using Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to a significant degree, the plan was to design, trial and refine an approach which I called The Scripture and Liturgy Teaching Approach (The SALT Approach).

The Structure of the Study

A design-based research model was selected for this study (Plomp & Nieveen, 2007). The SALT Approach would address the religious education in a classroom setting and would also explore the mentoring of teachers accompanying myself as the teacher-researcher. Design-based research facilitates the development of educational tools and the 'engineering' of learning environments by testing, refining and revising an educational prototype through a series of iterations (Cobb, DiSessa, Lehrer, & Schauble, 2003, p. 9).

The Scope of the Study

A diocesan school using Parramatta's Sharing Our Story (Catholic Education Office, Parramatta, N.S.W., 1999) was selected. The selected cohort had been the comparative group in a previous (unpublished) research study conducted by myself in 2013. The previous study verified that the school's clientele was multi-cultural and multi-religious, and there were significant and complex family issues. Such factors

would challenge the SALT Approach. Year Two was selected because the children were moving into the 6–9-year-old phase. Montessori style of education is often perceived as more relevant for the early school years and this age selection offered an opportunity to explore how the SALT Approach could work successfully with children transitioning from Montessori's first phase of development (0–6-year-olds), into the second one (6–12-year-olds). There were two participating teachers, who shared the role of homeroom teacher. As the researcher, I was the leading teacher, since the approach needed to be well understood so as to be adequately trialled, evaluated and refined.

The literature review explored the expectations and recommendations of the Catholic Church concerning religious education in its schools and formed the theoretical framework for the study. Catholic religious education is expected to be faithful to the message, belief and practice of the Catholic Church, reflecting belief in a personal, triune God, the historical person of Jesus Christ, the plan of salvation and the nature, place and purpose of the Sacraments (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988). Shaped by a Christian anthropological understanding of the human person, it should recognise each person's integrity, transcendent value and eternal destiny (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988). Teachers are expected to be 'outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life' and 'deeply motivated' (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007, para. 4). Documents identified challenges, recognising the difficulties that schools today encounter in educating children in the Catholic Faith. Young people absorb knowledge from many perspectives and are not always equipped to prioritise this in the light of Christian faith and life (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988). Many parents are indifferent to the faith, lack faith education and commitment or hold to other faiths (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). Many young people experience instability and wounded human relationships, leading to a disorientation and a loss of meaning in life (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, 2014).

The varied faith understanding and commitment of teachers themselves are recognised (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, 2014). However, the need for a teacher's mature understanding is implicit, since partial or inaccurate grasp can misrepresent what the Catholic Church holds to be true. Simplistic interpretations and inappropriately timed introductions of concepts can unnecessarily provoke ultimate rejection. Genesis, for example, is full of figurative language with regard to the days of creation, Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, the nature of the serpent, Original Sin and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Pope Benedict XVI & Seewald, 2002; Pope Benedict XVI, 2013). These important considerations require carefully nuanced wording, when introduced to children in the early school years.

A growing body of scholarly writing addresses the contemporary challenges described in magisterial documents. Tse (2015), Moog (2016), Paletta and Fiorin (2016) and Bracken, Dean and Gowdie (2016) discuss the complex scenarios in Catholic schools, where students, parents, teachers and executive staff do not necessarily uphold the beliefs of the Catholic Church. Lawler (2016) addresses the issue of faith leadership of school principals. Franchi and Rymarz (2017) tackle the challenge of inadequate teacher formation and suggest the need for an increased teacher

educational commitment to addressing the problem. Rymarz (2015) offers a range of suggestions. Elshof (2017) suggests the relevance of a mystagogical approach in the light of current challenges.

Literature relating to Montessori and Cavalletti was reviewed. Montessori's core principles and holistic approach included her perception of religious education, following the pedagogy of the Catholic Church (Standing, 1998). Cavalletti's Christocentric, scripture-based method was explored, with its focus on the Sacraments and the Liturgical Year. Cavalletti's approach also reflected the appropriate introduction of concepts requiring abstract thought, with the exploration of issues rich in figurative language and symbolism being left until the child is equipped to interpret literal meaning appropriately (Cavalletti, 2002).

Cavalletti-inspired methods are challenged by some for their catechetical emphasis, suggesting that this is misplaced in religious education, since Catholic schools today have students of diverse confessional faiths or none at all. As Grajczonek (2013) puts it 'while some do come with a religious context, the reality is that most do not' (p. 5). Children lack prior knowledge of church seasons and church attendance. They have witnessed very little sacramental life and in such a climate the anticipated response is not to be presumed (Grajczonek and Truasheim, 2017; Rossiter, 2011). Other research evidences that all children appear to be spiritually sensitive and respond with joy, wonder and peace in diverse ways, through the lens of their own religious traditions, and that these ways need to be respected (Eaude, 2011; Grajczonek, 2013; Hay and Nye, 2006). Still, others maintain that it is important and entirely possible to demonstrate respect and openness from a confessional perspective and that Catholic educators need to be faith-formed and personally committed in order to express meaningful openness to others (Franchi, 2016).

Last, the educational landscape was scanned, with a review of relevant aspects of contemporary pedagogical research, using the Teaching and Learning Research Programme of the Economic and Social Research Council (James and Pollard, 2011) as a framework. It proposed ten core pedagogical principles for effective teaching and learning. Literature relating to outcomes-based education, the holistic paradigm, literacy and behaviour challenges were also considered, as they would impact elements on free choice and self-regulated learning fundamental to the SALT Approach.

Micro-standardised assessments and outcomes-based learning can impede effective learning (Clark, 2012). Berlach (2004), critic of micro-accountability, points to the danger of fragmented learning, which is one of the risks of an outcomes-based education. Research indicates challenges for religious education, with the declining numbers of teachers who have the depth of knowledge and understanding required (Franchi and Rymarz, 2017; Rymarz, 2015). Research indicates that academic results are higher in countries that invest heavily in professional development, and where, as in Finland, there is a more holistic approach to education (Hargreaves and Shirley 2009; Sahlberg, 2011).

Thus, the main research objective emerged as 'To design, trial and refine an approach for teaching religious education in a contemporary Catholic systemic school based on the work of Cavalletti (to be called the SALT Approach)'.

The subsidiary objectives framing the three lenses used on the journey were: (a) Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today's child within the SALT Approach, (b) Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach, and (c) Achieving the accountability requirements of a Diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach.

The Journey Begins: Packing the Equipment

With the purpose and direction of the journey defined, preparations were made. This involved building the first 'prototype': the curriculum outline, the actual programme, the production or sourcing of necessary materials and the consideration of factors relating to the multi-faith nature of the cohort.

The starting point for the prototype design was O'Shea's Continuum of Foundational Religious Experience (O'Shea, 2012), which followed Montessorian principles and the core topics of Cavalletti's Good Shepherd Catechesis. After broadly allocating the concepts to three stages: (i) Kindergarten and Year One, (ii) Years Two and Three and (iii) Years Four, Five and Six, the prototype articulated the Year Two programme in more detail, incorporating the foundational concepts usually covered in the Kinder-Year One stage, making a rich programme for the year.

A working document was developed. It included a summary of Church expectations and an outline of the essential approach, built on a spiral liturgical curriculum. It incorporated practical guidelines and a draft of the year's programme. A chart cross-referenced the SALT Approach with the relevant Parramatta Diocese's Sharing our Story Units. A comprehensive range of materials was sourced or produced.

The Journey Through the Data-Gathering Year

Data-gathering extended a full academic year, and the terrain was explored using the three lenses mentioned above. The first lens considered the SALT Approach in the light of factors affecting today's child, and addressed issues of behaviour and self-control, literacy and communication and the spiritual nature of today's child. The second lens focussed on facilitating the implementation of the SALT Approach, including equipping and maintaining the learning space, key pedagogical factors underlying the approach and teacher expertise. The third lens considered accountability, exploring it within the context of Parramatta Diocese's Catholic Education, and looking at the SALT Approach's capacity to meet its religious education curriculum requirements, including assessment and reporting issues.

Findings and Contributions

The extensive study covered ground far beyond the scope of this chapter. Only four aspects will be presented here, and these briefly. These are: (a) The SALT Approach's recognition and accommodation of children's attraction towards the spiritual, (b) teachers as co-learners of faith, (c) three pedagogical approaches vital to the SALT Approach and (d) meeting accountability within the contemporary educational climate.

The children in this study, regardless of family, social, religious and cultural backgrounds, were spiritually very sensitive. They verbalised deep yearnings for spiritual truths, displayed a desire and readiness to pray and were capable of transferring knowledge into personal behaviour, as the comments below illustrate.

> I like that bible you brang [sic] because it has the words of Jesus in it.
>
> I like this room because … it has a lot of things that are true in it.
>
> … definitely don't move the Lamb of God. That needs to stay there because I want it to be in a separate place for praying.
>
> I used to be mean to (N) … but now I am good to her … because we learn about good things and following Jesus.

Ways of encouraging deep thinking were considered and implemented throughout the study's iterations. Posing deep questions requiring long-term thought became important. One such question was: 'I wonder why John called Jesus "the Lamb of God?"'. Students, including those from non-Christian backgrounds, offered new ideas and reflections and two years later it was still a topic of discussion. Students, like Ahmed (a Muslim student) would bring up deep issues, requiring a sensitive response:

> Ahmed (Muslim student): Why do we have armies? Is it because some people on one side believe in Jesus and not on the other side?
>
> Researcher: It is partly that. In the end, armies are often about some people being greedy or proud or selfish or cruel. Sometimes people have to stand up and defend themselves from others. Funnily enough, there are always good people on both sides…

Spontaneous class prayer often came through the children's initiative and they frequently engaged in personal prayer during choice times. The contributions of non-Christian students were spontaneous and often particularly perceptive, as the following comments illustrate.

> … and Jesus died as the same day that they crucified the lamb. (Hindu Student)
>
> [I like] learning about new things like the Lamb of God, John the Baptist, the Guards… God is the father of Jesus, and John is the cousin of Jesus and God is the Father of Jesus not like Joseph… (Muslim Student)
>
> … Jesus and God are One and Jesus is God's son and God has given him the power. (Hindu Student)

In relation to the non-Catholic families, parents' thoughts and responses were explored as far as possible. Interviews enabled relevant discussion, revealing positive

attitudes. At no point did parents express concern to school representatives. However, a deep exploration was beyond the scope of this study, and further studies are needed to explore this aspect more fully.

The interweave between children's confident verbal communication and their innate attraction towards the spiritual opened horizons for the SALT Approach and indicated differences between it and the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. The latter focuses on the individual child's encounter with God, to the exclusion of others (Cavalletti, 2002). In the school environment, interaction with others is fundamental and cannot be suspended. While there were moments of deep quiet, the room by no means resembled the monastery Cavalletti describes in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd's Atrium. The SALT Approach embraced verbal exchanges since they acted synergistically upon each student's relationship with God. Another core factor was the teacher's need to step back from dominating talk-time and discover the real face of dialogic learning (Alexander, 2013). Deep, diverse participation in discussion moments was encouraged. Spontaneous discussion increasingly followed presentations. Contributions raised important issues for the individual child and were of interest to the group at large. The inclination to ponder was fostered, following the children's threads rather than the teacher's pre-determined course.

Teachers as Co-learners in Faith

Church documents infer that teachers authentically witness the Catholic faith (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). However, current research points to the fact that this is not the reality for many teachers in Catholic schools (Franchi and Rymarz, 2017). Instances were identified when spiritual awareness and understanding of the teachers grew alongside that of the children. Personal change was experienced due, in part, to observations of the children's spiritual sensitivities and responses. Teachers witnessed children raising deep topics, asking wise questions, and being curious about spiritual matters. Immersed in the environment, along with the children, new thoughts, connections and ideas emerged, affecting the teachers in personal ways. They moved away from previous patterns for teaching religious education, towards one that was more organic and experiential, where they, along with the child, became co-learners of the mysteries of God (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982), as comments below illustrate.

> Teacher A: (completing a course in religious education) I have just finished my unit on educating young children spiritually and religiously and this fits in beautifully. I was looking at what we are doing, how we actually do the activities linking the two and it has been valuable. My knowledge of the faith has definitely increased this year…
>
> Teacher B: I have reconnected with my faith … a bit of the fear is to have enough knowledge. It has been such a positive experience for my own faith journey and as a religious educator. I have learnt so much and continue to learn …

Although the study was aimed towards student learning, the teacher-apprenticeship concept emerged. Teachers understood that religious education was

much more than transferring information and achieving outcomes but involved a deeply organic process creating a pathway towards religious experience for both student and teacher. A mentoring concept, incorporating a companion-leadership role, took shape. A companion-leader would be one who walked non-threateningly alongside teachers: a role not the same as that of Religious Education Coordinator as currently understood.

Key Pedagogies

Three pedagogical considerations vital to the SALT Approach were extensively explored. These were pedagogies that (a) permitted pondering, (b) respected the person and (c) allowed for authentic freedom and choice.

A pedagogy of pondering touches the core of the SALT Approach. Pondering was encouraged at all moments: during the presentation, discussion and 'I wonder' sections, extending through the choice time and into the final reflection time. Students found opportunities to ponder alone, with peers or with the adults in the room.

Recognising the difference between 'stabs in the dark' and purposeful pondering was important since valuable time was lost if students guessed answers to questions they were not equipped to answer (stabs in the dark). Other responses could be volleyed back to the children, encouraging further thought. It was sometimes appropriate to directly answer children's questions, assisting them to 'join the dots'.

A pedagogy of respect, consistently recognising and affirming the dignity of each child, was essential. This included such things as truly listening, shaping one's tone to reflect sensitive awareness, valuing what the child valued, and affirming the dignity of persons, even of those causing disruption or distraction. Children's trusting expression of thoughts was essential. Truly listening to the child was not always easy but vital, as the child needs to know he/she is heard and understood. A certain gentleness in speech and meeting the student's eyes demonstrated that each student was respected.

Manifestations of respect implied a subtle awareness that within each person lay a raft of life experiences of which one had little idea and presumed a certain vulnerability in each person. An example of respectful handling of distractions addressing big ideas is illustrated in this classroom interaction:

Researcher: (speaking about the Bible) Now, when people hold the Bible, one of the things they may think about is who wrote this book…. I mean who wrote it?

Children whispering: God

Researcher: Well, yes, God wrote this book firstly by making all the things that happen…

Robbie: Aww stop (to Basem)

Researcher: Mmm…Basem what's happening there?

Basem: He is touching my foot.

Researcher: Robbie, please move along a little bit and don't come close to him. Ahmed just move a long a little and Robbie move along a little… thank you.

…so, it was written by God, by God doing the things that are … (Researcher notices the issue is continuing, briefly addressing and going on) … Basem, you have to hold yourself together and close your lips. Don't swing your feet, that is part of the problem…

It tells us firstly what God did. and then God inspired people to write the things down…

Respect included an attentiveness to the inner person. Early on it seemed that many children were not 'in touch' with their inner self. It was their inner dimension that was constantly sought. This was shown in a turn of phrase, or sharing of a special experience, and constantly aiming to speak to the children as persons. Affirming the dignity of persons causing disruption or distraction was another aspect. Coming in from fractious playground experiences, for example, the children could be agitated and irritated. These were hard moments. They required keeping the flow of learning, while addressing the issue adequately, without disrespecting the persons involved. Maintaining a gentle tone, looking at the individual, offering brief, thoughtful responses assisted children's self-awareness. Agitated or disruptive children especially needed to feel the warmth of understanding.

The third pedagogical consideration involved allowing students authentic freedom in choice activities. Issues at this particular school indicated that exploring the theme of freedom of choice was vital since student behaviour often undermined such pedagogical practice. Pedagogical understandings relating to freedom of choice were identified, complete with caveats and indicators. These included establishing boundaries leading to gradual release, laying the groundwork by demonstrating skills facilitating a range of choices, and being ready to 'let go', recognising one's main role as facilitator and observer.

In the first iteration, self-regulated learning, which necessitates a true sense of freedom, was seriously wanting. At this stage, tight boundaries were important, while the children acquired the 'tools of the trade'. Too many choices resulted in chaos. It was essential to lay the ground work, keeping the ultimate goal in mind. Gradually, as the necessary skills were acquired. The children increasingly engaged in tasks with almost professional verve. The long-term benefit of skilling the students was substantial, giving them multiple ways of reflecting on their learning.

The pedagogical decision of being ready to let go was crucial. Participating teachers found this a challenge, particularly in the first iteration, with its disorder, noise and chaos: boundaries had to be made clear before 'letting go' could happen, as this discussion on February 17, 2005, reflects:

Researcher: They are not ready for the choices.

Teacher B: Montessori is self-directed, isn't it?

Researcher: Yes, but it is guided. We have to decide how much they can do and what is beyond reasonable. They all wanted to use the dioramas, and then they would take anything they could lay their hands on and the boys just went wild. We can't give them many choices. I am trying to get across the concept that they can choose. They like the idea but they don't have the skills.

Teacher B: Can you minimise the choice? Can it be on a rotational basis where we put them into groups, sit even at same table as in class, and tell them what they are doing.

Researcher: But then there is no choice there… but if that is what it has it to be at this stage, then that is what we have to do.

Teacher B: Maybe just for the next few weeks. On Thursday, maybe can you just do an activity that everybody does, or is that against the idea?

Researcher: Yes, we have to give away choices until they are ready. They will all have to do the same thing and to have a place to sit…

Accountability Issues

The tension between Catholic religious education, opening a path for the child, leading towards a personal encounter with Jesus Christ (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997), and the constraints imposed by accountability systems, is much discussed by religious educators and academics (Hyde and Rymarz, 2009). In Catholic schools, accountability is usually built upon outcomes-based frameworks. However, the vastness of the human spirit's search for goodness, beauty and truth cannot be held captive within the locked steps of a system addressing the material and temporal (Cecero, 2011; Waghid, 2003).

The element of 'Systemic Accountability' involved Parramatta Diocese's religious education curriculum requirements and included assessment and reporting. The study demonstrated that accountability was possible, albeit involving lateral thinking. In addition to students' written work and labelled illustrations, verbalisation offered insights into each student's knowledge, understanding, values and attitudes as they increasingly turned to the camera to explain work or share thoughts. Focus groups provided material for assessment. Formal tasks also took place, usually during the 30-minute sessions. Other tasks were completed in choice times, through mini-tasks, incorporated into the Personal Choice Charts developed for the study. Assessment of attitudes took place in informal ways, such as observation of film footage.

Matching Parramatta's overall curricular requirements included meeting Sharing Our Story outcomes, and matching learning intentions and success criteria. The capacity to reach these was demonstrated by using a Sharing Our Story programming template to describe the working plan.

When reporting, the faith traditions of students were considered. In this class, there was a Buddhist, a Hindu, a Muslim, several non-Catholic Christian and 'not regular Mass attending Catholics'. Practicing Catholics were in the minority. Comments were tailored to convey delicacy and respect, while at the same time communicating a valid remark, such as the one below.

'Ahmed expresses great interest in Religion lessons. He participates thoughtfully in the variety of prayer experiences.' (Term 2 report for the Muslim student.)

Concluding Comments

Teaching Catholic religious education today presents many challenges. They include respectfully involving, inspiring and motivating students with diverse needs and

from various faith backgrounds; recognising teachers varying levels of religious knowledge, understanding and commitment; and working within structures that may challenge the recommended pedagogical practices.

The data provided evidence of the spiritual sensitivity in the children, regardless of faith background. Results point to the possibility of a paradigm for thinking about current religious educational practice in Catholic schools, suggesting a move away from the demands imposed by micro-accountability which can become an obstacle to deep learning, and towards recognising religious education's own valid approach: one that is more suited to fostering the spirituality and faith of students, empowering them to discover the spiritual dimension for themselves.

The study demonstrated that the SALT Approach can work successfully within a contemporary, diversely populated school, offering a fresh response in religious education, looking at each child from a profoundly Christian anthropological perspective while respecting the faith-position of each one. However, there is much yet to be explored, applying the SALT Approach in distinct settings. This design-based study creates a research space whereby the approach can be extended, implemented and trialled with teachers at a grassroots level, as the researcher walks alongside them as they work.

Since 2015, throughout 2016 and 2017 the school continued using the SALT Approach, with the researcher working alongside teachers, as they implemented aspects of the SALT Approach. By the end of 2017, Kindergarten to Year 3 learning-spaces were equipped with materials.

Future possibilities include expanding the research to involve other academics, building a network of relationships with schools and individual teachers within Australia and beyond. The close collaboration of many people offers rich, fertile ground for targeted research.

References

Alexander, R. J. (2013). Improving oracy and classroom talk. *Primary First*, 22–29.

Berlach, R. G. (2004). *Outcomes-based education and the death of knowledge.* A paper presented at The Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, The University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Nov 28–Dec 2, 2004.

Berryman, J. (1994). *Godly play: An imaginative approach to religious education*. Augsburg Books.

Bracken, T., Dean, A., & Gowdie, J. (2016, October). Critical leadership challenge: Spiritual formation in the contemporary context. *Compass, 50*(3), 7.

Catholic Education Office, Parramatta. (1999). *Sharing our story: Religious education curriculum, K-12.* Sydney, NSW: Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Parramatta, Sydney.

Cavalletti, S. (1983). *The religious potential of the child: The description of an experience with children from ages three to six* (P. M. Coulter & J. M. Coulter, Trans.). New York: Paulist.

Cavalletti, S. (2002). *The religious potential of the child, 6 to 12 years old*. Liturgy Training Publications.

Cavalletti, S., & Gobbi, G. (1964). *Teaching doctrine and liturgy: The Montessori approach*. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House.

Cecero, J. J. (2011). Measuring faculty spirituality and its relationship to teaching style. *Religion and Education, 38*(2), 128–140.

Clark, I. (2012). Formative assessment: Assessment is for self-regulated learning. *Educational Psychology Review, 24*(2), 205–249.

Cobb, P., Confrey, J., DiSessa, A., Lehrer, R., & Schauble, L. (2003). Design experiments in educational research. *Educational Researcher, 32*(1), 9–13.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977). *The Catholic school*. London: Catholic Truth Society.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1982). *Lay Catholics in schools: Witnesses to faith*. London: Catholic Truth Society.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988). *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2007). *Educating together in Catholic schools*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20070908_educare-insieme_en.html.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014). *Educating for today and tomorrow: A renewing passion*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.html.

Congregation for the Clergy. (1997). *General directory for catechesis*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

Eaude, T. (2011). Spiritual and moral development. *Debates in Religious Education,* 120–131.

Elshof, A. J. M. (2017). Mystagogy, religious education and lived catholic faith. *Journal of Religious Education, 64*(3), 143–155.

Franchi, L. (2016). Being open to others in Catholic schools. *EducA: International Journal of Catholic Education, 2*.

Franchi, L., & Rymarz, R. (2017). The education and formation of teachers for Catholic schools: Responding to changed cultural contexts. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 9*(1), 2–16.

Grajczonek, J. (2013). The early years religion program: Placing the emphasis on how young children learn. *Religious Education Journal of Australia, 29*(2), 3–8.

Grajczonek, J., & Truasheim, M. (2017). Implementing godly play in educational settings: A cautionary tale. *British Journal of Religious Education, 39*(2), 172–186.

Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. L. (2009). *The fourth way: The inspiring future for educational change.* Corwin Press.

Hay, D., & Nye, R. (2006). *The spirit of the child* (Rev ed.). London: Jessica Kingsley.

Hyde, B., & Rymarz, R. (2009). *Religious education in Catholic primary schools: Contemporary issues and perspectives for RE teachers*. David Barlow Publishing.

James, M., & Pollard, A. (2011). TLRP's ten principles for effective pedagogy: Rationale, development, evidence, argument and impact. *Research Papers in Education, 26*(3), 275–328.

Lawler, G. A. (2016). A standards-based approach to Catholic principal preparation: A case study. *Journal of Catholic Education, 19*(3), 332–349.

Tse, T. K. C. (2015). Religious education programme of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong: Challenges and responses since 1997. *Journal of Beliefs and Values, 36*(3), 331–346.

Moog, F. (2016). The challenges facing Catholic education in France today. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 8*(2), 155–167.

Montessori, M., & Standing, E. M. (1965) *The child in the church.* Catechetical Guild.

O'Shea, G. (2012). Developing a continuum of experiences for catholic faith formation. *Studia Ełckie, 14,* 19–39.

O'Shea, G. (2018). *To know Jesus Christ, A practical handbook for developing the catholic faith from childhood to adolescence*. Angelico Press.

Paletta, A., & Fiorin, I. (2016). The challenges of Catholic education: evidence from the responses to the Instrumentum Laboris 'Educating today and tomorrow'. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 8*(2), 136–154.

Plomp, T., & Nieveen, N. (2007). An introduction to educational design research. In *Proceedings of the Seminar Conducted at the East China Normal University [Z]*. Shanghai: SLO-Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development.

Pope Benedict XVI, & Seewald, P. (2002). *God and the world: Believing and living in our time: A conversation with Peter Seewald.* San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Pope Benedict XVI. (2013). *General audience February 06, 2013.* Retrieved from https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2013/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20130206.html.

Rossiter, G. (2011). Reorienting the religion curriculum in Catholic schools to address the needs of contemporary youth spirituality. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 3*(1), 57–72.

Rymarz, R. (2015, July). The evangelisation of younger catholics in secular cultures: Some principles. *Compass, 49*(49), 20.

Sahlberg, P. (2011). The fourth way of Finland. *Journal of Educational Change, 12*(2), 173–185.

Standing, E. M. (1998). *Maria Montessori, her life and work*. NAL.

Waghid, Y. (2003). Peters' non-instrumental justification of education view revisited: Contesting the philosophy of outcomes-based education in South Africa. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 22*(3–4), 245–265.

Anne-Marie Irwin, PhD., is an educator based in Sydney, Australia. She has taught in Catholic and independent schools for over 35 years. Anne-Marie is a religious education consultant, currently working with several schools implementing The SALT Approach. She lectures in Religious Education at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney. Her research interests lie in infants and primary education, autonomous learning and religious education. She has conducted a six-year study on ways in which Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd can be adapted for successful implementation in Catholic school environments.

Chapter 24
Effective Tools for Pedagogical Change in Religious Education: Experience of Teachers in Hong Kong Catholic Kindergartens and Primary Schools

Wing Kay Vion Ng and Shuet Yan Fion Luk

Introduction

The growing student population with pluralistic views and diverse background in Catholic schools all over the world is raising ethical and pedagogical issues in Catholic Religious Education (CRE). In the past, much emphasis was given to theological concerns (Grimmitt, 2008). However, there has been more research paying attention to CRE in terms of teaching technique, methods, approach and pedagogies (Buchanan, 2005; Figiel, 2013; Grimmitt, 2008; Groome, 1996). One of the most discussed approaches in CRE is the Shared Christian Praxis (SCP) proposed by Thomas Groome (1996, 2011). His approach was adopted and evaluated in various countries including Australia, Lithuania, Sweden and Korea, and was appreciated. However, some reports suggested there were difficulties in equipping teachers to use this approach in their teaching (Bezzina, Gahan, McLenaghan, & Wilson, 1996; O'Connell, 2008). Hong Kong, as the first East Asian region to adopt SCP in CRE, also faced problems in implementing the approach. This chapter will discuss the implementation problems in the Hong Kong context and suggest ways to overcome the hurdles.

W. K. V. Ng (✉) · S. Y. F. Luk
Catholic Education Office, Hong Kong, China

S. Y. F. Luk
Caritas Institute of Higher Education, Hong Kong, China

The Context: Catholic Religious Education in Hong Kong

Catholic schools in Hong Kong are mostly government subsidized but managed by the Church. This practice goes back to the British colonial period (1842–1997). The identity of Catholic schools is expressed through CRE that permeates the whole curriculum (Chan, 2007, 2015; Lau, 2017; Mok, 2007; Tse, 2017). Unlike Catholic schools in other regions, Catholic schools in Hong Kong have most of their students randomly chosen by the government. This leads Catholic schools to have a high percentage of students with different religious and non-religious beliefs. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that Catholic students comprise only 11% of the total student population (Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, 2017).

Despite the small Catholic student population, CRE is rooted in formal and informal curriculum of all Catholic schools. This means that all students attending Catholic schools learn about the Catholic religion in their school life. This has always been a less vigorous subject when compared to subjects like Chinese language, English language, or Mathematics. Perhaps the main reason for this is that it does not influence students' educational path since the local universities do not pay much attention to this subject in their selection process. Given the low status of CRE in the eyes of the education stakeholders, teachers teaching this subject are not required to be professionally trained. In the past, fortunately, this subject was mostly taught by nuns, brothers or priests who received sound subject knowledge in their training as a consecrated person. However, in the past few decades, there has been a huge drop in the number of the consecrated. This has led to having lay teachers without much subject knowledge in CRE being asked to teach CRE in the Catholic schools. These lay teachers are usually trained in another scholastic subject. In a survey done by CEO of the Education Office in 2016, only 43% of the primary CRE teachers and 64% of secondary CRE teachers teaching CRE were subject-trained (Catholic Education Office, 2016). In terms of pedagogical practice, CRE teachers were found mostly using a didactic approach in teaching CRE because their main concern was Biblical or Catechetical knowledge (Chan, 2015). Nuzzi (2015) pointed out that CRE teachers seldom advance their ways of teaching according to the advancement in educational science such as for example, in the areas of affective education and child psychology. This is likely to cause a worsening in the learning outcomes of this subject in Catholic schools.

The Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Synod convened in 2001–2002 to promote a 'renewal movement' for priests and the laity (Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, 2001). One of the key issues brought up was that Catholic schools should be aware that the 'Religious dimension should not stop at the planes of experiences and thinking; it should go further and deeper into areas related to the meaning of life and concepts of values' (Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, 2001, p. 222) rather than just instilling biblical and catechetical knowledge in a didactic way. This is especially important when one considers that as early as the second century, the Catholic Church 'developed a pedagogical sensitivity towards different audiences' (Gellel & Buchanan, 2015,

p. 2). They noticed the importance of arguing and exposing the message when doing catechism sessions with both believers and non-believers.

The Synod (2001) anticipated the difficulties for such a curriculum change, and thus urged the Diocese to 'formulate guidelines for the teaching … produce teaching materials' (p. 221). It also indicated that 'the top priority is to compile textbooks of religious and moral studies, textbooks that fit in with various levels, that would solve the pedagogical difficulties of teachers' (p. 223). In 2006, under the supervision of the CEO, a new religious and moral education (RME) curriculum was developed. One of its key features was the adoption of a new curriculum approach namely, the 'Emmaus Pedagogy' (EP) that is based on the 'Shared Christian Praxis' (SCP) pedagogy proposed by Groome (2006).

The authors of this chapter have been serving as curriculum officers at the Religious and Moral Education Curriculum Development Centre (RME Centre) since its setting up in 2006 as the executive arm for the new curriculum implementation. To help teachers understand the aims and approach to the curriculum, the RME Centre has run more than 60 workshops and seminars for teachers from kindergarten, primary and secondary levels. In every seminar and workshop, curriculum officers would introduce the EP in detail because the EP is regarded as the key to the curriculum change. However, most teachers stated that they did not see how the EP was different from what they used to do in their classrooms.

In 2014, the RME Centre started a Common Lesson Planning (CLP) scheme with selected teachers from Catholic kindergartens and primary schools. CLP is a common tool used in curriculum implementation in Hong Kong. During CLP, teachers teaching the same subject usually plan the lessons together. Then each teacher would experiment what they had planned in their own class. This would be followed by an evaluation and lesson plan refinement. Participating teachers reported that they learned the EP more effectively through the CLP scheme than in workshops and seminars. The RME Centre chose CLP as the tool to conduct a professional development project on the use of the EP because teachers in Hong Kong are familiar with it. Many local researches showed that this is an effective tool for curriculum change (Fok, 2016; Pang & Wang, 2016). However, CLP was only commonly used in subjects like English, Chinese and Mathematics, but seldom considered as a professional development tool in CRE.

Implementing Pedagogical Change in Catholic Religious Education

There has been an increasing volume of research on pedagogical CRE issues. This is especially related to a trend of curriculum change in CRE all over the world. Studies found that pedagogical change is crucial to curriculum implementation. Buchanan (2006) stressed that without appropriate levels of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge, it is likely that teachers will impede the curriculum change. Moreover,

teachers' pedagogical knowledge would also directly affect students' learning outcome. Lovat (2010) pointed out that pedagogical strategies and techniques used by teachers are crucial to students' achievement. Darling-Hammond also found that student achievement is predicted by a teacher's subject and pedagogical knowledge (as cited in Lovat, 2010). However, classroom teaching has been 'the neglected piece in the recent history of Religious Education in Catholic schools' (Rymarz & Cleary, 2017, p. 8).

One of the most discussed and influential approaches in CRE is Groome's (1996, 2006, 2011) Shared Christian Praxis (SCP). It is a five-movement pedagogical approach to religious education with an aim to enhance dialogue between life and faith. SCP rejects banking education but encourages learners to reflect upon their life and see whether a through faith they can find meaning to it. After researching on SCP for more than 20 years, Groome (2011) summarized SCP in his book *Will there be Faith?* as:

> A life to Faith to life approach to religious education and catechesis encourages a teaching/learning community of active participation, conversation, and presentation, in which people share their reflections upon their own lives in the world around a generative theme of life or of life in faith, are given persuasive and meaningful access to the truths and spiritual wisdom of Christian Story and Vision regarding the theme, are encouraged to integrate their lives and their Faith and to make decisions for lived, living, and life-giving faith as disciples of Jesus for God's reign in the world. (pp. 272–273)

To understand SCP, one should not take it simply as a pedagogical method or strategy but rather as a sound pedagogical practice that supports and complements the movements of the SCP (Archdiocese of Hobart, 2005). In fact, SCP is developed not only on theological ground but also on vigorous educational theories. Lovat (1988) said that SCP is one of the most comprehensive 'weldings' of religious education to contemporary educational thinking ever made available in the English-speaking world. Groome (1980, 1996) explained that his approach was deeply affected by modern education theorists like Jürgen Habermas' ways of knowing and Paulo Fieire's Critical Pedagogy in emancipation through education. If one uses SCP without understanding the nature and ideologies of these contemporary theories, one would have difficulties in appreciating and using the teaching approach properly. A teacher from the Diocese of Parrammatta shared his discovery of SCP as a flexible and fluid, rather than a lock-step, approach that allowed him to move back and forth at any time in his teaching. However, the experience in Parramatta told us that not many teachers would have such a realization (Bezzina et al., 1996). It seems that whether teachers understand and use SCP correctly makes a difference in their classroom teaching. So, what are the effective ways to equip teachers with this potentially powerful approach?

Emmaus Pedagogy: A New Pedagogy Adopted in CRE at Hong Kong Catholic Schools

Similar to the experience of the Diocese of Parramatta, the *RME curriculum 2006* endorsed by the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, simplified the five-movement SCP to a four-movement one and renamed it as the Emmaus Pedagogy (EP). The EP combined the first two movements in SCP for easier adoption.

EP Movement 1: Life stories

Participants are encouraged to express and reflect critically around the generative theme as to what are their feelings, viewpoints or actions.

EP Movement 2: Christian Stories

Christian stories with spiritual wisdom are told.

EP Movement 3: Appropriation

Participants are encouraged to reflect and compare, making comparison between their own experience and the wisdom from the Christian stories.

EP Movement 4: Response to the stories

Participants are encouraged to choose and decide what the best wisdom they want to embrace and put into practice in their lives is.

(Catholic Education Office, 2006)

As the RME Centre agrees that the mastery of necessary pedagogical knowledge is the key to successful curriculum implementation, it has held a number of seminars and workshops to explain the theory and practice of the EP, in order to equip teachers to use the EP in their classroom teaching. Key concepts of each movement were explained in detail. Workshops were also organized to facilitate group discussion and participants were given teaching demonstrations on how to use the EP. From teachers' feedback, it can be seen that teachers regarded the EP as a positive move in the curriculum change because it touches on students' life experience. However, teachers reported that they had difficulties in understanding how to help students reflect upon a Christian story and link it to their daily life. It seems that teachers need to know more the EP on its operational level.

SCP appears to have gained positive support from RE educators in western countries but has it never been examined in the Asian context. Based on the above-mentioned experience of CRE teachers in learning the EP in Hong Kong, the RME Centre is seeking ways to improve teachers' learning of the EP and its adoption as an effective teaching approach in Hong Kong classrooms. Since 2014, the RME Centre started a CLP scheme for teachers from some Catholic primary schools and kindergartens to examine whether learning by doing through CLP is an effective way for teachers to learn the EP. Many research works have reported that teachers would benefit when working collaboratively with their colleagues because teachers could solve their common problems in those professional networks (Pang & Wang, 2016). Cheng (2006) stated that collaborative group enhances teachers learning because teachers are formed as a team of inquirers who had the same challenge in their teach-

ing experience. The interflow among various inquiries could generate more practical knowledge which is essential in the change process.

Empirical Research

As part of the CLP scheme, the RME Centre conducted a qualitative study with teachers' group interviews, and curriculum officers' in-activity observation and post-activity reflection. There were 24 CRE teachers from 8 Catholic primary schools and 49 teachers from 10 Catholic kindergartens involved in the scheme. All primary teachers were Catholic while only half of the kindergartens teachers were Catholic. All of them had attended workshops or seminars on the EP conducted by the RME Centre before they joined the CLP scheme.

Teacher participants were selected by their schools from amongst those willing to join the CLP scheme on a voluntary basis. The authors of this chapter, the then curriculum officers, accompanied the teachers to plan the lessons of a theme from the CRE textbook they were using. The whole lesson planning process consisted of three to four meetings. In each meeting, teachers would plan together the teaching of a theme in the textbook: what to teach, how to teach and why to do so. At the beginning of each meeting, curriculum officers would lead a reflection of teachers' personal experiences on the selected theme, followed by a short sharing session for the teachers to retrieve and narrate their personal teaching experience on the same theme in the past. The curriculum officers would observe and take notes of what teachers shared, especially experiences related to the EP. Data collected by the curriculum officers were noted in written form for analysis. At the end of the scheme, teachers were interviewed in a group to evaluate the effectiveness of the CLP scheme. The curriculum officers then summarized all their comments for data analysis.

This study aimed to examine the following three questions:

1. Is CLP an effective way for teachers to learn the EP?
2. What teachers could learn from CLP?
3. What hurdles would teachers face when learning the EP through CLP scheme?

Findings

First, before the CLP scheme, the teachers used to focus more on the operational level of the EP, such as, for example, how to prepare for a good game, or tell a good story, etc. They seldom thought that their personal reflection could be that important to their teaching.

> I never spent much time to reflect on a lesson to recapture the most impressive moment with the students. Now, I realise that the reflection is very important to my teaching. This can

help me understand more about my students so that I may address their needs in teaching. I think I should create more reflective moments for myself. (Teacher K1, Kindergarten 1)

I realise that they (students) talked and shared more when I guide them to reflect on their own experience with questions like how I was guided during the CLP meetings. Moreover, I paid more attention to encourage them free to share, like how I felt safe and accepted in sharing in the CLP scheme. I will do this with my students in the future. (Teacher K4, Kindergarten 2)

I didn't realise that my personal experience could be so useful in my teaching. And I would not be able to catch these personal 'resource' without reflection. (Teacher P5, Primary school 1)

Only after I listened to all your (other teachers in the same group) reflection sharing on your teaching, I finally know how deep this topic can be and how I was not teaching something of the topic." (Teacher P12, Primary school 6)

Dewey (1933) stated that reflective thinking is important for teachers in planning classroom activities. He characterized reflective thinking as, 'active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends.' (as cited in Day & Harbour, 2013, p. 112) Reflective thinking includes pondering on one's feelings, tasting at an impressive moment and engaging the whole person (Buchanan, 2005). Reflection is regarded as an important element and ability in the Christian tradition because it is profoundly linked to the revelation of the Sacred (Buchanan, 2011). According to Groome (2011), 'critical reflection in dialogue with each other' (p. 764) is crucial for one to 'access to traditions of spiritual wisdom and identity in faith' (p. 764), and which is crucial in a praxis model. 'This could be achieved by providing a model that encouraged participants to reflect on their own feelings and actions rather than what they should think or are told to think.' (Buchanan, 2005, p. 28). However, teachers were found to be problematic in critical reflection in a report on the implementation of SCP in the Diocese of Parramatta in Australia (Bezzina et al., 1996). This showed that critical reflection is theoretically important and crucial but difficult to implement.

Second, the use of CLP could help teachers develop their narration skills. This was particularly obvious in the primary group. We believe this was because these teachers had the chance to narrate their own experience to others in the scheme before they narrated it to the students in the lessons.

I did not expect my own experience would be useful in my teaching. Furthermore, when I listened to other teachers' stories, I know what and how to share with my students on a certain topic. (Teacher P10, Primary school 3)

I told my students for the first time that I think how wonderful life is after talking to a friend who is dying. She has tried her best to live every moment and make all people around her to be joyful. After this, one of my students also shared his experience of his grandpa. (Teacher P11, Primary school 4)

In fact, narration is one of the salient features of SCP (Groome, 1996). It is also a teaching method commonly used in RE (Reed, Freathy, Cornwall, & Davis, 2013). Learners are encouraged actively to engage in a conversation and dialogue. It is not only a story, but 'shared' stories, that is, shared experience from different people under the same context. SCP emphasized the dialogue between the spiritual wisdom from 'Christian stories' and students' own experience in order to make appropriation.

So, if a teacher does not have good narration skills, it would be hard for students to appropriate the spiritual wisdom. The primary teachers in the CLP scheme shared their 'shared story' during the meeting with other teachers. This helped them acquire narrative skills. They then know how to share their own personal stories with students to resonate with theirs.

Third, learning the EP through CLP is more effective than through seminars and workshops. Teachers opined that seminars and workshops were only useful as an induction for novice learners of the EP. They found learning slowed down afterwards. They agreed, however, that the CLP scheme expanded their pedagogical knowledge because through discussion and sharing, they realised the ideas and rationale of the EP, as they need to plan the lessons with reasons. This finding supported the results of research on CLP by some Hong Kong scholars' who found that CLP is one of the most effective ways to build teachers' knowledge. (Cheng, 2006; Fok, 2006; Pang & Wang, 2016; Zheng, 2006). Bauml (2016) said that CLP provides a platform for teachers to dialogue with others in order to share what they have learnt from their experiences. It provides new ways of thinking about pedagogy and other aspects related to teaching.

These findings indicate that CLP could benefit teachers to learn narration and reflection through group sharing. Even non-Catholic teachers who do not have sound knowledge in Catholic faith, can at least learn how to use reflection and narration as a tool to prepare CRE lessons through CLP.

Discussion

Findings of this study together with many other researches show that reflection and narration are crucial to improve teaching. Field (2011) claimed that professional development requires knowledge acquisition and skills development, but it could not be fully achieved without reflection. Also, narrative is said to be an effective tool to help one find one's own way of teaching. The finding of the research shows that through developing reflection and narration, teachers could teach more effectively because they could better manipulate all movements of the EP with what they had gained through reflection and experience narration. For example, prompting students to share their own experience by leading a reflection on a certain theme at the beginning of the lesson, or, stimulating students' sharing by the teachers narrating their personal stories first. These are essential elements in Movement 1 and 3 of the EP. Compared to just telling a Bible story interestingly in class, acquiring reflection and narration ability through learning the EP could be a huge step forward in improving CRE lessons.

The authors of this chapter believe that reflection and narration are not only essential elements in learning the EP, but they also add to practical knowledge in teaching CRE. Shulman (1986) argued that each discipline should have its own subject-specific pedagogical content knowledge, which is a very particular kind of knowledge that aids teachers to teach. Reflection and narration can be regarded as

components of CRE. Teachers usually neglect this kind of knowledge and put more time and effort in subject matter knowledge only. Though teachers in this study were generally receptive and somehow positive towards doing reflection and narration during the CLP scheme, there were some teachers who did not like doing reflection and narration. They still considered subject knowledge more important while they deemed reflection and narration to be very peripheral in their daily teaching. The authors believe that reflective teaching is still not a common practice for teachers in Hong Kong.

Furthermore, teachers in Hong Kong seldom share their own spiritual experience and reflection with other teachers even less so with their students in class. Some even feel ashamed in expressing themselves in front of students. Some teachers wondered if there was any 'standard' or 'correct' content for sharing. During the CLP scheme, they talked about teaching objectives, methods and materials but not about sharing their feelings or views. They felt uncomfortable when invited to express their own views and tried to avoid giving 'wrong' answers. This would affect their learning of the EP because the pedagogy requires teachers to share their Christian experience during classroom teaching. Another point worth noting from this study on the use of reflection is the role of the curriculum officer. During the CLP scheme, guided reflection led by a curriculum officer was introduced which not only helped teachers stay focused on what to reflect, but also deepened their reflection on their experiences by asking them to retrieve scenarios, feelings, ideas, or emotions associated with their experiences. The EP requires both teachers and learners to reflect before their sharing. This echoes the experience of the kindergarten teachers in this study who were not comfortable to reflect on their own without guidance. If they reflect alone, they tend to lose the focus of reflection.

In spite of some negative feedback from the teachers, the authors felt that reflection and narration should be included in CRE professional development programs, such as when learning to adopt the EP in classroom teaching. The authors feel that further study should be conducted to find ways to overcome hurdles faced by teachers in doing reflection and narration.

Difficulties Faced by Teachers Untrained in CRE

Helping teachers to learn a pedagogical approach embedded with theological and educational theories and philosophy is no doubt a challenge. Groome (1996) himself termed SCP, as an 'academically rigorous approach'. Teachers always take pedagogical change as learning new teaching methods on an operational level. However, the EP, as pedagogy in CRE teaching, is not just a teaching method but an approach with particular pedagogical expertise. Ubani (2012) said pedagogical expertise is a sophisticated form of knowledge which is not easily gained or mastered. To Hong Kong CRE teachers, learning the EP is especially difficult because many of them are subject untrained with a weak foundation in theology or Bible knowledge or in both. Besides, some CRE teachers are non-Catholics. They usually take CRE as life educa-

tion or values education with little emphasis from a religious perspective, or they just follow what the textbook says. The EP requires teachers to help students appropriate the spiritual wisdom from Christian stories (usually they are Bible stories or Church teachings). If teachers themselves do not have sound subject matter knowledge, how could they help students to 'see the message' from Christian stories?

This study shows us that CLP provided teachers a chance to work collaboratively with others, not only in experience sharing but also in clarifying some subject matter knowledge. For example, in one of the primary groups, teachers discussed the concept of 'humans are created in the image of God' with the help of a curriculum officer. One teacher stated, 'I found the clarification of concepts in group learning very helpful to my teaching. It gave me a focus on what to lead in my class discussion.' (Teacher P9, Primary school 4)

The authors think that the clarification of religious concepts in the CLP scheme also helped teachers narrate Christian stories and provided a focal point for their reflection upon the stories, both of which are crucial when adopting the EP in class.

Another advantage we have discovered in the group evaluation is that teachers treasured the chance to share their own experiences and new ideas with others during the CLP scheme. They felt being supported rather than being isolated (Bauml, 2016; Cheng, 2006; Pang & Wang, 2016; Zheng, 2006).

Conclusion

This study revealed that CLP is an effective tool to facilitate teachers to learn the EP through narration and reflection. First, CLP creates a learning community for teachers to support and learn from each other. Second, narration and reflection with group dynamics can add to the learning momentum which is not achievable in seminars and workshops. The results also suggest that including reflection and narration in CRE professional development is essential to teachers' learning of the EP because teachers could learn the pedagogy by experiencing how reflection and narration could help improve their adoption of the EP in their teaching.

References

Archdiocese of Hobart. (2005). *Good new for living.* Retrieved from http://catholic.tas.edu.au/key-documents/good-news-for-living-1.

Bauml, M. (2016). The promise of collaboration. *Educational Leadership, 74,* 58–62.

Bezzina, M., Gahan, P., McLenaghan, H., & Wilson, G. (1996). *Shared Christian praxis as a basis for religious education curriculum: The Parramatta experience. (A presented reports).* Southport, Australia: The Annual conference of the Australian Association for Religious Education. Retrieved from ERIC data base. (ED401266).

Buchanan, M. T. (2005). Pedagogical drift: The evolution of new approaches and paradigms in religious education. *Religious Education, 100*(1), 20–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344080590904662.

Buchanan, M. T. (2011). Peer reviewing preservice teachers of Christian higher education. *Christian Higher Education, 10*(5), 464–481. https://doi.org/10.1080/15563759.2010.515455.

Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong. (2001). *Diocesan synod document.* Retrieved from http://catholic.org.hk/synod/synodindex.html.

Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong. (2017). *Education statistics 2009–2017.* Retrieved from http://archives.catholic.org.hk/Statistic/2009-2017%20Education.htm.

Catholic Education Office. (2006). *Catholic secondary schools, primary schools, kindergartens: Religious and moral education curriculum document 2006*. Hong Kong: The Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong.

Catholic Education Office. (2016). *Current situation of religious and moral education in Hong Kong Catholic schools.* Unpublished survey, Hong Kong.

Chan, F. N. (2015). Religious education in Hong Kong Catholic schools: Past, present and future. In M. T. Buchanan & A. M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 131–142). Dordrecht: Springer.

Cheng, D. P. (2006). The translation of western teaching approaches in the Hong Kong early childhood curriculum: A promise for effective teaching? *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 7*(3), 228–237. https://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2006.7.3.228.

Day, M., & Harbour, C. P. (2013). The philosopher and the lecturer: John Dewey, Everett Dean Martin, and reflective thinking. *Education and Culture, 29*(1), 105–124. Retrieved from https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1509andcontext=eandc.

Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. Lexington (Massachusetts): D.C. Health.

Field, K. (2011). Reflection at the heart of effective continuing professional development. *Professional Development in Education, 37*(2), 171–175. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2011.559700.

Figiel, D. (2013). Integrism towards contemporary Christian religious education and teaching of the Second Vatican Council. *Journal of Education Culture and Society, 3*(2), 16–28. https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs20132-16-28.

Fok, P. K. (2016). Implementation of collaboratively lesson preparation and lesson observation in Hong Kong. *Journal of Education Research, 201603*(263), 96–114. https://doi.org/10.3966/168063602016030263007.

Gellel, A. M., & Buchanan, M. T. (2015). Contextualising the catholic religious education project. In A. M. Gellel & M. T. Buchanan (Eds.), *Global perspectives on catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 1–4). Dordrecht: Springer.

Grimmitt, M. H. (2008). Inside a religious education research project: The influence of theological and educational considerations on the treatment of religious content within a prescribed pedagogic framework. *Journal of Beliefs and Values, 29*(3), 223–232. https://doi.org/10.1080/13617670802464782.

Groome, T. H. (1980). *Christian religious education: Sharing our story and vision*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

Groome, T. H. (1996). *Sharing faith: A comprehensive approach to religious education and pastoral ministry*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Groome, T. H. (2006). A shared praxis approach to religious education. In M. de Souza, K. Engebretson, G. Durka, A. Mcgrady, & R. Jackson (Eds.), *International handbook of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education. Part 2* (pp. 763–777). Dordrecht: Springer.

Groome, T. H. (2011). *Will there be faith?*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Lau, Y. (2017). *A study of change: Junior secondary school textbooks of Catholic religious Education in Hong Kong.* (Doctoral thesis, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong). Retrieved from http://repository.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/en/collection/etd.

Lovat, T. J. (1988). Action research and the praxis model of religious education: A critique. *British Journal of Religious Education, 11*(1), 30–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/0141620880110106.

Mok, M. M. (2007). Challenges for Catholic schooling in Hong Kong. In G. Grace, & S. Joseph O'Keefe (Eds.), *International handbook of catholic education, challenges for school systems in the 21st century series: International handbooks of religion and education* (Vol. 2, pp. 751–769). Dordrecht: Springer.

Nuzzi, R. J. (2015). The teaching of religion in Catholic schools. In M. T. Buchanan & A. M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 245–256). Dordrecht: Springer.

O'Connell, D. (2008). *Educating religiously toward a public spirituality.* (Doctoral thesis, Boston College, United States). Retrieved from https://libguides.bc.edu/graduate-etd.

Pang, N. S., & Wang, T. (2016). Professional learning communities: Research and practices across six educational systems in the Asia-Pacific region. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 36*(2), 193–201. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2016.1148848.

Reed, E. D., Freathy, R., Cornwall, S., & Davis, A. (2013). Narrative theology in religious education. *British Journal of Religious Education, 35*(3), 297–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2013.785931.

Rymarz, R., & Cleary, A. (2017). Examining some aspects of the worldview of students in Australian Catholic schools: Some implications for religious education. *British Journal of Religious Education*. https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2017.1352486.

Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher, 15*(2), 4–14.

Tse, T. K.-C. (2017). When Christian education meets patriotism: Christian organisations' response to the introduction of moral and national education in Hong Kong schools. *British Journal of Religious Education, 39*(3), 257–268. https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2015.1117416.

Ubani, M. (2012). What characterises the competent RE teacher? Finnish student teachers' perceptions at the beginning of their pedagogical training. *British Journal of Religious Education, 34*(1), 35–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2011.601906.

Zheng, M.-Y. (2006). *Tong chai guan ke dui ti sheng jiao shi jiao xue neng liang de ying xiang (A presented paper).* Retrieved from The Chinese University of Hong Kong website: https://www.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/~cthk/paper/a6.pdf.

Wing Kay Vion Ng is a curriculum officer of the Religious and Moral Education Curriculum Development Centre, Catholic Education Office, Hong Kong. She has over 10 years' experience in Religious Education curriculum implementation and teacher professional development. She was the team leader of the textbooks series (secondary and primary levels) written for a new religious education curriculum implemented in Hong Kong Catholic schools. Vion is currently a doctoral student with research focus on implementing the *'Emmaus Pedagogy'* (adapted from Thomas Groome's *'Shared Christian Praxis'*) in religious education in Hong Kong.

Shuet Yan Fion Luk has 16 years of professional experience in early childhood education and is currently the curriculum officer of, the Caritas Institute of Higher Education of the Hong Kong Caritas Education Services. She coordinates professional training courses for teachers of religious and moral education and provides support to related projects for school development in this curriculum area. She was a former curriculum team leader of the Diocesan Catholic Education Office, responsible for having written a series of religious and moral education textbooks for Catholic kindergartens, and conducted several teacher professional development programs. She has just completed a piece of research work on the implementation of the 'Emmaus Pedagogy', adapted from the 'Shared Christian Praxis' of Thomas. H. Groome, in Catholic kindergartens in Hong Kong.

Chapter 25
Enhancing Curriculum Syllabi and Frameworks: Catechetical, Cognitive, and Affective Principles

Max T. Engel

Introduction

This chapter proposes a theoretical basis for the design and analysis of Catholic high school religious education curricula in Catholic schools. It is based in the Catholic school experience in the United States context which is similar to, but also distinct from, other Catholic school contexts.

For decades, if not centuries prior to the 1970s, it was presumed that Catholic schools in the United States explicitly educated from and for a Catholic world-view: intentionally preparing students through curricular instruction and school-wide socialization to be active and practicing Catholic adults (Buetow, 1988). This formed the foundation of a school's "Catholic identity." However, this presumption changed in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It was an article by Australian Graham Rossiter, or at least the title of the article, "The Need for a 'Creative Divorce' Between catechesis and religious education in Catholic schools" (Rossiter, 1982) that has come to exemplify a challenge for Catholic schools' religious instruction. In Australia, the United States, and many other countries, the nature and goals of Catholic school religious instruction was being called into question. This question included the relationship and distinction between religious education and catechesis, which has remained part of the conversation about Catholic school religious instruction ever since and has been admirably summarized elsewhere (Groome, 1980, 2007; Warren, 1981; Rossiter, 1982; Kravatz, 2010; Franchi, 2011; Rymarz, 2011; Hyde, 2013; Scott, 2015).

That conversation is in the background but not the focus of this chapter. Suffice to say, each national context is unique, but the desire for students to understand and value Catholicism is universal. This is manifest in the contributions of international Catholic religious education scholars and practitioners as well as the educational and catechetical directives from national bishop's conferences from around the world.

M. T. Engel (✉)
Creighton University, Omaha, NE, USA
e-mail: MaxEngel@Creighton.edu

For example, in Australia, the Archdiocese of Melbourne developed its own textbook series, "To Know, Worship and Love," for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (Engbretson, 2000). At least partially in response to this textbook initiative, which was perceived to lack an affective dimension, some Australian religious education scholars have been advocating for greater inclusion of affectivity in religious education. For instance, Marian de Souza developed a religious education curriculum model that includes affective learning and spiritual intelligence (2001) and continued to promote this in subsequent articles, including "Engaging the Mind, Heart and Soul of the Student in Religious Education: Teaching for Meaning and Connection" (2005). Similarly, Buchanan and Hyde responded to the cognitive emphasis in religious education in Australia, asserting that thinking (cognitive), feeling (affective), inner reflective/intuitive (spiritual) are all necessary and complementary for religious education (2008).

Bishop's Conferences in Canada, England and Wales and Scotland have recently attempted to bring clarity to religious education in their countries through national directives. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2015 published Criteria for Catechesis as a guide for the "Dioceses of Canada in selecting, developing and approving catechetical resources for use in their Catholic schools and parishes as well as with families" for children between infancy and age 18 (Introduction, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015). It includes cognitive and affective outcomes, cites both the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1993) and the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) throughout, and will perhaps be the basis of future Catholic school directives similar to those in England and Wales or Scotland. The Religious Education Curriculum Directory for England and Wales published by the English and Welsh bishops in 2012 is intended for Catholic school instruction of students aged three to 19; it includes "methodology" and clearly involves affective and behavioral outcomes (The Department of Catholic Education and Formation of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales, 2012). The Scottish Bishops published the national syllabus This is Our Faith for schoolchildren aged four to 15 in 2011, following this with the Senior Phase, through age 18, in 2015 (Scottish Catholic Education Service, 2015). This document is notable for its thorough inclusion of outcomes in the affective domain; "beliefs, values, and practices" are in every "strand" of its curriculum. Collectively, these bishops' directives potentially have great relevance for other Catholic school contexts to the extent they seek to operationally unite catechesis and religious education, and this is especially true given the current context of Catholic school religious education in the United States.

A generally overlooked distinguishing characteristic of this context is the lack of state funds for Catholic schools in the United States. There are two significant results of this characteristic. First, in the U.S., parents send their children to Catholic schools expecting a Catholic culture that includes moral formation and values. For example, the National Catholic Education Association for the United States supported a nationwide market research study involving over 1400 parents that found that "the majority of parents expressed desire that their children have moral formation, and strong values. These two areas are hallmarks of Catholic school education" (National Catholic Education Association, 2018). In the U.S., most parents choosing a Catholic

school are paying an increasingly high cost and expecting a return (at least in part) in the form of a "Catholic effect" in moral formation, values, and instruction for their children. Second, there is no governmental stakeholder that provides funds and an alternative narrative for the nature and goals of Catholic education. Catholic school curriculums—even those for non-religion courses—are not accountable to government agencies, which is unlike the context in Australia, Canada, England and Wales, or Scotland. Further, every aspect of the religion curriculum in the U.S. is accountable only to the bishop without state involvement. Primary stakeholders—parents and bishops—in the U.S. Catholic schools anticipate Catholicism to be an important component of the Educational experience, and the Bishops have spoken: "Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age" (Framework) for better or worse is the guiding document for the U.S. Catholic high school religion instruction.

Unfortunately, there are inconsistencies evident in the Framework. The Introduction to the Framework defines Catholic religious education in the U.S. as catechetical, citing Catechesi Tradendae:

> The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ… These ends are evident in this framework—designed to guide catechetical instruction for young people of high-school age wherever and however it takes place

including "in Catholic high schools." This manifests the U.S. Bishops' clear desire at the outset.

However, if Catholic school religious education in the U.S. is to be catechetical, one would expect that the Framework would include affective pedagogy and behavioral outcomes, or perhaps incorporate catechetical methodology from the General Directory for Catechesis or the National Directory for Catechesis similar to what is found in the national directives for Catholic schools in England and Wales or Scotland. In short, the Framework is focused on content, not process, implying that catechesis is cognitive and not affective or behavioral. Engel's (2013) findings on the implementation of the Framework (Engel, 2013) was later cited by Ronald Nuzzi as evidence that the resulting textbooks overlooked "engagement of students' affective learning," something "regrettable given what modern science has found to be the enduring quality of learning that includes highly affective components" (Nuzzi, 2015, p. 253). It follows that since the Framework omits affective outcomes and catechetical pedagogy, these curricular components are diminished in value and therefore not incorporated in some textbook curriculums or in the class experience as thoroughly as one would expect. Eileen M. Daily (2015) comments that "the Framework's content knowledge references some dispositions (e.g., that '[i]n the Beatitudes, Jesus teaches us attitudes essential for true happiness;' USCCB, 2007, p. 48) but nothing in the document suggests that teaching the students to live from those attitudes … should be part of the course" (p. 11).

Given that the Framework will guide Catholic religion instruction for the foreseeable future and acknowledging its inherent weaknesses in the areas of catechetical pedagogy and affective outcomes, this chapter proposes steps that teachers, curricu-

lum coordinators, and textbook editors can use to enhance the doctrinal material presented in the Framework in the U.S.; however, the principles are applicable anywhere around the world that Catholic school educators engage high school-aged learners with doctrinal content with the stated or implied intent to catechize.

The remainder of this chapter demonstrates fundamental catechetical principles that can be the foundation of more developed rubrics to guide the creation or evaluation of religious education curriculums given an authoritative framework of doctrinal topics. The first step presents principles of methodology for catechesis distilled from the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) and the United States National Directory for Catechesis (2005). The second step uses Bloom's cognitive taxonomy as an analytical tool to identify the inclusion of strategies prompting higher order thinking. The third step incorporates a modified version of Krathwohl's (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964) affective taxonomy to identify the extent students are invited to demonstrate affective value for doctrinal content.

Principles of Catechetical Methodology from the General Directory for Catechesis and the U.S. Bishop's National Directory for Catechesis

The U.S. Bishops based their National Directory for Catechesis (NDC) (2005) on the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy's (1997) General Directory for Catechesis (GDC). Much of the content from the GDC's "Part Three: Chapter II, Elements of Methodology" is integrated into the NDC's "Chapter Four: Divine and Human Pedagogy," particularly the "Elements of Human Methodology," and "Means of Communication," (Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, p. 95–107). "Methodologies" in the directories is interpreted as principles that guide the general approach to and specific components of pedagogy for growth in the Catholic faith. In sum, the following nine principles synthesised from the GDC and NDC can be used to guide high school religion curriculum development and analysis.

One: Religion curriculums incorporate inductive methodology. This approach begins with events and facts and proceeds to discern their meaning in divine revelation.

Two: Religion curriculums incorporate deductive methodology, which begins with doctrinal principles and proceeds to their illumination and application in daily life.

Three: Religion curriculums integrate human experience. According to the GDC, "Human experience in catechesis" has different functions, including: arousing the learners' interest, promoting the intelligibility of the Christian message, and that when "assumed by faith," experience becomes a "locus for the manifestation and realization of salvation" (par. 152).

Four: Religion curriculums include a lived response. The key is fostering and reflecting on experiences beyond the classroom.

Five: Religion curriculums involve personal and class prayer—practices that are easily understood.

Six: Religion curriculums reveal the intrinsic Christian community of the classroom, as well as the school, parish, and other organizations such as teams or clubs. This use of the term "reveal" instead of "build" is intentional because in authentic community one realizes a sense of God's self-giving love through one's peers.

Seven: Religion curriculums integrate the family wherever possible and appropriate.

Eight: Religion curriculums include learning by heart. A caveat: What is memorized should be understood in order to become a source for Christian living (GDC, par. 154).

Nine: Religion curriculums use and critique mass digital media communications. The NDC pointedly calls for catechists themselves to be conversant with the opportunities and challenges of using the Internet and social media for catechesis, but also to help learners "develop a critical sense with which to evaluate the media" (NDC, pp. 106-107).

Once the principles are understood, the units of analysis within the curriculum need to be identified. Within a curriculum, assessments, instructional activities, and assignments are all instances of engagement. The engagements for the curriculum or a given unit should be identified and counted. Then, the inclusion rate of each of the nine principles can be tabulated for the collective total number of engagements. The objective is to see which principles occur frequently, which less often or never, and then use that information for curriculum development or revisions.

Using Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy and Krathwohl's Affective Taxonomy

Identifying methodological principles for catechetical education is important but insufficient to guide the creation and analysis of high school religion curriculums. Assuming requisite doctrinal content, these curriculums should incorporate specific strategies for higher order cognitive and more internalized affective learning.

Bloom's cognitive taxonomy has proven to be a sturdy tool in evaluating and guiding curriculums to practices that result in the "transfer" of knowledge from the classroom to the students' lived experience (Bloom, 1956). Since then, "Bloom's Taxonomy" has become one of the most widely recognized theoretical constructs in educational literature, a "cornerstone of curriculum and instruction," and its notion of classifying activities based on cognitive complexity is almost universally referred to and understood by educators (Johnson, Musial, Hall, & Gollnick, 2018, p. 360). Slightly revised in 2001, this taxonomy classifies the cognitive processes needed to demonstrate attainment of learning objectives for a curriculum and specific activities within the curriculum (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). This current taxonomy is divided into six major classification categories, each presumed to involve incre-

mentally more complex cognitive processes: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create.

The creators of the taxonomy view student learning as knowledge construction or making sense of one's experience; this emphasizes knowledge retention and transfer as learning outcomes. Retention is the ability to remember material presented in a course, while transfer is the ability to use what was learned in new situations (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p. 63). This corresponds with the objectives of catechetical education, where students are ultimately to use their knowledge of Jesus Christ in their everyday lives. First, students must recall the doctrines. Second, students should transfer their doctrinal knowledge to new situations, applying the teachings in their own context. This transfer and application necessitates more higher order cognitive processes than those involved in retention alone.

Bloom's taxonomy has been used for decades to systematically analyze curriculums and instructional practices identifying the extent to which they invite "lower order" and "higher order" thinking behaviors (Sosniak, 1994, p. 113). This usage aligns with the desire to create and identify religious education curriculums that result in students valuing and living Christian teachings. Too often "catechesis" or "religious education" is equated with the retention or memorization of doctrines, which is the lowest order cognitive process. A caution: remembering information is essential for catechetical education, but students also need to be able to understand and transfer information. Research in the 1990s suggested that the curriculums and assessments overemphasized the lowest level cognitive process "remember"—a conclusion still relevant today—and further, that the majority of assessments of transfer-based educational objectives (levels "understand" to "create") are classified in the second classification level, "understand" (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p. 63, 70). In short, Bloom's cognitive taxonomy can be used to identify the extent to which curriculums incorporate higher-order learning objectives and include activities and assessments that move students to cognitively transfer their knowledge to their lived reality.

In 1964, eight years after Bloom's taxonomy was first published, many of the same researchers, including the lead editing team, published what is known as Krathwohl's (1964) Affective Taxonomy under the title Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook II: Affective Domain (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). Where Bloom's cognitive taxonomy uses the principle of increasing cognitive complexity as the basis for its hierarchical continuum, Krathwohl's affective taxonomy uses the "principle of internalization." Internalization is the process where one moves over time from "awareness of" to an increasingly more complete "acceptance and practice of" the desired tenet and behavior (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964, p. 29).

This taxonomy was developed because Bloom's cognitive taxonomy does not include the affective dimension of learning. Affective learning is defined as changes in students' affection for, value of, or attraction to the concepts they are encountering. The creators of the original and revised Bloom's taxonomy reasoned that affective learning outcomes are not demonstrable within a school setting, either because they are inappropriate for assessment given their highly personal nature or they relate to

behaviors and choices subsequent to the class experience. However, it does not mean that affectivity is not important for learning and that curriculums should not invite students to consider their personal value for the content. This is important for religion curriculums, which are intended to help students value information they are taught, so much so that it guides their lived behaviors. Therefore, this chapter proposes that a modified version of Krathwohl's (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964) affective taxonomy can be used to identify the frequency and depth of invitations for students to demonstrate personal responses to, and even value for, the doctrinal content.

The same units of analysis can be used for both intended cognitive and affective outcomes; these will be more specific than the units of analysis presented above for identifying the inclusion of catechetical methodologies. To identify the units of analysis, one should distinguish important and standard components of the curriculum such as learning objectives, assessments, instructional activities, and assignments within each unit or lesson. These components include individual questions and tasks which in turn each include a verb communicating what the student is expected to demonstrate he or she can do. This verb is the key because it indicates the cognitive process students are expected to demonstrate. For example, a student may be asked to "summarise the Prologue of John's Gospel;" the verb is "summarise;" in other words, students are expected to demonstrate they can accurately summarise John's Gospel Prologue. Every question and task can be classified in both the cognitive and affective taxonomies. However, one might analyze a given unit or units within a complete curriculum as a sample or simplify the analysis in another reasonable manner.

What follows are functional descriptions and examples of Bloom's taxonomy in use that can be further developed into an evaluative rubric to guide the analysis and enhancement of religious education curriculums (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). At the conclusion of the six descriptions some questions are posed to help clarify analysis.

Level One: Remember. In the identified course components, for each of these discrete elements (e.g., each learning objective, assessment question, and learning activity question or task) whenever students are asked to recognize or recall information in the same form it was given, these elements would be classified "Remember." For instance, if students are prompted to "name the primary symbols of baptism" the cognitive process is "remember," a lower order process.

Level Two: Understand. Whenever students are asked to construct meaning from instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication, these elements should be classified "Understand." When students interpret, exemplify, classify, summarize, infer, compare, or explain, they are being asked to demonstrate that they understand the material. For example, if students are asked to "explain the significance of water, sacred chrism, candle-light, and new clothes as the symbols of baptism," their task is to demonstrate understanding.

Level Three: Apply. If students are asked to carry out or use a procedure in a given situation, it would be classified as "Apply." For instance, in a religion class this would most likely be an instance where a student is asked to apply a sequential thinking strategy to respond to a moral dilemma or interpretative question. Alternatively,

students could be asked to show they can apply the process of an examination of conscience typically associated with the sacrament of reconciliation-penance before partaking in Holy Eucharist. In both prompts, students would be applying understood processes with new scenarios.

Level Four: Analyze. Whenever students break material into its constituent parts and determine how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose, it would be classified as "Analyze." If students differentiate, organize, or attribute information, they are analyzing it. An instance of analysis would be if students are invited to analyze the activity and significance of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Baptism.

Level Five: Evaluate. If the element prompts students to make judgments based on explicit criteria and standards, it would be classified as "Evaluate." In other words, if students check or critique a process or conclusion to determine its effectiveness, validity, or appropriateness, the element has asked them to evaluate something. A potential example might be when students are asked to critique hypothetical scenarios related to relationships and marriage using their knowledge of the Sacrament of Marriage as evaluative criteria.

Level Six: Create. Whenever students are prompted to form a coherent or functional whole or reorganize elements into a new pattern or structure, this element would be classified as "Create." For instance, a teacher could assign a project with the following objective: "Create a post-baptismal ritual celebration to be held immediately after the baptism in the parish center that incorporates the four primary symbols of baptism in a way that invites all participants to consider their own baptism and the role of the Holy Spirit in their lives." In short, when students hypothesize, design, or construct something new with the information they had been taught they are showing they can "create," the highest order cognitive process in the taxonomy.

Once one understands these functional descriptions and applications of Bloom's taxonomy, it remains to identify the curriculum's learning objectives, assessments, instructional activities, and assignments within each unit or lesson, which include individual questions and tasks—elements to be classified. Each element, a question or task, includes a verb; this verb, signifying the requisite cognitive process, should be classified in the taxonomy. Some preliminary questions: Are the course elements expecting predominately higher or lower order cognitive processes, or is there a range? Do the objectives, learning experiences, and assessment questions align in cognitive complexity?

These same curriculum components (e.g., a test assessment) and specific elements (e.g., each assessment question) can then be classified using a modified version of Krathwohl's (1964) affective taxonomy. Krathwohl's affective taxonomy has been modified for the purpose of analyzing high school religion curriculums. To do this, the criteria for classifying educational objectives in the affective dimension has been reframed from "the student demonstrates…" to "students are invited to demonstrate…" For instance, instead of the original wording of the second level, "the student responds…." it becomes "the student is invited to respond…" Put another way, every activity the curriculum suggests or question it asks is interpreted as an invitation to the students to respond. Some of those invitations explicitly intend to prompt affec-

tive growth and reflection through the experiences suggested or questions asked. The crux for affective learning is that students are invited to experience and respond in a way that demonstrates a classifiable level of internalization or value, not that they do so.

From the original affective taxonomy, the first classification category has been substantially changed and the fifth omitted. The original first classification level, that students receive or attend to the phenomenon, has been changed to "No Affective Response" for instances that do not explicitly invite students to demonstrate affective learning. The original fifth classification is omitted because even the most mature teenagers are incapable of expressing a fully developed philosophy of life. The result is a four-level taxonomy to classify invitations to students to demonstrate personal internalization of value for religious doctrines in a Catholic high school Religion curriculum. These four classification levels derived from Krathwohl's (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964) affective taxonomy are presented immediately below.

Level One: No Affective Response. For the identified course components (e.g., a learning activity), once the discrete elements are identified (e.g., each question or task within the activity), those that do not explicitly invite an affective response are classified here. For instance, the question "Why is water a primary symbol of baptism?" does not explicitly prompt a personal or potentially affective response. Implicit in this classification is the close relationship, at least in initial stages, between cognition and internalization in that students need to remember and possibly understand in order to demonstrate affective learning.

Level Two: Respond Personally. This level classifies any objective, question, or task that anticipates students providing a personal response to the material within the context of the class. A possible indicator is the term "you" which might indicate an invitation intended to prompt a personal response on the part of the student. For example, the question "Why do you think water is a good symbol for baptism?" attempts to prompt a more personal response than the example above. This illuminates curriculums' explicit attempts to include affective strategies for affective learning, something clearly beyond "Level One: No Affective Response." Level Two includes any invitation involving what students think, have done, do, or will do, without inviting them to comment on their value for it, Level Three, or making a decision about or analyzing their value for it, Level Four.

Level Three: Value. This level identifies when students are explicitly asked to demonstrate a minimum acceptance of the value of a teaching or practice. At this level in a religion class, students might first demonstrate their value for the doctrines, often relating to "attitudes" or "appreciation." Ideally, clues to the learners' value for the doctrines would be expressed in descriptions of behaviors acting in a way consistent with the doctrines. However, ranges in this level go from inviting agreement that something is important to proposing students demonstrate commitment to the concept. For example, the question "Why might baptism be important to you or someone who is Christian?" invites demonstration of more thorough internalization. The third level is more concrete than the fourth, necessitating less interpretation of the invitation on the part of the analyst.

Level Four: Organize. Elements classified in Level Four are those that ask students to explain concrete personal decisions for their lives or explain their chosen values and behaviors in contrast to other possibilities. There is a significant cognitive element here because students are invited to demonstrate more thorough internalization of the doctrine. They must articulate how their value for the doctrine fits with other values they hold. Differentiation between Level Three "Value" and Level Four "Organize" hinges on whether students are invited to explicate judgments or a plan of action that incorporate the course content into their lives. For example, "Explain how you might 'live your baptism'—or a Christian may 'live her baptism'—as a young adult in today's world" invites students to potentially prioritize relevant Christian values in a lived way.

Once the frequency of invitations for personal responses have been identified, and to what level of internalization and value using the affective taxonomy, some preliminary questions are suggested: Are students invited to demonstrate both cognitive learning, something that can be assessed objectively, as well as affective learning by responding personally in a variety of ways? Are the queries of appropriate frequency and depth? A teacher must understand the students and their context in order to best engage them with these invitations. The assumption is that credible curriculums, when executed by effective teachers, can invite students to respond to the material in ways that potentially suggest that they are internalizing and valuing the doctrines taught.

Conclusion

To summarize, the U.S. Catholic school context resembles that of other countries in that there are inconsistencies regarding the nature and goals of instruction in religion courses, particularly around definitions of "catechesis" and "religious education." Unlike other Catholic school contexts, Catholic schools in the U.S. receive no state funding, the significance of which relates to perceptions of "Catholic identity." Bishops expect their schools to catechise, and parents desire at least a modicum of religious formation for their children. If such an educational experience rooted in "Catholic identity" is not provided, bishops will question the relevance of Catholic schools, and parents will make other school choices. Currently, the U.S. Bishops use their Curriculum Framework to guide and define the Catholic identity in Catholic high school religion courses. However, the Framework does not include affective pedagogy and outcomes, or incorporate catechetical methodology from the General Directory for Catechesis or the U.S. Bishops' National Directory for Catechesis. It is therefore recommended that religion teachers, curriculum coordinators, and textbook editors enhance the doctrinal material presented in the Curriculum Framework. They can do this by utilizing or augmenting with additional catechetical methodology, and by incorporating pedagogy that invites both the transfer of knowledge to students' lived experience as well as affective learning.

To that end, this chapter has proposed a theoretical basis for the analysis and enhancement of Catholic school religious education curriculums. This proposal distilled catechetical pedagogy from the GDC and the NDC. It then introduced and briefly demonstrated using Bloom's cognitive taxonomy to evaluate how thoroughly a curriculum anticipated higher-order cognitive learning. This higher-order thinking is important for religious instruction because it fosters transfer and application of the learned content, doctrines that nurture Christian living and commitment. Lastly, this chapter proposed using a modified version of Krathwohl's affective taxonomy to evaluate how extensively the curriculum invites students to respond personally in ways that suggest affective learning related to the content; when students value concepts, they are more likely to incorporate them into their lived experience.

References

Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. New York: Longman.

Bloom, B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Handbook I: Cognitive domain*. New York: David McKay.

Buetow, A. B. (1988). *The Catholic school: Its roots, identity, and future*. New York: Crossroad.

Buchanan, M. T., & Hyde, B. (2008). Learning beyond the surface: Engaging the cognitive, affective and spiritual dimensions within the curriculum. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 13*(4), 309–320.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2015). *Criteria for Catechesis.* Retrieved from: http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Criteria_for_Catechesis.pdf.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. (1993). Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales. (2012). *Religious education curriculum directory for Catholic schools in England and Wales*. Retrieved from file:///Users/mte30466/Documents/Scholarship/Religious_Ed/EnglandRE_2012.pdf.

Daily, E. (2015). Core outcomes for Catholic religious education. *Religious Education, 110*(1), 10–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2015.989091.

de Souza, M. (2001). Addressing the spiritual dimension in education: Teaching affectively to promote cognition. *Journal of Religious Education, 49*(3), 31–41.

de Souza, M. (2005). Engaging the mind, heart and soul of the student in religious education: Teaching for meaning and connection. *Journal of Religious Education, 53*(4), 40–47.

Engebretson, K. (2000). The Melbourne archdiocesan textbook project: An innovation in Australian religious education. *Journal of Religious Education, 48*(1), 28–32.

Engel, M. T. (2013). *An analysis of Catholic high school religion textbooks based on identified methods for catechesis and taxonomies for cognitive and affective learning*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Catholic University of America. ProQuest LLC, #3562977.

Franchi, L. (2011). St. Augustine, catechesis and religious education. *Religious Education,* 106 (3): 299–311.

Groome, T. (1980). *Christian religious education: Sharing our story and vision*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

Groome, T. (2007). Religious education: No divorce for the children's sake. *Catholic Education, 16*(4), 12–14.

Hyde, B. (2013). A category mistake: Why contemporary Australian religious education in Catholic schools may be doomed to failure. *Journal of Beliefs and Values: Studies in Religion and Education, 34*(1), 36–45.

Johnson, J. A., Musial, D., Hall, G. E., & Gollnick, D. M. (2018). *Foundations of American education: Becoming effective teachers in challenging times* (17th ed.). New York: Pearson.

Krathwohl, D. R., Bloom, B. S., & Masia, B. B. (1964). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals: Handbook II: Affective domain*. New York: David McKay.

Kravatz, M. (2010). *Partners in wisdom and grace: Catechesis and religious education in dialogue*. Lanham, MD: University of America Press.

National Catholic Education Association. (2018). Our mission in a changing world: An update on a national market research study. *Momentum XLIX(*1):48–49.

Nuzzi, R. (2015). The teaching of religion in Catholic schools in the United States: One faith amidst competing ecclesiologies. In M. T. Buchanan & A. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 245–256). New York: Springer.

Rossiter, G. (1982). The need for a creative divorce between catechesis and religious education in Catholic schools. *Religious Education, 77*(1), 21–43.

Rymarz, R. (2011). Catechesis and religious education in Canadian Catholic schools. *Religious Education, 106*(5), 537–549.

Scott, K. (2015). Problem or paradox: Teaching the Catholic religion in Catholic schools. In M. T. Buchanan & A. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 47–60). New York: Springer.

Scottish Catholic Education Service. (2015). *Key sections of this is our faith*. Retrieved from https://sces.org.uk/this-is-our-faith/.

Sosniak, L. A. (1994). The taxonomy, curriculum, and their relations. In L. W. Anderson & L. A. Sosniak (Eds.), *Bloom's taxonomy: A forty-year retrospective* (pp. 103–125). Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education.

The Sacred Congregation for the Clergy. (1997). *General directory for catechesis*. Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2005). *National directory for catechesis*. Washington, DC: USCCB.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2007). *Doctrinal elements of a curriculum framework for the development of catechetical materials for young people of high school age*. Retrieved from: http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/upload/high-school-curriculum-framework.pdf.

Warren, M. (1981). Catechesis, an enriching category for religious education. *Religious Education, 76*(2), 115–127.

Dr. Max T. Engel is an assistant professor in the Education Department as well as the Theology Department in the College of Arts and Sciences at Creighton University, a Jesuit, Catholic university in Omaha, NE, USA. He researches, publishes, and presents in the areas of faith outcomes through academic instruction in Catholic undergraduate and high school programs, Catholic identity and mission in Catholic K-12 schools, and pastor formation and preparation related to Catholic schools. He reviews articles for the *eJournal of Catholic Education in Australasia* and *The Journal of Catholic Education* (USA), where he is on the governing board.

Chapter 26
Religious Art and Liturgical Catechesis of Children

John-Paul Sheridan

Introduction

Before children can form words, they are cognisant of their surroundings. Before children can write their names, they can take up a writing instrument of some sort or other and make their mark on a page. Art is something that suffuses the life and experience of the child from a very early age.

This chapter argues that the presence and use of the visual elements in liturgy can assist in the liturgical catechesis of children. This liturgical catechesis is discussed as meaning behind ritual, meaning during ritual and meaning in front of ritual (Morris, 1995). This might be described as the way liturgy might be prepared, participated in and reflected upon in order to assist the full and active participation of children.

The chapter makes specific reference to the paragraphs in the 1973 Directory for Masses with Children which mention the visual elements of the liturgical celebration (par. 35–36). While a child's exposure to religious art might not be as prevalent as it was in the past, the opportunities to see and experience this particular art form are still there. One of the places where this might happen is during the course of religious education, catechetical formation and sacramental preparation in primary school. This is consistent with the aspirations of Church documents in regard to the place and content of religious education in Catholic school. Exposure to religious art might also occur at church when children attend with the parents and families as part of the liturgical assembly. Even if visits are not frequent, the child gradually becomes aware of a church as a place that is different to the other buildings they know, and this building is inhabited by objects and elements, which might be vaguely familiar to the child, but which are different in their subject matter and use.

I will discuss three themes in this chapter—spirituality of the child, religious art, and liturgical catechesis, with the purpose of establishing an intersection between

J.-P. Sheridan (✉)
Pontifical University of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Ireland
e-mail: JohnPaul.Sheridan@spcm.ie

the three themes. I want to begin with some observations regarding learning and the arts. I will then comment on the place of liturgical education and formation in the course of religious education in the Catholic school.

Learning and the Arts

Arts education contributes to both the cognitive and affective domains of learning (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, & Krathwohl, 1956) and assists the child's conceptual and aesthetic development. It teaches children to use 'a range of communicative expression through which they can explore their experience of and interaction with, the world' (p. 52). It is also education whereby the children are afforded the opportunity to respond as viewers.

Fleming (2011) offers the concepts of learning in and through the arts. This is not dissimilar to the distinction made by Grimmitt (2000) between education about religion and education from religion. Learning in the arts is about knowledge of art within its field—history, styles, techniques, etc. Learning through the arts can look beyond the subject in itself and see it at the disposal of other disciplines. In observing the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, I can come to an understanding of the genius of Michelangelo as an artist, the techniques he employed, the palette of colours he used. However, observation of the ceiling will also assist an understanding of religious iconography, biblical knowledge and interpretation, and the religious convictions both of artist and patron. Learning in art and learning through art should be taken together; seen as two sides of the one coin.

Religious Education and Liturgical Catechesis

The General Directory for Catechesis sees the principal locus of catechesis as being the community (par. 254). When the child enters the world of the school, 'with the possibility of greater development of intellectual, affective and behavioural capacities' (par. 179), he or she comes into contact with a programme of religious education and starts the journey towards sacramental preparation and celebration.

While the place of liturgical catechesis seems not to fit in the sphere of Catholic religious education and the Catholic school, I propose the evidence suggests otherwise. The 1988 document, The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School outlines the importance of multidimensional formation of the pupil (par. 50), of which liturgical formation must be part. It sees Catholic schools as having a complementary link in the aims of catechesis with the community mentioned earlier. While the school might provide the instruction and the parish the formation, the opposite is also true. 'It is evident…that religious instruction cannot help but strengthen the faith of a believing student, just as catechesis cannot help but increase one's knowledge of the Christian message.' (par 69). The document emphasises the

link that the school must have both with the family and the parish (#70) the other locus of liturgical catechesis. Furthermore, it is in the school under the guidance and expertise of teachers that an academic study of arts and aesthetics (par. 60) can take place, again complementing the use and understanding of art in the liturgical space. The document mentions the role of Catholic schools in the sacramental journey (par. 78–79, 82–83), which cannot be seen merely in an academic sense, but where teachers accompany their pupils in the understanding of, and initiation into the sacraments, with particular emphasis on the Eucharist. 'The life of faith is expressed in acts of religion. The teacher will assist students to open their hearts in confidence to Father, Son and Holy Spirit through personal and liturgical prayer.' (par. 83). This is particularly true in Ireland where much of the preparation for the sacraments is still undertaken in the primary school.

The Spirituality of the Child

Reynaert (2014) outlines three aspects of the spirituality of the child which are of particular relevance. The first aspect is the search for meaning in their lives, what Eaude (2014) calls the 'big questions' related to meaning, identity and purpose. Second, spirituality is embedded in the everyday lives of children and is something that influences their lives and in the shaping of the people they are and are becoming. Finally, the spirituality of the child is something that needs to be stimulated and nurtured. While all three have a bearing on this topic, I wish to focus on the third. The spirituality of the child relies on the partnership between the home, the school and the parish. These are the communities in which children begin to make 'spiritual' meaning with the assistance of the adults in these communities. Coles (1990) writes of the capacity of children to understand things religiously and even to be able to make sense of some of the existential issues of life (birth, death, separation, loss, etc.). He suggests that children are 'young pilgrims, well aware that life is a finite journey' (p. xvi).

Nye (2004) states that children, 'partly by virtue of their distinctive psychological characteristics, have an intriguing rich capacity for spirituality, for a kind of religious knowing and being which is neither contingent on their religious knowledge nor moral accountability.' (p. 93) When arriving at school for the first time, children seem to take to prayer and religious and catechetical education very easily and quickly, regardless of how little religious exposure they might have had to date. Ingersoll (2014) sees a child as an active participant in his or her spiritual life and not just a passive receiver. Eaude (2014) explores some of the ways in which children explore the spiritual aspects of their lives.

> Curiosity, imagination and playfulness help children to process difficult and puzzling experiences as well as those which are joyful and life-enhancing … Such qualities are built up over time, through a broad and balanced range of experiences, with opportunities for activity and quiet, reflection and exploration, through activities including play, drama, art, music, story and discussion. (p. 237)

The most obvious thing here is that the exploration of the spiritual life of the child is conducted in a manner that is familiar to the child. The natural qualities of curiosity, etc. are at the disposal of the learning experience, along with the active and reflective dynamics. These are qualities which are also built up both in the classroom and within the liturgical assembly.

The insights of children can often be deeply spiritual and can often take adults unawares. Without the language to express, the intimacy to share, and space to encounter, the child may lose the ability, so evident in early age, to connect with that which is spiritual within them.

Religious Art

Jensen (2004) asserts that, 'Christian worship can be visually as well as verbally rich, filled not only with prose but also with poetry, enhanced by all kinds of art forms, appealing to the senses' (p. 77). The visual elements of liturgy are many and they are often ignored at the risk of overly extending the liturgy. She divides the use of art in the Church into four categories: decoration, didactic, devotion and prophetic.

In terms of the decorative, Jensen sees the conflict arising in the assertion that, beautiful things are distracting to the eye and thereby disturbing to the soul. Art is somehow seen as carnal rather than spiritual. We are attracted to the worldly beauty that we see rather than being drawn inward or upward to the invisible and spiritual. However, Jensen also offers the argument that what is beautiful is a reflection of the beauty of God, thereby drawing us towards the transcendent. A beautiful space in which to worship is not meant to be merely a reflection of a dedicated parish. It is meant to be a place which aesthetically enhances the celebration of the liturgy.

She then discusses art as didactic. Images in churches act as a teaching tool and deepen worship experience. Whether in formal instruction, or by 'osmosis', or at the hands of parents or grandparents, successive generations of children were introduced and taught about saints through images in churches. Jensen affirms that children learn best when their lessons are accompanied by illustrations, and that visual art is an essential element in religious formation, in the 'communication of key concepts, core principles, and cherished traditions' (p. 89).

The lights of thousands of candles bear testimony to art as an aid to devotion. Furthermore, the inclusion of figures into paintings has the particular function to draw the viewer into the picture, to aid devotion and to leave a lasting image in the imagination of the devotee. Art as an aid to devotion helps us to look through the image to what is beyond.

Jensen's final category is art as prophetic. It is a category which has been prevalent in the twentieth century, though not exclusively so. The ability to both deliver a message and raise moral questions has often been found in art: Rembrandt's depiction of the Jews of Amsterdam; Goya's Black Paintings; Christ as an AIDS patient or as a homeless person are all images which disturb the viewer and provoke a response. Jensen is clear to delineate between art that might 'have a message' and art that

is propagandist. Any 'message art' can be superficial and sloganeering, whatever position it takes about the mainstream culture or dominant political powers.

These four categories are a good point of departure in teaching children about religious art. Beginning with simple images and understanding of art as devotion, perhaps at Christmas. Art as decoration can be observed in the way a church is adorned. The stained-glass windows or the Stations of the Cross give an opportunity for the children to learn and when they are older they might be introduced to art in the prophetic context.

Much like animals viewed in a zoo as opposed to their natural habitat, a piece of art viewed in a gallery never has the same power of impact as it would have if it were seen in the place for which it was created. Viewing a sixteenth-century altarpiece in a museum is not the same as viewing it in the church and above the altar that is was painted to adorn. It might be considered a piece of religious art and no doubt its beauty evokes responses from visitors. However, it was originally meant as an altarpiece, so viewing it in a liturgical space, might evoke a different response.

Viewing the same altarpiece in its original setting and considering the purpose for which it was created is something very different. In other words, viewing it during the celebration of the sacrifice of the mass might evoke a deeper response. This is what Irvine (2013) means by seeing artworks liturgically; 'seeing the artwork as part of the total worshipping environment and experience in its originally intended setting where the Mass was celebrated' (pp. 22–23). In this way, the piece is not only a piece of religious art but also a piece of sacred art. It has a liturgical function. De Gruchy (2008) makes the distinction between religious and sacred art. Religious art functions in an instructional, didactic and devotional manner. Sacred art, according to his interpretation 'is specifically intended for liturgical purposes; it is the art of the icon, the crucifix or the 'Stations of the Cross', normally but not necessarily produced by artists who are themselves Christians' (p. 235). This is an important distinction. Religious art and sacred art are not the same thing.

Irvine uses the term, 'liturgical seeing' to refer to art in a liturgical setting. It is seeing both in context and with reference to the event. This is what transforms the person from being a viewer to being a worshipper. Participant might be a better word. Irvine notes that some of the purpose of the renewal of the liturgy after Vatican II was in order that people might participate; that they might be active in the execution of the liturgy. However, in as much as one brings something to the liturgy, Irvine notes that it is also a matter of what the liturgy brings to the person.

Liturgical Catechesis

Liturgical catechesis might be defined as how the church, gathered in liturgical assembly, instructs by means of information and formation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that liturgical catechesis, 'aims to initiate people into the mystery of Christ by proceeding from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from the "sacraments" to the "mysteries" (par. 1075). The emphasis here

seems to be something moving, not static. It also suggests a deepening understanding of something that begins in the realm of knowledge and moves to the realm of encounter, *metanoia* and formation, as Baker (2015) suggests, 'liturgy enacts and mediates this spirituality of encounter that spills out into all of the Christian life. In the liturgy, Christians enter the paschal mystery, experiencing life with Christ in prayer, ritual action, and sacrament' (p. 525).

In speaking about the liturgical catechesis, Colloton (2006) emphasises both information and formation.

> It was informational, in that I was sharing the teachings and sources of our liturgical life. It was formational, in that I was inviting people to reflect on our ritual vocabularies and reinforce their use. It was catechesis from a liturgical experience to provide both catechesis about the liturgy of the church and for participation in that liturgy more consciously and actively. (p. 173)

Morris (1995) likewise mentions three particular dimensions in liturgical catechesis: meaning behind ritual; meaning during ritual; meaning in front of ritual. These dimensions are explained and expanded by Ostdiek (1998). In meaning behind the ritual, Ostdiek suggests that this is the preparatory and planning phase of liturgy. While this might include reviewing the words used in the liturgy (prayers, readings, etc.), it should also include the wide array of gestures, symbols and action that occur in the course of the liturgy. In meaning during the ritual, Morris stresses that it is not only the meaning that is behind the ritual, but the new meaning that can arise because of celebrating the ritual. The third dimension is meaning in front of the ritual. This might be explained as what happens after the ritual, what critical reflection on the ritual might look like. Ostdiek expands on the second and third dimensions in particular. The second dimension he titles, 'Liturgy as Catechesis'. The liturgical assembly is not only formed by the liturgy but is a formative community itself. In the signs, symbols and gestures of the liturgy, meaning is suggested, but a complementary meaning might be discovered by someone sitting in the pews —the symbolism of the cross on Good Friday and a person suffering in some particular way. Ostdiek related the third dimension of liturgical catechesis to what happens once we have returned to our homes. He uses the phrase, 'Liturgy as Catechesis for Life', and it is here that he situates mystagogy. This is where what has been celebrated is now lived.

Regarding the participation of children in the liturgical assembly, the threefold dynamic expounded by Morris and Ostdiek might be presented as the following three phases: how a community prepares for liturgy; how a community participates in the liturgy; how a community reflects once the liturgy is over and they have been commanded to 'go in peace'. When a community prepares for liturgy it recognises the distinctive elements of the liturgy, the symbols and rituals associated with it, the music and congregational participation. When children are present, preparation should reflect this and that this might require adjustment so that they might participate more fully as part of the liturgical assembly. During the liturgy, catechesis happens with the proclamation and explanation in the Liturgy of the Word. The full and active participation of the whole assembly acts as a sign to children that this is something that the adults among them and with them take seriously. Children, as Ostdiek suggests,

'mimic their parents and teachers until they know by heart the song to sing, the story to tell, the way to think' (p. 79). Children should be assisted in seeing what is taking place and how the elements of the liturgy fit together. Gallet (2000) suggests,

> Singing strong hymns, walking in procession, lighting a candle from the paschal candle, observing the flame "divided but undimmed," are all ways of knowing for children. They are kinaesthetic, bodily-based experiences that engage the imagination and teach about participation in the liturgy the way no class or explanation could ever do. They touch the heart and the emotions deeply and profoundly. Although children may not be able to articulate exactly what they have experienced, they take from these moments much more than they are able to say. The seeds have been planted firmly in the fertile ground of their imaginations and memories. (p. 124)

Children should have a clear, unrestricted view of what is happening in the sanctuary so that their imagination might be engaged and that the various elements of the liturgy, including the visual might touch the heart and the emotions. All too often, children are tolerated as long as they're quiet, relegated to the back of the church or the crying room, where they can see nothing and are told to sit still for an inordinate length of time with nothing to do.

> Studies now demonstrate what some parents and teachers have always observed: that from infancy through the pre-school years, the human child is a voracious receiver of stimuli; and that the child's consciousness is alive with a fantasy life constituted in great part by the images which are given to encompass that child. An appreciation of the fullness of the interweaving of images and actions of the liturgy would lead us to conclude that young children belong in church as much as any adult. (Ramshaw Schmidt, 1983, p. 113)

It is incumbent on parents, educators and catechists to bring children up to where they can see; to whisper in their ear, telling them what's happening and pointing to things that they can see. When it is all over there is also the possibility for the children to ask their questions and to reflect about what they have seen and heard. The experience comes first, and the articulation of that experience will come later, usually with the guidance of teachers, parents or catechists. However, the children will have nothing to reflect on or to speak about later, if they haven't been able to see what has been going on.

This is what Kavanagh (1984) refers to as primary theology; the 'grammar, vocabulary, and syntax' of the rite itself, 'which actively joins the participating church together not in a discussion of theological principles, but in an enactment—a common experience, an encounter in faith' (pp. 147–148). This participatory catechesis will then lead to fuller participation with the wider Christian community assembled liturgically.

This threefold movement of liturgical catechesis can be seen in the context of sacramental preparation and celebration both in parishes and in primary schools. Many parishes now run programmes based during the Sunday Eucharist which help to prepare the children for sacraments and often children are encouraged to become involved in preparing the liturgy.

As one of the primary loci for faith formation, the place of programmes of religious education and catechesis in primary schools is crucial, and the threefold movement of liturgical catechesis is often very strong in the primary school setting. Teachers

are often doing the job of handing on the faith to children when parents have reneged on the responsibility. Teachers are the ones who provide catechetical formation for children in the course of sacramental preparation. Teachers are the ones who will take the children on a tour of the church, and perhaps persuade the sacristan or parish priest to open all the drawers and cupboards for the children to have full experience of the visual elements of the church.

Liturgy and the Visual

Ramshaw Schmidt (1983) states that the liturgy

> teaches by immersing us into a juxtaposition of images, stories, and symbols of the faith. Here is a paschal candle, there a green chasuble, now the angels lauding Christ's birth; and later people yelling Hosanna. Some liturgical readings were written millennia ago, but they are mingled with hymns composed centuries ago and prayers drafted yesterday. (p. 117)

The Directory for Masses with Children refers to the visual elements in two paragraphs.

The first paragraph relates to the visual elements during the course of the liturgical year and a number are named. It goes on to mention the visual elements of liturgy as it is being celebrated and the actual place where the celebration is taking place.

> 35. The liturgy of the Mass itself contains many visual elements and these should be given great prominence with children. This is especially true of the particular visual elements in the course of the liturgical year, for example, the veneration of the cross, the Easter candle, the lights of the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, and the variety of colours and liturgical appointments.

> In addition to these visual elements that belong to the celebration itself and to the place of celebration, it is appropriate to introduce other related elements that will permit children to perceive visually the wonderful works that God performed in creation and redemption and thus support their prayer. The liturgy should never appear as something dry and merely intellectual. (Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, 1973)

The second paragraph turns to the children's artistic contributions and how they might be used in the homily, the general intercession, or as part of the reflection. It suggests that children's art might have a specific function within the liturgical assembly and what is clear from this is that there is no sanction for the widespread decoration of churches with children's art which is a common occurrence at the celebrations of sacraments.

> 36. For the same reason, the use of pictures prepared by the children themselves may be useful, for example, as illustrations of a homily, as visual expressions of the intentions of the general intercession, or as inspiration to reflection. (Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, 1973)

Of the two paragraphs, the second section of the first paragraph might be most open to interpretation and expansion. In terms of the place of worship and children's presence there, we should distinguish between several different ways to understand

visual elements in the liturgical setting: their use in the liturgical setting; their use as educational and devotional; art that adorns the building; art that is produced by the children. Finally, the building itself and the liturgical space also warrants mention. Another distinction can also be made between the liturgical catechesis that takes place during the liturgical assembly and catechesis that can take place when the children might visit the church either with a family member or as part of a class visit during school time.

There are two distinctions that should be made in terms of the visual: that which we can see and that which we can touch. Take as an example of the visual the Stations of the Cross, which are an important part of any church. Children might be unfamiliar with them, a fact often realised on a class visit to the church. There are a number of ways to approach the Stations, artistically and devotionally being the most obvious. They remain, however always at a distance, on the wall not moving.

There are then objects which we can touch. First, in terms of their use in the liturgical assembly and second, seeing them up close for educational purposes. So the Sunday Lectionary can be carried as part of a ritual around the Liturgy of the Word. It is treated with reverence and placed in the appropriate location in the sanctuary. The day before or after in class, the children might get to hold the book as the priest, teacher or catechist explains its various parts, etc. The same can be said for the thurible, a chalice, a stole, or a pyx.

While we seek to show, instruct and educate children regarding the visual elements and their use and function in the liturgy, we are also forming them as members of the liturgical assembly. These objects or visual elements are not merely museum pieces, but something connected to the life of the worshipping community.

As with all things in education, children react differently to art according to their age and psychological development. Younger children will focus on colours and their use and older children will be interested in techniques and media used in the depictions. Children will sometimes be interested in the story portrayed by the painting and sometimes by the story behind the painting. At other times, the bodily depictions of the figures in the painting or sculpture will also interest them. The context of the work is also as important to them as its appeal to their imagination. Children learn better and remember longer when lessons are accompanied by images and/or stories.

In liturgical education around visual elements, there is a tripartite relationship which should be known and understood. In the history of liturgical and religious art, the artefact, the place and the ritual action form a relationship. This is true today and it a good stepping off point for children. In this way again, artefacts are not seen as museum pieces but have a context and place within the ritual action of the liturgical assembly. The cross is probably the most obvious artefact with which children are familiar. However, the cross on a building or the crucifix in the class takes on a different significance when seen in a church being carried on Good Friday, and when people kiss it as they go in procession towards the altar.

The visual elements mentioned in the Directory for Masses with Children are elements that offer the child a greater opportunity of participation in the liturgical assembly. The education and formation of the visual elements of the liturgy is also

so that the child might be a full, active and conscious member of the Christian community assembled in prayer.

Conclusion

Isadora Duncan once said, 'if I could tell you what it meant, there would be no point in dancing it'. Art is an activity which requires no collaboration, no other stimuli. The explanation comes later. Jensen (2004) says,

> as young children we were given crayons and drawing paper, and we drew, not necessarily straight lines. Pictures were a language we understood before we could read and write. Images were modes of expression and communication. Colours and shapes carried ideas and feelings. The goal wasn't to mimic the external world but rather to interpret it. (p. 11)

As stated in the first section, children have an inordinate capacity to make meaning of the experiences around them. When this experience is a piece of art, either sacred or religious, they have several avenues open to them. There is first an interpretation coming from a teacher or parent, which assists them in understanding the meaning of the piece. There is their own art work. They take up a pencil or crayon and give their own interpretation of the piece of art, or indeed a story from the bible or from the lives of the saints. Witnessing them concentrating very hard on the activity is an observation on the dynamic which is at work in the movement from the external experience to the internal interpretation to the external production on the page.

In the broader context of the liturgical assembly, either as part of the parish congregation or as a school community, the visual in the church has the possibility of enhancing the liturgical experience of the child, of assisting in the threefold movement of liturgical catechesis, because the child sees the visual elements not as pieces of art, but as visual elements in the context of a liturgical setting and as part of the liturgical celebration.

References

Baker, K. (2015). Proclaiming a dynamic understanding of Grace. *Worship, 89*(6), 505–525.

Bloom, B. S., Engelhart, M. D., Furst, E. J., Hill, W. H., & Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives, Handbook I: The cognitive domain*. New York: David McKay Co., Inc.

Coles, R. (1990). *The spiritual life of children*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Colloton, P. H. (2006). The value of catechesis and formation for liturgical renewal. *Liturgical Ministry, 15,* 171–175.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988). *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

De Gruchy, J. W. (2008). *Christianity, art and transformation: Theological aesthetics in the struggle for justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eaude, T. (2014). Creating hospitable space to nurture children's spirituality possibilities and dilemmas associated with power. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 19*(3–4), 236–248.

Fleming, M. (2011). Learning in and through the Arts. In J. Sefton-Green, P. Thomson, K. Jones, & L. Bresler (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of creative learning* (pp. 177–185). London: Routledge.

Gallet, J. (2000). The Sunday assembly: A place for children. *Liturgical Ministry, 9,* 127–140.

Grimmitt, M. (2000). Contemporary pedagogies of religious education: What are they? In Michael Grimmitt (Ed.), *Pedagogies of religious education* (pp. 24–52). Great Wakering, UK: McCrimmon Publishing.

Ingersoll, H. N. (2014). Making room: A place for children's spirituality in the Christian church. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 19*(3–4), 164–178.

Irvine, C. (2013). *The cross and creation in Christian liturgy and art*. London: SPCK Publishing.

Jensen, R. (2004). *The substance of things seen*. Cambridge: Eerdmans.

Kavanagh, A. (1984). *On liturgical theology*. Collegeville, MN Liturgical Press.

Morris, T. (1995). Liturgical catechesis revisited. *Catechumenate 17*, 13–19.

Nye, R. (2004). Christian perspectives on children's spirituality: Social science contributions? In D. Ratcliff (Ed.), *Children's spirituality: Christian perspectives, research, and applications* (pp. 90–107). Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Pub.

Ostdiek, G. (1998). Liturgy as catechesis for life. *Liturgical Ministry, 7,* 76–82.

Ramshaw Schmidt, G. (1983). The pre-schooler in the liturgy. In D. Apostolos-Cappdona (Ed.), *The sacred play of children* (pp. 113–121). New York: Seabury Press.

Reynaert, M. (2014). Pastoral power in nurturing the spiritual life of the child. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 19*(3–4), 179–186.

Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship. (1973). *Directory for Masses with Children*. R Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Sacred Congregation for Clergy. (1998). *General Directory for Catechesis*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Pope St. John-Paul II (1994). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Dublin: Veritas.

Dr John-Paul Sheridan is a priest of the diocese of Ferns, Ireland. He is a Lecturer at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth and the education progammes coordinator, where he orchestrates modules and progammes for future primary and post-primary teachers. He has written extensively, providing educational policy documents for his diocese and resources for Primary School teachers and has contributed to a number of publications. He undertook graduate studies at Maynooth College (STL) Boston College (MEd) and University of Dublin (PhD). His research interests include religious identity, teachers' identity and education, theology of childhood and religious education and catechetics at the primary level.

Chapter 27
Education Through Art: The Use of Images in Catholic Religious Education

Andrzej Kielian

Introduction

Lack of biblical knowledge and of Christian doctrine, as well as of Church history and liturgy, frequently prevents people from understanding and thus from appreciating some of the greatest art which has ever been created. The same is true for literature where the words of the authorized translations of the Bible, echoed by poets and writers up to now, no longer have the effect intended by the author and, due to their illegibility for young generations, their meaning and their relevance is lost (Murray, 1996). The use of art and other visual elements in liturgy may as well be illegible for those who have never heard about their meaning or do not experience much of it in their own tradition or denomination (Jensen, 2004).

When considering Catholic Religious Education (CRE), at least in some parts of the world, one can observe the crisis of traditional, parish forms of religiosity and piety and a significant number of young people who consider the religious dimension of life as foreign and unknown, or outdated and unattractive (Duchesne, 2016; van Dijk-Groeneboer, 2015; Twenge, 2017). In such a case, is it art that could be a more effective medium than other ways of supporting and nurturing a sound relationship with God? Is 'education through art' an alternative way of rebuilding Christian identity and preventing it from trivialization or being treated instrumentally?

The basis of the research methodology of this paper is composed of the following: the theory of 'education through art' and the analysis of its development starting from Herbert Read. Second, the theological aesthetics as formulated by Karl Rahner to define the meaning of the notion 'religious images'. The main methods in this part of the paper are: analysis, hermeneutics and theological synthesis. Then, it will be necessary to find out the links between visual arts and religious education. Using

A. Kielian (✉)
The Pontifical University of John Paul II, Kraków, Poland
e-mail: andrzej.kielian@upjp2.edu.pl

the recontextualization method, the language of visual arts as conveying a certain message is analysed in the context of theology and education as exemplified in three teaching methods described at the end of the article.

Art and Imagination as a Challenge for CRE

It has to be noticed that young people, due to the shift to digital media, discover new opportunities for creating relationships and shaping their own lifestyle. The modern generation, that is, people born in 1995 and later, after the dissemination of smartphones and the spread of Facebook (Anderson & Drescher, 2018), being thus called 'linksters' (Johnson & Johnson, 2010) or 'iGen' (Twenge, 2017), communicates using phones much more than ever in the past. The main aspects of the lives of young people today, according to Twenge (2017), are: the ever-present Internet, individualism and rejection of social traditions, income inequality and the subsequent insecurity, irreligious lifestyles, inclusivity and independence. On the other hand, Anderson and Drescher (2018) point out that the new, digitally integrated society, becomes more and more cosmopolitan in terms of seeing all humans as part of diverse but interconnected commons within which the distinctive differences of certain groups, cultures or nations add value to the whole. In fact, it is a new opportunity for creating meaningful and respectful relationships between people who are living in different parts of the world. Nevertheless, Twenge (2017) stresses that it is now quite difficult for teenagers who are not using social media to engage in a social group since only 3% of American teens are not on social media. Facebook, Instagram and other sites require a certain level of self-presentation, like posting interesting activities done with friends, funny memes, etc. This leads to a search for a new learning model that allows to implement different possibilities within the main task of CRE and catechesis. Following Hess (2005), this new model can be described in general as keeping the teaching-learning process away from the two extremities—becoming too focused on the challenge itself, along with the fearful flee to authorities and with the loss of one's own creativity on one hand, and the denial of the problems on the other.

The main goal of education is thus 'to sustain a responsible imagination' (Hess, 2005, p. 17), that is, to become aware of the modern paradoxes in the world and, at the same time, revitalizing the courage to be an active player in shaping our own future within a Christian community. The main challenge to shape imagination in times of a global change is to capture people's attention. As Hess (2005) formulates it: 'we have to notice that popular media structure most of our forms of attention in ways that we barely even notice anymore' (p. 18). At the heart of the teaching-learning transformation is a struggle over one's attention. It may be compared with Anderson and Drescher's (2018) 'crowdsourcing'—a practice that, like crowdfunding, ignores traditional boundaries and invites everyone to solve a problem, disseminate ideas or collaborate on a project. The use of social media may contribute to the goals of Christian education. It may also, in some way, lead to understand Rahner's (1976)

notion of 'anonymous Christians' as suitable to describe this attitude and to focus our attention on expressive and transformative teaching rather than instrumental transmission of knowledge or information.

The thesis to be defended here is that attracting one's attention then shaping its imagination and inviting into an active Christian community as a goal of CRE, may be facilitated by means of visual arts, especially religious images and paintings used as didactic tools within a broad notion of 'education through art'.

Historical-Theoretical Basis for 'Education Through Art'

The notion of 'education through art' became widespread through some idealists' views on it. Among them, Herbert Read's (1969) conception had a revolutionary character. Before, one has to face difficulties to define what art is. 'It is already difficult to decide whether the different arts—sculpture, painting, music, poetry—may really be subsumed under one concept «art»' (Rahner, 1992b, p. 162). In the 'ascriptive' approach Jackson (2016) points out that: 'What we call art or music is a function of whatever the art or music world accepts under such rubrics' (p. 10). Rather than searching for the defining characteristics, the processes conventionally ascribed to the phenomena should be identified, to assign them the headings: religion, ritual or art (Gajda, 2002). The purpose of art in ancient Greece, as well as religion, was an idealization of nature and especially of humankind. Perfect types of humanity, perfectly formed and proportioned, in a beautiful world, are the typical characteristics of classical art form, revived later in the Renaissance (Jensen, 2004). It differs from the Byzantine ideal, which was divine rather than human, intellectual and abstract, and from the Primitive one, which seemed to be rather an expression of fear in the face of a mysterious world (Read, 1951).

Read's struggle for 'education through art' was an important component of the human being's defence from alienation in a technocratic consumerism. He compared a contemporary human to an injured bird, unable to fly harmoniously as the wings of its feelings and imagination have been clipped and the wing of its intellect broken. His idea of education was based on what he identified as the free process of expressive creative activity, the sublimation of the human being, and a belief in the possibility of improving the world. The idea of a universal creativity, and that of art as a way of life, was received enthusiastically in many circles. In Great Britain, it was expressed in the form of sharp criticism of the traditional way of teaching drawing and the dissemination of the slogan 'education through art' which gave birth to a great didactic movement, formalized as the INSEA organization (International Society for Education through Art), affiliated to UNESCO (Wojnar, 2002; Steers, 2002).

Hausman (2002) insists that we need to develop 'a creative orientation to teaching in which there could be an organic relationship involving spontaneity, insight and control' (p. 44). This emphasis tends to connect the arts to the dynamics of perceiving, creating and reflecting upon human experience. The purpose of art is to communicate

the feeling and to place it within our intersubjective relationships. Thus, artistic phenomena can be considered from two points of view: the aesthetic and the contextual. It is precisely in this consequently multicultural and multisubjective perspective that the problem of a 'design' becomes paramount, so that the art is rooted in the social life and strongly related to the human's needs: '…we find ourselves through our relations with those we love, or with a favorite writer, an heirloom, a home place, a landscape, a religion, a work of art' (Jackson, 2016, p. 6). Following Altmeyer (2015), aesthetics does not entail focusing only on fine arts, but points to the sensual, non-conceptual, non-discursive dimension of human knowledge. Postmodern era is challenging to construct meaning and impose structure on situations rather than to expect to find them already established. This is a matter of art. The work of art is the way of 'processing' human experience, a way of changing our perception of the world. Pieces of art transform one's real-life experiences into objective entities, in an interplay of subjective and objective dimensions of reality, communicated to the spectators by the artist and his work, offering thus a possibility of seeing one's own world from outside. In Jackson's (2016) terms 'art as a technique, [is] inextricably connected to storytelling, play, dreaming and ritual, whereby we work out vital relationships between inner desires and external determinants' (p. 3). Insofar as art is being commonly consumed or even misunderstood, it starts to be discovered outside its context (that is, the author's experience) and the circle of understanding can close, so that art might become one with life. The starting point for artwork is thus one's subjective experience that is passed out of its creator's hands and enters the public realm, whereby it acquires the variety of meanings that reflect the relationship between an artwork and its consumer (Gajda, 2002).

Faith intrinsically has an aesthetic dimension. The example of St. Paul's famous tenet '*fides ex auditu*' shows the deep interconnection of receptive and expressive aesthetic actions in the context of faith. So faith begins with aesthetic perceptions such as hearing or seeing (Altmeyer, 2015). If human beings are to be fully themselves, then all their sense powers must be working together. As Rahner (1992a) formulated it: 'religious images have a religious significance that cannot be replaced by the word' (p. 155). Thus, 'education through art' must now be considered more in terms of humanist education than just in terms of aesthetic teaching. Visual teaching techniques propose ways of understanding visual phenomena in art, in the world and by the media thus giving insight into the deeper aspects of pictorial realism or a kind of a manual on how to read and interpret paintings within their cultural contexts (Wojnar, 2002; Daily, 2005b; Gellel, 2018). Instead of teaching mostly religious facts, education through art may become the way to open the doors of meaning and give access to the spiritual and symbolic sphere, helping students to become fully human (Gellel, 2010). By the permanent interplay of hearing and speaking, perception and expression, the dynamic of faith and tradition is initiated. Let us follow Martland (1984) who wrote that 'religion is art when it opens us up to new ways of seeing things that are upsetting from the perspective of the old way of seeing things' (p. 252).

Religious Images in Terms of Rahner's Theological Aesthetics

Rahner within his theological aesthetics distinguishes three kinds of religious images. It would be theologically naïve, in his opinion, to think that only explicitly religious acts will be conducive to a salutary relationship with the divine. He argues that even an image that does not have an explicit religious character can truly be a religious image, when viewing it helps to bring about the religious experience of transcendence. Today, this view no longer seems particularly remarkable. He stressed, however, that seeing was a fundamental element in the whole of religious acts, since a Christian must learn to see with loving eyes, if s/he confesses Christ not only as the Word but also as the image of God. A painting may be so inspired by divine revelation and by God's gracious self-communication that it conveys something about the human being in the light of the divine (Rahner, 1992a; Thiessen, 2005). Thus, an image that is not religious does not have to be an anti-religious image. Hence Impressionistic painting, although it seems non-religious, may cause the viewer to see the world in a way that inspires adoration of God the Creator (Rahner, 1992b).

Besides images without immediate religious themes, Rahner (1992a) points out the ones representing events from salvation history, and he considers them as necessary for Christian piety. These are not abstract paintings but images that can easily be understood by all, because they are referring explicitly to the history of salvation as part of the whole of secular history by using explicitly religious items and symbols, like the crucifix. These help one to grasp the message of the Bible as well as remind of the Gospel stories. They thereby have a didactic role: 'a portrait cannot be totally replaced by a biography' (Rahner, 1992a, p. 157). For Rahner, all kinds of art affect humans in a holistic and non-conceptual way. Religious art not only transfers the person from the material world to the world of spiritual matters, but leads him/her towards the space of transcendence,

> …it can reveal glimpses of the mystery of the unfathomable divine. It can provide for us moments of genuine seeing, hearing, tasting and feeling, and thus understanding. In this way the arts further knowledge through the unity of sensuous-spiritual-intellectual perception. (Thiessen, 2003, p. 863)

In Rahner's words: 'we have to distinguish here between a primal experience of God, and a reflective, verbally objectifying knowledge of God' (Rahner, 1981, p. 233). Such an experience of God is of transcendental necessity; it exists always and everywhere if a person implements his/her spiritual knowledge and freedom. The experience however can be present as a free acceptance or as rejection. The individual must also have the possibility of reflecting on his/her own transcendental experience of God in a framework of his/her historical and social conditions (Rahner, 1981). This point of view reflected in Maria Montessori (2008) insisting on the necessity of spiritual development, in a prepared environment, from the very beginning of the person's life that aims at giving the child the opportunity to feel the joy of discovering God not by verbal knowledge, but first by experiencing his mysterious presence.

Third, Rahner (1992a) distinguishes the icons as cultic images. They are more than ordinary religious images by actually being the objects of veneration as well as enjoying some kind of official approbation. The question he asks is whether veneration aims at the image itself or does it concern the person who is represented. However, both are described positively in the answer:

In whatever way this veneration may be described more precisely, it is based on the image's collective function as a religious image, the viewing of which has become an essential element of the religious act. On account of this function, such an image may be highly esteemed and put above other religious images. In that sense, it may itself be 'venerated'. We do not have to insist on the fact that the veneration belongs only to the reality represented by the image (Rahner, 1992a, p. 161).

The icons might be quite useful as corresponding, above all, to the two tasks of catechesis: teaching to pray and education for community life (see General Directory for Catechesis, 1997, par. 85 and 86). Praying in front of an icon has a special meaning when considered in both aspects—of private–personal prayer as well as that of common Christian veneration. In Rahner's (1992a) nomenclature, this is a necessary condition for constituting the religious act using the sense powers a person does have. Educating for Christian community life implies common prayer ('if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask…', Mt 18:19) so an icon may have here a unifying dimension based on its collective meaning: 'an image is cultic if the image is always considered religious in the experience of a greater number of Christians, and if this collective meaning is known and acknowledged' (Rahner, 1992a, p. 161).

Good Practice in Religious Education Through Art

Identifying innovative examples of good practice in religious education through art aims to enhance the work of teachers by providing them with insights of successful classroom activities. According to a study conducted by Schweitzer, Riegel, and Zieberts (2009), interpreting pictures or paintings in work with pupils is very popular in Poland and Germany, among European countries. More than 65 and 64% of religion teachers respectively report they use this method of teaching frequently and the other 28 and 30% say they do this from time to time. As far as salvation history and liturgy of the Church is concerned, one can observe in Polish elementary school RE that among the most frequently used teaching methods are: interpreting pictures or paintings (64.3% of teachers use it often) and drawing and painting pictures (63.3%). It means that art making and art interpretation is giving children the opportunity to express themselves by creating images in order to memorize and ponder the issue (Kielian, 2016). In addition to the necessity of making art, experiencing it and reading contextually seems to be an important task in order to give the student the opportunity to interact and become aware of the symbolic language and metaphorical reasoning. In the Polish RE handbooks for senior elementary school students (10–12 year olds), one can find from 7 to 40 (depending on the editor) religious paintings in a series of textbook, most of them, following Rahner's division,

either biblical-historical images or icons (Chałupniak, 2014). Not all of them can be interpreted by the students due to their too small dimension in the handbook or lack of verbal description (author, title, historical context in which the artist painted, etc.). The latter description is a necessary condition for a deeper study of an artwork (Chałupniak, 2013; Daily, 2005a, b).

Apart from studying artworks from a handbook or by means of a slide projector in the classroom, e.g. as it is suggested by the teacher's guide in Poland (Panuś, Kielian, & Berski, 2013) to reflect on Hans Memling triptych 'The Last Judgment' with 11-year-old students, it becomes necessary to experience art in real life situations. One has to smell the paint, to walk around a sculpture, to see art objects in their original surroundings or at an exhibition. Only 13.6% of Polish RE teachers admit they visit places of relevance with the students, and they consider this kind of activity as desirable in CRE (Zajac & Makosa, 2009). Education through art should no longer be limited by the four walls of the classroom (Koppers, 2002), but the students should be going out and collaborating with artists, museums and galleries, as it is proposed by Gellel's symbol literacy approach activities (Gellel, 2018).

Mazzarello (2007) presents Teaching Religion through Art as a method used in school CRE in Italy. While working project with 9 and 10 year olds, she proposed a three-step work with Christian images: (1) A 'global' view: the approach is focused on emotional component of contemplating the artwork, so the students can grasp with both eyes and heart what attracts them in the painting missing other details; (2) The 'analytic' view: which is aimed at grasping all the elements that have the meaning for the viewer and discovering the relationships between them, including reading symbols; (3) The 'synthetic' view: the image is recomposed in its total significance by pointing out the details missed in the previous steps along with the explanation of their symbolic meaning. In such a way, the children have the possibility to learn that the image has a certain structure and characteristics that have to be read and interpreted correctly.

A similar approach is proposed by Daily (2005a, b) who has developed the method of 'reading art' individually or collectively by a step-by-step model of 'Teaching with Art', that starts with grasping first impressions while looking at a painting: the colour, the light, the mood of the scene, most important figures. Then, if it's a biblical story, she moves to the reading of the Scripture, and goes back to contemplating the image in order to discover the complementary character of the painting and the written story: what the text did not say but the painter made it visible in a certain way and vice versa. Next, one should go further to discover the context of a specific image—the purpose of the artist painting this special scene in that period of time. The cultural-historical and social context seems to be of high importance to get to the clear message conveyed by an artwork. She proposes also creating one's own religious artwork by modifying the professional artist's work (Daily, 2005b). The last step is meditation or prayer that ponders on the theological meaning of an image thus contributing to the viewer's spiritual development.

Education through art in CRE makes teaching-learning process more likely understood as a negotiation of ideas arising from asking pertinent questions and testing provisional answers, rather than seeking predetermined ones. Using religious art in

teaching is a great way to include learning skills other than those used in reading, lecture and discussion (Daily, 2005b; Gellel, 2018). The emphasis is on the learner and learning, negotiating the content, developing new activities and understanding knowledge as a multiplicity of changing hypothesis that may bring one closer to the truth. The aim is not to try to achieve a superficial uniformity but to encourage and appreciate diversity to find religious dimension of even non-religious paintings in the atmosphere of a true dialog.

Conclusion

Ultimately, images have an aesthetic, epistemological, meditative and mediative function with regard to the Christian message. Read (1969), following Burckhardt, reiterates that artists and poets at every epoch have had an intimate and solemn attitude to religion and culture. Through art, the mystery of beauty, that appears to our eyes so briefly and uneven, is assembled in a world of poems, images and great cycles of figuration by means of colours, stones and sounds. There is a need for something more than just knowledge about God, for some kind of a spiritual experience, an encounter with Him by means of art, rituals and liturgy or narratives. Karl Rahner's theological aesthetics reminds of Christian anthropology's claim for the unity between sense knowledge and spiritual-conceptual knowledge. Sense, intuition and emotion always ought to form a fundamental unity in our understanding and knowledge. It is in this way that the artwork must have a place within the scope of academic theology as well as, in consequence, in children, youth and adult CRE (Thiessen, 2003). So it seems very difficult to attain the main goal of CRE, as it was expressed by John Paul II (1979) in the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae* (par. 5) without any reference to art itself. God cannot be approached as an object to be wanted by systematic argument; rather it is through the experience of all-embracing love as a mystery.

References

Altmeyer, S. (2015). The aesthetic dimension of believing and learning. In M. T. Buchanan & A.
  -M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 61–72).
  Cham: Springer.
Anderson, K., Drescher, E. (2018). *Clic2save. Reboot. The digital ministry bible*. New York: Church
  Publishing.
Chałupniak, R. (2013). *Arcydzieła malarstwa w katechezie*. Opole: RWWT Uniwersytetu Opol-
  skiego.
Chałupniak, R. (2014). *Malarstwo religijne w podręcznikach szkolnych*. Opole: RWWT Uniwer-
  sytetu Opolskiego.
Congregation for the Clergy. (1997). *General directory for catechesis.* Retrieved from http://www.
  vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_
  directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

Daily, E. M. (2005a). *Beyond the written word. Exploring faith through Christian art*. Winona: Saint Mary's Press.

Daily, E. M. (2005b). *Teaching guide for "Beyond the written word. Exploring faith through Christian art"*. Winona: Saint Mary's Press.

Duchesne, J. (2016). *Le catholicisme minoritaire? Un oxymore à la mode*. Paris: Éditions Desclée de Brouwer.

Gajda, J. (2002). The meaning of popular art, which is not to say, worse art. In M. Samoraj (Ed.), *Essays on education through art. Time passing and time enduring* (pp. 59–65). Warsaw: Agencja Reklamowo-Wydawnicza A. Grzegorczyk.

Gellel, A.-M. (2010). Nurturing spirituality through symbol literacy in religious education. *Journal of Religious Education, 58*(3), 44–51.

Gellel, A.-M. (2018). Towards a symbol literacy approach in the education of children. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 23*(2), 109–121.

Hausman, J. J. (2002). Post-modern prospectives for art education. In M. Samoraj (Ed.), *Essays on education through art. Time passing and time enduring* (pp. 43–47). Warsaw: Agencja Reklamowo-Wydawnicza A. Grzegorczyk.

Hess, M. E. (2005). *Engaging technology in theological education: All that we can't leave behind*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Jackson, M. (2016). *The work of art. Rethinking the elementary forms of religious life*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Jensen, R. M. (2004). *The substance of things seen. Art, faith, and the Christian community*. Cambridge: Eerdmans.

Johnson, M., & Johnson, L. (2010). *Generations Inc: From Boomers to Linksters—Managing the friction between generations at work*. New York: AMA.

Kielian, A. (2016). Pięć warunków jak pięć palców. Znaczenie ilustracji katechizmowych w przyswojeniu warunków spowiedzi w klasie trzeciej szkoły podstawowej. In J. Kowalczyk (Ed.), *Sakrament pokuty i pojednania w życiu Kosciola* (pp. 103–122). Legnica: Diecezjalne Centrum Edukacyjne.

Koppers, W. (2002). Teaching the teachers, a teasing profession. In M. Samoraj (Ed.), *Essays on education through art. Time passing and time enduring* (pp. 95–100). Warsaw: Agencja Reklamowo-Wydawnicza A. Grzegorczyk.

Martland, T. R. (1984). Question: When is religion art? Answer: When it is a jar. In D. Apostolos-Cappadona (Ed.), *Art, creativity, and the sacred: An anthology in religion and art* (pp. 250–271). New York: Crossroad.

Mazzarello, M. L. (2007). Teaching religion through art in religious education in Italian schools. In P. Schreiner, F. Kraft, A. Wright (Eds.), *Good practice in religious education in Europe. Examples and perspectives of primary schools* (pp. 101–114). Berlin: LIT Verlag.

Montessori, M. (2008). *The Montessori Method*. BN Publishing.

Murray, P., & Murray, L. (1996). *The Oxford companion to Christian art and architecture*. Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press.

Panuś, T., Kielian, A., Berski, A. (2013). Wierzymy w Pana Boga. Podręcznik metodyczny do nauki religii dla klasy V szkoły podstawowej. Kraków: św. Stanisława BM.

Pope John Paul II (1979). *Apostolic exhortation on catehesis in our time Catechesi tradendae*. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/docu-ments/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html.

Rahner, K. (1976). Observations on the problem of the 'Anonymous Chrisitian'. In K. Rahner (Ed.), *Theological investigations* (Vol. XIV, pp. 280–294). London: Darton, LongmanandTodd.

Rahner, K. (1981). Religious feeling Inside and outside the Church. In K. Rahner (Ed.), *Theological investigations* (Vol. XVII, pp. 228–242). New York: Crossroad.

Rahner, K. (1992a). The Theology of the religious meaning of images. In K. Rahner (Ed.), *Theological Investigations* (Vol. XXIII, pp. 149–161). New York: Crossroad.

Rahner, K. (1992b). Art against the horizon of theology and piety. In K. Rahner (Ed.), *Theological investigations* (Vol. XXIII, pp. 162–169). New York: Crossroad.

Read, H. (1951). *The meaning of art*. London: Faber and Faber.

Read, H. (1969). L'art et la société. In *Les arts et la vie. Place et rôle des arts dans la société* (pp. 27–44). Paris: UNESCO.

Schweitzer, F., Riegel, U., Ziebertz, H. -G. (2009). Europe in a comparative perspective. In H. -G. Ziebertz, U. Riegel (Eds.), *How teachers in Europe teach religion. An international empirical study in 16 countries* (pp. 241–255). Berlin: LIT Verlag.

Steers, J. (2002). InSEA: Past, present, and future. In M. Samoraj (Ed.), *Essays on education through art. Time passing and time enduring* (pp. 18–29). Warsaw: Agencja Reklamowo-Wydawnicza A. Grzegorczyk.

Thiessen, G. E. (2003). Towards a theological aesthetics: Karl Rahner's contribution. In J. Haers, P. De Mey (Eds.), *Theology and conversation. Towards a relational theology* (pp. 857–64), Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium CLXXII. Leuven: University Press/Peeters.

Thiessen, G. E. (2005). Karl Rahner: Toward a theological aesthetics. In D. Marmion & M. E. Hines (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Karl Rahner* (pp. 225–234). Cambridge: University Press.

Twenge, J. M. (2017). *iGen. Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy–and completely unprepared for adulthood.* New York: Atria Books.

van Dijk-Groeneboer, M. (2015). Youth ministry: About youth? *Journal of Youth and Theology, 14*(2015), 25–44.

Wojnar, I. (2002). Reflections on the 30th anniversary of the death of Sir Herbert Read (4/12/1893–12/6/1968). In M. Samoraj (Ed.), *Essays on education through art. Time passing and time enduring* (pp. 30–37). Warsaw: Agencja Reklamowo-Wydawnicza A. Grzegorczyk.

Zajac, M., Makosa, P. (2009). Poland: faithfulness to God and to people. In H.-G. Ziebertz, U. Riegel (Eds.), *How teachers in Europe teach religion. An international empirical study in 16 countries* (pp. 169–180). Berlin: LIT Verlag.

Rev. Dr Andrzej Kielian holds a PhD in pastoral theology. He completed his doctorate on 'The Models of CRE in the European Countries' (2009). He has also published (with T. Panuś) 'The Perspectives of Catechesis in Europe' (2010). As an assistant at the Chair of Catechetics in the Institute for Practical Theology at the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków Poland, he coordinates the preparation of religious educators at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He is a member of The Polish Theological Society and Co-founder of The Polish Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Since 2012, he has been the co-author and editor of several CRE teaching guides and textbooks for kindergarten and elementary schools in Poland. His research interests include religious education, pedagogy, catechetics and youth ministry. He is now preparing a book on the implementation of education through art into CRE in Poland.

Chapter 28
From Early Christian Art to Postmodern Visual Imaginary. New Approaches to Catholic Religious Education

Elżbieta Osewska

Introduction

Taking into consideration the rapid social, cultural, economic, political, ideological, religious, educational and social changes in Europe, Catholic religious education is searching to respond to the many real challenges. In the post-synodal exhortation, *Ecclesia in Europa* Pope John Paul II suggests that

> what is needed is a calm critical assessment of the current cultural situation of Europe and an evaluation of the emerging trends and the more significant contemporary events and situations in the light of the centrality of Christ and of Christian anthropology. (Pope John Paul II, 2003, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 58)

A critical interpretation and evaluation of European culture is an essential component of education, and one that is particularly relevant to Catholic religious education (CRE). Young people living in Europe, both in the Western part and in the post-socialist Central-Eastern one, need an education that offers them possibilities to see genuine human living, authentic human interaction and opportunities for discovering the mystery of God, which is necessary for students' integral growth.

Today, European culture is saturated with visual imagery. Children and youth, in particular, have instant digital access to exponentially growing volumes of imagery that can affect their imagination. They are not able to escape from being influenced by the complex consumer lifestyle promoted by media imagery. Hopefully, Catholic religious education can help young Christians to take a more discerning stance. In this context, it is worth to seek answers to the questions: What can CRE at school do in this situation? How can it make young people sensitive to transcendence? Do symbols and images call for a new reception? Is visual imagination and beauty the gate for spiritual experience in a postmodern context?

E. Osewska (✉)
State Higher Vocational School, Tarnów, Poland
e-mail: eosewska@wp.pl

Whilst seeking answers to the above questions, it is also worth keeping in mind that historically speaking, Christianity has shaped the culture of Europe. In antiquity, Christians were not only spreading the message about Jesus Christ orally, but they were also creating visual elements as a basis of Christian art and culture. Consequently, we shall start with a reflection upon the catacombs as an environment and space for visual signs, paintings and other items depicting Jesus Christ, then we shall discuss Europe's Christian memory and heritage, the theology of beauty, the way of beauty in relation to God and finally present the contemporary challenges confronting CRE.

The Christian Catacombs as Setting for Art

The Christian catacombs originated in Rome between the end of the second and the beginning of the third centuries A.D., but the custom of burying the dead in underground areas was not new. Before Christians, the Etruscans, the Jews and the Romans created underground cemeteries; yet with Christianity, they started to become more complex. The Christian burial places originated first of all in order to welcome the whole Christian community in one necropolis. It is worth remembering that as the first Christian martyrs buried in the catacombs became objects of veneration, so many followers of Jesus wished for burial near them. Catacombs have been found in Rome and throughout Italy (in Chiusi, Naples, Syracuse), in North Africa (in Alexandria and Susa), and in Asia Minor (Krzywiński, 2016).

The catacombs are mostly excavated in tuff or in other easily removable, but solid stone. The catacombs entail the presence of ladders that lead to ambulatories that are called galleries. In the walls of the galleries the 'loculi' are arranged (the burial places of ordinary Christians that are made lengthwise). Most tombs are closed with slabs or bricks. The loculi system is the humblest one in order to respect the community sense that animated the early Christians (Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology, 2001).

The reasons why am I using Christian catacombs as my starting point lies primarily in the fact that the catacombs respect the sense of Christian community and recall Jesus Christ' teaching to His followers. They present the Christian ideas, values and teaching to the new converts. Second, they link the past to the present. In antiquity, like today, visual imagery made a significant impact on people's life. The early Christians, most of whom were illiterate, acquired their beliefs from stories told by the first witness and followers. But what was prominent was the 'visual depiction' of their faith in the religious art of the catacombs, which was partly narrative and partly symbolic. The simple wall drawings, paintings, reliefs and minor arts recalled important stories from the Old and New Testaments. All of these reflect a burgeoning Christian iconographic tradition. Christian art was created and developed gradually since the second century in the Mediterranean and originally made reference to the

tradition of late antique art. Its development can be divided into two periods: before and after the Edict of Milan in 313 years, which recognised Christianity as a tolerated religion. Slowly, Early Christian art developed in different provinces of the Roman Empire (Krzywiński, 2016).

The simple, almost primitive art of the catacombs was very symbolic, in the sense that some ideas and values that were very difficult to express were presented in a simple way. Most of the symbols such as the palm, the dove, the peacock, the phoenix referred to eternal salvation and peace. An anchor was drawn to indicate the firmness of faith. The lamb and fish pointed to Jesus Christ. The natural signs related to the everyday life of a human being, which apart from their natural meaning, received a new liturgical function in the history of salvation. Simple signs, such as bread, water, wine, light, darkness, the lamb and the community can seldom be viewed as only literal but communicate the deeper, hidden meaning: the truth about salvation in a mystical way (Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology, 2001).

But Christian catacombs art was also creating and pointing to hope for future happiness. This is why some stories from the Old Testament were especially valued. Often depicted was Jonah, who was saved from the belly of the big fish where he stayed for three days, which story re-evokes Jesus Christ's Resurrection. Other popular paintings included those of the young men of Babylonia rescued from the flames, Noah who with his family escaped the flood, and Daniel who survived in the lions' den. The Christian catacombs were like the first cinemas and their art like the first 'films'. From the New Testament, the theme of resurrection was often presented (Lazarus, the widow of Naim's son, Jairus' daughter). These gave a sense of safety and hope. Likewise the miracles were often depicted. It was a kind of pedagogy for exploring not only the acts of Jesus, but also spiritual, social and moral dimensions of living in the first centuries (Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology, 2001). This simple pedagogy of hope may be used in the contemporary CRE providing access to a safe space in the troubled society.

In addition to portraying knowledge about the mystery of Jesus Christ, Christian art allowed the believer to enter into the mystery of creation, redemption and sanctification. Thanks to Christian art, the believer was able to get intellectual and aesthetic impulses, but, above all, a chance to recognise God as the eternal beauty and glory. It is for this reason that signs and symbols of Jesus Christ were so important in early Christian art. One of the images of Jesus Christ represented in the catacombs is that of the Good Shepherd. While the iconography is taken from pagan culture, it immediately takes on a Christological significance inspired by the parable of the lost sheep. The Church proclaims that the invisible God has become visible to people through the Incarnation of His Son. In this Christian understanding, Jesus Christ is a living image (icon) of God, and the visible art has an important role to play, that is, to put the human being 'in touch' with the Absolute (Krzywiński, 2016).

What kind of message, relevant to contemporary CRE, emerges from the catacomb paintings? The message is highlighted in each painting's purpose, function and content, especially indicating that the image helps awaken, support and strengthen Christian faith. Through the perception of the content of Christological drawings

in the catacombs, the pupil is able to recall Christ's message, life, passion, death and resurrection, and then is invited to deepen the knowledge and form Christian attitudes.

The Importance of Renewal of Christian Memory in Europe

In postmodern European societies, the dominant sociocultural theme is consumerist and capitalist. This has become dominant in shaping people's thinking about life. That is why in Pope John Paul II pointed out:

> I would like to mention in a particular way 'the loss of Europe's Christian memory and heritage', accompanied by a kind of practical agnosticism and religious indifference whereby many Europeans give the impression of living without spiritual roots and somewhat like heirs who have squandered a patrimony entrusted to them by history… Certainly Europe is not lacking in prestigious symbols of the Christian presence, yet with the slow and steady advance of secularism, these symbols risk becoming a mere vestige of the past. Many people are no longer able to integrate the Gospel message into their daily experience; living one's faith in Jesus becomes increasingly difficult in a social and cultural setting in which that faith is constantly challenged and threatened. (Pope John Paul II, 2003, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 7)

This sociocultural critique given by the Polish Pope resonated with the critical thinking of some theologians, who identified challenges faced by contemporary society and the loss of Europe's Christian memory and heritage. Today's Europe systematically removes Christianity from the public and moves it into the private or even forbidden sphere. Many youngsters believe that talking about Jesus Christ or presenting Christian symbols means exposing themselves to mocking. In this situation, violence and terror are possible in the name of freedom (Kawecki, 2013). For many political and economic reasons, Christianity seems to have become a scapegoat, easy to blame and accuse of indoctrination. In Europe, many prestigious Christian symbols are present, but slowly they are becoming a mere vestige of the past. If Christianity does not protect their symbols in Europe, the future of Christianity will be in danger.

It is also possible to observe some trends within Christianity which, under the influence of contemporary culture, propagate something like the optimistic philosophy of life and common reconciliation, which is the attempt to adjust Christianity to the common expectations of avoiding suffering and evil; of forgetting that a human being is burdened with original sin. This is the desire for maximising one's own freedom, which is the approval of radical individualism (Kawecki, 2013). If the modern European culture promotes the escape from any form of suffering, then Christ's suffering seems to be severe, sad and even horrific. Europeans live in a culture that is more and more post-Christian, distancing themselves from Christian values and becoming even hostile to it. For young Christians in Europe living their faith becomes increasingly difficult, that is why they need events like World Youth Day (26/31 July 2016), where almost the 2.5 million young people from 185 countries gathered to express their faith and recall Christian memory and heritage.

Maybe one of the propositions for Catholic religious education is to help young people to rediscover the Christian signs, symbols, pictures and imaginations that have been mostly forgotten by today's media (television, advertising and internet). Michael Warren (1992) underlines that the web of interrelated cultural and economic activity has created the 'consumerist lifestyle complex' that has removed Christian signs from the public sphere or used them only for very naïve understanding connected with buying new products.

According to Pope John Paul II (2003), 'this loss of Christian memory is accompanied by a kind of *fear of the future*… A feeling of loneliness is prevalent; divisions and conflicts are on the rise' (par. 8).

Undoubtedly, the life without hope for the future is frequently pointed out by educationalists (Osewska & Stala, 2015). A contemporary pupil does not find inner strength in loneliness, but rather encounters a feeling of sadness, desolation and emptiness. The described phenomena related to pupil's inner chaos, augmented by external chaos, sets very high requirements for education. If CRE in schools is to support pupils in the today's context, then it must accept young people's experiences, feelings of being lost, feeling of loneliness, their conflicts and problems. The basic tasks of CRE teachers include being in attendance, patience and making an effort to understand (Osewska, 2016a).

Theology of Beauty

Taking into consideration the present context, we may ask the next questions: can beauty be helpful to discover God and fulfil the aims and tasks of Catholic religious education? Do the symbols and images which had been painted on walls and ceilings in the Christian catacombs in the first centuries, call for a new reception? Are they only decorations of burial chambers, simply images depicting stories from the Bible or from the life of Christians, or do they express the faith of ancient Christians, passing on the message to contemporary Christians? May today's symbols, images and pictures be helpful in discovering God? The questions raised above will now be explored through the teaching of the Church and human experiences on our journey to God.

So first, let us have a look at theology. It seems that one of the possible directions of developing theology is discovering faith through the category of beauty. Theologians should remember that their work expresses the dynamic inscribed into faith itself, and that the real object of his quest is the truth, Living God and His intention of salvation, revealed in Jesus Christ.

> This prime epiphany of *God who is Mystery* is both an encouragement and a challenge to Christians, also at the level of artistic creativity. From it has come a flowering of beauty which has drawn its sap precisely from the mystery of the Incarnation. In becoming man, the Son of God has introduced into human history all the evangelical wealth of the true and the good, and with this he has also unveiled a new dimension of beauty, of which the Gospel message

is filled to the brim. Sacred Scripture has thus become a sort of 'immense vocabulary' (Paul Claudel) and 'iconographic atlas' (Marc Chagall), from which both Christian culture and art have drawn. (Pope John Paul II, 1999, *Letter to Artists*, 5)

There are some theologians that recognise the possibility of beauty being within a natural (as well as a supernatural) frame. Looking for Faith by means of Beauty reminds us the truth that God, being Almighty, possesses all kinds of perfection, including beauty, to the utmost degree. In the Bible, there are some verses that present the beauty of God (Ps 27:4; Ps 90:17). On the other hand, through the act of creating the universe and human beings, we can see beauty belonging to God's creative act. That is why every human being reflects the beauty of God. Yet only His Son Jesus Christ is the perfect image of the invisible God (Col 1:15). Jesus's incarnation was the most beautiful epiphany of love. Through His incarnation, God has become audible and visible. It can be assumed that the 'inner interchangeability' of the word and image occurs in Jesus Christ, who is confirmed by the Christological Titles of *Logos*-Word and *Eikon*-Image (Królikowski, 2009; Osewska, 2016a).

Beauty is becoming a fundamental category of theology that is directly connected with the achievement of Hans Urs von Balthasar in proposing a theological aesthetics focused on the disclosure of God as overwhelming beauty in the figure of Christ (Balthasar, 1982). But theological search for beauty means also reference to the Holy Trinity who is the source of beauty. Through the theology of beauty the Church explains, in contemporary language, the truth of God because beauty has the capacity to take the Christian message and translate it into forms, figures, colours and shapes (Kawecki, 2013, Osewska, 2016a).

Beauty is the reality in relation to the human person, building up the reality itself, expressing the essential and existential perfection, building up another world, i.e. the continuation of the creation process. Beauty is not able to exist without the person. Beauty in God exists in persons, as well (Kawecki, 2013).

In addition, Christian art allows the believer entry into the mystery of creation, redemption and sanctification. Thanks to Christian art, the believer is able to get intellectual and aesthetic impulses, but, above all, a chance to recognise God as the eternal beauty and glory (Osewska, 2016a). There are so many examples of art presenting Jesus Christ in various ways. It is my contention that many of the images derived from the Christian catacombs should be presented during CRE lessons because they still have a direct or almost direct connection with the living Jesus Christ.

The Way of Beauty

Nowadays, there is the tendency to depreciate the 'word' in favour of the 'image', especially in the electronic media. The question arises: does the visuality and graphic character of culture threaten Christianity? Or, on the contrary, does it help in the pedagogical processes in Catholic religious education? May the theological and communicational ability of transmitting faith be put together with the help of images?

Looking for new educational and catechetical ways, the Pontifical Council for Culture suggested the 'way of beauty', as both an effective means of evangelisation and also of dialogue with the areligious, indifferent and non-believers:

> In order to reach people with an apt pastoral approach to culture, in the light of Christ contemplated in the mystery of the Incarnation (*GS* 22), the Church examines the *signs of the times* and draws pointers from them to develop 'bridges'… Beginning with the simple experience of the marvel-arousing meeting with beauty, the via *pulchritudinis* can open the pathway for the search for God, and disposes the heart and spirit to meet Christ, who is the Beauty of Holiness Incarnate, offered by God to men for their salvation. (The Pontifical Council for Culture, 2006, par. 1)

The way of beauty is considered as a pathway for people who already know beauty, but search for something more beyond beauty and art. Through the beauty of nature and the arts, every man and woman is able to admire a direct creator, but they can also get to know the First Creator ontologically. Focusing on beauty may lead a person to the moment, in which the act of admiration will become a religious and mystical act (Królikowski, 2013). Beauty is the gate for spiritual experience.

Authentic, visual art is one of the ways into religious experiences because it can trigger the creative imagination and processes. When a person faces beauty, he/she is stimulated to open himself/herself to the much broader perspectives, to react in a personal way to the content and form of art and to gain fresh insights. Beauty and art surpass the aesthetic sense and lead to new levels of reality. It is indeed possible to say that art may be a perfect way for Catholic religious education. However,

> the absolutely original and singular beauty of Christ, *model of a truly beautiful life*, is reflected in the holiness of a life transformed by Grace. Unfortunately, many people perceive Christianity as a submission to commandments made up of prohibitions and limits applied to personal liberty… The joy of being Christian is beauty, and it is right to believe it. (The Pontifical Council for Culture, 2006, par. III.3.A)

Therefore, to spread the message of salvation, Christianity created a vivid language of images. This developing trend is called Christo-morphism, because it represents God through Jesus Christ who states that 'Who sees me, sees my Father, too' (Jn 14:9). The relevance of the primitive Christian images of Jesus Christ to CRE lies in the message that they convey which is highlighted in its purposes, functions and content. This is especially so since the image may help gain fresh insights, awaken or strengthen Christian faith. Through the perception of the content of Christological paintings and symbols in the catacombs, even today's pupil is able to recall, discover or rediscover Jesus Christ's passion, death and resurrection, His life and teachings. The beauty of the life of Jesus Christ is a direct calling to those who search for the meaning of life, for values, for something more than the visible world. If they find this Beauty they also find the power of new life and hope.

Challenges Facing Catholic Religious Education

Christian art, symbols and images call for a new reception in the twenty-first century. Human awareness of transcendent mystery is imaginative. The access to the divine world happens through mediations, that shape the perception, the reception and the practice of religion. The Christian tradition is known for its initiation into the faith mysteries through images. It is precisely because of this that Christian art had an eminent educational importance. Visual images somehow translate what is inevitably unreachable into what is more existential. Imagination can also liberate people to be more receptive of mystery and through art help to enter into the symbolic mediations of revelation (Lombaerts, 2006). For this reason, CRE needs to refer to pupils' visual experiences as a kind of mutual dependence and influence: on the one hand, by helping pupils to discover Christian images, drawings or visual symbols as the means of expression while on the other hand, through visual arts, that leads them to the recognition, appreciation and admiration of beauty. Nonetheless, in order for the twenty-first-century generations to recognise beauty they must learn the language of emotion, admiration and appreciation. Only then will they be able to enter the way of beauty. A work of art is not only an external expression of the vision of world and life, or even faith, but it is also an internal act of a person that builds up and strengthens one's faith. This experience of beauty appears and develops as a moment and form of faith in a given situation (Królikowski, 2013; Kawecki, 2013). In other words, it may be assumed that the proposal for pupil's visits to art galleries, museums, exhibitions or simply perceiving the beauty of the surrounding world can become one of the ways of making someone more sensitive towards religion (Osewska, 2016b).

Over time, perceptions and interpretations of what is happening to the religious phenomenon in Europe are changing. Although the empirical observation of an 'objective secularisation', the loss of official religious beliefs and practices, of a feeling of being religious, is a matter of fact, the 'subjective secularisation', the depth attitudes of individual people and of society, maintain strong ties with the original religious background. Despite the loss of official beliefs and religious practices (objective secularisation), the depth structure of the initial religious socialisation remains. The symbolic structures of these traditions still have an impact upon culture, but much less in the institutional social forms.

What do youth do with their Christian heritage in Europe? According to Herman Lombaerts, the younger generations recompose their religious reference frames and religious behaviour in loose forms, with paradoxical, non-justified or undocumented statements, outside the Christian stories and institutional dogmas (Lombaerts, 2008). In this setting, the way of beauty may be important for CRE. This description might be a significant indication for teaching religion at school, since there are often few pupils in one class with clearly defined religious identity. Classes are most often composed of supporters of individually created religiousness, the religiously indifferent, the lost and the antireligious. The multitude and diversity of the participants of CRE at school is the fact that is a major a challenge for the teaching of religion at school.

The major change in twenty-first century education is the multiplication of learning environments. Today's pupils use the different electronic tools and diversified sources, but they also build up networks of communication with peers and multiple types of other networks. They discover an enormous potential for learning about whatever topic. It is obvious that they use signs, icons, pictures and films in their learning processes. On entering Catholic religious education classes, they do not leave their electronic networks behind them (Lombaerts, 2008). In this context, an important task of CRE at school is to help a young person differentiate between superficiality and wise reflection together with calling for action.

An awakening the sensitivity of beauty is both an act of countercultural liberation and a gateway towards the faith. In other words, beauty is a key element in any pre-evangelisation. Yet, the perception of beauty requires proper education, because it exists in relationship to the truth and good. That is why, Catholic religious education needs to link theology, human and social sciences with ethics. The religious dimension is in fact intrinsic to culture. It contributes to the overall formation of the person and makes it possible to transform knowledge into wisdom of life (Osewska & Stala, 2015).

Where progress in CRE is good, pupils make gains across the range of skills and attitudes. In particular, going back to Early Christian Art, they may understand why faith was important in the lives of the early Christians and they may see a connection between many of the issues in Early Christianity and their own lives. It would be important for pupils to ask and respond to questions such as Why?, What does this mean? and What do I think about those catacombs images? Theologically speaking, the 'object' of faith remains hidden in mystery: God is not a direct object of the usual modes of cognition (Stala, 2011). Through the simple catacombs art, pupils may also reach the stories of martyrs, who were the witnesses of faith.

The 'way of beauty' is able to 'touch' the hearts of young people, expressing the mystery of both God and of man. In this context, we note that Pope Francis underlines this way as the effective one in the dialogue with believers and non-believers:

> Every expression of true beauty can thus be acknowledged as a path leading to an encounter with the Lord Jesus… We must be bold enough to discover new signs and new symbols, new flesh to embody and communicate the word, and different forms of beauty which are valued in different cultural settings… (Pope Francis, 2013, par. 167)

For contemporary young people visual signs, fine arts and artistic work in virtual space may provide an important means of expressing oneself. Simultaneously, when entering the sphere of beauty, youth find something that goes beyond their everyday reality, and may be enabled to recognise the depth of their own experiences and mysteriousness of beauty. Focusing on visual arts may lead a person to the moment, in which the act of admiration will become a religious act.

Crawford and Rossiter (2006) point out that the present young generation does not always treat religion as the foundation for establishing the goal and meaning of life. Under such circumstances, CRE needs to search for new perspectives and accounts of education in order to prepare the youths for functioning in the twenty-first century. The starting point may be to get a better understanding of how today's

young people try to form their own identity, hierarchy of values and meaning of life. Early Christian spirituality was strongly connected with the visual elements of their culture and reminds us that contemporary spirituality is influenced by contemporary mass media images and consumerist lifestyle. Consequently, popular imagery has a shaping influence on youth thinking. But there is a danger that the focus of the visual iconography today is not on the spiritual world but on contemporary lifestyle. In this context, the contemporary imagery needs to be evaluated. Value judgments can be made about how the visual imaginations of life are projected in media.

From a pedagogical perspective, Catholic religious education has, for a long time, suffered on the one hand from overly intellectual system-thinking and on the other hand from powerful indoctrination. CRE needs to take seriously the contemporary culture and the experiences of pupils. Visual imagery can play an important role in pedagogical and theological processes. Christian, and any authentic art, has a strong suggestive power. Through beauty and visual imagery, Catholic religious education does justice to the uniqueness of the vision of revelation (Gallagher, 2006). Without the way of beauty, CRE may be reduced to historical information about various religions or just about Christianity.

There are many contemporary strategic voices on Catholic religious education, but a history of catechesis and CRE in Europe illustrates first of all the importance of searching for authentic forms. To avoid the risk that the subject becomes artificial, insincere or purely informative, CRE needs to face the challenge of exploring God's presence at the core of the present evolution of civilisation. Taking the good example from primitive art of the catacombs, which was able to express Christian ideas and values in a simple way, Catholic religious education may provide initiation into the faith mysteries through the mediations of images. The function of visual art is to trigger off the creativity, to provoke fresh insights, renewed esteem for beauty, to touch the human and to enable the search for the truth and goodness. That is why the way of beauty has to be part of CRE. The rapidly changing culture of Europe moved religious tradition and imagination to the periphery. For this reason, in the twenty-first century Europe, speaking of beauty and visual imagination in Catholic religious education is not just calling for more creative sessions, but for human perception, recognition, interpretation and hopefully for pre-evangelisation.

References

Balthasar, H. U. von. (1982). *The glory of the lord: A theological aesthetics (Vol. 1).* San Francisco: Ignatius; and New York: Crossroad.

Crawford, M., & Rossiter, G. (2006). *Reasons for living: Education and young people's search for meaning, identity and spirituality*. A handbook. Melbourne: ACER Press.

Gallagher. Jr., M. P. (2006). Theology and imagination: From theory to practice. *Christian Higher Education, 5*(1), 83–96.

Kawecki, W. (2013). *Theology of beauty. Looking for locus theologicus in contemporary culture*. Poznań: FLOS CARMELI.

Królikowski, J. (2009). *Widzialne słowo. Teologia w sztuce*. Tarnów: Biblos.

Królikowski, J. (2013). Zobaczyć wiarę. Obraz i doświadczenie wiary w Kościele. In: K. Flander, D. Jaszewska, W. Kawecki, B. Klocek di Biasio, E. Mazur, N. Mojżyn, J. S. Wojciechowski, M. Wrześniak, D. Żukowska-Gardzińska (Eds.), *Wierzyć i widzieć* (pp. 127–138). Sandomierz: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne.

Krzywiński, W. (2016). *Widzieć i wierzyć. Przesłanie wizualnej sztuki wczesnochrześcijańskiej do współczesnej katechezy*. Kraków: UPJPII.

Lombaerts, H. (2006). From interpretation to communication and back again. In H. Słotwińska (Ed.), *W poszukiwaniu nowych metod katechetycznych* (pp. 57–79). Lublin: KUL.

Lombaerts, H. (2008). ICT as the main support for a Global World and for a global educational environment. In: A. Bałoniak, J. Szpet (Eds.), *Między tradycją a współczesnością. I Krajowy Kongres Katechetyczny* (pp. 73–90). Poznań: Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza.

Osewska, E. (2016a). Religious education as accompanying: From superficiality to spirituality to personal acquaintance with God incarnate. *The Person and the Challenges, 6*(2), 21–34.

Osewska, E. (2016b). Education to faith in the family community in relation to the contemporary visual culture. In E. Osewska (Ed.), *Focus on family and education* (pp. 175–188). Split: Crkva u svijetu.

Osewska, E., & Stala, J. (2015). *Die katholische schule zu beginn des XXI. Jahrhunderts am beispiel Polens und Englands*. Warszawa: UKSW.

Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology (2001). *The Christian catacombs.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_commissions/archeo/inglese/documents/rc_com_archeo_doc_20011010_cataccrist_en.html.

Pontifical Council for Culture (2006). *The Via Pulchritudinis, Privileged pathway for evangelisation and dialogue.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_cultr_doc_20060327_plenary-assembly_final-document_en.html.

Pope Francis. (2013). Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

Pope John Paul II (1999). *Letter to artists.* Retrieved from https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_23041999_artists.html.

Pope John Paul II (2003). *Post-synodal apostolic exhortatione ecclesia in Europa*. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20030628_ecclesia-in-europa.html.

Stala, J. (2011). Discovering god with children with the help of R.E. books in a polish context. In F. Kraft, H. Roose, G. Büttner (Eds.), *Symmetrical communications?* (pp. 49–59). Rehburg: Loccum.

Warren, M. (1992). *Communications and cultural analysis: A religious view*. Westport: Bergin and Garvey.

Prof Elżbieta Osewska is a Professor at the State Higher Vocational School in Tarnów, Poland, a habilitated doctor of theology in catechetics and a doctor in pastoral theology. During 1990–1993, she was a Lecturer in educational and catechetical centres in the former USSR (Catholic religious education, Christian pedagogy, family catechesis and pastoral theology). During 1998–1999, she was the Head of the Family Affairs Department in the Prime Minister's Office in Warsaw. From 1994 to 2014, she was Catholic RE consultant and Teacher Trainer in the Teacher Training Centres in Suwałki and Łomża. Between 1995 and 2015, she held an academic post at Cardinal Wyszyński University, Poland.

Chapter 29
Storying Faith: The Promises and Contradictions of New Media in Catholic Religious Education

Mary E. Hess

Introduction

Catholic Religious Educators the world over—from so-called advanced democracies to newly emerging countries—find ourselves steeped in digital media (Zuckerman, 2013). Increasingly, these media come to us via mobile devices, and range from highly produced commercial pieces to photos and stories shared amongst friends (Rheingold, 2012). The world we inhabit is also an increasingly tumultuous one, with a level of polarization that feels unique to this time (Haidt, 2012). Thomas Boomershine has noted that we reason more by means of sympathetic identification than philosophical argument (Boomershine, 1999), an assertion that resonates with much of the neuroscientific literature on narrative and learning (Hess, 2012). We are a storying people, and we live in a world awash in competing and often conflicting stories (Hess, 2014a).

In the chapter that follows, I will explore some of the promises as well as the contradictions that emerge for Catholic Religious Educators amidst this turmoil. If we are serious about our roles as Catholic Religious Educators, we have to listen very carefully to the signs of this time we find ourselves in. What does it mean to support our students in learning how to reason well by means of sympathetic identification? Answering that question requires drawing on affective and psychomotor forms of learning, not simply on cognitive arguments (Hess, 2005).

Marty Haugen's refrain in a hymn that is widely sung in the United States—"shepherd me O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life" (Haugen, 1986)—is directly on point. This song, based on Psalm 23, encapsulates our key challenge as school teachers working with young people: we must help each other and the young people we teach to move beyond our fears and our wants into deep recognition of how God creates, saves and continues to breathe God's Spirit through

M. E. Hess (✉)
Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, USA
e-mail: mhess@religioused.org

and amongst us. This is no longer, if it ever was, a solely cognitive enterprise. Yet for a variety of reasons, we are losing—perhaps have already lost—many of the practices of discernment, prayer and deep interconnected sharing which for centuries helped us *reason* not only cognitively, but affectively and with psychomotor engagement. Perhaps as an educator, I can talk about the affective elements of learning, but as a Catholic Religious Educator singing this hymn I am reminded that learning has sacramental elements as well (Wren, 2000).

What does it mean to pray to be shepherded beyond our wants, beyond our fears? At a minimum, it is a reminder that our wants and our fears are not the same as our needs, and while our fears may be very real, we need to let them push us towards courage. I live in Saint Paul, Minnesota, which is home to the Target Corporation, a retail entity that actually does a lot of good in my community. But for all that I like this store and regularly shop at it, I also always need to remember that one of its core tactics in supporting retail profit requires turning wants into needs (Hayden, 2018). That is, enormous amounts of money are being spent on teaching us to believe that something we desire is actually something we need, that consumption saves (Turpin, 2006).

I often do theological reflection with students using commercials, because commercials are tightly composed, brief but evocative narratives that evoke desire (Hess, 2017). They then seek to attach that desire to some form of consumption, some kind of purchase. If we can enter into the narrative enough to ask what the underlying longing is, however, we can help our students birth a deeper recognition. There is resonance here to long-standing practices of Catholic discernment. Ignatius of Loyola's spiritual exercises, for instance (see Pungente, 2011 for a version of the exercises using film), or in a more contemporary setting, the work of the Linns (see Linn, Linn, & Linn, 1995).

A Relational Epistemology

These are processes that proceed from a thorough commitment to a relational epistemology. Moving beyond our wants and our fears requires first recognizing how they shape our knowing, and then reaching beyond our limited understanding into trust that rests in God. This is learning— to know—in a holistic, analogical, sacramental way.

Consider Parker Palmer's (2017) assertions about ways of knowing, and the distinctions he draws between an "objectivist myth" where knowing is described as something to be achieved by experts observing a particular object which is under investigation, and then sharing what they have observed with amateurs who are well removed from the object in question. In contrast to that model, he describes a "community of truth" which imagines knowers focused together on a subject of inquiry, with each knower connected both to subject at the centre of inquiry, as well as to each other.

In the objectivist myth, there are no direct connections between the amateurs and the object, and indeed the information flows in only one direction through the gate-keeping of the expert. While in the community of truth, each knower is connected to every other knower as well as to the subject in the centre of inquiry (for a visualization of this argument, see Palmer, 2017, Figs. 4.1 and 4.2).

The foundational assertion that Palmer (1993) is making is that our knowing is bound up in relationality. Such relationality, grounded in a shared central focus, is not subjectivist or relativist, but rather bound into truth which no one of us can ever fully access or describe by ourselves, or in isolation from community. It is a relational epistemology. Matthias Scharer and Jochen Hilberath (2008) make similar assertions in their work on communicative theology. We live in a world which God created, a God whom we confess is communicative within God's very self, in Trinitarian relationship. We live in a world which Pope Francis has rightly noted begins, thrives, and ends in relationship.

Here are, for example, just a few quotations from *Laudato Si'* which give a distinctively Catholic voice to Palmer's (2017) community of truth:

> If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously. The poverty and austerity of Saint Francis were no mere veneer of asceticism, but something much more radical*: a refusal to turn reality into an object simply to be used and controlled.* (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 11) (my emphasis)

> The basic problem goes even deeper: it is the way that humanity has taken up technology and its development *according to an undifferentiated and one-dimensional paradigm*. This paradigm exalts the concept of a subject who, using logical and rational procedures, progressively approaches and gains control over an external object. (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 106)

> Social love is the key to authentic development. (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 231)

> The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 240)

So how are we, as Catholic Religious Educators, to do this? How do we support a human person growing more, maturing more, being sanctified more, as we and they enter into relationship with each other, with God, with all of Creation? And how, specifically, might we do this amidst the churn and roil of digital media, of polarized public spaces, of pluralism?

I do not have definitive answers to these questions. But I am clear that if we take seriously Palmer's description of a community of truth, if we desire to live deeply into the kind of epistemological relationality of which Pope Francis writes, then we have to recognize that the more diverse the knowers, the more robust the knowing. Therefore, I write as one knower in a web of diverse knowers, and invite you to reflect with me from that situated stance.

Returning to the hymn refrain with which I began, if all around us we are being urged to focus on our wants, to focus on our fears, how do we move through and beyond them to real needs and to the courage to serve each other and all of Creation?

Authority, Authenticity, Agency

Digital media scholars point to three shifts in our functional epistemologies which have been catalysed through digital media: what constitutes authority, what we mean by authenticity and how we experience agency (Campbell, 2010; Clark, 2016; Garner, 2016; Hess, 2016; Hoover, 2016). Authority, for instance, is being dramatically flattened. A simple example in our context would be that decades ago the Holy Father would issue an encyclical in Latin. That text would then be shared with conferences of bishops who would translate it into vernacular languages, while priests in specific contexts would make that teaching accessible to communities of faith. The line of authority would be direct, clear and hierarchical in a very specific way.

Today an encyclical such as *Laudato Si'* (Pope Francis, 2015) is released through the Vatican's website in multiple languages at once. Everyone has access to it at the same time, which means that many lay people will first hear of it filtered through public media, absent any accompanying theological framing within which to understand it. Indeed, many people will come to know and engage such a document absent any connection to a community of faith at all. Authority is flattened and shared in concrete ways we could not have imagined a century ago.

Amidst these dynamics, alongside the turmoil and tribalism, I mentioned at the beginning of this essay, people make sense of such teaching in large measure through these other two dynamics—authenticity and agency.

First, does a particular piece of information, let alone a teaching document, feel authentic? Does it accord with previous experiences? What do trusted people say about it? A document, let alone any other kind of teaching, only has credibility for most people to the extent it passes this authenticity test. It amuses me, as someone on a Protestant faculty, to perceive how much authority the Holy Father's writings possess in that context. Pope Francis has authority there for at least two reasons. First, what he is writing accords well with what these Protestants already believe (that is, it *feels* authentic to them). Second, these Protestants see their Catholic friends granting authority to these documents. It is not the structural authority of the Church, the teaching magisterium, which grants credibility and authority to these documents, rather it is that every day ordinary Catholics all over the world draw hope and meaning from them.

Digital ecologies have another impact, however, that is perhaps even more subtle or insidious, and that has to do with how we experience agency (Shirky, 2008; Benkler, 2006; Weinberger, 2011). In many ways, digital ecologies are offering more and more access, more and more ability to "make a difference." Consider the impact of the hashtags #blacklivesmatter and #metoo. These small lines of code, when connected to the global network that is Twitter, have made it possible for people whose stories

have not previously been heard, let alone believed, to be shared, authenticated and then turned into concrete action (Hess, forthcoming).

Yet while digital ecologies open up more avenues of action, more kinds of agency, they also reinforce for many people a default position, a form of agency that is essentially consumption. We not only consume products, we consume ideas, we consume ideologies, we "pay" for political candidates and so on. And here, in the midst of Catholic community, we need to grapple with the challenge of agency which is represented primarily in individual terms.

There are few representations of effective collective action in popular media, at least in the North American contexts which I inhabit. These are spaces which are highly individualistic, which have been permeated by a particularly vicious form of neoliberal imagination (Brown, 2015). Such an imagination is absent any form of divine agency. It is not simply that we are living in a world where personal agency is conceived of in individualistic terms, embodied in patterns of personal consumption, but also that we are living in a world which has lost most of its ability to perceive divine agency. In doing so, we have also begun to let go of the patterns of practice, of belief, of feeling, that have shaped our ability to be in relationship with transcendence.

In the past, religious communities taught religious identity within a broader ecology which made it possible for us to focus on, as Dorothy Butler Bass notes, "belonging, believing, behaving" (Bass, 2012). One would grow up in the midst of a specific community, belonging to that community, and through that community come to experience the norms which shaped it, the patterns of practice and belief which embodied its identity.

In a world of networked individualism, religion is rapidly becoming networked as well. Heidi Campbell identifies elements of networked religion as:

- Networked community made up of loosely bounded social networks
- Storied identity built through fluid and dynamic identity construction
- Shifting authority which simultaneously creates empowerment and challenge of authority
- Convergent practices of personalized blending of information and rituals
- Multisite reality embedded in online–offline connections. (Campbell, 2012, pp. 5–19)

In this space, communities of faith are hard-pressed to do religious education through socialization into community. This does not mean that socialization is not important, or that we can no longer socialize into community, but rather it means that socialization into other patterns of practice and belief are competing with those of our religious communities and most often are proving to be more powerful, more durable and more ingenious.

It is no longer about belonging, believing and behaving—but first and foremost about being and becoming. This is what Elizabeth Drescher's research into those who claim the label "spiritual but not religious" is teaching us (Drescher, 2016). In societies of networked individualism, the dynamics push us towards first finding ways to narrate what it means to be and to become before we ever start to work on beliefs and behaviours.

I think this is one reason, Pope Francis' words have had such a profound impact globally. He does not set out simply to explicate Catholic teaching to insiders who belong already, who must somehow accept without question certain beliefs, and who then exercise behaviour which is church sanctioned. Instead, his pastoral sense, his deep discernment as a Jesuit, his disciplined listening to the Holy Spirit, all of this has led him to articulate who God is and what God is doing in the world in a profoundly biblical, theologically rich and thoroughly relational way.

Whose are we? God's. What does it mean to be? It means profound relationship in love. Who are we becoming? Ever deeper lovers. As Pope Francis writes in *Evangelii Gaudium*

> …we become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being. Here we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts at evangelization. For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others? (Pope Francis, 2013, par. 8)

This is the central learning task, the central faith assertion, of Catholic religious education.

How Do We Do This Amidst Digital Media?

Taking seriously a community of truth epistemology means that a given circle of knowing is an essential element of how our students learn. If they live in a small circle of knowers, if their attention is focused on a subject that does not participate in transcendence, their definitions will be small, narrow or perhaps even demonic. I use that word advisedly, even though it is a strong word, a word laden with difficult connotations.

If they are using digital tools with default settings, without intentionality, without awareness of how specific algorithms work, our students will remain in self-enclosed bubbles of like-minded people. But if we can help them to live into and out of and through a community of truth, then digital ecologies can help to make visible and tangible how related we all are, how entangled with each other we all are, how interdependent with Creation we all are. We must trust that God continues to promise life, even in the midst of such tools.

Networked community, storied identity, these are attributes of the world many of us inhabit that we can draw on in our religious educational practice. But are we doing so constructively? Or have we allowed our fears to chase us into settling for a community of like-minded people? If we think religious education can only happen if explicitly Catholic content is transferred from experts to amateurs, and if we further fear the kinds of knowing that float through what others term secular society, then it is easy to see how religious educators can get trapped in spaces that appear to teach Catholicism, but actually embody something else entirely.

Consider the work of Mario D'Souza, a key philosopher of religious education, who called us to promote a Catholic philosophy of education, not a philosophy of

Catholic education (D'Souza, 2016). In other words, a philosophy of education that has implications and resources far beyond what we do in Catholic religious education. A philosophy that hinges on a relational epistemology, and urges us to attend to the affective and the psychomotor as well as the cognitive. A philosophy which ought to guide, inspire and resource us in all that we are doing. D'Souza worked primarily with church documents and with the theologies of Jacques Maritain and Bernard Lonergan. Let me note just two quotes from his recent work which underline points I have already tried to make:

> Thus it is the student, and not the teacher, who is the main agent in the learning process. So, while methods and techniques are important, what is more important is the truths that teachers profess and live by, at all levels of education: witness to truth becomes the formative influence for the intellect and personality of the student. (D'Souza, 2016, p. 58)

> … three transcendental precepts: experience, understanding, and judging. Later he introduces a fourth level, deciding, and it is primarily at this level that the human subject comes to understand that every major existential decision and choice has implications for one's life. These transcendental principles become the bridge between one's being and becoming, either in the direction of the good and right, or in the direction of error and evil. (D'Souza, 2016, p. 64)

As D'Souza (2016) was keen to note, perceiving knowing in this way requires active recognition of God's agency, and of the ways in which human agency is bound up with God's creative and communicative action. Being and becoming, and doing so in the midst of a lively respect for and engagement with the community of truth, requires a profoundly reflective curiosity, and a thorough commitment to being in relationship across many differences. So again, how do we do this in pragmatic and concrete ways? We need to engage digital ecologies through embodied knowing, through an epistemology that is relational, through a community of truth, rather than in an objectivist myth frame which privileges disembodied, closed knowing.

Teaching for Discernment

This is an insight that many scholars have asked us to attend to, across many and diverse disciplinary fields. One of the very first, most basic elements of nonviolent communication involves helping people to distinguish between wants and needs by observing their feelings. The argument that Marshall Rosenberg (2015) and Deborah Van Deusen Hunsinger and Theresa Latini (2013) make is that we express particular emotions, specific feelings, in relation to needs that are either unmet or well met. These scholars write of emotions that arise when needs are not well met—fear, annoyance, angry, confusion, disconnection, disquiet and so on—as contrasted with feelings which arise when needs are well met—affection, confidence, inspiration, excitement, exhilaration and so on.

Anthropologist Michael Wesch, who has done stunning research in digital environments, writes of the ways in which we express increasing individualism, but actually harbour a deep desire for community. Or that we increasingly express independence

while longing for relationships; or even that we pursue increasing commercialization while longing for authenticity (Wesch, 2008).

Leadership development scholars such as Anita Farber-Robertson write of coaching leaders to move from "directly observable data" beyond an inferred meaning to an actual meaning, which can only be done through collaborative, participatory forms of knowing (Farber-Robertson, 2000).

Here is the challenge at the heart of it all: we need to help our students become more self-reflective, more conscious of how to observe their emotions without immediately drawing conclusions from them. As D'Souza reminds us:

> The education of the whole person guards against the student's "loss of serenity." It is a serenity compromised by concentrating on future professional identity, skills, and technical knowledge at the expense of the humanity and personal development of the student. The greatest responsibility that Catholic educators face in the education of the whole person is to "make human beings more human". (D'Souza, 2016, p. 118)

This is being, this is becoming, and this is the work we need to find ways to do throughout our curricula, but most precisely within religious education. Fortunately, this is where digital storytelling practices are very fruitful.

In the context within which I am writing—the upper Midwest of the United States on the North American continent—Catholic schools are educating religiously with students who are, in the majority, not Catholic. The students who attend these schools come from multiple backgrounds and cultural experiences, are thoroughly shaped by the popular cultural spaces around them and have little if any vibrant experience with Catholic worship. What they do have is immersion in a Catholic school context which is committed to a robust and holistic epistemology.

Digital Storytelling in Forming Faith and Religious Identity

Practices of digital storytelling pick up on the narrative identity dynamics of which Heidi Campbell writes (Campbell, 2012), and enters into them with media literate/media fluent practices which teach students how to communicate within digital media, and to do so while learning to articulate their own personal stories in wholehearted ways.

Digital storytelling of this sort is "a workshop-based participatory media practice focused on self-representation" (Vivienne, 2016, p. 1). Pioneering work in digital storytelling began back in the 1990s at the Centre for Digital Storytelling in California, and has since spread across the globe. This kind of creative learning involves in-person narrative sharing circles, where participants are invited to develop and sharing personal narratives around specific prompts.

Once a story has been developed and honed, it is recorded in audio. The next step involves adding images and sometimes also additional sound or music to the narrative. Doing so with digital tools means that the final story is able to be shared out via various digital sharing services, and made available in a broad and diverse

array of contexts. Developing a digital story requires that the storyteller revisit their story over and over again, and work with it in collaborative and participatory ways in workshop formats.

Vivienne captures the dynamic well when she notes:

> Digital storytelling is a discursive practice that mediates the interface of many to one. It also mediates private and public understandings of identity and everyday life. Like any group initiative, storytelling practice is shaped at multiple points of intervention … (Vivienne, 2016, pp. 189–190)

This form of creative learning embodies, in practical experiences, the epistemology of the community of truth. At the same time, it offers multiple connecting points to key curricular goals in most learning settings. Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton, & Robinson, wrote, back in 2009, that education needed to be reshaped to confront the challenges of a participatory culture, and they offered a set of key learning goals for students:

Play — the capacity to experiment with one's surroundings as a form of problem-solving

Performance — the ability to adopt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation and discovery

Simulation — the ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real-world processes

Appropriation — the ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content

Multitasking — the ability to scan one's environment and shift focus as needed to salient details.

Distributed Cognition — the ability to interact meaningfully with tools that expand mental capacities

Collective Intelligence — the ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common goal

Judgment — the ability to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different information sources

Transmedia Navigation — the ability to follow the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities

Networking — the ability to search for, synthesize, and disseminate information

Negotiation — the ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative norms. (Jenkins et. al., 2009, p. 4)

Note how well these goals match the skills necessary for religious identity and practice in a world of networked religion. They are pragmatic grounding for the new curricular approaches we ought to be supporting as Religious Educators. These are skills, indeed really habits, which are required to move beyond our wants and beyond our fears to encountering our God, who promises to shepherd us from death into life.

But these skills, these practices of engaging in participatory culture, are only available if we step outside our comfort zones, if we recognize that doing religious identity development in the midst of digital ecologies requires us to learn how to communicate and create in these media. I have more to say about how we do this

in other writing (Hess, 2014b). Here, I will simply conclude by noting that if we sincerely believe that we know as we are known, then we need to trust that God will meet us in digital ecologies, and trust that God will shepherd us beyond our wants, beyond our fears, from death into life.

References

Bass, D. (2012). *Christianity after religion: The end of church and the birth of a new spiritual awakening*. New York: HarperOne.

Benkler, Y. (2006). *The wealth of networks: How social production transforms markets and freedom*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Boomershine, T. (1999). *How to be a faith witness in the communications media? Conditions requisite for the public communications value of faith witnesses*. Paper presented at the Witnessing to the Faith, An activity of the Media Conference, St. Paul University, Ottawa.

Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books.

Campbell, H. (2012). Understanding the relationship between religion online and offline in a networked society. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *80*(1), 64–93. Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfr074.

Campbell, H. (2010). *When religion meets new media*. London: Routledge.

Clark, L. (2016). The media and religious authority, an afterword. In S. M. Hoover (Ed.), *The media and religious authority*. London: Routledge.

Drescher, E. (2016). *Choosing our religion: The spiritual lives of America's nones*. New York: Oxford University Press.

D'Souza, M. (2016). *A Catholic philosophy of education: The church and two philosophers*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Farber-Robertson, A. (2000). *Learning while leading: Increasing your effectiveness in ministry*. Alban Institute.

Garner, S., & Campbell, H. (2016). *Networked theology: Negotiating faith in digital culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Haidt, J. (2012). *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Haugen, M. (1986). *"Shepherd me o God", song tune and lyrics*. Chicago: GIA Publications.

Hayden, R. (2018). *Interview of Ruth Hayden by Kerri Miller on MPR News*. Retrieved from: https://www.mprnews.org/story/2018/01/03/hitting-reset-on-your-budget.

Hess, M. (forthcoming). Pursuing racial justice in the US: What religious educators need to learn from the "Black Lives Matter movement". In Sion, T., Astley, J., Francis, L., and Lankshear, D. (Eds.). *Values, human rights, and religious education: Contested grounds*. ISREV.

Hess, M. (2017). *Deliberately structured conversation as a way to "see through" popular media*. Paper presented to the REA:APPRRE annual meeting, St. Louis, MO.

Hess, M. (2016). Teaching and learning comparative theology with millennial student. In M. Brecht & R. Locklin (Eds.), *Comparative theology in the millennial classroom* (pp. 50–60). New York: Routledge.

Hess, M. (2014a). *And the Word went viral: Finding god at the intersection of Scripture and popular media*. In America, July 21–28. Retrieved from: https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2014/07/08/and-word-went-viral-finding-god-intersection-scripture-and-popular-media#.

Hess, M. (2014b). A new culture of learning: Digital storytelling and faith formation. *Dialog, 53*(1), 12–22.

Hess, M. (2012). Mirror neurons, the development of empathy, and digital story telling. *Religious Education, 107*(4), 401–414.

Hess, M. (2005). *Engaging technology in theological education: All that we can't leave behind*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Hoover, S. (Ed.). (2016). *The media and religious authority*. London: Routledge.

Jenkins, H., Purushotma, R., Weigel, M., Clinton, K. and Robinson, A. J. (2009). *Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century*. Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press. Retrieved from: https://www.dropbox.com/s/co9mdasoh8r1ew7/8435.pdf/dl=0.

Linn, D., Linn, S., & Linn, M. (1995). *Sleeping with bread: Holding what gives you life*. New York: Paulist Press.

Palmer, P. (2017). *The courage to teach: The inner landscape of a teacher's life (20th anniversary edition)*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Images of figures retrieved from: https://books.google.com/books?id=eEozDwAAQBAJandlpg=PP1anddq=the%20courage%20to%20teachandpg=PT147#v=onepageandq=the%20objectivist%20myth%20of%20konwingandf=false.

Palmer, P. (1993). *To know as we are known: Education as a spiritual journey*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

Pope Francis. (2015). *Encyclical letter laudato si'. On care for our common home*. Retrieved from: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

Pope Francis. (2013). *Apostolic exhortation evangelii gaudium. On the proclamation of the gospel in today's world*. Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/evangelii-gaudium/en/files/assets/basic-html/index.html#1.

Pungente, J., & Williams, M. (2011). *Finding God in the dark II: Taking the spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola to the movies*. Toronto: Novalis.

Rheingold, H. (2012). *Netsmart: How to thrive online*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Rosenberg, M. (2015). *Nonviolent communication: A language of life* (3rd ed.). Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press.

Scharer, M., & Hilberath, B. J. (2008). *The practice of communicative theology: Introduction to a new theological culture*. New York: Crossroad.

Shirky, C. (2008). *Here comes everybody: The power of organizing without organization*. New York: Penguin Press.

Turpin, K. (2006). *Branded: Adolescents converting from consumer faith*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press.

Van Deusen Hunsinger, D., & Latini, T. (2013). *Transforming church conflict: Compassionate leadership in action*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Vivienne, S. (2016). *Digital identity and everyday activism: Sharing private stories with networked publics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Weinberger, D. (2011). *Too big to know: Rethinking knowledge now that the facts aren't the facts, experts are everywhere, and the smartest person in the room may be the room*. New York: Basic Books.

Wesch. M. (2008). Presentation at the Library of Congress, June 23, 2008. Minute mark 18:59. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPAO-lZ4_hU.

Wren, B. (2000). *Praying twice: The music and words of congregational song*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox.

Zuckerman, E. (2013). *Rewire: Digital cosmopolitans in an age of connection*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co.

Prof Mary E. Hess is Professor of educational leadership at Luther Seminary, where she has taught since 2000. During 2016–2017, she held the Patrick and Barbara Keenan Visiting Chair in religious education at the University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto. Hess has degrees from Yale, Harvard and Boston College, and has directed a number of projects focusing

on the challenges of media culture for communities of faith. Her most recent books include *Teaching Reflectively in Theological Contexts: Promises and Contradictions, and Engaging Technology in Theological Education*.

Chapter 30
Using Digital Technologies to Interpret Life: Media Literacy and Catholic Religious Education in Dialogue

Check for updates

Edward Wright

Introduction

The following comments and questions were shared by some of my students in the Catholic Religious Education (CRE) class in previous years.

> For me faith is like a lighthouse….it shows you that there may be land and safety amidst all the darkness, fear, anxiety and helplessness you feel overcome with. But how can I feel sure and convince others as well of this, if it exists? (Ex-student)

> Faith is like a small window in a room in which you are alone and feel lonely. Through that window you can see another world that is waiting for you. But how can it help you get there if in that world there are so many obstacles and stumbling blocks for faith? (Ex-student)

> Faith is like a clay object …..It can be so beautiful and cute but as fragile and irreparable. How can you preserve it even in difficult situations? (Ex-student)

While dealing with the topic of 'faith' and its relevance to one's life, I specifically asked these 15-year olds to think of a metaphor that best describes their understanding of their Catholic faith, as well as a question that occurs to their mind frequently and challenges their personal faith significantly. They were then assigned the task of producing a short script for a multimodal presentation that would show, using images (still and/or moving) and sound, their view of faith and its impact on their personal lives. The metaphor and question constituted the heart of each multimodal presentation that was followed by a discussion among the students. My role was not only that of facilitator, but also of relating what was being discussed to the content of the unit being dealt with. Among the positive results that came out I could observe the students' deeper analysis and understanding of issues related to faith, such as the relationship between faith and reason, the ways in which faith enlightens human experience, and the characteristics of faith manifested not only in those who are adherents of a religious tradition but also in those who live Christian/Catholic values

E. Wright (✉)
Faculty of Media and Communication, Bournemouth University, Poole, UK
e-mail: edward.wright@maltadiocese.org

outside the confines of an institutional Church. I have often observed that the use of media technologies, especially photography and moving image could facilitate the development of the 'life story' in adolescence that could in turn enlighten and empower one's Catholic faith. This is made possible through the combination of autobiographical remembering and self-understanding to create a coherent account of one's past, as well as to find purpose in life, both present and future, through imagination and critical reflection. This paper seeks to explore how such an endeavour could be possible through skills that students learn in Media Literacy Education (MLE) which can unlock and unleash their creative potential in Catholic Religious Education (CRE) to narrate and share their life stories. In this way, it becomes more possible for CRE to achieve and fulfil one of its main aims, namely that of facilitating identity formation by supporting students in the process of becoming subjects of their own lives and finding purpose for it (Grimmitt, 1987).

This chapter will thus combine a review of research literature with personal reflections from my professional practice as a CRE and MLE teacher in Maltese Church schools over these last 20 years. The dialogue between CRE and MLE that it seeks to engage will start from an understanding of the importance of a narrative-hermeneutic approach to learning and of how the power of metaphor could facilitate such an approach. The French philosopher Ricoeur (1992) can be very instrumental in providing insights in this regard. Then, it will be necessary to examine the relationship between narrative and identity formation in adolescence, since the narrative has been considered to be the key mechanism by which we comprehend our life course development. Following this analysis, the paper will explain how MLE provides the space to students to develop their imagination and creativity which could then be positively utilised in CRE to facilitate reflection on one's life experiences. In this way, CRE is transformed into a space in which students become lifelong learners and theologians in practice in relation to what they learn about themselves, others, the world, and God in the person of Jesus Christ. Finally, this chapter will show how through the creative potential of digital technologies, new ways for the exchanging of narratives in community could be found. For several experts of CRE, this exchange lies at the heart of educating in faith 'as it develops each person's own understanding of purpose and meaning, in relation to God's purpose for the world.' (Lunde-Whitler, p. 312).

This chapter will thus answer the question: how can the creativity of digital technologies embed in CRE a narrative-hermeneutical approach to life experiences, an approach that helps adolescents share their life stories in communities of learning and probe their meaning in relation to those in the Bible? It will be argued that such an approach could testify to the inherent value and sanctity of every student as a human being created in the 'image and likeness of God', and their respective life-journeys, thus bringing together both a pedagogy and a theology that enables the content of CRE to shed light on the sense of meaning that students could discern in their lives, especially in the dark and painful moments.

Paul Ricoeur: A Narrative-Hermeneutic Approach
to Learning and the Power of Metaphor

Ricoeur (1992) reflects at length on how a narrative pedagogical approach can be enlightened by a narrative-hermeneutic perspective to autobiographical learning that in turn transpires from an interpretive methodological framework. He believes that when people narrate their own lives, they construct their own identity in connection with the plot of their autobiographical narrative that is simultaneously determined by the most important experiences of our lives that we narrate as stories, and by the way we interpret them in a new narrative configuration (Miedema & Roebben, 2008). Ricoeur (1984) uses the term 'emplotment' to explain how identity develops in meaningful ways through the dynamic process of storytelling. For stories to have a real impact on one's present, they must correspond to what a person already knows and understands through previously internalised stories. The unique power of stories, according to Ricoeur (1984), lies in their 'double allegiance' to both intelligibility and innovation, the strange and the familiar, life 'as' and life 'as if'. Thus, when persons recount their past, they are not simply remembering and reciting life histories and chronologies of past events, but they are reflecting deeply on the significance of life occurrences, through the discernment of a dynamic plot, which has the potential of being interpreted in a multitude of ways, and which can invoke known themes, values, characters, and other elements. In this way, reflection on life stories and experiences helps us connect past events with the present, and at the same time provides better self-understanding by way of which we can imagine alternative and possible personal narratives unfolding in the future. The living present becomes a way to rediscover our capacity to imagine constructively our life as other than it is. Ricoeur believes that narrative and autobiographical learning occur at three different levels: when we hear stories, when we tell the stories ourselves and thus become the actor, putting all the details together and making the experience coherent for ourselves and others, and third when we recognise narratives in which we are positioned. At all these levels of narrative learning, meaning is simultaneously related to past experience, reconstructed within the present, and oriented towards the future.

Ricoeur believes that narrative interpretation and learning can transpire from the power of metaphor as 'seeing as'. Inspired by Aristotle who defined metaphor as 'the transfer of a word to a being that in the first instance defined another thing' (as cited in Masong, 2012, p. 5), Ricoeur (2004) reflected upon metaphor's power. The Greek philosopher believed that metaphor belonged to the world of rhetoric and its main function was to disclose reality, 'to set the scene before our eyes' (as cited in Masong, 2012, p. 6), by bringing reality, partially or fully, to light. However, Aristotle, in his 'Poetics', also reflects on the other functions of metaphor, namely to organise and to structure. Significantly, Ricoeur uses the term 'seeing as' to refer to the transfer of meaning in metaphor. The usage of this term in relation to metaphor emphasises the figurative character of language, and consequently, of all reality. Language is freed and becomes a more effective tool for human creativity. Metaphors become living

and new, recreating reality by structuring and organising it, not only disclosing what already is there but bringing to awareness what had been forgotten.

This view of narrative identity facilitates the understanding of religious narrative identity that is so crucially important for the pedagogy of CRE teachers. If religion is a matter of ultimate concern then it is intimately related to the meaning and aim of human existence. Religious identity starts developing with the individual's interpretation of the life story from a transcendent perspective (Tillich, 1978). Establishing coherence to one's life story has been shown to be directly related to the formation of religious identity (Miedema & Roebben, 2008). Thus, the formation of one's personal and religious identity occurs as a hermeneutic process in the light of prevailing narratives present in the surrounding culture. When these narratives are internalised, the individual enters the life histories and narrative traditions of others (Ricoeur, 1992).

More recently, a growing number of religious educationalists have written extensively on the formation of identity as one of the main aims of religious education in today's multicultural and pluralistic society (Miedema, 2009; Roebben, 2009a, b; Ter Avest, 2012). Roebben (2009b) insists that young people need to be listened to carefully and urgently. Teachers need to empathise with their life experiences, making these the starting point to the appreciation of a particular religious identity, such as a Christian identity. This is built on the view that students are 'human beings with their own existential longing, with their own soul' (p. 163), and that they 'have the right and ability to share with each other and to theologize about their personal and communal lives' (pp. 181–2). Certainly, it would be worthwhile exploring how this view of CRE can be put into practice through a pedagogy that engages students into reflection upon and representation of their lives in creative ways, and therefore, through the skills they learn and the creativity they gain in MLE, they can mature holistically in their identity. This pedagogy, as it transpires from Ricoeur's narrative-hermeneutic approach, as well as his view of metaphor, can establish CRE as the space where interconnectivity between one's humanity, one's need for community, and one's being as 'creation in process' occurs.

Relationship Between Narrative and Identity Formation

Since Erikson (1968) developed his theory on psychosocial development, identity formation has been viewed as one of the most significant tasks of adolescence that has implications for healthy development throughout one's life (Weber & Mitchell, 2008, as cited in Buckingham, 2008). This has led to a renewed interest in the role of narrative in psychology, particularly in the emergence and construction of one's life story that allows individuals to organise recollective memories (Habermas & Bluck, 2000) and knowledge of their past experiences in a coherent manner. The narrative has been considered to be the key mechanism by which we comprehend our life course development.

Narrative Meaning-Making and Identity Formation in Adolescence

Even though the importance of narrative for identity formation can be traced back to the early years of childhood (Reese, Yan, Jack, & Hayne, 2010), it becomes particularly significant during preadolescence and adolescence, the time when young people develop the capacity to think about the relationship between the past, present, and future, and how their life narratives make sense across time periods (Halverson, 2010). At around the age of 12 the ability to create coherent life narratives starts to develop, particularly the ability to link together single life events in a way that defines the young person's identity and personality, creating a meaningful story (Chen, McAnally & Reese, 2013; Steiner, Pillemer, Thomsen, & Minigan, 2014).

Habermas and Bluck (2000) speak of four different types of coherence that constitute autobiographical reasoning, and that could be observed in people of different cultures worldwide: temporal, causal, cultural, and thematic. The first refers to one's ability to put events of the life story in a chronological order. Causal coherence implies the ability to recount life experiences in terms of causes and motivations, thus engaging in a process of meaning-making and interpretation of certain life events that are particularly significant. Cultural coherence describes one's ability to assimilate shared cultural expectations and norms, and then include them in the life narrative to make it more organised. Finally, thematic coherence occurs when one has the ability to establish thematic similarities between various elements of life. Autobiographical reasoning, through such abilities, becomes a constructive memory process that forges links between single life episodes, makes connections between and provides interpretations of various life experiences. Such reasoning has been positively related to identity formation (Chen et al., 2013; McLean & Pasupathi, 2012; Steiner et al., 2014).

When such autobiographical reasoning finds its place in CRE, it makes it possible for student stories to become connected to stories of and about God, as well as to other narratives of different communities from which Biblical and other narratives stemmed (Ganzevoort, 2011). In this way a sense of reflection on questions related to human transcendence would be enabled, leading to the gradual formation of a religious identity (Miedema & Roebben, 2008).

Identity and Digital Literacies in Adolescents' 'Participatory Culture'

In today's world, most young people feel comfortable to express their life experiences through the digital world for which they have a strong attraction and passion (Buckingham, 2008; Hobbs, 2011). Thus, it is crucial for both media and Religious Educators to understand how uploaded multimodal productions can reveal aspects of

youth identity, and serve as means of interpreting significant life events that includes projection of life into the future.

Recently, increasing awareness of 'youth participatory cultures' (Jenkins, 2009) has led media educators and researchers to focus more on young people as 'media producers', and more specifically on multimodal production as a new form of literacy. As Prensky (2001) had observed, the beginning of the twenty-first century was already experiencing a generation of 'digital natives.' Many of these young people, referred to as 'prosumers' by Martin Lister (2003), are becoming fluent in the 'new literacies' by way of which they both create digital products and upload them online, and consume popular images, combining, adapting and incorporating them into their own media productions (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003). Many of these productions are used by adolescents and youth to tell stories about themselves, about who they are and who they would like to be. They are often nonlinear and multivoiced, and reflect several identity processes taking place in adolescence (Weber & Mitchell, 2008). Given that the processes of producing, consuming and 'being shaped' by these digital technologies occur simultaneously and are intertwined, they become ideal entry points for the exploration of learning in relation to identity formation. It is precisely through such processes that adolescent identity is constructed and deconstructed, experimented with, shaped and experienced (Buckingham, 2008; Lister, 2003; Weber & Mitchell, 2008).

While there has been considerable research on the importance of identity and the processes leading to its formation in digital production processes, research on the potential of film to enhance identity formation processes in adolescence and youth has been sporadic. However, there is a direct and significant relationship between the video/film production process and identity formation (Vargas, 2006). Film as a medium offers young people an effective way to produce narratives of self (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). It may indeed 'represent the ideal medium for accessing an unmediated relationship with the real' (Fleetwood, 2005, p. 157). While digital technologies can have a considerably strong impact on identity through the process of merging words, rhyme, rhythm, imagery and music, as well as movement, film becomes a more dynamic and effective medium for representing self (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). It is through these propensities that film could become a core tool for meaning-making in various curricular subjects, especially in CRE.

MLE as Curricular Space for Promoting Creativity, Imagination and Critical Thinking in Relation to Identity Formation

Research shows the importance of letting adolescent students bring their existing and diverse pleasures and areas of digital expertise in the classroom (Buckingham, 2008; Hobbs, 2011), while simultaneously stimulating them to reflect critically on what they produce. This leads students to view learning as enjoyment (see also Martens,

2010; McDougall, 2007). Yet, only when students are given opportunities to discuss media content and language critically, and share and discuss their own media productions that learning occurs efficiently (Redmond, 2012). This sense of critical enjoyment goes far beyond the inoculation, preparation and appreciation approaches. It embraces students' experiences of analysing, evaluating and sharing the media they produce, while facilitating learning through the nurturing of a critical mind in the concrete context of life experiences. At the same time, such an approach embraces the students' feelings during learning. Through its social and collaborative dimensions, students could engage in a process of negotiating friendships and defining identities while constructing their own story-productions in media education projects (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994). Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994) state that MLE can serve as an ideal space for students to 'consciously manipulate and play with various identities through self-portraits and photo-stories using a range of familiar media genre' (as cited in Buckingham, 2003, p. 129). The degree of play, fantasy and wish-fulfilment that the project allows provides the space for students to explore in an effective manner several social issues related to their identity. Buckingham (2003) also explains how digital technologies can facilitate the production process in photography or film-making by making it possible to learn through trial and error, looking back at earlier versions of one's work, and reflect upon how and why some ideas might have changed. Such digital technologies make drafting and redrafting possible, allowing for critical self-evaluation in the process. Even in post-production, the decisions that need to be made with regard to the selection, manipulation and combination of images and sounds are not only facilitated and made more accessible through digital technologies, but involve a whole process of meaning-making that is intimately related to identity formation.

Hobbs (2011) believes that the creative and expressive dimension of MLE is not only inevitable and crucial for the relevance of the subject, but it also enables students to apply their creative and expressive skills in other learning areas, such as the arts and sciences, enhancing their appreciation, understanding, and mastery of these subjects. This could only be possible if digital technology does not become an end in itself but a means toward important outcomes, such as collaborative production and sharing with a wider audience (Buckingham, 2008). Thus, the link between learning and the life story (as the construction of experiences) becomes central to education, and the synergy between narrative and experiential learning is strengthened (Clark, 2010; Clark & Rossiter, 2008).

The Contribution of MLE to CRE and Identity Formation

Since through the skills they learn in MLE students bring out their creative potential, while being afforded the space to express their identities in different ways, CRE can certainly be one of the curricular subjects that benefits from the pedagogy of MLE.

When I look back at and reflect upon my professional classroom practice in these last 6 years, I realise that there is a realistic possibility of engaging in digital media

production in ways that open up elements of personal identity formation, including religious identity in the broad sense as explained in the previous section, and with particular resonance to our young people's social and cultural context as well as their contemporary environments. Since digital storytelling, especially through the use of photos and film-making, begins in learning how to share stories that frequently have a personal foundation to them, the process is immediately congruent with the kind of religious education that seeks the formation of personal and religious identity, and develops spirituality.

Grimmitt (1987) believes that identity formation consists mainly of how a human being creates personal meaning in a social context. He argues in favour of a religious education that can help adolescents and young people find their role as subjects of life, thus facilitating a fundamental milestone of their identity formation. This, he says, can be achieved when Religious Educators help students explore the purposes and meanings through which they constitute and interpret their own life experiences, facilitate spaces for them to construct their life story through narratives by way of which they acquire integrated wholeness and a coherent view of themselves, create opportunities for social interaction to explore the moral and civic virtues for themselves and society, and when they support them to think and act critically, independently, and responsibly towards others (Grimmitt, 1987; Niemi, 2006). Thus, in the process of becoming subjects of life, religious education can enable young people to become critical, even of their own past experiences and decisions, make them more integrated and coherent, empower them to meet life's challenges, and afford them the opportunity to project their lives in the future as they wish them to be and reflect upon such projections through imagination. Religious education can achieve such aims through a narrative pedagogical approach that concretizes a sense of continuity between past, present and future. In this way it can act as a binding force, dealing with internal fragmentation and bringing wholeness, making adolescents and young people stronger to work and act after a process of reflection (Grimmitt, 1987; Niemi, 2006). By adopting such a framework and mindset in relation to religious education, the subject could address young people's search for meaning and spirituality that is so vital for their identity formation (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006). If religious education manages to accomplish such an aim, then it would become an instrumental agent that contributes to solutions for the problem of identity that has become the 'loudest talk in town' (Bauman, 2004, p. 17). This occurs when the educational system and people responsible for designing curricula conceptualise identity formation as 'a process in which individuals draw on both internal and cultural resources for their self-understanding and self-expression'. These, in turn, could be 'worked out through complex interactions between their identity needs and the identity resources they find in culture' (de Souza, 2011, pp. 2–3).

In this way, through the creative opportunities offered by the skills learnt in MLE, especially the use of photography and film-making, students can see more the importance and relevance of CRE as they learn to tell rich and lively stories about themselves, through and as a function of one's relationships and culture. The Catholic Religious Educator's main role becomes that of facilitating a space for authentic communities within learning environments, thus allowing life experiences to be cre-

atively explored in the open with others, and connected to the doctrine and Biblical narratives that are so important and essential to the Catholic faith. In learning how to construct a life story from one's own personally significant experiences, adolescent students in the CRE classroom can be brought into a more critically engaged relationship with such a story, with those of other students, as well as with the most significant traditions and narratives of the faith community or religious tradition they belong to. Much of the research until now focusing on storytelling in religious education occurred in nondigital settings and viewed religious education in a broad sense, not tied to a particular religious tradition (Miedema & Roebben, 2008; Selçuk, 2008). Unfortunately, only a few sporadic studies have been conducted on how digital technologies can be applied to a specific model of RE. These studies were based on a few projects investigating digital storytelling in the context of either a broadly viewed religious education such as multicultural religious education, or a Christian religious education viewed and constructed from the perspective of Christian churches with much less hierarchical structures than the Roman Catholic Church, and with much less emphasis on religious identity based on dogma and Tradition as presented by the teaching magisterium of the Catholic church, and the beliefs and devotions that have always been held by the faithful (the 'sensus fidelium').

Conclusion

If the formation of a narrative identity occurs as a crucially important hermeneutic process throughout one's life, the same could be said of one's religious narrative identity (Miedema & Roebben, 2008). Research projects and studies need to be conducted with the aim of understanding how digital technologies, especially photography and film-making can facilitate identity formation through CRE. Malta must not be an exception to such an endeavour, and a pilot study is already being planned in this respect for the next scholastic year and beyond. It will give students, both Maltese and foreign, in several Maltese senior schools, coming from various backgrounds, opportunities to narrate their life experiences through photography and short film-making, the basic skills of which would be learnt in MLE that in many Church schools is compulsory in the first 2 years of the secondary school curriculum. It is hoped that such a study, if successful, would shed light on how CRE in Malta, which is still compulsory in all schools and at all levels, can gain more relevance by unlocking its potential to assist adolescents in the development of their religious identity. This would occur through a dialogical, hermeneutic process in which students integrate religious narratives (including Biblical narratives) and Catholic doctrine into their own autobiographies and exploring the significance of religious texts and narratives through their personal religious accounts in the present context. After all, as has already been pointed out, Ricoeur (1991, p. 26) believes that a narrative's significance 'stems from the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader'. Such potential could be actualized through photography and film-making that could concretize a narrative-developmental approach to CRE. Thus, it would also

finally put into practice the aims of and ideals for CRE that the Maltese 'National Curriculum Framework' (NCF) emphasises the importance of when it states that the teaching of CRE in schools should be

> seen as an important element in the integral formation of the person. It should lead to a process of self-discovery, developing the moral and spiritual dimensions and contributing towards children's capacity to value, appreciate, perceive and interpret the world they live in…….Learning in this area nurtures and enhances a sense of spiritual self. Children and young people develop their own identity and understand better their cultural identity. (2012, p. 35)

This endeavour can be very realistically achieved on our small and beautiful Mediterranean island if, as the NCF also specifies with regard to 'Digital Literacy',

> it promotes learning that is facilitated through using the potential of technologies to enable students to show and create knowledge, and through an increased complexity of tasks and use of multi-modal information for identity formation in every aspect of it. (2012, p. 37)

Thus, through the pedagogy of MLE that promotes reflection and creativity, CRE can concretize a narrative-developmental approach to the life story of adolescents, contributing significantly to their identity formation.

References

A National Curriculum for All. (2012). Ministry of Education and Employment, Malta.

Bauman, Z. (2004). *Identity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Buckingham, D. (2003). *Media education: Literacy, learning and contemporary culture*. UK: Polity Press.

Buckingham, D. (Ed.). (2008). *Youth, identity and digital media*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Buckingham, D., & Sefton-Green, J. (1994). *Cultural studies goes to school: Reading and teaching popular media*. London: Taylor and Francis.

Chen, Y., McAnally, H. M., & Reese, E. (2013). Development in the organization of episodic memories in middle childhood and adolescence. *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience, 7,* 1–9.

Clark, C., & Rossiter, M. (2008). Narrative learning in adulthood. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 119,* 61–70.

Clark, M. C. (2010). Narrative learning: Its contours and its possibilities. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 126,* 3–11.

Crawford, M., & Rossiter, G. (2006). *Reasons for living: School education and young people's search for meaning, identity, and spirituality*. Melbourne, VIC: Australian Council for Educational Research.

de Souza, M. (2011). Promoting inter-spiritual education in the classroom: Exploring the perennial philosophy as a useful strategy to encourage freedom of religious practice and belief. *Journal of Religious Education, 59*(1), 27–37.

Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity, youth and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.

Fleetwood, N. R. (2005). Authenticating practices: Producing realness, performing youth. In S. Maira & E. Soep (Eds.), *Youthscapes: The popular, the national, the global* (pp. 155–172). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Ganzevoort, R. R. (2011). Narrative approaches. In B. Miller-McLemore (Ed.), *Wiley-Blackwell companion to practical theology* (pp. 214–223). Chichester 2011.

Grimmitt, M. (1987). *Religious education and human development: The relationship between studying religions and personal, social and moral education*. McCrimmon: Great Wakering Essex.

Habermas, T., & Bluck, S. (2000). Getting a life: The emergence of the life story in adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin, 126,* 748–769.

Halverson, E. R. (2010). Film as identity exploration: A multimodal analysis of youth-produced films. *Teachers College Record, 112*(9), 2356.

Hobbs, R. (2011). *Digital and media literacy: connecting classroom and culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Jenkins, H. (2009). *Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2003). *New literacies: Changing knowledge and classroom learning*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Lister, R. (2003). *Citizenship: Feminist perspectives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Martens, H. (2010). Evaluating media literacy education: Concepts, theories and future directions. *Journal of Media Literacy Education, 2*(1), 1–22.

Masong, K. (2012). Metaphor, poiesis and hermeneutical ontology: Paul Ricoeur and the turn to language. *Pan Pacific Journal of Philosophy, Education and Management, 1*(1), 1–7.

McDougall, J. (2007). What do we learn in Smethwick Village? Computer games, media learning and discursive confusion. *Learning, Media and Technology, 32*(2), 121–133.

McLean, K. C., & Pasupathi, M. (2012). Processes of identity development: Where I am and how I got there. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research, 12*, 8–28.

Miedema, S., & Roebben, B. (2008). The two contested concepts of culture and tradition in religious education. *Religious Education, 103*(4), 480–492.

Miedema, S. (2009). Religious education between certainty and uncertainty. Towards a pedagogy of diversity. In W. A. J. Meijer, S. Miedema, & A. M. Lanser-van der Velde (Eds.), *Religious education in a world of religious diversity* (pp. 195–205). Waxmann: New York/Berlin.

Niemi, H. (2006). Identity formation and religious education—Meeting the challenge for a meaningful life. In K. Tirri (Ed.), *Religion, spirituality and identity*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon, 9*(5), 1–6.

Redmond, T. (2012). The pedagogy of critical enjoyment: Teaching and reaching the hearts and minds of adolescent learners through media literacy education. *Journal of Media Literacy Education, 4*(2), 106–120.

Reese, E., Yan, C., Jack, F., & Hayne, H. (2010). Emerging identities: Narrative and self from early childhood to early adolescence. In K. C. McLean & M. Pasupathi (Eds.), *Narrative development in adolescence, creating the storied self* (Vol. XXXIII, pp. 23–43).

Ricoeur, P. (1984). *Time and narrative* (Vol. 1). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, P. (1991). Life in quest of narrative. Teoksessa David Wood (toim.): *On Paul Ricoeur* (pp. 20–33). Routledge: London and New York.

Ricoeur, P. (1992). *Oneself as another*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, P. (2004). *Memory, history, forgetting* (La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli) (K. Blamey & D. Pellauer, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Roebben, B. (2009a). Narthical religious learning: Redefining religious education in terms of pilgrimage. *British Journal of Religious Education, 31*(1), 17–27.

Roebben, B. (2009b). *Seeking sense in the city: European perspectives on religious education*. Berlin: LIT Verlag.

Selçuk, M. (2008). Who am I between "us" and "them"? *Religious Education, 103*(5), 511–516.

Steiner, K. L., Pillemer, D. B., Thomsen, D. K., & Minigan, A. P. (2014). The reminiscence bump in older adults' life story transitions. *Memory, 22,* 1002–1009.

Ter Avest, I. (Ed.). (2012). *On the edge: (Auto)biography and pedagogical theories on religious education*. Amsterdam: Sense Publishers.

Tillich, P. (1978). *Systematic theology* (Vol. I). London: University of Chicago Press.

Vargas, L. (2006). Transnational media literacy: Analytic reflections on a program with Latina teens. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 28*(2), 267–285.

Weber, S., & Mitchell C. (2008). Imagining, keyboarding, and posting identities: Young people and new media technologies. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, identity, and digital media* (pp. 25–48) The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur foundation series on digital media and learning. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Edward Wright is head of department for media literacy education (MLE) and personal, social and career development (PSCD) for Church Schools, as well as visiting lecturing on teacher formation courses at the University of Malta. He is reading for a doctorate at Bournemouth University, and is investigating how the pedagogies of media literacy education and religious education could contribute to meaning-making and identity formation in adolescence, especially through digital storytelling. He has been teaching MLE and PSCD, social studies, and religious education for the last twenty years, in a Maltese secondary Church school.

Chapter 31
Contextual Influences on Knowledge Mediation in Religious Education and Its Significance for Teacher Education

Ana Thea Filipović

Introduction

In current educational policies, in most European societies, the prevailing opinion is that the primary task of religious education in public schools is the mediation of religious knowledge, not the transmission of faith and introduction into religious life. This helps students address issues of religious, worldview, and value orientation in their own lives in a more responsible way (Franken & Loobuyck, 2011; Pajer, 2009; Rothgangel, Jäggle, & Schlag, 2016; Schreiner, 2015). This shift in emphasis is related to the loss of traditional religious milieus, with increasing secularisation as well as the religious and ideological pluralisation of societies. The concept of knowledge used in this way relies on the sociology of knowledge, which examines the relationship between society and the construction of knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Foucault, 1994; Mannheim, 2007) and accordingly this concept does not only refer to the theoretical, but also to practical knowledge, applied in specific situations. Therefore, the concept is similar to the concept of religious competence that prevails in today's religious education discussions (Englert, 2007; Garmaz, 2012; Pfeufer, 2011; Schambeck, 2011).

Socio-contextual influences on the mediation and acquisition of religious knowledge in religious education will be analysed considering the models of religious education in public schools in Europe. Based on empirical insights, the influences of the social and cultural environment on the reception and the formation of religious knowledge among students will be examined. Finally, conclusions relevant to current teachers' training in the field of religious education are presented.

A. T. Filipović (✉)
Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
e-mail: thea.filipovic1@gmail.com

Religious Knowledge and the Main Concepts of Religious Education in Schools in Europe

How is the mediation of knowledge, in religious education in schools understood in different social contexts? Each country has its own religious and denominational history. Moreover, every society understands the public meaning of religion in its own way and accordingly develops its relationship towards religious communities. Religious education is related to that background, but it also reflects religious, cultural, and value-related changes in a particular society. Consequently, there are a variety of legal models and conceptual forms of religious education in European countries.

First, regarding the concept and goal of religious education, there is an explicitly denominational approach. It expounds the doctrinal and moral contents of a specific religion or Christian denomination, including the history of a particular religious community or Church, with a view to educate students as faithful citizens. Religious knowledge primarily draws upon theological disciplines and the goal of religious education is the systematic and organic transmission of a denomination-specific faith (Grimmitt, 1994; Schreiner, 2007). This kind of religious education relies on the dominant meaning of a specific religion or Christian denomination in a particular society or educational institution. In view of growing religious and worldview pluralisation, this concept of religious education is much rarer and more difficult to justify in public schools in Europe (Filipović, 2011; Franken and Loobuyck, 2011; Pajer, 2009; Rothgangel et al., 2016; Schreiner, 2015). It should be noted that the Congregation for Catholic Education (2009) in a Circular Letter to the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on Religious Education in Schools, also distinguishes between the aims of religious education in schools and parish catechesis in the following way: 'Catechesis aims at fostering personal adherence to Christ and the development of Christian life in its different aspects (…), whereas religious education in schools gives the pupils knowledge about Christianity's identity and Christian life.' (par. 17)

There is another concept of religious education which transmits religious knowledge mediated by theology but which also uses the methodology of secular religious studies. The belief and life of a particular religious community and its role in history are based on theological rationality, but are also supplemented by other types of argumentation (philosophical, historical, religion-based, socio-empirical, etc.). The goal of this religious education concept is not primarily the transmission of faith or as a way of sustaining their faith but the mediation of information, concepts, meanings and comparative views. This helps students to recognise the cultural meaning of specific religious traditions as key to understanding both history and the present. At the same time, this knowledge should help find one's own answer in the universal search for the meaning of human existence, when encountering the symbolic and ethical heritage of a specific religion or confession. The mediation of religious knowledge through the phenomena that religions have in common (such as sacred texts, rituals, liturgy, ethics, etc.), and taught through the pedagogical approach is also important for the teaching of religious knowledge. Students can connect such knowledge with other forms of knowledge more easily (Pajer, 2009). In the last few

decades, a large number of countries in Europe have created this type of religious education, which preserves the denominational form of religious education. While respecting the cultural meaning of a specific religion or denomination and its historical predominance in a particular country or region, it also integrates the goals of civic education (Filipović, 2011; Rothgangel et al., 2016).

Finally, there are concepts and forms of teaching religion in Europe nowadays that rely exclusively or predominantly on the scientific plausibility of religious studies. The ways in which knowledge on religion is mediated vary from case to case. This ranges from the subject 'multi-faith religious education' (as in Great Britain) to another subject that integrates culture and religion (in some of the Swiss cantons), or religious history with national history and philosophical knowledge (in the Scandinavian countries Norway, Sweden, Denmark). The trans-confessional, multireligious model of religious education is primarily preferred by countries in the North and the Northwest of Europe, where the tradition of state Churches existed or still exists. Today, these are markedly secularised countries with a large percentage of non-believers, but with significant and long-term settled groups of immigrants of other religions and other Christian denominations (Jackson, 2009; Rothgangel, Jackson, & Jäggle, 2014a; Rothgangel, Skeie, & Jäggle, 2014b; Schreiner, 2012).

It is also interesting to examine who has control over religious knowledge in these types of religious education. In the case of explicitly confessional religious education, the curricula and syllabi are formulated by religious communities. Religious education teachers are also educated at theological faculties of individual religious communities. In regard to religious education that is both denominationally recognisable and pedagogically oriented, programmes are established by religious communities and their theologies but in cooperation and in dialogue with secular religious studies and humanities. This is also the case in teachers' education. In the model of the denominationally independent mediation of religious knowledge, the elaboration of the curricula and syllabi is within the competence of educational institutions. However, general cooperation with Churches is maintained, due to historical meanings and relationships between the Church and state in individual countries. Teacher education is within the competence of the state or regional institutions and their religious studies, which are often the successors of denominational theological studies (Filipović, 2011; Pajer, 2009).

Due to the internationalisation of education in Europe (Schreiner, 2012) as well as the globalisation of religion (Simojoki, 2012), mutual influence between individual models can be observed. Apart from the three above-mentioned approaches (learning religion, learning from religion and learning about religion), a fourth approach is learning through religion, that links together learning about and learning from religion (Schreiner, 2016). Plurality and diverse situations require the plurality of religious education models, which complement and inspire each other (Filipović & Lehner-Hartmann, 2016; Grimmitt, 1994; Lindner, Schambeck, Simojoki, & Naurath, 2017). In the opinion of religious education teachers, international comparative empirical findings also show that these models are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary (Popp, 2013).

Contextual Influences on Religious Knowledge Among a Sample of Students in Croatia

After the fall of communist regimes, religious education was taught again (in various forms depending on country) at schools in most of the countries of the former socialist bloc of Eastern Europe. In Croatia, it became part of the education system as a school subject in 1991. Since the communist regime abolished all private (religious and alternative) schools, I refer to all schools, which are primarily public schools in Croatia. Since 1991, several private schools were founded, but they still only account for 2.40% of all schools in Croatia (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2018a, 2018b). Religious education is a separate subject taught according to denominations, in all grades of elementary and secondary school. According to data available from the Ministry of Science and Education, from 3 October 2016, in the 2015/16 school year, 89.98% of elementary school students and 78.55% of secondary school students attended Catholic religious education classes in Croatia. In secondary schools, students can choose between different types of denominational religious education (Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, religious education of Protestant churches and communities) (Radelj, 2016). These percentages are a reflection of the denominational composition of the population in Croatia. According to the 2011 census, 86.28% of the population declared themselves as Catholic (Državni zavod za statistiku, 2013). A further 17.94% of students attended classes on Ethics (Radelj, 2016).

In view of the concept and objectives of religious education, Croatia belongs to the group of countries that has the second above-mentioned model of denominationally separate religious education, which expounds the contents of Christian faith in Catholic form within the context of contemporary culture and of students' interests and questions. The curricula of Catholic religious education are mainly based on the principle of the correlation of creed and contemporary life (Hilger, 2010). It takes into consideration the requirement of contemporary pedagogy and didactics, the curricula define competences. It attempts to connect the content of religious education with the content of other subjects. In doing so it aims to promote social dialogue, respect for diversity, foster non-discrimination on religious and worldview, national, class, racial, gender and other grounds (Program katoličkoga vjeronauka u osnovnoj školi, 2003; Plan i program katoličkoga vjeronauka za četverogodišnje srednje škole, 2009; Plan i program katoličkoga vjeronauka za trogodišnje srednje škole, 2014). In many aspects, such a dialogic stance is a part of the Christian viewpoint according to the Second Vatican Council, although there are ethical aspects in which the teaching of the Church differs from the requirement of the secular and pluralist society. Given that the curricula undergo a double review, by the Church and educational institutions, solutions are negotiated.

Socio-contextual Impact on Students' Knowledge Acquisition

The way in which the social context shapes students' religious knowledge can be explored by empirical research. Unfortunately, such investigations are still quite scarce in Croatia. The only research on this subject was conducted by Boris Jokić in 2006, combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies among elementary school students encompassing two age cohorts: a 5th and 6th grade group (approx. 11 to 12 years old) and a 7th and 8th grade group (approx. 13 to 14 years of age). In total, 419 students from 11 schools from central and the surrounding Zagreb area participated in the quantitative survey research while thirty students from a school in the centre of Zagreb participated in the qualitative research (Jokić, 2013). However, this research can only be indicative, not exhaustive.

In relation to the views and experiences of the older students' this research showed that religious education was comprehensible but that it set a low level of requirements from students and they considered this to be of average importance and interest. In both age groups, it was evident that religious education in the family had a significant impact on their attitudes towards religious education. Where a positive family influence was expressed, students had a positive stance towards the content of religious education, while those students who did not have this kind of familial upbringing were less interested in the content of religious education. Among the older group of students, adolescent disassociation from patterns of childish thinking and behaviour was evident as well as the questioning of authority that contributed to a more critical view of Church teachings and of religious education. At the same time, they showed a greater inclination towards the personalization of faith. Older students also attached less religious and personal meaning to the sacrament of Confirmation and expressed a more critical stance towards the role of the Church in Croatian society. Older students also felt that their critical views on the content of religious education were problematic for the teachers of the subject. In both age groups, there were no relevant differences in relation to gender and attainment, but it was evident that students more inclined towards a scientific interpretation of the world, were also more critical of religious education (Jokić, 2013).

Considering that the Marxist worldview in former socialist countries propagated the incompatibility of science and religion, this research also focused on examining this relationship. First, it was noted that the relationship between science and religion was not the focus of students' attention. They experience them as two different fields of knowledge without establishing a relationship between them. Questions on the relation between the theory of evolution and the Biblical narrative on the creation of the world, revealed that younger students still accepted Biblical literalism while older students accepted the symbolic meaning of the Biblical story of creation proposed by the religious education curricula for the 7th and 8th grades (Program katoličkoga vjeronauka u osnovnoj školi, 2003). For some students, the transition from the literal to the symbolic meaning of Biblical stories on creation represented a relief due to the possible compatibility of religion and science while for others it strengthened

the already present tendency of dissociating themselves from the teaching of the Church. The influence of age characteristics, manifested in the personalized way of explaining the two interpretations of creation, literal and symbolic, was noted among the older students. Likewise, it was observed that more religious students who came from religious families were more likely to accept the literal interpretation of creation and were more reserved towards the theory of evolution than students who did not come from such a background. This research generally suggests that either a familial religious or unreligious background has a greater influence on the religious view of students than religious education itself. According to Jokić's (2013) interpretation of the research results for one group of students the family and parish community are the decisive factors of their relationship towards religious education while for other students it has a sole role in strengthening cultural affiliation to Catholic Christianity.

Research suggests that religious education requires approaches that take into account various starting points pertaining to the religious experience and religious socialisation of students in order for both those from religious families and families dissociated from religion, to develop a positive attitude towards the Catholic creed. It would be necessary to examine the role of religious education as an aid in the development of a worldview that would connect various fields of knowledge and different views of reality. Religious education should manifest the compatibility of religious and scientific worldviews while both natural science subjects and religious education should promote the idea of the coexistence of various truths and different levels of symbolism and transcendence that are present in both fields. In addition, both fields should respect the possible opposing stands of students in relation to what is taught within the framework of specific subjects. These varied stances are an opportunity and not an obstacle (Jokić, 2013).

A Comparison with Australian Research Results

Socio-contextual influences on students' knowledge mediated by religious education are even more evident when results of the previously mentioned research are compared to research in another context. Empirical research conducted between 2002 and 2006 among youth in Australia, and later expanded to students at 25 schools in four states of Eastern Australia, most of which were associated with Catholic or Lutheran denominations showed that students have varied relationships towards different fields of knowledge (Hughes, 2007a). Teachers, on the one hand, mediate knowledge in the belief that the students accept them as objective knowledge. On the other hand, the dominant opinion nowadays is that students, in light of a postmodern consciousness, hold all knowledge to be subjective. This research based in Australia demonstrated that the social context (origin, cultural affiliation), has an influence on students' knowledge and their construction of a worldview. It also showed that students generally accept the role of (natural) sciences and know that scientific hypotheses must be verified and proven. In contrast, in other fields of knowledge, such as religious education, this is more related to subjective criteria among students (Hughes, 2007a).

National research conducted in 2005 showed that 49% of Australian youth between the ages of 13 and 18 claim to believe in God while 34% are uncertain regarding specific religious content and conceptions. Results of the above-mentioned research showed that older students are more uncertain in their faith than younger students. Interestingly, they also attested that the religious knowledge mediated to them by the school claimed to have a higher degree of certainty than what they themselves believed. Students feel that they themselves have to construct their knowledge, each in their own unique way. During this process, they take what they consider appropriate from various creeds, except for a small number of students who are connected with the Christian community. However, this affiliation is also the result of a personal decision. When this changes, they will find something else for themselves. On the basis of this research, Hughes (2007a) claims that Australian youth's relation towards religion and spirituality is under the strong influence of contemporary consumerist and individualistic culture. Youth are convinced that they have the right to their opinion and a responsibility for that opinion; this attitude significantly impacts their relation to religion. Most of the interviewed students consider that spiritual beliefs, practices and attitudes are the responsibility of the individual. Any decision related to religion is not something acquired once and forever but is a process in which new knowledge and information are verified and defined anew creating one's own belief. Youth in this study noted that the role of others (parents, family) was important in shaping their religiosity while they were younger. Only a small number pointed out the actual importance of the teachers, Christian community, clergymen and others, in general (Hughes, 2007a).

In human history, religion was always for the good of the community while religious institutions gave authentic religious interpretations and had power over people's beliefs. 'In the contemporary Western world, young people see religion as personal in which one believes what one personally wants to believe' (Hughes, 2007a, p. 145). Results similar to those pertaining to Australian youth were also obtained in the United States of America (Smith & Denton, 2005). The stance on electivity, which is quite widespread in Australia according to Hughes (2007a), considers faith significant in some, particularly crisis situations in life. However, if faith does not provide help momentarily, anyone can substitute it with some other spiritual practices or techniques. Doubt in the official Church teachings in Australia begins according to Hughes (2007a) early in elementary school, particularly concerning belief in miracles. When considering the teenage group of students, the need to align science and religion is apparent but they do not seek this alignment on the road to knowledge but rather along the road to experience. Consequently, Hughes (2007b) notes that it is very difficult to teach religious knowledge compared to any other field of knowledge because such efforts encounter students' resistance.

Although the ages of students of the above-mentioned research only partly overlap (the students' ages in Croatia were from 11 to 14, and those in Australia from 13 to 18), it is still possible to observe both common and different characteristics of the students' relation to religious knowledge. In both cases, it is apparent that the influence of others on the religiosity of students and their acceptance of religious knowledge mediated by the school was much greater among young children than

among adolescents, when heteronomy gradually becomes autonomy. Adolescent students, both in Croatia and Australia feel that they have to interpret and construct religious knowledge mediated to them autonomously and individually.

In Croatia, the influence of the familial environment on students' religiosity and their stance towards the teachings of the Church seems to be more pronounced than in Australia. Croatian society is traditionally Catholic. Croatia belongs to the group of European countries that have the highest proportion of the population identifying with a particular denomination (Črpić & Zrinščak, 2014). The growth of religious self-identification was already evident at the end of the of communist rule era in the 1980s, when 60–70% of the population interviewed in research polls declared themselves to be Catholic (Nikodem, 2011). After the fall of communism and democratic changes in 1990, this number grew to about 90% and slightly decreased again to 86.28% according to the 2011 census (Državni zavod za statistiku, 2013). The dominant form of religiosity in Croatia according to sociological research is the traditional form of religiosity, which is connected to religious institutions. According to the study 2010 'The Modernization and Identity of Croatian Society' 47.5% of the population declared themselves 'as religious in line with the teachings of the Church' (Nikodem, 2011, p. 25). This is certainly connected with the significance of the Roman Catholic Church in the historical formation of a collective national identity. The family and parish community played a decisive role in transmitting faith during the communist period and this influence has been maintained to the present. Nevertheless, after more than 40 years of systematic atheisation of the public social space, traces have been left concerning the perception of the Church and attitudes towards religion and creed, which is particularly apparent in the field of education. After a period during which the population returned to traditional religious affiliation and religiosity in the 1990s, other influences have become increasingly prominent today, both old Marxist ones as well new pluralist-democratic and liberal-individual ones (Filipović, 2012).

Requirements for Religious Education Teachers' Education

Empirical insights into the practices of teaching religious education and students' relations towards religious knowledge place the onus on academic institutions to determine and evaluate appropriate qualifications and training for teachers. The question is to what degree are religious education teachers capable and willing not only to take into consideration but to apply in a didactically fruitful manner different contexts and views of students on the content and objectives of religious education. How qualified are teachers to convey pluralist religious knowledge and introduce dialogue with other worldviews? To what extent do they succeed in linking actual situations and the requirements of educational institutions in the search for religious education models that are appropriate for specific contexts? Empirical research provides some answers to these questions.

I conducted empirical research in 2015 among religious education teachers of all religious communities that have religious education in schools in Croatia ($N = 471$).

Related to their treatment of differences encountered in class and teaching, some questions were related to different views in their religious community and wider society. Religious education teachers claimed that they do not feel uncomfortable talking about different views and stances. Their answers on a scale from 1—never or rarely to 4—always, were $M = 1.28$. Religious education teachers present different views to their students, but relatively often (on a scale from 1—never or rarely to 4—always $M = 2.68$) try to convince their students of the correctness of their religious community's view on these topics. Among all differences they encounter in classes, teachers accept the ideological differences least of all (Filipović, 2016).

Qualitative empirical findings from classroom observations and interviews conducted in Switzerland suggest that students in religious education largely learn in the manner the teachers teach them (Landert, Brägger, Frank, & Joedicke, 2012). Frank (2015) has identified four types of teaching in religious education in public schools based on class observations and interviews with teachers and students that were collected in Switzerland and Germany as part of various research projects over the past two decades. She describes the narrative type of communication of religious knowledge, the dogmatic type, and the lifeworld type of mediating religious knowledge as well as the cultural-informational type of mediating the knowledge about religion(s). From my own insights into the practice of teaching religious education, I can confirm the first three types of mediation of religious knowledge in Catholic religious education in Croatia: narrative, dogmatic and lifeworld type. This is based on observations spanning 12 years of students at the Catholic Theological Faculty, University of Zagreb who go to their teaching practice in schools. Teaching practice is an integral component of teacher training. It grants student teachers experience in the actual teaching and learning environment. Each approach has different starting points and takes student attitudes into account in their own way. The lifeworld type of religious education based on correlation didactics (Hilger, 2010), understood nowadays as a hermeneutic-communicative approach (Pollefeyt, 2011–2012) takes contextual differences and their influences on students in a most serious way.

The Congregation for Catholic Education (2009) in the above-mentioned 'Circular Letter to the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on Religious Education in Schools' citing Pope Benedict XVI points out the need to open up the area of rationality in religious education

> to the larger questions of the truth and the good, to link theology, philosophy and science between them in full respect for the methods proper to them and for their reciprocal autonomy, but also in the awareness of the intrinsic unity that holds them together. (par. 17)

If the religious interpretation of the world is to become understandable in a world in which students live, but no longer believe, or believe in a different way, or only selectively accepts certain aspects of religion, an effort at 'translation' is required. That effort discloses to students the approach to religious experiences and offers the possibility of a cognitive activity to have an impact on their own behaviour and creation of meaning. The job of 'translation' requires finding a way of conveying within a non-religious context the meaning and substance of religious discourse (Schluß, 2008).

An open, professional stance and competent relation to the different dimensions of knowledge in religious education teaching currently requires the permanent revision of teachers' education. Contact should also be with religious education teachers who belong to other Christian confessions and other religions but also with (future) teachers of different worldviews since knowledge becomes transformative and changes the views of others most frequently in contact with others (Ferguson and Roux, 2003). Religious learning requires a culture of encounter and mutual respect, it requires the development of a pedagogy of encounter that raises the question on how through encounter one is called into a deeper relationship with others and God (Gill, 2016).

References

Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2009). *Circular letter to the presidents of bishops' conferences on religious education in schools.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20090505_circ-insegn-relig_en.html.

Croatian Bureau of Statistics. (2018a). Basic schools: End of 2016/2017 school year and beginning of 2017/2018 school year. *First Release* (55) Nr. 8.1.2. 30 April.

Croatian Bureau of Statistics. (2018b). Upper secondary schools: End of 2016/2017 school year and beginning of 2017/2018 school year. *First Release* (55) Nr. 8.1.3. 30 April.

Črpić, G., & Zrinščak, S. (2014). Religija, društvo, politika: komparativna perspektiva. In J. Baloban, K. Nikodem, & S. Zrinščak (Eds.), *Vrednote u Hrvatskoj i Europi: Komparativna analiza* (pp. 13–41). Zagreb: KS and KBF.

Državni zavod za statistiku. (2013). *Statistička izvješća 1469: Popis stanovništva, kućanstava i stanova 2011: Stanovništvo prema državljanstvu, narodnosti, vjeri i materinskom jeziku.* Retrieved from http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2012/SI-1469.pdf.

Englert, R. (2007). Bildungsstandards für Religion: Was eigentlich wissen sollte, wer solche formulieren wollte. In C. P. Sajak (Ed.). *Bildungsstandards für den Religionsunterricht – und nun? Perspektiven für ein neues Instrument im Religionsunterricht* (pp. 9–28). Münster: Lit.

Ferguson, R., & Roux, C. (2003). Mediation in the context of teaching and learning about religions in tertiary education. *South African Journal of Education, 23*(4), 292–296.

Filipović, A. T. (2011). Der Religionsunterricht in öffentlichen Schulen in Europa: Modelle und Entwicklungen als Indikatoren für die gesellschaftliche Bedeutung des Glaubens und die Anfrage an Theologie und Kirche. *Christlich Pädagogische Blätter, 124*(4), 239–245.

Filipović, A. T. (2012). Vjeronauk i društveno povezivanje: Neka obilježja hrvatskoga društva i Crkve kao izvor pitanja i zadataka za izobrazbu vjeroučitelja. *Kateheza, 34*(2), 173–180.

Filipović, A. T. (2016). Odnos vjeroučiteljica i vjeroučitelja u Hrvatskoj prema razlikama u razredu i nastavi. *Crkva u svijetu, 51*(1), 7–34.

Filipović, A. T., & Lehner-Hartmann, A. (2016). Reflections on theories of (Catholic) education from the perspective of practical theology. In C. E. Wolfteich & A. Dillen (Eds.), *Catholic approaches in practical theology: International and interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 185–206). Leuven: Peeters Publishers.

Foucault, M. (1994). *Znanje i moć*. Zagreb: Globus.

Frank, K. (2015). Vermittlung und Rezeption von religiösem und säkularem Wissen im schulischen Religionsunterricht. *Zeitschrift für Religionskunde/Revue de didactique des sciences des religions, 1, 1,* 43–61.

Franken, L., & Loobuyck, P. (Eds.). (2011). *Religious education in a plural, secularised society. A paradigm shift*. Münster: Waxmann.

Garmaz, J. (2012). NOK i vjeronauk: Religiozna kompetencija u školskom vjeronauku. *Crkva u svijetu, 47*(4), 427–451.

Gill, S. (2016). Universities as spaces for engaging the other: A pedagogy of encounter for inter-cultural and interreligious education. *International Review of Education, 62*(4), 483–500.

Grimmitt, M. (1994). Religious education and the ideology of pluralism. *British Journal of Religious Education, 16*(3), 133–147.

Hilger, G. (2010). Korrelationen entdecken und deuten. In G. Hilger, S. Leimgruber, & H.-G. Ziebertz (Eds.), *Religionsdidaktik: Ein Leitfaden für Studium, Ausbildung und Beruf* (6th ed., pp. 344–354). München: Kösel.

Hughes, P. (2007a). Characteristics of religious knowledge among Australian students. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 12*(2), 137–147.

Hughes, P. (2007b). The future of religious education in the context of postmodernity. In M. de Souza, K. Engebretson, G. Durka, R. Jackson, & A. McGrady (Eds.), *International handbook of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education, part 1* (pp. 349–362). Heidelberg: Springer.

Jackson, R. (2009). Is diversity changing religious education? Religion, diversity and education in today's Europe. In G. Skeie (Ed.), *Religious diversity and education: Nordic perspectives* (pp. 11–28). Münster: Waxmann.

Jokić, B. (2013). *Science and religion in Croatian elementary education: Pupils' attitudes and perspectives*. Zagreb: Institute for Social Research in Zagreb.

Landert, C., Brägger, M., Frank, K., & Joedicke, A. (2012). *Neues Unterrichtsfach "Religion und Kultur": Bericht über die Evaluation der Einführungsphase*. Retrieved from: http://www.lfp.ch/files/140128_110331-1/Schlussbericht_Evaluation_Religion_und_Kultur_Teil_I_-_Bericht.pdf.

Lindner, K., Schambeck, M., Simojoki, H., & Naurath, E. (Eds.). (2017). *Zukunftsfähiger Religion-sunterricht: Konfessionell – kooperativ – kontextuell*. Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder.

Mannheim, K. (2007). *Ideologija i utopija*. Zagreb: Jesenki and Turk.

Nikodem, K. (2011). Religija i crkva: Pitanja institucionalne religioznosti u suvremenom hrvatskom društvu. *Socijalna ekologija, 20*(1), 5–30.

Pajer, F. (2009). Quale sapere religioso nella scuola pubblica? Dall'orizzonte europeo al caso Italia. *Ricerche di Pedagogia e Didattica, 4*(2), 1–14.

Pfeufer, M. (2011). *Kompetenzorientierung und religiöses Lernen.* Retrieved from https://www.rpz-bayern.de/dld/RPZ-Impulse-2011_Kompetenzorientierung.pdf.

Plan i program katoličkoga vjeronauka za četverogodišnje srednje škole. (2009). Retrieved from http://www.nku.hbk.hr/images/pdf_documents/plan_i_program_vjeronauka_SS.pdf.

Plan i program katoličkoga vjeronauka za trogodišnje srednje škole. (2014). Retrieved from http://www.nku.hbk.hr/images/pdf_documents/PROGRAM_TROGODISNJE_2014.pdf.

Pollefeyt, D. (2011–2012). *Reader: Course didactics (A0950) religious education.* Retrieved from https://www.kuleuven.be/thomas/uploads/image/prvftp/A0950Reader.pdf.

Popp, D. (2013). *Religion und Religionsunterricht in Europa: Eine quantitative Studie zur Sicht europäischer Religionslehrerinnen und –lehrer.* Münster: Lit.

Program katoličkoga vjeronauka u osnovnoj školi. (2003). Retrieved from http://www.nku.hbk.hr/images/pdf_documents/plan_i_program-OS_sluzbeni.pdf.

Radelj, P. M. (2016). *Polazišta za novi uputnik Katoličkoga vjeronauka*. Retrieved from http://www.vjeraidjela.com/polazista-za-novi-uputnik-katolickoga-vjeronauka/.

Rothgangel, M., Jackson, R., & Jäggle, M. (Eds.). (2014a). *Religious education at schools in Europe, Part 2: Western Europe*. Göttingen: Vandehoeck and Rupprecht.

Rothgangel, M., Jäggle, M., & Schlag, T. (Eds.). (2016). *Religious education at schools in Europe, part 1: Central Europe*. Göttingen: V&R unipress.

Rothgangel, M., Skeie, G., & Jäggle, M. (Eds.). (2014b). *Religious education at schools in Europe, part 3: Northern Europe*. Göttingen: Vandehoeck and Rupprecht.

Schambeck, M. (2011). Was bedeute „religiös kompetent" zu sein? *Katechetische Blätter, 136*(2), 132–140.

Schluß, H. (2008). Religiöse Kompetenz in der religionslosen Welt? Eine neue Zielbeschreibung des Religionsunterrichts vs. Bonhoeffers Analyse der mündig gewordenen Welt. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie*, *60*(2), 134–146.

Schreiner, P. (2007). Religious education in the European context. In E. Kuyk, R. Jensen, D. Lankshear, E. Löh Manna, & P. Schreiner (Eds.), *Religious education in Europe. Situation and current trends in school* (pp. 9–16). Oslo: IKO and ICCS.

Schreiner, P. (2012). *Religion im kontext einer Europäisierung von bildung: Eine Rekonstruktion europäischer Diskurse und Entwicklungen aus protestantischer Perspektive*. Münster: Waxmann.

Schreiner, P. (2015). Entwicklungen des Religionsunterrichts in Europa: Eine Übersicht. In E.-M. Kenngott, R. Englert, & T. Knauth (Eds.), *Konfessionell-interreligiös-religionskundlich: Unterrichtsmodelle in der Diskussion* (pp. 119–134). Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Schreiner, P. (2016). *Religionsunterricht, international*. Retrieved from https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/wirelex/das-wissenschaftlich-religionspaedagogische-lexikon/lexikon/sachwort/anzeigen/details/religionsunterricht-international/ch/8b7bb838b7c5a466b7928680d78e852f/.

Simojoki, H. (2012). *Globalisierte Religion: Ausgangspunkte, Maßstäbe und Perspektiven religiöser Bildung in der Weltgesellschaft*. Tübingen: Mohr and Siebeck.

Smith, C., & Denton, M. L. (2005). *Soul searching: The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Prof. Ana Thea Filipović is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Education and Catechetics at the Catholic Faculty of Theology at the University of Zagreb, Croatia. She holds a PhD in catechetics and youth ministry from the Salesian Pontifical University, Rome. Her research focuses on religious education in schools, religious education didactics, fundamental catechetics, youth ministry and pastoral care.

Chapter 32
Catholic Social Teaching, Catholic Education and Religious Education

Stephen J. McKinney

Introduction

Contemporary Catholic social teaching originates around the time of the publication of *Rerum Novarum* (Pope Leo XIII, 1891). It is important, however, to recognise that the Christian concern for social justice and care of the poor and marginalised is rooted in biblical and historical traditions (Birge, 2009; DeBerri, Hug, Henriot, & Schultheis, 2003). In the Old Testament this tradition can be discerned in the holiness code (Lev 17-26) and the commitment to the care of the stranger (Exodus 22:21; 23:9). In the New Testament, the tradition can be discerned in gospel demands for social justice, love of neighbour and correct use of material possessions (Lk 12:13-21; 12:33-34; 14:33).

Catholic social teaching aims to uphold social justice and address the causes and effects of social injustice. It is based on the fundamental principle of the dignity of all human beings because all people are creatures of God who are created in the image and likeness of God (Gn 1:27; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, par. 108). This fundamental principle is at the heart of the key themes of Catholic social teaching: life and dignity of the human person; call to family, community and participation; rights and responsibilities; option for the poor and vulnerable; the dignity of work and the rights of workers; solidarity and care for God's creation (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018). While the collation of these themes is very useful, Bergman (2011) cautions that we should beware of the reduction of Catholic social teaching to lists of principles or themes. The richness of Catholic social teaching needs to be understood in depth and cannot simply remain at the conceptual level. Tuohy (2005) understands Catholic social teaching as having two interconnected dimensions: the world of thought and the world of action. Catholic social teaching needs to be enacted and integrated into the lives of Catholic Chris-

S. J. McKinney (✉)
University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland, UK
e-mail: Stephen.mckinney@glasgow.ac.uk

tians. The world of thought and world of action come together in a living faith that has a commitment to justice and the transformation of the world (DeBerri et al., 2003).

Some recent academic writing stresses the need for a much greater focus on Catholic social teaching in Catholic schools and religious education and a deeper and more nuanced knowledge, understanding and application of this teaching in the UK and in North America. Valadez and Mirci (2015) have constructed a socially just model of Catholic schooling. Grace (2013) argues for the need to ensure that Catholic social teaching is permeated across the curriculum in Catholic schools. He draws on *Caritas in Veritate* and proposes that this is a good starting point for exploring previous papal encyclicals and the wider literature on Catholic social teaching. Byron (2015) states that issues such as poverty and world hunger should be subjects for ethical and theological engagement in Catholic schools. This chapter argues for a deeper knowledge and understanding of the essential links between Catholic social teaching and Catholic schools and Catholic religious education. The essential links are necessary if a Catholic school is to be a genuine 'Christian community whose educational goals are rooted in Christ and his Gospel' (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988, par. 67).

The method adopted initially focused on a brief examination of some of the wider literature on Catholic social teaching. The method also incorporated the study of the relationship between Catholic social teaching and Catholic schools and religious education in the Vatican documents on Catholic Education. This was accomplished by using the key themes of Catholic social teaching listed above to identify and analyse explicit references to this relationship in these documents. This produced a considerable amount of data and it was decided to limit the discussion to: life and dignity of the human person; call to family, community and participation; rights and responsibilities; option for the poor and vulnerable and solidarity. The findings of the analysis could have been presented thematically but it was decided to present the findings in the context of the original documents and in chronological order. This approach supports a clear understanding of the progressive intensification and deepening of the discussion of the importance of the themes of Catholic social teaching for Catholic schools and religious education. Two themes (or aspects of themes) that emerged in more recent documents were chosen to be discussed in more depth.

The first section examines two key documents and demonstrates that they emphasise the centrality of Catholic social teaching for Catholic schools and religious education and the necessary role of Catholic schools in the process of generating a greater awareness and knowledge and understanding of Catholic social teaching. The next sections provide an overview of some of the key themes of Catholic social teaching that are relevant to Catholic education and religious education that emerge from a close reading of some of the major Vatican documents on Catholic education. The final sections explore two highly pertinent themes drawn from this close reading: the common good and the education of women and the poverty of Jesus and the preferential option for the poor. The chapter provides some new insights into how these themes can be discussed and understood in Catholic schools and religious education.

Catholic Social Teaching and Catholic School Education

Catholic social teaching is described as the Church's best-kept secret and there have been strenuous efforts made to raise greater awareness of recent papal social encyclical letters and the other sources of the Teaching among the members of the Church (DeBerri et al., 2003). Two seminal statements/reports on Catholic social teaching stress the importance of Catholic social teaching for the Church, and the importance of this teaching for Catholic education. In 1996, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales issued a statement entitled The Common Good and the Catholic Church's social teaching. They stress the importance of the social dimension of the gospel and one of the striking points raised in the statement is that Catholic social teaching is not optional (para. 42). The document states that Catholic social teaching is vitally important and Catholic schools and other Catholic educational institutions

> …draw their Catholic character from their attention to Catholic doctrine (including Catholic social teaching), their regular collective worship, and the moral and spiritual content of the ethos that underlies their daily life. (par. 8)

The document explains that the richness of the sources of Catholic social teaching is not only contained in papal texts and other official documentation, but in a wider range of texts and in an oral tradition (par. 28). This is not intended to undermine the importance of social encyclicals but a reminder that Catholic social teaching has its roots in the scriptures and a wide range of sources within the Catholic Church.

In 1998, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published a summary report: Sharing Catholic social teaching: Challenges and Directions. They praise the good work being undertaken in the education of Catholic social teaching but comment that this is far from widespread and can be presented and taught in an inconsistent way. Similar to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, they also stress that the 'values of the Church's social teaching must not be treated as tangential or optional'. They call on those engaged in Catholic education, catechesis and social ministry to communicate the social teaching of the Church more fully. The United States Bishops propose that: 'If Catholic education and formation fail to communicate our social tradition, they are not fully Catholic'. The Bishops argue that this is a task for all those involved in Catholic education and catechesis not just for religion teachers. Nevertheless, Catholic schools and religious education are identified as being among the conduits that are very important for the sharing of Catholic social teaching.

These two documents provide concise and powerful statements about the significance of Catholic social teaching. They also identify the importance of ensuring that members of the Catholic community are aware of the content of Catholic social teaching and that it is essential to the educational endeavour of the Catholic school and religious education. Tuohy (2005) argues further that the Catholic school needs to reflect the two dimensions of Catholic social teaching, the world of thought and the world of action. It is important to highlight both the idea and practice of witness in the life of the Catholic school. The young people are in a position to learn about Catholic social teaching in religious education but must also learn how the study and

action can be integrated through the witness of the Catholic teachers and the activities of the Catholic school otherwise there may be a disjuncture in the learning and action process. Tuohy cites the example of young people from Catholic schools who are engaged in social outreach activities in local communities and who are unable to vocalise or witness to the connection of the activities with Catholic social teaching. The idea of witness presupposes the explicit understanding and articulation of the Christian basis and connection between both the study and the action.

The next section explores the key themes of Catholic social teaching that emerge from a close reading of some of the Vatican documents on Catholic Education. As has been stated above, the following themes will be highlighted: life and dignity of the human person; call to family, community and participation; rights and responsibilities; option for the poor and vulnerable and solidarity (Unites States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018). This will demonstrate that the commitment to these themes, rooted in the Catholic school witness to Christ and the gospel, is presented as an integral and necessary component of the rationale, operation and education in Catholic schools and in religious education.

Catholic Social Teaching in the Vatican Documents on Catholic Education

This section begins with Gravissimum Educationis (1965) and concludes with Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion. Instrumentum Laboris (2014). Gravissimum Educationis (1965) is a short document and while there are some references to the principle of subsidiarity these relate to civic responsibility to provide schooling (par. 3). The document does state that all Christians have a right to a Christian education and this will help them in the Christian formation of the world and to contribute to the common good (par. 2). The Catholic School (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977) makes reference to the contribution that the Catholic school should make to the creation of a more just society (par. 58). This would be consistent with its commitment to the Christian ideal. This contribution can be achieved by upholding the demands of justice and also by translating these demands into practice within the school community and within the daily life of the school. The Catholic School argues that Catholic schools can provide examples of true communities that aim to support the common good (par. 62). This living witness is in contrast to the increasing rise of individualism that can be observed in the contemporary world.

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982) argues that the Catholic educator must adhere to the Christian concept of the person that involves God-given dignity and the idea of the solidarity of all people and teach this Christian concept (par. 18, 30). The Catholic educator must develop a keen social awareness and profound understanding of civic and political responsibility in themselves and their students and prepare young people to work to

improve social structures and be positive agents of change (para. 19, 30). The teacher is called to be attentive to the different sociological dimensions of the environment of the school in terms of local, national and international significance (par. 35). The educator requires to be adequately formed in the social teachings of the Church, which are recognised to be an integral part of Christian life (para. 65). The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (1988) comments that the love that God has demonstrated is the love Christians are expected to emulate (par. 85). This love needs to be both understood and practiced and this applies to children and young people in the Catholic school (par. 86). The Church extends this love to all people regardless of religion, nationality or race to ensure that they may all come to know the Lord (par. 87). The Church exercises 'a preferential option for the less fortunate, the sick, the poor, the handicapped, the lonely', and the approach to Christian social ethics is one that must always be founded on faith (par. 88–89).

The optimistic vision of the Christian social ethic needs to be applied in the context of the many injustices in the contemporary world (par. 91–92). It is important that the Christian message is taught (and understood) as being rooted in scripture, especially the gospels (par. 74). The document also explicitly recommends that important Church documentation is read or studied by young people (where appropriate) in a number of footnotes (for example, 66, 76). It is important to note that in footnotes 94 and 95 it is stated that 'students should become aware of at least some of the Church's major social documents'. The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (1997) outlines many of the manifestations of social malaise including the increasing divide between the rich and the poor and the subsequent challenges facing Catholic schools throughout the world (par. 1). The document reiterates the importance of the dignity of the individual and the role of the Catholic school as an important community that serves society and presents its work as a work of love (par. 4, 9, 18).

There is a strong emphasis on Christian anthropology and the importance of the dignity of the person in Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools. Reflections and Guidelines (2002) (par. 5, 6, 31, 34, 35, 36, 60). There is also a strong emphasis on the role of consecrated persons providing a lived example of practicing solidarity and the option for the poor, promoting justice, peace, responsible participation and gender equality in education (par. 30, 46, 64, 69–79). The document stresses the role of the school as forming persons who can counteract the serious damage in the world caused by social injustices and the ravages of ecological plundering (par. 34). The school can promote positive relationships and can be a model for a society that is founded on peace and harmony (par. 43). The Catholic school is an important place for intercultural education and to demonstrate openness to other cultures and an understanding of other cultures (par. 66–67). This has become increasingly significant in the context of contemporary migration patterns (par. 65).

The issue of gender equality in education is mentioned in paragraph 79 and it is stated in paragraph 64

> In various parts of the world Catholic schools and numerous religious families are active in assuring that women are guaranteed access to education without any discrimination and that they can give their specific contribution to the good of the entire community.

There is a significant emphasis on the poverty of Jesus (para. 6–7 and 10) and the preferential option for the poor. The extended discussion on poverty and the preferential option for the poor (par. 69–77) advocates proposing the 'content of the social doctrine of the Church through educational projects' (par. 72). There is also a commitment to listening to the voice of the poor in the school and a reconfiguring of the educational activity to suit their needs. The defence of children's rights is also highlighted in this document (par. 74). School education involves promoting awareness of the cultural roots of the young people, their respect for other cultures and an education for peace (para. 78–79).

Educating Together in Catholic Schools (2007) states that the Catholic school can become a site for the discernment of what can be considered positive in the world, what is in need of transformation and what injustices are to be overcome (para. 46). The concise Circular Letter to the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on Religious Education in Schools (2009) comments on the importance of the formation and personal development of young people in religious education in schools, the fostering of the 'development of personal and social responsibility and the other civic virtues' and the contribution to the common good of society (par. 10).

Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools. Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love (2013) is focussed on intercultural dialogue and intercultural education that is grounded in the understanding and respect of the dignity of every person, the interconnectedness between people and cultures and solidarity and justice and peace (par. 12, 13, 21, 33, 34, 37, 38, 63, 73). The rise of globalisation and the impact of migration has amplified the interconnectedness of peoples (par. 4, 13). Religion is recognised as having an important role in the promotion of the individual, the common good and the support of the social community (par. 10). One of the most important roles of dialogue is that it 'must be cultivated for people to co-exist and build up a civilization of love' (par. 20). This will help realise the aim of education—the role in creating a more united and peaceful world (par. 20). The discussion on the different interpretations of pluralism is instructive as it demonstrates that the intercultural approach preserves the dignity of individuals and encourages genuine encounter between cultures, rather than the more limited relativistic and assimilationist approaches (par. 21–28). Catholic schools are called to truly base education around the human person, commit to the person as a person in communion and engender a new sense of the person who belongs to society (par. 46).

Catholic schools espouse a fundamental witness to the gospel and the love of God for all people (par. 61). This witness means an openness and love to others and for their culture: 'Catholic schools are, by their very vocation, intercultural' and have a significant responsibility for intercultural education (par. 50, 61). The dialogue that takes place in schools will allow pupils 'to share universal values, such as solidarity, tolerance and freedom' (par. 63). Catholic schools are encouraged to envision themselves beyond the restrictions of the knowledge-based society and promote a wisdom-based society (par. 66). This is an education that supports students to evaluate facts in the light of values and take on responsibility and exercising active citizenship. The schools must teach knowledge of different cultures and the school curriculum should enable the students to reflect on the major problems of the time,

such as the 'unequal distribution of resources, poverty, injustice and human rights denied' (par. 66).

The document adds that one of the roles of good teachers in Catholic schools is that they recognise that they have a connection with the local area and that they understand contemporary social problems (par. 83). Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion. Instrumentum Laboris (2014) reiterates that a characteristic of Catholic schools is that there is respect for individual dignity and uniqueness (par. II, 1.). The Catholic school should view those who are poorer, or more fragile or needy, as the most important students in the school (par. II, 5.). The education in a Catholic school must be imbued with an ethical dimension and dare young people to change both society and the world and to serve the community (par. III).

The short examination of some of the Vatican documents on education has demonstrated that, commencing with *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965), there has been an explicit focus on some of the key themes of Catholic social Teaching and the implications for Catholic schools and the education of young people in Catholic schools. The God-given dignity of each individual and the importance of respect for all persons are frequently highlighted in the documents. Great importance is attached to the Catholic school witnessing to the gospel and the love of God for all and upholding and applying principles such as justice and peace, solidarity, preferential option for the poor and contribution to the common good, setting an example to young people to emulate in their lives. This focus on the themes of Catholic social teaching has intensified and deepened since the publication of The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (1997). Some themes are highlighted and discussed in more depth in more recent documents, for example: the construction of a civilization of love; a commitment to intercultural education; preferential option for the poor and gender equality for women. This is partly due to the development of the concomitant thinking on these themes in Catholic social teaching and theology.

There are also references in the documents to the role of the Catholic teacher. The Catholic educator is called to be formed in the social teaching of the church and embody these values in his/her life and work. This has implications for the ways in which Catholic teachers are educated, formed and continue to be formed in future professional development. Eick and Ryan (2014) argue that there is a challenge for Catholic teacher education to 'help pre-service teachers to develop a critical social consciousness informed by Catholic social teaching' (p. 27).

In some of the documents there is an emphasis on the young people being educated in the social teaching of the Church following the example of their teachers and through study of relevant documents. This is an important focus for the curriculum in Catholic schools and especially for religious education. The focus on Catholic social teaching in religious education will help in the formation of the young people who are then able to identify the causes and effects of social injustices and be in a position to help counteract these injustices and assist in the Christian transformation of society.

This chapter will now explore two themes that have emerged from this examination: the common good and the education of women and the poverty of Jesus and the preferential option for the poor and the marginalised.

The Common Good and the Education of Women

The idea of the contribution of the Catholic school to the common good is one that is fundamental to the aim of Catholic schools. Catholic schools cannot be understood to be in isolation from the world but exist in the world and for the world. The common good is inclusive, it is for the good of all people and the whole person (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, par. 164–165). This necessarily involves all members of society and Catholic schools have recently been called to an openness to others and the cultivation of a civilization of love. It is instructive to return to the issue of the commitment to the education of women that is raised in Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools. Reflections and Guidelines (2002). The education of girls and young women is highly relevant in terms of the aspirations of human rights thinking in the contemporary world. Education is a well-attested human right that has been iterated in The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent human rights agendas. The most recent is the Sustainable Development Goals. This right to education has led to the target that all girls and boys without discrimination are able to complete free quality education at primary and secondary levels by 2030. Latest reports indicate that this is slowly being achieved at primary level but not at other levels. This is reflected in the gender imbalance in levels of literacy: there are around 796 million illiterate people in the world and, disproportionately, two-thirds are women, many of whom live in rural areas (Women Watch, 2012). Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools. Reflections and Guidelines (2002) explains that this commitment to the education of women contributes to the common good as women can then 'contribute to the good of the entire community' and by doing so are able to participate more fully in society. It is important to acknowledge and discuss in the religious education class the significant advances (and some of the continuing debates) in the Church's teaching on the issues of equality and the equal dignity of both women and men that originate and develop from the 1980s (Dorr, 2012). The promotion and realisation of equal opportunities in school education for boys and girls is a less well-known but crucial part of these advances.

The Poverty of Jesus and the Preferential Option for the Poor and Marginalised

Participation, as has been seen above, is strongly encouraged in the Catholic school and the principle of solidarity draws attention to the interconnectedness and inter-dependence between individuals and peoples and the concomitant understanding of mutual responsibility that requires social action (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, 192). The recognition of the inequalities and injustices in the world has led to the contemporary articulation of the preferential option for the poor. The preferential option for the poor can be broadened to all those who are marginalised and excluded such the disabled, the refugee and the asylum seeker. In this regard, it

is helpful to return to Jesus and consider how the life of Jesus can be used in religious education to illustrate this point.

As has been seen above there have been references to the poverty of Jesus in a number of recent major documents on Catholic Education and this is a useful teaching aid in discussing aspects of Catholic social teaching in religious education. The poverty of Jesus, as outlined in the stories of his birth and his lifestyle, can be used in discussions on poverty and the preferential option for the poor. I wish to highlight a feature of the poverty of Jesus that can be interpreted in a contemporary way: the story of Jesus as part of a refugee family that is contained in Matthew's gospel. This is a pressing issue as the global number of displaced persons has recently reached 65.6 million people, including twenty-two and a half million refugees (UNHCR, 2017). In the infancy narratives in Matthew's gospel the holy family flee to Egypt to escape the massacre of the innocents instigated by Herod (Mtt 2: 13-23). The historicity of the massacre and the flight into Egypt is questionable, though the historicity of this story is less important than the meaning and significance of this story. The use of different literary resources and devices is a feature of the biblical tradition (McBride, 1999). The flight to Egypt is linked to some key figures and events in the Old Testament. The story can be perceived to link the flight to Egypt with the story of the patriarch Joseph in Egypt and in Babylon during the Exile. Further, the story connects the birth of Jesus to the birth of Moses and the story of Moses subsequently being saved from the Pharaoh's edict to slaughter the first-born males of the Israelites. One contemporary interpretation explains that the story indicates that Jesus and his family are refugees (Houston, 2015). The family is forced to flee from their own land to escape persecution and danger. The story of Jesus as a refugee is designed to demonstrate that he has shared in the historical experience of the Jews as displaced people in Egypt at the time of Moses. Jesus has shared this experience of being displaced and can be understood to be in solidarity with the millions of people who are displaced throughout the contemporary world.

Concluding Comments

This chapter has argued for a deeper knowledge and understanding of the essential links between Catholic social teaching and Catholic schools and Catholic religious education. This argument has been initially supported by the use of documents by two Bishops' Conferences focussed on the importance of Catholic social teaching for Catholic schools and religious education and the role of Catholic education in teaching and disseminating Catholic social teaching. The argument was further supported by an examination of Vatican Documents on Catholic Education to discern the explicit relationship between Catholic social teaching and Catholic schools and religious education. A number of key themes were selected for discussion and two contemporary themes were explored in more depth.

Catholic social teaching is at the heart of the Church's realisation of its God-given responsibility to uphold social justice and address all forms of social injustice.

It is not optional or tangential or of lesser importance. It is a powerful witness to the contemporary world that the Church continues to make this commitment to the transformation of the world by its living faith. Catholic schools, which are a major part of the educational aims and initiatives of the Catholic Church, must constantly strive to fully integrate Catholic social teaching into the life and the witness of the school to the values of Jesus Christ and the gospel. This is a task for all members of the Catholic school community and, in particular, the teachers and young people. Catholic social teaching has a special place in the curriculum of the Catholic school, notably in religious education. The worlds of thought and of action highlight the necessary interaction between the study of Catholic social Teaching and enactment. This means that the study of Catholic social teaching and the social outreach activities must be better understood as being inextricably and explicitly linked to each other. The aim is to form young people from Catholic schools to prepare them to take up their rightful place in the world and transform the world though Christian love and social justice.

References

Bergman, R. (2011). *Catholic social learning. Educating the faith that does justice*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Birge SSJ, M. K. (2009). Biblical justice. In D. M. McCarthy (Ed.), *The heart of catholic social teaching* (pp. 19–30). Grand Rapids: Brazos Press.

Byron, W. J. (2015). What catholic schools can do about world hunger. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 7*(2), 201–209.

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. (1996). *The common good and the catholic church's social teaching.* Retrieved from http://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/THE-COMMON-GOOD-AND-THE-CATHOLIC-CHURCH_1996.pdf.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988). *The religious dimension of education in a catholic school*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/docu-ments/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2002). *Consecrated persons and their mission in schools. Reflections and guidelines.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20021028_consecrated-persons_en.html.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2007*). Educating together in catholic schools. A shared mission between consecrated persons and the lay faithful.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20070908_educare-insieme_en.html.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2009). *Circular letter to the presidents of bishops' conferences on religious education in schools.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20090505_circ-insegn-relig_en.html.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2013). *Educating to intercultural dialogue in catholic schools. Living in harmony for a civilization of love.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20131028_dialogo-interculturale_en.html.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014). *Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion. Instrumentum Laboris.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.html.

DeBerri, E. P., Hug, J. E., Henriot, P. J., & Schultheis, M. J. (2003). *Catholic social teaching. Our best kept secret.* New York: Orbis Books.

Dorr, D. (2012). *Option for the poor and for the earth.* New York: Orbis Books.

Eick, C. M., & Ryan, P. A. (2014). Principles of catholic social teaching, critical pedagogy, and the theory of intersectionality: An integrated framework to examine the roles of social status in the formation of catholic teachers. *Journal of Catholic Education, 18*(1), 26–61.

Grace, G. (2013). Catholic social teaching should permeate the Catholic secondary school curriculum: an agenda for reform. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 5*(1), 99–109.

Houston, F. S. (2015). *You shall love the stranger as yourself*. London: Routledge.

McBride, D. (1999). *The parables of Jesus*. Chawton: Redemptorist Publications.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. (2004). *Compendium of the social doctrine of the church.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html.

Pope Leo XIII. (1891). *Rerum Novarum. An encyclical on capital and labour.* Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977). *The catholic school.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1982). *Lay catholics in schools: Witnesses to faith.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html.

Second Vatican Council. (1965). *Gravissimum Educationis. Declaration on Christian education*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html.

Tuohy, S. J. D. (2005). Catholic social teaching in education. In *Catholic social teaching in action* (pp. 113–127). Dublin: The Columba Press.

UNHCR. (2017). *Global trends. Forced displacement in 2016.* Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34.pdf.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1998). *Sharing catholic social teaching: Challenges and directions.* Retrieved from http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/sharing-catholic-social-teaching-challenges-and-directions.cfm.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2018). *Seven themes of catholic social teaching.* Retrieved from http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching.cfm.

Valadez, J. R., & Mirci, P. S. (2015). Educating for social justice: Drawing from catholic social teaching. *Journal of Catholic Education, 19*(1), 155–177.

Women Watch. (2012). *Facts and figures.* Retrieved from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/ruralwomen/facts-figures.html.

Prof. Stephen J. McKinney is a professor in the School of Education, and a member of the St. Andrew's Foundation, University of Glasgow. He is the President of the Scottish Educational Research Association and a visiting professor of Catholic Education at Newman University, Birmingham. He is a member of the steering group for the Network for Researchers in Catholic Education. Professor McKinney's research interests include Catholic education, religious education, faith education, sectarianism and education, the impact of poverty on school education and the education of minorities. He has published articles and book chapters on Catholic religious education.

Chapter 33
The Anthropological Dimensions of the Preparation of Youth for Marriage and Family

Birutė Obelenienė

Introduction

Today, in the face of cultural challenges, dramatically decreased birth rate and the collapse of marriage and family institution, there is no doubt that preparation of youth for marriage and family (PYMF) is now, more than ever, necessary. The changes that have taken place in almost all modern societies demand that not only the family but also the school and Church be involved in this process. According to John Paul II (1981), this process includes three main stages: remote (mostly in the family), proximate (mostly at school) and immediate (immediately preceding the wedding). This chapter focuses on the proximate stage. In the Lithuanian system of Education, the PYMF is not a separate subject but is integrated mostly in moral education. In Lithuania, moral education is divided into the two subjects—Religion and Ethics. Students choose between ethics and religious education and almost half of the student population choose Catholic Religious Education (CRE) as an optional subject (Pranevičienė & Margevičiūtė, 2012). In CRE the concept of the family is based on the understanding that,

> the family, a natural society, exists prior to the State … is based on marriage, that intimate union of life in complementarity between a man and a woman … indissoluble bond of matrimony and is open to the transmission of life. (The Holy See, 1983, Preamble, B)

Every component of the family as so described is today becoming a real challenge during the proximate stage of preparation of Catholic young people for marriage and family in schools. The ideology of 'gender' is the main cause of this because it 'denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family' (Pope Francis, 2016, par. 56). This is the case not only in Lithuania. There are more and more countries where marriage as 'the union between a man and

---

B. Obelenienė (✉)

Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

e-mail: birute.obeleniene@vdu.lt

a woman' is questioned, with 26 countries in the world having legalised same-sex marriage (Pew Research Centre, 2017). In all countries in the World, including in Europe, the implementation of reproductive rights and comprehensive sex education contradict the concept of the family as 'open for the transmission of life'.

The PYMF, as an integral part of CRE in Lithuania, is based on Catholic sexual ethics. The problem is that comprehensive sex education, which is integrated into other school subjects (mostly in biology), strongly contradicts Catholic sexual ethics. It is very likely that this contradiction will become stronger in the future for several reasons, foremost among which, the global authorities such as UNICEF, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as powerful associations such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). These organisations create policy guidelines and fund initiatives worldwide to carry out their strategic priorities (De Irala, Osorio, Beltramo, Carlos, & López del Burgo, 2014). On 25 September 2015, the member states of the UN approved the 'Sustainable Development Goals'. These consist of 17 goals and 169 targets which nations have committed achieving by 2030. Target 7 of the third goal calls on nation states to: 'ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programs' (UN, 2015, par. 3.7). On 20 April 2013, the IPPF approved 'Vision 2020', in which 152 IPPF member states agreed 'to make comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) available to all by 2020' (IPPF, 2013, par. 8).

The Problem and the Research Question of the Chapter

The CSE and Catholic sexual ethics do not only differ on content or methods but they are two different worldviews. CSE is based on sexual and reproductive health (abortion is an integral part of it), gender, sexual rights and sexual citizenship, sexual pleasure, sexual diversity (IPPF, 2010). These contradict the understanding of the human person, human sexuality, human dignity and human life according to Catholic sexual ethics. According to Pope Francis, sexuality education 'can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving' (Pope Francis, 2016, par. 280).

> Pluralism is unavoidable in today's educational reality while the most important feature of dialogue is the preservation of self-identity, that is "to go out from oneself and consider the world from a different point of view is not a denial of oneself, but, on the contrary, is necessary for enhancing one's own identity". (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013, par. 38)

Pluralism may be difficult for teachers of CRE who need to find correct and corresponding answers to students' questions and issues regarding the teaching of the Church on human sexuality, love, marriage and family. It is for this reason that the aim of this chapter is to clarify the main anthropologic dimensions of the PYMF

that could serve as a guide for teachers of CRE in their own pedagogical practice of PYMF, as well as serving as an assessment tool that would help gauge how the different programmes of other school subjects are relevant to Catholic sexual ethics. The anthropological dimensions (AD) of the PYMF are constructed as a system of parameters, in which every dimension has criterions and corresponding indicators which show whether this dimension is or is not in the evaluated content. However, it is very important to note that RE can no longer be understood as the formation of a person or the passive acquisition and reproduction of knowledge. Today it is not enough to stress doctrinal and moral issues. According to Pope Francis, 'we have been called to form consciences, not to replace them' (2016, par. 37). Moving from traditional education to an integral education that is oriented to the student's life, the AD of PYMF can serve as a framework. This can happen if the interpretative creative active education takes root in the experience and attitudes of the student, thus moving from monologue to dialogue, from moralising to collaboration.

Understanding of the Human Person as a Unique Inseparable Unity of Body and Soul

The PYMF as an integral part of CRE is grounded on the Church's understanding of the human person as an inseparable unity of soul and body. This unity is 'so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the 'form' of the body' (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, par. 365). In the human person, the two different natures, materialistic (body) and spiritual (soul), are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature (CCC, 1993, par. 365). The body can never be reduced to mere matter: it is a spiritualized body (Pope John Paul II, 1994, par. 19). It is the material body that allows discourse about the human being as a person. The body connects the human being with this material world and other creations, but on the other hand, the human being differs from other animals on account of the body. This body comes to life and makes 'the alive human being' (Gn 2: 7) only when God fills it with his breath, which no other creation has received (Skinkaitis, 2016). The spiritual reality of the human person is revealed through his physical body, because 'only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine' (Pope John Paul II, 2006, p. 203).

> Yet it is neither the spirit alone nor the body alone that loves: it is man, the person, a unified creature composed of body and soul, who loves. Only when both dimensions are truly united, does man attain his full stature. (Pope Benedict XVI, 2005, par. 5)

According to the biblical narrative, 'God created mankind in his own image, … male and female he created them' (Gn, 1: 27). From the very beginning humankind is described as the relationship between two persons of different sex. It is precisely this sexual humankind that is proclaimed as God's image (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2004, par. 5). At the very centre of being human is relationality. The human person is the only creature that is called for love and the first sign indicating

this social dimension is the human body itself. It signals human interdependency and complementarity because the human race grows by means of the human body (Skinkaitis, 2016). Christian anthropology stresses that the person's integrity is based on relationship, and therefore human nature cannot be understood only as the unity of body and soul, but as a person having unity of bodily spiritual and moral basis (Skinkaitis, 2016). This is the main reason why sexuality cannot be considered only on a biological level. Human sexuality encompasses the whole reality of the human person. In this sense, Christian sexual ethics stresses the uninterrupted existential and psychological relationship between life transmitting, or procreating, dimension of human sexuality and the love transmitting dimension that binds persons (Obelenienė & Narbekovas, 2016). Through the body, the person expresses love, which is understood as a spiritual human experience of which the bodily and visible sign of love is a child.

Summarising the above, the first anthropological dimension of PYMF is that the human person can be described through the two criterions: the inseparable unity of spiritual soul and body (its corresponding indicators—sexuality is the whole person encompassing reality, not only at the psychical level; and the indispensability of two dimensions of sexuality: expressing of love and procreation); the human body is more than psychical reality (the body manifests the person and the body can never be seen as something extrinsic to the person or an object to be manipulated).

Understanding of Human Dignity

Human dignity is considered as a strong legal category, inseparable from the fact of human existence. It is from this concept that all natural human rights arise. However, paradoxically, the term human dignity, although being part of the content of many international laws and national constitutions, is perceived ambiguously (Juškevičius, 2007). In the most general sense, the concept of human dignity can be defined in accordance with two different positions (Obelenienė & Narbekovas, 2016). On the one hand, dignity is associated with the very existence of the human being. Dignity is 'a priori' characteristic of being human, because the 'dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God' (CCC, 1993, par. 1700). On the other hand, human dignity is understood to be given by others, and/or established by the human himself. According to this concept, the essence of dignity is not defined through its reason and properties that create it but though the value of the person.

For Catholics, the basis of the dignity of the human, created according to 'imago Dei', may be found in the goal of creation itself. The imago Dei is expressed in a threefold manner, namely (i) that only the human person is able to know and love his creator, (ii) that the human being is the sole creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake, and (iii) that only human beings are called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, par. 356). Furthermore, unlike any other creatures on Earth, only humans have the unique characteristic of being 'rational and therefore like God; he is created with free will

and is master over his acts' (CCC, 1993, par. 1730). Every human person is thus 'not just something, but someone' (CCC, 1993, par. 357). Under no circumstances can the human person become a means to another person. The human is the only moral being in creation because only those who are rational and free can be morally responsible. Freedom does not arise from the human himself; it is God's gift as the output of His relationship with the human being. At the same time, freedom is a responsible attitude towards the Good (Skinkaitis, 2016).

While in the Genesis narrative other creatures are created by the command of God that 'let's be' or 'produce' (Gn 1: 4–24), in creating the human race God says 'Let us make', (Gn 1: 26). This difference elevates humanity to a completely new level because the human being is connected with God in a special way (Obelenienė & Narbekovas, 2016). Therefore, the human cannot apply the same rules in relation to another person and with himself as with all the other creations. For this fundamental reason, human procreation must be fundamentally different as well.

Just as humans were personally created by the Creator, out of His love for humanity, and were wanted for their own sake, in the same way, the human must transmit his life to his children. Different from animals, humans must give life to their children only through a personal act that derives from love (Obelenienė & Narbekovas, 2016). Only in the human world do children and parents live in a special relationship, which begins even before children's birth and remains until the end of their lives. This means that human life has to be transmitted accordingly to human nature and in those conditions that are the most beneficial for a child to be born, grow up and develop. For Catholics this means that the origin of human life should have its authentic context in marriage and in the family where it is generated through an act which expresses the reciprocal love between a man and a woman. (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2008, par. 6). According Pope Francis,

> the child must be born of such love which is "the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of the parents", because "he or she is not something owed to one, but is a gift". (Pope Francis, 2016, par. 81)

This is the only appropriate way for human procreation and is the only way for the dignity both of spouses and of the conceived unborn.

The content of the PYMFL integrated into CRE has to clearly and unambiguously contain the notion that human life begins from the moment of conception. Indeed, the reality that human life begins from conception,

> does not allow us to posit either a change in nature or a gradation in moral value since it possesses full anthropological and ethical status. The human embryo has, therefore, from the very beginning, the dignity proper to a person. (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2008, par. 5)

Respect for human life is first and foremost the strengthening of responsibility. Therefore, when talking about the transmission of human life, the teacher of CRE must pay special attention to terms that are not compatible with human dignities, such as reproduction, or the expression of a negative attitude towards pregnancy, such as unwanted or unplanned pregnancy. No ambiguities regarding the beginning

of human life are acceptable. In some cases, the CRE teacher can be the only source from which students will learn that human life starts from conception. For example, the evaluation of textbooks of biology carried out in Lithuania shows that none of the textbooks use the term embryo and only one textbook clearly states that human life starts from the moment of conception (Obelenienė & Narbekovas, 2017).

Students must learn the correct facts about the conception of biological human life and that it logically follows that pregnancy is a direct consequence of sexual relations and not of misuse of contraception. It should also be argued that sexual relations are only justified in the context of marriage because teenagers are not mature for fatherhood or motherhood, that is, they are not capable either to commit or take responsibility for another person nor are they mature in a physical sense. It is for this reason that it is better to use the term marital act rather than sexual intercourse.

The teaching of the ending of life before birth, the avoidance of pregnancy and use of contraception is directly linked to the tradition of disrespect of women. In Humanae Vitae, Pope Paul VI has warned that,

> man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman, and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection. (1968, par. 17)

Today, we need to return to the message of the Encyclical Humanae Vitae, 'which highlights the need to respect the dignity of the person in morally assessing methods of regulating birth' (Pope Francis, 2016, par. 82).

Discussing sexuality in the context of unwanted pregnancy or unplanned pregnancy is talking about using another person, which does not agree at all with the Catholic concept of human dignity.

Summarising the above, the second anthropological dimension of PYMF 'the understanding of human dignity' can be described through the two criterions. First of all the dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God. This is understood through three indicators, namely that humans are rational, are free and have a dignity, and therefore they must not be subject to abuse. In so far as the person is rational he/she can get to know fertility and control sexual desire by themselves. On the other hand, because humans are free they have free will and can decide for themselves.

The second criterion is that human dignity and human life are inseparable. Indeed dignity and life begin at the moment of conception. This means that an authentic context of the origin of human life requires that parents give life to their child directly and through the conjugal act. Procreation should only happen within a family context consisting of one man and one woman on the basis of marriage. All this is an expression of a positive attitude towards pregnancy.

Understanding Man and Woman as Two, Equal in Dignity but Sexually Differentiated and Complementary to Each Other's Person

The human being was created as a dyadic unity and therefore sexuality is a unique way to reflect one's own nature of being an 'Imago Dei' (Skinkaitis, 2016). 'The human being exists only because, in respect of both the other human being and God, he is "in se a diada"' (Skinkaitis, 2016, p. 426). Sexuality characterises man and woman not only at the physical level but also on the psychological and spiritual levels, making its mark on each of their expressions. Such diversity, linked to the complementarity of the two persons of different sexes, allows a response to the design of God, according to the vocation to which each one is called (The Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995). However, different sexuality does not necessarily mean one person's superiority over another person. According to Pope John Paul II,

> it is important to stress the equality of a woman's dignity and a man's responsibility. This equality is inimitably implemented by self-gifting to one another and to one's children, which is common in marriage and family. … By creating 'male and female' humankind, God gave man and woman equal human dignity by gifting them with inalienable rights and responsibilities. (1994, par. 22)

In other words

> man and woman are equally created according to God's image. Both are persons gifted with mind and will, able to orientate their lives by implementing freedom. But both are doing it in their own way, specific to their sexual identity; in this way, the Christian tradition can speak about reciprocity and complementarity. These notions, which recently somehow became controversial, however, are useful in seeking to explain that man and woman cannot reach life's fullness without one another. (Skinkaitis, 2016, p. 141)

When talking about human sexuality to students, the CRE teacher's language should be enriched by terms such as persons of different sex, or man and woman, but never terms of depersonalised sex. It needs to be emphasised that 'biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated' (Pope Francis, 2016, par. 56).

Summing up, the third dimension understanding man and woman as two equal but sexually differentiated persons can be described with criterion sexual identity—-masculinity and femininity—as 'Imago Dei' and its indicators: the human being is created for relationships as a man and as a woman; man and woman are equal in dignity; man and woman are sexually different persons; man and woman are complementary to each other's person.

Understanding of Love

It is often believed that there is no need to develop the ability to love, and that love is given to a human being as a certain type of adventure of the heart (Wojtyla, 1994).

The word 'love', however, is commonly used and often misused, said Pope Francis (2016, par. 89).

Love is usually identified with feelings. While researching attitudes towards love among Catholic engaged couples in all Lithuanian dioceses, it was found that the majority of respondents also identified love with feelings and passion (Kulpys, 2009).

Love, however, should be seen as something which, in a sense, never 'is' but is always 'becoming'. What it becomes depends upon the contribution of both persons and the depth of their commitment and their ability to transfer their thoughts and feelings from sexual values of the other person to values of the person himself/herself. Experiences which have their roots in the sensuality or natural sensitivity of a woman or a man constitute only the material of love (Wojtyla, 1994).

Love should be created by spiritual, resolute, personal action by integrating four dimensions of human love, namely, the sensual impulse toward sexual pleasure, feelings and emotions (only at this level man and woman begin to experience the world together), the affirmation of the value of the person, and 'to cement and crown love's dynamic unfolding' (Anderson & Granados, 2009). In the case of disintegration, this results from a person's inability either to control himself or to have possession of himself, that is, the inability to love. According to Pope Benedict XVI,

> "love" is a single reality, but with different dimensions; at different times, one or other dimension may emerge more clearly. Yet when the <…> dimensions are totally cut off from one another, the result is a caricature or at least an impoverished form of love. (2005, par. 8)

True love can only be the creation of persons, that is, their unity in which they gift each other unconditionally. This does not mean to lose or to sacrifice something. Giving is the highest expression of ability, and of one's vitality. It is an experience of power and health (Fromas, 1999). Love is a reciprocal act of giving and receiving because, 'man cannot live by oblative, descending love alone. He cannot always give, he must also receive. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift' (Pope Benedict XVI, 2005, par. 7). But in order to give oneself it is necessary to be in possession of oneself, that is to control sexual desire, which is, according to Wojtyla, some kind of oppression on the other. The truly human and right attitude towards sexual desire must be based not on biological but on the principle of personalisation, which means that a person can never be used (Wojtyla, 1994). The content of the spouses' relationship undoubtedly supposes the content of a relationship with a child, who is the result of this nuptial relationship. If spouses accept each other as a gift, the child will be unconditionally accepted as a gift.

From the human being as the indivisible unity of body and soul, it follows that 'bodily love' is an integral part of love. The human body with its sexuality, masculinity and femininity is not only the source of fertility and procreation but has nuptial character, that is, the ability to express love. It is through love that a person becomes a gift and it is through this gift that the person gives meaning to his/her existence (Kulpys, 2009). When love is completed in body language, the sexual act becomes an unconditional self-gifting which includes: openness to life (which is possible to be realised only when the couple is practicing Natural Family Planning), respect for another person (a person can only be a goal), and stresses the control of feelings and

free participation of persons. Man and woman can only become a gift to one another if they are in possession of themselves, that is if they are masters of themselves and they control their sexual desire. As a condition for human existence and a means of love, sexual desire has a massive potential since it is good in itself, but it only becomes morally good when it is changed and personalised by a human person's inner, psychic and spiritual powers. Woman and man can provide each other with sexual pleasure, can both be the source of this purpose, but 'pleasure and sensual indulgence is not the good that unites people for long-term purpose' (Wojtyla, 1994). Sexuality is not a means for enjoying pleasure, 'it is an interpersonal language wherein the other is taken seriously, in his or her sacred and inviolable dignity' (Pope Francis, 2016, par. 151).

Therefore, love needs to mature. Teenagers are not able to take responsibility for another person, thus chastity is the main condition for a teenager while growing and maturing in love. Chastity is the spiritual power which frees love from selfishness and aggression (The Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995, par. 16). Among all virtues, chastity 'proves invaluable for the genuine growth of love between persons' (Pope Francis, 2016, par. 206).

Chastity is understood as a virtue, which expresses the integration of a person's sexual desire according to moral convictions about personal life. It supposes self-control, openness to life, as well as love, which is beyond the pressure of physical sexual desire. Therefore, chastity teaches self-control, which develops a person's freedom. This virtue enables the control of sensual triggers by willpower and power of desire. If the motivation for chastity is not sufficiently developed and there is no emphasis placed on the person's value, just a tendency for sexual value, which is overpowering for the will, the relationship with the person of the different sex is not formed properly (Wojtyla, 1994, p. 216). The idea of chastity for young people is needed not as a denial of their nature, but as training on how to control oneself, as an inspiring human example of what may be achieved by human will, as maturing them for their human vocation to love. Without chastity, love is not true love, because the wish to 'consume' is very active. For safeguarding the virtue of chastity, it is not only parents but also the teacher of CRE who also must follow the principles outlined at 'The truth and meaning of human sexuality Guidelines for Education within the Family' (1995, par. 121–127).

Summing up, the fourth dimension, 'the understanding of love', can be described by two criterions: the ability to love needs to be developed (sensitivity and sensuality are only material roots of love given to us by nature; a task that needs to be sought through the integration of 'love material' to the one totality of self-creation; all persons can and must learn to be masters of themselves; chastity is a prerequisite for the acquisition of the ability to love); love as unconditional self-giving (openness to life; respect for another person, the control of feelings and free participation of persons possessing themselves).

Conclusion

The principles of Catholic sexual ethics strongly contradict comprehensive sexual education that pretends to occupy the entire sexuality education arena. It is therefore very important that the teacher of CRE, in his/her pedagogical practice, is able to answer the main question about a human person, human sexuality, human dignity and life, family and marriage according to Church teachings. In some cases, especially in public schools, the teacher of CRE can be the only person introducing students to a Catholic perspective of sexual ethics.

This paper proposed that there should be four dimensions of PYMF, namely (i) understanding of the human person as a unique inseparable unity of body and soul; (ii) understanding human dignity; (iii) understanding man and woman as two equal but sexually differentiated and complementary to each other; (iv) understanding of love as unconditional self-giving could serve as a guide for teachers of CRE in their own pedagogical practice and in the process of PYMF. These together with an assessment tool would help evaluate how the different programmes of other subjects are relevant to Catholic sexual ethics. This is mainly because the anthropologic dimensions of the PYMF are constructed as a system of parameters in which every dimension has criterions and corresponding indicators, making it easy to evaluate the content of each programme and the dimensions covering the main areas of the Catholic sexual ethics, namely the human person, human sexuality and love, human dignity and human life, and procreation.

It is for this reason that the language of the CRE teacher must correspond to the anthropological dimension of PYMF.

References

Anderson, C., & Granados, J. (2009). *Called to love*. US: The Doubleday Publishing Group.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. (1993). Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2013). *Educating to intercultural dialogue in Catholic schools living in harmony for a civilization of love.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20131028_dialogo-interculturale_en.html#Anthropological_Foundations.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. (2004). *Letter to the bishops of the Catholic Church on the collaboration of men and women in the church and in the world*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040731_collaboration_en.html.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. (2008). *Instruction dignitas personae on certain bioethical questions.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20081208_dignitas-personae_en.html.

De Irala, J., Osorio, A., Beltramo, C., Carlos, S., & López del Burgo, C. (2014). *The politics of 'Comprehensive Sexuality Education'*. Briefing Paper, 2014. Retrieved from https://c-fam.org/wp-content/uploads/12The-Politics-of-"Comprehensive-Sexuality-Education"-revised-date.pdf.

Fromas, E. (1999). *Menas mylėti*. Vilnius: Asveja.

IPPF. (2010). *IPPF framework for comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)*. Retrieved from https://www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/ippf_framework_for_comprehensive_sexuality_education.pdf.

IPPF. (2013). *Vision 2020*. Retrieved from https://www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/v2020_manifesto_en_web.pdf.

Juškevičius, J. (2007). Kai kurie teisės į gyvybę prenataliniu laikotarpiu probleminiai aspektai. *Sveikatos mokslai, 17*(2), 764–774.

Kulpys, Ž. (2009). Krikščioniškoji kūno teologija: vedybinė kūno prasmė. *Daktaro disertacija*. Kaunas: VDU.

Obelenienė, B., & Narbekovas, A. (2016). Human dignity as a universal moral dimension of the preparation of youth for marriage and family life. In J. Stala & J. Garmaz (Eds.), *Strengthening families*. Kraków: Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow Press.

Obelenienė, B., & Narbekovas, A. (2017). Evaluation of content about human sexuality and Procreation in school textbooks in Lithuania. In *The European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, *20*, pp. 197–205. Retrieved from http://www.futureacademy.org.uk/files/images/upload/20iccsbs2017.pdf.

Pew Research Center. (2017*. Gay marriage around the world.* Retrieved from http://www.pewforum.org/2017/08/08/gay-marriage-around-the-world-2013/.

Pope Benedict XVI. (2005). *Encyclical letter Deus Caritas est*. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html.

Pope Francis. (2016). *Post-synodal apostolic exhortation amoris lætitia.* Retrieved from https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf.

Pope John Paul II. (1981). *Apostolic exhortation familiaris consortio.* Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.pdf.

Pope John Paul II. (1994). *Letter to families gratissimam sane.* Retrieved from https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_02021994_families.html.

Pope John Paul II. (2006). *Man and woman he created them. A theology of the body*. Boston: Pauline Books and Media.

Pope Paul VI. (1968). *Encyclical letter Humanae vitae.* Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html.

Pranevičienė, B., & Margevičiūtė, A. (2012). The right to religious education in Lithuania. *Jurisprudence, 19*(2), 443–458.

Skinkaitis, R. (2016). *Žmogaus, sukurto pagal dievo paveikslą ir panašumą, teologinė perspektyva (Monografija)*. Kaunas: VDU.

The Holy See. (1983). *Charter of the rights of the family presented by the Holy See to all persons, institutions, and authorities concerned with the mission of the family in today's world*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_19831022_family-rights_en.html.

The Pontifical Council for the family. (1995). *The truth and meaning of human sexuality: Guidelines for education within the family*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_08121995_human-sexuality_en.html.

UN. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. Retrieved from: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld/publication.

Wojtyla, K. (1994). *Meilė ir atsakomybė*. Vilnius: Alka.

Prof. Birutė Obelenienė is professor of the Department of Theology in the Faculty of Catholic Theology at Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania. Her research interests include youth preparation for family life, family research, sexual and conjugal ethics.

Chapter 34
Stewards of Creation: Laudato Si', Ecological Conversion and Religious Education

Sandra Carroll and John Francis Collins

Introduction

This chapter begins with a critical review of the module Stewards of Creation from a 2014 draft Religious Education Curriculum (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014) for the Archdiocese of Sydney. The publication of the papal encyclical *Laudato Si'* (Pope Francis, 2015) has moved environmental and ecological awareness from the periphery to the centre of Catholic thought and practice and this is reflected in the religious education curriculum. With a focus on Chap. 6 of *Laudato Si',* Ecological Education and Spirituality, this chapter examines the relevance of care for our common home. It draws on the notion of the scale of values proposed by theologian Bernard Lonergan to understand the term ecological conversion. Implications for religious education are discussed with specific reference to the Year 7 Module Stewards of Creation from the God, Religion and Life Strand of the draft Religious Education Curriculum (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014) from Sydney Catholic schools.

In his encyclical letter on ecology and climate, Pope Francis derives the title *Laudato Si'* from the canticle of Francis of Assisi. This Christian holy man is also an honoured figured with both ecumenical and interfaith significance, as indeed are the concerns of this papal letter. 'Outside the Catholic Church, other Churches and Christian communities—and other religions as well—have expressed deep concern and offered valuable reflections on issues which all of us find disturbing' (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 7). This chapter examines Laudato Si' with a focus on Chap. 6 'Ecological Education and Spirituality'. It draws on the notion of the scale of values proposed by theologian Bernard Lonergan to investigate the term ecological conversion (par. 216), a central concern of this encyclical. Implications for religious education are dis-

S. Carroll (✉)
Australian Catholic University, Sydney, Australia
e-mail: sandra.carroll@acu.edu.au

J. F. Collins
Catholic Institute of Sydney, Strathfield, Australia

cussed with specific reference to the Year 7 Religious Education Curriculum (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014) and in particular the draft Module 'Stewards of Creation' from the God, Religion and Life Strand of the draft Religious Education Curriculum from Sydney Catholic Schools Office, trialled by Catholic schools in the Archdiocese in 2015–17.

Since 2012, Sydney Catholic schools (SCS) have been undertaking a revision of the religious education curriculum being used for secondary students. This draft curriculum has been trialled in the Archdiocese of Sydney and in the New South Wales dioceses of Armidale, Bathurst, Lismore, Wilcannia-Forbes and Wollongong. It is intended that this will become the authorised RE Curriculum in 2019. The Religious Education Curriculum (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014) for students in years 7–12 (stages 4, 5 and 6) extends and compliments the Primary RE Curriculum which covers stages 1, 2 and 3. Together they provide a comprehensive development program. Students in Sydney Catholic schools are taught from a systematic coherent and coordinated religious education curriculum from kindergarten to Year 12. The secondary program acknowledges the increasing secularisation of Australian society, where the very existence of God is actively challenged. The Religious Education Curriculum is invitational with mandated strands which encompass Scripture, personal and communal prayer and Catholic social and moral teaching.

In 2014, I was asked to be an academic consultant for the review of the Year 7 RE Curriculum module—Stewards of Creation from the Archdiocese of Sydney. This predated the publication of *Laudato Si'*. My critique at the time was a concern with the nature and scope of the range of environmental and ecological issues identified. It was noted that there was little specific religious education for this focus. It seemed that the suggested learning experiences linked to this statement could fit into a science class. The module would be strengthened by drawing more explicitly on a theologically grounded Catholic understanding of creation, the environment and ecological issues. The publication of *Laudato Si'* (Pope Francis, 2015) provided a rich resource that necessitated a rewrite of the original working draft of the Year 7 module Stewards of Creation by the project committee at the Sydney Catholic Schools Office. In the light of *Laudato Si'*, this chapter first provides an overview of the encyclical, it then outlines the Scale of Values identified by Bernard Lonergan (1972) to provide a relevant theological framework for both essential teacher background and the development of relevant teaching-learning strategies for students. Significantly *Laudato Si'* has the potential to offer fresh insights and perspectives beyond the specific module to inform all the key organising strands of the Sydney RE Curriculum, namely A7 Sacred Scripture, B7 What it means to be Catholic, C7 Stewards of Creation, D7 Ways of Praying and E7 Affirming Human Dignity (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014).

The six chapters of *Laudato Si'* (Pope Francis, 2015) each addresses a specific theme or topic area. The encyclical begins with an introduction which builds upon over 50 years of papal thought beginning with St. John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963). This work was addressed to the entire Catholic world and indeed to all men and women of good will (Pope Francis, 2015). In 1963, the world was on the brink of nuclear war with the Cuban missile crisis and the fear of catastrophic

destruction. Pope Francis draws on the memory of imminent war to emphasise the urgency of facing 'global environmental deterioration' (2015, par. 3).

In Chap. 1 'What is happening to our common home', Pope Francis creates a new word, 'rapidification' (2015, par. 18) to express the contrast between the speed of human activity compared to the slow rate of evolution. Echoing a postmodern critique 'of irrational confidence in progress and human abilities', (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 60) Francis questions the myth of progress and notes an emerging critical approach 'towards pollution, waste and the throwaway culture' (2015, par. 20). Drawing on the long tradition of the common good in Catholic Social Teaching which began in 1891 with *Rerum Novarum*, the pope identifies the climate as a common good, belonging to all and meant for all (Pope Francis, 2015). The encyclical links the human environment to the natural environment noting that 'we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation' (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 48). This chapter directly relates to the Knowledge Outcome of C7 Stewards of Creation; 'A student understands that human beings participate in, contribute to and are responsible for God's creation' (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014).

In Chap. 2 'The gospel of Creation' Francis invites dialogue with all who are seeking liberation (2015, par. 64). He reaches out to members of the scientific community, noting the distinctive approaches to understanding reality from both science and religion (2015, par. 62). Drawing on Biblical wisdom the encyclical affirms that 'human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself' (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 66). Specific scripture passages are identified and discussed in *Laudato Si'* including the creation accounts in Genesis as well as an example from the Psalms and prophets. These texts can provide relevant teacher background for the Learning Focus and Statements of Learning for C7, 'Students recognise and value the sacredness of creation by reflecting upon Scripture passages which reveal God's creative activity'.

In Chap. 3 'The Human roots of the Ecological Crisis' Pope Francis observes that 'humanity is at a crossroads' (2015, par. 104) noting that science and technology are products of a God-given human creativity. Techno—science however, has provided the mechanism for a small part of humanity to have dominance over the whole of humanity (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 104). The pope challenges the belief that every increase in power means a concomitant increase in progress. He laments the lack of a culture informed by a 'spirituality genuinely capable of setting limits and teaching clear-minded self-restraint' (2015, par. 105). Pope Francis calls for a recovery of depth in life, of wonder about the purpose and meaning of everything (2015, par. 113). There is an acknowledgement that an inadequate presentation of Christian anthropology has given rise to a wrong understanding of the relationship between human beings and the world. Dominion over the universe, says Francis should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship (2015, par. 116). This chapter directly relates to the Learning Focus and Statements of Learning for C7 which asks students to assess the impact of human activity on creation by 'exploring the concept of dominion' (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014).

Chapter 4 'Integral Ecology' takes up traditional themes from the history of Catholic Social Teaching and anchors them in the current reality of a global ecological crisis. Pope Francis makes specific connections between three ecological realms; environmental, economic and social proposing the need to bring together different fields of knowledge 'in the service of a more integral and integrating vision' (2015, par. 141). This chapter provides a specific resource for background for teachers linked to the Learning Focus and Statements of Learning for C7, which requires students to assess the impact of human activity on creation by examining the work of Catholic organisations, which promote environmental stewardship and ecological responsibility (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014).

Chapter 5 'Lines of Approach and Action' outlines the major paths of dialogue between those with power and authority at the international, national and local level and the social teaching of the Church. The encyclical recognises the complex and integrated connection between economic development, disarmament, food security, migration and the environment. It echoes the words of the 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, when St. John XXII addressed a different type of international crisis (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 175). This chapter provides assistance to both teachers and students in regard to the Learning Focus and Statements of Learning for C7, 'students develop an appreciation of humanities responsibility for creation by examining Church teaching on the environment' (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014).

Chapter 6 of *Laudato Si'* titled 'Ecological Education and Spirituality' is particularly relevant for religious education. The chapter begins with the recognition that change is needed, a change in awareness that allows for the development of new convictions, attitudes and ways of living. As human persons who live on our vulnerable home planet earth, we need to alter our lifestyles to address environmental problems. This is a task especially relevant for Religious Educators, to address this 'great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge' (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 202).

The first section of Chap. 6 'Towards a new lifestyle' draws on the writing of Romano Guardini and names a 'techno-economic paradigm' which engenders a culture of compulsive consumerism. This can result in a pattern of living where people are caught in a relentless cycle of buying and spending. Francis uses the term 'whirlwind' (2015, par. 203) to describe this needless activity.

> This paradigm leads people to believe that they are free as long as they have the supposed freedom to consume. But those really free are the minority who wield economic and financial power …The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. It becomes almost impossible to accept the limits imposed by reality. In this horizon, a genuine sense of the common good also disappears. (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 203)

The cautionary note is that when people become too self-centred and self-enclosed, greed flourishes. The coupling of selfishness and greed is reminiscent of the gospel wisdom 'where your treasure is, there also will be your heart' (Mt 6: 19–21). There is rich material here for discussion in a religious education classroom.

Pope Francis alludes to an unbridled compulsive consumerist lifestyle which priorities personal needs over respect for social norms. Violence and mutual destruction can erupt when few people are able to afford such lives. The document however,

sounds a positive note, advocating the possibility of an honest re-evaluation, calling for the choice for what is good, a new start, and new paths to authentic freedom. Maintaining a positive note on environmental issues in the context of religious education is significant as the students are exposed to an almost constant stream of news related to global environmental degradation and the impact of climate change on local weather systems.

There is an invitation to overcome individualism and develop a different lifestyle in order to bring about social change 'Disinterested concern for others and the rejection of every form of self-centredness and self–absorption are essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment' (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 203). The need to assess the impact on the world around us of our actions and personal decisions is seen as a moral imperative and relates specifically to the Learning Focus and Statements of Learning for C7, which challenges students to develop an appreciation of humanities responsibility for creation by considering their own role as stewards of creation (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014).

Section 2 of Chap. 6 is titled 'Educating for the covenant between humanity and the environment' (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 209–227). While acknowledging that many young people have been raised in a milieu of affluence and extreme consumerism, the encyclical refers to their generous spirit and new ecological sensitivity. Inclusion of the transcendent, says Francis, provides a deeper meaning to ecological ethics. There is recognition that new habits must be developed to address the seriousness of the contemporary ecological crisis. Effective pedagogy is said to help people 'grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care' (2015, par. 210). This section of the document is especially pertinent to Religious Educators.

Grace (2013) comments on the importance of the formative role of Catholic schools:

> As educational discourse in contemporary society becomes increasingly dominated by the language of 'training', a Catholic educational discourse which emphasises 'formation of the person' is not only counter-cultural, but more human. It insists that the ultimate goal of the educational process is the formation of good persons equipped with knowledge and skills to serve the common good motivated by faith and a Catholic social conscience. (p. 114)

Beyond the provision of information, motivation and personal transformation are needed. The cultivation of virtues will assist people to make 'a selfless ecological commitment' (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 211). Little daily actions then can become habits which help protect the environment. Such actions affect our self-esteem, writes Pope Francis, as they help us to live life more fully as well as benefit society. This point is particularly salient for students regarding the Life Skills C7, 'students identify practical ways in which they can be stewards of creation' (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014).

> Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastics and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of practices. (2015, par. 211)

We are reminded that ecological education occurs in varied settings, such as schools, families and by the media. Families are singled out for their contribution as foundational in the growth to personal maturity. The culture of our 'shared life and respect for our surroundings' (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 213), are learnt from family exchanges. Political institutions, different social groups and the Church, indeed all Christian communities are said to have a role in awareness raising. Identifying that certain mindsets influence our behaviour, the encyclical asks for resistance to the onward advance of the consumerist paradigm by promoting a 'new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature' (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 215).

Pope Francis sees the rich heritage of Christian spirituality as a source of both motivation and inspiration for the work of protecting God's creation–our world. The life of the spirit, Francis reminds us, is not dissociated from the body or the realities of this world. On this point Ormerod (2010) writes:

> Far from being an end enclosed upon itself Christian conversion elicits and demands a subsequent moral conversion. And so from the earliest time the Church has not simply concerned itself with matters which could be identified as religious, for example, matters of obedience to the Father, faith in the person of Jesus and sharing in the power of the Spirit. In the teaching of Jesus and the letters of Paul we find repeated instances of moral teaching, that is, questions of our relationships with one another, of behaviour and actions which promote the human good or perpetuate evil. (p. 434)

Stating that gospel teachings have 'direct consequences for our way of thinking, feeling and living' (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 216) Francis states what is needed is 'ecological conversion', a change of heart, so the effects of an encounter with Christ, is seen in the Christian's relationship with the natural world. 'Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience' (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 217) Pope Francis names the ecological crisis as a call to 'interior conversion' (2015, par. 218).

What Is Ecological Conversion?

In Method in Theology, Bernard Lonergan names three different aspects of conversion as intellectual, moral and religious (1972, p. 31). Ormerod and Vanin (2016) point out that moral conversion makes a significant contribution to understanding ecological conversion. In Lonergan's view, moral conversion involves a shift from decisions based on satisfactions to decisions based on values. Ecological conversion addresses the implications of human decisions, and these decisions are informed either by values, or mere satisfactions, which are potentially damaging to human flourishing.

What Is Moral Conversion?

Moral conversion entails a commitment to the genuine good, a shift in the criteria for making our decisions. Our affectivity responds to both satisfactions and values, but in different ways. Interior discernment assists us in learning to distinguish between satisfactions and values. Affective responses raise questions about the truly good course of action, prompting us to engage in reasoning, deliberation, and responsible decision. *Laudato Si'* confidently asserts, 'No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God–given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts' (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 205). We all make decisions in our lives. Our fundamental orientation to goodness drives us to ask: Is this truly good? To ask whether our decisions are truly good is to recognise a distinction between the truly good, or genuine values, and the apparently good, or the merely satisfying.

At times there can be a conflict between satisfactions and values. Values can be viewed as a dynamic set of relationships between feelings and judgements, so what is judged as subjectively agreeable or disagreeable may, or may not be a true good. What is subjectively agreeable may align with a true good. Our judgment that something is pleasant or unpleasant can be ambiguous. Lonergan (1972) explains that 'it also happens that what is a true good may be disagreeable' (p. 31). Some things that feel good are not necessarily right. By way of example, occasionally we all need to do things we would rather avoid, whether that be sorting trash into landfill and recycle bins or in the world of teaching and learning working our way through a stack of papers that need to be marked.

Scale of Values

What does it mean to choose values over satisfactions? This is a key question that underpins discussion drawing on *Laudato Si'* in religious education classrooms. The Scale of Values proposed by Lonergan (1972) provides a framework that can scaffold a variety of teaching-learning approaches. He proposes a scale of values with vital, social, cultural, personal and religious values in an ascending order. Values concern both the value of persons as persons and the 'qualitative value of beauty, understanding, truth, virtuous acts, noble deeds' (Lonergan, 1972, p. 31). For Lonergan feelings are intimately connected to values. Vital values refer to things 'such as health and strength, grace and vigour, [and] normally [they] are preferred to avoiding the work, privations, pains involved in acquiring, maintaining, restoring them' (Lonergan, 1972, p. 31).

Social values, such as the good of order, create the environment in which the vital values of the whole community might be met and it is for this reason that social values are, 'to be preferred to the vital values of individual members of the community' (Lonergan, 1972, p. 31). Beyond mere living, Lonergan asserts that we

need to find meaning and value in our lives. It is the function of culture to discover, express, validate, criticise, correct, develop and improve community meaning and values (Lonergan, 1972, p. 32). Thus cultural values rank higher than social values.

As originators of values persons, 'can be principles of benevolence and beneficence, capable of genuine collaboration and of true love' (Lonergan, 1972, p. 35). 'Personal value is the person … as loving and being loved, as originator of values in himself and in his milieu, as an inspiration and invitation to others to do likewise' (Lonergan, 1972, p. 32). People can act as originators of values when they take a stand against a dominant majority or reach out in compassion to someone on the periphery of one's community. Generous donations to charities following natural disasters or volunteers binding together to fight a forest fire or clean up after a flood or earthquake are indeed instances of genuine collaboration and love. Lonergan distinguishes actions such as responses to catastrophic events from an attitude or orientation in which a person acts regularly, easily and spontaneously in such a manner. According to Lonergan, (1972) 'It is, finally, only by reaching the sustained self-transcendence of the virtuous man (sic) that one becomes a good judge, not on this or that human act, but on the whole range of human goodness' (p. 35). To act in a manner consistent with such selfless values the virtuous person needs to be sustained by religious values. For Lonergan (1972) religious values form the ground of the meaning and significance of the person's life and world and provide an orientation with regard to a person's ultimate horizon. Religious values assist individuals to overcome bias and a tendency or inclination to moral impotence. As such religious values rank highest in the ascending scale of values. The upward movement of Values from Vital through Social, Cultural, Personal and Religious provides a heuristic framework for curriculum design to significantly expand the 'Value' component of the Sydney RE curriculum which currently principally is concerned with aesthetic values of appreciating the beauty of God's creation.

The task for the teacher of Year 7 students in addressing the outcomes of the Stewards of Creation strand of the curriculum is to design teaching-learning strategies that will increase the probability of conversion occurring in the value domain of students, in an ascending order at the vital, social, cultural, personal and religious levels. Catholic Schools in Australia recognise the need for both and ecclesial and educational expectations of classroom RE in meeting the needs of students. In terms of educational expectations for religious education, an outcomes-based curriculum is normative. The design and delivery of outcomes-based curriculum require teachers to focus on student outputs. The teacher's focus is on what students learn and how they will learn it. Students in Year 7 in schools in NSW are around 12–13 years old and according to Piaget (Duska & Whelan, 1977) cognitively they are on the cusp of moving from the Concrete Operational Stage to Formal Operational Stage. Following Kohlberg's scheme of moral development (Duska & Whelan, 1977) the students are in the process of moving from Conventional Morality focused on gaining approval and doing one's duty to Post-conventional Morality where there is the beginning of a recognition of other views and opinions and an emerging awareness that agreement is needed between people for society to run smoothly.

Conversion or transformation is different to development as normally understood by the developmental theorists in that 'conversion is a radical shift in one's fundamental orientation' (Ormerod & Vanin, 2016, p. 330).

What follows are some illustrative examples of the use of the Scale of Values related to the draft module C7 Stewards of Creation from Sydney Catholic Schools (2014). A teaching-learning activity designed to promote conversion at the vital level could be a discussion on the quality of the drinking water available through the household tap. Three sources of drinking water are introduced:

1. A glass of water taken straight from the household tap
2. Bottled water and
3. A portable water filter demonstrating the process through which tap water drips through the filters to produce water more fit for drinking.

Depending on location, all three sources may be fit for drinking. The point of discussion is the vital importance of water fit to drink for human life to be sustained.

At the social level, the students are asked to consider the difference between their access to drinking water, here and now, and the need for everyone in their community to have ready access to good clean drinking water each day when they need it. The movement here is from the horizon of the individual at the present moment to the larger social horizon with the inclusion of a timeframe.

At the cultural level, the discussion moves to whether or not the students think it is a shared or communal responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to clean water all of the time or whether they think it is up to each individual to ensure that he or she has water fit to drink. The horizon has moved from a concern that a student has regular access to clean water to thinking about what kind of society he or she wants to be a part of and/or create. In short, the cultural question is, 'are we responsible for each other or is it every person for themselves when it comes to the issue of clean water'?

Moving up the scale of values to the personal level, the subject matter could be changed considering the developmental stage of the students. For Year 7 students to address the concerns of Stewards of Creation on the personal level, the teacher could show a video clip of air pollution in New Delhi or Beijing to illustrate the relationship between the burning of fossil fuels and the Vital Value of clean air. Clearly, access to clean air is not an individual or communal issue. Air pollution is a consequence of a Social Value with society, dependent on the burning of fossil fuel, sustained by a Cultural Value in which material progress and consumer goods are the norms to be striven for. The question for students in this instance is 'what can I do in a sustained way to make a difference?' Responses may range from turning off unnecessary lights, talking to parents about setting the air conditioner at home at a higher temperature to cool and lower temperature to heat, to discussions about putting solar panels on the roof of the school. White (2005) notes the significance of providing 'strategies that allow the students to initially personalise religious concepts and subsequently relate the issues to a more global, integrated context' (p. 7).

The size and complexity of the reversing ecological deterioration in terms of air quality, access to drinking water and the amount of plastic in the oceans of

the earth may appear to be overwhelming in the sense of 'what can one person do to make a difference'. It is at this point that specific Religious Values of hope, grace to sustain individuals and communities in the face of apparently intractable problems and notions of choice, free will and sin can be explored drawing explicitly on the text of *Laudato Si'* (Pope Francis, 2015). Starting with the text of *Laduato Si'* and asking students to come up with practical applications can result in argument rather than discussion. A defence of already held positions adopted from parents, and increasing in Year 7 from peers, can follow. The aim of this approach is to promote a communal search for answers to vital questions with the source of potential answers only introduced when the students themselves have raised the questions that the encyclical is attempting to answer.

The core content of the Religious Education Curriculum (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014) for Sydney Catholic Schools is organised in a grid format with five Strands; Strand A: Scripture and Jesus, Strand B: Church and Community, Strand C: God, Religion and Life, Strand D: Prayer, Liturgy and Sacraments and Strand E: Morality and Justice. While there is not a strict correlation between the stands identified by Sydney Catholic Schools and the chapter of *Laudato Si'* there is considerable overlap and as a comprehensive encyclical *Laudato Si'* has the potential to inform all five strands.

Specifically, Strand A of the Religious Education Curriculum (Sydney Catholic Schools, 2014) Scripture and Jesus could be informed by Chap. 2 of Laudato *Si'*, 'The Gospel of Creation' with its emphasis on biblical wisdom and the affirmation of creation itself being a source of revelation. Chapter 5 'Lines of Approach and Action' with its call for dialogue between those with power and authority at all levels of society and Catholic Social Teaching is a very appropriate source of data for Strand B: Church and Community. Strand C: God, Religion and Life could draw upon Chap. 6 'Ecological Education and Spirituality', as well as Chap. 4 'Integral Ecology' with its call for a new humanism capable of bringing together different forms of knowledge (Pope Francis, 2015, par. 141). Chapter 6 'Ecological Education and Spirituality' also provides a lens to re-examine Strand D: Prayer, Liturgy and Sacraments. Prayer, liturgy and reflection on sacramentality have the capacity to be both educational and transformational in strengthening and nourishing our call to authenticity as we promote, in those we teach, habits of striving to choose values over satisfactions.

Strand E: Morality and Justice relate to Chap. 1 of *Laudato Si'* 'What is happening to our common home' with its vivid description of the current environmental crisis as well as Chap. 3 'The Human roots of the Ecological Crisis' which pinpoints the ultimate source of the crisis in sinful actions of individuals. As Pope Francis reminds us in *Amoris Laetitia* (2016):

> Nor can we overlook the social degeneration brought about by sin, as, for example, when human beings tyrannise nature, selfishly and even brutally ravaging it. This leads to the desertification of the earth (cf. Gen 3 17–19) and those social and economic imbalances denounced by the prophets, beginning with Elijah (cf. 1 Kings 21) and culminating in Jesus own words against injustice. (cf. Lk 12:13;16:1–31). (par. 26)

Laudato Si' (Pope Francis, 2015) can be introduced to students in Year 7 in a way that the probability of its teaching being received by students is increased. The teaching-learning approach outlined is designed to promote transformation or conversion in students through the use of a structured development process grounded in the Scale of Values as articulated by Bernard Lonergan. With *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis has moved issues of the environment and ecology from being something of a footnote in Catholic Social Teaching to the heart of Catholic faith and life. The pope has identified the ecological crisis currently facing humanity as equivalent in both importance and urgency as the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1963 when there was an imminent threat of global devastation. It can be argued that *Laudato Si'* is not simply another source of data for religious education in Catholic schools but indeed currently forms the core or organising principle of the whole Religious Education Curriculum as significant as the personalism of St. John Paul II.

References

Duska, R., & Whelan, M. (1977). *Moral development: A guide to Piaget and Kohlberg*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

Grace, G. (2013). Catholic religious education should permeate the Catholic secondary school curriculum: An agenda for reform. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 5*(1), 99–109. https://doi.org/10.1080/19422539.2012.754591.

Lonergan, B. J. F. (1972). *Method in theology*. London: DLT.

Ormerod, N. (2010). Identity and mission in Catholic organisations. *The Australasian Catholic Record, 87*(4), 430–439.

Ormerod, N., & Vanin, C. (2016). Ecological conversion: What does it mean? *Theological Studies, 77*(2), 328–352. https://doi.org/10.1177/0040563916640694.

Pope Francis. (2015). *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si'. On care for our common home*. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

Pope Francis. (2016). *Post-synodal apostolic exhortation amoris laetitia. On love on the family*. Retrieved from https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf.

Pope John XXIII. (1963). *Encyclical letter pacem in terris. On establishing universal peace in truth, justice, charity and liberty*. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html.

Sydney Catholic Schools. (2014). *RE curriculum (Draft),* Year 7 Module "Stewards of Creation". Sydney unpublished.

White, D. (2005). Discerning religious meaning: The forgotten challenge facing religious education. *Journal of Religious Education., 53*(4), 4–9.

Dr. Sandra Carroll lectures in religious education at the Strathfield campus of the Australian Catholic University, Sydney. Her doctoral thesis from San Francisco Theological Seminary was titled *Teaching about Mary: Professional Development for Religious Educators*. Sandra is married with two sons. She has published book chapters and journal articles in the areas of religious education and theology. She shared a team award for outstanding contributions to student learn-

ing from the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and has presented papers at both national and international conferences in religious education and spirituality.

Dr. John Francis Collins is a Lecturer in practical and pastoral theology, Head of discipline, Christian life and ministry, Catholic Institute of Sydney, President of the Association for Practical Theology in Oceania. His research interests include practical and pastoral theology, theological method, Lonergan studies, depth psychology and psychoanalytic theory, pedagogical methods and cultural anthropology. Dr. Collins promotes Catholic religious education as a form of practical theology and employs experiential educational methods in the training and formation of religious educators. He has published articles in the *Religious Education Journal of Australia* and *The Journal of Religious Education.*

Chapter 35
Engagement in Religious Education: Focusing on Spiritual and Religious Capabilities

Christine Robinson and Chris Hackett

Introduction

Religious education in Catholic schools in Western Australia is considered to be the 'first' learning area (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia [CECWA], 2009a). This learning area is a classroom-based activity with a significant emphasis on student understanding of content. As the 'task of a teacher goes well beyond the transmission of knowledge' (Congregation for Catholic Education [CCE], 1982, par. 16) the Catholic school has the responsibility of drawing out the spiritual and religious capabilities of students in their care (CCE, 1977). This chapter outlines the literature around the notion of capabilities as part of the Australian national curriculum and its application within the spiritual and religious domains. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) describes a capability as 'what encompasses knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions' (2013, p. 5) and developed effectively through positive situations. The chapter examines the place of developing a core spiritual capability within religious education—to be free and become fully human; and, a core religious capability—to hear God's call and become humble before God (Heb 3:7–8) and to reflect on their contribution to student well-being (Spiewak & Sherrod, 2008). A small qualitative study is presented within the chapter that outlines a framework of generic spiritual and religious capabilities.

Catholic schools in Western Australia follow national trends in Church attendance and enrolments. Most Catholic students come from families that do not actively participate in parish life (Dixon, Reid, & Chee, 2013; Lucas, 2017; Rymarz & Graham, 2006). The 2016 census figures for Western Australia indicate that the proportion of people, who nominated as having 'No religion' had increased from 25.5% in 2011 to 32.8% in 2016; Christianity had decreased from 58.1% in 2011 to 49.8% in 2016; and, Western (Roman) Catholicism (the largest religion in WA) had fallen from 23.6% to

C. Robinson (✉) · C. Hackett
University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, Australia
e-mail: Christine.robinson@nd.edu.au

21.4%. The changes tend to be most notable among young adults rather than older generations and among more males than females (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). There are also increasing numbers of non-Catholic students being enrolled in schools (Grajconek & Chambers, 2007; McDougall, 2016; National Catholic Education Commission, 2015).

At the same time, there are increasing rates of emotional and psychological malaise among the student body in Australia (Lawrence et al. 2015; Mission Australia and the Black Dog Institute, 2016). Among the top concerns for 15- to 19-year olds were: coping with stress, school or study problems and body image. While all teens seem to go through a time of angst (Miller, 2015), the seriousness of these concerns become acute for those suffering from mental health disorders and have heightened feelings of anxiety, loneliness and depression. In many cases, these issues were manifested during the childhood years (Wright, 2015). Research in children's mental health highlight other key concerns to be relationship difficulties, body image and bullying (Kids Helpline, 2016).

The treatment of such a malaise through positive psychology (Seligman, Randal, Gillham, Reivich, & Larkins, 2009) has gathered pace. There is a growing recognition of the links between personal well-being and spirituality in the literature, especially in the childhood and adolescent years (Good & Willoughby, 2008; Hay & Nye, 2006; Miller & Barker, 2016). Similarly, in relation to spirituality, a lack of meaning and purpose in life during adolescence has been connected to what literature refers to as a 'spiritual vacuum' (Büssing, Föller-Mancini, Gidley, & Heusser, 2010; Gidley, 2005). For many students, a focus on positive developmental needs (often referred to as emphasising the 'head, heart, and hands') may provide opportunities for them to form and enhance their well-being and re-engage students in their learning (Warren, Lerner, & Phelps, 2012).

Likewise, the Catholic school emphasises the spiritual and religious dimensions of students in their care as part of the core of what makes a human being to be a person. Like God, they are endowed with the capacity to do the good and to love (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993). In turn, they are invested to love God in return with all their heart, mind and soul (Mt 22:37). The challenge of Catholic school educators is to go, 'beyond the giving of new information to students, to bring them to the edge of their own divine possibilities' (O'Leary, 2008, p. 28), that is, to affirm and assist students to be able to see God and the good in themselves, in others and in the world around them.

What Are Spiritual and Religious Capabilities?

In the Australian national curriculum, knowledge is complemented by general capabilities in each learning area. The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) outlines seven general capabilities within the Australian curriculum, namely: literacy; numeracy; information and communication technology

(ICT) capability; critical and creative thinking; personal and social capability; ethical understanding; and, intercultural understanding. A capability,

> encompasses knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions. Students develop capability when they apply knowledge and skills confidently, effectively and appropriately in complex and changing circumstances, both in their learning at school and in their lives outside school. The encouragement of positive behaviours and dispositions underpins all … capabilities. (ACARA, 2013, p. 5)

The rationale for these capabilities is the intention to develop learners who encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions for the twenty-first century (ACARA, 2013).

There seems to be a 'gap' between this curriculum and what a Catholic school curriculum should provide (Reid, 2011; D'Orsa & D'Orsa, 2012; McGunnigle & Hackett, 2015). Although the general capabilities are broadly inclusive of young people's social and emotional well-being, they do not go far enough in meeting the requirements of Catholic schools. The Bishop's Mandate (CECWA, 2009b) outlines the purpose of the Catholic school and, among other requirements, asserts the role of Catholic schools in nurturing young people's 'spiritual, intellectual, social, physical, emotional, religious and creative development' (p. 2) as well as promoting excellence in education within an environment that encourages the integration of faith, life and culture (CECWA, 2009a). Catholic schools are places of evangelisation; they are tasked with attending to the spiritual and religious dimensions of the human person (CCE, 1977). If Catholic schools are to meet this requirement, they must go beyond the general capabilities that are suitable to secular schools and intentionally attend to the spiritual and religious capabilities of young people.

A spiritual capability may be viewed as an innate human quality (Hay & Nye, 2006; Miller & Barker, 2016) that pertains to the relational aspect of life (de Souza, 2016). This capability can be described as 'the way in which a spiritual/moral dimension enters into, or is implied in, the thinking and behaviour of individuals' (Rossiter, 2010, p. 7). Within this context, the capability is about the ability to sense or make a connection with the 'other' or a 'transcendence' that reaches beyond the relationship of 'other' as to self, to persons and to the world to seek relationship with the 'Other' that is God (Hay & Nye, 2006; Miller & Barker, 2016, p. 25).

A religious capability may be regarded as complementary to the spiritual from which religious meaning and purpose within a community can develop. While a spiritual capability focuses on the sense of being, a religious capability focuses on the sense of trusting or believing in the Divine presence. Catholic schools are well placed to assist young people's connection to 'other', inclusive of the transcendent relationship, that is, a 'culture of relationships' (Cook & Symonds, 2011, pp. 323–324). While one is an ongoing longing that that can lead to God (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993), the other is a decision or commitment to God (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993). When both are developed in childhood, then there may be a 'well' to being that can be drawn upon in later years. The capabilities allow an individual to internalise beliefs and behaviours that develop a particular worldview (Porche, Fortuna, Wachholtz, & Torres Stone, 2015). When an individual

faces a crisis or is challenged, this internalised worldview is used to make sense of the situation.

Existing research clearly illustrates that the landscape for positive youth development, and thus the transition into adulthood, rests upon the development of spiritual and religious capabilities through childhood and early adolescence (King & Roeser, 2009). As such, Catholic schools require guidelines as to how they can explicitly address capabilities in this area. The development of spiritual and religious capabilities framework can provide Catholic educators across early childhood, primary and secondary schooling with a tool to intentionally promote spiritual and religious capabilities in the hope that children will develop appropriate Christian dispositions (McGunnigle & Hackett, 2015). These Christian dispositions are the human cardinal virtues and the theological virtues, respectively (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993).

The Catholic school curriculum, that includes religious education and the school's religious life, offers a unique opportunity to promote young people's spirituality and this can be attempted through the human cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. Each of these human virtues can assist young people to be free to become fully human—a core spiritual capability. Furthermore, religious capabilities can be framed on the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. These virtues relate to a core religious capability—to heed God's call and be humble before God (Heb 3:7–8). Religious capabilities focus on the ability of the student to know and to be able to grow in religious understanding and to develop a Christian life (CCE, 1977). In doing so, young people need not only to be re-engaged with the Gospel (Pope Francis, 2013) but to experience the interconnectedness between faith and life.

Exploring Spiritual and Religious Capabilities

The investigation that led to the spiritual and religious capabilities suggested by McGunnigle and Hackett (2015) was broadened in this qualitative study. In utilising a qualitative approach, the focus of the study was to gather a range of perspectives on the current practices educators already employed to address spiritual and religious capabilities of their students. Participation by educators was invitational and occurred during school-based professional development days. In gathering data in this way, a range of responses across early childhood, primary and secondary schools was possible. Educators were grouped within their Year level team and asked to complete a framework task. These matrices were collected from the groups to be collated for this study after permission from the educators was received. The frameworks were then de-identified and collated within the groupings: early childhood (3-year-old Kindergarten to Year Two); primary (Year Three to Six); and secondary (Year Seven to Twelve).

The framework task was the data collection tool. One matrix was provided for spiritual capabilities (this included the virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance) and one for religious capabilities (this included the virtues of faith, hope and

charity). Alongside each of the spiritual or religious virtues, educators contributed teaching foci, activities, strategies or initiatives that occurred both within the RE lesson as well as outside of the RE lesson and additionally, these were distinguished as either addressed or exercised. The decision to distinguish where particular spiritual or religious capabilities were addressed as well as exercised was central to the notion of a 'capability'. A capability requires 'knowing, acting and being in students' (Walker, 2005, p. 68) and, therefore, teaching about a capability or virtue is insufficient. Students need models and examples of these virtues; they need to learn within a culture that has significant adults who espouse these capabilities (Synod of Bishops, 2017). Young people also need to have opportunities to practice these virtues to the point of fluency (Davidson, 2014). This means, rather than being engaged in an isolated lesson on a virtue, students require opportunities for their own behaviours and dispositions to develop—if they are to become 'capable'.

Findings

The following sections present the collated findings across early childhood, primary and secondary. The findings presented offer suggestions or exemplars of spiritual and religious capabilities, rather than an exhaustive, or prescribed list.

Findings: Early Childhood Spiritual Capabilities

Inside RE Lesson

Addressed

Suggestions for the ways that prudence could be addressed included students identifying wonder questions people ask and discussing the choices made by key characters in a children's book such as Miss Lily's feather boa. Justice could be addressed by exploring questions such as 'What would Jesus do?' Responses relating to fortitude included the suggestion that students explore scenarios that require resilience and that students read about a particular community organisation for fundraising. Suggested ways of addressing temperance included discussing how children might regulate their emotions to deal with a situation and discussing that prayer is part of life and not just for RE.

Exercised

Responses regarding how prudence could be exercised included: students posing wonder questions about their own uniqueness and then what God might be like who created them in this way; and facilitating community circle discussions on how we treat each other. Suggestions relating to justice included: showing respect for God's creation and role-playing what Jesus would do in particular scenarios. Fortitude was suggested as exercised through role-playing the Parables such as 'The Prodigal Son' and through song (for example 'Be not afraid') whilst temperance was suggested to be exercised by providing time for breathing activities, meditations and opportunities to reflect on the ways Jesus showed his emotions.

Outside RE Lesson

Addressed

Suggestions for the ways that prudence could be addressed included students making choices within play-based experiences such as negotiating equipment and in Health lessons learning about how to resolve the conflict. Justice could be addressed by reflecting each day on how to relate to each other and work cooperatively as well as identifying that there are people less fortunate in the community. Responses relating to fortitude included encouraging children to 'have a go' in other activities and teachers being role models for children. Suggested ways of addressing temperance included identifying different types of emotions and recognising ways to self-monitor behaviour and develop self-control such as during play times.

Exercised

Responses regarding how prudence could be exercised included: taking opportunities to consider the beauty of nature and considering the impact their choices have on others.

Suggestions relating to justice included: participating in cooperative strategies and showing respect to others. Fortitude was suggested as exercised through coping with 'missing out' and failure and developing strategies for success in learning whilst temperance was suggested to be exercised by accepting people with difference selecting appropriate feeling faces on a self-regulation chart.

Findings Two: Early Childhood Religious Capabilities

Inside RE Lesson

Addressed

Faith was suggested as being addressed by providing examples of people showing faith in God and through the Parish Priest speaking with the children about the Church being God's family. Responses for addressing hope included students posing questions about the good in themselves and others and talking with children about praying to God at any time of the day. Charity could be addressed when teachers explore examples of Jesus showing love and kindness to others and when they teach children the virtue of charity.

Exercised

Responses for how faith could be exercised included writing and reciting formal and informal prayers as well as taking a visit to the local Church. Hope could be exercised when students write their own prayers based on their own needs or they explore scenarios when people might need to say 'sorry' and 'I forgive you'. Suggestions for charity included writing a class letter to a Project Compassion child.

Outside RE Lesson

Addressed

Faith was suggested as being addressed by spending time in the school sacred space and recognising symbols of faith in the school. Responses for addressing hope included exploring children's literature on the theme of positivity and using the class prayer table as a visual reminder of faith. Charity could be addressed when students see examples of others modelling empathy and practices of inclusivity.

Exercised

Responses for how faith could be exercised included showing reverence and respect during Masses and liturgies. Hope could be exercised when students receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and when teachers model praying in times of need. Suggestions for charity included participating in fundraising events and showing respect and acceptance for all cultures.

Findings Three: Primary Spiritual Capabilities

Inside RE Lesson

Addressed

Responses for how prudence could be addressed included sharing stories about making choices and through the sacrament of Reconciliation. Suggestions for justice included learning about forgiveness. Fortitude could be addressed through learning about the Confirmation fruits of patience and gentleness as well as through reflecting on challenges and how to deal with them. Temperance could be addressed through the sharing Bible stories (such as Jesus in the Temple).

Exercised

Prudence could be exercised when students make decisions and problem solve. Suggestions for exercising justice included identifying examples of actions of service and learning about loving difference. Fortitude was suggested as being exercised when students role-play the Parables such as 'The Prodigal Son' whilst temperance could be exercised through the use of mindfulness strategies and when students reflect on the ways Jesus showed his emotions.

Outside RE Lesson

Addressed

Prudence was suggested as being addressed when students follow rules within games and when discussing character choices in literature. Responses for addressing justice included teachers being a role model to younger children and peers and when teachers and students discuss fairness and forgiveness. Fortitude could be addressed when students take turns and demonstrate patience and endurance whilst temperance was suggested as being addressed when students are in touch with nature and when modelling self-control.

Exercised

Responses for how prudence could be exercised included following rules in sports and choosing to be collaborative. For justice, responses included students writing to organisations such as Amnesty International and showing respect to others. Fortitude was suggested as being exercised when students learn about School patron saints.

Temperance could be exercised when utilising the school sacred space for reflections and when students identify how to deal with a variety of emotions.

Findings Four: Primary Religious Capabilities

Inside RE Lesson

Addressed

Faith was suggested as being addressed by learning about the presence of God in sacraments. Responses for addressing hope included students learning about why we say 'sorry' to restore relationships. Charity could be addressed when students explore the dignity of the human person and discuss how all are made in the image and likeness of God.

Exercised

Responses for how faith could be exercised included being involved in sacramental preparation. Hope could be exercised when students rehearse for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and when they explore scenarios for when people might need to say 'sorry' and 'I forgive you'. Suggestions for charity included discussing inclusivity and scenarios where charitable actions could be included.

Outside RE Lesson

Addressed

Faith was suggested as being addressed when students witness lived examples of faith, such as staff responding to students' spontaneous events with a faith response. Hope could be addressed when students explore signs of God's presence in the world. Responses suggested that charity could be addressed in Humanities when students learn about cultural celebrations.

Exercised

Responses for how faith could be exercised included receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation in the school Sacred Space. Hope could be exercised by participating in retreat days and through the act of forgiveness in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Responses suggested that charity could be exercised when students donate to Caritas' Project Compassion and when they ask others if they need help and assisting them in their need.

Findings Five: Secondary Spiritual Capabilities

Inside RE Lesson

Addressed

Prudence was suggested as being addressed when students examine the Confirmation gift of wisdom and understanding and when they research the changes made from one of the papal documents from Vatican Council II. Responses indicated that justice could be addressed when connecting parables to contemporary situations to guide students' actions. It was suggested that ways to address fortitude could include exploring the life of a person who faced a challenging situation and that for temperance students could discuss how the Season of Lent promotes the virtue of moderation.

Exercised

Prudence was suggested as being exercised when students re-enact a religious person's life-choice situation and reflect on the experience the dilemmas created. Exercising justice could include engaging in activities of service whilst for fortitude activities that involve scenarios leading to the question 'What would you do?' were suggested. Temperance could be exercised when students practice a Christian meditation. Or reflect on Lenten practices.

Outside RE Lesson

Addressed

Prudence was suggested as being addressed when in English, students choose a scene from a text or film and discuss how the author dealt with the situation. Responses for addressing justice including applying social justice principles to an economic or technological issue. Fortitude could be addressed when students work collaboratively and cooperatively in all learning areas whilst temperance was suggested as being addressed when students apply ways to assist their mental and emotional well-being.

Exercised

Responses for how prudence could be exercised included preparing for a mock job interview and discussing school behaviour issues. For justice, responses included students participating in community building games. Fortitude was suggested as being exercised when students learn to reflect on why facing a challenge is healthy and when they develop appropriate strategies for success in learning. Temperance could be exercised when students practice self-regulating their needs by engaging in mindfulness techniques.

Findings Six: Secondary Religious Capabilities

Inside RE Lesson

Addressed

Responses for how faith could be addressed included students learning about drawing on the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit and when students listen to a religious person speak about a religious vocation. Hope could be addressed when discussing how forgiveness can provide hope to individuals. Suggestions for charity included researching organisations that assist those in need and exploring the life of St Mother Teresa and her Sisters of Charity.

Exercised

Faith was suggested as exercised when students are provided with opportunities to practice prayer or meditation in a RE lesson. Suggestions for how hope could be exercised included writing an Act of Contrition and practicing the Mystery of Light Rosary. Charity could be exercised when students attend a Seder Meal that includes symbols of Passover and when they dramatise examples of Saints who have been merciful to others.

Outside RE Lesson

Addressed

Faith was suggested as being addressed outside of RE when students follow the choreography of expressive dance (such as liturgical dance) within the Arts and when they make a connection in the sciences to the appreciation of God's creation.

Responses for hope included exploring the historical events around the Holocaust and reflecting on life choices and questions of the heart. Charity could be addressed when students are involved in service learning experiences.

Exercised

Responses suggested that faith could be exercised when students participate in an Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist programme and when they lead others in prayer (formally or informally). Hope could be exercised when students attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation and engage with models of hope, for example people who have persevered in 'hopeless' times. Charity was suggested as being exercised when students organised Caritas fundraising events or food/clothing appeals during winter.

Discussion

Catholic schools, as places of evangelisation and distinctive from secular schools, require something beyond the general capabilities outlined in the Australian Curriculum if they are to genuinely seek to develop Christian men and women (CECWA, 2009a). As illustrated in the findings presented in the previous section of this paper, spiritual and religious capabilities are not the sole responsibility of religious education; rather, religious education and the whole Catholic school share this responsibility in an integrated and collaborative way. Religious education provides education in and of the virtues, thus promoting the spiritual and religious capabilities. Religious education also provides a context for exercising these capabilities. The Catholic school facilitates and supports the classroom religious education by providing opportunities for students to view role models and for themselves, to live these capabilities.

In the context of the Catholic school, religious education must be considered as working in partnership with the elements of the wider Catholic school context. This wider school context involves the witness of staff, the opportunity for participation in activities of catechesis and experiences which draw together faith, life and culture. In an early childhood and primary school setting, integration of these elements in a harmonious way is somewhat easier given that the religious education programme is taught by the classroom teacher, thus providing an opportunity for spiritual and religious capabilities to permeate all curriculum. In the secondary setting, there is a greater challenge in integrating head, heart and hands in a harmonious way and its success is the responsibility of the whole school community. In the secondary context, students require opportunities to exercise spiritual and religious capabilities through service learning programmes, involvement with community not-for-profit organisations and through experiencing retreat opportunities.

When young people (whether they be in early childhood, primary or secondary) are given the opportunity to learn about and personally develop spiritual and religious

capabilities in a way that integrates head, heart and hands then the potential outcomes relate not only to their engagement with faith but to their sense of well-being. Pope Francis (2015) has emphasised this connection to well-being when he advocated for Catholic schools to be about, 'instructing in how to think, helping students to feel well; [and] accompanying students as they do' (p. 3). For Catholic schools to respond to the words of Pope Francis, religious education is well placed as a means to engage students' sense of well-being through a focus on addressing and exercising their spiritual and religious capabilities. Like Jesus, they are able to think, feel and act as He did (Jn 14:6).

Conclusion

A focus on integrating spiritual and religious capabilities within Catholic schools has the potential to influence the positive developmental needs of young people by engaging their head, heart and hands. Such an approach may be useful to re-engaging students in their learning and provide opportunities for them to form and enhance their well-being (Warren, Lerner, & Phelps, 2012). This chapter has outlined the literature around the notion of capabilities within the spiritual and religious domains. Through the use of frameworks, exemplars of capabilities, based on the human and theological virtues, are presented. These exemplars illustrate the ways that the spiritual and religious capabilities can be both addressed and exercised through religious education and in the context of the Catholic school. In doing so, a core spiritual capability—to be free and become fully human; and, a core religious capability—to hear God's call and become humble before God (Heb 3:7–8) are emphasised for their contribution within religious education and their connection to student well-being (Spiewak & Sherrod, 2008).

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *Religion in Australia, 2016*. Retrieved from http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2071.0~2016~Main%20Features~Religion%20Article~30.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2013). *General capabilities in the Australian curriculum*. Retrieved from http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/overview/general-capabilities-in-the-australian-curriculum.

Büssing, A., Föller-Mancini, A., Gidley, J., & Heusser, P. (2010). Aspects of spirituality in adolescents. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 15*(1), 25–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/13644360903565524.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. (1993). Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia. (2009a). *Mandate of the Catholic education commission of Western Australia 2009–2015*. Retrieved from http://internet.ceo.wa.edu.au/AboutUs/Documents/Bishops%20Mandate%202009-2015.pdf.

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia. (2009b). *Mandate of the Catholic education commission of Western Australia 2009–2015: Parents, carers and families.* Retrieved from https://internet.ceo.wa.edu.au/AboutUs/Documents/Welcome%20to%20Parents%20Carers%20and%20Families_Mandate%202009-2015.pdf.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977). *The Catholic school*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1982). *Lay Catholic in schools: Witnesses to faith*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html.

Cook, T. J., & Symonds, T. A. (2011). The charism of 21st-century Catholic schools: Building a culture of relationships. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 14*(3), 319–333.

D'Orsa, J., & D'Orsa, T. (2012). *Catholic curriculum: A mission to the heart of young people*. Mulgrave, VIC: Vaughan Publishing.

Davidson, M. (2014). A character education research perspective for the 21st century. *Journal of Character Education, 10*(1), 7–83.

Dixon, R., Reid, S., & Chee, M. (2013). *Mass attendance in Australia: A critical moment. A report based on the National Count of Attendance, the National Church Life Survey and the Australian census*. Retrieved from http://pro.catholic.org.au/pdf/Pastoral%20Research%20Office%20-%20Mass%20attendance%20in%20Australia%20-%20a%20critical%20moment%20-%20December%202013.pdf.

de Souza, M. (2016). *Spirituality in education in a global, pluralised world*. New York: Routledge Research in Education.

Gidley, J. (2005). Giving hope back to our young people: Creating a new spiritual mythology for western culture. *Journal of Futures Studies: Epistemology, Methods, Applied and Alternative Futures, 9,* 17–30.

Good, M., & Willoughby, T. (2008). Adolescence as a sensitive period for spiritual development. *Child Development Perspectives, 2*(1), 32–37. Retrieved from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ipacez.nd.edu.au/doi/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2008.00038.x/pdf.

Grajconek, J., Ryan M., & Chambers, M. (2007). *Inclusion of students who are not Catholics in Catholic schools: Policy, practices and problems*. Retrieved from http://www.acu.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/89896/Inclusion_of_Students_who_are_not_Catholics_in_Catholic_Schools.pdf.

Hay, D., & Nye, R. (2006). *The spirit of the child (Revised edition)*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Kids Helpline. (2016). *Insights 2016: Insights into young people in Australia*. Retrieved from https://kidshelpline.com.au/organisation/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/05/KHL_Insights_Report_2016-web.pdf.

King, P. E., & Roeser, R. W. (2009). Religion and spirituality in adolescent development. In R. M. Lerner and L. Steinberg (Eds.). *Handbook of adolescent psychology*. New Jersey: Wiley, https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470479193.adlpsy001014.

Lawrence, D., Johnson, S., Hafekost, J., Boterhoven de Haan, K., Sawyer, M., Ainley, J., & Zubrick, S. R. (2015). *The mental health of children and adolescents. Report on the second Australian child and adolescent survey of mental health and wellbeing*. Retrieved from https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/9DA8CA21306FE6EDCA257E2700016945/%24File/child2.pdf.

Lucas, B. (2017). Community, belonging and identity: Young people and mission. In *Mission and Spirituality News*. Retrieved September 4, 2017 from http://www.bbi.catholic.edu.au/news-events/110/article/1605/community–belonging-and-identity–young-people-and-mission-by-fr-brian-lucas.

McDougall, B. (2016). Catholic schools: Almost one third of students are from outside the faith. In *The Daily Telegraph*. Retrieved from http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/

nsw/catholic-schools-almost-one-third-of-students-are-from-outside-the-faith/news-story/72f626fb30d6eb94fb1da3e99ffcf3ab.

McGunnigle, C., & Hackett, C. (2015). Spiritual and religious capabilities for Catholic schools. *eJournal of Catholic Education in Australasia, 2*(1), Article 6. Retrieved from http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/ecea/vol2/iss1/6.

Miller, L. (2015). *The spiritual knock at the door* [Youtube]. Retrieved June 26, 2015 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55CdBPfi64w.

Miller, L., & Barker, T. (2016). *The spiritual child: The new science on parenting for health and lifelong thriving*. USA: Picador.

Mission Australia and the Black Dog Institute. (2016). *Youth mental health report: Youth survey 2012–16*. Retrieved from: https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publicationsresearch/young-people.

National Catholic Education Commission. (2015). *Annual Report*. Retrieved from http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/resources/publications/424-2015-annual-report/file.

O'Leary, D. (2008). *Begin with the heart…Recovering a sacramental vision*. Dublin: Columba Press.

Pope Francis. (2013). *Apostolic exhortation Evangelii gaudium of the Holy Father Francis to the bishops, clergy, consecrated persons and the lay faithful on the proclamation of the Gospel in today's world*. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

Pope Francis. (2015). *Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to members of the Italian union of Catholic school teachers, managers, educators and trainers*. Retrieved from https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/march/documents/papa-francesco_20150314_uciim.html.

Porche, M., Fortuna, L., Wachholtz, A., & Torres Stone, R. (2015). Distal and proximal religiosity as protective factors for adolescent and emerging adult alcohol use. *Religions, 6,* 365–384. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel6020365.

Reid, D. (2011). Making space for religious education in the national curriculum. *Religious Education Journal of Australia, 27*(2), 10–15. Retrieved from http://search.informit.com.au.ipacez.nd.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=231435431421988;res=IELHSS.

Rossiter, G. (2010). A case for a 'big picture' re-orientation of K-12 Australian Catholic school religious education in the light of contemporary spirituality. *Journal of Religious Education, 58*(3), 5–18.

Rymarz, R., & Graham, J. (2006). Australian core Catholic youth, Catholic schools and religious education. *British Journal of Religious Education, 28*(1), 79–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200500273745.

Seligman, M. E. P., Ernst, R. M., Gillham, J., Reivich, K., & Larkins, M. (2009). Positive education: positive psychology and classroom interventions. *Oxford Review of Education, 35*(3), 293–311. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054980902934563.

Spiewak, G. S., & Sherrod, L. R. (2008). Possible interrelationships between civic engagement, positive youth development, and spirituality/religiosity. In R. M. Lerner, R. W. Roeser, & E. Phelps (Eds.), *Positive youth development and spirituality: From theory to research* (pp. 322–338). West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press.

Synod of Bishops, XV Ordinary General Assembly. (2017). *Young people, the Faith and vocational discernment: Preparatory document*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20170113_documento-preparatorio-xv_en.html.

Walker, M. (2005). *Higher education pedagogies*. Berkshire, GBR: McGraw-Hill Education. Retrieved from http://site.ebrary.com.ipacez.nd.edu.au/lib/notredameaustralia/detail.action?docID=10175267.

Warren, A. E. A., Lerner, R. M., & Phelps, E. (Eds.). (2012). *Thriving and spirituality among youth: Research perspectives and future possibilities*. New Jersey: Wiley.

Wright, K. (2015). From targeted interventions to universal approaches: Historicizing wellbeing. In K. Wright & J. McLeod (Eds.), *Rethinking youth wellbeing: Critical perspectives*. New York: Springer.

Dr. Christine Robinson is the coordinator of the undergraduate and postgraduate early childhood programmes at the University of Notre Dame, Fremantle. Christine recently completed her Ph.D. investigating educator's practices for promoting young children's spirituality in the context of Catholic childcare. Her research interests are in the areas of religious education and early childhood. A particular focus of Christine's research is the construction of spiritual and religious capabilities within Catholic schools. In addition, as an outcome of her Ph.D. studies, Christine is engaged with local Catholic schools to develop their spiritual and religious awareness.

Prof. Chris Hackett is Associate Dean (Religious Education), School of Education, Fremantle, Western Australia at the University of Notre Dame Australia. His research interest includes the formation of RE teachers and leaders, spirituality and values education, pastoral care, RE curriculum. He is the Director, Catholic Institute of Western Australia, Commissioner (ex officio), Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, Chair, Religion and Life Curriculum and Assessment Committee, School Curriculum and Standards Authority and Chair, Editorial Management Team, *e-Journal of Catholic Education in Australasia*, The University of Notre Dame Australia.

Chapter 36
Integrating Community Spirituality into Religious Education: A School Educator's Role

Ausra (sr. Gabriele OSB) Vasiliauskaite

Introduction

The pluralist, interreligious and intercultural contexts of the twenty-first century-society pose challenges for Religious Education (RE). One may claim that these challenges are twofold. First, at schools, the Church cannot conduct catechesis, that is, the formation of faith, which comprises the following four elements: announcement, the creation of the faith community, liturgy and serving others (Pope John Paul II, 1979, par. 18). The second challenge is posed by the diversity that exists in classrooms, as acknowledged by Pope John Paul II in his apostolic letter *Catechesi tradendae* (1979, par. 32–34), that is, interpretations of religious language, which correlate with human and religious experiences.

This chapter attempts to address challenges that instigate changes in the well-established systems of Catholic RE from a theoretical and a practical perspective. From the theoretical perspective, it will allow perceiving community spirituality as a new RE system that uses various literature and sources. From a practical perspective, the present investigation may contribute to integrating community spirituality with RE. The importance of integration may help not only the educator but also the school culture which "can be defined as a set of common values, norms, and expectations shared by people directly or indirectly with each other and demonstrated by their specific behaviour" (Lombaerts, 2007a, p. 192). In addition, it may provide a partial answer to the challenges of RE by making difficult decisions to change the system of RE.

A. (sr. Gabriele OSB) Vasiliauskaite (✉)
Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania
e-mail: ausra.vasiliauskaite@vdu.lt

Research Question

When changing the method of RE, one should return "*ad fontes*", that is, to the primary source, so as to test authenticity. I am here suggesting that one should return to the friendship model presented by Jesus. This, of course, raises the question about the role of the Gospel in the intercontextual education of pupils, applying the newest perspective to future normativity. One of the most successful models, the hermeneutic-communicative model (HCM), was applied in Belgian schools by Lambert and Pollifyet (Vasiliauskaitė, 2010). On the basis of the HCM, where the educator has to be a good specialist, moderator and witness, the question whether these basic qualities are sufficient for an educator is still posed. It does seem that these three qualities of a Religious Educator arise from the concept of community spirituality (CS). Thus, this paper aims to prove the importance of integration of CS into RE and to discuss the role of a Religious Educator.

In order to reach this aim, the following objectives have been formulated: to discuss the concepts of CS and RE; to describe the role of the Gospel in RE; to prove that it is possible to integrate CS integration into RE; and to outline the role of a Religious Educator at school.

The research methodology in this chapter is based on philosophical theories. The first theory that is being taken into consideration is that of hermeneutics, that is, "the theory of historicity of human experience and linguisticality" as defined by Gadamer (2006). The theory comprises sub-theories, methods and principles. The main methods employed in this article are those of argumentation, hermeneutics and "proclaiming" from the perspective of personal testimony. The second philosophical theory used is the "theory of dialectical modelling" by Paulauskas. Though his theory, the relationship between CS and HCM has been determined and also tested through the dialectical relationship of content and form (Paulauskas, 1999). The third theory is "Dialogics". An interdisciplinary research has been used to prove the possibility of integrating CS in RE.

In this way, the role of an educator has been revealed in inter-contextual RE. The other part of the research methodology is founded on the theological and "educological" disciplines, whose help and support are detailed in this chapter. The first theological discipline is "Personalist anthropology". This principle has been used in defining the objects of CS and RE. The second is "The theology of spirituality". According to Chiara Lubich's community theology, the terms have defined both CS and its pedagogy. The third theological discipline is "Christology". The importance of the cooperation between Christ and the person (the friendship model) is demonstrated in the pedagogy of CS as well as the role that Jesus, the Logos, has in interreligious, inter-contextual and pluralist contexts. The fourth is "Eschatology", where friendship is understood as "the normativity of the future".

From "Educology", the role of an educator at school has been defined on the basis of the main principles of the pedagogy of CS. As a result of such applied and diverse theories and disciplines, this chapter makes use of multi-sided aspects, not only in

systemic theology, but also in the educological and philosophical literature, and the resources herein.

Research Methods

The analysis of argumentation (Rienecker & Jørgensen, 2003) was applied in discussing the possibility of integrating CS into RE on the basis of HCM. In addition, by applying the method of argumentation, the terms used in the present paper have been grounded philosophically and theologically. The structural and systemic analysis allowed distinguishing and describing the elements of CS and the aspects of the role of a Religious Educator at school. Employing the hermeneutical method, the elements of CS and the conceptualisation of RE and the HCM have been analysed. This revealed the core philosophical principles of the HCM and allowed perceiving the theological features of the model itself. Using the recontextualisation method, the HCM has been analysed in the context of CS. The theoretical comparative analysis has been applied in the comparison of the RE model, the HCM, and the elements of CS.

In order to achieve theoretical synthesis, the generalization method has been employed in order to generalize the educological and theological literature so as to achieve the aim of the paper.

The Concepts of Community Spirituality and Hermeneutics of Religious Education

The Second Vatican Council (1965a, *Nostra Aetate*, par. 1–5) emphasized the ideal of a Church as a community, the aim of which is a dialogue not only with Christian churches, but also with other religions and even with non-believers. In her Focolare Movement (in Italian, Focolare is a fireplace, a family) and teachings, Lubich (2011) forms the "basis of the Church reborn in the light of the Second Vatican Council and open for every dialogue" (p. 101). This unity culture is born based on the line of the Holy Scripture "*ut omnes unum sint*", ("they may all be one") (Jn 17:21) and on the concept of dialogue, as one of the main ways leading to the unity of individuals, communities, groups, religions, and CS. This is generalized by John Paul II who claims that

> Community Spirituality first refers to the view of our heart to the mystery of the Trinity in us, the light of which is reflected in the faces of our brothers and sisters. Moreover, Community Spirituality also refers to the ability to feel a deep unity of the mysterious Body and treat one's brother in faith as 'his/her own part.' Several conclusions can be made on the basis of this principle related to feelings and behaviour: to share the joys and suffering of brothers and sisters; to feel their deep desires and take care of their needs; and to suggest an authentic and deep friendship. Community Spirituality also refers to the ability to see the positive things

in others, accepting and cherishing this as God's gift; finally, this means providing space for a brother or a sister, carrying each other's burdens. Without this spiritual unity, external means will have little use. (Congregation for Consecrated Life Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life, 2002, par. 29)

From these descriptions, one may distinguish the elements of CS (Lubich, 2008), which help to discuss the conception of CS itself. The first element is "love testimony" which was emphasized by Pope Benedict XVI (2011, par. 14), when he announced the Year of Faith in 2012. According to Apostle Paul, love is the strongest and the most important virtue (1 Cor 13:13). Love is the basis for CS because Jesus Christ is God's love which became flesh (Pope Benedict XVI, 2005, par. 12–15) and has remained present in the Blessed Sacrament. It is only then that we can see the face of the Trinitarian God in another person. In this way, Love receives the expression of the divine quality of Love. "Each person who loves, acts stimulated by grace" (Lubich, 1997, p. 83). Grace allows opening up to the freedom of the spirit, while the freedom of the spirit and the testimony of the Gospel are two major requirements for a "dialogue" because community is sharing the gift (Congregation for Consecrated Life Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life, 2002, par. 42), which is the second element of CS. The Second Vatican Council (1965b, *Ad Gentes*, par. 11) encouraged this dialogue. According to Lubich (1997), the Second Vatican Council "suggests adapting the announcement of the Word of God to the customs, thinking, and culture of various nations, to encourage a new theological attitude, and to avoid syncretism and false narrowness" (p. 68). This cannot be implemented without "unity and the creation of unity culture", which is the third element of CS. What is even more necessary is a CS that destroys individualism and encourages "commonality". The latter is the fourth element of CS, since a person tends to create commonality and form communities (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, par. 1877–1880, 1890–1891). It can be, therefore, concluded that CS is the ability to seek unity among individuals through Love in all life spheres, including the school, not being fearful of dialogue with the Other and creating commonality. However, can CS manifest itself in RE, or be integrated with RE? In order to do so it is first necessary to define RE and to find common indicators.

RE is here being defined as the conveyance of perception, by a person who is informed and has a religious competence, to others about moral and religious problems, comprising both the individual and the collective sphere of life where all community is educated (Vasiliauskaitė, 2010, p. 7).

From this perspective, the educator has to live according to God's Word found in the Gospel; more precisely s/he has to communicate with the living God. Communication rather than age is the key factor as "religious education, the main mission of the Church, has an important task, i.e., to proclaim and to witness God's Word" (Stumbra, 2012, p. 114). Thus, the main principle of RE throughout the history of its development has become the dialogicity of Jesus, which refers to the attempt to communicate with the Being rather than remain in the solo monologue. This is confirmed not only by the personal way of proclaiming the Good News, but also by the public community-based one, that is, liturgy. The basis of all this, as Psalm 117 (118) indicates, is "the corner-stone" that Jesus revealed through the Gospels

(Vasiliauskaitė, 2014). Therefore, it is important to highlight the Biblical perspective of the key principles of RE, as a common indicator of "Community Spirituality" and "Religious Education", which will describe the integration of CS into RE, using one of the most successful models of RE in the twenty-first century, that is, the HCM, and describing the role of a school educator.

A Biblical Perspective: The Role of the Gospel

The Bible is not a simple text even though this "Word" is addressed to everyone. Only when the Word becomes alive it is in dialogue. One is invited to dialogue with the Word and thus, the revealed Word becomes flesh. This is the beginning of the Revelation as a dialogue, where "the creation 'logos', the 'logos' in the person, and the real and eternal 'Logos', the Son, who became the person, meet each other" (Pope Benedict XVI, 2012, p. 38). Jesus caused an eschatological tension through this announcement: "already" and "not yet". The Kingdom of God is already here, but not yet fully. Jesus invites us to friendship. This is a friendship is the fruit of the Holy Spirit who is "already" and "not yet" (Cantalamessa, 2010, p. 223). For this reason, the Word of God is the basis of the fulfilment of the promise (Second Vatican Council, 1965c, *Dei verbum*, par. 3–21). It is said that the Spirit is "already" because the promise is already partly fulfilled now, and not yet because we face the eschatological waiting. It is not without reason that the Council Fathers emphasized that "to carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel" (Second Vatican Council, 1965d, *Gaudium et spes*, par. 4). In the four Gospels, the concept of "the signs of time" is treated very differently. There is a transfer from John's Word about "the One Who Comes" to the Word itself, which came and has become "the sign of time" forever. This shows that in today's world, one needs to hear, recognize, explain, and evaluate various voices of the present time on the basis of the Light of God's Word so that the revealed Truth could be more clearly visible, understandable, and revealed more properly (Second Vatican Council, 1965a, b, c, d, *Gaudium et spes*, par. 44). In order to understand the signs of the times, the Church needs to open up and begin a dialogue with the world (Elsbernd & Bieringer, 2010). The Church has to protect the existing eschatological tension. The treatment of Jesus as the main "sign of the time" and the waiting for His second coming may and does create an eschatological perspective. From this perspective, one may suggest other terms, which not only comprise the main theological dimensions discussed above and the hermeneutical approach but also leave space for new directions. Such terms include commonality, the Spirit, Hope, "the future, alternative world, the invasion, the vision—the Word vision", ethical, practical development, "Revelation and human sinfulness", and rationality and dialogue. These dimensions and the hermeneutical approach allow an understanding of the content of the normative future, which is not a methodology (Elsbernd & Bieringer, 2010). Methodology—"theoretical concepts/models and assumptions that help to understand the problem under study and

design a research" (Teresevičienė et al., 2005, p. 38). Since the normative future is a term, it is based on the theory of language metaphors and expressions of symbols (Ricoeur, 2000).

Thus, according to Vasiliauskaitė (2014), the basis of this new and open perspective is the friendship model. Therefore, the Bible, the Word, cannot be an obstacle in current RE in schools. On the contrary, it should assist the pupil to meet God (that is., to open up in communication). Furthermore, the friendship model and the perspective of the "normative future" becomes the basis of the HCM because in the contemporary multicultural European context, it is very difficult to arouse the interest of the person in the Bible from the historical perspective (Pollefeyt & Bieringer, 2010). To reveal why the Word has been chosen as the basis of the HCM should be discussed to reveal the integration of CS into this model disclosing the change in the school educator's role.

The Possibility of the Integration of Community Spirituality into Religious Education

In the Biblical perspective, which is a common indicator of CS and RE, the possibility of integration is apparent. In order to show the aspects of this possibility, a pedagogical model of RE could help in describing this. Thus, the concept of HCM that extends the correlation model in teaching religion at a secondary school, has been chosen. This model was developed at the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Leuven on the basis of a scientific project of the Academic Institute for Teacher Education in Religion (Lombaerts & Pollefeyt, 2004b). The aspects of the integration of the CS are highlighted. When discussing the concept of the HCM in various contexts, including the intercontextual, interreligious and pluralist.

Up until recently, Europe was based on Christian values but since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Western Europe has been moving along a different path. According to Profs. Lombaert and Pollefeyt (2004a), while previously the central place was occupied by religious institutions, it is now the person and his/her context that occupies centre stage. In such a situation, the communication style is also different. In schools, people of various religions and cultures learn together and, the culture of unity is fostered. The main aspiration here as well as in CS is unity. The old mechanical way of transmitting information based on memory is no longer suitable or valid (Tha Ling Sum, 2012a, b). Therefore, in focusing on transmitting information and knowledge, teachers do not touch their pupils' hearts. Pupils do not perceive the Christian faith because there is no quality of Love, first emphasized by CS. The connection between RE and hermeneutics becomes particularly important as it aims at the conversion of the heart. Faith and human experience should go together and this merging can only be achieved through dialogue. In a contemporary pluralist context, it is most suitable to perceive religion as typical of religious cultures or nations. A new discipline, the theology of dialogue, has emerged, which is also developed

by CS. The source of its development is interreligious dialogue, a hermeneutical key is the assumption of different religious traditions and the role of an educator is to open an interreligious dialogue. Because of this new point of view, a Religious Educator is perceived as "a hermeneut, i.e., a witness, a specialist, and a moderator" (Pollefeyt, 2008, p. 14) based on the concept of CS. A witness endeavours to live the living Word so as to be recognized not only by pupils but also by other people. A Religious Educator as a specialist is perceived as a person who has to search for and read the signs of the times (Second Vatican Council, 1965d, *Gaudium et spes*, par. 4); to be able to open the windows (it. "aggiornamento") to contemporary reality, that is, to interrupt the dialogue with the Word. For this, a modern dialogue is necessary: the search for a new way rather than the provision of the Catechism. Therefore, for instance, to moderate, a group of children in class means to allow the Word to operate. Thus one more aspect, communication, is involved, which helps to develop dialogue. Communication encourages commonality, which is one more element of CS. "Communication marked by the art of interpretation is a special sign of human quality" (Lombaerts and Pollefeyt, 2004b, p. VI). The quality may be understood as the ABC of human attempts for searching, which helps perceiving oneself. Naturally, this communication may be interpreted ambiguously because it may be both external and internal. The indicator of external communication is not closeness, that is, there cannot be exclusion among children of different cultures and religions. They are witnesses to each other and they recognize the importance and uniqueness of their own religion. Having in mind the interreligious and pluralist context, it should be noted that the participant in this dialogue is not only the Religious Educator who is a hermeneut but also the Other. This external openness presupposes the openness of internal communication. With the emphasis on individuality as an expression of human dignity, without damaging his/her personality, the person opens up to the living Word and accepts It, while the Word draws the person into the dialogue.

The analysis of the two most important aspects of the HCM, hermeneutics and communication, which comprise four main elements of CS, lead to the conclusion that an absolutely new perspective of RE is necessary when RE becomes hermeneutic action and hermeneutics—the main paradigm of RE (Lombaerts and Pollefeyt, 2004a). In this HCM, which is done through a Catholic perspective, community spirituality becomes a hermeneutic key. Thus, at school where Catholic RE is conducted, not only the educator's role changes, but also the HCM content provides a new direction. This could be referred to as the pedagogy of community spirituality or the community pedagogy. The community pedagogics is a new paradigm which presupposes and requires one to live in relation with others when the quality of love is entrenched in the highest values because it is open to another, higher, non-deducted and constant exchange among professors, professors and students, and students (Lubich, 2012).

The Role of a Religious Educator at School

Community spirituality should first arise from the spirituality of family love, which arises from the spirituality of the divine community of the Trinity (Pope Francis, 2016, par. 313–314).

In this context, the role of a Religious Educator can be understood as that of being a good witness, a specialist and a moderator. The pedagogy of CS involves all these roles while at the same time, within the school context, broadens. The role of a Religious Educator may be discussed from three different perspectives. The first perspective is the position of the Religious Educator himself/herself: life in CS according to the example of an educational family. At the end of the nineteenth century, Paolina Kergonard (as cited in Cardini, 2012) called a school in France "a mother-like school". "A school" because it is related to the consistency and integrity of an educational programme, which requires the professional knowledge of the educator; "mother-like"—because of a natural and cosy way of learning". Similarly, Chiara Lubich attempts to liken the school to a large family where a community is created and community-based and educational relationship dominate. According to Chiara Lubich, dialogue provides the consistent methodology of making people as one (as cited in Gasparini, 2012). If this is not the case and if the person is not perceived as a gift, it is impossible to talk about any dialogue at school. Therefore, this relationship is possible at school only when listening. Thus, a Religious Educator should be a good and attentive "listener". When listening and creating the relationship of community, Love becomes the main method and the Person, a Gift (Zanghí, 2012). In such a case, the role of a Religious Educator is to help young persons to recognize and to open up to the Space of love (de Beni, 2012). The second perspective reveals the role of a Religious Educator very clearly: his/her reciprocity, the expression of which is approaching the other, taking a step to meet the other, seeking for a dialogue, and focusing on community pedagogics.

Avogadri (2012) maintains that according to Chiara Lubich, teaching is not static. Moreover, it is life and face-to-face talking, responding to life's needs and the questions posed. Each pupil is encouraged by a Religious Educator who focuses more on the others and has already found the Master of his/her heart. This discovery becomes the main principle of hermeneutics and life. Thus, from Rosmini to the Catholic pedagogy of the 20th century, this is one of the main topics of pedagogical personalism. It is in principle renewed by Chiara Lubich, providing a hermeneutical dimension of Christ as the Truth and the transcendental dimension 'among,' which we started to define and which was found by Plato in unity among people and in interpersonality, using a contemporary term (Avogadri, 2012). Therefore, each Religious Educator has to develop himself/herself, encouraging the pupils' trust in him/her.

The third perspective is the educator's input to pupils on the basis of the pedagogy of CS. One of the most important issues is positive education of young people. On the basis of this education, the Religious Educator uses six main virtues distinguished by Peterson and Seligman (as cited in Rijavec, 2012): Wisdom and knowledge, Determination, Humanness, Justice, Moderation, and Transcendency.

Each of these virtues has cognitive strengths. The virtue of Wisdom and knowledge is the cognitive strength comprised of gaining and applying knowledge—a religious educator encourages creativity in discovering new ways of action, through curiosity by showing interest in new topics and experiences; through openness to think and evaluate from various perspectives; through love for education to gain new skills and knowledge, and through a broad perspective to be able to advise. The second virtue, Determination, an emotional strength and will to reach the aim despite internal and external difficulties is manifested through authenticity and honesty to say the truth; to present yourself as you are; through courage not to retreat when facing dangers, challenges, difficulties, or pain; through persistency to finish the task, and through vitality to view life with joy. These virtues are also transferred to the pupils, and are the outcomes of a religious educator. The third virtue, Humanness, refers to interpersonal strengths such as caring and friendliness towards others and is developed through politeness and generosity. The fourth virtue, Justice, is the basis of a healthy life lived in society and is developed through equality and honesty, that is, treating all people equally under the principles of fairness and non-exploitation, and through leadership. The fifth virtue, Moderation, provides strength to suppress outrageous behaviour by developing forgiveness and the ability to forgive those who mistreat us; developing modesty; letting our achievements speak for us; developing calmness and cautious decision making; avoidance of future regrets and of unnecessary danger, through self-control, of one's feelings and behaviour. The sixth virtue, Transcendency, encourages the strengths in relating with the world and provides meaning to life; it is developed through respect of beauty and mastery: to recognize and respect beauty, mastery, and skills in various spheres of life.

Thus, these three perspectives clearly reveal the usefulness and importance of the integration of CS into RE in order to fully reveal the role of an educator at school.

Conclusions

CS enables the cultures of love and unity, dialogue, and commonality functioning in various spheres of life, including educational institutions. RE refers to the mutual learning of faith on the basis of the main principle of RE, that is, the dialogicity of Jesus. The Biblical perspective is a common indicator of "Community Spirituality" and "Religious Education", through which the integration of CS into RE is possible. The basis of the HCM is formed by the friendship model expressed in the Gospel and the perspective of "normative future". Because of the integration of CS into RE, the HCM forms a new hermeneutical key, that is, CS. In the context of a Catholic school, the content of the HCM acquires a new direction, that is, the pedagogy of CS or community pedagogy. The role of a Religious Educator is formed by three different perspectives. The first is the position of the religious educator himself/herself: life in CS according to the example of an educational family. The second is his/her reciprocity, which is, approaching the other, taking a step to meet the other, seeking a dialogue, and focusing on community pedagogics. The third is the educator's input

to pupils on the basis of the pedagogy of CS. One of the most important outcomes is the positive education of young people. In conclusion, these perspectives reveal the usefulness and importance of the integration of CS into RE in order to fully reveal the role of an educator at school.

References

Avogadri, G. (2012). Method foundations. In M. de Beni, V. Šimović, & A. L. Gasparini (Eds.), *Pedagogy of communion and the Agazzi method* (pp. 184–188). Zagreb: Učiteljski fakultet u Zagrebu.

Biblija arba Šventasis Raštas (ekumeninis leidimas). (2000). Vilnius: Lietuvos Biblijos draugija.

Cantalamessa, R. (2010). *Dvasios giesmė: apie Šventąją Dvasią pagal himną veni creator*. Kaunas: Gyvieji akmenėliai.

Cardini, P. (2012). Education proposal of Rosa Agozzi. The method of reading. In M. de Beni, V. Šimović, & A. L. Gasparini (Eds.), *Pedagogy of communion and the Agazzi method* (pp. 313–321). Zagreb: Učiteljski fakultet u Zagrebu.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. (1993). Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Congregation for Consecrated Life Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life. (2002). *Iš naujo pradėti nuo Kristaus: atnaujinti įsipareigojimą pašvęstajam gyvenimui trečiajame tūkstantmetyje*. Kaunas: Katalikų interneto tarnyba.

de Beni, M. (2012). Educational challenge of thought. In M. de Beni, V. Šimović, & A. L. Gasparini (Eds.), *Pedagogy of communion and the Agazzi method* (pp. 197–200). Zagreb: Učiteljski fakultet u Zagrebu.

Elsbernd, M., & Bieringer, R. (2010). Interpreting the signs of the times in the light of Gospel: Vision and normativity of the future. In R. Bieringer & M. Elsbernd (Eds.), *Normativity of the future: Reading biblical and other authoritative texts in an eschatological perspective* (pp. 47–90). Leuven: Peeters.

Gadamer, H.-G. (2006). *Truth and method*. New York: Continuum.

Gasparini, A. L. (2012). Towards new perspective of studying. In M. de Beni, V. Šimović, & A. L. Gasparini (Eds.), *Pedagogy of communion and the Agazzi method* (pp. 181–183). Zagreb: Učiteljski fakultet u Zagrebu.

Lombaerts, H. (2007a). Krikščioniškųjų mokyklų organizacijos kultūra. In H. Lombaerts (Ed.), *Krikščioniškų mokykla vadyba ir organizavimas* (pp. 187–217). Kaunas: Marijonų talkininkų centras.

Lombaerts, H. (2007b). Religinio švietimo vieta mokyklose. In H. Lombaerts (Ed.), *Krikščioniškų mokykla vadyba ir organizavimas* (pp. 61–86). Kaunas: Marijonų talkininkų centras.

Lombaerts, H., & Pollefeyt, D. (2004a). The emergence of hermeneutics in religious education theories. In H. Lombaerts & D. Pollefeyt (Eds.), *Hermeneutics and religious education* (pp. 3–54). Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Lombaerts, H., & Pollefeyt, D. (2004b). Foreword. In H. Lombaerts, & D. Pollefeyt (Eds.), *Hermeneutics and religious education* (pp. VII–XIII). Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Lubich, Ch. (1997). *Kada matėme Tave?*. Vilnius: Katalikų pasaulis.

Lubich, Ch. (2008). *Meditacijos*. Vilnius: Katalikų pasaulio leidiniai.

Lubich, Ch. (2011). *Akimirkos paslaptis*. Vilnius: VšĮ „Bernardinai.lt".

Lubich, Ch. (2012). Creating relationship of community. In M. de Beni, V. Šimović, & A. L. Gasparini (Eds.), *Pedagogy of communion and the Agazzi method* (pp. 173–174). Zagreb: Učiteljski fakultet u Zagrebu.

Paulauskas, S. (1999). *Savivaldos dialektika*. Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla.

Pollefeyt, D. (2008). Difference matters. A hermeneutic-communicative concept of didactics of religion in a European multi-religious context. *Journal of Religious Education, 56*(1), 9–17.

Pollefeyt, D., & Bieringer, R. (2010). The role of the Bible in religious education reconsidered. Risks and challenges in teaching the Bible. In R. Bieringer, & M. Elsbernd (Eds.), *Normativity of the future: Reading biblical and other authoritative texts in an eschatological perspective* (pp. 377–402). Leuven: Peeters.

Pope Benedict XVI. (2005). *Encyclical letter Deus caritas est.* Retrieved from: http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html.

Pope Benedict XVI. (2011). *Apostalic letter motu proprio data. Porta fidei*. Retrieved from: http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20111011_porta-fidei.html.

Popiežius Benediktas, X. V. I. (2012). *Liturgijos dvasia*. Vilnius: Katalikų pasaulio leidiniai.

Pope Francis. (2016). *Post-synodal apostolic exhortation Amoris laetitia.* Retrieved from https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf.

Pope John Paul II. (1979). *Apostolic exhortation* Catechesi Tradendae. *On Catechesis in our time*. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html.

Ricoeur, P. (2000). *Interpretacijos teorija: diskursas ir reikšmės perteklius*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos.

Rienecker, L., & Jørgensen, P. S. (2003). *Kaip rašyti mokslinį darbą*. Vilnius: Aidai.

Rijavec, M. (2012). Positive psychology in the development of young people. In M. de Beni, V. Šimović, & A. L. Gasparini (Eds.), *Pedagogy of communion and the Agazzi method* (pp. 255–257). Zagreb: Učiteljski fakultet u Zagrebu.

Second Vatican Council. (1965a). *Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions. Nostra Aetate.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.

Second Vatican Council. (1965b). Decree Ad Gentes. *On the mission activity of the Church*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html.

Second Vatican Council. (1965c). *Dogmatic constitution on divine revelation. Dei Verbum.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html.

Second Vatican Council. (1965d). *Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world. Gaudium et Spes.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

Stumbra, S. (2012). The features of expression of Catholic religiosity in early youth. *Soter: Journal of Religious Science, 43*(71), 113–134.

Tha Ling Sum, L. (2012a). A study of the Louvain hermeneutical-communicative model of religious education from an Asian perspective. *East Asian Pastoral Institute, East Asian Pastoral Review, 49*(2), 170–183.

Tha Ling Sum, L. (2012b). Engaging belief: A study of a hermeneutical-communicative model of religious education from Asian perspectives. *Paper session: Theology and Church as Context and Perspectives for Religious Education* (pp. 1–4). Retrieved from: http://teo.au.dk/fileadmin/www.teo.au.dk/forskning/aktuel_forskning/11th_Nordic_conference_on_Religious_Education/Full_papers/2.1.Lucas_Sum.pdf.

Teresevičienė, M., Linkaitytė, G. M., Gedvilienė, G., Sajienė, L., & Valiuškevičiūtė, A. (2005). *Edukologijos magistro studijose rengiami darbai: metodiniai nurodymai*. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas.

Vasiliauskaitė, A. (2010). *Pastoral models at the convent of the Benedictine sisters of Kaunas from the end of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century*. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas.

Vasiliauskaitė, A. (2014). *The possibilities for the application of pastoral hermeneutical-communicative model in the Benedictine women communities of Kaunas, Otwock and Alexanderdorf within the context of pastoral care of Silence*. Kaunas: Vytauto Didziojo universitetas.

Zanghí, G. M. (2012). The night of European culture. In M. de Beni, V. Šimović, & A. L. Gasparini (Eds.), *Pedagogy of Communion and the Agazzi Method* (pp. 212–216). Zagreb: Učiteljski fakultet u Zagrebu.

Dr. Ausra (sr. Gabriele, OSB) Vasiliauskaite holds a Ph.D. in humanities (theology) and lectures at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at VMU, Lituania.

Chapter 37
Applying René Girard's Mimetic Theory in the Religious Education Classroom

Eugene P. McElhinney

Introduction

In Ireland today one can see a drift away by an entire generation from a regular and sustained practice of the faith within the liturgical calendar of worship. The current Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Diarmuid Martin, in an address to German bishops in the Diocese of Wartzburg summed up this situation when he said,

> there are parishes in Dublin where the presence at Sunday Mass is some 5% of the Catholic population, and in some cases, even below 2%. On any particular Sunday about 18% of the Catholic population of the Archdiocese of Dublin attend Mass. That figure may be higher in some other parts of Ireland. (2017, p. 5)

By opting out of weekly Mass attendance these absentees seem to be content with a less overtly spiritual way of life. In this sense, one could say that they lean towards what Taylor (2009) in referring to a post Reformation sensibility, characterised as 'an affirmation of ordinary life'. Irish schoolchildren would also appear to be less committed to their faith. As Archbishop Martin expressed it:

> Young Irish people travel and despite most of them attending Catholic schools for twelve years or more they are as secularised as the young people of any European Nation. Irish Catholic young people are among the most catechised and least evangelised in Europe. (2017, p. 6)

Given this situation, the research question addressed here is, 'How do teachers of religious education re-set their teaching strategies to engage pupils who seem to have abandoned the practice of a faith that does not speak to their needs?' In an attempt to redress this situation, this chapter will suggest how René Girard's mimetic theory can reveal to pupils new insights about the biblical history of salvation that is more relevant to their lives. Out of this should emerge a new Soteriology that will provide a new understanding of the doctrine of Atonement. At the outset, Girard's mimetic

E. P. McElhinney (✉)
Loreto College Coleraine, Coleraine, Northern Ireland, UK

theory will be outlined. This will necessitate its application to the lives of pupils in preparation for an exploration of the biblical dimension.

Before exploring Girard's contribution to biblical exegesis it is necessary to identify how his insights relate to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Our reference point here is the Church's General Directory for Catechesis (1997). In the words of Groome,

> The General Directory for Catechesis gathers together such wisdom and principles, and does so with the magisterial authority of the universal Catholic community; it accurately reflects the 'mind of the Church'. (2010, p. 15)

Among a number of Guiding Principles, the Directory (1997, par. 130) enumerates that the 'seven foundation stones' of catechesis are, first, 'the three phases in the narration of the history of salvation'—the Old Testament, New Testament, and era of the Church, and then 'the Creed, Sacraments, Morality and Prayer'. It is to the first three of these that Girard's insights relate.

Mimetic Theory

There are three broad aspects to the mimetic theory that pupils need to understand before the teacher can lead them to an appreciation of the theory to their lives and to seeing how Girard's biblical hermeneutic is revealed.

Aspect 1: The Triangularity of Human Desire

Girard (1965) had a particular epiphany while studying secular texts. In 'Deceit, Desire and the Novel' he noted a common theme in the writings of Cervantes, Flaubert, Stendhal, Proust and Dostoevsky. Each author in varying degrees had discovered in the course of their writing that their central characters, far from having autonomous desires were in fact driven by the desires of each other. From this discovery, Girard formulated his mimetic theory extending it to all manner of desires from acquisitive desire, which is towards physical objects, to metaphysical desire that is qualities of being.

This imitation of the desire of another is what Girard calls 'mimesis'. He was not the first to draw our attention to the imitative process that has enabled the human species to develop its ability to advance linguistically, socially and culturally through infants' imitation of elders. Girard (1987) notes for instance, that seeing mimesis simply as imitation can be traced back to Plato who regarded it simply as representation to 'types of behaviour, manners, individual or collective habit, as well as words, phrases, and ways of speaking', but goes on to point out that Plato failed to explain kinds of behaviour that involved appropriation. This is because Plato did not take into account the role of the intermediary, the model, in the act of imitating. This tri-

angular nature of human desire means that in our daily lives we are constantly being affected by this dynamic which gives the lie to the notion that we are autonomous, freely choosing individuals. Sebastian Moore, in his foreword to Alison (1998) puts it well when he writes,

> I naturally think my desire is mine, is of me, that I am its subject and I know what I want. But so to think is not to see that desire is making me. Desire is awakened in me by the sight of another desiring. This model-aroused desire feels the other as rival and it is this over-against-the-otherness that makes me feel me. (p. viii)

The young people in our religious education classes today live in a media-rich world. They have access to images and ideas from a global community, which may be inimical to religious belief. Gallagher (1997) noted this emerging trend in the late nineties when he observed, 'Our receptivity for revelation is more shaped by culture than by philosophical clarities. We seldom live by ideas or ideologies but rather by images of life communicated by our surrounding worlds' (p. 4).

Barry (1995) warned us that the '… influence of culture escapes our consciousness' and that we need to find' (p. 6) '… how any of us encultured human beings can become free enough from our culture to be believers' (p. 21).

This gives the lie to the notion of individual autonomy, as mimetic theory has demonstrated. So how do we expose this lie to our students? As they move through adolescence our students seek to find their own identities, struggling as they do so with the mores and standards of their parents' generations. As conflicting voices come from all directions in a media-rich world, one is compelled to ask, as Gallagher (1997) p. 13 does, 'Who is imagining your life for you?' Girard's answer would be the model, whose desire becomes yours. We can point out that this imitative process is part of their development. We can explain that as infants they learned to desire what their parents proposed as good outcomes and not to desire what was indicated as bad outcomes. Imitating their desire to follow the good outcomes generated their parents' approval and positively reinforced their sense of worth, while daring to desire bad outcomes generated their disapproval and lowered their sense of worth. The imitative impulse was ingrained in them. Their desire to imitate drives them. As Alison (1998) puts it, 'It is the force by which each of us is drawn into the relational systems of the human race' (p. 29).

We can also invite our students to reflect on how, especially in their early years, they admired their parents, that as Girard would claim, they desired *being*, something they lacked and which some other person seems to possess. Regarding this metaphysical desire, Girard observes:

> The subject ….. looks to the other person to inform him of what he should desire in order to acquire that being. If the model, who is apparently already endowed with superior being, desires some object, that object must surely be capable of conferring an even greater plenitude of being. (1979, p. 146)

At a mundane level, second-level students could be asked to explain why, when they want to buy sportswear they invariably choose items with the leading commercial brand names, especially if they have been endorsed by famous sportspeople, and why they would resist wearing non-descript sportswear with no endorsements. Can they

see that their desires are being mediated by others, their models, and that they are borrowing esteem from their models to feel valued among them?

Having alerted students to how mimetic desire moves from the acquisitive desire for objects to metaphysical desire for what O'Conaill (2004) calls other-esteem and shame, the teacher could introduce a number of school-based scenarios to illustrate the problem: envy in sport over captaincy of school teams; envy in academic life over who wins most top grades in examinations; envy over who gets the lead in the school musical.

Both O'Conaill (2004) and McElhinney (2013) have provided teaching guidelines to answer Gallagher's question, 'Who is imagining your life for you', through their application of mimetic theory to issues that dominate the lives of modern teenagers. Where McElhinney (2013) gives broad guidelines on how mimetic theory informs moral choices. In *Solomon's Gift*, O'Conaill (2004) provides a structured programme, from the basics of mimetic theory to its outworking in the Christian history of salvation.

Aspect 2: Mimesis Has the Potential for Rivalry and Violence

Once pupils discover the pervasive nature of mimesis in their lives they can begin to understand how it has the potential to generate rivalry with the further danger of the occurrence of violence.

Modern societies have to be able to minimise conflict and violence and this is achieved by the presence of comprehensive legal and punitive systems. In Girard's reading (1979) of our anthropology, things were very different at the dawn of civilisation. In the process of hominization, our primitive ancestors had to find a way of controlling the violence that was the inevitable consequence of mimetic rivalry. As rivalry and consequent violence escalated, a controlling mechanism had to be found to diffuse the situation. Quite unconsciously and spontaneously, the controlling mechanism was the deflection of the rage of the warring parties to a single victim who was murdered or expelled. The single victim became the scapegoat. As Girard expresses it, 'When we examine the great stories of origin and the founding myths, we notice that they themselves proclaim the fundamental and founding role of the single victim and his or her unanimous murder' (2001, p. 82).

As a result of this murder, the conflict mysteriously ceases, thus confirming the guilt of the victim he or she was the cause of the conflict. From being demonised as the cause of the conflict, he/she is now divinised as a god-like figure that brought peace. In subsequent conflicts, this process would have been repeated over and over again for millennia, and so began a pattern which formed the basis of religion and culture (Girard, 1979).

What second-level students will be well aware of is the potential for bullying in schools, both physical and cyber-based. O'Higgins-Norman (2011) has demonstrated some of the disastrous consequences of cyber-based bullying. Following Girard's mimetic theory the teacher could explain that in situations, where mimetic rivalry,

conflict and possible violence are constrained by social boundaries such as school rules, protagonists seek a way to deflect their mutual antagonism on someone who is too weak to defend himself/herself. By making a scapegoat of an innocent student they are united in heaping their antipathies on this victim and this deflects it from each other. O'Higgins-Norman cites this example,

> …young adolescent men who are insecure and who compete with each other for identity, power and masculinity in the school setting will, instead of attacking each other, together attack those who are considered to be weak or easier to destroy such as other young males who do not appear to conform to heteronormativity. (2011, p. 295)

Following this exposition of how Girard's mimetic theory reveals to students the triangular nature of human desire, it's potential for rivalry, conflict and victimisation, the stage is set for revealing the profound significance of this theory in the biblical history of salvation.

Aspect 3: The Biblical Account of Salvation History Reveals the Innocence of the Victim

In his book 'The Scapegoat', Girard (1989) shows us how 'the scapegoat' has been a feature of human society from its origins. He finds evidence for his claim in the texts of persecution that are extant but goes further in his hermeneutic of suspicion to reveal, as noted earlier, the same mechanism at work in the myths that abound in all human cultures.

Girard (1989) refers to a fourteenth-century text by Guillaume de Machaut called 'Judgement of the King of Navarre' in which all kinds of disasters befall a community. Jews living in the community were suspected of having poisoned several rivers and fountains. Having become the scapegoats for what scholars think was the Black Plague, Guillaume goes on to describe their fate, as reported in Hoeppfner (1908) "Then every Jew was destroyed, some hanged, others burned; some were drowned, others beheaded with an axe of sword. And many Christians died with them in shame' (pp. 144–145).

In his analysis of this and other texts of persecution Girard points out that the accounts are those of the persecutors, who believe that the victim of their violence is guilty. In some cases, the victim is expelled rather than killed, thus resembling the 'scapegoat' of Leviticus 16. James G. Williams in his foreword to Girard (2001), says, 'So, sacrifice and scapegoating are two different expressions of the same reality, the victim mechanism by which human societies have typically operated. The mechanism is the origin of human culture, or 'founding murder' (p. xv).

In his examination of myths, Girard (2001) claims that a 'myth' is really a story about the origins of a community. However, the story of the myth is a cover up of a founding murder. Analysing the myth of Oedipus, Girard identifies numerous stereotypes of persecution. The first one is the crisis: Thebes is being ravaged by plague. There must be a reason for this. Oedipus is identified as the one responsible

because he has killed his father and married his mother. This is the second stereotype; a culprit is identified. To end the epidemic the culprit has to be expelled. The crimes of parricide and incest threaten order within a community. Specifically, these crimes are oblivious of their differences to the community's norms. There is a danger of contagion, so action needs to be taken. Oedipus fulfils another stereotype of persecution: he is disabled because he limps. If this wasn't enough he is also a stranger, despite the fact that he is a king and son of a king. In this myth, as in all others that Girard has analysed, the victim is presumed to be guilty. We never hear an account of the crisis from the perspective of the victim.

Having explored Girard's (2001) interpretation of a number of secular texts of persecution senior pupils are now ready to see how a mimetic interpretation applies to a sacred text. Traditionally students have been introduced to The Fall as described in Gn 3 as the great act of disobedience by our first parents. As a result, all the evils that we experience including violence and death are visited upon us. But God does not abandon us. In the biblical history of salvation, God tries to repair the damaged relationship by establishing a covenant with a 'chosen' people who through observance of His Law will make up for the original disobedience. However, this solution is theologically faulty because it is humankind's responsibility to repair the damage, not God. But because of the nature of the Person offended humankind would never be able to make restitution. Hence the need for God's Son to become man, who takes upon Himself the sins of humankind by living and dying in obedience to His Father. As the new Adam, his total obedience to God even unto death makes restitution for Adam's disobedience. This interpretation is known as the substitution account. As Kirwan (2011) expresses it, 'In many understandings of salvation, Jesus pays our debt to God, or forestalls the wrath of the Father by, as it were, standing in for us in the dock' (p. 70). A false reading of this would be that God is petty and vengeful and humankind is ungrateful and sinful.

Girard's (2001) theory of mimesis provides an interpretation that shifts the emphasis from substitution to enlightenment about the dynamics at work in the relationship between God and humankind. In order to do this he has to take us through the history of salvation from The Fall to the Resurrection through his lens of mimesis where we begin to see the three elements discussed above: the triangularity of human desire; the potential for this mimetic desire to lead to rivalry, conflict and scapegoating; the biblical revelation of the innocence of scapegoats. Unravelling all these elements is complex and would be beyond the capacity of second-level pupils to grasp fully but it is possible to give them a general account of Girard's hermeneutic.

Beginning with The Fall, many religious education teachers would have suggested that the sin was the result of pride- our first parents wanting to be God-like, to have what God had, that is, the knowledge of right and wrong. However, this explanation did not go far enough in explaining the dynamic at work. In Girardian terms, the account of The Fall reveals how forbidden desire is mediated by another, first by the serpent to Eve, and then by Eve to Adam. Viewed in this way the narrative indicates that ever since that original misplaced choice, humankind has repeated the pattern by choosing the desires of others rather than of the Creator. As Nuechterlein, expressed

it, 'Choosing our fellow creatures as models for our desiring leads to a perpetual fall from Paradise' (2002, p. 6).

In the story of Cain and Abel (Gn 4), we have the first reported murder. The cause of killing arose out of Cain's jealousy of Abel (Gn 4:1-8)). In Girardian terms, violence occurs as a consequence of rivalry, albeit a rivalry based on religious rivalry over who has God's favour. For Girard (2001), 'The name "Cain" designates the first community gathered around the first founding murder' (p. 85). Later he explains how the account of this murder is not a founding myth but rather a biblical interpretation of all founding myths.

Other stories familiar to secondary pupils which reveal the mimetic dynamic are the account of the rivalry between Sarah and Hagar (Gn 16-21) and the story of Esau and Jacob (Gn 27) Given what the pupils will now have understood about mimetic theory these stories will be more revealing than before.

The story of Joseph and his brothers is another important mimetic incident recounted in the bible and one which appeals to teenage pupils who identify with the young Joseph. Specifically, it has the hallmarks of a persecution text: in the relationship between the victim (Joseph) and the persecuting community (Joseph's brothers, and later Potiphar's wife). Joseph escapes death while an animal is substituted as a victim by his brothers; an accusation of a sexual (incestuous?) relationship with Potiphar's wife which has echoes of the Oedipus myth to the extent that Potiphar was a substitute father to Joseph. The important point is that Joseph is reconciled to his brothers. There is no sacralisation of the victim. Joseph is not demonised and he is not divinised. He remains human and forgives his brothers. There is no violent resolution.

Even before we get to the Passion narrative we discover that Jesus is not bound by our envious mimetic desire. In his lifestyle and teaching, he presents a picture of un-obstacle desire. His sole desire is to do the will of His Father and in so doing he exposes the problems faced by humanity caught up in covetousness, rivalry and violence. His rejection of the devil's imagining of a life for him based on pride, covetousness and earthly glory as recounted in the Temptation in the Desert (Mt 4:1-11) reveals this.

A traditional way of introducing secondary pupils to the revolutionary nature of Jesus' teaching is to initiate a discussion on the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). Irish pupils use the Irish Catechetical Programme. In 'Fully Alive 3' (Morgan & O'Reilly, 2006), which is the textbook for 13–14-year olds, the Beatitudes are presented as ideals in the kingdom of God. Pupils are usually impressed with the lofty ideals embedded in these and in the Sermon but struggle to agree with such counsels of perfection. The idea of 'turning the other cheek' seems particularly out of kilter with their experience of coping with playground bullies. Likewise, the idea that merely desiring sexual relations with someone is as bad morally as the actuality of it, seems harsh. Commenting on these ideals in a book of conversations (Berry, 2015) Girard pointed out the paradoxical nature of the Beatitudes wherein we discover a reversal. As he put it, '…what Jesus says is that ultimately it's better to go through the Passion with him than to be successful in the world'. Pupils aged 13–14 would struggle to accept such a radical interpretation but with an insight into the dynamics of mimesis

they should begin to appreciate that Jesus' teaching addresses mimetic conflict at its source: the desire of the heart and that pacific mimesis can break the cycle of retributive violence of the Lex Talionis ('an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth') as found in Ex 21:22-25. Teenage pupils are aware that violence is endemic in society and are familiar with the short-term counter-violent solutions popularly portrayed in the media. 'Good' violence seems to triumph over 'bad' violence. In. Berry (2015), Girard counters such a view:

> It's always the paradox of violent resistance being part of evil, because we regard the other as the aggressor, but the other regards us as the aggressor and he sees himself as the resistor. So ultimately, it's the same on all sides; you're preparing for more battles of twins, more tragedies. (p. 161)

The teacher can explain to pupils that rivalry and violence constitute bad mimesis while forgiveness and reconciliation constitute good mimesis. The latter is the only way of avoiding a mimetic crisis and scapegoating. Applying this to the Gospels it can be pointed out that Jesus' intention was to bring about the kingdom of God without violence. Had he succeeded there would have been no need for the Passion. But since humanity refused Jesus' pacifism he had to submit to the mimetic violence that tortured and killed him despite his innocence and thus expose the scapegoating mechanism that lies at the heart of mimetic cycles.

According to Kirwan (2011), p. 78 it is in Jesus' confrontation with Jewish leaders that the importance of his critique of the scapegoat process becomes clear.

> When the leaders insist that 'we would never have persecuted the prophets in the way our fathers did' (Matthew 22:30) they deceive themselves, and they remain entrapped in the cycle of violence. 'Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed' (Matthew 23:29).

It is in the Passion narrative that Girard (2001) finds the antithesis to the deceitful narratives of myths and persecution texts wherein are found cover-ups about innocent victims' roles in communities' crises. Contrary to what occurs in myths there is no prior demonisation of Jesus and in his death, it is not the mob of persecutors who see Jesus as Son of God. As Girard expresses it,

> …it is a rebellious minority, a small group of dissidents that separates from the collective violence of the crowd and destroys its unanimity. This minority group is the community of the first witnesses to the Resurrection…This dissident minority has no equivalent in the myths. (2001, p. 123)

It would be remiss, however, not to deal with a particular theological difficulty with Girard's views on atonement that we noted earlier. For Heim (2017), 'within theology he opened a bridge over the threatening chasm between theologies of transcendental reconciliation and the historical event on which they are based' (p. 179).

Within a theology of transcendental reconciliation Balthasar frames the problem thus:

> …what takes place on the Cross, according to this theory, if the transferral of the world's guilt to Jesus is only a psychological uploading (as it was in all ritual sacrifice, and if – on the other hand– the power-less Father-God demands nothing in the nature of an atoning sacrifice? (as cited in Kirwan 2011, p. 109)

Kirwan ([2011](#)) draws on the views of Raymond Schwager in support of Girard's position on atonement:

> God is progressively revealed as loving, non violent and on the side of innocent victims. Schwager establishes on this foundation a theory of redemption: Jesus' response of non-vengeance delivers men from the evil and hatred from which they cannot deliver themselves. (p. 107)

While accepting that some aspects of Girard's mimetic theory are theologically controversial, they are beyond the capacity of all but the senior secondary pupils to comprehend. In line with good pedagogy, pupils should be made aware that theologians differ on their interpretations of the doctrine of Atonement but that Girard's position is a legitimate one within his mimetic theory. From a purely teaching point of view high achieving senior pupils could be asked to research Ransom Theory, Moral Influence Theory and Substitution theory as extension work in Soteriology.

Resources that are relevant to the context of one's teaching are important in this enterprise. Where the ideas expressed above would provide an overview, some practical steps would also be needed. Both 'Solomon's Gift' by O'Conaill ([2004](#)) and the novel 'The Chain that Binds the Earth' by O'Conaill ([2015](#)) would provide excellent classroom materials for teasing out the many issues thrown up by an exploration of the effects of mimesis in the lives of young people. One particular source for Irish pupils is the 'persecution text' about the expulsion of St. Columba from Ireland after being blamed for his involvement in the Battle of Cúl Dreimhne in 561 (Stokes, [1936](#)). Another useful resource is the film, 'Lord of the Flies' (1963) based on the novel by Golding ([1954](#)) which deals with the breakdown of civil society, scapegoating and violence when a group of English schoolboys is marooned for an extended period on a remote island.

Conclusion

Religious Educators need to move away from the old authoritarian apologetic to a more positive one based on people's deepest desires (Groome, [2010](#)). This aligns with Girard's ([2001](#)) theory of mimetic desire particularly as applied to Scripture and helps pupils to move away from an essentialist view of human nature as a fixed entity, to an existentialist one where they begin to perceive their human development as an emerging narrative bound up with the mimetic nature of existence. Girard's exposition of the potential for rivalry and conflict in their mimetic-driven lives should lead to a new level of self-understanding particularly in the moral life where heretofore complete autonomy was assumed. Girard's identification of the scapegoat mechanism ought to alert pupils to the dynamics of bullying and help them to deal with this if it features in their social relations. Most of all, the application of Girard's theory to the history of salvation as found in Scripture should give them a revealing hermeneutic.

When Cleopas and his friend encountered the stranger on the road to Emmaus they were distressed and disturbed because, having witnessed events in Jerusalem in the previous days, they were disillusioned by the 'failure' of Jesus of Nazareth to vindicate his claim to be the Messiah. 'But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel' (Lk 24:21). In the story, it says 'And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself' (Lk 24:27). Later, when Jesus shares a Eucharistic meal with them '… their eyes were opened and they recognized him' (Lk 24:30). He leaves them and they exclaim, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures'? (Lk 24:32). This new understanding of the scriptures was a profound epiphany and changed their lives. Hopefully, Girard's interpretation of the Scriptures will provide an epiphany for teenage pupils.

References

Alison, J. (1998). *The joy of being wrong*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company.

Barry, W. (1995). U.S. culture and contemporary spirituality. *Review for Religious, 54,* 6–21.

Berry, S. (2015). *Reading the bible with René Girard*. Lancaster, PA: JDL Press.

Gallagher, M. P. (1997). *Clashing symbols: An introduction to faith and culture*. London: Darton-Longman and Todd.

Girard, R. (1965). *Deceit, desire and the novel: Self and other in literary structure*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Girard, R. (1979). *Violence and the sacred*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Girard, R. (1987). *Things hidden since the foundation of the world*. Stanford California: University Press.

Girard, R. (1989). *The scapegoat.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Girard, R. (2001). *I see Satan fall like lightning*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Golding, W. (1954). *Lord of the flies*. London: Faber and Faber.

Groome, T. (2010). The "Mind of the Church" in the General directory for catechesis: Where we are now; Reaching beyond. *Theoforum, 41*(1), 11–29.

Heim, M. (2017). Approaches to atonement: How Girard changes the debate. In J. Alison & W. Palaver (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of mimetic theory and religion* (pp. 179–184) https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53825-3_24.

Hoeppfner, E. (1908). Guillaume de Mauchaut, oeuvres, société des anciens textes francais. *Vol.1 Le Jugement du Roy de Navarre.*

Kirwan, M. (2011). *Discovering Girard*. London: Darton-Longman and Todd.

McElhinney, E. P. (2013). Exploring human desire—a neo-experiential approach to catechetics. *Religious Education Journal of Australia, 29*(2).

Martin, D. (2017). The challenge for the Church in the 21st. Century, St. Kilian's Lecture, delivered to Diocese of Wurzburg Germany. Retrieved from http://www.dublindiocese.ie.

Morgan, S., & O'Reilly, P. (2006). *Fully alive: 3 Catholic religious education programme. Year 10, Key Stage 3.* Dublin: Veritas.

Nuechterlein, P. J. (2002). René Girard: The anthropology of the cross as alternative to post-modern literary criticism. Retrieved from: http://www.girardianlectionary.net/girard_postmodern_literary_criticism.htm.

O'Conaill, S. (2004). *Solomon's gift: The spiritual wisdom of the Bible.* pdf. format available at http://www.seanoconaill.com/solomonsgift.

O'Conaill, S. (2015). *The chain that binds the earth*. Bloomington: Author House.

O'Higgins-Norman, J., & Connolly, J. (2011). Mimetic theory and scapegoating in the age of cyber-bullying: The case of Phoebe Prince. *Pastoral Care in Education, 29*(4), 287–300.

Stokes, G. T. (1936). *Ireland and the Celtic Church. A history of Ireland from St. Patrick to the English conquest in 1172*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Taylor, C. (2009). *Sources of the self: The making of the modern identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Dr. Eugene P. McElhinney is a retired head of religious education at Loreto College Coleraine, N. Ireland, UK, and a retired associate lecturer of language and education with the Faculty of Education, The Open University in Ireland.

Chapter 38
Profiling and Enhancing Religious Education in Catholic Schools

Paul Sharkey

Introduction

Two sources inform these reflections on religious education in Catholic schools in Melbourne, Australia. The first source is a post-Conciliar theology of revelation and the second is the Enhancing Catholic School Identity (ECSI) research undertaken over the past decade by the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium) under the auspices of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, Australia. The research question driving this study is: How can religious education in an Australian Catholic school respond to increasing student diversity in ways that are illuminated by a post-conciliar theology of revelation and by findings from the ECSI research? Part One of the study regards the ECSI research instruments through the lens of a Vatican II understanding of revelation. The implications of Part One for religious education are then considered in Part Two of the study. The method used to develop Part One of the chapter was a documentary analysis of relevant magisterial documents and key reports from the ECSI research. Part Two of the chapter was developed from a series of semi-structured interviews of religious educators whose practice exemplified the characteristics presented in Part One.

Part One

The ECSI Research

The ECSI research is promoted by Professor Didier Pollefeyt and carried out by his research team, which is coordinated by Dr. Jan Bouwens. Those who are unfamiliar

P. Sharkey (✉)
Catholic Education Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia
e-mail: psharkey@cem.edu.au

with the research will find it helpful to review the brief video clips which introduce the three core research instruments at www.schoolidentity.net/introduction (see also Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2010, 2014). In other publications, I reflect on the research from the perspective of hermeneutics (Sharkey, 2013), educational practice (Sharkey, 2015) and key challenges which arise from the research findings (Sharkey, 2017).

The ECSI Scales are grounded in a strong theological and cultural analysis and are instruments with a sophisticated level of statistical validation. To date, 320 schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne have engaged in the research over the period 2011–2017 with approximately 34,000 adults and 76,000 students completing surveys for analysis. School and system leaders use the ECSI research to inform their strategic thinking in Catholic identity because they believe it is essential that they design programs for the communities they actually have, not the ones they think they have or wished they had. The ECSI research does more than profile school communities on the basis of sociology as a 'normative position' is declared for each scale and a theological rationale is offered for the advice given to schools to support their movement into those normative positions. Given that the research was undertaken by the theology faculty at a Pontifical University, it is not surprising that the normative positions are grounded in a Vatican II theology of revelation.

The ECSI Scales Illuminated by a Theology of Revelation

Concepts such as 'dialogue' and 'encounter' lie at the heart of a Vatican II understanding of revelation and sound as a leitmotif through the ECSI research. The understanding of God encountering and being in dialogue with humanity is found in the Conciliar Constitution on revelation where God 'out of an abundance of love' speaks to humanity as 'friends and lives among them' (Second Vatican Council, 1965a, par. 2). 'Encounter' was placed front and centre in the opening paragraph of Benedict XVI's first encyclical: 'Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction' (Pope Benedict XVI, 2005, par. 1).

O'Collins (2016) presented the Conciliar position on revelation as being primarily an interpersonal encounter between the believer and God and only secondarily an encounter that gives rise to propositions or truths about God. Whilst the encounter with God is primary in revelation, this encounter always gives rise to knowledge about God. Over the millennia, the content of revelation has been expressed in various elements of tradition such as Scripture, creeds and other doctrinal statements, the liturgy, icons and other works of sacred art and music.

The implications for religious education of the theology of revelation enunciated at Vatican II are profound and have been articulated well from a Rahnerian perspective in Hinsdale (2001). The Vatican II theology of revelation provides a foundation for the ECSI research which is considered below through the focal points of dialogue, encounter and revealed truth.

The Post-Critical Belief (PCB) Scale is developed on the basis of two dimensions: one representing whether the respondent(s) experience God as a personal presence in their lives and the other representing whether religious faith is experienced and processed literally or symbolically. The four quadrants in the scale are External Critique, Relativism, Literal Belief and Post-Critical Belief. Those in External Critique reject God and therefore the truth revealed by God. Relativists also do not have a sense of God being present to them but they are quite prepared to accept that others may hold religious beliefs since the relativist position is that there is no absolute truth—all we have are human constructions—and so one person's 'truth' is as good as the next person's (provided it does not claim a status beyond being merely an opinion). The Literal Belief quadrant is oriented towards the truths that have been revealed and authoritatively defined in past encounters with God and those at the extreme end of this quadrant believe that revealed truths are fixed and clearly communicable in ways that do not require interpretation.

The 'normative position' in the ECSI research is a low/high position in the Post-Critical Belief quadrant: lower on interpretation and higher on God's presence. This means God is strongly present to the Post-Critical believer and knowable in mediations such as Scripture, prayer, liturgy and life-giving relationships. Post-Critical belief (sometimes known as sacramental realism) encounters the divine presence in and through the mediation. Whilst God is knowable, there is always a degree of interpretation required of what is revealed. The normative position is not placed at the upper end of the symbolic axis in the PCB scale, however, because the researchers want to make it clear that God is positively known in the mediations, rather than being remote and unknowable. The lower position on the symbolic axis represents a positive theological stance, in contrast to an apophatic one. This normative position cannot be reconciled to atheism, relativism or any options which minimise or make remote the dialogue/encounter with God or the knowability of the truths which have been revealed in that dialogue/encounter.

The normative positions in the other two ECSI scales (the Melbourne Scale and the Victoria Scale) are also grounded in a post-conciliar understanding of revelation. The sloping sides of the Melbourne Scale represent the increasing gap between the Christian worldview and the dominant worldview in Western culture. Those in the secularist position of the scale eschew the dialogue/encounter with God as well as the truths that have been revealed in that dialogue. Those who take the Reconfessionalising position emphasise the dialogue with God but minimise the dialogue with context, so there is no sense that an ongoing process of dialogue/encounter is required in order for God's truths to be received and reformulated in the believer's life-world of meaning. Those in the Christian Values Education (CVE) position seek to correlate (link) Christian faith with the believer's culture and when the believer has a strong faith background these correlations work. Increasingly though students do not come with a strong background in areas such as doctrine or liturgy so the correlations fail and the CVE strategy becomes reductionist so that, for example, doctrine is reduced to mainstream cultural values, prayer to a form of mindfulness that does not encounter Christ, liturgy to 'God lite' ritual, social action unnourished

by an encounter with Christ, or even a version of Catholic faith that does not include the resurrection (Rymarz, 2017).

The ECSI normative position is Recontextualisation, which embraces an ongoing dialogue/encounter with God so that God's revelation is actively received and reformulated so that it makes sense in the believer's context and world of meaning. The reformulation needs to be faithful to what has been revealed in the past 'for the deposit of Faith or the truths are one thing and the manner in which they are enunciated, in the same meaning and understanding, is another' (Second Vatican Council, 1965b, par. 62). This position sits well alongside Catholic figures such as Joseph Ratzinger who stated at the time of the Council that revelation does not exist until it has been received in faith by the believer (Ratzinger, 1966) and John Paul II (1982) who noted that a faith that has not been enculturated is a faith that has not been received (Pope John Paul II, 1982). John Paul II's repeated call for a new evangelisation that was new in 'ardour, methods and expression' further reinforces this point which became a hallmark of his pontificate (see for instance Pope John Paul II, 1983). Pope Francis' continuous reflections on dialogue, discernment and encounter (for instance Pope Francis, 2015) significantly amplify these themes as do recent statements from the Congregation for Catholic Education (2013, 2014, 2017).

Culture is presented in the ECSI research as being shaped by pluralising, detraditionalising and individualising currents. Believers in a pluralising culture are confronted with a variety of options for interpreting their world and they are very aware that questions of truth and meaning can be resolved from many perspectives. The individualising context means that individuals decide for themselves what to believe, rather than feeling bound to a particular religious or philosophical worldview. In a detraditionalising context religious traditions are not passed on from one generation to the next as easily as they once were.

A comprehensive review of our current cultural context lies beyond the scope of this chapter but it should be noted that the ECSI analysis aligns with the findings of other recognised Australian cultural commentators—for example Hugh Mackay's reflections on the rising phenomenon of people who describe themselves as 'spiritual but not religious' (Mackay, 2016). The individualising and detraditionalising dimensions of our culture are also present in Charles Taylor's 'ethic of authenticity', where the fundamental task for each individual is to realise their humanity by fashioning their own unique way of being human (Taylor, 1991). Further reinforcement of the cultural analysis underpinning ECSI occurs in the research of Philip Hughes, where he found that Australian young people seek to 'put life together themselves' in their own creative way rather than belonging to an already-established system of belief (Hughes, 2007). Hughes (2017) explores these themes further in his review of the post-traditional and multifaith characteristics of Australian culture.

The 2016 ABS Census provided stark confirmation of the rapidly changing operating environment for Catholic Schools in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). While Catholics remain the largest religious group in Australia, they are now exceeded in number by those who are classified as No Religion. Almost a third of Australians are classified as No Religion in the 2016 Census, up by 8% on the previous census in 2011 and an increase of more than 3000% on the 1966 census. The

pluralising context of our Australian religious landscape is starkly apparent in the following observation from Gary Bouma: 'Australia now has more Muslims and more Buddhists than Presbyterians; more Hindus than Baptists or Lutherans; and nearly as many Sikhs as Lutherans' (Bouma, 2017). The changing place of religion in Australia is evident not only demographically but also in media commentary on issues as diverse as same-sex marriage, Islamic extremism and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Religious education in Australia at this time needs to be viable in a context where students insist on having agency and voice as they construct their belief systems, where the impact of religious traditions is minimal for many and where Catholic faith is but one option among a wide variety of religious and non-religious life stances. Rather than lamenting this cultural context, the ECSI research frames it as an environment that is potentially enriching for Catholic identity provided the appropriate dispositions and strategies are in place. The challenge will be to provide forms of religious education that respond effectively to this religious diversity without compromising Catholic beliefs or alienating students by seeking to impose a version of the Catholic faith on them that they are unable to receive.

The third and final scale in the ECSI research is the Victoria Scale which is developed on two dimensions: the extent to which a school identifies as a Catholic school and the extent to which the school engages with worldviews that differ from a Catholic perspective. Each of the four school types derived from those dimensions are now considered in turn: the Colourless School, the Colourful School, the Monologue School and the Dialogue School. The Colourless School is a secularised environment where one's religious commitment and personal philosophy are positioned as belonging to the private realm rather than being disclosed openly in a public forum such as a school. In contrast, the Colourful School invites students to engage with questions of meaning from any and all perspectives within the pluralising school community but there is no commitment in this school type to a Catholic mission where revelation is intentionally and systematically addressed in the educational process. The Monologue School ensures that the revealed truths of Catholic faith are foregrounded in the life of the community but the expressions of other perspectives, faiths and philosophies are suppressed as they are seen as compromising the school's Catholic identity. The normative position in the Victoria Scale lies with the Dialogue School which takes a 'both/and' approach where each person's philosophical and religious perspectives are included and respected in an ongoing school dialogue which deliberately and systematically engages with Catholic faith. The outcome of the ongoing dialogue is genuinely open in the sense that individuals are not coerced into Catholic faith but they are regularly invited to appreciate its meaning and message by those who witness to its value and richness. Diversity is welcomed, not only because to do otherwise means students switch off and stop listening but more importantly because we see in the Gospels that Jesus deeply encountered people when he engaged with them—consider, for example the Emmaus Story or the Samaritan Woman at the Well.

We have seen in the above summary that the ECSI research promotes the post-critical belief that is nurtured in an ongoing dialogue that is explicitly Catholic

and fully engaged with the diverse contexts and worldviews of all parties to the dialogue. A key finding from the ECSI research is that as students mature from their Primary schooling years into Secondary schooling, they move into options that are less desirable from the perspective of the Catholic school's mission. For example, in the Melbourne Scale, whereas only 10% of students affirm a Secularisation of their school in Year 5/6, this percentage increases more than fourfold by Year 11/12. Reconfessionalisation drops from 19 to 7% and Recontextualisation from 34 to 13% in that same period. Similar trends away from the normative positions occur in the PCB and Victoria Scales.

Part Two

The second part of this study was undertaken by interviewing religious educators whose practice was identified as being responsive to the challenges presented by the ECSI research. One of the hallmarks of such practice is that it opens up the particularity of Catholic faith at the same time as it actively engages the pluralised worlds of the teachers and their students.

The Challenge of Particularity

In a memorable phrase, Lieven Boeve argued that there is 'no such thing as a religious Esperanto into which every religion can be translated' (Boeve, 2014, p. 331). This is so because every religion has its own grammar and vocabulary—its own particularity—and something essential is lost when a religious tradition's narratives, rituals, doctrines or practices are reduced, suppressed or stripped away to make the religious tradition more accessible to a wider audience. To Boeve's metaphor, I would add the metaphor of the love that a mother has for her child or the friendship experienced by two lifetime companions. The richness of the mother's love cannot be reduced to a few dot points about her child and neither can the knowledge and tenderness of friendships that are long and deep. So it is with believers and their faith. In a Catholic context, the experience of Christ truly present in the Eucharist cannot be reduced to a slogan, a theme or a so-called 'Gospel value' and neither can the Word of God active in the Scriptures or the profound beliefs about human life enshrined in the moral and social teachings of the Church.

Here we are taken to the deep challenge that lies at the heart of the ECSI research and is such a focus for the professional reflection of effective religious educators in our time. How can students in a school environment engage with a living and authentic experience of Catholic faith, given the pluralising, detraditionalising and individualising context described above? The following observation from the General Directory for Catechesis is illuminating:

In the case of students who are believers, religious instruction assists them to understand better the Christian message. … Those students who are searching, or who have religious doubts, can also find in religious instruction the possibility of discovering what exactly faith in Jesus Christ is, what response the Church makes to their questions, and gives them the opportunity to examine their own choice more deeply. In the case of students who are non-believers, religious instruction assumes the character of a missionary proclamation of the Gospel and is ordered to a decision of faith, which catechesis, in its turn, will nurture and mature. (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, par. 75)

The religious education practice of Mother Teresa Primary School in the northern fringe of the Melbourne metropolitan area is now considered in light of the challenges and opportunities presented in our current cultural context. The Mother Teresa school community is comprised of families that come from a number of Catholic rites including Latin, Chaldean, Melkite, Syro-Malabar and Maronite rites. While the majority of students are Catholics of the Latin rite, there are a growing number of Chaldean Catholics and a small number of other Christian families as well as Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh across the school.

From the moment one walks into the school, it is clear that one is entering a carefully and deliberately structured learning environment with a strong focus on student engagement and a clear commitment to engaging students with Catholic beliefs and practices. When teachers were asked to describe the religious education pedagogies they employed to engage students from diverse backgrounds, they spoke easily and naturally about their use of Scripture, Church teaching, prayer, liturgy and the diocesan religious education text. They referenced educational researchers such as Ritchhart (2017) and Murdoch (2015), who provided an empirically based research foundation for a Culture of Thinking and Inquiry-Based approach for learning across the curriculum, including religious education, literacy and numeracy. The teachers were familiar with the criticisms of inquiry learning as a methodology but argued that these critiques are often based on versions of inquiry learning which imagine students are being left to fend for themselves as they learn. The interviewees said that their approach to inquiry learning was highly structured with teachers in their school being very clear about the processes needed to guide and scaffold students in their learning, foster curiosity, activate their prior knowledge and identify appropriate sources for their inquiry. The teachers had clear expectations for their students and were very positive about their natural curiosity, their capacity to ask questions to find out more and in this sense to engage in their version of theological reflection.

One of the reasons why I refer to this approach in this study is that it opened up spaces for the students to engage richly with the Catholic faith in its particularity and in the context of what mattered most in the students' lives. A key feature of the pedagogy is around the 'big question' that drives the inquiry and it is important that the question is chosen well so that there is clarity around the learning intention and a clear relevance and interest in it for the students, as well as being faithful to something foundational in the Catholic faith. As the students mature, the teachers offer greater independence to students in their learning. Although the weekly whole school liturgy happens outside the religious education classroom, the liturgy and the Scripture within it are deliberately unpacked in the learning spaces over the course of

the following week because it is recognised that many families do not participate in the liturgy in their parish on a Sunday. The Scripture is framed as a 'provocation' and students are led into an inquiry to deepen their understanding of its significance for their lives. The teachers were also clear that if they are going to structure meaningful learning experiences for their students in relation to the Scripture, they themselves needed to have done their own inner-work beforehand. Time was allocated in the staff meetings after school each week to reflect on the Scripture passages and engage in the same learning processes as the students. Biblical commentaries are also studied so that the process is informed by scholarship.

The Inquiry-Based Approach aligns well with the issue-oriented approach to religious education advocated by Graham Rossiter and Marissa Crawford, who argue that students quickly switch off when they sense that they are being corralled into a Catholic belief by pedagogies which do not give them the freedom to raise issues or questions that matter to them (Crawford and Rossiter, 2006). Pollefeyt (2008) described the 'shutter phenomenon' where students pull down the shutters when they see that their teacher continually re-frames what is said in the classroom in contrived ways to confect a Catholic correlation. Pollefeyt (2013) proposed a pedagogy which challenged teachers to be more explicit about their integration of Catholic faith but to do so in ways that respected the plurality of the students they were teaching. Rather than squeezing student experience into Catholic forms, the task is to genuinely confront students with difference: difference between their perspectives and other possible perspectives with a special care always being taken to engage students with the claims made by the Catholic faith. There is a debate about the various types of inquiry approaches and the outcomes they realise for students and it is right and proper that Religious Educators engage in these debates to ensure that their approaches are fully grounded in a Catholic mission and in the best educational research and evidence available.

The St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop (SMCM) Catholic Parish Primary School community is also located in the northern edge of the Melbourne metropolitan area with a similar enrolment profile to the school that has just been discussed. Although the interview with teachers at SMCM addressed their pedagogical approach, my focus here is with the sacramental program which loomed large in our conversation about religious education. The teachers spoke about the role played by liturgy and school prayer in their ongoing formation as Catholic educators. One teacher mentioned the question that was asked of staff at the last staff meeting: 'So where has God been for you this morning?' Another teacher referred to the practice at lunchtime where the older students do not start eating until every person is gathered because of the sense of meaning attributed to the meal. The Religious Education Leader spoke about a prayer box that the students developed with prayer activities for the families to use at home and showed me emails from the families who had responded well to this initiative. Another of the teachers admitted that in her first year at the school she was wishing people a Merry Christmas and was told that because they were still in Advent, the practice at the school was to leave it right until the end of the year before moving into a celebration of Christmas. She had the same experience at Easter where the Easter eggs were distributed after the Term break, rather than distorting

the students' experience of Lent. Of course, on one level it does not matter when Easter eggs are distributed but what does matter is whether teachers and students are being invited into formative experiences of the sacred time of the Church's liturgical year. Religious education needs to engage with Catholic faith as a living faith in all its particularity.

The two examples that have just been provided come from Catholic Primary Schools. Space does not permit a detailed review of the other schools and initiatives which were researched in this study but one example from a Secondary context is, however, worth mentioning to offer an approach that is informed by a post-conciliar theology of revelation. A teacher of Texts and Traditions (the biblical studies course in Year 12) indicated that one of his students came to class at the end of the year and said: 'You have absolutely no idea what change that class brought in me. I will be forever grateful for the way you have made me think about things'. The teacher attributed this outcome to the text being studied (Luke's Gospel) rather than to his pedagogy as a teacher. It is, however, clear from descriptions such as the following: that the teacher's strong pedagogy, theological knowledge and witnessing was an important component of achieving rich learning outcomes for students:

> When teaching Texts, it is a craft and you need patience. You very patiently chip away. You go straight in, introduce them to the big ideas, the big history, the context, the literary forms, all of that. For example, I spend a long time showing how in Luke faith in God and a relationship with God does not go according to how we think of things as human beings so it introduces a whole other way of understanding their existence and human existence through text. I use the text as a vehicle. When I am teaching the text, I am rediscovering it as well and it is really sinking home to me how alternative this view of life is from the conventional view we normally have. I constantly recapitulate the material and eventually students will say 'I get it, I can see. This Lucan text is actually really radical. It was radical in his time and it is radical today.'

Learning Consultants in Catholic Education Melbourne are working with religious education leaders to develop pedagogies which are authentically Catholic at the same time as they genuinely respect the students in all their diversity and engage effectively with them in the pluralising, individualising and detraditionalising cultural context in which our schools operate. Given this cultural context, it is counterproductive to seek to impose a Catholic identity on the students or manipulate them into Catholic beliefs. A more detailed description of one pedagogical approach which we believe provides an effective response to the needs of our students is available elsewhere (Madden, 2017) but some of the key features of the approach can be mentioned here. A key challenge is to welcome the diverse responses students have to the topic and at the same time create spaces which explicitly engage Catholic revelation, not only in terms of its content and truth claims but as an experience of a meaningful and life-giving encounter opened up by teachers who witness to Catholic faith as a living reality in their own lives and in the life of the school. Diversity is seen as an enriching phenomenon in this pedagogy as, for example students from an Islamic background can model respect for sacred texts and students from a Buddhist background respect for ritual or right relationships. Diversity does not just express itself in a range of different faiths as indifference to religious meaning and practice or even suspicion

and hostility towards religion are also elements of the diversity encountered in our schools. Students are asked in this pedagogical approach to consider where they are in relation to their own religious commitment and spirituality and they do so in a dialogue that deliberately and explicitly draws in Catholic perspectives. In order to be able to lead these processes, the teachers have to prepare by asking themselves the same questions of meaning and commitment that they ask of the students and this requires formation and preparation.

Conclusion

A Catholic understanding of revelation embraces both the truths revealed in the Catholic faith as well as the interpersonal encounter with the revealing God. Religious education is no more able to manufacture an encounter with God than any other ministry within the Church. Religious education can, however, be oriented to both the encounter and the truth which is only revealed when it is received. Debates can and should unfold about the best methods to use in religious education but a touchstone for the assessment of any method will be the theology of revelation reviewed here. Does the method lead to an appreciation of the truth revealed in the past as well as the living Catholic faith that continues to be received and appropriated by believers today? Does the method truly honour the particularity of each student's own world of meaning so that diversity is seen as enriching, rather than threatening Catholic faith? Enrichment rather than dilution occurs when teachers are able to respect diversity at the same time as they give a worthy account of the Catholic faith they are witnessing to. It is only when students are brought into a genuine dialogue that both witnesses to Catholic faith and respects diversity that God's truth can be received and appreciated.

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *Religion in Australia: 2016 census data summary.* Retrieved from: http://www.abs.gov.au.

Boeve, L. (2014). Orthodoxy in the postmodern context. *Concilium, 2,* 82–91.

Bouma, G. (2017, June 27). Census 2016 shows Australia's changing religious profile, with more 'nones' than Catholics. *The Conversation*.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2013). *Educating to intercultural dialogue in Catholic schools.* Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20131028_dialogo-interculturale_en.html.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014). *Educating today and tomorrow.* Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.html.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2017). *Educating to fraternal humanism.* Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20170416_educare-umanesimo-solidale_en.html.

Congregation for the Clergy. (1997). *General directory for catechesis*. Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

Crawford, M., & Rossiter, G. (2006). *Reasons for living*. Camberwell: ACER Press.

Francis, Pope. (2015). *Encountering truth*. New York: Image.

Hinsdale, M. (2001). Karl Rahner's contribution to modern Catholic thought on the child. In M. Bunge (Ed.), *The child in Christian thought*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Hughes, P. (2007). *Putting life together*. Fairfield: Fairfield Press.

Hughes, P. (2017). *Educating for purposeful living in a post-traditional age*. Nunawading: Christian Research Association.

John Paul II. (1983, March 24). The task of the Latin American bishop. *Origins*, 659–662.

Mackay, H. (2016). *Beyond belief*. Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia.

Madden, R. (2017). RE curriculum in Melbourne 2016. In *Religious education in Australian Catholic schools*. Mulgrave: Vaughan.

Murdoch, K. (2015). *The power of inquiry*. Northcote: Seastar Education.

O'Collins, G. (2016). *Revelation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pollefeyt, D. (2008). The difference of alterity. In J. De Tavernier et al. (Eds.), *Responsibility, god and society* (pp. 305–330). Leuven: Peeters.

Pollefeyt, D. (2013). The lustre of life (English translation). *Narthex, 13*(1), 62–68.

Pollefeyt, D., & Bouwens, J. (2010). Framing the identity of Catholic schools. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 2*(2), 193–211.

Pollefeyt, D., & Bouwens, J. (2014). *Identity in dialogue*. Zurich: Lit Verlag.

Pope Benedict XVI. (2005). *Deus Caritas Est*. Retrieved from: http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html.

Pope John Paul II. (1982). *A letter to H.E. Cardinal Agostino Casaroli*. Retrieved from: http://www.cultura.va/content/cultura/en/magistero/papa/JohnPaulII/fondazione.html.

Ratzinger, J. (1966). Revelation and tradition. In K. Rahner, & J. Ratzinger (Eds.), *Revelation and tradition* (pp. 26–49) (W. O'Hara, Trans.). London: Burns and Oates.

Ritchhart, R. (2017). *Culture of thinking resources*. Retrieved from: http://www.ronritchhart.com/COT_Resources.html.

Rymarz, R. (2017). *Teacher pilgrims at WYD*. Unpublished report.

Second Vatican Council. (1965a). *Dei Verbum*. Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html.

Second Vatican Council. (1965b). *Gaudium et Spes*. Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

Sharkey, P. (2013). Hermeneutics and the mission of the Catholic school. In T. D'Orsa & J. D'Orsa (Eds.), *Leading for mission*. Mulgrave: Vaughan Publishing.

Sharkey, P. (2015). *Educator's guide to Catholic identity*. Mulgrave: Vaughan Publishing.

Sharkey, P. (2017). Understanding the CECV Leuven research. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian Catholic schools*. Vaughan: Mulgrave.

Taylor, C. (1991). *The ethics of authenticity*. Cambridge: Harvard.

Dr. Paul Sharkey is director of Catholic education services at Catholic Education Melbourne. He was previously State Director of Catholic Education in South Australia. His Ph.D. was a case study of teacher responses to a religious ethos program in a Catholic school. Paul has also completed postgraduate programs in theology, education, program evaluation and educational leadership and management. Paul is interested in exploring issues of identity and culture in Catholic education as they have a profound significance for our sector at this time and he has published in this area over some decades.

Chapter 39
How Do Sport Educator-Coaches Contribute to RE in Catholic Schools?

Matt Hoven and Trevor Egli

Introduction

Our aim is to help describe the purpose of the religious education (RE) by demonstrating its place outside the RE classroom within the Catholic school. Examining how sport educator-coaches in particular contribute to the Catholic religious education of the school can refocus the purpose of classroom RE and shed light on religious education's role in the overall mission of the schools.

Religious Education of the Entire School

Thinking about RE in Catholic schools should include religious education that occurs outside the RE classroom. Current thinking in educational leadership challenges educators to move past the image of the stand-alone educator—in this case, the RE teacher. Research shows that the most successful schools have collaborative teachers who overcome felt-divisions arising from separation of subject areas and grade levels in schools, along with the physical divisions between classrooms (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Successful teachers focus on the learning and growth of all students in the school community and not simply the students in their classes. Thus, the social capital of the school—made up of faculty/staff and administration, and inclusive of students, parents and outside communities—must be considered when thinking about RE in the schools. Isolating the

M. Hoven (✉)
St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada
e-mail: hoven@ualberta.ca

T. Egli
Johnson University-Tennessee, Knoxville, USA

RE classroom restricts the influence of RE teachers and the overall capacity of the school to convey its religious identity.

Moreover, RE classroom teachers are limited by the fact that they are but one influence in the religious learning of students (Rossiter, 2017). The subject they teach, however, is fundamental to the mission of the schools and cannot be replaced through integration of religion into other subjects (Rymarz, 2016). These educators play an important role towards the school's purpose, but their influence on students is typically limited to time in the classroom. Students, of course, are affected by others, like parents, peers and the media. RE teachers are not wholly responsible for the lived faith of their students. These two primary limitations—that is, successful teachers must collaborate with others and individual teachers have a limited influence—establishes the basis for examining the contribution of others (particularly sport educator-coaches) to the Catholic religious education of the entire school.

Religious education cannot be restricted by the four walls of the RE classroom. Yes, this subject must be academically concerned, where students learn about religion and inform their lives through religious learning (Groome, 2011; Rossiter, 2017; Rymarz, 2016). The RE classroom primarily offers academic learning, then, and the possibility of developing students affectively and spiritually. At the same time, school leadership must also consider the contribution of other educators towards religious learning in the school. While church leaders speak often of this reality (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, par. 52; Pope John Paul, 1979, par. 69), Maria Harris' (1989) five curricula of the church engage traditional categories that differentiate various forms of ecclesial learning. She challenges the idea that religious education takes place only in classrooms with chalkboards and lesson plans and instead charts out 'the entire course' of the church's educational ministry. With a more expansive vision of curriculum than a Tylerian school of thought (p. 169), she explains the rich diversity of ecclesial educational formation offered throughout the centuries (pp. 43–44): engaging learning through community (koinonia), prayer and worship (leiturgia), service and outreach (diakonia), proclaiming the Word of God (kerygma) and teaching and learning (didache).

Drawing from Harris (1989), traditional categories enable this study to show how in practice teachers outside of the RE classroom can engage multiple forms of RE. Since the release of Harris' book, several researchers argue to expand RE in the schools to ensure a faith-infused worldview throughout the entire school. For instance, researchers have questioned and sought direction for improving Catholic schools' capacity to integrate the Catholic faith across the curriculum (Arthur, 2013; Davis, 1999; Garcia-Huidobro, 2017; Grace, 2013), or have demanded that classroom RE converses with other academic disciplines (Gellel, 2015). Our study, in a similar vein by way of Harris' long-standing categories, draws upon qualitative research completed with a specific group of educators in schools to show how RE lives outside the classroom. This is similar to other research examples: social capital created through school Masses (Casson, 2013), the value of sacramental preparation cooperation with parishes, or promotion of fellowship among religiously committed students (Rymarz, 2011). All told, these studies point to the value of thinking about RE more broadly.

Unfortunately, religious educators often neglect sport's appeal and educational value, especially considering that many in sport have an inclusivist, justice-centred, play-oriented and excellence-driven vision that is not the stereotypical understanding as drawn from muscular Christianity (Hoffman, 2010; Lixey, 2013). Despite increasing interest in the scholarly study of sport and religion (Watson and Parker, 2014) and Catholic schools' long-standing involvement in sport (Kelly, 2012), there is little research into sport as a form of religious education (Lasher, 2002; Friedrichsen, 2002; Kelly, 2015). Employing Harris' model, we examine the experiences of educator-coaches leading extra-curricular sports programs to answer the question: How do sport educator-coaches contribute to the Catholic religious education of the school? Below we state how knowledge of other forms of religious education can even sharpen the purpose of teachers in the RE classroom.

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to show how educator-coaches contribute to the religious education of Catholic schools. A larger study employed a qualitative, phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994) to understand the spirituality of educator-coaches in Catholic schools; we wanted to understand how they lived out their faith or spirituality as educator-coaches. The point was 'to determine what an experience mean[t] for the persons who had the experience' (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13) of a spirituality of coaching in a Catholic school. In a phenomenological approach, there is a refusal to separate the subject's experience from the object studied: 'the reality of an object is only perceived within the meaning of the experience of an individual' (Creswell, 2007, p. 59). Thus, this approach enabled a rich diversity of ways spirituality was woven into the very fabric of sport-coaching. This chapter draws on secondary analysis from that research project to outline their contribution to RE in the Catholic school.

Sample

Using purposeful sampling, educator-coaches (seven male and three female) were recruited as participants from Edmonton Catholic School District. Coaches were employed at the elementary and secondary levels and had 3–27 years of coaching experience. They coached a wide assortment of sports (e.g., basketball, cheer, soccer, broomball, etc.) in recreational to highly competitive programs. All were teachers except for one educational assistant; one teacher was also a part-time administrator. All were Catholic except for two actively engaged Protestants. Many had studied theology/religion in post-secondary education; many spoke openly about participation in church or para-church organisations, like an adult sport ministry program or outreach group caring for addicted persons. Many currently or had previously taught

religion class in school. With the exception of one adult-baptised participant, they were raised in Christian homes with varying degrees of religiosity.

Procedures for determining this sample was as follows. The lead researcher was a speaker at a professional development session for school district staff, at which he introduced the study and invited potential participants. Because only a few interested educators responded to that request, the District sent out three general email invitations for interviewees over subsequent months. Respondents could email the lead researcher if they were interested and if they met inclusion criteria: (a) an educational employee of the District; (b) English-speaking; (c) at least 3 years sport-coaching experience; and, (d) were willing to talk about spirituality and religion and its relationship to coaching sport. Further information was emailed to the interviewees prior to contact. Informed consent was obtained from the educator-coaches at the beginning of each individual interview.

Data Collection and Analysis

The lead researcher completed ten interviews from September to October 2015 in Edmonton, Canada. Educator-coach participants were separately interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. Interview lengths ranged from thirty to ninety minutes. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim by a professional transcribing company and checked by the lead researcher for accuracy. Using phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1994) of the transcripts, we categorised each 'nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statement' and clustered the invariant statements into thematic clusters. Individual descriptions of the textures and structures of each interview was composed, followed by composite statements of each for the interviews overall (p. 122). After writing individual descriptions of each interview (p. 122), the lead research mailed each interviewee's description to them with an invitation to discuss the statements. This researcher met two of the educator-coaches to review their responses. While the topics of the interviews ranged broadly, it became apparent that they saw their role as educator-coaches as a form of RE within a Catholic setting, which is the stream of research presented here. The transcripts were also reviewed by the second researcher, who also read the descriptions and responded to the themes generated by the first author. Several changes were accordingly made to these themes, which became more focused and in line with the data. All categorizations were reviewed by both the lead researcher and a research assistant. Ongoing discussions determined the themes of the larger project and this particular article.

Results and Discussion

Educator-coaches reported several of Harris' forms of religious education in their sport-coaching. Coaches spoke about cultivating relationships with students to form

community (koinonia), gave examples of prayer (leiturgia), supported disadvantaged students through works of charity and justice (diakonia) and less frequently noted moments of instruction and proclamation (didache and kerygma). Despite this diversity of RE experiences, these educator-coaches admitted limited self-reflection on the relationship of sport and religious faith. Using Harris' categories, we below report and discuss how these educator-coaches engaged in these forms of religious learning. It should be noted that because of space limitations for this chapter we write about each form of RE simply in the lives of two or three coaches' experiences instead of detailing its significance for several or all coaches.

Koinonia

Harris (1989) described the learning form of *koinonia* as driven by the human 'impetus toward belonging' and 'toward the human need to share' (p. 76), where the ministry of community 'moves us toward the healing of division, toward overcoming brokenness, and ultimately toward achieving wholeness' (p. 77). The educator-coaches spoke of the bond forged through playing sports and the support and healing that can come through this relationship. Coach 10, who ran a sports' academy through his junior high school, stated:

> The reality with a lot of these students is that they might not come from a great home life. They might not wanna be at home at all, and they wanna come to a safe haven or a place where they can be with family. And we try to provide that [in] the academy, try to provide a sense of family for these students. And sport gives them [that, as indicated] in their journal writings. [While playing], it's like they . . . forget about the issues that they're dealing with at home and whatnot.

Elsewhere this educator-coach shared the story of a girl, who had skipped school and showed up afterwards for practice. It turned out that it was the anniversary of her mother's suicide and she had cut herself several times. Coach 10 realised that the soccer team and the soccer field were her solace, providing a place for respite and healing.

As a teacher and administrator, Coach 7 had coached for over 20 years because it 'gives you a better rapport with the kids'. He found that coaching builds a high level of trust among the players and allows him to know them at a deeper level. Further, he described how on each team at the elementary and junior high levels, he takes on 'projects': 'there's always kids who struggle with school, there's always kids who do something, that they're out of line in school . . . so I want to build a positive rapport with those kids too'. Some kids, then, make the team 'to give them an opportunity to be responsible, to learn what it's like to be team work, to know what it is to be depended upon for things'. Some parents question the approach, especially when their child is cut from the team, but Coach 7 believes that it gives a unique opportunity for building social skills and experiencing a tight-knit community. Coaches with more elite teams at the high school level didn't mention including 'projects', but

nonetheless also affirmed the strong sense of community that appeared through the dedication of the coaches and players.

Leiturgia

Harris argued that Christianity has built-in rhythms and patterns that shape communal life, and that much of this draws on prayer and worship. Leiturgia, experienced in both communal and personal forms, has multiple elements (for instance, thanksgiving, petition, etc.) that give life to Christians, and create and recreate their identity in Christ. She affirmed the importance of not separating the sacred from the secular and supports 'attempts of people to live religiously and morally in the midst of life' (p. 101). In the sporting world, educator-coaches who had learned to incorporate team prayer into their teams' pre- and post-game rituals drew together the sacred and the secular in an important community-building moment. Of the many coaches' stories, two stood out.

Coach 5, who primarily coached basketball in an elite high school program for several years, explained that he always led a team prayer before a game:

> you use it for a moment of grounding to make sure these guys know it's not cutthroat. And we pray for health for both teams, and good competition, we ask these kids to demand of themselves, and then you do see some of the kids, they will use some of that prayer [privately].

He added that he tells players his own religious background and identity as a Catholic so they can make sense of why they do a team prayer; he didn't see himself as a very spiritual person, but believed the Mass grounds him and gives him perspective. He added

> For me prayer before games has been a moment where you take that and . . . channel those handful of things that should matter to these kids at that time, like health and hard work, and finding some spirit within them to dig deeper than they've been digging and to see and . . . find some guidance for that.

The seriousness of sport and the intensity of playing in a competitive program made prayer a seamless working within this coach's program. The act of thanksgiving and petition felt natural in this environment, as he witnessed youth praying privately. In fact, Coach 1, who generally had not led a team prayer with his players in any sport, reported beginning the practice after his original interview.

While most but not all the coaches believed in saying a team prayer before a game, Coach 2, who primarily coached volleyball and did so at various school levels, prayed for similar things before his team's games yet also incorporated parents while coaching a junior high school team:

> We went out into the hallway and I encouraged all the parents. I said, "We're all gonna hold hands. Parents stand behind your players, put your hand on their shoulders and let's ask God to bless these young ladies as they continue their careers in volleyball. Let them have some success." And it was stunning because one of the organizers of the [tournament] looked at

me and he [said], "We've been tryin' to get our coaches to do that for years and you're one of the first coaches that I've seen that has prayed every game."

Including parents in a corporate act of prayer expanded the use of team prayer and embodied the mentoring role of parents and the familial bond.

Diakonia

In her description of leiturgia, Harris asserted the connection between prayer and worship to service and justice. This element, diakonia, can be understood broadly as all acts of service and ministry, yet Harris reminded readers of specific activities of outreach where emphasis is 'toward remembering and reintegrating compassionate service as part of the essential curricular work of every Christian community' (pp. 144–45). The broad theme of service was prevalent through all of the experiences of the educator-coaches.

Coach 9, who primarily led a junior high volleyball team and was a Protestant teacher, underlined his coaching as a service:

I think Jesus obviously asked us to serve others, to be generous with your time and your effort and certainly with your money. And I think [coaching is] just a way of giving . . . I like doing it and I like serving in that way. I think some people maybe would feed the homeless, I think I can maybe coach some players. Both are good. One's probably better than the other, but I think if you're giving of yourself then you're doing a Christ-like thing.

Here Coach 9 explicitly names his coaching as a work of service to youth and which is an imitation of Christ. Another Protestant, Coach 6, worked with high school students and echoed this theme:

I want to be a consistent person in their lives, somebody that they can come and talk to if they have some issues, somebody that is a leader for them that they can come and ask . . . Not just about sport, about the skill . . . . To give them some stability and somebody that they can come and talk to, and trust.

Coach 6 passionately spoke of wanting to offer her time and energy to selflessly give of herself for the benefit of others.

Another junior high coach, Coach 8, illustrated how girls who find success in sport grow in confidence, which transfers over into other areas of life. One girl in particular, who had spent time in a refugee camp, had uncovered a real talent in throwing a ball and had an 'a-ha' moment about what she was capable of: sport 'transfers very easily to the rest of their life, because then they're like I can do something, somebody recognised me for doing something, and I can do that'. Many other coaches gave similar examples. Coach 3 had a 14-year-old student with a 'rough family life' who got seriously involved in track and field, won the city championship in one event, and was able to be swayed away from 'the wrong crowd'. Coaching as an act of service, as a compassionate work that flows from the educator-coaches' Christian vocation, was exemplified again and again. What was not as pronounced was what

was found in Coach 4's elite high school basketball program. As this educator-coach had built the program, he included elements of charity and leadership. His players 'volunteered at an elementary school' providing 'a Phys. Ed. class after-school care', and also ran 'charity events' like 'an alumni basketball game' versus a rival school for charity. Because this coach recognised the advantages his players received from playing on the school team, he promoted and supported his players' acts of service for the wider community.

Didache and Kerygma

Harris named two remaining educational forms of ecclesial learning: the didache—from the Greek for 'teaching' and focused on 'verbal instruction, literacy and study' (pp. 110-111)—and the kerygma—the original apostolic proclamation of Christ's death and resurrection that remains an active and powerful force in the Church. Educator-coaches typically did not see their educational task in these two forms and often underlined that they were not preaching at their players and that coaching sports was advantageous precisely because it was not like regular classroom teaching. Nonetheless, there were some instances of educator-coaches practicing didache and kerygmas.

Several coaches offered verbal instruction about living a better life. Coaching was not restricted to Xs and Os, and could apply Christian teaching and belief to sporting arenas. Coach 8, who coached several sports with female junior high athletes explained what she tells her athletes:

> You can't expect God to control your life. He should be in your life and you should be looking to him for guidance. But he expects you to do some of the work. That's kind of how my philosophy of teaching and coaching is. Yeah, I'm gonna help you and I'm gonna try and create this area of love, where it's safe to fail, it's safe to grow, it's safe to learn, it's safe to ask questions. But you still have to do [things to be successful].

Similarly, Coach 5, who coached at the high school level highlighted part of his approach with students: 'I think it's essential that you learn how to work well with people, and that you're willing to shed ego, and you're willing to compromise—-maybe your game—for the sake of the team's game. 'Cause I think that is . . . how you exist within the team framework'. This verbal instruction isn't explicitly Christian, but it was how coaches felt comfortable speaking about topics related to faith and morality to a diverse student-body.

Another example came from an educator-coach who had fought off cancer in his adolescence, but had to quit the sport he loved. He thus had an important message for his players:

> Be thankful for what you have right now. I wanna make sure that every student has the chance to play, I want them to play because when it was taken away from me, it . . . was a big thing. I turned to God at that moment, and I battled and I overcame that setback . . . I hope to pass on some of these stories and the difficult moments of my life to some of these students I teach [and coach].

Coach 9, who was a Protestant, spoke about embodying Christian teaching in his actions as coach:

> I am trying to do this faith thing without saying to them, 'Hi, I'm trying to be like Jesus right now.' You don't wanna shine your light on yourself all the time in that sense, like I'm doing the good Christ-like thing.

This coach reveals how he tried to be less conspicuous with his faith and simply modeled the teaching. Coaches generally felt that it was in the act of living their faith that their actions spoke to the gospel.

As is evident, there wasn't a kerygmatic preaching in sport; that didn't feel appropriate for the sporting atmosphere, especially with many non-Catholics playing (as noted by many educator-coaches). Nonetheless, there was a deeper connection fostered through time spent together in sport, as relayed by Coach 3 and her time coaching junior high basketball: 'I had a big talk with [a player about her family], and actually we did talk about God, and that she's always loved no matter what . . . It actually surprised me that she was so open about it'.

Implications

The various traditional forms of RE used by sport educator-coaches can offer important contributions to Catholic schools and can help clarify the purpose of RE inside the classroom.

First, the diversity of experiences confirms that educator-coaches do act like religious educators in many ways. They reported engaging thoroughly in koinonia and diakonia, along with many acknowledging the public and private use of leiturgia. The didache offered was not typically kerygmatic in form; it did qualify as a verbal instruction about a better way to live (which could be based on Christian principles). In effect, educator-coaches offered a form of leadership that showed and taught lived-wisdom through deeds and relationship-building. Drawing upon Harris and others overall, we confirm that there are multiple forms of RE learning and the RE should not be restricted to the RE classroom. Naming this larger vision of RE can help situate the particular focus of RE in the classroom.

The second implication stems from the first: these multiple forms of RE clarify the primary purpose of classroom RE (that is, knowledge-based learning). All educators are asked to support the faith-based mission of Catholic schools, and educator-coaches can offer a mentorship that should be recognised, developed, and promoted as such. RE teachers must trust that students learn other forms of RE elsewhere in the school, especially when school leadership support the development of RE in these other forms. Will focusing on an educationally-based RE classroom program forego important faith formation elements in the classroom? Hyde (2013, p. 43) originally raises this concern, but then stipulates that there is room for an academic approach to RE if the school as a community focuses on the integration of the religious learning in the lives of students elsewhere in the school. Educator-coaches themselves noted that

classroom RE is substantially different from what happens in the gymnasium; these educator-coaches found it refreshing to work with students outside the classroom. In their experience, the classroom is of a different nature than the soccer pitch. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that classroom RE should be treated as an academic discipline like other school subjects (General Director for Catechesis, 1997, par. 73). Because of its distinct setting, classroom RE should not be primarily focused on faith formation and school leadership must promote other educators' engagement of these other forms of RE.

Furthermore, an important element of a strongly educationally based RE program is that it can support encounter between people of difference, where knowledge of other faith traditions can enable dialogue outside of the classroom in environments like sport. Research with Catholic schools highlights that students in sports are respectful of others' religious beliefs but feel uncomfortable to dialogue about this difference (Hoven and Kuchera, 2016). Here, the content-based RE program can be supportive of sport programing and differences among players.

Third, we must recall that current educational leadership research emphasises systems-thinking, highlighting learning communities among professional educators and acknowledging limitations to dealing with a school subject on its own. A communal model for educators has often served Catholic schools well in the past (Convey, 2012) and this study's findings affirm the need for practicing a larger vision of RE to ensure that it does not become restricted to the classroom. Instead of under-appreciating different forms of RE, school leadership must support these forms outside the classroom so that the religious dimension of the school not become relegated to simply school prayers and the RE classroom (Davis, 1999). For this to happen, however, it must be recognised that these educator-coaches admitted limited self-reflection on the relationship of sport and religious faith. Although they were doing RE, the educator-coaches had not considered the religious aspect of their work comprehensively: that is, they hadn't explicitly identified and promoted their work as a form of RE. These educator-coaches, who work in a predominantly secular country like Canada (Bibby and Reid, 2016; Thiessen, 2015), require both professional preparation and continuing education to complete a more thorough integration of RE throughout the entire curriculum of the school (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, par. 52; Pope John Paul, 1979, n. 69). This more inclusive vision of RE is necessary for the flourishing of students' own integration of religious learning.

To be clear, we affirm that religious education has a dual-role: to provide learning about religion and learning in a particular religion (Moran, 1997, p. 153). These two aspects must be incorporated into the Catholic school, yet all of it cannot fall on the RE classroom teacher. Other places of formation exist in the school and must be incorporated as such. Harris' work, along with others like Moran, highlight how didache (or verbal instruction) should not be seen as the only source of RE. In reality, elements of diakonia, leiturgia and koinonia provide the basis for a more authentic and inclusive religious learning (Hoven and Kuchera, 2016).

Conclusion

It is necessary to note that these ten educator-coaches had volunteered to discuss a range of topics about sport-coaching and spirituality. They felt comfortable talking about this subject—many also noted regular attendance at Sunday services—which cannot be assumed for many educator-coaches in Catholic schools. However, this larger phenomenological study highlights the range of experiences for coaches engaging sport, religion and spirituality and arguably makes room for different forms of RE that correspond with different coaches' interests and abilities. Further, because modern sport has Protestant Christian roots (Hoffman, 2010), there is a particularly advantageous opportunity in sport that may not be as implicit elsewhere outside the RE classroom. Sport educator-coaches can offer an important contribution to the Catholic religious education of the school and support the work of educators in the RE classroom.

References

Arthur, J. (2013). The de-Catholicising of the curriculum in English Catholic schools. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 5*(1), 83–98.

Bibby, R., & Reid, A. (2016). *Canada's Catholics: Vitality and hope in a new era*. Toronto, Canada: Novalis.

Casson, A. (2013). "Religious" and "spiritual" capitals: The experience of the celebration of Mass in the English Catholic secondary school. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 5*(2), 204–217.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988). *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school*. Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html.

Congregation for the Clergy. (1997). *General directory for catechesis*. Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

Convey, J. J. (2012). Perceptions of Catholic identity: Views of Catholic school administrators and teachers. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 16*(1), 187–214.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Davis, R. (1999). Can there be a Catholic curriculum? In J. Conroy (Ed.), *Catholic education: Inside out/outside in* (pp. 207–230). Dublin: Lindisfarne Books.

Friedrichsen, T. (2002). Disciple as athlete. *The Living Light, 39*(2), 13–20.

Garcia-Huidobro, J. (2017). What are Catholic schools teaching to make a difference? A literature review of curriculum studies in Catholic schools in the U.S. and the U.K. since 1993. *Journal of Catholic Education*, *20*(2). Retrieved from: http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/joce.2002032017.

Gellel, A.-M. (2015). The interdisciplinary imperative of Catholic religious education. In M. T. Buchanan & A.-M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 23–34). New York: Springer.

Grace, G. (2013). Catholic social teaching should permeate the Catholic secondary school curriculum: An agenda for reform. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 5*(1), 99–109.

Groome, T. (2011). *Will there be faith? A new vision for educating and growing disciples*. New York: HarperOne.

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. New York: Routledge.

Harris, M. (1989). *Fashion me a people: Curriculum in the church*. Louisville, KT: Westminster/John Knox Press.

Hoffman, S. (2010). *Good game: Christians and the culture of sport*. Waco, TX: Baylor University.

Hoven, M., & Kuchera, S. (2016). Beyond tebowing and superstitions: Religious practices of 15-year-old competitive athletes. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 21*(1), 52–65.

Hyde, B. (2013). A category mistake: Why contemporary Australian religious education in Catholic schools may be doomed to failure. *Journal of Beliefs and Values: Studies in Religion and Education, 34*(1), 36–45.

Kelly, P. (2012). *Catholic perspectives on sports: From medieval to modern times*. New York: Paulist Press.

Kelly, P. (2015). *Youth sport and spirituality: Catholic perspectives*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Lasher, C. (2002). A hymn to life: The sports theology of Pope John Paul II. *The Living Light, 39*(2), 6–11.

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership and Management, 28*(1), 27–42.

Lixey, K. (2013). The Vatican's game plan for maximizing sport's educational potential. In N. Watson & A. Parker (Eds.), *Sports and Christianity: Historical and contemporary perspectives* (pp. 250–268). New York: Routledge.

Moran, G. (1997). Religious education after Vatican II. In D. Efroymson & J. Raines (Eds.), *Open Catholicism: The tradition at its best: Essays in honor of Gerard S. Sloyan* (pp. 151–166). Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pope John Paul II. (1979). *Apostolic exhortation catechesi tradendae. On catechesis in our time.* Boston: Pauline Books and Media.

Rossiter, G. (2017). What sort of school religious education is needed? And why is it so important today? In M. Shanahan (Ed.), *Does religious education matter?* (pp. 25–36). New York: Routledge.

Rymarz, R. (2011). Catechesis and religious education in Canadian Catholic schools. *Religious Education, 106*(5), 537–549.

Rymarz, R. (2016). *Creating an authentic Catholic school*. Toronto, Canada: Novalis.

Thiessen, J. (2015). *The meaning of Sunday: The practice of belief in a secular age*. Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Watson, N., & Parker, A. (2014). *Sport and the Christian religion: A systematic review of literature*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Dr. Matt Hoven is the Peter and Doris Kule Lecturer in Catholic Religious Education and an associate professor of religion and education at St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. He earned his doctorate in religious education at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and now focuses his research on sports and religious education. He has published articles in *Religious Education, Journal of Religious Education, Practical Theology, International Journal of Children & Spirituality* and *Sport in Society*. He presents about sport and catholic education to practitioners, along with writing sport and spirituality modules for local high schools.

Dr. Trevor Egli is an associate professor and director of the Sport and Fitness Leadership major at Johnson University in Knoxville, Tennessee. He earned his doctorate in sport psychology and motor learning from the University of Tennessee and is also a certified consultant through the Association for Applied Sport Psychology. His research interests include spirituality and sport, the use of spirituality and religion in applied sport psychology, prayer in sport and the health and wellness of college students. Journals he has published in include *The Sport Psychologist*, *The Journal of Christianity and Psychology*, and *The Journal of American College Health*.

Part IV
Inter-religious Issues

Chapter 40
Teaching About Religious Diversity: Policy and Practice From the Council of Europe

Robert Jackson

Changes in Religious Education in Europe

Changes in religious education in Europe and more widely since the 1960s have been complex. This complexity is documented in an ongoing series of books from the REL-EDU project at the University of Vienna. Readers are referred to these volumes for discussions of the different systems of European religious education (see for instance, Rothgangel, Jackson, & Jäggle, 2014).

To take England as an example, when I began teaching in the late 1960s, religious education policy was determined by the 1944 Education Act (Gates & Jackson, 2014). Within the state sector, this distinguished between 'county' and 'voluntary' schools. County schools received full state funding and had a form of religious education reflecting a non-denominational approach to Christianity, influenced by Biblical studies. Voluntary aided schools were mainly funded by the state, but received some funding from religious bodies, and they were allowed to teach their own form of religious education. The majority of non-independent Catholic schools in England were voluntary aided schools.

Key Influences: Secularisation, Pluralisation and Globalisation

From around the mid-1960s religious education, especially in county schools, was changing. Many shifts were initiated within the schools themselves. However, changes in the academic study of religion in universities were also influential. A key driver of change was (and is) secularisation. In England, this was reflected in an

R. Jackson (✉)
University of Warwick, Coventry, UK
e-mail: r.jackson@warwick.ac.uk

expressed desire by older school students to learn about and discuss issues concerning religion, but not to be told what to believe. This view was common among older students during my own early years of teaching in the late 1960s and is reflected in research (Cox, 1967). Much literature on religious education in Europe reports the continuing influence of secularisation.

A second influence for change is pluralisation, especially through the migration to European states of people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds. In Britain's case, as a result of the decline of the Empire, migrants from former colonial states, especially South Asian, African and Caribbean countries, came to the UK. By the early 1970s, many British cities had communities practising—for example—Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam, as well as varieties of South Asian and Caribbean Christianity. Such changes influenced religious education at school level, especially in urban, 'multi-faith' schools (Cole, 1972). Forms of diversity have changed over time, and Vertovec's remarks on 'super diversity', which note shifting and interacting factors such as migration pattern, legal status, human capital, locality and transnationalism should be registered (Vertovec, 2006).

A third influence is globalisation, often connecting aspects of life in particular countries with events in other parts of the world. The pioneering work of Ninian Smart in Religious Studies was influential in the UK, partly because he participated in an educational project which linked his global, phenomenological approach to the study of religions, with religious education in England and Wales (see, for instance Schools Council, 1971; Smart, 1968). For young people currently, globalisation is especially reflected in the revolution in communication represented by the internet, the mobile telephone and social media.

Speaking generally, changes resulting from influences of secularisation, pluralisation and globalisation have varied across countries, not least because they have interacted with contrasting national histories of religion and state, and different experiences in relation to migration. Thus, in various European states, there has been a transition in state education from forms of religious education, in which religious beliefs and values are transmitted to young people (sometimes called faith-based or confessional approaches), towards types of inclusive religious education, in which young people from various religious and non-religious family backgrounds learn together about religious, and sometimes also non-religious, diversity. In some national contexts, varieties of 'inclusive' and 'faith-based' religious education co-exist (see the REL-EDU Project books).

Educational Encounters with Religious Diversity

My own work developed in settings where pluralisation was the dominant factor. When I moved to the city of Coventry in 1972, as a teacher-trainer, I met children and parents in schools who introduced me to their Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian communities; I also met families with Polish and Ukrainian Catholic backgrounds. I was invited to make educational programmes for the BBC about these communities,

for various age groups, and with a focus on the experience of young people and their families (Blaylock, Jackson, & Marshall-Taylor, 2002). I also began research studies, developing a methodology which led to various projects at the University of Warwick, the development of an interpretive approach to religious education (Jackson, 1997, 2019 forthcoming), and the publication of books for children and young people for use in inclusive religious education. These books were written with the collaboration of families, and other community members, from a range of religious ancestries (see, for instance Barratt, 1994a, b, c; Everington, 1996; Jackson, 1989; Jackson & Nesbitt, 1990; Robson, 1995; Mercier, 1996; Wayne, Everington, Kadodwala, & Nesbitt, 1996). Although the approach was pluralistic in content, and impartial in approach, there was no distancing from religious communities or their members. Children, parents and other community members who practised religions were involved in educational activities concerned with increasing knowledge and understanding of children and young people at school, regardless of background, rather than with generating faith. Moreover, they were fully aware that they were participating in this process.

My theoretical approach to understanding the religious lives of others, and to utilising this in religious education, was eclectic. I have compared it to playing jazz music (Jackson, 2012a, 2017). Initially, I tried out ideas from the phenomenology of religion, but found this approach problematic for providing workable field methods. The methods and theory I utilised over time, resulted from trial and error learning, and consultation with colleagues from various disciplines. I found common ground with some methods and theory from the ethnography of Clifford Geertz—not from sociology, and certainly not from Durkheim's views on religion (Jackson, 1997, p. 31, 2015)—and I combined ideas and methods from Geertz's hermeneutical approach to ethnography with various ideas, from social psychology on group theory, from Wilfred Cantwell Smith in theology, from Edward Said's work on cultural studies, together with philosophical work on hermeneutics and material from other sources. Instead of attempting to describe Hinduism as a set of beliefs and practices, for example, I talked about the relationship between individuals, groups of various kinds to which they belonged, and the broad Hindu tradition. This was not a reduction of a religion to the sum of its participants, nor was it an anti-realist deconstruction of religions. It was a statement about the complex social reality of religions (Jackson, 2008a). Religions were understood in terms of the relationship of individuals to the groups they belonged to, and the relationship of both to aspects of the wider religious tradition. The term 'interpretation' was used both for exploring the relationship of individuals, groups and the wider tradition and for explaining another's meaning through comparison and contrast of that person's description of experiences with one's own nearest equivalent understandings.

What I have not mentioned so far is the impact of religious informants on me. There was an influence of their meanings, conduct and relationships on me as a researcher, learner and person. Although I did not adopt their beliefs, reflection on aspects of their way of life influenced and sometimes deepened my own perspectives. I called this 'deepening' of view 'edification', part of a broader concept of reflexivity,

which also included a critique of the processes of interpretation and a retrospective critical review of methods used.

Thus there emerged an interpretive approach to the study of a religion as practised by adherents, involving the key concepts of representation, interpretation and reflexivity (including edification) (Jackson, 1997). These concepts have been adapted for use in different contexts, including experiments in using the approach by children learning about religions in their own locality (Jackson, 1990), in the development of books for children and young people (see above), and as a theoretical stimulus and set of tools for analysing research on young people's learning about religions in schools (Jackson, 2012b).

Inclusive Religious Education: Information-Based, Neutral and Detached and Information-Based Impartial and Dialogical Approaches

In Western democracies, two different generic approaches to include religious education have emerged. The first, which I will call here an 'information-based, neutral and detached' approach, confines the subject to learning information about religions (or religions and philosophies, such as secular humanism). The approach is highly sensitive to criticism concerning any influence that religious ideas studied might have on pupils engaging in religious education. Study methods emphasise scientific objectivity and neutrality, and tend to be influenced by academic religious studies in universities. Student-to-student dialogue is discouraged or prohibited, since its content might be construed as potentially influencing participants. One variant of this generic approach is the Ethics and Religious Culture syllabus currently taught in the province of Québec in Canada (Québec, 2008).

The second, which I will call an 'information-based, impartial and dialogical' approach, providing accurate information about religions (and other world views) together with opportunities for students to discuss what they have learned, with one another and with the teacher, under the teacher's guidance and moderation. Concerns about inappropriate influence upon student participants are addressed through adopting methods which aim to promote impartiality, rather than detachment or neutrality (Jackson and Everington, 2017). Contact with members of religious (and belief) communities is encouraged as a learning resource, with care given to educating all participants about their roles. For example, a representative of a religious community invited to a school to speak, has the role of informant, and must not attempt to persuade students to adopt her position. In teacher-moderated classroom dialogue, students are encouraged to express their religious stance or their personal views about religions in a civil way, and to learn to live together peacefully with those who hold different views. The interpretive approach described above is an example of this information-based, impartial and dialogical style of religious education, as are various approaches which focus on dialogue (e.g. Ipgrave, 2001; Leganger-Krogstad,

2001). An information-based, impartial and dialogical approach combines the liberal education idea of initiation into the full breadth of human knowledge and experience with opportunities for interaction and personal reflection, including the possibility of contributing to students' personal and social development.

Democratic and Human Rights Values

A version of this information-based, impartial and dialogical view connects explicitly with human rights values. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 18 states:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his (sic) religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. (United Nations, 1948)

The UDHR acknowledges implicitly that a particular religious or belief position is grounded in personal faith or belief rather than objective knowledge, and affirms the right of individuals to hold their view and engage in religious practice, provided that this does not entail harming others. Gaining an accurate knowledge and understanding of religions or beliefs might be regarded as a condition for dialogue, and the promotion of tolerance and respect for those holding beliefs or views different from one's own, thus contributing to skills for citizenship.

Human rights are also relevant to the view that parents should be able to guide their children as they grow up, in a family environment which reflects their beliefs and values. For example, Article 14 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms respect for the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their children as they grow up together with the right of every child to think and believe what they choose, and also to practise their religion (United Nations, 1990). The question is, therefore, raised about the relationship between information-based, impartial and dialogical religious education and forms of faith-based religious education; this will be discussed below. It is also important to recognise that students with personal religious or belief commitments are very likely to be present in the classrooms of 'inclusive' schools, and that sensitivity needs to be shown to these students (Jackson, 2016; Moulin, 2011). Moreover, information-based, impartial and dialogical approaches should provide opportunities for students to meet and engage with members of religious communities (Jackson, 2014, pp. 87–97).

The Council of Europe

One approach to learning about religions and beliefs, which takes an information-based, impartial and dialogical approach has been developed within the Council of

Europe. The Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg, is an intergovernmental human rights organisation, currently with 47 member states, established in 1949, 1 year after the publication of the UDHR. Education is included in its broad remit.

Since 2002, the Council of Europe has focused on education about religions (and also, since 2008, non-religious convictions) in publicly funded schools in member states. The events of 9/11 in the USA triggered a reappraisal of the view that matters of religion belonged to the private sphere, and there was a policy change within the Council regarding teaching and learning about religions (Jackson, 2014, 2018a forthcoming).

The Council of Europe aims to develop a common commitment to human rights values, while also respecting and valuing Europe's cultural and religious diversity and the cultural traditions of each member state. Its educational work for schools concentrates on human rights, citizenship and intercultural education. These interrelated fields inform subjects such as language, history—and now religion and belief. Thus, the fundamental reasons for including religion in the Council of Europe's educational work concern social issues related to human rights, citizenship and intercultural education. However, aims concerned with personal development and the value of a broadly based liberal education are also included. For example, moderated student-to-student dialogue is regarded as an essential component of such studies. The Council of Europe integrates political activity with various projects undertaken via the Council's directorates. The Parliamentary Assembly (representatives of the Parliaments of member states) and the Committee of Ministers (the member states' Foreign Ministers) are empowered to make Recommendations to all members. These are not legally binding but, rather, tools for use in national policy development.

The 2008 Council of Europe Recommendation

In 2002, the Council of Europe launched a project on the study of religions as a contributor to intercultural education—'The New Challenge to Intercultural Education: Religious Diversity and Dialogue in Europe'. It was noted that adding the dimension of religion required '…revisiting and updating the concept of intercultural education in general, to ensure that all education contributes harmoniously to the four pillars of education for the twenty first century outlined in the Delors Report' (Council of Europe, 2003). This direct linkage to the pillars of the Delors Report—learning to know, to do, to live together and to be (UNESCO, 1996)—introduces a personal, existential element, showing that the rationale for the project went wider and deeper than aiming to increase tolerance.

Outputs included books for policy makers and teachers (Council of Europe, 2004; Keast, 2007). There was a Recommendation from the Parliamentary Assembly to member states in 2005 (Council of Europe, 2005) that has influenced some working in faith-based education (see, for instance Anderson, Byrne, & Cullen, 2016). Most importantly, the Committee of Ministers agreed, in 2008, a Recommendation on the

dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education (Council of Europe, 2008), distributed to all member states.

The Recommendation acknowledges diversity, encourages 'local' and 'global' connections, an exploration of issues of religion and identity, and—importantly—the development of positive relations with parents and religious communities. The intention is to introduce young people to a variety of stances in a mutually tolerant atmosphere, within the 'safe space' of the classroom. Competence for understanding religions and world views is emphasised, including offering relevant information, and the development of skills and attitudes to facilitate dialogue. The aims are to provide knowledge, to encourage reciprocity, sensitivity and empathy, and to combat prejudice. Students are encouraged to participate in dialogue, moderated by teachers with specialist knowledge and facilitation skills. The Recommendation notes the need for high-quality teacher training and resources, ongoing research and evaluation, and sensitivity to current educational systems in member states. Policymakers and practitioners in member states are encouraged to adopt the Recommendation to their own needs.

Consultation with Faith-Based and Philosophical Organisations

Following the Council of Europe's change in policy towards teaching about religions, meetings were organised by the Council of Europe's then Commissioner for Human Rights (Álvaro Gil-Robles), involving representatives from different religions in Europe in discussing how, from a human rights perspective, teaching about religions could be developed in European public schools. Catholic contributors included Andrew McGrady from Ireland. Meetings were held in Malta in 2004, and in Kazan (Russian Federation) in 2006. Policy recommendations were made to the Parliamentary Assembly, and the Committee of Ministers, showing support from representatives for teaching about religions in public schools as both just and prudent. Their recommendations were made available to the team working on the development of the religious dimension to intercultural education.

Additionally, in 2008, the Council of Europe invited representatives of European religion and belief organisations (including the Catholic Church) to Strasbourg. They met and exchanged views on the Council of Europe's educational work about religions and beliefs. Invitees were given an overview of relevant Council of Europe declarations and projects. Goals included: clarifying the rationale for the participation of religious bodies in the Council of Europe's educational work and exemplifying possible developments at the European level, involving religious and philosophical communities (Jackson, 2008b). The report on the first exchange gave reasons why dialogue with religious voices adds value to the Council of Europe's work, including the offer of approval and support by religious communities, together with their giving theological and ethical reasons for supporting an impartial study of religions in

schools, and their concern that the portrayal of religions to the general public across Europe, especially in the media, needed to be addressed through education (Jackson, 2008c). Exchanges have been organised annually since 2008.

The Development of Signposts

To promote the use of the 2008 Recommendation in member states, the Council of Europe and the European Wergeland Centre established a joint committee to assist policymakers and practitioners to discuss and apply ideas from the Recommendation in their own national setting. (The European Wergeland Centre is a European resource and teacher-training unit established in 2009 by the Council of Europe in partnership with Norway). This committee distributed a questionnaire to members of the Council of Europe's Education Committee, representing the 47 member states, asking respondents to identify issues in applying the Recommendation to their own country.

A number of issues were identified that were common to many states. These were addressed in a book that the present author was invited to write on the committee's behalf (Jackson, 2014). Aimed at policymakers and practitioners in member states, Signposts: Policy and practice for teaching about religions and non-religious worldviews in intercultural education include 10 chapters:

1. The Recommendation: background, issues and challenges
2. Introducing Signposts and its key themes
3. Terminology associated with teaching about religions and beliefs
4. Competence and didactics for understanding religions
5. The classroom as a safe space
6. The representation of religions in media
7. Non-religious convictions and world views
8. Human rights issues
9. Linking schools to wider communities and organisations
10. Promoting further discussion and action.

The chapters aim to enable readers to explore issues raised in relation to their own national context. The central chapters identify major issues, with examples from recent research which address them, and give examples of good practice from member states. Central issues, such as the development of teachers' and students' competence, handling representations of religions in the media, and making the classroom a safe space for civil dialogue are introduced.

Signposts have been translated so far into 12 languages. PDF copies can be downloaded free of charge from the European Wergeland Centre website: http://www.theewc.org/Content/Library/COE-Steering-documents/Recommendations/Signposts-Policy-and-practice-for-teaching-about-religions-and-non-religious-world-views-in-intercultural-education.

The Relationship Between Information-Based, Impartial and Dialogical Religious Education and Forms of Faith-Based Religious Education

I have discussed the issue of state funding for faith-based schools elsewhere, with reference to the English situation, and I conclude that:

> Policy should support faith-based education that promotes justice and fairness, the provision of information about religions, a critical approach, relative autonomy for children, social cohesion through dialogue and communication and the opportunity for all children to participate in debates about plurality. (Jackson, 2003, p. 99)

Here, I will raise some issues related to the compatibility of some forms of faith-based education with what I have called an information-based, impartial and dialogical approach to include religious education. The notion that faith-based and non-faith-based forms of religious education correspond to two incommensurable and deeply incompatible 'paradigms', in the sense used by Thomas Kuhn (Kuhn, 1996), is rejected. Neither process is a paradigm in the sense used by Kuhn. Rather, they are different processes bearing the same name, suitable in different contexts; the two processes are, in principle, compatible (Jackson, 2018b forthcoming).

There are various approaches to faith-based religious education, which might be placed in two broad categories, one seeing inclusive forms of religious education as a threat, the other seeing at least some forms as complementary to faith-based education.

Some see inclusive forms of religious education as threatening, and might avoid teaching about religious diversity. There are also those from faith backgrounds who regard inclusive approaches as imposing a view of theological pluralism, or who denigrate, as inherently secularist, approaches utilising theory or method from the social sciences (see Jackson, 2015).

Others take a very positive stance towards religious diversity (for instance Geiger, 2016), without necessarily adopting a pluralist theological stance; thus, there is some significant overlap between certain approaches to faith-based education and an information-based, impartial and dialogical approach to religious education. For example, writing from a Catholic context in the USA, Maria Harris and Gabriel Moran, identify religious education as being concerned both with teaching young people to practise a religious way of life and enabling them to understand religion(s). The latter considered a task, which starts from an understanding of one's own religion but which also involves comparison and engagement with others (Harris and Moran, 1998).

Andrew Lewis, writing about the relationship between Catholic education in the UK and inclusive religious education, explores how a Catholic view coheres with the wider view of the subject held by those working in inclusive schools. He gives examples of issues and dilemmas within Catholic education (such as balancing the study of religions with questions concerning students' personal development) which parallel those in inclusive religious education. Thus, at the least, the two need to

be in conversation (Lewis, 2018). Mike Castelli, another UK Catholic writer, gives close attention to the process of dialogue in all forms of religious education, arguing that it needs to be taught, following the dispositions and procedures of humility, seriousness, hesitation, imagination and articulation (Castelli, 2018).

Commenting on the Irish educational scene, Andrew McGrady argues for a balance and integration of 'religious Instruction' and 'religious education', a process that 'will vary between schools reflecting different patronage structures and sectors', but which must embrace inter-religious and intercultural dialogue. As McGrady remarks:

> Any approach to teaching religion that does not embrace inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue is educationally limited. A plurality of world views must be appreciatively yet critically considered as part of the search for meaning and values and as a foundation for possible active citizenship, mutual respect, tolerance and social cohesion. (McGrady, 2013, p. 89)

Also writing from the Irish context, Sandra Cullen presents religious education in Catholic schools as an ongoing conversation between religious nurture in the private sphere and religious education in the public sphere (Cullen, 2017). Her sources include Thomas Groome's idea of 'appropriation'—the interaction of the self with the religious tradition that allows for the appropriation of the tradition to the living faith of the individual—(Groome, 1991). Also Bert Roebben's view that learning should involve 'a comprehensive and integrated conversation with fellow learners concerning their own religious experiences, religious questions, and with the possible insights found in traditions and cultures' (Roebben & Warren, 2001), and my own idea of 'edification' (Jackson, 1997). These various ideas show the importance of a continuing dialogue between those concerned with religious education in different sectors of education.

Conclusion

This chapter has given examples of the positive involvement of children, families and academics from religious (including Catholic) backgrounds in what I have called an information-based, impartial and dialogical approach to include religious education. It has also exemplified the contribution that the study of religions can make to an outward-looking view of Catholic and other forms of faith-based education. The work of the Council of Europe on the religious dimension of intercultural education was offered as an example of an attempt to involve members and representatives of religious communities in the process of developing an inclusive approach to learning about religions and beliefs across Europe.

References

Anderson, B. A., Byrne, G., & Cullen, S. (2016). Religious pluralism, education, and citizenship in Ireland. In E. Aslan, R. Ebrahim, & M. Hermansen (Eds.), *Islam, religions, and pluralism in Europe* (pp. 161–172). Wiesbaden: Springer.

Barratt, M. (1994a). *An egg for Babcha, 'Bridges to religions' series*. The Warwick RE Project, Oxford: Heinemann.

Barratt, M. (1994b). *Something to share, 'Bridges to religions' series*. The Warwick RE Project, Oxford: Heinemann.

Barratt, M. (1994c). *The Buddha's birthday, 'Bridges to religions' series*. The Warwick RE Project, Oxford: Heinemann.

Blaylock, L., Jackson, R., & Marshall-Taylor, G. (2002). Image and imagination: Religious education at the BBC. *RE Today, 19*(3), 28–29.

Castelli, M. (2018). Principles and procedures for classroom dialogue. In M. Castelli & M. Chater (Eds.), *We need to talk about religious education: Manifestoes for the future of RE* (pp. 143–154). London: Jessica Kingsley.

Cole, W. O. (1972). *Religion in the multifaith school* (1st ed.). Yorkshire Committee for Community Relations.

Council of Europe. (2003). Education for intercultural and interfaith dialogue, Proposal for a new project, Working document prepared by the Secretariat for the Steering Committee For Education (CD-ED), Educational Policies and European Dimension Division, Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education, Directorate General IV.

Council of Europe (Ed.). (2004). *The religious dimension of intercultural education*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Council of Europe. (2005). *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Recommendation 1720 (2005)1 Education and religion*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, downloadable from: http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/adoptedtext/ta05/erec1720.htm.

Council of Europe. (2008). *Recommendation CM/Rec (2008) 12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the dimension of religions and nonreligious convictions within intercultural education*. https://wcd.coe.int//Viewoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec(2008)12andLanguage=lanEnglishandVer=originalandBackColorInternet=DBDCF2andBackColorIntranet=FDC864andBackColorLogged=FDC864.

Cox, E. (1967). *Sixth form religion*. London: SCM Press.

Cullen, S. (2017). Interpreting "between privacies": Religious education as a dialogical activity. In M. Shanahan (Ed.), *Does religious education matter?* (pp. 37–48). London: Routledge.

Everington, J. (1996). *Meeting Christians (Book Two)*. Heinemann: Bridges to religions, The Warwick RE Project, Oxford.

Gates, B., & Jackson, R. (2014). Religion and education in England. In M. Rothgangel, R. Jackson, & M. Jäggle (Eds.), *Religious education at schools in Europe, part 2: Western Europe*, (Wiener Forum für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft, Band 10.2), (pp. 65–98). Göttingen: Vienna University Press/VandR unipress.

Geiger, M. W. (2016). Emerging responsibilities, emerging persons: Reflective and relational religious education in three episcopal high schools. *Religious Education, 111*(1), 10–29.

Groome, T. H. (1991). *Sharing faith: A comprehensive approach to religious education and pastoral ministry: The way of shared praxis*. New York: Harper Collins.

Harris, M., & Moran, G. (1998). *Reshaping religious education*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

Ipgrave, J. (2001). *Pupil-to-pupil dialogue in the classroom as a tool for religious education*. Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, Working Paper 2, Coventry: Institute of Education, University of Warwick.

Jackson, R. (1989). *Religions through festivals: Hinduism*. London: Longman.

Jackson, R. (1990). Children as ethnographers. In R. Jackson & D. Starkings (Eds.), *The junior RE handbook* (pp. 202–207). Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes.

Jackson, R. (1997). *Religious education: An interpretive approach*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. An introductory article, plus a free download of the full text of the book are available from the European Wergeland Centre at: http://www.theewc.org/Content/Library/Research-Development/Literature/Introducing-Religious-Education-an-Interpretive-Approach.

Jackson, R. (2003). Should the state fund faith-based schools? A review of the arguments. *British Journal of Religious Education, 25*(2), 89–102.

Jackson, R. (2008a). Contextual religious education and the interpretive approach. *British Journal of Religious Education, 30*(1), 13–24.

Jackson, R. (2008b). *Council of Europe exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue: 'Education, democratic citizenship and the religious dimension: Summing up of the morning interventions'*. Available online at: https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM(2008)62andLanguage=lanEnglishandVer=originalandSite=CMandBackColorInternet=9999CCandBackColorIntranet=FFBB55andBackColorLogged=FFAC75.

Jackson, R. (2008c). *Council of Europe exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue*. Follow-up by Robert Jackson, Rapporteur, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, available online at: https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=TC-ID(2008)8andLanguage=lanEnglishandVer=originalandSite=CMandBackColorInternet=DBDCF2andBackColorIntranet=FDC864andBackColorLogged=FDC864.

Jackson, R. (2012a). Religious education and the arts of interpretation revisited. In I. ter Avest (Ed.), *On the edge: (Auto) biography and pedagogical theories on religious education* (pp. 57–69). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Jackson, R. (Ed.). (2012b). *Religion, education, dialogue and conflict: Perspectives on religious education research*. London: Routledge.

Jackson, R. (2014). *Signposts: Policy and practice for teaching about religions and non-religious world views in intercultural education*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. (pdf downloadable from: http://www.theewc.org/Content/Library/COE-Steering-documents/Recommendations/Signposts-Policy-and-practice-for-teaching-about-religions-and-non-religious-world-views-in-intercultural-education (English text of Signposts together with 12 translations, with more to follow).

Jackson, R. (2015). The politicisation and securitisation of religious education? A rejoinder. *British Journal of Educational Studies, Special Issue on Education, Security and Intelligence Studies, 63*(3), 345–366.

Jackson, R. (2016). *Inclusive study of religions and world views in schools: Signposts from the Council of Europe*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Jackson, R. (2017). Hermeneutics, tradition and reflexivity: Deepening the interpretive approach. In H. T. A. Amsing, B. Blom, J. J. H. Dekker, & M. van Essen (Eds.), *De kern van onderwijs. (The Core of Education). Liber Amicorum voor Wilna Meijer* (pp. 83–86), Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit/University of Groningen.

Jackson, R. (2018a forthcoming). The Council of Europe, human rights and education about religions and other worldviews. In Tania ap Sion, J. Astley, L. J. Francis, & D. W. Lankshear (Eds.), *Values, human rights and religious education: Contested grounds*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Jackson, R. (2018b forthcoming). Paradigm shift in religious education? A Reply to Gearon, or When is a paradigm not a paradigm? *Journal of Beliefs and Values*.

Jackson, R. (2019 forthcoming). *Religious education for plural societies: The selected works of Robert Jackson*. World Library of Educationalists, London: Routledge.

Jackson, R., & Everington, J. (2017). Teaching inclusive religious education impartially: An English perspective. *British Journal of Religious Education, 39*(1), 7–24.

Jackson, R., & Nesbitt, E. M. (1990). *Listening to Hindus*. London: Unwin Hyman.

Keast, J. (Ed.). (2007). *Religious diversity and intercultural education: A reference book for schools*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Kuhn, T. S. (1996). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (3rd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Leganger-Krogstad, H. (2001). Religious education in a global perspective: A contextual approach. In H.-G. Heimbrock, P. Schreiner, & C. Sheilke (Eds.), *Towards religious competence: Diversity as a challenge for education in Europe* (pp. 53–73). Hamburg: Lit Verlag.

Lewis, A. (2018). The future of Catholic religious education in the context of proposed wider reform. In M. Castelli & M. Chater (Eds.), *We need to talk about religious education: Manifestoes for the future of RE* (pp. 85–99). London: Jessica Kingsley.

McGrady, A. (2013). 'Teaching religion': Challenges and opportunities for educational practice in a pluralistic context. In G. Byrne & P. Kieran (Eds.), *Toward mutual ground: Pluralism, religious education and diversity in Irish schools* (pp. 79–91). Blackrock: The Columba Press.

Mercier, C. (1996). *Muslims, 'Interpreting religions' series*. Heinemann: The Warwick RE project, Oxford.

Moulin, D. (2011). Giving voice to "the silent minority": The experience of religious students in secondary school religious education lessons. *British Journal of Religious Education, 33*(3), 313–326.

Québec. (2008). *Québec education program: Ethics and religious culture*. Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport: Gouvernement du Québec.

Robson, G. (1995). *Christians, 'Interpreting religions' series*. Heinemann: The Warwick RE project, Oxford.

Roebben, B., & Warren, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Religious education as practical theology*. Leuven: Peeters.

Rothgangel, M., Jackson, R., & Jäggle M. (Eds.). (2014). *Religious education at schools in Europe, volume 2: Western Europe* (Wiener Forum für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft, Band 10.2). Göttingen: Vienna University Press/VandR unipress.

Schools Council. (1971). *Religious education in secondary schools: Schools council working paper 36*. London: Evans/Methuen.

Smart, N. (1968). *Secular education and the logic of religion*. London: Faber and Faber.

UNESCO. (1996). *Learning: The treasure within* (The Delors Report). The Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, Paris: UNESCO.

United Nations. (1948). *The universal declaration of human rights*. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/ and at http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html.

United Nations. (1990). *United Nations convention on the rights of the child*. Adopted November 1989; Entry into force 2 September 1990. http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC_PRESS200910web.pdf.

Vertovec, S. (2006) *The emergence of super-diversity in Britain, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society*. Working Paper No. 25, University of Oxford.

Wayne, E., Everington, J., Kadodwala, D., & Nesbitt, E. (1996). *Hindus, 'Interpreting religions' series*. Heinemann: The Warwick RE project, Oxford.

Prof Robert Jackson was director of the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit (WRERU) at the University of Warwick, UK. Currently, he is a visiting professor at Stockholm University, and emeritus professor of religions and education at Warwick, an expert adviser to the European Wergeland Centre, Oslo. He has directed many research projects on religions and education, is a prolific writer and edited the *British Journal of Religious Education* for 15 years. Since 2002, he has been deeply involved in the Council of Europe's work on religious diversity and education. He received the William Rainey Harper Award from the Religious Education Association (USA) in 2013 and was awarded honorary doctorates for his contributions to religious education internationally in 2017 by two Norwegian universities

Chapter 41
Religious Education: A Creative Time and Space for Spiritual Development

Ann Casson

Introduction

Religious education (RE) in English and Welsh church secondary schools is both a rigorous academic discipline and an opportunity to make a powerful contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Often it is the academic rigour that is prioritised in school, embedded in the curriculum, researched and measured. This chapter explores RE in a joint Catholic and Anglican secondary school; a case study drawn from the Ten Leading Schools research project (2014–2017), which investigated the nature of the spiritual influence of ten leading Christian ethos secondary schools in England and Wales. It critically investigates the contribution of RE to spiritual development in a joint Catholic and Anglican secondary school. This is explored in three ways, a consideration of the use of sacred space, liturgy, prayer and chaplaincy within RE identifies the variety of ways young people's active engagement with faith is encouraged. Second, there is a reflection on the contribution that the joint Catholic and Anglican ethos makes to pupils' spiritual development. Third, the influence on the pupils is explored through their own characterisation and understanding of the role of RE in their spiritual development. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the extent to which RE in this school actively influences spiritual development, it highlights the challenges encountered and concludes with a reflection on the contribution RE makes to spiritual development.

A. Casson (✉)
Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury, UK
e-mail: ann.casson@canterbury.ac.uk

RE and Spiritual Development

Investigating the influence of RE on pupils' spiritual development is controversial, and problematic. For many it echoes concerns about RE as a means of indoctrination; a way 'to actively foster religious commitment' (Marple, 2005, p. 139). Some RE teachers stress the academic nature of their subject, and are reluctant to engage in discussion about its contribution to pupils' spiritual development for fear of the accusation of the confessional approach to RE. However, these concerns are often based on false assumptions and outdated views of the purpose of RE and the nature of the faith community (Grace, 2002; Pring, 2005).

RE in twenty-first-century Europe operates within a landscape, characterised by de-traditionalisation, individualisation and pluralisation (Boeve, 2012), which is best understood not as a 'continuum between two extremes, but a plural field of a multitude of positions' (p. 145). The teaching, and learning of RE has responded to this increasingly secularised, multifaith and multicultural society (Jackson, 2000). Within a non-confessional framework, a variety of approaches have been developed, such as phenomenological, dialogical, experiential, interpretive, narrative and religious literacy. Catholic religious educators have made a necessary distinction between classroom RE and catechesis (Congregation of Catholic Education, 1997, General Directory of Catechesis, par. 73; Rossiter, 1982; Rymarz, 2011). Catechesis or confessional RE, with aims of the formation in the faith, is not considered appropriate within a 'context of detraditionalisation and pluralisation' (Boeve, 2012, p. 152). Although the relationship between catechesis and RE is still contested (Franchi, 2013), there is a complementarity. RE can be inclusive of catechesis (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000), if it recognises the 'affective dimension of the discipline that often correlates with catechetical goals' (Rymarz, 2011, p. 547) opportunities of catechesis can be presented within the Catholic school. Yet it must be recognised that RE may also contribute to spiritual development, without being catechetical in approach.

Research, teaching and learning have often focussed on the academic, professional nature of RE, rather than the influence of RE on spiritual development. Roebben (2009) argues that attention to this latter aspect of RE is neglected often because of pupils and teachers are unable to access 'underlying religious experience … because of their deep-rooted ignorance of the topic' (p. 18). Clarification of the terminology of spiritual development is needed here. It is a legal requirement of all English schools that they attend to the spiritual development of their pupils (Ofsted, 2016, p. 35). However, it is a vague term open to a variety of interpretations (Davies, 1998). Within Catholic education, faith formation, or formation within the Christian faith is a more common term (Congregation of Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 1977, par. 45). Formation in faith should not be understood as passive transmission, but inclusive of critical openness it should be a process that aims to create 'someone who "thinks for herself" about her faith' (Astley, 2018, p. 23). This chapter employs the term spiritual development, but as inclusive of a sense of formation characterised by critical openness and critical enquiry. It recognises young people's openness to

the spiritual dimension of life (Hay & Nye, 2006) and that spiritual development is an essential element of being human. However, it places the term firmly within a Christian context with its roots in the Christian belief that all are made in God's image (Gn 1:26), and that the role of education is to enable all to reach their God-given potential and live life in all its fullness (Jn 10:10). This includes enabling and encouraging all young people to develop or deepen an awareness of the spiritual dimension of life.

The concept of spiritual development is more relevant to the changing nature of church school communities in a post-secular age characterised by de-traditionalisation, individualisation and pluralisation (Boeve, 2012), where Christianity has not disappeared, but has become de-institutionalised. It is an 'amnesiac' age, a society in which everything fragments, characterised by high mobility, remoteness of social relations and uncertainty (Hervieu-Léger, 2000 p. 165).

Pupils in church schools function within this context, they come from a diversity of faith backgrounds and of none, and many have not been socialised within the faith (Roebben, 2009). Previous research (Casson, 2013) has highlighted that young Catholics in church schools have a fragmentary understanding of and attachment to the Catholic faith tradition. However, within this context, young people are seeking meaning (Roebben, 2009), constructing an identity rather than accepting a 'given identity' (Boeve, 2012, p. 146). Danièle Hervieu-Léger speaks of religious bricolage, a 'playing of the code' (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, p. 217). Bricolage is a process practised by bricoleurs who are creating meaning, making creative and resourceful use of whatever materials are to hand regardless of their original purpose (Hervieu-Léger, 1998). Young people in Catholic schools are often bricoleurs, undertaking bricolage to form a faith identity (Casson, 2013). A characteristic of modern society is not only that people practice bricolage, but that they also assert a right to bricolage, producing for themselves their own relationship to the lineage (Hervieu-Léger, 1998). In this context, RE functions as a resource of the religious tradition for individuals to use and reuse in a myriad of different ways.

Research Methodology

The data for this chapter is drawn from a larger study, the Ten Leading Schools (TLS) research project (2014–2017), which investigated the nature of the spiritual influence of ten leading Christian ethos secondary schools in England and Wales. An initiative set up by the National Institute for Christian Education Research (NICER) at Canterbury Christ Church University, working in association with Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit (WRERU) at the University of Warwick. The research employed both quantitative (WRERU) and qualitative methods (NICER). The ten participating Christian secondary schools were selected through an application process. Eight of the schools are Church of England schools, one is joint Anglican-Catholic and the other an Oasis Academy (Oasis Community Learning have 47 academies in England). All the schools shared a commitment to making a

positive contribution to the spiritual development of their pupils. This chapter draws on the qualitative data from one of the ten schools. The researcher spent 3 weeks spread over the course of 2 years in school interviewing and observing. Members of staff and pupils were identified to take part in an individual interview (mainly staff) or a focus group interview. The transcripts and observation notes were uploaded to NVivo and coded; the aim of the analysis process was for the themes to emerge from that data rather than to be imposed. The strengths of the TLS research were both working in partnership with the schools, and listening to the views of staff and pupils. The participating schools agreed to be named, but all interviewees have been anonymised and pseudonyms employed where appropriate (for a full account of the stories of the ten schools see Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017).

For the purpose of this chapter, I shall focus on the data drawn from research in St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican High school in Wales (secondary school 11–16 years). This school was unique among the ten participating schools in being a joint Catholic and Anglican school. Since the nineteenth century, the Anglican Church (the Church in Wales is an independent member of the Anglican Communion) has been involved in the education of young people, and their schools traditionally have held in balance a domestic function of education of children from Christian homes, and a general function of service to all in the community (Francis, 1993, p. 54). For the Catholic Church, the Catholic school 'forms part of the saving mission of the Church' (Congregation of Catholic Education, 1977, par. 9), and the Catholic Church in England and Wales aims to provide a place in a Catholic school for every Catholic child (Stock, 2005). A small number of these church schools have a joint foundation as Anglican and Catholic schools (Green, 2014). They are an interesting phenomenon, a coming together of two long-time providers of Christian education, but ones which appear to have two different aims. Joint schools hold in a creative tension these dual aims of nurture (Catholic schools) and service (many, but not all Anglican schools). Although this tension has been traditionally found within many single denominational Anglican schools and Catholic schools, it is more complex and more visible in joint schools. Joint Catholic Anglican schools could be seen as a product of the ecumenical activity, offering a positive example of a shared witness (Chadwick, 1994). However, in practice, they often emerge for more pragmatic and educational reasons (Chadwick, 1994), for economic reasons (Arthur, 1995), and they may not be 'rooted in a robust theological framework' (Green, 2014, p. 297). Some of the challenges faced by joint schools are common to all church schools, such as 'how does a church school explicitly nurture the faith of its pupils, whilst educating them to be intellectually critical' (Green, 2014, p. 288), but joint schools face the added challenges of how to meaningfully celebrate the Eucharist in school and, most relevant here, how to teach RE.

Data Analysis

The influence of RE on pupils' spiritual development in this joint Catholic and Anglican school is explored through the aspects highlighted by the pupils' in the school. For example, the interconnectedness of RE and the religious life of the school, the joint Catholic and Anglican ethos of the school, and the opportunities within RE for encounter and discussion of spiritual issues.

Pupils and staff stressed the close connection between the RE department and the chaplaincy team (a Catholic priest, a Catholic sister and an Anglican vicar), the chapel space, prayer and liturgy.

> Historically in this school the religious life of the school has always come under the remit of the RE department. … I've never wanted it to be any other way. I didn't want to detach curriculum RE from the prayer and religious life of the school. (Teacher)

The RE department made deliberate use of the school chapel for short meditations, stilling exercises and even incorporated short services in the chapel into lessons when appropriate, for example, 'the Christmas card appeal [for prisoners]… Reconciliation services. This all takes place in RE time, RE curriculum time' (Teacher). The pupils were introduced to the chapel space through RE lessons in year 7; the sacred nature of the chapel space was explained and experienced, with a short service, meditation and prayer.

Another example frequently cited was the twice-yearly weeks of reconciliation services in Advent and Lent. A pupil explained that they had reconciliation services, when, '[we] might go into the chapel or … stay in our [RE] classroom … it gives that time to think'. The teachers explained that necessary preparation was undertaken within RE lessons: When there are sacramental issues … a lot of explanation needs to be done by [RE teachers] in the classroom and then [pupils] experience it themselves.

It was made clear to the pupils, 'that if they want to receive the sacrament they go to the appropriate member of clergy, Anglican or the Catholic. [Or] they can go to either, and just receive a blessing or have a prayer said or to say a prayer' (teacher). The pupils highlighted the active nature of the prayer 'picking up stones and washing them' or making and writing on a paper boat 'the water rubbed the pen away from it. … It's a way of saying that bad things go away' (pupil). Rymarz (2011) argues that teaching the sacrament of penance can fulfil both educational and catechetical aims; 'the idea of teaching about and then freely offering is a synergy that captures well the catechetical dimension of the Catholic school' (p. 546).

Often RE classes came to the chapel for an experience of and opportunity for prayer. The space gave a different tone to the lessons.

> It just takes them out of the learning environment, the classroom, and into a place where they feel like they've got permission I suppose to pray out loud and to share more deeply probably than they would in a classroom maybe. (Teacher)

Prayer within lessons was mentioned by many pupils; it was important to many pupils, and many claimed to have come to prayer through their experience in school. The RE teachers stressed that prayer was a natural part of RE lessons, and that it

permeated everything and everywhere, although 'we never want to just do it for the sake of it, we want to give it the space and the time'.

The above examples give a glimpse into the vibrant religious life of the school. In many cases, the RE department was a motivator, a facilitator to the religious life of the school, but crucially it was not the sole motivator. The department existed within a school structure that prioritised the religious life of the school through all aspects. For example, while it was in RE that each new generation of pupils was introduced to the school's Gospel values, many pupils and staff made reference to the way Gospel values were embedded all aspects of school life, not only collective worship, pastoral care, but throughout the curriculum.

> I think the morals and the Christian values that are taught here are what people leave with and grow up to and then they give to their children. (Pupil)

Chadwick (1994) argued that the two most divisive issues for joint schools are establishing its identity as a church school and deciding on the RE curriculum. These two issues are inextricable; the Christian identity of the school impacts on the nature of the RE curriculum and vice versa, as was undoubtedly visible in this joint school. Interestingly, pupils in St. Joseph's did not identify differences within RE. In some earlier joint schools, there were separate RE classes for Anglicans and Catholics and Chadwick (1994) noted that these had proved very challenging and ultimately unjustifiable. To comprehend fully the influence of RE on spiritual development, understanding the way in which the school views its identity is crucial.

Staff and pupils argued the vibrant Christian ethos of this school was a consequence of the joint Catholic and Anglican foundation of the school.

> I think we've got something beautiful here, you can't really express and explain. Because obviously we're all different denominations but we get on so well and I think it does inspire pupils by seeing us and witnessing to our faith, that has a profound influence on them. (Teacher)

The headteacher argued that what could be perceived by some to be a dilution of the religious life of the school was, in fact, an enhancement. Two key features contributed to this influence, strategic reflection at all levels of management on the nature of the Christian ethos of the school and staff visibly living out their faith in school. From the beginning, there had been a commitment to 'making a shared … fully Catholic and fully Anglican [school]'. The leadership team, governors and chaplains agreed it was a challenge to interpret this, but this meant that there was a constant reflection, an ongoing process to address this challenge and 'put the and in Catholic and Anglican' (Head). The necessity to interpret, reflect and express both sides of the Christian partnership ensured that the Christian ethos and pupils' spiritual development was prioritised.

Staff valued the visible working together of the two denominations in, for example shared pastoral care and collective worship. Chaplains and staff argued that it made 'faith more real'.

> The children see that we are real about our faith and we're not all trying to model perfection, you know, how we think it ought to be. We're trying to do what is real and right for us, and the children notice that and respond so well to it. (Teacher)

The Anglican chaplain and staff attributed the rich religious life of the school, the explicit witnessing to faith, to the Catholic aspect of the school.

> It wouldn't happen like this in an Anglican school … I've benefitted so much from seeing really good upfront Christian witness in a church school. (Chaplain)

This resonates with Green's findings that staff in the joint schools in her research expressed the view that 'Catholic education was somewhat stronger with a more clearly understood vision' (2014, p. 292). However, in St. Joseph's, many Catholic staff who had worked in other Catholic schools argued that it was the joint nature of the school that made the religious life more explicit. In Chadwick's (1994) research, staff also suggested 'ironically, more attention might have been paid to RE and Roman Catholic teaching at St. Bede's than in some other Catholic schools' (p. 203).

The overwhelming impression was that having two denominations visible in school enhanced the religious life of the school and had a cohesive influence on the community.

> I think the religious side of this school helps us to realise that we're just people and that it's wrong to make others feel bad because of their background or religion. (Pupil)

The joint nature of the school required pupils to reflect on their religious identity. For example, the nature of the Eucharistic celebrations in this school meant that the differences in the denominational background became visible. Pupils argued this was the only place where the difference was visible, 'at the Eucharist you were able to tell if teachers were Catholic or Anglican or whatever faith'.

This awareness and reflection on denominational identity influenced the pupils, one explained that 'it helped me to decide which [denomination] I belonged to'. A parent explained that it had made her son 'more aware of different traditions, and I think more sure of what he really believes himself'. Pupils were forming, constructing their identity in relation to others. The need for a thick identity (Schweitzer, 2007) is essential for participation in dialogue with other religions, for the motivation to engage in an exchange of ideas and practices. This thick identity may be constructed in engagement and reflection on what others believe, indeed, 'to be able to come to a dialogical identity construction in mutual recognition, diversity and difference must be recognisably present' (Boeve, 2012, p. 149). Pupils within this school were challenged to reflect on their 'religious position' and of necessity 'bringing their identity into relation with that other' (p. 149).

Many of the pupils identified the nature of classroom RE within the school as being a major influence on their spiritual development. The key characteristics that they highlighted were the opportunities to share opinions, reflect on their beliefs, challenge and be challenged by others' beliefs. RE was not about being 'forced to believe in God' but rather an opportunity to discuss, to share opinions, to explore difficult and sensitive issues. A group of older pupils discussed a recent lesson on abortion:

> I think it helps you see that things aren't black and white … It's all taken seriously but not too seriously that you can't like put your own opinion across and everything. … Personally, I think that the RE lessons have influenced me because we're very open (Pupil).

The opportunity to think about their faith and question their own faith was welcomed.

> You suddenly start questioning your own faith when you get to year 10 or 11. You're on Mark's gospel and [the teacher asks] why do you think this story might cause problems for Christians today and you suddenly realise that just because you're a Christian it doesn't mean that you believe everything that's written (Pupil).

The pupils expressed an awareness of their own agency with regard to faith Within RE lessons, was when they really started thinking about faith, for one pupil she had 'realised it's [about] what I want to do, it's what I want to be'.

> When you were younger you thought how was Jesus walking on water possible? In the RE … it's just good to be given the information to decide for yourself I think [studying Mark's Gospel] would help anybody at this school with their faith who's not sure. I think that was what got it for me, what made me decide that I want to be a Christian. (Pupil)

The pupils perceived RE to encourage critical enquiry, to be an opportunity to think for themselves about faith, to develop a questioning faith, to reach their own conclusions about various moral issues. RE was seen as being different to other subjects in school, the space for discussions, the respect given to all opinions, were perhaps partly the reasons so many pupils identified RE as making a contribution to their spiritual development.

It was in RE that pupils grappled with questions of belief, of identity and of belonging. It was enabling them to develop spiritually, providing a space to engage in seeking out the meaning and constructing their identity. Young people 'are open to' this questing (Roebben, 2009, p. 18) and the RE classroom is a prime place where this 'discovery of meaning' (p. 20) can take place.

One pupil shared how his experience of RE in this school had developed his faith identity. He identified as a Catholic 'because of his parents', but explained his 'dedication' to the Catholic religion was on his own terms.

> I don't personally believe in completely … I don't believe in going to church weekly or following the Bible to the last word. … however I am still a Catholic and I still believe in God. I don't think that makes me a bad Catholic. (Pupil)

He identified the influence of RE particularly in the examination classes, which had helped him understand that 'I don't have to believe in all the aspects. That really a good Catholic is what you are and how you behave towards people and it's not what you really believe in'. However, he claimed he was 'more of a believer', because of RE and he now 'own[ed] my spiritual life'.

> This school has really helped [me] believe the things I should believe really … It helped me to decide which religion I belonged to … and I think it just really helped to find myself. (Pupil)

Discussion

This pupil's responses clearly revealed evidence of bricolage (Casson, 2013), he was selecting and rejecting elements of the Catholic faith to form his own Catholic identity. In the full interview script some of his selecting and rejecting may be based on false premises, for example he 'rejected' the Biblical creation stories because he believes in evolution. He acknowledges he has 'inherited' the faith tradition from his parents, but RE provided him with the resources and opportunities to develop and to carve out for himself his Catholic identity. This bricolage was not confined to the Catholic pupils, one pupil who identified as agnostic valued 'the experience [of] being able to refocus' in RE arguing that it had 'shaped who I am and it's an experience. I'd never forget this school'. The pupils were responding to the presentation of a Christian worldview within RE, by selecting and rejecting elements to form a faith identity. Further research is needed to explore the 'thickness' and durability of this identity post-school, particularly as it appears to have no roots in a wider Christian community. Although interesting several pupils spoke of how they expressed the school's Gospel values in their life outside of school.

To what extent could it be established that RE in this school actively influences spiritual development? Researching the positive contribution RE makes to spiritual development is challenging. This research has focussed on pupils' own accounts, their interpretation and narrative. Measuring the depth, breadth or longevity of spiritual development is necessarily problematic. Within the TLS project, attitudes to Christianity were measured using Francis Scale of Attitude to Christianity, (Francis, 2009) and differences in pupils' values, attitudes and beliefs were measured by quantitative questionnaires completed by all pupils in years 7–11, (see Casson et al., 2017). More detailed analysis of these quantitative findings is ongoing. Further research is required to investigate how these attitudes are sustained into adulthood. Listening to the pupil's voice, giving pupils the opportunity to explore and express their interpretation of spiritual development did provide an insight into the areas of religious education that are perceived to have a positive influence.

Three key features had been identified: the value of an interconnection between RE and the spiritual life of the school, a holistic approach and clear expression of the Christian ethos, and the importance of space within RE to explore issues of faith.

The first aspect of the embedding of RE in the spiritual life of the school highlighted the influence of opportunities for personal reflection and prayer within the framework of a Christian liturgy, and sacred space. The encountering within the RE of Christian narrative, beliefs and practices alongside the opportunity for personal reflection was valued by many pupils. The embedding within teaching and learning of different ways to reflect, personal prayer, and liturgy, different forms of meditation enabled the pupils to meaningfully reflect on the spiritual dimension and its influence on their own life. The imaginative use of the chapel space and the connection between RE and for example reconciliation services was valued by both staff and pupils. Within this school, RE department provided opportunities for pupils to

experience the Christian practices and through careful preparation enabled all pupils to access these experiences.

The holistic approach and prioritisation of a Christian ethos were identified in the TLS research project as a key contributing factor to developing a climate in which spiritual development may flourish (Casson et al. 2017). The Christian ethos of a church school is no longer a given, it cannot assume the strength of faith in the local parish and family. Boeve (2012) argues that a precondition for the effective implementation of RE is that 'the school comes to terms with its own confessional identity' and reflects on it 'in relation to the increased detraditionalisation and pluralisation of its staff and audience' (p. 154). In St. Joseph's, it was argued that it was the joint Catholic and Anglican nature of the school that led to prioritising the Christian ethos. This case study highlights that establishing an environment in which spiritual development flourishes cannot be left to chance, but requires strategic thinking, deliberate decisions and continual revisiting of the changing needs of the pupils.

Third, this study suggests that RE can provide time and space for pupils to explore, discuss and reflect. In fact, it can provide a space for 'discovery of meaning' (Roebben, 2009, p. 20) and space and time for spiritual development, where pupils can explore forming a spiritual identity. It could be that these examples are pointing to the creation of a 'narthical learning space' where 'transformative learning' can take place (p. 23). For Roebben, this narthical learning space, drawing on the concept of a church narthex, is not a stepping stone into the Christian faith, but offers a space to look at [life] from a completely different perspective. As a narthical learning space, RE should challenge 'young people to reconsider their own stories from a different angle', not with an aim to provide answers, but to open a 'hermeneutic space in which seeking can be transformed into a meaningful and fulfilling practice' (p. 20). It is a safe space to encounter, explore and reflect on the religious experience.

One challenge of research in this area is that the landscape is constantly changing. The certainty of faith in home, parish and school no longer exists. Young people and many teachers in church schools have a fragmentary and fluid understanding of faith. In interviews with young people, their faith identity is often described as fluid and flexible. However, many young people are seeking meaning, looking to understand themselves, their community, and open to exploring the spiritual dimension of life. There is a need to listen to the views and opinions of the young people, to understand their experiences of faith and to facilitate them being active agents in their own spiritual development and that of others.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has explored pupils' experience of RE within one joint Catholic and Anglican secondary school. This one case study, with its unique context, has indicated that when an environment is sustained where RE is interwoven into the spiritual life of the school, where a Christian ethos is prioritised, and there is space and time within RE for open discussions and engagement in critical enquiry, pupils

do see RE as a positive influence on their spiritual development. There is a challenge, but also an opportunity for classroom religious education in a church school, to be a space and time when spiritual development can take place.

References

Arthur, J. (1995). *The ebbing tide: Policy and principles of Catholic education*. Leominster: Gracewing.

Astley, J. (2018). The naming of parts: Faith, formation, development and education. In R. Stuart-Buttle & J. Shortt (Eds.), *Christian faith, formation and education* (pp. 13–27). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Boeve, L. (2012). Religious education in a post-secular and post-Christian context. *Journal of Beliefs and Values, 33*(2), 143–156.

Casson, A., Cooling, T., & Francis, L. J. (2017). *Lessons in spiritual development: Learning from leading secondary schools*. Church House: Church House Publishing.

Casson, A. E. (2013). *Fragmented catholicity and social cohesion: Faith schools in a plural society*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. (2000). *Statement on religious education in Catholic schools.* Retrieved from http://www.rcdow.org.uk/education/default.asp?library_ref=8andcontent_ref=827.

Chadwick, P. (1994). *Schools of reconciliation. Issues in joint Roman Catholic-Anglican education*. London: Cassell.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977). *The Catholic school*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html.

Congregation for the Clergy. (1997). *General directory for catechesis.* (GDC). Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/cogregtions/cclergy/docments/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

Davies, G. (1998). What is spiritual development? Primary headteachers' views. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 3*(2), 123–124.

Franchi, L. (2013). Catechesis and religious education: A case study from Scotland. *Religious Education, 108*(5), 467–481.

Francis, L. J. (1993). Theology of education and the church school. In L. J. Francis & D. W. Lankshear (Eds.), *Christian perspectives on church schools*. Gracewing: Leominster.

Francis, L. J. (2009). Understanding the attitudinal dimensions of religion and spirituality. In M. De Souza, L. J. Francis, J. O'Higgins-Norman, & D. G. Scott (Eds.), *International handbook of education for spirituality, care and wellbeing* (pp. 147–168). Dordrecht: Springer.

Grace, G. (2002). *Catholic schools: Mission, markets and morality*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Green, E. (2014). The negotiation and articulation of identity, position and ethos in joint church academies. *Research Papers in Education, 29*(3), 285–299.

Hay, D., & Nye, R. (2006). *The spirit of the child*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Hervieu-Léger, D. (1998). The transmission and formation of socio-religious identities in modernity: An analytical essay on the trajectories of identification. *International Sociology, 13*(2), 213.

Hervieu-Léger, D. (2000). *Religion as a chain of memory*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Jackson, R. (2000). Law, politics and religious education in England and Wales: Some history, some stories and some observations. In M. Leicester, C. Modgil, & S. Modgil (Eds.), *Spiritual and religious education* (Vol. 5, pp. 86–99). London: Falmer.

Marples, R. (2005). Against faith schools: A philosophical argument for children's rights. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 10*(2), 133–147.

Ofsted. (2016). *School inspection handbook* [online]. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015.

Pring, R. (2005). Faith schools: Can they be justified. In R. Gardner, J. Cairns, & D. Lawton (Eds.), *Faith schools: Consensus or conflict* (pp. 51–60). Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer.

Roebben, B. (2009). Narthical religious learning: Redefining religious education in terms of pilgrimage. *British Journal of Religious Education, 31*(1), 17–27.

Rossiter, G. M. (1982). The need for a "creative divorce" between catechesis and religious education in Catholic schools. *Religious Education, 77*(1), 21–40.

Rymarz, R. (2011). Catechesis and religious education in Canadian Catholic schools. *Religious Education, 106*(5), 537–549.

Schweitzer, F. (2007). Religious individualization: new challenges to education for tolerance. *British Journal of Religious Education, 29*(1), 89–100.

Stock, M. (2005). *Christ at the centre: A summary of why the Church provides Catholic schools*. Birmingham: The Diocesan Schools Commission of Birmingham.

Dr. Ann Casson is a senior research fellow at the National Institute for Christian Education Research (NICER) at Canterbury Christ Church University and an associate fellow at Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit (WRERU). Prior to becoming a full-time researcher, Ann was a secondary school Religious Education teacher in the North East of England. Trevor Cooling (Canterbury Christ Church University); Leslie Francis and Ursula McKenna (University of Warwick) were the other key contributors on the research project which generated the empirical data used in this chapter.

Chapter 42
The Student Voice in South African Catholic School Religious Education

Paul Faller

Introduction

A survey of the student voice in religious education was carried out in 2017 among 2025 students in South African Catholic secondary schools. The survey, administered through a questionnaire, and focusing on the students' experience of teaching and learning in the subject, was prompted by a growing concern among those responsible for developing religious education at the very inconsistent and unequal practice in the schools. The research aimed at answering the following question: How might the students' reflection on their experience of religious education help to develop a more relevant curriculum? After a brief presentation of Catholic schooling and the state of religious education in South Africa, current movements in curriculum and classroom practice were identified in the recent literature. An introduction to the survey's questionnaire and the participant sample will be followed by an analysis of the student voice. An attempt will be made to correlate this analysis with approaches identified in the literature review. The paper will conclude with recommendations for a revision of the curriculum and a strategy to encourage teachers to make the necessary shifts in their classroom approach.

Religious Education in South Africa

Catholic schools make up about 1% of 30,000 primary and secondary institutions that provide basic education in South Africa. Of the approximately 350 Catholic schools, 100 are independent and 250 are public schools on private property (CIE, 2014). The right of the latter to maintain their religious character is enshrined in law (Department

P. Faller (✉)
Catholic Institute of Education, Johannesburg, South Africa
e-mail: paulf@cie.org.za

of Education, 1998), while independent schools have greater freedom to determine their character and curriculum as long as their academic standards are comparable to those in public schools (South Africa, 1996, par. 46(3)(a)). Included in the right to maintain a Catholic ethos in those schools that are public is the provision of religious education. On the other hand, all schools are expected to deliver a very prescriptive national curriculum that does not recognise religious education and consequently does not allow time for it in the school day. This is one of the external pressures that make the delivery of religious education difficult.

Internal pressures also have a major impact on delivery. Many Catholic schools, especially those in deep rural areas, suffer from the lack of material and human resources, now that religious congregations have a diminishing role in the schools they have established. The public schools receive no financial support for religious education since it is not recognised. In addition, most teachers engaged in religious education have received no formal training in this area.

Literature Review

Context

While South Africa would not be described as a first-world country, it nevertheless becomes increasingly a part of the global village and therefore has not escaped the various influences of globalisation, secularisation and cultural postmodernity. Three characteristics of secularisation have been identified as—individualisation, detraditionalisation and pluralisation. In the first place,

> individuals are seen as creating their own identities, rather than having their identity assigned to them by the society or culture in which they live… [E]lements of identity such as gender, religion, marriage or ethnicity are seen as being shaped by personal choice, rather than by culture, religion or biology. (Sharkey, 2017, p. 61)

In a detraditionalised society, cultural and religious traditions are not automatically passed down from one generation to the next. Crawford and Rossiter (2006) describe 'a radical shift towards a more hermeneutic consciousness of reality' (p. 387). Religious conceptions of reality, they say, are seen as interpretations that always fall short of the reality they are trying to capture. They do not, therefore, have the same compelling power to convince as before.

Another factor influencing this shift is the pluralisation of society where 'a variety of religious and ideological traditions sit visibly and legitimately in the public space so that individuals are forced to confront the reality that one's own tradition is but one among many alternatives' (Sharkey, 2017, p. 62). The choice before young people today is not only from among religious traditions. Being religious is itself a choice.

Students

How do students relate today to the world of religion? Two characteristics of the classroom today will play a major part in shaping the future of religious education—the spirituality of contemporary youth shaped by secularisation, and the multireligious student body resulting from the process of globalisation. More and more people today describe themselves as spiritual but not religious and we need to appreciate the implications of this distinction. Rossiter (2013) explains that 'the spiritual is the natural dimension to life that includes thinking and feelings about transcendence', while 'being religious means being spiritual in a particular way as informed by the beliefs, practices and traditions of a religious group' (p. 10).

Why is it that there is among youth an increasing interest and involvement in the spiritual dimension of life while at the same time a withdrawal from practice associated with a traditional religious community? For better or for worse, the process of secularisation has led contemporary society to this position. Because culture can be 'an unrecognized presence, 'a highly selective screen' between us and our world which decides 'what we pay attention to and what we ignore" (Gallagher, 1997, p. 7), it is no surprise that younger generations will assume—in most instances uncritically—the prevailing cultural worldview.

Rossiter (2012) provides a summary of the chief characteristics of youth spirituality today: it is individualistic, eclectic, subjective, secular, and personally constructed (p. 9). This is, of course, not true for all young people: some tend 'to withdraw into highly structured fortresses of resistance to the chaos that they perceive' (Gallagher, 1997, p. 30). Furthermore, authority no longer resides in the institution. The individual has become his/her own ultimate touchstone for authenticity in beliefs and values. Religious teachings that do not seem to be relevant, having no perceived connection with life, may simply be ignored, or discarded as an unnecessary burden (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006).

It is not that young people have summarily dismissed religion. They may have no first-hand experience upon which to make a judgement, and yet be interested and sense its importance. Whatever the case, Crawford and Rossiter (2006) argue that

> they need to be educated in relation to issues in meaning, identity and spirituality that bring them to the beginning point of seeing that religion does have something valuable to contribute, and that it warrants study … getting to the spiritual starting point is the task of the compulsory school religion curriculum. (p. 386)

The second shaping influence is the multireligious classroom. The Second Vatican Council in *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) defines the common good as 'the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily' (par. 26). In the same paragraph, it stresses that 'the order of things must be subordinate to the order of persons and not the other way round' (par. 26). There should be little argument as to whether these principles apply to the Catholic school which welcomes all regardless of their religious identity. We, therefore, need to take into account, when fashioning our religious education

curriculum as a service for all, a number of different religious realities among our students.

Approach

Crawford and Rossiter's getting to the 'beginning point' (2006, p. 386) is described in different terms by Gallagher (2001) emphasising 'that the 'ineffectiveness of organized religion today is due to its failure to speak to the pre-religious God awareness" (p. 120). Efforts at evangelisation, he says, must dive deeper to nourish the human grounds of faith. 'Where the surrounding culture causes disposition to stay dull, or imagination to suffer malnutrition, it is small wonder that the human grounds of faith remain weak' (p. 120).

In the same vein, O'Leary (2008) sees the task of the religious educator as being 'beyond the giving of new information to students, to bring them to the edge of their own divine possibilities for recognizing the divine everywhere. Story, poetry and all the creative arts become a necessary part of this adventure' (p. 28).

Grajczonek (2015) makes the same point about beginnings. She argues that

> the starting point should be with children's innate spirituality or … their human spirituality, rather than with their religiosity. In other words, if teachers nurtured those features or characteristics common to both spirituality and religiosity, such as relationship, imagination, wonder and awe, and so on, they would, in the first instance, be nurturing children's spiritual development, which could then lead to their religious development. (p. 32)

Aims

Moran (1991) distinguishes between 'teaching people religion' and 'teaching people to be religious in a particular way'. Is the second of these still valid in a multireligious classroom? Crawford and Rossiter (1988, p. 69) remind us that the classroom is a zone of obligatory attendance and that overt catechetical intentions can impinge on the religious freedom of students.

This does not suggest that religious education in the Catholic school be confined to 'teaching people religion' in the above sense only. Nor does it suggest that classroom moments with a catechetical potential should be avoided. However, it does mean that setting aims needs to be open to the many different religious identities present. The General Directory for Catechesis (1998), according to Madden (2017), identifies some of the outcomes possible within one group of students: for some it may be catechesis, for others evangelisation and for yet others pre-evangelisation or inter-religious learning.

Given this complexity, it would seem practical to identify the principal responsibilities of religious education to its students. Crawford and Rossiter (2006) identify these as 'provision of access to their religious traditions—to which they have a right;

and help in learning how to explore spiritual-moral issues that are prominent in the culture and that have a bearing on their personal development' (p. 402). This would entail 'an educational exploration of religion and not necessarily a religious experience as such' (Rossiter, 2017, p. 17).

To what extent should religious education aim at the personal change in the students? Rather than making this a direct aim, Crawford and Rossiter (2006) argue that it is more appropriate to aim at disposing students towards personal change by 'helping them learn how to become well informed and to think critically - educating them to learn better from their own experience' (2006, p. 19).

Curriculum

A curriculum that is static is hardly able to meet the needs of students in an ever-changing world. The Congregation for Catholic Education (2013) reminds us that 'developing the curriculum is one of the school's most demanding tasks', but a necessary one since 'the curriculum is how the school community makes explicit its goals and objectives, the content of its teaching and the means for communicating it effectively' (par. 64).

Curriculum for religious education in the contemporary world needs to be grounded in two distinct yet related realities. Everist (2000), discussing the implications of diversity and change for religious education, maintains that students need a firm grounding in their inherited traditions 'so that they are able to deal with diversity within and among cultures' (pp. 56–57, 67).

In the religious school, the sponsoring tradition will feature prominently. The tradition will not be imposed, however, but will rather, as Madden (2017) suggests, humbly invite students 'into a faith possibility that is open, dialogic, critical and creative' (p. 225).

Attention will be paid to the tradition's various aspects but given the context we described above, and the approach favoured by Gallagher (2001) and O'Leary (2008) to develop the pre-religious consciousness, a special place will be given to spirituality which 'in its various guises (e.g. Catholic, ecumenical, interfaith, ecological)', as Mudge (2017) notes, 'is an essential glue and lingua franca that holds all aspects of Catholic education together' (p. 142). Everist (2000) agrees since religious education, she says, 'needs to address the issues of time urgency, frenzy and fatigue, and to study the meaning of Sabbath. Spiritual disciplines that promote silence, stillness and growth in faith need to be central to curriculum' (p. 62).

The second reality in which the curriculum needs to be grounded is the students' experience. For this reason, Crawford and Rossiter (2006, pp. 386, 395–396) advocate an issues-oriented approach which will satisfy the students' need for relevance. The importance of this is borne out by empirical research on German youth carried out by Karl Nipkow in the 1990s. He found 'that if the teaching of religion did not focus in some way on what young people perceived to be the main spiritual and moral issues of the day, then they tended to regard descriptive content as religious paraphernalia,

more concerned with institutional maintenance than with people's search for meaning and values' (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, p. 386).

Crawford and Rossiter (2006) provide examples of issue-oriented content from fields such as global society, theology, psychological spirituality, science and religion and world religions. Whether the chosen issues have relevance for students will depend on whether it is perceived to have some personal significance. While not discounting the possibility of more traditional topics to have such relevance, especially if taught in a problem-posing way, they advise that 'it would be desirable to include an appropriate amount of issue-related content in the religion curriculum, giving it a prominent place alongside traditional religious topics' (2006, p. 380).

We end this section with a note about language. Fleischer (2000) writes:

> Religious education in the twenty-first century has the major task of conveying the relevance and credibility of religious discourse and a religious worldview for a generation that is scientifically sophisticated, preoccupied with technological developments, increasingly indifferent to dogmatic formulations, and yet hungry for authentic spirituality. (p. 214)

Writing in the same vein, Brennan (2017) calls for a language 'that aids dialogue between a plausible Catholicity and modern culture' (p. 352).

Methodology

Contemporary writers advocate a process they call inter-religious education. Boys and Lee (2008) describe this approach as 'a form of dialogue that emphasises study in the presence of the religious other and an encounter with the tradition that the other embodies' (p. 94). The Congregation for Catholic Education (2013) supports this approach, albeit from the broader perspective of culture: 'It is a question, rather, of helping people to revisit their own cultures, with the cultures of others as their starting-point: in other words, helping people to reflect on themselves within a perspective of 'openness to humanity'' (par. 63). This approach can clearly be extended to include those whose worldview is not a religious one, and this should be welcomed, since 'faith formation … will involve a dynamic, respectful and searching dialogue between belief and unbelief … between theism and atheism … and between faith and doubt' (Lane, 2013, p. 46).

How will this approach look in the multireligious Catholic school? Sharkey (2017) describes the Dialogue School, which 'creates the conditions where all voices are respected and invited to join a conversation that is systematically and intentionally engaged with Catholic beliefs' (p. 71). If all voices are respected this would mean, in the inter-religious paradigm, that the Catholic voice or voices are in dialogue with other Christian voices, and with the voices of other religious and non-religious traditions. For genuine dialogue to take place, the process needs to be open to learning from these other voices. Included in the voices will be those of the students themselves. Crawford and Rossiter (2006, p. 17) call for 'an open, inquiring, student-centred

learning process' and not an approach 'that remotely resembles an exhortation from authority [which] runs the risk of being dismissed as irrelevant'.

The freedom of religion of every student thus will mean an invitational approach. Students should never 'be pressured psychologically to contribute at a personal level' (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, p. 392). However, such contributions should be welcomed since they can help students to learn from each other. On the other hand, an inter-religious approach will make certain demands on the students. For them, writes Madden (2017), 'a disposition of openness to encounter is vital to engagement in religious education' (p. 234). Inter-religious education will also make demands on the teacher who should be open to encounter and prepared to add her voice when appropriate. The teacher as participant in shared dialogue, says Madden (2017), needs to model certain dispositions, such as 'being comfortable with sitting with silence and ambiguity; listening with respect; embracing difference and challenge; making space for all contributions and balancing divergent thinking with staying on track' (p. 227). Madden also points out that this openness also includes vulnerability. The process asks the teacher 'to share of themselves, even as an unfinished identity 'under construction'' (p. 232).

The Survey

In what follows, references to the literature reviewed above indicate some correlation of the student voice with the ideas or views expressed there. Catholic schools with students in Grades 7–12 were invited to participate in the survey, and ten responded. Seven of these are independent and three are public schools on church property or ground belonging to a religious congregation. The schools comprising the sample—from five different provinces—reflect adequately the cross-section of socio-economic and human settlement realities in the country. The sample of 2025 students contained a higher percentage of female respondents (62%) than is found nationally (54%) (CIE, 2014), due to the inclusion of an all-girls' school in the survey. Of significance with regard to gender was the number (6.5%) who made no response (Sharkey, 2017).

Religious affiliation was predominantly Christian (85%) with 39% of the sample being Catholic. This latter percentage is significantly above the national average of 24% for Catholic schools (CIE, 2014). It is accounted for by the fact that one of the township schools in the sample, providing 27% of the respondents, had among them a 68% Catholic population. Other religions were represented (6%) while 5% stated that they had no religion (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006).

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was completed anonymously although respondents were asked to indicate the name of their school and grade so that feedback could be given later to individual schools. Personal details of gender and religion were requested as noted above. The first part of the questionnaire, seeking to establish the respondents' engagement with religion, revolved around four questions: What role does religion play in the life of your family? What role does religion play in your personal life? Which religious practices do you find meaningful? Which religious practices at school do you find most challenging to participate in? The second part focused on the students' experience of religious education and covered a number of aspects described below in the analysis of the results.

Analysis

Religious Practice

Responses to the first part of the questionnaire show a relatively high level of participation in personal and familial religious practice. In the family context, 76% of students indicate that they pray together regularly or sometimes, 74% talk about religion together and 73% attend service together. Personal practice in some respects is higher. 87% pray regularly or sometimes, 79% attend religious services, and 73% talk about religion, at least sometimes. Students were also asked about their participation in voluntary groups. Only 13% indicated a regular engagement, and another 28% were occasionally involved. What is of interest here is the contrast between voluntary individual and communal engagement in religious practices. The same contrast is evident in students' naming of religious practices they find meaningful. 1329 respondents cited personal prayer, 699 named meditation whereas only 664 favoured communal prayer.

There are significant challenges for students, particularly those who are not Catholic, when they are expected to participate in specifically Catholic practices—going to Mass and not being allowed to receive Communion (124 responses), praying the rosary (58 responses), being signed with ashes (39 responses) or feeling obliged to participate in other rituals, for example making the Sign of the Cross (57 responses).

Level of Satisfaction

Where students were asked to rate their experience of religious education, a generally high level of satisfaction is indicated by 76% of the respondents who recorded that they either enjoyed it or found it interesting. Cause for concern, however, is the

relatively large number of students (17%) who find it either boring or irrelevant. 7% made no response to this question.

Student Questions

Students were invited to name three questions they would like answered in religious education. While the responses display a wide range of topics, some feature prominently across the grades. Those relating directly to religion were most numerous (205 responses), followed by questions about God (128 responses), Jesus (95 responses), spirituality (90 responses), the Bible (71 responses), prayer (58 responses) and religious education itself (70 responses).

A brief mention is given here of the issues underlying these main questions, especially those that point to curriculum areas that need development or which resonate with the literature review.

Students are puzzled at the multiplicity of religions and at the many different denominations within Christianity. They, therefore, want to know how they arose and developed. There is also a sense of awakening to the historical realities of Christianity in Africa. With regard to religion as a way of life, students are often hesitant about their commitment. While there is keen interest in the idea of God, students want to base their faith on a reality they can comprehend. There seems to be great confusion about the relative identities of God and Jesus, and with respect to Jesus, a common question related to his colour.

Students are generally concerned about their spiritual life, but want affirmation and guidance. They want a close relationship with God and a sense that prayer is a real communication. While many students enjoy engaging with the Bible, there are some reservations, especially when interpretation is fundamentalist or contradictions are perceived in the text.

Curriculum Content

The previous section dealing with student questions already gives pointers to curriculum content. From questions relating to what students enjoy about religious education, what topics they'd like addressed, and what areas they suggest should be included in the curriculum the following emerged: preference was given to Bible (708 responses), God (584 responses), world religions (563 responses) and Jesus (539 responses). Together with prayer (227 responses), these choices correlate closely with the topics identified through student questions. In addition, there was a strong emphasis (679 responses) on practical matters related to life, including choice and consequence, relevant life issues, personal growth and sexuality (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006). Interest was also shown in origin stories and theories (107 responses) and the history of religions (107 responses).

With respect to broader curriculum areas, Prayer Education (798 responses), as previously, is strong—in fact, the leading choice. Moral Education (574) is second, and, in line with the development of pre-religious consciousness advocated in the literature, Art is third (511 responses) (Gallagher, 2001; O'Leary, 2008). If we link Moral Education and Education for Personal Growth and Relationships (380), we see again that practical concerns for living are uppermost in students' minds. The theological/philosophical dimension (774) is also well represented in students' choices as is an interest in world religions (308).

On the negative side (154 responses), the major criticism of current curriculum is that attention is paid 'only to Catholic Christianity and no other religions'. Students feel that this, in effect, is a denial of their freedom to choose in the matter of religion (Sharkey, 2017).

A significantly large number of respondents (92 responses) remark that they dislike the fact that they 'learn the same thing over and over'. This suggests that in many cases, teachers are not accountable to an agreed curriculum and schools leave them to pursue their own personal interests.

Classroom Practice

With regard to learning activities, by far the most popular is discussion (767 responses). While this is positive because of the interaction that students enjoy and benefit by, there is a caution to consider. For discussion and dialogue to result in learning, both teacher and students need to develop certain dispositions that were mentioned in the literature review (Madden, 2017), or else the activity results in the entrenching of already-held opinions and can lead to conflict, as some students pointed out in the survey.

By way of healthy contrast, the high scores for meditation (538 responses) and retreat (453) show an appreciation for times of silence and reflection built into the learning experience. The high score for film and video (493 responses) is not surprising, given the current absorption of most students in digital and visual media.

In some schools, more specifically religious activities such as Bible reading and sharing (318 responses), praying (420 responses) and hymn singing (237 responses) are popular, though a significant number—in some instances 5%—find these activities challenging, especially when asked to lead them in public.

Despite the tendency we noted above to favour personal rather than communal religious practice, there is a healthy sense of the readiness to learn together in the scores for community work (300 responses) and group projects (343 responses).

Considering teacher approaches and attitudes, student responses show that while there is a healthy measure of free engagement in the classroom and the ability of teachers to generate interest in the subject, there is an equal measure of unsound practice where teachers have not understood their role, or taken seriously the ethical implications of their approach (Crawford & Rossiter, 1988).

Some students, for instance enjoy the freedom to question and challenge (59 responses), while others feel that religion and ideas are forced on them (86 responses). Students enjoy hearing others' experiences, opinions, views and perspectives (69 responses), but some find their opinions not welcomed (39 responses). Many enjoy sharing their experiences, knowledge, thoughts, feelings, views, and opinions (86 responses) but are hesitant when expected to share more personal things (55 responses).

A limited number of students expressed satisfaction with their teachers as approachable role models (24 responses), but a far larger number of responses indicated teachers who are narrow-minded, judgmental, discriminatory and biased at times (72 responses).

While there is some support among students for the assessment of religious education, there is a much larger sense of discomfort with the practice. This may be due to a lack of awareness among teachers of what is appropriate or inappropriate to assess.

Benefits and Challenges

Among the benefits of religious education noted by the respondents was the experience of feeling connected with or coming closer to God (128 responses). They find it as a help and guide (40 responses) and a means of growing spiritually (27 responses), finding themselves (26 responses) and strengthening their faith (24 responses). On the other hand, their greatest challenge is their hesitance to accept ideas that seem beyond belief (33 responses).

The observations made in this analysis of the student voice confirm to some extent the direction for religious education as reflected in the literature. Students look forward to a subject in which their individual religious identities and concerns are recognised and which gives them the freedom to express them without judgement. They are not comfortable with any approach that is perceived to be either subtly or forcefully indoctrinating.

They are open to most dimensions of the curriculum if teachers are suitably resourced and trained to make the teaching and learning experience understandable, interesting and relevant. Of particular note is the students' inclination to prayer and meditation, as well as their interest in art as a source of meaning and a means of expression. These areas of curriculum point clearly to a need for the development of their spirituality (Everist, 2000; Mudge, 2017).

Recommendations

The following recommendations arise from the results of the survey. They are essentially two, relating to teacher formation and curriculum development. There needs

to be an updating of religious education in South Africa Catholic schools if it is to remain credible. And the change must begin with the teachers, who need to undertake a journey in faith from a literal to a second naiveté or post-critical belief (Sharkey, 2017). While there will be resistance to the invitation by some who might feel their integrity threatened, embarking on such a journey will empower teachers to meet their students openly and without trepidation, acknowledging the range of difference in their faith experience and their attitudes to religion. They will be able to engage confidently with students' questions, not passing them off with an abrupt answer, but guiding them to live their questions in a spiritually and psychologically sound way (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006).

Second, and equally important, is the development of a nationally agreed core curriculum that will engage student interest while making accessible to them the core of the Catholic tradition in dialogue with other traditions, especially those that are prominent in South African society (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013). The curriculum will have as its main objective the bringing of students to the 'the beginning point' of recognising and becoming open to transcendent reality (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Grajczonek, 2015).

Conclusion

On the basis of a survey among a relatively small but representative sample of Catholic schools in South Africa, this paper has made an initial attempt at gauging the student voice in religious education. The findings, largely in line with the literature reviewed, suggest a movement towards making religious education more equitable and accessible to students in a multireligious and secular context. Further research through interviews with focus groups of students who participated in the survey will help to confirm the findings.

References

Boys, M., & Lee, S. (2008). *Christians and Jews in dialogue: Learning in the presence of the other*. Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths.

Brennan, T. (2017). Towards a new integrated approach to religious education: The Tasmanian experience. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian Catholic schools: Exploring the landscape* (pp. 349–367). Mulgrave, VIC: Vaughan Publishing.

Catholic Institute of Education (CIE). (2014). *Catholic education statistics*. Johannesburg: Catholic Institute of Education.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2013). *Educating to intercultural dialogue in Catholic school: Living in harmony for a civilization of love*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20131028_dialogo-interculturale_en.html.

Congregation for the Clergy. (1998). General Directory for Catechesis. Dablin: Veritas.

Crawford, M., & Rossiter, G. (1988). *Missionaries to a teenage culture: Religious education in a time of rapid change*. Sydney: Christian Brothers Province Resource Group.

Crawford, M., & Rossiter, G. (2006). *Reasons for living: Education and young people's search for meaning, identity and spirituality*. Camberwell, VIC: ACER Press.

Department of Education. (1998). *National model deed of agreement for Catholic public schools on private property. Schedule 3: Description of distinctive religious character*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Everist, N. C. (2000). Issues and ironies of the new millennium. In J. M. Lee (Ed.), *Forging a better religious education in the third millennium* (pp. 51–68). Birmingham, Alabama: Religious education Press.

Fleischer, B. (2000). Practical theology and transformative learning: Partnership for Christian religious education. In J. M. Lee (Ed.), *Forging a better religious education in the third millennium* (pp. 203–225). Birmingham, Alabama: Religious education Press.

Gallagher, M. P. (1997). *Clashing symbols: An introduction to faith and culture*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.

Gallagher, M. P. (2001). *Dive deeper: The human poetry of faith*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.

Grajczonek, J. (2015). *Spiritual development and religious education in the early years: A review of the literature*. Retrieved from http://qcec.catholic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Final_Spiritual-Development-Religious-Education-in-the-Early-Years_A-Review-of-the-Literature.pdf.

Lane, D. (2013). *Religion and education: Re-imagining the relationship*. Dublin: Veritas.

Madden, R. (2017). Religious education curriculum in Melbourne. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian catholic schools: Exploring the landscape* (pp. 223–242). Mulgrave, VIC: Vaughan Publishing.

Moran, G. (1991). *Understanding religion and being religious*. *Professional Approaches for Christian Educators, 21*, 249–252. Retrieved https://leocontent.acu.edu.au/file/a0ed9332-17fa-4201-be07-ada34ab724ab/1/Moran6340.pdf.

Mudge, P. (2017). Missing in Theory and praxis?—Teaching spirituality in the catholic classroom and beyond. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian catholic schools: Exploring the landscape* (pp. 141–160). Mulgrave, VIC: Vaughan Publishing.

O'Leary, D. (2008). *Begin with the heart: Recovering a sacramental vision*. Blackrock, Dublin: Columba Press.

Rossiter, G. (2012). Some perspectives on contemporary youth spirituality; A 'need to know' for Church school religious education. *The Well, 5*(1), 8–12.

Rossiter, G. (2013). Key Issues for a relevant religious education curriculum. *The Well, 6*(3), 7–16.

Rossiter, G. (2017). A personal, critical perspective on the development of Australian Catholic school religious education: Where to from here? In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian catholic schools: Exploring the landscape* (pp. 13–33). Mulgrave, VIC: Vaughan Publishing.

Second Vatican Council. (1965). *Pastoral constitution on the church in the modern world. Gaudium et spes.* Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

Sharkey, P. (2017). Better understanding the context of religious education: The CECV Leuven research. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian catholic schools: Exploring the landscape* (pp. 53–76). Mulgrave, VIC: Vaughan Publishing.

South Africa. (1996). Government Gazette No. 17579, *South African Schools Act*, November 15, 1996. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Paul Faller is the National coordinator of religious education, Catholic Institute of Education, Johannesburg, South Africa. He has taught in both Catholic primary and secondary schools. His

work in the field of Religious Education includes policy, curriculum and materials development together with teacher training and support. His current work includes the development of an entry-level distance learning course, the promotion of meditation in schools, and research into a new curriculum for Catholic schools. He holds a B.A. from the University of South Africa, a Masters in Theology from St. Augustine College in Johannesburg and a Master of Religious Education degree from the Australian Catholic University.

Chapter 43
Pedagogical Identity for Religious Education in Catholic Schools: A Brazilian Case Study

Sérgio Rogério Azevedo Junqueira

Introduction

In 1500, in the first text about the Brazilian territory, the fleet clerk told the King of Portugal that the best fruit that could be produced in the territory is to save 'these people', this being the main seed to be thrown upon this land. Brazil is therefore a country with a long Christian tradition as a result of the arrival of Franciscans, Mercedarians, Jesuits and many other religious congregations between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries. This was a period when Catholic schools were established right from the Amazon region in the north to southernmost Brazil, largely aided by Black slave labour, and later by new European and Asian groups that contributed not only to the ethnic and racial plurality, but also to the religious diversity of the Brazilian people. The advent of the contemporary republican regime emphasised, with effect from the 1889 New Constitution, that Brazil was to take on the characteristics of a secular country (Bueno, 2003). During the course of the twentieth century, Brazil changed from having a mainly rural population to large urban agglomerations. As part of this change, Catholic schools which had once been characterised as boarding schools became mixed schools offering lessons in part-time periods (morning, afternoon or night). They also took on the characteristic of schools considered to be of good quality as well as having pupils of different religious beliefs.

Moulding Christians and Citizens in the Catholic School

In the context of a Catholic school in a pluralistic society, it was necessary to rethink the relationship between being Christian and being a citizen. This brings us to the

S. R. A. Junqueira (✉)
Institute of Research and Training Education and Religion (IPFER), Curitiba, PR, Brazil
e-mail: sergio@ipfer.com.br

Epistle to Diognetus, written in approximately AD 120, which presents the testimony written by an anonymous Christian in answer to the question posed by Diogenetus, a learned pagan, who wanted to gain a better understanding of the new religion which was spreading so rapidly through the provinces of the Roman Empire. Diogenetus was amazed by how Christians despised the pagan gods and bore witness to the love they had for one another. The question posed was: who was the God they trusted, how did they worship him, where did that new community come from and why did they appear so late in history. Diogenetus' text affirms that Christians are distinguished not by their dress code or by where they live, since they are found everywhere. What differentiates them is how they live and take on their citizenship (Diogenetus V).

Practicing citizenship is therefore understood to be characterised by a series of attitudes that must lead to the benefit of the society in which the citizen lives, guaranteeing the basic human rights, such as housing, food, health, work, education, leisure and personal freedoms, among others. In this way, citizenship involves the relationship between a society and its members. It is being aware of rights and duties. To be a citizen is to have a spirit of solidarity and sharing, to know how to live in a community, to participate, to be indignant in the face of injustice and wrongs, to want to improve, to serve others. It is to act and thus to think of life as plural and not singular (Sawaia, 1994). Among the proposed rights of citizens, article 18 of the Declaration of Human Rights states that

> …everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change one's religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest one's religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. (ONU/UNIC, 2009, p. 5)

The State offers all its citizens this principle of autonomy so that they can exercise their human right to freedom; one of which is religious freedom. This, however, requires an educational process to serve as an instrument to enable the full realisation of these rights. This also means that respect for minorities is a question of education, of knowing, for example, the religion of other people. Thus, people learn to see cultures that are different from their own and to judge them from their point of view, as expressed by Nelson Mandela: 'no one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love' (Mandela, 1994, p. 115).

The School: A Place to Prepare for Diversity

Individuals practice diversity through the cultural lenses, since no culture, human being or religion looks at another without having previously constructed an image thereof. Thus, incorporating cultural variety found in society, including religious diversity, arising from cultural plurality, into the educational process is necessary in order to build a democratic and therefore more inclusive school. This is why the school educational environment needs to open up to the coexistence of different

cultural expressions and to stimulate movements which affirm the cultural identity of the different groups that exist in Brazil and thus build harmonious coexistence between this cultural multiplicity.

In this way, an education system can play an important role in excluding prejudice and hatred from textbooks and disseminating accurate and correct information about all groups that make up society. It is important to note that lack of education and lack of information facilitate people being manipulated in order to gain political advantages, thus opening the way for discrimination against and persecution of minority groups. In order to achieve this, that contents taught in schools need to be are capable of bringing a broad approach to reality, permeating human rights principles, as foreseen in the National Human Rights Education Plan (Brasil, 2007a, b). Such an approach will support learners in developing the ability to use these principles, in order to better understand reality and thus contribute to the construction of a fairer world.

It is from this perspective that religious education in the context of Brazilian schools is part of the curriculum and seeks to ensure respect for the cultural, ethnic, religious and political diversity that constitute the multiplicity of values within society, as part of a process of building citizenship based on the principle of achieving equal rights for all citizens. Therefore, religious education should

Provide knowledge of the basic elements that make up religious manifestations, based on experiences perceived within the leaner's context; analyse the role of religious traditions in the structuring and maintenance of different cultures and sociocultural manifestations;
Reflect the meaning of moral attitude resulting from the phenomenon of religion and as an expression of peoples' conscience and personal and communal response; and Enable clarification on the right to difference in the construction of religious structures which achieve their inalienable value through religious freedom.

Thus, by studying at school the religious phenomena of the different religious traditions, religious education triggers respect rather than tolerance towards that which is different, thus promoting respect for the human right to freedom of belief.

Through religious education, education in religious diversity becomes a fundamental instrument for the construction of the right to religious differences in society. This goal supports the gradual development of a harmonious coexistence among the diverse social groups within society. However, this is not a goal easily achieved in Brazil. Colonisation has brought about a long tradition of cultural domination and impositions, all with the intent of making culture homogeneous rather than diverse. Thus in order to support the current proposal of religious education, there is a need to adequately train teachers, who with effort and persistence may pave the way for constructive and peaceful coexistence in society.

Diversity: The Space for Educating for an Identity

The understanding of the nature of Catholic Education in Brazil is confirmed in article 20 of the 1996 Law of National Education Guidelines and Framework, which states that Denominational Schools are instituted by groups of individuals, or by one or more legal entities, that follow specific denominational orientation and ideology. Religious education is not subject to any government regulation of how these should be developed (Moura, 2000). Each school institution constructs its syllabus within its political pedagogical project whilst attempting to respect as much as possible the considerations set forth above.

Within this framework, the presence of the Church in the field of education in Brazil has taken on the shape given to it by the different historical contexts through which it has passed. At the same time, this has also involved moments of difficulties, including the adaptation of the models of its legal profile as regimes, forms of government and constitutions that have been transformed, in addition to crises. The Church's trajectory in the field of education has not always been free from tensions and social conflicts resulting from its options that have been characterised by contradictions, especially in favour of the education of the elite. Indeed, this was the situation at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth century, when the Church focused on the education of Brazilian high society with the intent of influencing the country's management and ruling classes (Junqueira & Rocha, 2014).

However, this situation began to alter as a result of the Second Vatican Council and the Latin American Episcopal Conferences. In the twenty-first century, Catholic school communities comprised teachers, staff and above all students coming from diverse religious traditions. Even though the majority still state that they are Catholic, their effective attendance at Catholic churches is relative. The fact of the majority not being practicing Catholics is confirmed when they are asked why they continue to send their children to Catholic Schools. The reason given by students' families is that these Schools are organised institutions providing quality teaching guided by values (Anjos, Itoz, & Junqueira, 2015).

As such and at the same time, it is fundamental to be aware that in fact the identity and mission of this School is to serve the Church as a space for evangelization. Based on this perspective, the project that is in place establishes that pastoral activities at school should be distinct from and complementary to curricular religious education. As such, the systematisation as well as the direction taken by pastoral activities in denominational schools needs to delimit their actions and spaces.

While Brazilian education legislation recognises denominational institutions, these have their own ideology and in order to maintain it they need to establish their religious identity which is linked to the religious tradition to which they belong. For this reason, school pastoral activities are established and organised in a differentiated and distinct manner to religious education. Religious education is taken to be part of the curriculum, and its objectives and strategies are based on the school's teaching methods. Notwithstanding, each school can offer students and families actions

that are explicitly denominational. These follow specific and distinct guidelines for proposed school pastoral activities.

Religious Education in the Catholic School

Discussion about religious education in the Catholic School has been systematically carried out within Religious Congregations and the Conference of Brazilian Bishops, as well as within the Brazilian Catholic Education Association. Parameters for working in elementary education schools have been established to distinguish religious education from Catechesis. Catechesis is taught in a community that lives its faith, within a broader space and for a longer time than occurs at school. On the other hand, religious education takes place within the limits of the school within a context of pluralism of beliefs of students, families and teachers.

Religious education is a scholastic discipline in its own right. As such, the Church affirms that it should be integrated into the school curriculum in an explicit, systematic way with the same quality and rigour required of other curricular disciplines, whilst having the peculiar characteristic of dialoguing with culture and maintaining a relationship with other forms of knowledge. Likewise, it recognises the pluralism of modern society, as well as religious freedom and the right of families to define their moral and religious principles (Caron, 2016). Therefore, it is a right and duty of students and parents to expect religious education teachers to be more interreligious in their approach and to provide knowledge about different religions with aim of offering the student a basic social and religious formation that will allow a broader understanding of the world.

Based on these assumptions, between 2015 and 2017 four publishers that provide services to Catholic schools produced collections of textbooks providing a perspective of religious plurality. The textbooks also describe how contents and exercises for pupils are to be applied in the classroom. These resources have aroused interest since, apart from being produced for commercial and profit-making purposes, they address issues of knowledge, authority and power that ensure, through social or cultural capital, a position of prestige within these relationships. It follows that the practical guidance for the use of the textbooks must be understood not only as support since, whether in the form of manuscripts or printed matter, they not only impose meaning from the text they contain but also reflect the uses to which they are to be put and the appropriations to which they are susceptible (Chartier, 1990).

Underlying these publications are suppositions that religious education is a component of the curriculum taught in an organic and systematic manner at school, and which provides mastery of symbolic language and thus favours understanding of the social phenomenon of religion. It contributes to students being able to face situations that enable coexistence and respect within diversity, through the building of arguments aimed at achieving dialogue in a space where knowledge is collectively built, namely, the school, articulating teaching and learning contents with experiences and

questioning both on the part of teacher and students in the light of the reality in which they live.

Religious Education: Specific and Complementary

Based on this perspective, the development of religious education in the daily life of the classroom should effectively contribute to understanding all the languages of the world, including words, numbers, facts, space, art and technology. It is noteworthy that the elements covered favour the relationship with social values, ties of solidarity and overcoming all forms of prejudice. This occurs by reflecting on Ethos, in particular, the question of otherness, this being a theme proper to this component of the curriculum that deals with culturally produced knowledge, wisdom and values that are expressed in public policies and generated in institutions that produce scientific and technical knowledge. This knowledge includes the world of work, the development of languages, sporting and physical activities, artistic production, the diverse ways of exercising citizenship and social movements.

Including religious education as part of the curriculum provides a basis for establishing its pedagogical identity, even though in its origins it may not have been intended to be part of the curriculum. It being so produces one of the elements that favours interpretation of cultures that interfere in the way the human being acts. In this way, religious education as a scholastic discipline, by proposing contents that reflect Brazilian cultural and religious diversity, aims to promote the construction of knowledge in a way that favours respect for the undeniable characteristic of diversity (including ethnic, racial and religious diversity), in addition to religiosity being an aspect that 'is constituted in one of the threads that weaves the happening of our daily life' (Corrêa, 2008, pp. 17–18). Proving teaching that encompasses this diversity is to recognise that the knowledge of religions can collaborate to form a priceless social and cultural heritage. It enables the exercise of interreligious dialogue in a perspective of cultural knowledge of welcoming and learning with things or people that are different.

Learning in the discipline of religious education that takes into consideration gaining knowledge of different religious traditions and cultures can stimulate an escape from aspects intended to domesticate or at least accustom students to look for aspects that should arouse curiosity. Such learning can also provide significant moments of encounter, recognising singularities that at times go unnoticed in one's own culture. In this sense, it should be clarified that the school is not just an environment for the development of religiosity, but rather a favourable place to 'enhance student citizenship and humanisation, also through the knowledge of religiosity and values preserved by religious traditions' (Soares, 2010, p. 127).

Taking the cultural dimension of religious education classes into consideration implies an approach which is mindful of cultural plurality and which promotes education in human rights, citizenship, a culture of peace and welcoming. In the classroom space, teaching strategies are used which exclude any type of discrimination and

social exclusion, leading students to know, reflect and value the trajectory of the groups that make up society. In order to live democratically in a multicultural society such as Brazil, it is necessary to know and respect the different cultures and groups that make up that society. In its cultural perspective, religious education brings into question the reading and understanding the multiple forms of human existence and supports the analysis of social groups in their ways of acting, living with others and living with transcendent aspects.

Religious education contributes to the comprehensive development of students as it broadens, with the mastery of reading, writing and arithmetic, the capacity to learn and promote an understanding of the natural and social environment, the political system, technologies, arts and values. Besides the anthropological, socio-political and cultural dimensions, which constitute the pillars of this discipline, religiosity can be considered to be one of the constitutive dimensions of the human being. After all, human beings search for the meaning of life, individually and collectively, finding and expressing answers through religiosity and the transcendent as a means of overcoming their own bodily, social, cultural, spiritual and other limits. In this regard, the science used as a reference for this discipline is the Science of Religion. It provides an academic means necessary for the construction of the knowledge of religiosity in the classroom. The knowledge developed by this science can help students to respect different religious expressions without demonstrating value judgments or prejudices.

Religious education within the Brazilian Catholic school curriculum is able to be translated operationally through the general principles stated above and which are to be put into practice in everyday school life as a link between educational theory and pedagogical practice, between planning and action, all of which becomes the goal of those involved in this discipline. In short, enabling students to master different languages, to understand the phenomena in question, whether physical or social, to build arguments and to deal with the various situations in their lives (Teixeira, 2006).

Pedagogical achievement, centred on knowledge that is accumulated and systematised historically, allows learners to know the past and address the present with a view to creating new knowledge. Students are provided with a new form of interreligious dialogue that offers information, the interpretation of accumulated knowledge, and the re-signification of contents and concepts. This teaching–learning process takes place across differences, diversities and plurality which have their roots in history, thus enabling understanding of oneself and of otherness on the pathway to being a citizen. The outcomes entail a level of analysis and knowledge of cultural and religious diversity, respecting the different religious expressions of the learners.

Since religious education is dedicated to studying the phenomenon of religion, the teaching and learning process is challenged to present the curriculum in a systematic way through employing empirical studies on religions, and extracting from them relevant human cultural and religious concepts and themes. These goals recognise the importance of content being in line with the age of the child and with the stage at which they find themselves at school, respecting the cognitive development stage and the developmental phases of the children's faith (Fowler, 1992). In this light, the goal of religious education is to bring students and the teacher closer to the content, stimulating the practice of research and enabling students to build knowledge in a

scientific–academic way. To this end, religious education favours the relationship between learner–knowledge–educator which, in so doing, assumes that the educator is a professional mediator of the process, available for dialogue, having the ability to articulate knowledge about the phenomenon of religion through coexistence with their students. The teacher's perception, analysis and information on what the phenomenon of religion is reveal how it appears in relation to religious manifestations. Thus, the learner is the subject person, who builds knowledge from the manifestations of reality and otherness, the classroom being the place where the expression of their individuality is possible.

As religious education focuses on religious knowledge historically constructed by the community, it treats religious themes as something which is inherently complex and makes the diversity of the classroom present. This requires the educator to have a deeper understanding, as it is in the relationship between one's own religious knowledge and that of others that the student is sensitised about mystery and is supported in an understanding of the meaning of life and the meaning of life after death according to Religious Traditions.

This process of religious education can be carried out by re-reading and understanding the phenomenon of religion in society and appropriating a methodology that enables the following to be achieved through teaching contents:

Observation of the phenomenon of religion in its multiple dimensions, in particular, the analysis of action, or lack or part thereof, in its context and in its relationships in order to explore and work on the basic concepts of religious education;
Extracting information as a means of getting closer to one of the aspects of religious knowledge, making it possible for the learner to broaden their knowledge and build instruments that provide references for interpretation or analysis, thus enabling the re-signification of concepts;
Reflection, as an aspect that facilitates theoretical knowledge and what happens in practice to be compared in the teaching process. It is through reflection that observation and the extraction of information are exercised and managed, thus measuring elements, aspects, facts and other elements necessary for building knowledge. This mobilises the learner to master languages, understand phenomena, build arguments, in order to face situations and elaborate proposals for a fraternal and respectful coexistence.

What is achieved by the methodological treatment of religious education, as an area of knowledge with a theoretical framework and pedagogical practice based on goals and contents, is interaction between aspects historically constructed in the different religious traditions and their presence in current culture. This process takes place through observation of what is found and through information on what is reflected on. Therefore, observation–reflection–information comprises the methodological pathway that, as a strategy, guides and proposes social interaction as well as relations with religious cultures and traditions in everyday religious education. The starting point is always the social interaction between students, in order to ensure respect for the religious traditions they have acquired from their families. Such procedures allow students to gradually update their knowledge, reflect on the various

religious experiences around them, perceive the blossoming of their existential questioning, formulate answers based on argumentation, analyse the role of religious traditions in the structuring and maintenance of different cultures, and understand the meaning of the different affirmations and truths of faith. These procedures reflect the different moral attitudes arising from the religious phenomena that occur within religious cultural plurality.

Religious education, like the other disciplines of the school curriculum, also provides for the social organisation of activities, the organisation of time and space, as well as the selection and criteria for the use of materials and resources. In this way, religious education is interested in total language (interior, verbal, gestural and symbolic), which is an ontogenetic (individual) and phylogenetic (collective/social) phenomenon. It depends on the acquisition of the symbolic (or semiotic) function that gives rise to thinking. This occurs through the capacity to mentally represent details of reality, grasped through perception, i.e. the capacity to use a signifier (mental image, word, gesture or symbol) to represent a meaning. It is through this capacity that, throughout history, humankind has built an entire complex system of meanings. The four aspects of communicative linguistic competence: speaking, listening, reading and writing, should also be used in this area, as part of preparing, orienting and evaluating schoolwork.

Religious language is by nature a symbolic, evocative, celebratory, communitarian and narrative language. On the other hand, it also announces the mentality underlying discourse, sometimes more clearly than what one is trying to say when using language; it is a symptom of each person's way of thinking and living (Junqueira, 2002). Within the arena of religious education, language is not of this or that religious tradition, but rather of the quest of every human being, not in a neutral vague way but through concrete models, consistent with people's traditions and cultures. This open attitude offers great educational scope, because, in addition to being revealing of a mentality, language is also an instrument of new experiences.

It is important for religious education to focus on the human foundations of the religious question. This should be evident in the language used by its interlocutors in the educational process. The religious education curriculum in Brazil uses didactic–pedagogical evaluation as an integrating element between the student's learning and the educator's performance in building knowledge. The instruments for accompanying the everyday learning and teaching process demonstrate information, observation, reflection and personal elaboration regarding cultural and religious diversity, prohibiting any forms of proselytism and reaffirming, once again, the non-establishment of value judgments regarding the elements already covered above. In view of this framework, it is clear that the methodology of religious education must also be based on the methods of the Science of Religion.

Regarding its applicability in elementary education, two principles should guide religious education:

Interdisciplinarity—this interaction should occur both through complementation, with other forms of knowledge, and also through the active exchange between teachers and learners on the one hand and other professionals on the other hand;

The non-normative study of religions, avoiding any personal value judgments, ranking of religions or opinions on religious 'truths' (Passos & Usarski, 2013, p. 12).

These principles guide the process of religious education in favour of the learner developing cognitive aspects, as in all other school disciplines, through empirical and systematic studies on religions in the classroom. Outcomes of this process, in the sense of building stances or attitudes guided by 'values' of tolerance, respect and promotion of equality by students and teachers are expected and can be considered very positive. These are, however, outcomes and not skills or competences to be evaluated during classes. Religious education should not 'teach values', as a kind of subtle proselytism, but rather enable learners to develop skills and competences by means of scientifically based studies, limiting itself to *encouraging* constructive coexistence between people who do or do not practice a religion.

In view of this, two pillars are proposed:

The first is fundamental principles: the articulation of worldviews as per traditions and as the interface between social experiences, in the same way as ethos, relating to an individual's behaviour, morality and applicability, that the attitudes of each individual. Standing out among these fundamental themes are the understanding of God in plurality, the feminine, religious values, rules of coexistence, the mysteries of life and death and theologies, among others.

The second pillar is expressions: these are the materialisation of the fundamental principles, that is, how religious traditions express their beliefs, mediated by texts, rites and myths. Standing out among the themes of this pillar are words and expressions of traditions, food, religious clothes, feast days and dances, among others (Kluck & Itoz, 2016).

Conclusion

The religious education curriculum in Brazil is developed to support students in their understanding of religious diversity within Brazilian education. The aim is to contribute to the knowledge and respect of the different religious expressions that arise from the cultural composition of Brazilian society, in order to ferment interreligious dialogue and tolerance of every religion, as well as to mould multicultural citizens.

References

Anjos, M., Itoz, S., & Junqueira, S. (2015). *Pastoral escolar: práticas e provocações*. Aparecida: Santuário.

Assembléia Geral Das Nações Unidas. *Declaração universal dos direitos humanos. Biblioteca virtual de Direitos Humanos da Universidade de São Paulo.* Retreaved from: http://www.direitoshumanos.usp.br/index.php/Declara%C3%A7%C3%A3o-Universal-dos-Direitos-Humanos/declaracao-universal-dos-direitos-humanos.html.

Brasil. (1996). Presidência da República. Congresso Nacional. *Lei 9394/96, de 20 de dezembro de 1996. Estabelece as diretrizes e bases da educação nacional.* Diário Oficial da União, Brasília, ano 134, n. 248, p. 27833–41, dez.

Brasil. (2007a). Presidência da República. Congresso Nacional. *Lei N° 9.475/97. Dá nova redação ao artigo 33 da LDB 9394/96.* Diário Oficial da União.

Brasil. (2007b). *Plano nacional de educação em direitos humanos*. Comitê Nacional de Educação em Direitos Humanos. Brasília.

Bueno, E. (2003) *Brasil: uma história. A incrível saga de um país.* São Paulo, Ática.

Caron, L. (2016). Ensino religioso nos espaços escolares. In. S. Junqueira, S. Itoz, S., J. Melo (Eds.). *Pastoral e educação: estudo e reflexão sobre pastoral escolar*. Curitiba, Piá.

Chartier, R. (1990). *A história cultural: Entre práticas e representações*. São Paulo: Zahar.

Corrêa, R. (2008). *Cultura e diversidade*. Ibepex: Curitiba.

Diogeneto. Carta. In. *Biblioteca virtual de Direitos Humanos da Universidade de São Paulo*. Retreived from: <http://www.direitoshumanosusp.br/index.php/Documentos-anteriores-%C3%A0-cria%C3%A7%C3%A3o-da-Sociedade-das-Na%C3%A7%C3%B5es-at%C3%A9-1919/carta-de-diogneto.html >.

Fowler, J. (1992). *Estágios da fé: a psicologia do desenvolvimento humano e a busca desentido*. Sinodal: São Leopoldo.

Junqueira, S. (2002). *O processo de escolarização do ensino religioso no Brasil*. Petrópolis: Vozes.

Junqueira, S., & Rocha, T. (2014). *Pedagogia libertadora de Jesus*. São Paulo: Fonte Editoria.

Kluck, C., Itoz, S. (2016). *Ensino religioso. manual do professor*. Curitiba, Piá.

Mandela, N. R. (1994). *Long walk to freedom: the autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Moura, L. (2000). *A educação católica no Brasil: passado, presente e futuro*. São Paulo: Loyola.

ONU/UNIC. (2009). *Declaração universal dos direitos humanos*. Rio de Janeiro: UNIC.

Passos, J., & Usarski, F. (2013). *Compêndio de ciência da religião*. São Paulo: Paulinas/Paulus.

Sawaia, B. (1994). Cidadania, diversidade e comunidade: uma reflexão psicossocial. In: SPINK, M. (Org.). *A cidadania em construção: Uma reflexão transdisciplinar* (pp. 147–157). São Paulo: Cortez.

Soares, A. (2010). *Religião and educação: Da ciência da religião ao ensino religioso*. São Paulo: Paulinas.

Teixiera, F. (2006). Educação inter-religioso e educação para alteridade. In C. Scarlatelli, D. Streck, J. Follmann Religião (Eds.), *Cultura e Educação* (pp. 29–40). São Leopoldo: Unisinos.

Prof Sérgio Rogério Azevedo Junqueira is Director of the Institute for Research and Training in Education and Religion and holds a postdoctorate in science of religion from Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo. He has been involved with the discipline of Religious Education since 1984 as a teacher, school manager and member of the association that brings together these educational institutions in the country. His research focus is oriented towards establishing theoretical references and practical guidance to subsidise the formation and organisation of subsidies for teachers and managers of Brazilian Catholic schools.

Chapter 44
A Panorama of Christian Religious Education in Nigeria

Chizurum Ann Ugbor

Introduction

Religious educators who are sensitive to multiplicity of religions and cultures can effectively respond to the call to be 'co-learners' in Christian religious education (CRE) of students in a pluralist world. However, for the moment, this is not the case in CRE in Nigeria. The practices in Catholic schools emphasise morality, spirituality, evangelisation and conversion, and do not take cognisance of non-Catholics in the system. They are not open to multireligious, cultural and other kinds of influences on Christian youths today.

This chapter advances the case for Integral and Transformative Religious Education (ITRE) that has the capacity to enter into conversation with the multiplicity of voices, views and transdisciplinary issues during the religion classes. How could this be attained? First, it seeks to historically but critically present the Nigerian model of CRE. Second, it analyses the ITRE model of CRE. Third, it explores how religious educators could concretise ITRE model without undervaluing the religious and cultural identity of their Catholic faith.

Therefore, the following questions are critical to understanding the dynamics of this chapter: What could be learnt from the analysis of the history of CRE in Nigeria with a view to developing an ITRE model in keeping with the nature and identity of Catholic religious education in schools? How could religious educators in Catholic schools do justice to the reality of religious and ethnic diversity? How could religious educators implement and contextualise such a model in a constructive and critical manner in Nigeria?

C. A. Ugbor (✉)
Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy Congregation, Umuahia, Nigeria
e-mail: srzurunkem@yahoo.com

549

Brief Background to Christian Religious Education in Nigeria

Historically, Nigerian education systems thrive on tripod formation and pedagogical cultures: the Indigenous education stems from African Traditional Religion (ATR), the Arabic-Islamic Religion and Euro-Christian or European pedagogy, via the colonialist project, as well as in post-independent Nigeria.

The Indigenous/ATR stressed practical relevance of pedagogical instruction within a community of persons. This is the education offered in the pre-literate era, within the community, by the community members who possessed specialised skills in various fields of human endeavour. This positively transmitted religious, moral principles and code of conduct, cultural and community values to the learners (for further details, see, Fafunwa, 1974; Okogba, 1992). Nevertheless, the Indigenous/ATR might be deemed a conservative and rigid process, since learners accept wholeheartedly what is transmitted to them without critically questioning and lack of opportunity to make personal opinions, it remained the only option 'forced' on the adherent of the faith (Jekayinfa, 2003).

The Arabic-Islamic Religion was positively designed to promote both religious and secular dimensions, but its concern was based on memorisation of the Qur'an and Hadith and the Shari'ah, the articles of faith and basic moral education and conversion (Adesina, 1988). Such education in contemporary period breeds passive learning that educates learners without adequately empowering the learners to handle their own life crises and so become responsible for their experiences, expectations and decisions they make in the world.

The third leg of the tripod education in Nigeria is the Western/European/Missionary type of education. This educational tradition began with the arrival of missionaries. It has obviously been the most successful in meeting the overall formal educational needs of the consumers for the present but it has its shortfalls. The missionaries with their Christian evangelism on the one hand strongly focused on rote learning since their educational focus was mainly on conversion. This implies that in the context of inter-religious and interfaith dialogue, the other religious traditions are now approached from the perspective of one's own superior tradition. This has led to significant inter-religious conflict and tensions in Nigeria today (Uwazie, Albert, & Uzoigwe, 1999).

In addition, the British who established Western education across the country and formulated the syllabi for two main religions, the Islamic religious education (IRE) and Christian religious education (CRE) paid no serious attention to the realities of multireligious, multicultural and multilingual values in Nigeria due to their political interest (Lemu, 2002). The British colonialists had their agenda, and they promoted a conservative outlook that preserved only the North's Islamic religious and cultural identity, effectively marginalising the Middle-belt (that is the minority ethnic groups in North Central Nigeria) and Christians' religious and cultural identities. Methodologically, education is the quest for converts which created prejudices and internal conflicts within the families that were initially non-conflictual (Tanko, 2007).

Consequently, the three pedagogical cultures gave rise to two learning approaches, namely, conversion (imposition of faith) and evangelisation (disconnected from everyday life experiences). These approaches are monoreligious and confessional, simplistic and ineffective in the long run, even if attractive and convenient for catechetical purposes in the short run. It appears that the raison d'être of CRE in Nigeria is to convert non-adherents, to make the learning subjects faithful practitioners of their respective faiths and to become better Nigerian citizens.

With this context, the Nigeria post-colonial era (1960 till the present) certainly maintained the same missionary colonialist CRE method, since its focus was monoreligious, confessional and denominational (Nwagwu, 1979). What is the way forward?

Challenges Facing Nigeria in the Context of Today

Nigeria is a religious country. However, it is also a multireligious, multicultural, multilinguistic country. At the same time, it is a constitutionally secular country. In the light of multireligious traditions in the country, no single religious group should dominate the machinery of governance and education. Nevertheless, it is a fact that two religions dominate Nigeria schools—Christianity and Islam. Therefore, this national reality is not without problems.

First, the educational method is still monological, requiring students to receive, memorise and repeat what has been taught by the educator, which in the long run does not challenge them to reflect and generate productive learning activity in the society (Ezeani, 2005). Methodologically, the content delivery is still imprisoned in a 'rote learning' mode (Oduolowu, 2007), which does not engage students in higher level cognitive activities, problem-solving skills and decision-making. Hence, there is little or no opportunity for a relationship of dialogue between the teacher and students (Okoh, 2012).

Second, the consequences of the Federal government takeover of private schools have huge implication on the delivery of CRE. Even today, CRE has been relegated to the background, no longer a core subject for the West African School Certificate (WASC). This has lead the students to avoid taking the subject at all (Okoro, 2010). Some students erroneously believed that since they read Bible in their homes or at churches, they are familiar with the subject (Okoh, 2012). Consequently, most students are not pushed beyond their comfort zones to discover the 'strange religious other'. Therefore, sensitivity to religious coexistence and social justice in a pluralist setting is lost.

It is at this point that one glimpses the potential of our proposed model, ITRE, which responds to pupils' existential crises and their respective, apparently endless, search for meaning in life within the nature and identity of CRE in Nigerian schools.

An Integral and Transformative Model of Christian Religious Education for a Future Nigeria

The central idea of the ITRE is that an integral and holistic CRE can be transformative. The ITRE is multidimensional model of seven principal proposals, designed to be inclusive and dialogical, to reflect the country's diversity, to empower students to become responsible in making and shaping their own lived faith meaningful and to trust in God's providence and gratuitousness as they strive for the Kingdom of God.

Therefore, the ITRE that I am proposing is new and innovative in the Nigeria context because of its hermeneutical orientation, as against Nigeria's rote learning in religious education. Being hermeneutical, it focuses on interpretation of context in order to know the forces that generate social injustice in the society. ITRE tries to do justice to the irreducible and unique alterity of other religions but remains open to multiple interpretations and deepened insights arising from dialogue with plural religious others. However, its openness and plural understanding of Christian tradition pay attention to the particular character of one's religious tradition and identity. It does not deny Particularity and Confessionality. It is about the future being planned for today. For this reason, the ITRE is not just a new form of 'colonisation' or 'an importation of secular western ideas' into Nigeria via my ITRE. Rather, it is a Christian model which is as well, universal.

Engaging the Wholeness of Human Person

The ITRE is oriented towards the enrichment of the person as a developing human being in the world and in relation to God. For this reason, the whole of human person, rich and complex, is understood and appreciated. Thus, each one is empowered to responsibly and competently develop and empowered to handle the challenging realities that form and shape his/her religious identity.

Today, given the imperative to involve the whole spectrum of the human person in CRE, some Nigeria educators (Arinze, 1965; Okpaloka, 1989; Adenike, 2015) advocate that Catholic education should aim to encompass the whole person's life experiences. This form of education is essential in CRE, which strives towards the development of the whole person and treats students as agent subjects capable of choosing, deciding, charting their own course, working with others and contributing something to the well-being of self, others and creation. Through this, CRE students may choose to 'act and be actors in humanising and faith-filled ways' (Groome, 1991, p. 334).

Community

The ITRE argues that CRE as part of the structured processes of forming people cannot be carried out in isolation from each one's fellowship and personal network of trust and honour, or form an understanding of Christian rituals and how they contribute to each one's Christian identity and ethical values. We, as human beings, are born into the community, and community informs our identity, and the way we think and act in society.

In essence, the African communal understanding of God, of humanity and of communal ways of knowing (Ogbonnaya, 2001) inform the ITRE's insistence that multidimensional CRE must be situated within community. Even in secularised Western contexts battling with issues of diversity and plurality, an African communal understanding of God and humanity, 'can afford us a coherent way of dealing with the concept of the one and the many in relational equality' (p. 6).

According to the African worldview, community is a group of human beings to which one is connected through a particular root, with a traditional ancestral connection (Bujo, 2003). Thus, individuals cannot and do not exist alone. Rather they are corporately linked to one another. Mbiti (1989) writes, 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am' (p. 106). Each individual is both unique and yet a member of a whole with whom one shares some primordial ties. Thus, without the whole, the part finds it difficult to survive (Ogbuene, 1999).

Within this framework, one becomes grounded in a community through storytelling: narration of stories, fables and parables (Bujo, 2003). Community is kept alive through the past handed on in narration because narration is concerned with the transmission of 'virtues' (to be embraced) and vices (to be avoided). Also, rituals of initiation into the community are part of the communal ways of imparting CRE to students (Gotan, 2005). Thus, underlining continually the role and importance of community in Catholic education will empower people to uphold this idea: humankind is essentially communal; we are relational beings, and so must turn to the neighbour—even to enemies—in love, intertwining the personal and social which is the core of Christianity (Groome, 1998).

Content Communicative Dimension

The ITRE's communicative dimension focuses on what and how specific topics and themes should be taught to the students in the class. On the one hand, the dimension of 'what' offers the content to the students from a dynamic dual interpretation of plurality and religious traditions, so as to make them relevant to the life of the students. This means that the responsive ITRE model attempts to bridge the gap between religious tradition and contemporary society and culture by communicating the content to pupils in the class not by means of a linear exposition of either the life experiences of the pupils or of the Christian tradition, but rather from a dynamic dual interpre-

tation of both elements. On the other hand, the how dimension communicates the content to the students through a hermeneutic approach that works both deductively (confrontation with the Christian tradition) and inductively (finding clues in human experience or in a life story). It conceives students as active/hermeneutical beings by starting from a critical communication with them in Catholic school (Pollefeyt, 2009). This implies that the religious educator 'would not merely tell young people what the content used to mean, but rather would offer them a dynamic method so that youngsters may seek out what that content means to the today' (De Souza, 2004, p. 260). The students become more competent and act as agents in planning religious education as the content (communication oriented) cannot be completely pre-packaged by the teacher.

This ITRE's hermeneutic approach poses a challenge regarding how to interconnect the past, present and future in the faith formation of students in the class. This challenge is on (Nigerian) Catholic education that focused on the foundation of the collective wisdom of the community's past and largely unconcerned with the critical appraisal of this wisdom in light of the socio-cultural realities of the time. For Groome (1980), such faith communication runs the risk of over-guarding past traditions—that is, the risk of fundamentalism, fear of change and aloofness in the face of present and future realities. Consequently, the task of Catholic education is to ensure that what is already known and experienced in the community is preserved in an open-ended system for the sake of posterity, making it available for the present and the future generation.

Religious (Hermeneutics of Life) Dimension

The ITRE's religious hermeneutics of life emphasises the importance of bringing 'life into faith' and 'faith into life' (Groome, 2006). Groome's integration can empower many students in (Nigerian) Catholic schools to learn the wisdom of the faith tradition and help them to make this tradition their own. With this, the person in religion class is regarded as a hermeneutical being, since the student's capacity as a seeker and receiver of meaning is made central (Pollefeyt, 2008).

Obviously, the ITRE's hermeneutical component incorporates harmonies, differences and conflicts of students' experiences. When students' multiple life experiences are in conflict with the Christian message of building their (religious) identities, they are challenged to 'discover not only "autonomous" but also "heteronomous" elements' (Dillen, 2007, p. 46) 'whereby people "receive" from each other, and even from God, new interpretations, new ideas, and even, potentially, new life' (p. 46), which inspire them as they give shape to their own life story (Pollefeyt and Bieringer, 2010).

Justice and Peace Education: Liberative Praxis

The rise of religious violence and conflicts prevalent in Nigeria indicates that Nigeria's monological and confessional model is in need of a common framework with regard to its CRE syllabus, so that it will effectively promote national unity, justice and peaceful coexistence with other religions, working alongside them. It is a fact that various interfaith initiatives have been founded in Nigeria such as the National Interreligious Council, the Catholic-Muslim Dialogue Committee, the Abuja Interfaith Peace-building Forum, the Interfaith Vocational Training Centre for Muslim and Christian Youth, and the World Conference of Religions for Peace (for further details see, Onaiyekan, 2013; Omonokhua, 2014).

Furthermore, such significant Nigerian Catholic leaders as Cardinal Onaiyekan, Bishop Kukah, Cardinal Arinze and Rev. Fr. Omonokhua via their writings and public speeches have called for religious dialogue and peaceful coexistence. Onaiyekan in particular decried the unwillingness to 'develop the right attitude of mind, and devise an appropriate strategy of action to achieve' (Onaiyekan, 2013, p. 127) the proper spirit of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

It is within this ambit that the ITRE stresses the need for serious training in issues of Justice, Peace education and pedagogical values. The ITRE underscores that CRE is not just about spirituality (the vertical relationship with God) but also equally includes horizontal (social) relationships with others. Ultimately, CRE sensitive to Afro-Christian values can re-awaken the human state of consciousness and urge people to seek the goals of restoring not just their identity but their (many) identities. What the ITRE model emphasises is that religiosity and religious education cannot place brackets around ethical involvement. God-talk, taught in the classrooms and celebrated in liturgy, is embodied in ethics. It is in ethics that religious people give the 'present-absent' God a Body in the world to reach out to others. CRE without ethics is sterile and theologically untenable, from the Christian perspective. Thus, any religious conversation and imagination must be incarnational, concrete and tangible, in words and deeds (Burggraeve, 2009).

Eschatological Vision: Future-Oriented

The ultimate horizon of all CRE is the eschatological vision: the coming of God's Kingdom on earth. Thus, the ITRE has a very strong future-oriented dynamic. It aims to contribute to the creation of an alternative world that includes all human beings, communities and creation as such, with promises and realised salvation for all.

In Christian, eschatological vision refers to a belief about the end of life and history—either of individuals or of an age (McGrath, 1994). This belief is tied to the person, ministry and meaning of Jesus Christ. In other words, the incarnation inaugurated a new age—of transformation of the world (the now), which is yet to be completed (the not yet). The element of the 'yet to be realised' transformation

'motivates human hope towards a future that goes beyond "all the alienation of the present"' (p. 475).

Therefore, this eschatological vision inspires a normativity of the future which is a dialogical- and future-oriented hermeneutic of Divine Activity breaking into human history as history moves towards its final goal, while 'inviting participation in continuing creation, liberation, healing, and transformation' (Elsbernd & Bieringer, 2002, pp. 187–188).

Since the eschatological vision is a central and ultimate theme in Christian theology, ITRE maintains that it should inform Christians' attitudes, activities and projects. Hence, this theological presupposition if implemented in (Nigeria) Catholic education calls students to be community builders; to an inclusive horizon that demands that they respond positively in justice and solidarity to all people, especially the oppressed and marginalised.

Enveloped in God's Grace

Traditionally, grace in Christian theology refers to 'the graciousness or liberality of God' (McGrath, 1994, p. 335) towards creation. Biblically, it connotes 'favour', that is, someone inclining towards another in benefaction, especially in a time of need, vulnerability or enslavement (Pilch, 1996). The notion of an 'unmerited gift from God' underlies this theological concept. Grace precedes human existence as a universal offer of God's love. Grace lives with us and includes the pledge of God's gift of transformation, both now and in the future (Lefebure, 1996).

In consequence, whatever we acquire, then, faith cannot be affirmed without the action and intervention of the 'present-absent' Other (God). Hence, God acts and intervenes not out of necessity, but out of freedom and graciousness. One cannot ignore the place of grace in the affirmation and recognition and even articulation of faith, at least in traditional Christian theology. Since grace precedes human existence and consciousness, like a cloud enveloping us, our activities, even teaching, should be thought of in ways that express and confirm this theological understanding of grace.

Thus, God's grace enhances and empowers the students to be responsible and setting them free to respond. Then, CRE becomes part of a complex human response to God's graciousness and gratuitousness. If CRE students are already aware of divine grace at work in their lives prior to entering religion classes, then their responses will not simply be about acquiring knowledge to pass exams or to know what people believe about God. Rather, it will prepare them to respond to divine activity in human history and towards a participation in God's liberation, healing and transformation. This leads to the central argument of the ITRE model, that is, CRE cannot be taught outside the context of faith due to the centrality of religion and spirituality among majority of human beings, especially in non-Western contexts. Hence, the features of the ITRE have to be communicated from the perspective of human beings, who

having been adopted as children of God are called to 'live-in-grace' so that God's vision for the future can come to pass without human beings mission out.

These proposals offer educators in Nigerian Catholic schools the opportunity to do justice to the reality of religious and ethnic diversity in CRE classes. The ITRE avers that Nigerian educators of religion who want to build strong multireligious, multicultural and multilinguistic curriculum must be prepared to think and act 'outside the box'. Only in this way can teachers hope to inculcate in Catholic students the kind of interfaith and cross-cultural experiential learning needed to confront the tensions endemic to pluralist and multicultural societies like Nigeria.

Towards Implementing and Contextualising the Integral and Transformative Model

Following this trajectory, a number of possible remedies have been identified. I do concede that a national approach may not be the best way to begin; however, on the short term, the ITRE model could be applied at the local level which compasses a few ethnic and religious groups. In the medium term, after a period of time, the CRE *ad experimentum* could be extended to the regional levels. Subsequently, in the long term, a national Catholic curriculum is not inconceivable.

An effective short term could take place at a local level, for instance, at the Diocesan level in Catholic schools. The central idea would be to call Catholic teachers of religion subject to come together and reflect on the possibility of formulating a common CRE syllabus. Content could be shaped according to students' needs within the locality. During this short-term period, the CRE Director of Catholic schools, in the case of Nnobi Diocese in Anambra State, Nigeria, would be in a position to respond to the challenge by inviting all CRE teachers in the diocese schools for workshops and interactive sessions geared towards reflecting on values, texts and sources of wisdom within their respective traditions so as to formulate a common CRE syllabus with content that is in line with the ITRE model proposed in this paper.

If the short-term response is well managed and successful, then the Director of CRE, with the core CRE teachers of the model, having gained the skill and experiences necessary, could widen the scope, involving more stakeholders. This will form the nucleus for mid-term response. Two criteria would be crucial: first, the Director of CRE and the core CRE teachers aiming to design resources (including textbooks) should give adequate presentation on other religions. Second, the Director of CRE and the core CRE teachers of students of the Islamic faith could deepen and increase their own understanding of Islam by inviting a Muslim faith to address the students. At this stage, the Director of CRE and the core teachers might seek out teachers and religious/cultural leaders within the community on how to make use of their resources, thus formulating a CRE syllabus and content that is open, sensitive and truly inter-religious and intercultural. If this is successful, it is conceivable that inter-

ested people and groups in other regions would come, to learn, and develop their own plans to implement the ITRE model.

The long-term goal focuses on a national plan. For success at this level, it would be essential that no one group, Christians or Muslims, would be in a position to hijack the formulation of RE syllabus and content. At this stage, the ITRE model could be presented to those responsible for determining National Policy on education, especially CRE. For this to eventually happen in Nigeria and elsewhere, CRE directors at all levels would need to introduce the new model to the National Policy makers through public presentations and conferences involving people from various religious and cultural affiliations, commissioned and sponsored papers, and proposals to bodies that coordinate CRE in Nigeria, such as the Catholic Bishops' Conference, the Christian Association of Nigeria and the National Interreligious Council. In this way, these bodies could also help to influence and shape the model at the national level.

A fundamental element of the chapter's ITRE model is that religious educators in Catholic schools, while coming from a Catholic perspective, also incorporate perspectives of other traditions and worldviews. This gives the certitude that it is inclusive—not exclusive or secularised in the sense of not being attached to any religious tradition. In other words, the CRE syllabus its content must be open to various forms of religious perspectives while not losing sight of its own Christian/Catholic tradition.

Conclusion

Christian religious education is a vital aspect of Nigerian Catholic schools nurturing the faith development of its Christian pupils. Yet, the effectiveness of CRE depends very much on the pedagogy employed. Obviously, the Nigerian monological and confessional model of CRE cannot sufficiently handle the existence of religious diversity in the pluralist society and diversity in the Nigerian state. This lacuna calls for a new religious pedagogical approach, equipped to handle these challenging realities. The position of this chapter is that the ITRE model would pave way for the effective transformation of Christian faith without prejudice to non-Catholic students who may be studying in the Catholic schools. Taking into cognisance the plurality of Nigerian society, other religious faiths are also catered for by the adherent of those faith teachers. This is solely the position of Catholic students who like other students have equal right not denying students their own Catholic identity.

Seven core recommendations have been identified in this chapter. First, this recommendation has been informed by the fundamental reality that Nigerian Catholic education in any CRE needs to engage the very core of students' life experience and to encourage them to make the faith their own in a pluralist society. Second, any holistic CRE worthy of the name in multireligious, multicultural and multilingual contexts requires a living morality based on individual responsibility and fostering a stable communitarian ethic, which at the same time seeks a balance between extreme

individualism and extreme collectivism. Third, the ITRE recommends a CRE that dynamically holds in tension deductive, inductive and abductive forms of learning and critically engaging students to seek out meaningful traditions, relevant to them today. Fourth, the ITRE recommends a CRE that integrates 'life into faith' and 'faith into life' by empowering people to learn how to read multiple life experiences through a religious lens. Fifth, without a shadow of doubt this model prepares students to live harmoniously despite religious differences, Justice and Peace lessons and discussions opens up the minds of the students to issues in the society. For instance, in 1967–70 Nigeria fought a Civil War and the effects of those narratives on inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations would be re-interpreted to students in the multidirectional religion classes. Such a multidisciplinary re-interpretation would challenge educators in religion classes to explore stories from all angles, empowering students to move beyond their painful and often hate-filled past to becoming the epicentre of their lives and identities (Rigby, 2001). Sixth, the ITRE's eschatological vision not only promising a future that God has in mind for creation but also challenges each of us, especially those of the Catholic faith to an ethical responsibility and a future of dialogue. Finally, the ITRE recognises the role of the grace of God in faith formation, so vital in the CRE of students in Catholic schools. Such a perspective will encourage students to trust in God as they strive for His kingdom and find strength in the understanding that what cannot be achieved by human hands will be accomplished by a loving God.

References

Adenike, E. (2015). Setting and maintaining standards in the education system: The experience of the Catholic Church in Nigeria in school administration. In Education committee of the Catholic Bishops conference of Nigeria (Ed.), *Catholic Education in Nigeria* (pp. 21–42). Abuja: Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria.

Adesina, S. (1988). *The development of modern education in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.

Arinze, F. (1965). *Partnership in education between Church and State in Eastern Nigeria*. Ontisha: Ude's Printing and Publishing Company.

Bujo, B. (2003). *Foundations of an African ethic: Beyond the universal claims of Western morality*. Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa.

Burggraeve, R. (2009). *Proximity with the other: A multidimensional ethic of responsibility in Levinas*. Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications.

De Souza, C. (2004). A growing drift between contemporary culture and religious education: The need for a double hermeneutic. In H. Lombaerts & D. Pollefeyt (Eds.), *Hermeneutics and religious education* (pp. 254–268). Leuven: Peeters.

Dillen, A. (2007). The child 'as a child': A theological-ethical investigation of the concrete and relational giving of a child. In T. Wyller & U. Nayar (Eds.), *The given child: The religions' contributions to children's citizenship* (pp. 83–103). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht.

Elsbernd, M., & Bieringer, R. (2002). *When love is not enough: A theo-ethic of justice*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical.

Ezeani, E. (2005). *Education in Nigeria: Problems, dilemmas and perspectives*. London: Veritas Lumen.

Fafunwa, B. (1974). *History of education in Nigeria*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Gotan, T. (2005). *Evaluation of Christian religious knowledge curriculum for junior secondary schools in plateau state of Nigeria 1985–2002*. (PhD diss.) Jos: University of Jos.

Groome, Th. (1980). *Christian religious education: Sharing our story and vision*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row.

Groome, Th. (1991). *Sharing faith: A comprehensive approach to religious education and pastoral ministry*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Groome, Th. (1998). *Educating for life: A spiritual vision for every teacher and parent*. Allen, TX: Thomas More.

Groome, Th. (2006). Bringing life to faith and faith to life: For a shared Christian praxis approach and against a detractor. *Compass: A Review of Topical Theology, 40*(3), 17–24.

Jekayinfa, A. (2003). Indigenous African education. In J. Abiri (Ed.), *Perspectives on history of education in Nigeria* (pp. 29–37). Ibadan: Emola-Jay Communications.

Lefebure, L. (1996). Grace: Pastoral-liturgical tradition. In C. Stuhlmueller, D. Dumm, M. Francis, L. Hoppe, K. Hughes, I. Nowell, B. Reid, R. Schreiter, & D. Senior (Eds.), *The collegeville pastoral dictionary of biblical theology* (pp. 400–401). Collegeville, PA: Liturgical Press.

Lemu, A. (2002). Religious education in Nigeria—A case study. In L. Larsen & I. Plesner (Eds.), *Teaching for tolerance and freedom of religion or belief* (pp. 69–75). Oslo: Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

Mbiti, J. (1989). *African religions and philosophy* (2nd ed.) Oxford: Heinemann.

McGrath, A. (1994). *Christian theology: An introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Nwagwu, N. (1979). The State take-over of schools in Nigeria: A controversy. *Journal of Educational Administration, 17*(1), 75–86.

Oduolowu, E. (2007). A comparison of the universal basic education (Ube) Programme in Nigeria and the Grundskola of Sweden. *Essays in Education, 20,* 90–102.

Ogbonnaya, A. (2001). *African ways: A Christian education philosophy*. Chicago, IL: Urban Ministries.

Ogbuene, C. (1999). *The concept of man in Igbo myths*. Frankfurt am Main/New York: Peter Lang.

Okogba, F. (1992). Planning and implementation: The key to effective education. In S. Oriaifo & U. Gbenedio (Eds.), *Towards education in Nigeria for the twenty-first century* (pp. 146–154). Benin: University of Benin.

Okoh, M. (2012). *Fostering Christian Faith in schools and Christian communities through Igbo traditional values: Towards a holistic approach to Christian religious education and catechesis in Igboland (Nigeria)*. Berlin: LIT.

Okoro, C. (2010). *Evaluation of possible constraints to effective Christian religious education in secondary schools: The Nigerian experience*. (PhD diss.) Mishawaka, IN: The Graduate Theological Foundation.

Okpaloka, P. (1989). *The role of the Church in Nigerian education in the light of Vatican Council II and the 1983 Code of Canon Law*. Rome: Domenici-Pécheux.

Omonokhua, C. (2014). *Dialogue in context: A Nigerian experience*. Kaduna: Virtual Insignia Books and Publishing.

Onaiyekan, J. (2013). *Seeking common grounds: Inter-religious dialogue in Africa* (Vol. I). Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.

Pilch, J. (1996). Grace. In C. Stuhlmueller, D. Dumm, M. Francis, L. Hoppe, K. Hughes, I. Nowell, B. Reid, R. Schreiter, & D. Senior (Eds.), *The collegeville pastoral dictionary of biblical theology* (pp. 397–400). Collegeville, PA: Liturgical Press.

Pollefeyt, D. (2008). The difference of alterity: A religious pedagogy for an interreligious and interideological world. In J. De Tavernier, J. Selling, J. Verstraeten, & P. Schotsmans (Eds.), *Responsibility, god and society* (pp. 305–330). Leuven: Peeters.

Pollefeyt, D. (2009). Belgium: The hermeneutic-communicative model—A feasible option? In H. Ziebertz & U. Riegel (Eds.), *How teachers in Europe teach religion: An international empirical study in 16 countries* (pp. 31–43). Berlin: LIT.

Pollefeyt, D., & Bieringer, R. (2010). The role of the bible in religious education reconsidered: Risks and challenges in teaching the bible. In R. Bieringer & M. Elsbernd (Eds.), *Normativity of the future: Reading biblical and other authoritative texts in an eschatological perspective* (pp. 377–402). Leuven: Peeters.

Rigby, A. (2001). *Justice and reconciliation: After the violence*. Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner.

Tanko, P. (2007). Conflict in Northern Nigeria: Toward a resolution. *Koinonia, 3*(3), 99–127.

Uwazie, E., Albert, I., & Uzoigwe, G. (1999). *Inter-ethnic and religious conflicts resolution in Nigerian*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Dr. Chizurum Ugbor belongs to the Congregation of Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy. She has a doctorate in pastoral theology from Catholic University Leuven, Belgium and worked in Abia State University, Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Uturu Okigwe. As a Pastoral Theologian, she focuses her research contribution on a Christian religious education that brings 'faith into life and life into faith'. A contribution that will strike a balance between doctrine and praxis by encouraging dialogue with the changing contexts of Christian religious education.

Chapter 45
Identity and Dialogue: Learnings from a Personal Interreligious Encounter

Toni Foley and Maree Dinan-Thompson

Introduction

Currently, there is considerable attention given to conceptualisations of Catholic identity or identities in the religious education and theological literature (Arbuckle, 2013; D'Orsa, 2013; Lombaerts and Pollefeyt, 2004; Pollefeyt and Bouwens, 2010; Rossiter, 2013a, b; Sharkey, 2017; Sultmann and Brown, 2011) that acknowledges the reality of identity as polyvalent and paradoxically, static and changing. Identity is both personal and communal and is born out of one's social, cultural and religious experiences, reflection and critique. In the past, Catholics in Australia have benefited from a strong religious tribal culture as part of the fabric of community life. However, over time gradual changes in religious affiliation have evolved with approximately 30% of Australians now identifying as 'no religion', and most adherents of this group are in the younger age brackets (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). What is clear is that Australia is a religiously diverse nation and this reality will be confronted by most. Coming to new attitudes and understandings about one's religious identity is enhanced by knowing even one other religious tradition beyond one's own (Boys and Lee, 2006) and the first author's personal encounter with the religious other, experienced in attending a Shabbat service and meal, provides lived experience of the identity and dialogue milieu. An autoethnographical account is constructed to bring to light learnings that could be utilised in the contemporary religion classroom given the plurality of the modern world.

T. Foley (✉)
Catholic Education Services, Cairns, Australia
e-mail: tfoley@cns.catholic.edu.au

M. Dinan-Thompson
James Cook University, Cairns, Australia

Using Autoethnography

Autoethnography provides a method for exploration of the first author's interreligious encounter and is an established methodology in the health, education and social science fields (Attard and Armour, 2005; Brooks and Dinan-Thompson, 2015; McMahon, Penney, & Dinan-Thompson, 2011). The method brings together features of autobiography and ethnography. The autobiographer often 'writes about "epiphanies"—remembered moments perceived to have significantly impacted the trajectory of a person's life' (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 275). These epiphanies provide opportunities for an individual to reflect and to uncover ways that future situations might be negotiated. The ethnographic researcher studies 'a culture's relational practices, common values and beliefs, and shared experiences for the purpose of helping insiders (cultural members) and outsiders (cultural strangers) better understand the culture' (Maso, 2001, p. 138). The researcher scrutinises the cultural experience through attempting to bring the insider and the outsider into a conversation potentially exposing better understandings. Utilising autoethnography, I am reflecting upon thoughts, feelings, conversations and learnings I experienced in an interreligious encounter and critiquing that against typologies of cognitive belief styles and pedagogical identity options for Catholic institutions (Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2010). I am therefore studying myself within personal, cultural and religious spaces. Autoethnographic research wants to concentrate on ways of producing meaningful, accessible and evocative research, grounded in personal experience, research that would sensitise readers to issues of identity politics, to experiences shrouded in silence and to forms of representation that deepen our capacity to empathise with people who are different from us (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 736). While his methodology uses the first author's personal stories, it enables the researcher to uncover discourses and learnings that can potentially be utilised in the classroom teaching of religion.

In this paper, the reflection and analysis is framed as a dialogue between personal and socio-cultural/religious voice (adapted from Brooks & Dinan-Thompson, 2015; McMahon & Dinan-Thompson, 2008). The personal voice or stories are authentic, subjective, emotional and evocative, and the socio-cultural/religious voice provides critical reflection and analysis of the encounter. Through reflection on my experience and associated emotions, I will link my personal experiences with an explanation of the interreligious encounter from my perspective so that my stories and reflections resonate (or not) with others to provoke potential learnings.

Typologies for Identity Discourses

The Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project (ECSIP) is research which has evolved in Australia as a partnership between the Victorian Catholic Education Commission and the Catholic University in Belgium. The researchers have produced three multivariant scales (Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2010, 2014) which identify

typologies of cognitive belief styles, institutional theological identity options and pedagogical identity options concerning Catholic identity in a pluralising cultural context. The scales, the Post-Critical Belief (PCB), the Melbourne and the Victoria, provide a framework for discussion around identity in Catholic schools. Sharkey (2017) presents a succinct austere summary of the ECSIP in accessible language and emphasises that it is one tool for shedding light on the Catholic identity options taken up in a school. While the scales correlate, for the purposes of this paper, I will focus predominately on the PCB Scale which is a typology for cognitive belief styles and the Victoria Scale, a typology of pedagogical identity options in a culturally and religiously pluralising context.

The degree to which one believes (or not) in God (however, named) is subjective and varies on a spectrum from total disbelief or atheism, to holding a deep and intense awareness of an ontological referent. This essentially describes what one believes and can be considered simultaneously with how one believes. How an individual believes is potentially on a continuum from a literal to a symbolic interpretation of belief. These 'what' and 'how' dimensions form the basis of the PCB scale which identifies four types of cognitive engagement based on combinations of belief or not in transcendence and literal or symbolic interpretations of that reality. The belief types, Literal Belief, External Critique, Relativism and Post-Critical Belief, are represented in four quadrants (see http://www.schoolidentity.net/introduction/).

Literal Belief is characterised by belief in a transcendent God that is interpreted literally. Proponents of the belief style interpret faith mediations such as sacred texts, prayers and rituals in a literal way and hold steadfastly to belief in the one true God and indeed one way to God. The External Critique supporters are those who do not believe in God; however, they interpret expressions of faith literally. Thus, religious content is interpreted literally and dismissed as unbelievable, resulting in a substantially critical standpoint which disregards or ridicules belief. The Relativist position holds a personal disbelief in God; however, there is openness to others who do believe, as belief is interpreted symbolically. The Relativist is aware that the world is open to interpretation and there may be many credible truths; however, these adherents don't personally hold to any truth axiom regarding transcendence. Post-Critical Belief is a faith position which utilises symbolic mediations as a means of interpreting religion. It is a complex believing style attained through the ability to critique and the capacity to consider multiple interpretations of religious content within a discerning frame. Pollefeyt and Bouwens (2014) have developed a PCB survey that measures the extent to which an individual (and a group) identifies with the belief/nonbelief positions. The researchers acknowledge that the belief styles are extreme positions and an individual is likely to hold a combination of the belief styles, as is a group, and belief styles may be more dominate at various times in one's life. The ECSIP researchers have articulated the preferred cognitive belief style on theological grounds as Post-Critical Belief.

Within the education sector, there is considerable discussion focussed on pedagogy and its impact on learning and student outcomes (Fullan, 2012; Fullan & Langworthy, 2013; Hattie, 2011; Willms, Friesen, & Milton, 2009). Fullan and Langworthy (2013) advocate the necessity of deep learning to establish connection and

enable human flourishing. The plurality of cultures, religions and worldviews populating many school contexts presents an additional dimension to developing cultures of connectedness. The Victoria Scale (Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2014) provides a typology for discussion of pedagogical identity options for schools in relation to religious content and core educational activities of the Catholic school. The Victoria Scale was developed on a typology that is also based on two axes: one indicating minimal to maximal openness to Catholic identity and the other minimal or maximal openness to public solidarity with diversity.

The Victoria Scale identifies the perception of the school's pedagogical engagement with Catholic identity and solidarity. The Monologue school opts for maximal Catholic identity and minimal solidarity. Pedagogically, the school offers strong public support for Catholic identity and minimal openness to engaging other worldviews or beliefs. The narrative of the school openly tells the Catholic story but offers little opportunity to consider other ways of being in the world. The Colourless school is one that chooses to minimise engagement with the diversity of beliefs and minimises engagement with the Catholic story in public discourses. This school type keeps its pedagogical eye on the students' educational outcomes with minimal reference to a Catholic worldview or the cultural/religious diversity of society. The Colourful school, in contrast, takes the diversity of the contemporary world seriously and engages with its colourfulness. Pedagogically, this school is open to including a multitude of voices in its public discourse with the Catholic voice simply one of many. This school is inclusive of all with no public priority for the religious or Catholic story. The Dialogue school prioritises Catholic identity and openness to other worldviews in the school's pedagogy. This requires attentiveness to learning and teaching that engages Catholic religious content alongside other religious/cultural content and provides opportunity to build cultures of connectedness and enhance human flourishing. This school publicly engages with the Catholic story in relation to other worldviews and while prioritising the Catholic view is open and welcoming of the encounter with the other perspective. It is also possible that a school's pedagogical engagement may not be captured in one box or corner but exists within the boundaries and perhaps aligns closer to an axis. This may also represent a journeying of identity across time, interactions and changes in worldviews and beliefs. The ECSIP researchers, based on theological grounds, have identified the Dialogue School as the preferred pedagogical identity option.

Encountering the Other

As a Catholic educator, I was invited to a course focussing on Jewish life and religious practices. During this experience, I joined an educator for the 'Kabbalat Shabbat' prayer service at an Orthodox synagogue and afterwards shared a Shabbat meal. This experience brought me face-to-face with the religious other and presented an opportunity to bring a real-life experience into conversation with the typologies of the PCB and Victoria Scales.

Personal Voice

> Walking into the synagogue via secure gates and guards wasn't the welcome I had expected. The guards questioned me seeking justification for my connection to a regular congregant. Thoughts of anti-Semitism, injustice, disbelief, flashed through my head. An anxious wait for Roberta, then she ushered me into the synagogue with a "Shalom Shabbat" and handshake from the Rabbi as I entered. Ladies headed upstairs and men on the main level. I scurried after Roberta, still feeling affronted by the guards. We found our prayer book and seats then surprisingly to me, we went out to a lobby area to enjoy whiskey and cake with the men.
>
> The Rabbi teased, "This is some fellowship, and a way of enjoying ourselves while we wait for the stragglers!"

The presence of the guards was disturbing, and their interrogation left me feeling vulnerable and anxious. I had prepared for prayer, not a grilling from guards. My understanding of 'imago Dei' was confronted, and I felt like an accomplice in a society that perpetuated the indignity of human persons. My thoughts flagged injustices of this world and childhood memories of being confronted with cultural difference came flooding back. I had metaphorically been here before—encountering otherness from a minority perspective. My prior experience told me this was an opportunity to listen and be open to the encounter that was offered. The welcoming hand of the Rabbi brought a sense of knowing and yet the internal turmoil immediately returned with the abrupt separation of the men and women. I felt a vacillating within, knowing to unknowing, searching desperately to latch on to elements of my religious experience to assist me in making meaning of this strange situation. Astley (2004) indicates listening deeply to a religious tradition's powerful concepts, rituals, music and practices can transform us. Hence, a listening ear and openness were a means to appreciate and learn about this unfamiliar text.

The reality of our contemporary world is such that encountering diversity of language, culture and religion is inevitable, thus presenting the opportunity to develop and maintain human connectedness through translation. While experience indicates it is possible to understand foreign languages and to translate, there is often a preoccupation with the discourse of untranslatability (Moyaert, 2014). In interpreting the work of Paul Ricoeur, Moyaert advises:

> …statements concerning the impossibility of translation express the real resistance any translator may encounter, regardless of whether they move between languages, cultures or religions. This resistance, which arises both on the part of the host language and on the part of the guest language, flow for the most part from a desire for perfection and purity, a desire that underlies the typical human desire for mastership and invulnerability. (Moyaert, 2014, p. 145)

The experience of moving from the known to the unknown, albeit in relation to language, religion, culture or a combination, can be disturbing, evoke anxiety and result in loss. This is challenging and requires a level of commitment and vulnerability to continue to be open to grappling with the uncertainty and welcoming exposure to new possibilities. Translation of religious experience is possible, but it calls for the translator to be open to the possibility of interpretation and reinterpretation through a variety of mediations and expressions of religiosity.

A Post-Critical believing style is seemingly optimal for allowing the possibility of translation and learning in the interreligious encounter. To enter the synagogue experience with a literal believing stance would have immediately closed me off to the possibilities that the experience offered. I wouldn't have been receptive to allowing the experience of another way of being religious to touch me and expand me beyond my current understanding. Entering such an experience from a predominately disbelieving stand would also have limited the potential of the religious encounter.

Personal Voice

> I sat on the balcony beside the Rabbi's wife and to my amazement, she began chatting and telling me about the synagogue, the prayer, and what was happening below where the praying had commenced. As other women came in, they greeted and chatted freely as the praying continued. The Rabbi's wife could see my angst and inquired cheerfully,
>
> "Don't you talk during your services?"
>
> "No," I silently shook my head.
>
> She smiled and reassured me, "It's okay to talk here, that's how it works."
>
> This was foreign, and my discomfort lingered, allayed somewhat by the invitation to follow the prayer in English.
>
> "We're all in relationship with God," my hostess reassured, "we don't have to earn it!"
>
> Below in the main level of the synagogue, a world of strange besieged me. I watched like a gallery spectator – prayers were being chanted in Hebrew. Some men wandered around catching up with friends, others rocked back and forth totally engaged in prayer, yet others chanted as a group. As a livelier chant began, some men spontaneously danced and clapped around the cantor. Other congregants clapped as the prayer was joyfully intoned. Young girls and boys wandered freely in and out of the congregation on the main level. Two boys with a football chased each-other around as the praying continued.
>
> "This would never be tolerated in a Catholic Church!" my immediate thought.
>
> Amidst the cacophony of sounds, the young cantor enwrapped in a prayer shawl and kippah continued to lead the chanting, apparently oblivious to what appeared to be chaos around him.
>
> "What is prayer?" I mused silently.
>
> As the prayer was coming to an end, the young boys awkwardly scrambled up to the central lectern and with the encouragement of the male adults, led the final singing.

Attending prayer in the synagogue presented me with an experience of 'otherness' regarding religious practice and I chose to engage in the work of translation so that I might make meaning of the experience. Had I taken an External Critique position, I may have ridiculed the experience or from a Relativist position possibly enjoyed the experience but not engaged in critical reflection with a desire for learning about religiosity. From a literal stance, I would have struggled to reflect and explore what the encounter could offer me in my life now. Instead, I chose to listen and be open to how this way of being religious might translate for me—to discover things that my prior experiences/knowledge had in common with this experience of a Jewish tradition and things that were vastly different. Such translation, Moyaert (2014) suggests,

> brings forth a creative encounter between two worlds and makes meaning move. It develops new semantic resonances, makes unexpected allusions, and points to surprising new possibilities. It expands the horizon of meaning of the translated text. (p. 149)

The synagogue encounter highlighted how meanings can move through and within the relationships that exist and that are being developed.

Amidst the cacophony of sounds, there was visible testimony of the participants' relationships with each other, with God and with the stranger, somewhat indicative of the home. It looked and sounded like an open narrative, inviting me to engage with it. Subsequent reflection has invoked the desire to explore my participation in liturgies, uncovering an openness to life around me and the potential meanings in relation to God. For Catholics, liturgy is communal and has a power of its own. Yet through my encounter in the synagogue, I've expanded my understandings and considered choosing to welcome the disruption. Subsequently, I've become more attentive to the in-breaking of God in surprising ways. This 'translation' has enabled a development in me and offered me the joy of a deeper experience of liturgy where all is welcome and has meaning. This is perhaps, a spiritual effect of an interpreter engaged in 'a genuine conversation (in which) something emerges that is contained in neither of the partners by himself (sic)' [Gadamer (1982) cited in Astley, 2004].

Personal Voice

> After the service, we walked swiftly to Roberta's house. Despite our haste, I was caught in my own thoughts… what had just transpired in that prayer service? How did it fit with what I know? Would the toilet light be on in Roberta's house? Was it okay to turn it on? How should I greet? What would I say? Suddenly, we arrived. The door adorned with an elaborate mezuzah, was wide open and we walked straight in, to be warmly greeted by Roberta's parents, two siblings, their partners and young children. Immediately, there was a sense of homeliness and welcome.

> The gathering was noisy with sibling banter and the coos and cries of babies. There was an atmosphere of genuine love – everyone helped with the children and bringing the meal to the table. The women lit the Shabbat candles and the wine and challah bread blessed. The parents blessed each other and their children. Then the feasting began…. we ate, and we drank …. Some more family arrived…. we ate, and we drank… we discussed, we debated, we laughed, and we shared. The gathering was timeless and boundless – conversations, jokes, sharing of cultural and religious practices, a lot of eating and drinking… There was a deep sense of not wanting to leave this space.

The Shabbat meal manifested as an extension of the synagogue service, providing opportunity to grapple with an interreligious encounter and search for and create new understandings. My initial reservation, founded on a desire to be respectful, was quickly dispelled through the meeting of human persons. The receptive manner with which I was welcomed laid a foundation for dialogue that was genuine and established space for engaging richly and deeply with the other. Any desire for mastership and invulnerability dissipated. Haers (2004) proposes in relation to the school context, which he suggests is a playground to enact and design future life, one needs to be conscious that:

> More important than an anxious defence of one's own identity or of one's own point of view, is the awareness of a conversational space in which points of view and identities arise, always connected to other points of view and identities. It is important to 'play' the encounter as the articulation and enactment of a fundamental togetherness of people. (Haers, 2004, p. 329)

The challenge Haers (2004) explains is akin to a frontier, where one either chooses borderlines that separate or searches for and creates new ground or thick spaces that

hold a togetherness of people. This requires commitment and genuine openness, particularly when the participants are not equally represented resulting in minority/majority groups. The conversational space holds different attitudes, languages, religions or cultures and diverse positions that potentially push against one another in their vulnerability, uncovering something of the other and in-turn revealing something of oneself. The challenge is to identify frontier spaces within the community, including the school community, and to engage in dialogical encounters that foster connectedness, as this is a positive and necessary endeavour for the future of humanity. The frontier is a fragile space, potentially offering encounter as opposed to battle. In the present social and religious climate, many adults appear to need educating into this space and the students in our schools may also require education and support to negotiate these frontiers and build a new world alternative.

Discussion

In the Australian context, it's been proposed that substantial focus on education in identity would provide rich and fruitful content for religious education, particularly in the secondary context (Crawford and Rossiter, 2006; McGrath, 2017; Rossiter, 2013b, 2017). Such an emphasis in a Catholic school context would engage students in a critique of culture and academic study of the Catholic Tradition with reference to other religious traditions (Engebretson, Souza, Rymarz, & Buchanan, 2008; Rossiter, 2012, 2017; Ryan, 2014; Rymarz, 2017), thus providing a platform for responsibly interrogating contemporary world issues. This potentially affords students a religious voice that is authentic and plausible for engagement in the modern world. Such an endeavour necessitates the development of knowledge and skills and potentially dispositions and protocols for encountering otherness. This identity development offers the possibility of religious, cultural or personal certainties being offered a new or richer perspective. An open, mutually respectful and listening disposition is paramount to such encounters.

The ECSIP in Australia has provided data for schools highlighting a decrease in Literal Belief as students get older and a simultaneous decrease in PCB. In addition, the data identifies an increased option for External Critique and Relativism as the students' age increases (Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2014, p. 163). Hence, in many Australian Catholic schools, as students are getting older they are choosing a non-believing cognitive belief style. Many secondary students are also opting for a Colourful school as the preferred pedagogical option for the future (Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2014, p. 208), which is a pedagogical identity option that maximises solidarity with diversity but minimises public engagement with the Catholic story. The younger students also indicate less future resistance to the Colourful school (Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2014, p. 206). Thus, as students are maturing in Australian Catholic schools, many are opting for non-believing cognitive belief styles and solidarity with the diversity without public reference to the Catholic story.

The ECSIP preferred options on theological grounds are for PCB and a Dialogue school, thereby challenging schools engaged in this project to plan for the prioritising of these positions. My experience of the Shabbat service and meal highlights the advantage and potential for learning of an individual operating predominately from PCB. Additionally, having an open, respectful and listening disposition in negotiating the dialogical encounter enabled potential learning. In the Australian classroom context, it seems apparent from the ECSIP data that students may require intentional education into this more complex cognitive believing style alongside the appropriate dispositions and dialogical pedagogical practices, to robustly grapple with an interreligious encounter and seize opportune learning. This necessitates thoughtful development of religious knowledge and skills and the dispositions and pedagogical practices required for such encounters. Exploring pedagogies that encourage students to encounter each other in an open and mutually respectful way and to listen to the religious other offers possibilities for deepening one's living of their home tradition and creates cultures of connectedness.

Conclusion

Personal Voice

> My reflection on the Shabbat experience, has expanded my understanding of who I am as a faith-filled Catholic woman. I have re-examined my engagement in liturgy and my role as a member of a prayer community, as well as developed relationships with members of a religion beyond my own. The experience was a fragile one, I was vulnerable as those I encountered potentially were. However, I prepared myself for new dialogue to be included and chose to engage with an open mind and a sincere listening heart. I reflect to see that my religious belief style supported the encounter with an openness to a multitude of avenues through which one can express faith or come to know God or the Divine.

A Post-Critical Belief style, founded on the inherent dignity of every human person (Gn 1:26), enables an individual to be open to multiply ways of encountering the Divine and to discerning engagement through symbolic mediations. This believing style supports authentic dialogue with the religious other and promotes grappling with how contemporary individuals live life, consequently affording insights born of human encounter. Learning and teaching in the contemporary Australian classroom encourages pedagogies of inquiry that interrogate, and that dig deeply into the learning content searching for meaning and connection. In the context of the Australian Catholic School, developing students' capacity to believe symbolically will include a capacity to engage with multiple interpretations of religious/belief context and to critique such content in the light of a home tradition and contemporary culture. For students to engage in dialogue in the religion classroom, which is indeed at the core of any educational endeavour, they could benefit from developing dispositions for dialogue. True dialogue requires respect, openness, equality and inclusivity and interreligious dialogue founded on such dispositions offers the possibility of genuinely expanding understandings and humanising the religious other. It presents an opportunity to choose the frontier space over the borderlines, facilitating creational

togetherness where new possibilities can emerge both within and beyond the school community. This could provide a platform for recontextualising faith in this complex world, promote human flourishing and continue to actualise the 'kingdom of God' (Mk1:15).

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). ABS Census of Population and Housing, 1996–2016 Retrieved from: http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2071.0~2016~Main%20Features~Religion%20Article~80.

Arbuckle, G. A. (2013). *Catholic identity or identities? Refounding ministries in chaotic times*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.

Astley, J. (2004). What is religion and whose faith is it anyway? In H. Lombaerts & D. Pollefeyt (Eds.), *Hermeneutics and religious education*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Attard, K., & Armour, K. M. (2005). Learning to become a learning professional: Reflections on one year of teaching. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 28*(2), 195–207.

Boys, M. C., & Lee, S. S. (2006). *Christians and Jews in dialogue: Learning in the presence of the other*. Woodstock: Skylight Paths Publishing.

Brooks, C., & Dinan-Thompson, M. (2015). Insideness and outsideness—An autoethnography of a primary physical education specialist teacher. *European Physical Education Review, 21*(3), 1–15.

Crawford, M., & Rossiter, G. (2006). *Reasons for living: Education and young people's search for meaning, identity and spirituality: A handbook*. Camberwell: ACER Press.

D'Orsa, T. (2013). Catholic curriculum: Re-framing the conversation. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 5*(1), 68–82.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An Overview. *Historical Social Research, 36*(4), 273–290.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 733–768). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Engebretson, K., Souza, M. D., Rymarz, R., & Buchanan, M. T. (2008). *Cornerstones of Catholic secondary religious education—Principles and practice of the new evangelization*. Terrigal: David Barlow Publishing.

Fullan, M. (2012). *Stratosphere: Integrating technology, pedagogy, and change knowledge*. Toronto: Pearson.

Fullan, M., & Langworthy, M. (2013). *Towards a new end: New pedagogies for deep learning*. Retrieved from Seattle, Washington. http://redglobal.edu.uy/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/New_Pedagogies_for_Deep-Learning_Whitepaper1.pdf.

Haers, J. (2004). Religious education as conversation: schools as communities of discernment. In H. Lombaerts & D. Pollefeyt (Eds.), *Hermeneutics and religious education* (pp. 313–336). Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press.

Hattie, J. (2011). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. New York: Routledge.

Lombaerts, H., & Pollefeyt, D. (2004). The emergence of hermeneutics in religious education theories: An overview. In H. Lombaerts & D. Pollefeyt (Eds.), *Hermeneutics and religious education*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Maso, I. (2001). Phenomenology and ethnography. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland, & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 136–144). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McGrath, J. (2017). The religious education curriculum in Australian Catholic schools: An overview. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools: Exploring the Landscape*. Mulgrave, Vic: Vaughan Publishing.

McMahon, J., & Dinan-Thompson, M. (2008). A malleable body—Revelations from an elite Australian swimmer. *ACHPER Healthy Lifestyles Journal, 55*(1).

McMahon, J., Penney, D., & Dinan-Thompson, M. (2011). 'Body practices—Exposure and effect of a sporting culture?' Stories from three Australian swimmers. *Sports, Education and Society, 17*(2), 181–206.

Moyaert, M. (2014). *In response to the religious other: Ricoeur and the fragility of interreligious encounters*. London: Lexington Books.

Pollefeyt, D., & Bouwens, J. (2010). Framing the identity of Catholic schools: Empirical methodology for quantitative research on the Catholic identity of an education institute. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 2*(2), 193–211.

Pollefeyt, D., & Bouwens, J. (2014). *Identity in dialogue: Assessing and enhancing Catholic school Identity research methodology and research results in Catholic schools in Victoria, Australia*. Zweigniederlassung Zurich: Lit Verlag GmbH and Co.

Rossiter, G. (2012). Religious education as cultural interpretation. *Journal of Religious Education, 60*(2), 67–68.

Rossiter, G. (2013a). Perspective on the use of the construct 'Catholic Identity' for Australian Catholic schooling: Areas in the discourse in need of more emphasis and further attention—Part 2. *Journal of Religious Education, 61*(2), 17–29.

Rossiter, G. (2013b). Perspective on the use of the construct 'catholic identity' for Australian Catholic schooling: Part 1 The sociological background and the literature. *Journal of Religious Education, 61*(2), 4–16.

Rossiter, G. (2017). A personal, critical perspective on the development of Australian Catholic school religious education: Where to from here? In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian Catholic schools: Exploring the landscape*. Mulgrave, Vic: Vaughan Publishing.

Ryan, M. (2014). *Religious education in Catholic schools—An introduction for Australian students* (Revised ed.). Hamilton: Lumino Press.

Rymarz, R. (2017). Religious education in a changing context: The paradox of Catholic schools. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian Catholic schools: Exploring the landscape*. Mulgrave, Vic: Vaughan Publishing.

Sharkey, P. (2017). Better understanding the context of religious education: The CECV Leuven project. In R. Rymarz & A. Belmonte (Eds.), *Religious education in Australian Catholic schools: Exploring the landscape*. Mulgrave, Vic: Vaughan Publishing.

Sultmann, W., & Brown, R. (2011). Modelling Pillars of Catholic school identity: An Australian study. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 3*(1), 73–90.

Willms, D., Friesen, S., & Milton, P. (2009). *What did you do in school today? Transforming classrooms through social, academic and intellectual engagement*. Toronto: Canadian Education Association.

Toni Foley is a Senior Education Officer, Catholic Education Services, Cairns where she currently supports Catholic Schools with Identity, Mission and Religious Education. She is the diocesan coordinator for the Graduate Certificate in Catholic Education and an adjunct senior lecturer at James Cook University. Her research interests include inter-religious learning, wellbeing, and religious education.

Maree Dinan-Thompson is an Associate Professor at James Cook University, Cairns. Her research interests include health and physical education, physical education, curriculum, assessment, and wellbeing. Maree has served in advisory and governance roles with the Cairns Diocese, Queensland Catholic Education Commission and participates in local catholic schooling as a consultant. Through her university role, she maintains a strong relationship with Catholic schooling and coordinates the Graduate Certificate of Catholic Education.

Chapter 46
Catholic Religious Education in Germany and the Challenges of Religious Plurality

Angela Kaupp

Introduction

Since religious education is a regular school subject in Germany, it is being defined as being different from catechesis in the parish since they are two different places of learning which are meant to complement each other. The school subject religious education is taught according to different beliefs confessions, that is, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish or Muslim. It is nowadays being increasingly considered how interfaith cooperation between Catholics and Protestants could be formed and how inter-religious aspects could be added to the school subject.

Moreover, during the last two decades, schools have also developed the field of pastoral care. Pastoral care exists in Catholic and Protestant schools and in some state schools in Germany. It is offered to pupils, teachers and parents and can be chosen voluntarily. It can contribute to a "human school" offering a multi-layered approach and includes some aspects of religious maintenance as part of that support.

School and Church as Different Systems of Religious Education

It is necessary to realise that Church and school are two systems that function according to their own rules. In school learning, performance, marks and qualification for jobs and professional life take centre stage while in a church context the greater importance is given to the aspects of faith and its traditions. The church emphasises equality in front of God over performance. At school, we normally encounter two generations, while in church there are also children who are not of school age as well

A. Kaupp (✉)
University of Koblenz-Landau, Koblenz, Germany
e-mail: kaupp@uni-koblenz.de

as many older people. Finally, the professional profile of teachers is different from that of parish workers, pastoral staff and priests.

Both systems are encountering new challenges:

(a) Since the Enlightenment, it has been repeatedly found necessary to justify why religious education should and can have a place in the public school curriculum. Discussing the meaning of religion in society is still relevant today. Educational researcher Jürgen Baumert (2002) provides a pedagogical response, based on the suggestion that religion and ethics are a specific mode of encountering the world just like natural sciences, arts and language or law. Their cognitive, aesthetic or normative approaches to the world cannot replace the religious-ethical approach. If this mode is absent, not only are bodies of knowledge lost, but at the same time a manner of encountering the world is also lost. Insofar as human education is included in the school, the sensitisation for religion also belongs to the educational canon of the public school.

(b) The increasing plurality among the population has led to a plurality of world views and to an increase in the number of religious organisations. The churches do not only have to confront decreasing membership but also religious plurality within the church (Englert, 2002, pp. 20–21). Since the 1970s, there has been much activity in the Catholic Church in parishes which counted on commitment and community within the framework of the church. However, at least since the beginning of the twenty-first century, it has become obvious that this model has reached its peak and each year sees fewer active volunteers (due to changes in school and professional area/labour market), larger and more impersonal parishes. Individualised and pluralised religiousness are facts that the churches have to deal with.

(c) While, until the end of the twentieth century, it was common standard in Germany for school to last half the day, now schools have become increasingly all-day schools like in other European countries. Thus, mealtimes and recreational activities have to be developed and designed within the school setting. School as "living space" necessitates different forms of didactics and communication.

Religious Education in German Schools

RE in German schools is organised through collaboration between the state and the religious communities and is considered a matter of *res mixtae* (joint responsibility). It is identified in the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) of the German Constitution in Article 7, chapter 3, RE is as a regular school subject that has to be taught "in accordance with the principles of religious communities" (http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/gg/art_7.html).

Teachers normally have a university education together with having passed a state examination; teachers with an ecclesiastical education (parish worker, pastoral care

staff) are also partially employed in the sphere of primary and secondary modern schools in some areas; nevertheless, they need a teaching license from the state. The religious communities are generally responsible for teaching contents. Religion teachers are delegated by the churches (Catholic: Missio; Protestant: Venia).

RE in Germany has a confessional Christian (Protestant or Roman Catholic) basis. In some federal states (Bundesländer), there exists Islamic RE as well. Jewish and Orthodox Christian RE is also provided on parental demand (Boschki, 2015; for an overview of differences and rules specific to the federal states that do not conform to the standard religious instruction: Meyer-Blanck, 2005).

Although RE is compulsory, pupils have the right to opt out from RE on the principle of freedom of religion. Pupils who do not participate in RE normally have to attend an alternative subject such as Ethics, Practical Philosophy or Philosophy (depending on the federal states). In Catholic church schools, Protestant religious education is also made available. They rarely offer an Ethics course because with the registration at the school, participation in religious instruction becomes compulsory.

Didactical Approaches

In religious educational literature, the following trichotomy is frequently cited: learning in, about and from religion (Grimmitt, 1987).

RE in religion helps students to grow up according to their own religious tradition. RE from religion supports students to shape their own identity on the basis of religious values.
RE about religion gives information about different religions and churches.

The model of denominational religious instruction conforms to the model of RE from religion. The norm from the Catholic point of view is denominational religious instruction which encompasses instructor, pupils and content being of the same religious denomination. According to the German Catholic Bishops, there are three primary tasks:

> Religious instruction delivers a valuable and structured basic knowledge about the faith of the church, familiarises pupils with the forms of a lived faith and enables experience of the faith of the church while promoting the ability of pupils for dialogue and judgement. (Die deutschen Bischöfe, 2005, 3)

Because of the changes that have occurred in society, this model is no longer accepted by all and some are in favour of a model that relies more on the science of religion, that is, RE about religion.

Religious instructors also gravitate towards this model in order to accommodate the heterogeneous nature of religion in school (Riegel & Ziebertz, 2009).

Challenges for RE in Public Schools

Religious individualism and pluralism: Religious plurality and religious individualisation processes challenge the previous model of a confessional religious education. The presupposition that the teacher, the pupils and the content all belong to the same faith has become fragile: despite their baptism, many pupils—particularly Christian without a migratory background (Calmbach, Borgstedt, & Borchard, 2016, pp. 339–358)—have no confessional identity since they often grow up with little religious socialisation in the family and without any reference to the Church. The proportion of non-Christians among students is constantly growing. The ways and forms in which Christianity is lived differ between the different denominations and also within the Catholic Church. Migration processes have led to children from other cultures and other confessions, for instance, of Orthodoxy background, taking Catholic religious classes. The possibility of an Orthodox religious education as an ordinary subject only exists if the number of enrolled children is large enough.

Ecumenical Cooperation and Inter-religious Learning in the School: In several federal states, models of ecumenical cooperation have already been introduced since some time now. For instance, in Baden-Württemberg, the Catholic Church and the Protestant regional churches are in agreement about the possibility of confessional cooperation (Boschki, 2015). In this model, the pupils' confession differs, but the teachers' confession matches the content (Die deutschen Bischöfe, 2016). Scientific evaluation substantiates a large degree of acceptance of the model among pupils, parents and teachers (Kuld, Schweitzer, Tzscheetzsch, & Weinhardt, 2009).

Non-Christian RE: Based on the multi-religious situation, today the question is posed regarding whether RE shall also be offered for other religious communities. In many areas, pilot schemes for Islamic RE are in operation and some Bundesländer started to offer Islamic religion as an ordinary subject. One difficulty for its introduction is that up to now there is no uniform point of contact on the Islamic side for all Muslims in Germany.

A teaching degree programme for the Islamic religion has been introduced in several German universities since 2010. The objective is to teach Muslim children their religion by Muslim teachers in the German language.

Inter-religious education: The religious plurality and organisational school difficulties of a confessional religious education make an inter-religious education appear as a solution. However, it is still unresolved how an inter-religious education would have to be arranged in order to be more than a cognitive imparting of knowledge about religion ("learning about religion").

Ideally, inter-religious and inter-confessional RE can be associated with the concept "learning from religion". The question regarding whether inter-religious or inter-confessional dialogue presupposes an accommodation in one's own religion/denomination or whether it promotes this (Leimgruber, 2009) is still being openly discussed.

Inclusion: Until now, Germany has had a fairly streamed school system in which students that have special needs usually go to specialised schools. Teachers usually

specialise in this area in university. Since some years ago, a more inclusive approach has been promoted in the standard schools. This poses new challenges for teachers who have not been trained in this concept. Furthermore, the increase in the number of refugees and migrants requires a swift integration of school-age children into the school system but could be problematic for reasons often associated with language barriers.

Pastoral Care at School

Pastoral care at school has been an element of the school system since its beginnings and historically can be traced back to the ecclesiastical foundations of monastic and cathedral schools.

Since the mid-1990s, there have been developed a variety of approaches for pastoral care at school, all based on different theological and pedagogical reasonings. In addition to that, individual practical areas of pastoral care have been established and are taking shape, particularly in the pastoral care of pupils (For the historical development, see Lames, 2000, pp. 24–97; Görtz, 2010, pp. 93–112; in the Protestant view see Koerrenz & Wermke, 2008, pp. 15–33). Pastoral involvement of the church in public schools happens within the framework of legal regulations at the federal as well as at the state level and in terms of the relative provisions of the education acts.

Pastoral care in Germany has developed a specific profile of engagement of the churches in schools. The dioceses invest financially by sending teachers and pastoral staff into school. In German dioceses, there are different models of determining the focus in terms of content and organisation of pastoral care at schools (Kaupp, 2012; Kaupp, Bussmann, Lob, & Thalheimer, 2015; Kaupp, 2018).

In their document "Schulpastoral" (Die deutschen Bischöfe, 1996), the German Catholic Bishops assigned a certain profile to the pastoral care in schools and also set up an ecclesiastical office. Since then, the diaconal orientation prevails and the main emphasis is on what contribution the churches can and are willing to provide to the school life.

Pastoral care aims to support the religious development of the individual as well as the daily life at school. It intends to contribute to the development of a Christian ethos resulting in a pleasant and humane coexistence within the framework of the school. It also aims to support people in their personal development and to promote solidarity in the schools and seeks to promote dialogue on life direction while offering a variety of stimuli for pupils to develop religious roots.

Accordingly, it differs from social work in schools since it does not limit itself to the diaconal area in terms of its Christian engagement. Pastoral care is characterised by the following principles: It depends on persons that give it form; the majority of offers are organised in an ecumenical way; participation is voluntary; and everybody is invited. Pastoral care cooperates with the different sections within the school as well as with other partnering organisations (e.g. institutions of the Diocese and the municipality, parishes and youth organisations).

Challenges for Pastoral Care

Pastoral care also has to confront religious plurality and individualism. New responsibilities have emerged because of the increase in migration in recent years, and pastoral care is active in the area of integration of foreign students, e.g. through homework help or recreational activities. However, many involved in pastoral care do lack relevant training in the area of inclusion of children with special needs.

Catholic schools always provide a pastoral care service but at public schools pastoral care is like a guest, because it is a voluntary offer by the church to the school. In such environments, the pastoral care offered by the Church has to work for its status by demonstrating its usefulness to the life in school and also to non-Catholic people. Because the acceptance of the offer of pastoral care is voluntary, it faces competition from other groups that are involved in recreational activities in the schools.

Catechetical Work in the Parish Context

Since the 1970s, religious instruction in the school and catechesis in the parish have been clearly differentiated and the school and the parish have been designated as places of learning faith that complement each other. While religious instruction serves mostly for the examination of religious questions, in the western federal states, catechesis aims at introducing the faith and the life of the church and to "contribute to the acquiring of a reflected faith for those open to it" (Gemeinsame Synode, 1977, p. 42).

Following Vatican II and the synod:

> The main goal of catechesis consists in helping humans to succeed in their life by relying on the solace of and complying with the requirements of God. In this respect 'success' should not be misunderstood in a superficial way. That this also encompasses suffering and failure becomes visible in that we Christians profess the way of the crucified one as our own path. (Gemeinsame Synode, 1977, p. 41)

Ideally, catechesis assumes the first encounter with Christians and a tentative initial faith among the participants. This does not always conform to reality, for example, if children only have sparse contact with practical faith between baptism and first communion.

Proclamation is understood as a commission for all the faithful. Models of preparing children and youth for first communion and confirmation in manageable groups exist. These groups are usually led by (adult) volunteers. Ideally, these volunteers see themselves as guides and witnesses of faith. They are not necessarily theological or pedagogical professional, and they are accompanied in their work by professional pastoral care staff. The opportunity for catechetical work in the parish consists in the fact that children and youth meet people who are believers in their everyday life without associating them with a profession in the church such as priests or religious

instructors. Another quality feature is the possibility for intergenerational learning processes in the parishes. These become more and more important because the children's support for religious development often rests with the children's grandparents rather than with the parents.

Challenges for Catechetical Work in Parishes

Religious pluralism and individualism have had a significant impact on parishes many of which have been amalgamated into larger parishes. Furthermore, both as a result of religious individualism and due to the expansion of classes and recreational activities in schools, catechesis has reached its limits. There is on the hand the fact that organising groups for children and youth is harder to achieve, and on the other hand the problem that, because of job pressures, fewer adults are willing or available to work with such groups. In some places, catechetical instruction has been relocated to the school or is being offered within the framework of pastoral care. Notwithstanding these difficulties, it needs to be realised that there is the necessity that faith and the handing down of faith traditions rely on the community. Otherwise, children and youth will lack the opportunity to experience the parish as a living space independent from their school (Lutz, 2011, pp. 52–64; Kaupp, 2013).

The Necessity of Cooperation Among the Three Pillars of Religious Education

Religious education, pastoral care and catechesis each follow their own different logics. If the logic of the other area is not understood, conflicts are unavoidable (Deinet and Treichel, 2011, pp. 233–248; Reismann 2009).

Each of the three areas possesses a varying proximity to educational and ecclesiastical forms of organisation. Furthermore, the degree of commitment on the part of the addressees and the professional competencies on the part of instructors differ: In religious education, one always finds professional instructors; in pastoral care, professional and/or volunteers are involved depending on the diocese while in the area of church youth work and catechesis most of the direct contact happens with volunteers that are supported by professional staff. Last but not least, there is a varying degree of organised (curricular) and situational (incidental = kairological) learning. While the form of religious learning in religious instruction and catechesis is organised, in pastoral care and youth work, it is kairological.

Bridging pastoral care and religious instruction seems to be relatively simple because both focus on the school and fulfil a diaconal task given by the church for the benefit of the ones active in the school. There is a significant overlap between the providers and the addressees of pastoral care and of religious instruction where pupils

are the target group. Often, religious instructors become active in the area of pastoral care—with or without being tasked with that. Pastoral care is fundamentally defined by its mission given by the church, while religious instruction has an educational task as well as a mission given by the state and by the religious community.

While religious education as a compulsory subject, it has to work within the constraints of the school, pastoral care as a voluntary offer, not being constrained within any timetable, can familiarise students with more expansive forms of lived faith and can immerse them in a personal examination of questions of meaning. While religious instruction is geared to students, pastoral care addresses all those active in the school, including the parents. Pastoral care has a variety of possibilities to advocate for a humane school culture—also in cooperation with people and groups not belonging to the school. Thus, it is obvious that religious instruction and pastoral care both benefit when supporting each other through their respective strengths.

Catechesis and youth work are mostly sustained by volunteers or the youth themselves and are mainly characterised by relating to everyday life outside of school and by being located in the parish. There is a significant space to create programmes in this field of work but effective advertising is necessary to make it known that these offers exist at all. There is a concern that an increasingly longer school hours for children and youth escalates the difficulties of religious programmes outside of the school.

Pastoral care can counteract this tendency through connecting with programmes outside of the school. This can prove to be beneficial in terms of content, personnel and space in order to provide an attractive offer. In order for the cooperation to succeed, it is necessary to keep the different cultures of communication in mind. Conflicts of roles may arise because of one of the diverging interests and varying degrees of pedagogical and theological competencies. Consequently, it is important to have open communication between the parties concerned and that the programmes offered are strong in all aspects.

Learning Through Religion—Reflections on Contemporary Catholic Education

As today children and adolescents are spending more and more time at school, the school should satisfy the requirement of a living environment. A "school as a living environment" necessitates other forms of didactics and communication and one needs to think about how school life needs to be configured alongside education. The discussion on pastoral care and cooperation with youth ministry as forms of the presence of religion in the school is being held in this context.

If religion is seen as a means to approach the world, one should ask how this approach can be acquired or deepened within the framework of organised Catholic learning arrangements.

The models which are currently being discussed cover the entire spectrum from "learning in religion" to "learning about religion". I would like to divide "learning in religion" into two columns: "learning in religion" and "learning through religion". "Learning in religion" helps one to mature according to one's own religious traditions, whereas "learning through" supports to shape one's own (religious) identity by adopting the point of view of a believer.

While RE as a school subject is mostly learning about and from religion, Catechesis in parish is an example for learning in religion. But there is an overlap in the field of "learning through". Theoretical concepts which are bundled under the catchword "performative religious didactics" (Dressler, 2015; Mendl, 2016), reflect how a "learning in and from religion" can also be accounted for in the future within the framework of the school. To be more precise, I would classify performative didactics as a form of "learning through". This concept is suited to form an overarching connection between religious instruction, catechesis and pastoral care insofar as it is possible to use it in a differentiated manner in the field.

The verb "to perform" includes the meaning of doing, executing, carrying out, accomplishing, officiating a ceremony and acting out, putting on stage (https://de.pons.com/Übersetzung?l=deenandq=performativ). This ambiguity of meanings of the English term has led to different uses of the term: "Performative can refer to the conditions of speech acts, to the medial embodiment of utterances, or to the staging conditions in the context of theatre performances" (Wirth, 2002). It is only the study of religion, that, so to speak, "lets one walk in the shoes of the other" and thus encourages a personal engagement that enables a deeper understanding of religion. However, that doesn't necessarily mean one has to choose the shoes oneself.

The study of religion includes its cognitive-, emotional- and action-oriented aspects. Following Hemel (1986, p. 62), religious learning is therefore described in the following five dimensions:

– Religious sensitivity is the ability to perceive religious reality.
– Religious expression is the act of taking over religious behaviours in the form of individual or collective gestures and attitudes.
– Religious content is defined by the conceptual aspects of religiosity.
– Religious communication is the ability to verbalise one's own religiosity. This requires "religious linguistic, interaction and dialogue competence", as well as "religious symbolic competence and a capacity to communicate in religious contexts" (Hemel, 1988, p. 685).
– Religiously motivated life-shaping is the result of a religious self- and world interpretation and therefore presupposes the other four dimensions.

Based on these dimensions, it is plausible that religious competence is not acquired solely through cognitive processes, even though this dimension is of great importance in religious teaching. The religious world approach requires more than content or social understanding,

The question is how to find or deepen access to religion as a prospect of the world's interpretation. This requires experience. Forms of worship, symbols and personal prayers are not only an expression of a certain belief, but also a visible

aspect of a faith; they "show" the content. Therefore, students can understand the system of a religion deeper, if they know its forms of expression. Knowing this visible side of the faith is necessary before students could reflect on these aspects. The more vivid a religion becomes, the more it is possible that students could empathise with the believer's perspective.

The ethnologist Turner (2002) came to the conclusion that an ethnological staging of social ceremonies of foreign cultures leads to a better understanding of not only the foreign but also one's own culture. In this sense, "religion as a foreign religion" can also be shown in the context of a performative religious education. It is about a perspective transfer, which is also achievable for students who understand themselves as non-religious or non-Christian. They do not have to accept the religious perspective as their own!

Showing something with pedagogical intent needs performance and reflection: Religious education in this sense must not neglect the cognitive and reflective examination of religious aspects. If experiences are not reflected, a learning progress cannot be identified. In order to acquire a sense of orientation about a religion, the critical examination of the contents of the religious tradition is necessary. In order to enable students to actively exercise their right to freedom of religion, reflection is urgently needed, particularly in view of the plurality of religious options and the individualization of faith. If religion is understood as merely a private matter, one runs the risk of blinding oneself to rational justification as everyone tries to find his or her own truth. It is only a theoretical analysis and discussion that will lead to a deepening of knowledge and to making communication with others possible. Even from a point of view of the psychology of learning, there is a link to be found between the interest in religion and its reflected absorption: "The more students succeed in cognitively deciphering tradition as connections, as patterns, as a shaped and formed order, the sooner they can adapt these traditions" (Englert, 2006, p. 14). This is valid for religious instruction as well as for catechesis and pastoral care. So far, the performative approach has been discussed with regard to religious instruction, but in my opinion it could also serve as a didactic foundation for catechesis in the parish (Kaupp, 2017). Performance—learning through—is an approach that is pedagogically compatible; as the results of teaching, research proves that learning is all the more successful, given contextual and illustrative content. Particularly, action-oriented teaching and learning concepts emphasise that learning cannot be achieved if they are merely cognitive (Rustemeyer, 2016, pp. 113f).

"Showing religion" requires a relationship between the learner and the teacher: The teacher has to show himself as someone who is familiar with Christian content and forms of expression, without assuming that the learner has the same point of view. The performance of religion therefore needs teachers that are "skilled at staging". This requires that the teachers themselves can distance themselves from their own religious actions: Showing someone something is different from doing something with someone. That is why I assign this approach between "learning from" and "learning in". Christian actions of faith therefore have their place in pastoral care or in catechesis. In particular, the latter areas of activity needs people that "show" religion as their own religious practice. Current empirical analyses prove the great

significance of a positive relationship between the learner and the companions for catechesis in the parish (Könemann, Sajak, & Simone, 2017; Forschungsgruppe Religion und Gesellschaft, 2015). Here, we will also have to consider the difference between showing and doing, but we can assume that the people who come together in this environment want to seek and live the faith together.

Concluding Remarks

As educational research substantiates, learning is all the more successful the closer it is to context and the more demonstratively the contents are presented. Since religious competence cannot be acquired solely by means of cognitive processes, students could only understand religion as a perspective of the world encountering it, only if forms of expression become clearly "tangible" to them. That is why forms are sought to gain experiences with religion within the framework of "performative religious didactics". At the same time, a theoretical debate is necessary: a debate that first enables communication and leads to a deepening of knowledge. Both approaches are necessary in order to enable students to actively perceive their right to the free practice of religion. This is valid not just for religious instruction but also for catechesis and pastoral care.

Catholic education of children and youth in Germany occurs in several places that are more or less connected to the learning space of school. Cooperation between these areas of activities serves the needs of a contemporary religious education.

The approach of a performative religious didactic may be a path to accommodate religious plurality and individuality. The objective is to strengthen the sensitivity for a religious view of the world by having children and youth adopt a religious perspective in their thinking and discover their own religiosity.

References

Baumert, J. (2002). Deutschland im internationalen Bildungsvergleich. In N. Killius (Ed.), *Die Zukunft der Bildung* (pp. 100–150). Frankfurt a.M: Suhrkamp.

Boschki, R. (2015). Catholic religious education in German schools: An ecumenical and interreligious perspective. In M. T. Buchanan & A. M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 195–206). Cham: Springer.

Calmbach, M., Borgstedt, S., & Borchard, I. (2016). *Wie ticken Jugendliche 2016? Lebenswelten von Jugendlichen im Alter von 14 bis 17 Jahren in Deutschland.* Wiesbaden: Springer.

Deinet, U., & Treichel, M. L. (2011). Kooperation von Jugendhilfe und Schule. In K. Kansteiner (Ed.), *Professionswissen für Lehrerinnen und Lehrer* (pp. 233–248). Baltmannsweiler: Schneider-Verl. Hohengehren.

Die deutschen Bischöfe. (1996). *Schulpastoral—der Dienst der Kirche an den Menschen im Handlungsfeld Schule.* Retrieved from https://www.dbk-shop.de/media/files_public/yvlyevqqmur/DBK_1216.pdf.

Die deutschen Bischöfe. (2005). *Der Religionsunterricht vor neuen Herausforderungen*. Retrieved from: https://www.dbk-shop.de/media/files_public/gumrlcpeieyk/DBK_1180.pdf.

Die deutschen Bischöfe. (2016). *Die Zukunft des konfessionellen Religionsunterrichts*. Retrieved from: https://www.dbk-shop.de/media/files_public/fejxhgvv/DBK_11103.

Dressler, B. (2015). *Performativer Religionsunterricht.* Retrieved from: https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/fileadmin/buh_bibelmodul/media/wirelex/pdf/Performativer_Religionsunterricht__2017-10-10_11_15.pdf.

Englert, R. (2002). Dimensionen religiöser Pluralität. In F. Schweitzer, et al. (Eds.), *Entwurf einer pluralitätsfähigen Religionspädagogik* (pp. 17–50). Freiburg i. Br: Herder.

Englert, R. (2006). Religion reflektieren—nötiger denn je. In *Kirche und Schule* "Religion inszenieren und Religion reflektieren"—Eine Alternative?, Freiburg i. Br. *139,* 9–14.

Forschungsgruppe Religion und Gesellschaft. (2015). *Werte—Religion—Glaubenskommunikation: Eine Evaluationsstudie zur Erstkommunionkatechese*. Wiesbaden: Springer.

Gemeinsame Synode der Bistümer in der Bundesrepublik. (1977). *Das katechetische Wirken.* Retrieved from: https://www.dbk-shop.de/media/files_public/glkfltwdc/DBK_GS_26_katechetisches_Wirken.pdf.

Görtz, P. (2010). *Nach den Sternen greifen: Ignatianische Schulpastoral und Kollegsseelsorge: konzeptionelle Erwägungen und Konkretisierungen*. Bonn: lulu.

Grimmitt, M. (1987). *Religious education and human development*. Great Wakering: Mc Crimmon.

Hemel, U. (1986). *Religionspädagogik im Kontext von Theologie und Kirche*. Düsseldorf: Patmos.

Hemel, U. (1988). *Ziele religiöser Erziehung: Beiträge zu einer integrativen Theorie*. Frankfurt a. M.: Lang.

Kaupp, A. (2012). Schulpastoral. In J. Först & H. Schöttler (Eds.), *Einführung in die Theologie der Pastoral: Ein Lehrbuch für Studierende, Lehrer und kirchliche Mitarbeiter* (pp. 191–212). Berlin [etc.]: Lit Verlag.

Kaupp, A. (2013). Schulreligion—nicht für alles. Firmvorbereitung in der Schule? Eine Erwiderung auf Hans Mendl. *Katechetische Blätter, 138,* 377–381.

Kaupp, A. (2017). Katechese und Glaubensvalidierung zwischen religiösen Individuationsprozessen und Katechismuswissen. *euangel—Magazin für Missionarische Pastoral,* 2017, 3. Retrieved from: https://www.euangel.de/.

Kaupp, A. (Ed.). (2018). *Pluralitätssensible Schulpastoral: Chancen und Herausforderungen angesichts religiöser und kultureller Diversität.* Ostfildern: Grünewald.

Kaupp, A., Bußmann, G., Lob, B., & Thalheimer, B. (Eds.). (2015). *Handbuch Schulpastoral*. *Für Studium und Praxis*. Freiburg i. Br.: Verlag Herder.

Kaupp, A., Leimgruber, S., & Scheidler, M. (Eds.). (2011). *Handbuch der Katechese: Für Studium und Praxis*. Freiburg i. Br : Verlag Herder.

Koerrenz, R., & Wermke, M. (Eds.). (2008). *Schulseelsorge—Ein ökumenisches Handbuch*. Göttingens: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht.

Könemann, J., Sajak, C. P., & Simone, L. (2017). *Einflussfaktoren religiöser Bildung: Eine qualitativ-explorative Studie*. Wiesbaden: Springer.

Kuld, L., Schweitzer, F., Tzscheetzsch, W., & Weinhardt, J. (2009). *Im Religionsunterricht zusammenarbeiten: Evaluation des konfessionell-kooperativen Religionsunterrichts in Baden-Württemberg*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Lames, G. (2000). *Schulseelsorge als soziales System: Ein Beitrag zu ihrer praktisch-theologischen Grundlegung*. Stuttgart u.a.: Kohlhammer.

Leimgruber, S. (2009). *Interreligiöses Lernen* (2nd ed.). München: Kösel.

Lutz, B. (2011). Gemeinde in Zeiten der Individualisierung—Auslaufmodell oder Notwendigkeit. In A. Kaupp, S. Leimgruber, & M. Scheidler (Eds.), *Handbuch der Katechese: Für Studium und Praxis* (pp. 52–64). Freiburg i.Br.: Verlag Herder.

Mendl, H. (Ed.). (2016). *Religion zeigen—Religion erleben—Religion verstehen: Ein Studienbuch zum Performativen Religionsunterricht* (1st ed.). Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Meyer-Blanck, M. (2005). *Religion im Kanon der anderen Fächer.* In U. Baumann et al. (Eds.), *Religionsdidaktik: Praxishandbuch für die Sekundarstufe I und II* (pp. 35–47). Berlin: Cornelsen Scriptor.

Reismann, H. (2009). *Jugendarbeit und Schule zwischen Nähe und Distanz: Konzept- und struktur-theoretische Voraussetzungen und Formen der schulbezogenen Jugendarbeit*. Hamburg: Kovac.

Riegel, U., & Ziebertz, H.-G. (2009). Concepts and methods. In H.-G. Ziebertz & U. Riegel (Eds.), *How teachers in Europe teach religion: An international empirical study in 16 countries* (pp. 13–19). Berlin: Lit.

Rustemeyer, R. (2016). *Einführung in die Unterrichtspsychologie* (3rd ed.). Darmstadt: WBG.

Turner, V. (2002). Dramatisches Ritual—Rituelles Drama. Performative und reflexive Ethnologie. In U. Wirth (Ed.), *Performanz. Zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Kulturwissenschaften* (pp. 193–209). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.

Wirth, U. (2002). Der Performanzbegriff im Spannungsfeld von Illokution, Iteration und Indexikalität. In U. Wirth (Ed.), *Performanz. Zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Kulturwissenschaften* (pp. 9–60). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.

Prof Angela Kaupp is Professor of practical theology/religious education at the Institute of Catholic Theology, University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany. She was previously at the Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Freiburg, Germany. Her research interests include didactics of religious education (RE), school-pastoral and catechesis, biography and RE, space and RE, and she guest lectures at the Jesuits' University Jnana-Deepa-Vidyapeeth, Pune (India) and at faculties of theology across Europe. She is President of AKRK (Association of Scholars in Catholic Religious Education and Catechesis). Besides her professional memberships include EEC (European Team for Catechechis) and Gerfec (a European association for research and formation for teachers of different cultures and convictions).

Chapter 47
Interreligious Education Involving Christianity and Confucianism in Hong Kong

Imelda Pui-hing Lam

Introduction

With the migration of people of various ethnicities, the postmodern world is breaking down the barriers between different traditions, cultures and interreligious communities. People are becoming more aware that neglecting other faiths can bring misunderstandings that could lead to hostility, war and destruction. On the other hand, understanding another faith can help to promote peace and harmony. Confucianism is one such example. The trend of Chinese immigrants studying abroad, interracial marriages, or doing business with people of Asian heritage in the West has resulted in the encounter of persons, ideas, products, practices and religions of the East with those of the West (Berling, 2008). As Christianity has had an immense influence in the West, and so did Confucianism in the East, the intermixing of East and West enhances the dialogue between Confucianism and Christianity, and it enriches each other's inspiration and articulation in thoughts, ideas and ways of life.

The Catholic Church has long been making efforts in developing peaceful relationships with other religions, officially seen in the document "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" (*Nostra Aetate*) as part of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). The Council fostered interreligious dialogue by raising the worthiness of seeking values shared in common and learning from others. Enlightened by interreligious dialogue, this paper examines an element of interreligious education in Hong Kong, specifically concerning the integration of the topic of Confucianism. After British sovereignty of over 150 years (1841–1997), Hong Kong has become a place representing the intermixing of western and eastern cultures. 95% of the population is ethnically Chinese, the majority of whom are rooted in Chinese culture, which means that they are both consciously and unconsciously influenced by the shadow of Confucianism. One-fifth of schools in Hong

I. P. Lam (✉)
Catholic Education Office, Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China
e-mail: imeldalamlam@gmail.com

Kong are managed by Catholic-affiliated bodies, which greatly influence education in the entire society. Religious education is no doubt playing an important role in cultivating the brains and the minds of the new generation but, in its focus on Christian values, are schools aware of the need for enriching Chinese wisdom and cultures for all students? Do they find interreligious education of Christianity and Confucianism crucial? To what extent are they working on it? This paper looks at the religious education curriculum, to examine how the curriculum is designed, how to implement it in schools, and what needs to be done to bring it to a fuller fruition.

Salient Features of Confucianism

Confucius was originally a name written in Latin, translated from Kong Fuzi (551–479 B.C.) by Matteo Ricci in his mission to China (1582–1610). Confucius' stress on cultivation of human behaviour exerted a huge influence on his followers. His thought developed and largely spread when Emperor Wu (157–87 B.C.) declared it to be the national philosophy. Confucianism became established as a school of thought.

Confucius claimed himself to be a transmitter but not an innovator since he was devoted to antiquity. He taught students six arts (learning of ritual, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy and arithmetic) which he believed were the means of shaping the body and mind for one to be a civilized, disciplined person eager to maintain the order of the society. Ancient rites, for example, stressed the expression of propriety, filial piety and sincerity. The learning of rites was therefore associated with the construction of a disciplined social order. His verses prevailed in societies in following ages:

> Do not look unless it is in accordance with the rites
>
> Do not listen unless it is in accordance with the rites
>
> Do not speak unless it is in accordance with the rites
>
> Do not move unless it is accordance with the rites. (Analects, XII, 1)

The articulation of rites and propriety later inspired Mencius (372–289 B.C.) to build up his analysis of Confucius's teaching. He framed human relationship into Five Relations:

> Affection between father and son
>
> Righteousness between sovereign and minister
>
> Attention to their distinctive roles between husband and wife
>
> Respect between old and young
>
> And fidelity between friends. (Mencius, 3A, 4)

The concept of Five Relations was indeed shifting the focus from rites to duties and responsibilities for each role, and eventually reached the goal of building up a

harmonious society. This concept grew, strengthened and became the foundation of social ethics that informed the consciousness of Chinese society.

The concept of self-cultivation was deeply examined in Daxue, The Greater Learning, one of the "Four Books" of Chinese Classics. According to Neo-Confucian Zhu Xi's (1130–1200) interpretation, the terms "investigation of things", "extension of knowledge", "sincerity of the will" and "rectification of the mind" are claimed as the most significant dimensions of efforts to achieve human excellence. These dimensions enable a person to acquire the qualities to "obtain a perfect human character", "construct a family", "govern the state" and eventually "bring peace to the world". These four qualities indicate the goal of the cultivation of an understanding of humanity as a process of extending from self to family, to nation and to the world. The four dimensions of human excellence with the four spheres of achievements are known as the "Eight Principles". These principles primarily became the core thought of Confucianism and guided the thinking and mindset of the Chinese people for the following ages (Daxue, The Greater Learning, 1).

Is Confucianism a Religion?

Whether Confucianism is a religion has perennially been a controversial topic. Confucius believed that there is a supreme power over Heaven, but since there was no examination on it, he did not speak of "prodigies, force, disorder, and gods" (Analects, VII, 21). An ancient sage, Zhuangzi referred to it as "keeping in mind but no discussion", and this description was considered a temporary conclusion to the supreme power (Zhuangzi, Inner Chapters: The Adjustment of Controversies, 10).

Though he did no investigation, Confucius never objected to the supreme power of Heaven, as the term "Tian" (Heaven) was one of his significant teachings. Contemporary scholar Chan, al Faruqi, Kitagawa, & Raju (1969) finds it difficult to make an accurate translation, since "Tian" includes the meaning of not only Nature, person and principle, but all of them taken as a whole. In any sense, it is real, purposive, powerful and the source of the Moral Law. Heaven does not rule, but reigns. Confucius did not speak explicitly about Heaven, but examined the Moral Law in depth and defined it as "Dao" (the Way), the rule of Heaven. He then left the unfinished question of the mystery of Heaven to his followers (pp. 105–6).

Mencius developed the idea of "Dao" and associated it with the innate goodness of human beings. He held that the belief in the Moral Law of Heaven was bestowed on human heart and mind and is known as "conscience". The heart and mind give the person intelligence to discern good or bad, and through their cultivation, the person can learn to "understand the heart", "understand the nature" and gradually "know Heaven" (Mencius, 7A, 1).

With the influence of Taoism on the evolution of Confucianism, the meaning of "Dao" was enriched. Taoism concerns itself with the mystery of the universe. From the everlasting changing and growing of nature, Taoists presume that there is a limitless force in the universe which is characterized by the movement of motion

and rest. They regard this movement as the principle of the universe, called "Tian-li" or "Tai-ji", the "Heavenly Principle" or the "Great Ultimate". Neo-Confucians employed this concept from Taoism and regarded it as the source of moral goodness. Using the insights of Zhu Xi's Yin-yang school, he demythologized the notion of Heaven as a personal deity and shifted it to metaphysical investigation. Heaven was then perceived as nothing more than physical nature:

> Heaven's ways are constant. It does not prevail because of a sage like Yao; it does not cease to prevail because of a tyrant like Chieh. Respond to it with good government, and good fortune will result. Respond to it with disorder, and misfortune will result. (Xunzi, ch. 17)

With the unceasing quest for the cosmic divine and human moral, Heaven became a philosophical concept that embraced the highest value of morality. The supreme deity or divine power faded out, but Neo-Confucians retained the concept of offering reverence to the spirits of ancestors and the powers of nature. This concept was later interpreted as Heaven and Earth, with humans becoming one in harmony through ritual performance. This was termed "Oneness of Heaven and Man".

Is Confucianism a religion? Chan, al Faruqi, Kitagawa, & Raju (1969) claims that it is certainly not if one thinks of religion as an organized church with Holy Scriptures and clergies, since there is none of these in Confucian traditions. However, it is "unmistakably religious", since Confucius and his followers have always affirmed the reality of a purposive and powerful Heaven. It is undeniable that Confucianism did promote traditional rites such as sacrifice to Heaven and Earth, and to ancestors as well. Sacrifice has exercised an influence and control over Chinese society, and the classics of Confucianism are regarded as the fountain of truth as the way that religious scriptures do in other countries.

From the perspective of Catholicism, the Chinese Christian theologian Zhang (1974) believes that without the gift of the Holy Spirit, it would not be possible to understand the supernatural dimension in human wisdom. Thus, transformation is considered to be self-transcendence with the aid of an "other". Yao (1997) defines Christianity as a theistic religion embodying many humanistic characteristics, while Confucianism is a humanistic one admitting some theistic elements. As a humanistic religion, it quests for the understanding of the Ultimate, the imminent power, the transcendent, the world, life and death, for all that concerns the explorations of human nature and human destiny. Confucianism is not solely confined to philosophy because it investigates the supreme power between the natural and the supernatural. Though it does not speak explicitly about the truth of God, the presence of divine power is never denied (Yao, 2000). Phan (2012) takes Confucianism to be a "philosophical anthropology, an ethical system, a socio-political theory, and a religious way of life, all at once" (p. 169). Considering the features of Confucianism from different convictions, it is evident that this influential Chinese thought plays an important role in cultivating human minds for morality, and the perception of the divine. Here is where Phan stresses the perspectives of culture and religion, to explore how these two areas encounter between Confucianism and Catholic Christianity, so as to envision interreligious dialogue.

Catholic Christianity and Confucianism: Interreligious Dialogue

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) declared their "non-defensive understanding of the value of other religions" as "true and holy" perceived in different ways:

> The Catholic Church rejects nothing of which is true and holy in these religions. It has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from its own teaching, nevertheless often reflects a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women. (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, 1965, par. 2)

The Catholic Church intends to articulate fruitful dialogue with other Christians and members of other religions. However, because of complexities, challenges, possibilities and the necessity of leading conversations with other religions, the Church holds the faith of one Triune God and exhorts Christians not to fall into distortion or relativism. In 1991, the Vatican issued a document entitled "Dialogue and Proclamation", which describes dialogue as having four dimensions required for fruitful conversation. These four dimensions are the dialogues of life, action, theological exchange and religious experience (Dialogue and Proclamation, 1991, par. 42; Heft, 2012, pp. 7–8).

The "dialogue of life" is to open the conversation between people who are striving to live with a better spirit, and intend to share their joys and sorrows, problems and thoughts with others. The "dialogue of action" is to open opportunities to collaborate with other religions to work for the well-being of others in society or in the world. The "dialogue of theological exchange" is to open the mind to listen to the philosophy or theology of other religions, so as to understand their religious heritage, practice, rites and belief. It is helpful to appreciate each other's spiritual values and to lessen conflicts due to misunderstanding. The "dialogue of religious experience" is to open one's eyes to see other religious traditions. It can enrich the spirituality of one's own faith when sharing the way of searching for God or the divine.

Pope Paul VI's encyclical "Ecclesiam Suam" ("On the Church", 1964) gives a précis instruction on four qualities which generate genuine interreligious dialogue and possibly result in mutual enrichment. These four qualities are clarity, meekness, trust and pedagogical prudence. With "clarity", "every angle" of one's language in religious dialogue can be taken to review and to reflect, and thus Christians can rethink whether it is "understandable, acceptable, and well-chosen". "Meekness" associates with humility. It reminds people of the sense of charity that dialogue is not proud, not bitter, not offensive, not commanding, not impositing; but rather it is intrinsic to the truth, peace, patient and generous. "Trust" is rooted in faith. Pope Paul VI reminds Catholics that they should have confidence in telling the view of the church and should have the same attitude to welcome the words of interlocutors. "Trust" promotes confidence and friendship. It is not limited to self-seeking, but is open to enriching the mutual adherence to the good. "Prudence" strives to learn the sensitivities of the hearer and requires the listener to respond in a reasonable way, and to avoid being displeasing and incomprehensible. "Pedagogical prudence"

is a wisdom which requires that the listener exercises the sending and receiving of religious messages in a true way.

The four dimensions and the four qualities of dialogue are instructions for inter-religious dialogue and are insightful for a fuller implementation in interreligious education. The following section presents research on curriculum and its implementation in schools, so as to acquire a better way of teaching and learning in religious education.

Empirical Research: Interreligious Education in Hong Kong Catholic Schools

In the early 2000s, a focused study of religious education and its interplay of global and local, traditional and postmodern, theological and philosophical dimensions was prevalent among religious scholars, educators, principals and teachers in Hong Kong, for the preparation of the change of era after the return of sovereignty to China. Gradually, consensus emerged that a new curriculum could be written on the perspectives of Catholic education with contemporary cultural and societal concerns. Chinese wisdom and cultures were recruited for the purposes of arousing the roots of ethnic Chinese, and so as to enrich the thought when encountering Christian values on a basis of complementary learning.

A new curriculum based on such a rationale was completed and was approved by the Catholic Diocese in 2006. With the support of the bishop, a development centre, entitled Religious and Moral Education Curriculum Development Centre (RME), was subsequently established. In 10 years' time, 12 levels of textbooks were completed and are currently used in about 200 Catholic schools, which between them take two-thirds of all Catholic schools in the city. To examine interreligious education of Catholic Christianity and Confucianism, this study considers how complementary learning actually functions in schools. The discussion concerns two areas: curriculum design and authentic implementation. This research aims to investigate how the backup work and the frontline work function together in the implementation. Implications will be drawn up to envision a fuller support for a better teaching and learning in schools.

Curriculum Design

The Catholic Diocese identified eight learning goals of religious education at a diocesan synod in 2000, and these learning goals represent the highest achievement that Catholic education aims to gain. To convert philosophical thought to actual implementation, RME employs the paradigm of a value approach, breaks the 8 learning

goals into 47 kinds of values and attitudes, and places each kind for each learning unit as a study focus.

Regarding interreligious education, the curriculum instructs about the interface between Catholic Christianity and Confucianism. RME distributes the 47 kinds of values and attitudes into 5 scopes of care and concerns, which range from the most self-centred to the most global. These five scopes correspond to the four spheres of achievements pertaining to Chinese thought since thousands of years and that are familiar to ethnic Chinese since they agree with what they have learnt in families. It also shows that Chinese culture and wisdom have long been coherent to Catholic teaching, but adds the fifth scope that highlights the thought of contributing to global peace as the greatest achievement.

The new curriculum is not bound by the five spheres of concern and care, but is confined in the perspectives of Catholic teaching. The document makes use of the four sections written in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which are Faith and the Creed, Liturgy and Sacraments, Moral and Christian Life, and Prayer, as primarily principles of Catholic teaching. While this does not mean that contemporary Catholic education is a Catechist education, all discussions are related to Catholic views. The structure of the curriculum is framed in the holdings of vertical and horizontal lines: while four vertical lines represent Catholic perspectives, and five horizontal ones show the spheres of care and concern. Under such instruction, each topic develops on the interaction between Catholicism and Chinese wisdom concerns.

To instruct the paradigm of value-seeking, RME employs the Shared Christian Praxis of Groome (2006), which stresses learning from experiences, inspired by new insights and gaining transformation from their integration. In light of Groome's conviction, the new curriculum makes use of stories as new insights. There are two kinds of stories, namely, Christian stories and Chinese stories. Christian stories are stories from the Scriptures, the Catholic tradition, the lives of saints, the Vatican exhortations and any types associated with Christian values. Chinese stories are teachings from the Chinese classics, traditional way of thoughts, lives of ancient sages, heritages or any types identified with Chinese features. These two kinds do not aim at comparison; instead, they are mutually enriching and enlightening in complementary learning. While Christian stories are cultivating students to learn from Catholic Christianity, Chinese stories offer a better understanding about the ethnic traditions, and a broader mind to associate and to reflect on what is compatible with Christian values. The following section is about the search of authentic implementation of the curriculum and for suggestions on it can be refined and refreshed.

Authentic Implementation

The research uses two ways to examine authentic implementation: First, to investigate what the Catholic Church did for complementary learning; and second, to interview teachers for their opinions. Herein, these two areas are subtitled "A Glance at the Top" and "A Glance on the Ground".

A Glance at the Top

After the document of a new curriculum approved by the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong in 2006, the Church established a writing centre (RME), recruited staff and equipped it with all supporting materials. The staff team comprises a scholar specialized in teacher training, experienced teachers of RE from sectors of kindergarten, primary and secondary (high) schools, and other staff such as designer for artwork, computing technological support and clerical assistance. A professional team comprising a textbook committee was formed to supervise the teaching content, and to make sure that all teachings are in conformity with the views of Catholic Christianity. Supplementary supports like printing, publishing, marketing and selling are also involved. Apparently, the Church gives its full support to mobilizing religious education towards change in response to the needs of this era.

The curriculum officers of RME started by seeking the best way of implementation. After doing the necessary research, they started to write the teaching and learning materials for teachers and students. The teaching support includes a series of resources for seeking Christian values. It includes the teaching goals of each unit, relevant knowledge on theological and educational meanings of the chosen stories, suggested lesson plans, and teaching aids such as pictures, slides, audio and videos. The learning support includes the writing of students' texts, learning activities, classroom exercises and worksheets for consolidation. Hitherto, a decade has passed and 12 levels of textbooks ranging from Kindergarten One (aged 4) to Junior Secondary Three (aged 15) have been published and are now being used in about 200 Catholic schools. Currently, they are writing for Senior Secondary levels Four to Six (aged 16–18), and keeping in close contact with schools for authentic implementation.

A Glance on the Ground

Since this paper represents ongoing research, the progress of authentic implementation up until now is from teachers' interviews. These are interviews of a focus group of primary teachers. They are six, all Catholic, and all are teaching the new religious education curriculum at every individual school. The schools vary from students' family background, such as relation to various religions and level of family support on their study. These six teachers are selected from a training course on religious education of which it is newly offered by a Catholic Institute, and thus they are on one hand represent the uniqueness of their schools, and on the other they can provide ideas based on knowledge of contemporary religious education. Interview questions mainly focus on three areas: (1) the use of textbooks (including students' textbooks and teachers' guide), (2) the progression of integration of students' experiences and new insights for transformation, and (3) the teaching of stories, specifically based on the Chinese stories, to collect comments on the realization of roots, and level of enrichment of value-seeking. These three areas are coherent with a complemen-

tary learning of Catholic Christianity and Confucianism, as the first directs teachers' preparation, the second the teaching skills and the third the teaching outcome. The interviewees do not only share their own thoughts but also crucially tell what they observe from their colleagues in schools.

The first area concerns the use of textbooks and particularly concerns how much teachers rely on them. The interviewees claimed that they found the books resourceful. With the aid of information, they are clear about the teaching goals, and the scriptural meanings of each unit. However, the interviewees shared the view that some colleagues are reluctant to teach this new curriculum. They complained that the new one is confusing when compared with the previous one. The new one carries too much information, and teachers find it hard to prepare well in the way they did beforehand. Consequently, some do not use the teachers' guide, but based on the students' text, and teach according to their religious knowledge and imagination.

The second area concerns the integration of experiences and new insights for transformation. RME stresses "Emmaus Pedagogy" which is a learning approach modified from Thomas Groome's "Shared Christian Praxis" (2006). Interviewees found the approach insightful, as they mostly agree that learning from experience can help to do reflection. However, this is not a usual practice in most classrooms. Most teachers complain that classrooms are often limited by time and space for discussion and sharing, and students who have less experience in life would be ignorant about sharing. Some teachers keep the methods of "ask and tell", and do not shift to the paradigm of learning from reflection to integration.

The third one concerns story teaching, and specifically the Chinese stories. Interviewees reveal the biggest problem in this part. Since most teachers were not major in Chinese history or literature in college, they found no confidence in teaching well, even though relevant resources are provided. Hence, some teachers skip them, or leave them for whole school activities. No matter which form, it reveals teachers are reluctant to shift the usual mind, and possibly not aware of the significance of religious dialogue for interreligious education.

Conclusion

Interreligious dialogue is significant in seeking understanding of religions, and in contributing to global peace. Here, one can employ the four dimensions of dialogue advocated in Vatican exhortation (Dialogue and Proclamation, 1991) as measurement to examine the current topics written by RME. Reviewing all topics written for primary schools as a research sample, it finds that the proportion of the four dimensions varies greatly. It counts that most topics are in the dimension of the "dialogue of life", which takes 63% of all. The others are descending from "dialogue of theological exchange", 25%, "dialogue of action" and "dialogue of religious experience", 6%, respectively. Such an account helps to show that the greatest proportion relies on the "dialogue of life" and gives inspiration. On the one hand, it allows RME to realize the importance of storytelling, as they offer stories on model learning; however, on the

other, it raises the consciousness of what is insufficient in other areas. While writing on levels of Senior Secondary currently, this examination offers a reference for them to rethink about the width and the depth of such complementary learning. Moreover, the four qualities of dialogues, which are clarity, meekness, trust and pedagogical prudence, are rightly the instructions to approach.

To engage well in religious dialogue, it requires the readiness of one's own faith for discussion and sharing. However, considering the data collected on actual implementation in schools, most teachers are not ready for the complementary learning, and hence it is necessary to remind the authority not to push too far, but to step back to the current situation, and review what the essential need is for teaching development. As a teaching profession, we acknowledge that teachers' qualifications range from religious knowledge and sense of mission, which are two influential factors affecting the quality of education. Without an enthusiastic teaching spirit, it is difficult to promote critical thinking. Durka (2002) stresses the vocation of the teaching profession. She claims that teaching is not merely a routine job, but a commitment to one's vocation. For fully responding to vocation, Durka encourages teachers to shape themselves with the practice of prayer and meditation, so as to ponder the rich spirituality of commitment of teaching. This is a crucial reminder. To design a training programme for interreligious education, pastoral ministry cannot be neglected. Pastoral cares such as reflection, meditation and discernment are essential elements that can help teachers to refresh their vocation and commitment.

Commitment to teaching requires lifelong education. Moran (1989) stresses that religious education is about lifelong education. He emphasizes "reshaping of life's form is with end and without end" (p. 49). Learning of religious education is not limited to gaining "term-end purpose" or to be the "products of society", but to shape the life, so as to enrich it, and pursue for a fuller meaning of life. Such conviction is not merely for students, but also for teachers, which should be part of teachers' education.

Lifelong education closely relates to training for the teaching profession. There are two training courses offered by the Catholic Diocese in Hong Kong, one managed by the Catechetical Centre, which has existed for decades with focus on Catechism; and another one by a Catholic institute, which newly started a year ago, and with the focus on education. For better teaching and learning, the Catholic Church encourages more participants to engage in courses by setting certain mandatory qualifications for religious education as professional development. They also explore possibilities to cooperate with overseas institutions, so as to pursue a wider learning spectrum and a broader teaching prospectus.

The problem of ethnical identity for "Chinese" or "Hong Kong people" has long been a controversial issue in Hong Kong, especially in midst of increasing contact with the mainland after the return of sovereignty. In spite of the ambiguities involved, it is wise to consider Christianity and Confucianism through the lens of religious dialogue, so as to envision a broader vision and a deeper pursuit of faith, ethnic roots and global movement.

References

Analects. (2010). Translated by D. C. Lau. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Berling, J. A. (2008). Teaching confucianism in Christian contexts. In J. L. Richey (Ed.), *Teaching confucianism* (pp. 203–224). New York: Oxford University Press.

Chan, W., al Faruqi, I. R., Kitagawa, J. M., & Raju, P. T. (1969). *The great Asian religions: An anthology.* London: The Macmillan.

Daxue & Zhongyong: Bilingual edition. (2012). Translated and Annotated by Ian Johnston and Ping Wang. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Durka, G. (2002). *The teacher's calling: A spirituality for those who teach*. New York: Paulist Press.

Groome, T. H. (2006). A shared praxis approach to religious education. *International handbook of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions in education, part 1* (pp. 763–777). Dordrecht: Springer.

Heft, J. L. (2012). Catholicism and interreligious dialogue. In J. L. Heft (Ed.), *Catholicism and interreligious dialogue* (pp. 3–22). New York: Oxford University Press.

Mencius. (2003). Translated by D. C. Lau. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Moran, Gabriel. (1989). *Religious education as a second language*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press.

Phan, Peter C. (2012). Catholic and confucianism: An intercultural and interreligious dialogue: historical perspectives and contemporary challenges. In J. L. Heft (Ed.), *Catholicism and interreligious dialogue* (pp. 169–192). New York: Oxford University Press.

Pope Paul VI. (1964). *Encyclical letter ecclesiam suam. On the Church*. Retrieved from: http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam.html.

RME Curriculum Task Group. (2006). *The Catholic diocese of Hong Kong: Catholic secondary schools, primary schools and kindergartens: Religious and moral education curriculum document.* Hong Kong: Catholic Education Office. Retrieved from: http://www.rmeceo.org.hk/files/RME_curr_ch1-7eng.pdf.

Second Vatican Council. (1965). *Nostra aetate.* [Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religion.] Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.

The Holy See. (1991). *Pontifical council for Inter-religious dialogue: Dialogue and proclamation.* Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/doc-uments/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html.

Xunzi. Chapter 17: *Treatise on Tian (Tian Lun).* Retrieved from: http://www.iub.edu/~p374/Xunzi_Tian.pdf.

Yao, X. (1997). *Confucianism and Christianity: A comparative study of Jen and Agape*. East Sussex, UK: Sussex Academic Press.

Yao, X. (2000). *An Introduction to confucianism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Zhang, C. 張春申. (1974). *Zhongguo lingxiu chuyi中國靈修芻議*[The discussion on Chinese spirituality]. Taichung, Taiwan: Guangqi.

Dr. Imelda Pui-hing Lam holds a Ph.D. in religious education from Fordham University, New York. For the past 10 years, she has helped the position of curriculum developer at the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong. She specializes in the writing of religious education textbooks for Catholic schools in Hong Kong. Her achievements include the publication of 12 levels of textbooks ranging from K1 to S3 (Age 4–15). She is currently working on S4–S6 (Age 16–18). Her research interests include interreligious education, especially on the complementarity in learning about Christianity and Confucianism.

Chapter 48
A Theory of Alterity as a Perspective for Interreligious Learning

Check for updates

Bernhard Grümme

Introduction

As a result of globalisation, migration and refugee movements, interreligious learning becomes a central task of religious education in public schools, in confessional schools and even in Catholic Religious Education. A key element here is the concept of encountering people. Children are able to learn tolerance and openness when in dialogue with other people. Encountering others through dialogue also enables individuals to understand themselves better. But interreligious learning cannot be achieved via a set formula or pattern because the worlds of life ("Lebenswelten") and the traditions lived by the subjects are themselves too diverse. In addition to religious plurality and cultural diversity, there are other challenges such as socio-economic differences that seem to permeate in a significant way (Grümme, 2017).

A concern arising from these challenges is whether the dominant paradigm of pluralism in relation to religious education might still be the framework for interreligious learning, especially in the context of an increased heterogeneity.

In this context, interreligious learning needs an understanding of heterogeneity that is based on a concept of alterity. A shift is necessary from the predominant paradigm of pluralism to the paradigm of heterogeneity. Due to the interdependencies of multiculturalism, multi-religiosity and socio-economic discrepancy, it must be constructed as a paradigm of "enlightened Heterogeneity". Pluralism combined with the discourse on heterogeneity in a constructively critical way will contribute to fruitful interreligious education. Thus, perspectives of righteousness and acknowledgement, of cultural–religious difference and equity, and of disparity and discrepancy become critically correlatable. Interreligious education has the ability to be heterogeneous if it normatively targets the subjects' ability to religious perception, to religious speech, to judgement and to action in the light of a contextually enrooted

B. Grümme (✉)
Ruhr-University Bochum, Bochum, Germany
e-mail: Bernhard.Gruemme@rub.de

otherness–theoretical form of thought, and in doing so takes into account one's own mechanisms of thought construction.

To illustrate this point, four key steps are explored. First, a reflection on the theological background of interreligious dialogue which despite the progress made by the Second Vatican Council is still a much contested issue. Second, an analysis of the problems stemming from the current research on interreligious learning followed by an exploration the pluralist paradigm to the phenomenon of heterogeneity, and fourth, an outline of the basics of a theory of heterogeneity which will be referred to as a "Theory of Enlightened Heterogeneity" (*Aufgeklärte Heterogenität*), and is based on the "critical theory" and post-structuralism.

Truth in Dialogue—a Theological Basis

From a theological perspective, this increasing awareness and appreciation of the non-Christian religions was facilitated by a revelation–theological burst of the ecclesiological and Christological exclusivism. It has shaped the religio-theological assessments categorially over the centuries. It was initially the Second Vatican Council which became serious about this concept of universal salvation and certified other religions as at least collective rays of truth. While exclusivism amounts to the other's conversion and mission, only such an inclusivism provides the necessary basis for interreligious education. This inclusivism appreciates the non-Christian believers as characters loved by God and dialogical counterparts, which even the Christians—irrespective of their Christologically justified universal claim of truth—would have something to learn from (Boschki & Wohlmuth, 2015).

But is this supposed to be a genuine dialogue, a reciprocal relationship between the religions in front of God? Representatives of a pluralist theology of religion claim that a basis for the dialogue, which is not only necessary but also sufficient, requires a genuine reciprocity, or at least an equally ranked standing in front of God, respectively, the Absolute. But utterly deconstructing claims of truth run counter to the religions' entitlement, in particular, to Christianity's claim of truth. Instead, regarding the spirit of a mutual refraction of universal salvation and apophatic theology, could it not be asked whether a final theocentricism could not help to avoid a relativism in the same way as avoiding an inclusivism, which tendentially subverts a dialogue? Such a theocentric Pluralism is in terms of religious education momentous to that extent that it provides the basis for a "presuppositionlessly open, dialogical oriented interreligious learning" as a "genuine and open search process for ultimate truths, actual insights, deepest recognitions" (p. 74). But can interreligious learning actually remain without pre-assumptions? Does such a version of the claim of truth's theocentricism not run contrary to its own intention of an impairment of the Christian, but also of the, respectively, otherwise justified and outlined Muslim and Jewish claims of truth on their part (Langenhorst, 2016)? Instead, the concept of truth could be grasped categorially different. This is attempted by Comparative Theology, which has become more important for interreligious dialogue, and in whose

slipstream interreligious learning has also gained importance. Claims of truth are definitely of importance here but they are developed in the dialogue itself, without an assumption of truth that runs ahead. The "Epistemic Humbleness", which has been articulated by Klaus von Stosch (2012), does not per se imply the other's acknowledgement in his or her truth, but it does imply his or her "ability to truth" (p. 168). Claims of truth thus become relevant "in view of certain religious believes within specific language-game-contexts" (p. 224). He does not turn to a religion's complex entity as a whole, but to the miniscule individual cases, which he then condenses comparatively in terms of a criteria selection of interreligious judgement, which has immanently been developed out of religious beliefs. By renouncing a landmark decision about which religion casts the most adequate light upon the ultimate substantiality that has been met once and for all, it is supposed to result from the process which religion is actually profitable beyond "inclusivistic taming" (p. 333). In terms of religious education, this is momentous because by voting for the religions' authentic representation in their elements, a vote in favour of an essential point of view of the participants, and hence in favour of a denominational approach in the broadest sense, becomes justifiable (Stosch, 2012; Burrichter, Langenhorst, & Stosch, 2015). A sheer outside view in terms of religious studies is not sufficient for a degree of religious beliefs which are life-determining and rooted in a lifeworld centred way. Nevertheless, here too, it must be asked whether the claim to truth which has been downsized to distinct language-game's claim of validity suffices the Christian claim to truth in itself. But could the truth not be maintained as a universal truth in that it is viewed as valid by God and is to be verified historically precisely in its theological centring? It would then be a truth of testimony, which practically tries to be implemented under historical–contingent conditions, and in this way, it knows itself to be endowed and challenged in advance (Werbick, 2005). An otherness–theoretical concept of truth, which assumes a truth that is established by otherness, would not relativize its own claim to truth, but would put it into a relation with others that is dialogical and willing to learn, because the own truth is precisely not understood to be self-constituted. This would unbolt the inclusivism truth theoretically, and simultaneously thwart pluralism's relativistic drift (Grümme, 1996, 2007). This could be a religious and theological basis for interreligious learning (Meyer & Tautz, 2015). But at the same time, what I term interreligious learning's cultural drift should be thwarted and the meaning of interreligious learning has to be analysed in detail.

Reduction on Culturalism in Religious Education?

The term "interreligious education" is defined, according to the German scholar Monika Tautz (2013), as

> mainly the rehearsal into a change of perspective which esteems the other, to be able to emphasize into a tolerance which perceives differences and respects them as such, the acquisition of knowledge about foreign religion(s), the maturation of one's own faith in and

through the encounter with the non-Christian religion(s) […] whereby the 'inter' in terms of a 'dialogical learning through encounter should take place as it were. (p. 279)

Based on individuation and identity formation in a social context, such an interreligious education aims at an "ability to pluralism" which is aligned in an interreligious way" (Schweitzer, 2014, p. 133).

However, there are some aspects that are problematic.

Intra-pluralism in Interreligious Learning

Interreligious learning assumes implicitly that not only religious individuals encounter each other within it, but individuals as members of religions. This assumes a religious homogeneity and what might be termed representation logic. For example, Christians encounter Muslims and learn understanding, dialogue and recognition by experience-based and knowledge-based change of perspective. In doing so, a representation is presumed that is not given according to every socio-logical study. However, neither Christianity, nor Judaism, nor Islam are monolithic units. After all, according to what sociology of religion studies say, these already plural religions are also widespread in our country. Children and young people make different use of religious tradition.

Furthermore, the studies clearly show that for most students in religious education classes in Germany, only a fractional identification with the Christian faith is given, which in itself is already highly plural. For a vast majority of adolescents, the Christian religion with its semantics has become a foreign religion which they first and foremost experience from an external perspective (Porzelt, 1999). So, how can an encounter between religions really happen?

Cultural Heterogeneity

Can interreligious learning presume a similar culture of argumentation, of rationality and discourse from all participants? If perhaps, Christian students who have been socialised in Catholic or Protestant religious education classes enter into a dialogue with Muslim students, the encounter will produce divergent methods of dealing with religious traditions and Holy Scriptures: Here, a learning culture that is coined rather by enlightenment, there a learning culture that is primarily oriented on the scripture text. Learning through encounter here insinuates a symmetry of discursive and action-theoretical premises, which does not plainly exist (Gärtner, 2015b).

Educational Injustice

For interreligious learning, the sensitivity of socio-economic requirements and categorical considerations should be elementary.

According to the PISA report,

> the social situation, the cultural resources and activities as well as the migration status of families are responsible for the emergence, and the passing on, of disparities in the educational participation and in the acquisition of competencies—both all the factors together and individually" in Germany. (Baumert & Schümer, 2001, p. 379)

Related to the reading performance,

> the linkage of the family's social origin and the growing up generation's acquisition of competences is particularly strong in Germany while other states of very diverse geographic location and cultural tradition are able to reduce the impacts of social origin despite comprising a similar social profile of the population. This can usually be traced back to the successful support of children and adolescents of socially underprivileged families." (Baumert & Schümer, 2001, p. 393)

Three very short points illustrate the problem (Grümme, 2014):

Social origin: There are still concerns about the question of equality of opportunities in the German general education school system, with regard to four parameters: integrational strength, freedom to choose among educational paths, competence fostering and certificate issuing. The results are disappointing. Considerable improvements compared to PISA are shown and significant differences between the singular federal states are found, but in general, the highly problematic connection still remains. In Germany,

> A pupil's social origin has a great impact on his/her probability of going to a grammar school after primary school: The chances are much higher for children from families of academics than for children from working class backgrounds. This disadvantage can be shown in all federal states—though to a different degree. (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012, p. 18)

Inclusion: Due to the influence of the UN-Convention of 2009, all German federal states have to create inclusive schools for children and adolescents. Pupils with special support requirements are thereby supposed to learn together with pupils without special support requirements so as not to be disadvantaged. However, "by reference to the exclusion quotas, it becomes clear how many pupils are still taught separately in special-needs schools in the federal states" (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012, p. 15; see also Schambeck & Pemsel-Maier, 2014). With the continuance of exclusion, that is, the still high number of pupils in special-needs schools, the "legitimisation and reproduction of social inequality and thus unequal opportunities" (Haeberlin, 2009, p. 3) is being supported.

Migration: Admittedly, one has to distinguish between children of different social classes and different countries of origin. The results of children from Iranian or East Asian children are much better than the results of children from Turkish, Italian or Moroccan backgrounds. But still, the findings of the European TIES-Survey are

unambiguous: 16% of all pupils with a migration background, which is more than twice the percentage among their German schoolmates, leave school without qualifications. Only 11% of all foreign pupils obtained a student permit in Germany in 2007 (versus 30% of the German pupils). 41% obtained a secondary modern school qualification. The over-representation of special-needs schools is obvious (Karaksagoglu & Neumann, 2011).

The consequences for social solidarity, for the political culture and life of society, and not least, for the individuals themselves are serious. The high number of education "losers", which correlates to a high level of exclusions from the employment market as well as social and political participation, has worrying "consequences for social integration, life satisfaction, health and political attitudes" (Quenzel & Hurrelmann, 2010, p. 19).

Naturally, there is little consensus about the reasons. Education researchers like Klaus-Jürgen Tillmann (2010) emphasise the close connection of pedagogical "longing for homogeneity and selection praxis" (p. 19). Others cite the interference of socio-economic with cultural variables as well as the aspect of gender (Karaksagoglu & Neumann, 2011).

It is obvious that such considerations have relevance to religious pedagogy. Since every human is created in the image of God, the God-given opportunity to develop towards Him in freedom and autonomy lies in everyone. Man, as an autonomous subject, has come to prominence as a result of the influence of Enlightenment ideas and from the heritage of humanist (Paideia) and Judaeo-Christian traditions. Accordingly, everyone has a right to education according to his or her opportunities and abilities (Schweitzer, 2011; Grümme, 2012). From a theological point of view, the aim of education must be inclusive and must make efforts to avoid social and cultural disadvantage—in a sense to compensate for inequalities in a given set of circumstances. Education of this form is about the elimination, or at least the reduction, of disparities; it is about educational provision

> for those, whose needs are not fulfilled by the traditional educational system, as well as critical discussion about just and unjust relations in society as a topic of education [… Thereby] questions of a just educational system and of institutional preconditions are raised beside questions of individual support in the educational system […]. (EKD, 2009, pp. 48–50)

Education should be "as effective as possible" (EKD, 2009, p. 48) in structurally supporting the individual child in school or in youth service. It includes equal opportunities, but it also has to do with enabling participation. Only in this way it is possible not to leave any children behind (Schweitzer, 2011). This also could be a way to challenge the verse Mt 25, 29 according to which everyone who has will be given more, which, in its literal sense, has been proven true by education sociology (Zuckerman, 2010). So support of "the weak" is only possible if the resources are distributed appropriately (Bedford-Strohm, 2010). Both the theoretical context of education and the political context need to be considered. A fixation on education alone, and the discourse of greater educational justice and social justice in general (Möhring-Hesse, 2011) require to be considered within a wider political context (and within existing

social structures and institutions). This is the only way to avoid the charge that educational discourse merely leaves everything as it is. Questions about poverty, about the unequal distribution of symbolic capital, of poor health, social opportunities and also of insufficient social participation, according to Pierre Bourdieu, belong to the political–social discourse about justice (Möhring-Hesse, 2011).

Social Heterogeneity

If perhaps, Muslim children from socially deprived migrant families were to learn together with Catholics from established households, this would then carry weight for interreligious learning processes (Gärtner, 2015b). Nevertheless, the issue becomes more complex and heterogeneous due to the interdependency of the individual factors. Sociology of education has proved the inconsideration, discrimination and lack of educational commitment among migrant students. Indeed, a correlation between success, or lack thereof, at school and migration is undeniable: the higher the qualification, the lower the grade of students with a migrant background in Germany. However, while students from Turkish or Arabic migration contexts reveal rather inferior performances, it is the reverse with students from Asia. Besides, the involvement in peer groups, as well as gender, carries a significant weight (Brake & Büchner, 2012).

This conflicting situation indicates the interdependency and partially intensifying impact of the various dimensions of culture, religion, social status and gender, and thus shows the validity of the heterogeneity concept for interreligious learning. Not considering this interdependency would lead interreligious learning to walk right into culturalism's trap, which locates interreligious learning within the field of culture and differences, but in doing so neglects the mechanisms and their intrinsic fixations. These already become apparent by the specific teaching structure and the teachers' expectations and habitual attitudes. Undeniably, they contribute to discrimination and educational injustice due to their, albeit well-intentioned, attitudes, expectations and suppositions. If students with migrant backgrounds from socially deprived families are denied the recommendation for admission to an academic high school (Gymnasium) despite good grades, because they are not given credit for the necessary domestic support, then this is an issue of "institutional discrimination" (Brake & Büchner, 2012, p. 113), from which religious education classes, and thus also interreligious learning, cannot be exonerated.

Essentialist Attribution and Didactic Mechanisms of Constructing

Such suppositions can, for instance, already be found in the expectations which are affiliated to the representation logic. They manifest themselves there, for instance, where Islamic children should bring in the Muslim prayer tradition into religious education classes. These common didactics require the attribution of religious practices ("Being a Muslin, you believe, after all…") (Schweitzer, 2013, p. 276). A student is identified religiously from the group of his/her classmates and is removed from his/her peer group. Starkly, this denotes the heterogeneity–discourse's dialectics which has already been worked out, and which, encouraging participation, recognition and individualization, has a disposition to attribution, to essential fixations, to reifications and thus to the development of stereotypes. Intentionally aimed at the recognition of differences, this is produced at the same time. This logic, from which processes of recognition express themselves as "misjudging recognition" (Bedorf, 2010, p. 3), is discernible in interreligious learning.

One phenomenon can be singled out as an illustration: In an oppressive, as well as almost caricaturing way, this becomes manifest by way of example on the level of materials and schoolbooks, for example, in the way Judaism is represented as a devout orthodox Judaism in schoolbooks, embodied in the image of a Jewish boy wearing a kippah and donning the phylactery. Something that targets schoolbook pedagogical empathy for the peers, which is appropriate to the student's age, and that also targets a change of perspective, is, however, highly problematic on several levels. At the macro-level, Judaism is perceived as a religion that was able to evade the processes of diversification, individualisation and secularisation in a very opaque way. At the meso-level of Judaism itself, it is displayed as a coherent construct, without even mentioning Judaism's inner differentiations. Finally, at the micro-level, it is suggested that a Jew is a devout, orthodox Jew, which disregards the accelerating processes of Judaism's inner differentiation globally, as well as in Germany. In nuke, the logic of the misjudging recognition becomes blatantly visible by this example. It seeks to motivate recognition, but amounts to folklorization and stereotyping.

Heterogeneity: Towards a Different Paradigm of Interreligious Learning

These analytical perspectives make two things obvious in an impressive way:

The hermeneutic category of pluralization does not go far enough. Using it as a singular hermeneutic-analytical reference point moves religious education on this field in a cultural drift, which enables it to perceive differences but not inequalities and which enables it to work on them reflexively and, therefore, through which it risks undermining its own postulates of subject orientation in the broad sense.

At the same time, the violation of the difference theorem, which, as a basis of adequate perception of the otherness, is elementary for the moments of change of perspectives and dialogues, becomes clear. The other is not appreciated as different, which makes one think, challenges and enriches one's faith. The other is instead constructed in the mechanisms of practice and hermeneutics, which are qualified as mechanisms of power. What interreligious education therefore misses is a self-reflexive examination of discourses for its immanent mechanisms of identification, misjudging recognition, exclusion and power (Burrichter, 2015). Its approaches, however, want to acknowledge more or less the otherness of the other as a precondition of respect, tolerance and dialogue (Gärtner, 2015b).

Enlightened Heterogeneity. Perspectives

The religious educational approach of the enlightened heterogeneity, in contrast, tries to handle this desideratum constructively. Some aspects of the form of thought and religious educational practice are considered.

Form of Thought

More than anything else, in interreligious education, the dialectic of universality and particularity is affected. How is the other supposed to be recognised as the other? How is tolerance supposed to be initiated, if there is no resistance, no positionality, which ever already transcend the subject's comprehension and experience horizon? On the other hand, how is education supposed to happen, if otherness cannot be perceived hermeneutically and cannot be presented, at least to some extent, in one's own categories of comprehension? This requires an intercommunicative concept of subject as well as a reason that allows the combination of both otherness and subject. Another way of thinking, depending on the theory of alterity (*Alteritätstheoretische Denkform*), is meant to protect the opposite's ability to truth and communicability through recourse to the subject's rationality, and anchors in principle to a reason that lets itself be irritated, liberated and opened by preceding otherness. The language-theoretical and the action-theoretical foundation in intersubjective, language-structured liberty allows us to think of the theory of otherness in categories of history and society and to adhere to a concept of universal reason.

On the other hand, alterity cannot be wrapped up in dialogic in the light of the critically challenging, corrective force of the other's unassailable strangeness. Dialogic, therefore, has to be based on asymmetry. The priority of the other in dialogue breaks the dialogue's' strict reciprocity (Grümme, 2015).

When profiling this dialectic theory of otherness, a difference theorem can be established, which enables a sound attitude towards other religions. Thereby, this attitude is self-reflexive enough because it allows reflection on the immanent ten-

dencies of the discourse of heterogeneity to misjudge recognition, to essential zing and exclusion. This does not relieve it of this dialectic but it enables it to clarify and to treat the issues in a manner that is critical of ideology (Grümme, 2007). In its contextual–critical concept of reason, it thereby needs to re-appropriate the heritage of critical theory. According to the social philosopher Rainer Forst, critical theory raises the question of "why a modern society is not able to generate rational forms of social order". Critical theory is the attempt to hold on to this question, but in so doing, it critically interrogates the concept of reason itself about its 'irrationality' and its potentials for sovereignty (Forst, 2011, p. 18). Such a critical–theoretical self-reflectivity of reason is fundamental for a public religious pedagogy, and this in two different ways. First, it has to divest itself of the structures of power, hegemonic structures as well as identity–logical structures in which it already stands contextually; and second, it has to divest itself of the mechanisms of exclusion, stigmatisation and power, which might possibly become effective within itself in its debate with educational justice, even if it intends to contradict them intentionally.

Practice

Concerning the consideration of the heterogenic starting point, analyses of the field of discourse are not very euphoric. Obviously, interreligious learning does not yet have those instruments in order to appositely satisfy the socially, religiously and culturally highly different pupils (Sajak, 2013; Biesinger, Schweitzer, Gronover, & Ruopp, 2012).

The latest didactic research shows the close connection between the didactic mechanisms of discrimination in religious education and the didactic-methodical arrangements for an interreligious education with the ability to heterogeneity. Accordingly, interreligious settings need theological and religious educational expertise in an inter-communicative learning process that gets teacher and student to interact in a discriminating way. Open learning situations in self-organised learning arrangements of a religious plural class open up "hardly learning opportunities" and "'fizzle out in questions of the interreligious dialogue'" (Gärtner, 2015a, p. 294). This is interesting because educational research likewise prefers a very tight learning setting for disadvantaged students. Through open, taught in the way of constructivism, learning arrangements, they are increasingly discriminated against compared to the stronger classmates (Grümme, 2016).

On the other hand, there are at least some very promising perspectives:

As an ordinary subject, religious education also participates in the processes of selection and allocation which are established in schools, even as it gives them a specific imprinting (Hilger, 2010).

The other option is an option for educational justice, which will have to show a commitment through adequate pastoral and pedagogical measures in youth work, community work and family education; in the involvement of civic society and in the constitution of school life by an appropriate pastoral care programme. This

could entail specific projects like homework assistance, language development and whole-day offers (Naurath, 2011). Such a religious pedagogy is perception-, action- and judgement-orientated, and precisely in this respect plurality- and heterogeneity- enabled. In the sense of diaconal learning, it contributes projects like "compassion- learning" and makes educational justice itself a topic for ethical learning. In this way, the principle of Liberation theology, "seeing—judging—acting" gains in axiomatic importance in the field of educational justice. Thereby, it expects "a basic renewal, even 'conversion' from itself and from religious education teachers … to see social reality from the point of view of the poor'" (Baus, 2008, p. 168).

Conclusion

The theory of heterogeneity based on alterity seems to have an enormous impact on interreligious learning. In contrast to the paradigm of pluralism, it could be a promising frame for religious education in the twenty-first century. The task now is to implement the theory into practice!

References

Baumert, J., & Schümer, G. (2001). Familiäre Lebensverhältnisse: Bildungsbeteiligung und Kompetenzerwerb. In P. K. Deutsches (Ed.), *PISA 2000: Basiskompetenzen von Schülerinnen und Schülern im internationalen Vergleich* (pp. 323–410). Opladen: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Baus, K. (2008). Kinder-und Bildungsarmut in Deutschland: Eine Herausforderung an Religionslehrerinnen und Religionslehrer. In T. Kläden, J. Könemann & D. Stoltmann (Eds.), *Kommunikation des Evangelium: Festschrift für Udo F. Schmälzle* (pp. 159–172). Münster: LIT.

Bedford-Strohm, H. (2010). Bildung und Gerechtigkeit. In Comenius-Institut (Ed.), *"Niemand darf verloren gehen!": Evangelisches Plädoyer für mehr Bildungsgerechtigkeit* (pp. 14–23). Münster: Comenius-Institut.

Bedorf, T. (2010). *Verkennende Anerkennung: Über Identität und Politik*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Biesinger, A., Schweitzer, F., Gronover, M., & Ruopp, J. (Eds.). (2012). *Integration durch religiöse Bildung: Perspektiven zwischen beruflicher Bildung und Berufspädagogik*. Münster: Waxmann.

Boschki, R., & Wohlmuth, J. (Eds.). (2015). *Nostra Aetate 4: Wendepunkt im Verhältnis von Kirche und Judentum – bleibende Herausforderung für die Theologie*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh.

Brake, A., & Büchner, P. (Eds.). (2012). *Bildung und soziale Ungleichheit: Eine Einführung*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Burrichter, R. (2015). Umgang mit Heterogenität im konfessorischen Religionsunterricht? Anmerkungen zu Optionen und Herausforderungen in einem schulischen Praxisfeld. In R. Burrichter, G. Langenhorst, and K. v. Stosch (Eds.), *Komparative Theologie. Herausforderungen für die Religionspädagogik. Perspektiven zukunftsfähigen interreligiösen Lernens* (pp. 141–158). Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh.

Burrichter, R., Langenhorst, G., & Stosch, K.v. (Eds.). (2015). *Komparative Theologie: Herausforderung für die Religionspädagogik: Perspektiven zukunftsfähigen interreligiösen Lernens*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh.

EKD. (2009). *Kirche und Bildung: Herausforderungen, Grundsätze, und Perspektiven evange-lischer Bildungsverantwortung und kirchlichen Bildungshandelns: Eine Orientierungshilfe des Rates der EKD*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.

Forst, R. (2011). *Kritik der Rechtfertigungsverhältnisse, Perspektiven einer kritischen Theorie der Politik*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Gärtner, C. (2015a). Vom interreligiösen Lernen zu einer lernort- und altersspezifischen interre-ligiösen und interkulturellen Kompetenzorientierung: Einblicke in aktuelle Entwicklungen im Forschungsfeld "Interreligiöse Bildung". *Pastoraltheologische Informationen, 35,* 281–298.

Gärtner, C. (2015b). *Religionsunterricht – ein Auslaufmodell? Begründungen und Grundlagen religiöser Bildung in der Schule*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh.

Gerhardt, V. (2014). *Sinn des Sinns: Versuch über das Göttliche*. München: C. H. Beck.

Grümme, B. (1996). "Er hat dir gesagt, o Mensch, was gut ist": Aspekte einer messianischen Erkenntnistheorie bei Franz Rosenzweig. *Orientierung, 60,* 78–84.

Grümme, B. (2007). *Vom Anderen eröffnete Erfahrung: Zur Neubestimmung des Erfahrungsbegriffs in der Religionsdidaktik*. Gütersloh, Freiburg i. Br.: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Herder.

Grümme, B. (2012). *Menschen bilden? Eine religionspädagogische Anthropologie.* Freiburg i. Br.: Herder.

Grümme, B. (2014). *Bildungsgerechtigkeit: Eine religionspädagogische Herausforderung*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Grümme, B. (2015). *Öffentliche Religionspädagogik: Religiöse Bildung in pluralen Lebenswelten*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Grümme, B. (2016). *Ein Desiderat der Lehrerforschung. Katechetische Blätter, 2,* 136–142.

Grümme, B. (2017). *Heterogenität in der Religionspädagogik: Grundlagen und konkrete Bausteine.* Freiburg i. Br.: Herder.

Haeberlin, U. (2009). Verträgt sich Chancengleichheit mit Integration? *Vierteljahresschrift für Heilpädagogik und ihre Nachbargebiete, 1,* 2–7.

Hilger, G. (2010). Welche Wirkungen hat Religionsunterricht? Evaluation und Leistungsbewertung. In G. Hilger, S. Leimgruber, and H.-G. Ziebertz (Eds.), *Religionsdidaktik. Ein Leitfaden für Studium, Ausbildung und Beruf* (pp. 282–290). München: Kösel.

Karaksagoglu, Y., & Neumann, U. (2011). Anforderungen an die Bildungsinstitutionen in der Ein-wanderungsgesellschaft: Integration durch Bildung, Schaffung von Bildungsgerechtigkeit und interkulturelle Öffnung. In T. Meyer & U. Vorholt (Eds.), *Bildungsgerechtigkeit als politische Aufgabe* (pp. 57–73). Bochum, Freiburg: Projektverlag.

Langenhorst, G. (2016). *Trialogische Religionspädagogik. Interreligiöses Lernen zwischen Juden-tum, Christentum und Islam*. Freiburg i. Br.: Herder.

Meyer, K., & Tautz, M. (2015). *Interreligiöses Lernen*. Retrieved from: WiReLex: https://doi.org/10.23768/wirelex.Interreligises_Lernen.100068.

Möhring-Hesse, M. (2011). Auf Bildung gereimt: Zur Bildungsoffensive in die Gerechtigkeitsthe-orie und –politik. In G. Bitter & M. Blasberg-Kuhnke (Eds.), *Religion und Bildung in Kirche und Gesellschaft (für Norbert Mette)* (pp. 187–199). Würzburg: Echter.

Naurath, E. (2011). Bildung und Gerechtigkeit: Ein Plädoyer für Familienbildung als Alltagsbil-dung. In G. Bitter & M. Blasberg-Kuhnke (Eds.), *Religion und Bildung in Kirche und Gesellschaft (für Norbert Mette)* (pp. 172–179). Würzburg: Echter.

Porzelt, B. (1999). *Jugendliche Intensiverfahrungen. Qualitativ-empirischer Zugang und religion-spädagogische Relevanz*. Graz: Manumedia-Verlag Schnider.

Quenzel, G., & Hurrelmann K. (2010). Bildungsverlierer. Neue soziale Ungleichheiten in der Wissenschaft. In G. Quenzel & K. Hurrelmann (Eds.), *Bildungsverlierer. Neue Ungleichheiten* (pp. 11–33). Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Sajak, C. -P. (2013). Interreligiöses Lernen als schulformspezifische Herausforderung? Eine kri-tische Relecture religionsdidaktischer Konzeptionen. In B. Schröder & M. Wermke (Eds.), *Religionsdidaktik zwischen Schulformspezifik und Inklusion. Bestandsaufnahmen du Heraus-forderungen* (pp. 329–350). Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt Leipzig.

Schambeck, M., & Pemsel-Maier, S. (Eds.). (2014). *Inklusion!? Religionspädagogische Einwürfe*. Freiburg i. Br: Herder.

Schweitzer, F. (2011). *Menschenwürde und Bildung. Religiöse Voraussetzungen der Pädagogik in evangelischer Perspektive*. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag.

Schweitzer, F. (2013). Die Religion des interreligiösen Lernens. Neue Antinomien einer religionspädagogisch-wissenschaftstheoretischen Grundfrage. In: S. Altmeyer, G. Bitter & J. Theis (Eds.), *Religiöse Bildung: Optionen – Diskurse – Ziele* (pp. 269–278). Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Schweitzer, F. (2014). *Interreligiöse Bildung: Religiöse Vielfalt als religionspädagogische Herausforderung und Chance*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.

Stiftung, B. (2012). Institut für Schulentwicklungsforschung (Ed.), *Chancenspiegel: Zur Chancengerechtigkeit und Leistungsfähigkeit der deutschen Schulsysteme: Zusammenfassung zentraler Befunde*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Stosch, K.v. (2012). *Komparative Theologie als Wegweiser in der Welt der Religionen*. Paderborn: Schöningh.

Tautz, M. (2007). *Interreligiöses Lernen im Religionsunterricht. Menschen und Ethos im Islam und Christentum*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Tautz, M. (2013). Welche Rolle spielt die Theologie im interreligiösen Lernen? In: S. Altmeyer, G. Bitter & J. Theis (Eds.), *Religiöse Bildung: Optionen – Diskurse – Ziele (279–288).* Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Tillmann, K. -J. (2010). Viel Selektion – wenig Leistung. Ein empirischer Blick auf Erfolg und Scheitern in deutschen Schulen. In Comenius-Institut (Ed.), *Niemand darf verloren gehen!". Evangelisches Plädoyer für mehr Bildungsgerechtigkeit* (pp. 38–46). Münster: Comenius-Institut.

Werbick, J. (2005). *Den Glauben verantworten. Eine Fundamentaltheologie*. Freiburg i. Br.: Herder.

Zuckerman, Harriet. (2010). Dynamik und Verbreitung des Matthäus-Effekts. Eine kleine soziologische Bedeutungslehre. *Berliner Journal für Soziologie, 20,* 309–340.

Prof Bernhard Grümme Chair of religious education and catechetics at the Faculty of Catholic Theology, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany.

Part V
Contextual Issues

Chapter 49
Policies to Reform Religious Education in Hong Kong Catholic Schools

Francis Nai Kwok Chan

Background

Upholding the Catholic identity of her schools has long been one of the major concerns of the Catholic Church which, ever since the Vatican Council II, has repeatedly reiterated the paramount importance of providing pastoral care for the faithful and promoting evangelization in all Catholic schools (Denig & Dosen, 2009). In Hong Kong, there are about 250 Catholic schools, all pledging in the mission statement of their school constitutions that the promotion of Catholic values should be a key concern of school life.

While Hong Kong has just celebrated its 20th anniversary of reunion with mainland China since 1997, its Communist sovereign government in Beijing is seen by not a few leaders of the diocese as attempting to tighten control over school education, in the domain of ideology in particular. The Catholic Church, as the largest school sponsoring body of the city, feels the threat upon religious education in her schools. From the perspective of the leaders of the diocese concerned, the situation in Hong Kong since the handover to Beijing in 1997 has proven to be increasingly unfavourable for Catholic schools in their endeavour to maintain their autonomous status to educate their students in Catholic values.

Externally, all schools in Hong Kong have had to face a series of educational reforms imposed upon them since 1997 (Education Commission, 2000). School leaders have to cope with all the demands and requests from the government, parents and other stakeholders. As a result, much less room than before has been left for individual schools to focus on their own school-based priorities, such as the promotion of Catholic values at Catholic schools (Cheng, 2017). Another challenge facing the values education of Catholic schools comes from the preference of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) Government to cultivate a set of seven core

F. N. K. Chan (✉)
Centre for Religious, Spiritual and Moral Education, Caritas Institute of Higher Education, Hong Kong, China
e-mail: fnkchan@gmail.com

values of citizenship, topped by patriotism, in order to prepare a younger generation of good nationals loving both their city and their country, from the perspective of Beijing (Curriculum Development Committee, 2012). It is not surprising that this policy is of concern for Catholic schools whose leaders wonder whether their religious and spiritual values will be marginalized. In fact, leaders of the diocese are worried that their control of Catholic schools would be weakened by the reforms imposed from above. This led to Cardinal Joseph Zen in 2004 vainly instituting a court case against the SAR government objecting to the law that reduced the management power of the sponsoring bodies over their schools (Chan, 2015).

The Catholic schools (including kindergartens) in Hong Kong are educating 16% of the whole student population of the city. While 11 and 23% of their students and teachers are Catholics, respectively, nearly all the RE teachers are Catholics (Hong Kong Catholic Truth Society, 2018). In Hong Kong, Catholic schools are well known for their adoption of a non-discriminative recruitment or promotion policy towards non-Catholic applicants. In many schools, even the vice principals and subject panel heads are not Catholics. Such an ecumenical approach, however, has turned into a liability over the last few decades as far as the provision of religious education is concerned. Many schools simply do not have competent leaders with a proper sense of priority and professional expertise to do so (Catholic Education Office, 2013–2017).

Religious education in a Catholic school is the most obvious vehicle of Catholic values (Pope Benedict XIV, 2009). In the context of Hong Kong, RE can, in a narrow sense, be referred to as a formal school subject on the school timetable. However, in a broad sense, RE can also be understood as the teaching and learning programmes to promote Catholic values through the different curriculum areas of school. Some emerging phenomena regarding RE inside Catholic schools have worried the leaders of the diocese even more than threats from outside. According to the recent reports of the visits to about 70 diocesan primary and secondary schools by consultants appointed by the Catholic Education Office between 2013 and 2017, the overall students' performance in religious education in these schools is far from satisfactory. The root of the problem for RE lies in a lack of qualified personnel and sound programme plans to promote it (Catholic Education Office, 2013–2017). Accompanying an obvious decline in the number of clergy serving in schools since the 1960s, the percentage of Catholic teachers in the schools has also kept on dropping over the last five decades (Lau, 2017). This shortage of Catholic manpower makes it difficult for the school principals to ensure quality RE class teaching or RE-related activities. What has worsened the situation is that many of those Catholic teachers available for teaching RE classes or organizing religious activities are not professionally trained for their jobs (Chan & Ng, 2017). Moreover, in many schools, the consultants have found that the leaders have neither the awareness nor the necessary enthusiasm to place the promotion of Catholic values across the whole-school curriculum as one of the key concerns in their school year plans.

As mentioned above, the reports of the visits have confirmed the worries of the diocese leaders and served as impetus to urge them to carry out reformist policies. Therefore, in October 2015, the Catholic Education Office set up a task force (RE Task Force) to study the feasibility of initiating suitable policies to enhance the

quality of RE in schools. Membership of the Task Force includes about 20 serving and retired principals of Catholic schools and specialists of RE, with this author as the coordinator. The Task Force has focused on a feasibility study of three major policies to be implemented across all Catholic schools in Hong Kong, namely, (1) specialized teaching of the subject RE, (2) professional qualifications requirement for RE teachers and (3) setting up the post of a RE Coordinator in every school.

Here, below is a discussion of the content and rationale of these three policies which are formulated with reference to, apart from the personal professional opinions of the members of the Task Force, the findings of two large-scale questionnaire surveys. The first one conducted in December 2016 was school-based, with 70 out of 85 (82%) of the local Catholic secondary schools and 86 out of 107 (80%) of the primary schools returning their views (The Task Force on RME, 2017). The second survey, done in December 2017, was individual principal- and teacher-based, with an even higher returning rate from the schools. 1147 (about 40% of the targeted) respondents from 81 out of 88 (92%) and 99 out of 106 (94%) secondary and primary schools, respectively, expressed their views on the proposed policies (The Task Force on RME, 2018). How does the Diocese address its concerns about the implementation of these three policies to reform the religious education in her schools? This paper is a report on the research on this question.

The Policy of Specialized Teaching at RE

The first policy strategy requires all class teachers of RE to teach RE as one of their major subjects, taking up at least one-third of their teaching load (Catholic Education Development Committee RME Task Force, 2018). In Hong Kong, while specialized teaching is only mandated for the major school subjects such as Chinese and English Languages, RE has long been regarded as a minor subject in school. In the current situation, RE teaching load in a Catholic primary school is shared by an average of 6.6 teachers, with 5.5 periods for each of them. In a secondary school, the load is shared by an average of 4.6 teachers, with 11.2 periods for each (Chan & Ng, 2017). The Task Force has proposed to set five teachers as the maximum number for each primary or secondary school as the target to be achieved within 5 years. The rationale behind this proposal is that teachers specialized in teaching RE as a major subject can do better than teaching it as a minor subject. Subject specialists with a strong sense of ownership are willing to devote more time to prepare their teaching and having more teaching experience, they can develop themselves into expert teachers of the subject more easily.

According to Sikes and Everington (2004), in terms of the attention that they have attracted from researchers, and in comparison with teachers of other subjects, religious education specialists seem to be a neglected and marginalized group. Hordern (2015) advances a conception of teaching as a 'specialized professional practice' that requires the support of particular socio-epistemic arrangements and conditions embedded in professional communities. What the Hong Kong diocesan leaders are

now trying to achieve with the proposed policy is providing the necessary arrangements and favourable conditions to facilitate 'specialized professional practice' in religious education. According to Poland, Colburn, and Long (2017), specialist roles are sought by those who see specialization as a means of reducing workload, while allowing for content mastery and improved instruction. Such a view is in line with the intention of the diocesan leaders.

According to the figures quoted above, the current situation is already favourable for most of the secondary schools to meet the required target. However, there are still concerns to be addressed if the policy is to be well received among all colleagues in school. First, RE is generally regarded as a relatively "light" subject in terms of the demand for teaching preparation and assignment marking in most Catholic schools in Hong Kong. As a result, there is the popular impression among colleagues in school that specialized teaching of RE would benefit the RE teachers and thus create an injustice to others. Second, some serving RE teachers prefer to continue teaching it as a minor subject so that they do not have to go through the accreditation process required for upgrading themselves into subject specialists. Furthermore, as RE is only offered in Catholic schools, young RE teachers who might go to teach in non-Catholic schools later would consider it undesirable to invest all their efforts in teaching RE as their major subject.

In the view of the diocese, administrative considerations at school can be properly addressed and thus should not be regarded as hurdles for implementing the policy. Similarly, teachers' personal considerations should not override the justified intention of the policy. The importance of RE should not be treated as more rhetoric than reality. Should specialized teaching result in a reduction of the number of RE teachers in each school, schools would afford retaining and developing those who are really committed to the subject. On the other hand, should there be a surplus of committed teachers available for deployment, a rotation system could be adopted to build up a pool of reserves for the years when they would be needed.

The Policy of Requiring RE Teachers to Get Professional Qualifications Recognized by the Diocese

The second strategy proposed by the Task Force is that all subject teachers of RE should be properly trained to attain professional qualifications recognized by diocese. It has already been well argued that professionalization of RE teachers can help enhance the quality of their teaching. In 2016, the *British Journal of Religious Education* devoted a whole issue to the discussion of "Teacher Professionalization and the Professional Quality of Religious Education". The relationship between the professional quality of RE teaching and the professionalization of RE teachers was one of the major areas debated. As argued by one of the authors, Everington (2016), there is the need for teachers to reflect on the relationship between their personal and professional lives, and teachers, especially the novices, require the kind of opportu-

nities for reflection and specialist support that are provided in institutions of higher education. Elsewhere, Cook and Hudson (2006) also argued that further development of a professional association for religion teachers, credentialing standards and a certification/licensing scheme was preferred. Moreover, in the view of Ingvarson, Beavis and Kleinhenz (2007), teachers who reported that they were well prepared to meet the demands of their first year of teaching were more likely to have completed courses that gave them deep knowledge of the content that they were expected to teach, and on how students learned that content, as well as skill in providing quality teaching.

In the light of the global trend towards professionalization of religious education teachers, the diocesan leaders obviously find the situation in Hong Kong far from satisfactory. For the last half-century, the only professional training programme for school RE teachers recognized by the diocese has been the *Two Year Training Course on Teaching of Catechism* offered by the Diocesan Catechetical Centre. This training course was initially designed for catechists serving in parishes, and school RE teachers were only enrolled as participants much later. This can be surmised from its curriculum design, with more than two-thirds of its content devoted to learning the subject matter knowledge on Biblical Studies, Catechism and Catholic theology. Mastery of the knowledge on theory and practice of RE which is crucial to any professional training programme for RE teachers is not adequately catered for. Up till now, 57 and 36% of primary and secondary RE teachers, respectively, have not yet attended this training course. In other words, they are regarded as not having received any formal professional training in RE recognized by the diocese (Chan & Ng, 2017).

According to the policy proposed by the Task Force (Catholic Education Development Committee RME Task Force, 2018), a qualified RE teacher should acquire the professional knowledge needed for teaching the subject, including subject matter knowledge in the domains of religious and biblical studies, Catholic theology and social sciences, as well as pedagogical knowledge in the areas of curriculum development of RE in Hong Kong and methods of teaching RE class. On top of the mastery of the relevant professional knowledge, an RE subject teacher is also expected to be a devoted Catholic and to identify with the vision and mission on RE in Catholic schools as expounded by the Hong Kong diocese.

What concerns the diocese authorities more, however, is the urgent need to set up an accreditation committee to determine the status of a number of relevant programmes being offered by various institutions in the diocese. Apart from the above-mentioned *Two Year Training Course on Teaching of Catechism* by the Diocesan Catechetical Centre, for example, the Caritas Institute of Higher Education has, since September 2016, begun to offer a course specifically for school RE teachers with a curriculum that is well balanced between subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, while the Holy Spirit Seminary has run a bachelor degree programme in religious studies for lay people for many years, the Hong Kong Catholic Biblical Institute is offering diploma courses on biblical studies. Some teachers might have also finished relevant courses offered by overseas Catholic universities. Therefore, the accreditation committee to be set up has to decide the relevance of each

of these programmes. The committee is also expected to set requirements for further regular refresher training for those who are qualified so as to ensure ongoing professional development of all RE teachers.

Is this policy on professionalism supported by current practicing RE teachers? The majority of them (91%) showed strong support for the diocesan policy of requiring RE teachers to attain relevant professional qualifications (The Task Force on Religious and Moral Education, 2018). They understood that the policy could serve as an impetus to enhance the status of RE teachers among colleagues at school when RE will no longer be treated as a subject easily taken up by any teacher as long as she is a baptized Catholic. Moreover, most of the respondents were in favour of the screening of current RE teachers that will happen as a result of the accreditation policy to upgrade the quality of RE teaching in schools. They are not worried of losing their job. On the contrary, they regarded the policy to be a measure that helps secure their job, because they will no longer share their workload with untrained Catholic colleagues (Caritas Institute of Higher Education, 2017).

The diocesan policymakers expect that these two new policies will bring about a new generation of RE teachers and subsequently enhance the quality of RE class teaching in the schools. However, these policies of promoting professionalism in RE should not be confined to RE class teachers only. If RE is to be promoted effectively by a whole-school approach, all teachers have to understand and embrace the Catholic values and know how to promote them in their various roles and capacities. Therefore, some reforms should be promoted to involve all school staff members, especially those more directly engaged in values education posts such as members of the civic and moral education team, guidance and counselling team, discipline team and extra-curriculum activities team. In many schools, however, even the leaders of these teams are not Catholics. This makes it more important to ensure that they have both the sense and the means to promote Catholic values in their works.

The Policy of Setting up the Post of Religious Education Coordinator in Every School

The current situation has prompted the diocese to propose the third new policy strategy, namely, the installation of the post of RE Coordinator in every school, to be taken up by a senior Catholic staff member with recognized professional qualifications and experience in RE. This RE Coordinator will be the designated chief lieutenant of the school principal to oversee all matters relating to RE in school (Buchanan, 2005). For example, she would be the Head of the RE teaching team to supervise the performance of all class teachers. She would also plan and coordinate the implementation of RE through the permeation and cross-curriculum approach in the whole school. Moreover, she would be responsible for designing and promoting professional development programmes on RE to all colleagues, especially to those involved more closely in values education. In the view of the diocese policymakers,

the installation of an RE Coordinator in every school can become a key mechanism to promote quality RE in a broad sense. In fact, the REC in some dioceses has recently been reconceptualised as Religious Education Leader to further highlight the important leadership status and role of the incumbent of this post in the school (Buchanan, 2015).

In the current situation, 91% of both the primary and secondary schools have already installed the post of REC (Chan & Ng, 2017). However, the diocesan leaders still have two major concerns notwithstanding the relatively encouraging figures. On the one hand, the scope of responsibilities of this post can vary tremendously among different schools. While some RECs would be asked to provide leadership in implementing RE through a whole-school approach, not a few of them would only confine their leadership to the RE as one of the school subjects. Therefore, the Task Force insists that the REC should be the leader of RE in a broad sense, that is, responsible for overseeing its implementation in all curriculum domains. On the other hand, it is of concern that the REC might only be a junior staff member without the power and authority to liaise with colleagues of other curriculum domains to help promote RE in the spheres of influence of the latter. In fact, only 52% of the RECs in the secondary schools are senior staff, while their counterparts in the primary schools fare much worse with only 27% of them occupying a senior rank in the school management (Chan & Ng, 2017).

Nearly, all of the Catholic schools in Hong Kong are government subsidized and thus the process of promoting teachers to senior ranks is closely monitored, Therefore, the most challenging part of this proposed policy lies in the fact that a principal cannot promote a Catholic teacher to a senior post merely because of her Catholic affiliation. The scarce number of available promotion posts at each school should be filled with competent and qualified candidates according to a fair process acceptable by all colleagues. In other words, in schools that have the post of REC now taken up by a relatively junior staff member, principals have to work hard to identify and develop potential candidates for the post among Catholic teachers within a transitional period of five years allowed by the diocese.

Discussion: Hurdles to Be Cleared

These three proposed new policies to reform RE in Catholic schools in Hong Kong are still being considered. While the Curia has just given the green light to the proposed policies, the Task Force expects the Curia to set up the Accreditation Committee as soon as possible to work out the details regarding the relevance of the various programmes now being offered. The Task Force is proposing a transitional period of 5 years between the official announcement, likely to be made in between June and August 2018, and the full implementation of the reform policies (Catholic Education Development Committee RME Task Force, 2017).

This policy initiative can be understood as an attempt at adopting a top-down approach by the diocese to address the challenges that could be difficult for individual

schools to handle. The effect of these policies, no doubt, will hinge upon whether they are so designed and implemented that individual schools find them reasonable and manageable. These policies should be able to solve their problems instead of merely reiterating the high-sounding ideals of Catholic education once again.

There exist notable discrepancies between the ideals and reality of this important curriculum area in Catholic schools (Chan & Ng, 2017). From the stance of the diocese policymakers, it is their duty to narrow the gap as far as possible so that the Catholic education being offered in their schools is authentic and in line with the expectations of the Church, especially in the challenging context of Hong Kong after 1997.

There are two main inroads that need to be achieved in order to improve the unsatisfactory situation depicted so far. One takes the route of enhancing the competence of all teachers, particularly RE class teachers. Through suitable policies, strategies and programmes, it is hoped that they could be convinced about the mission and vision of Catholic education. Moreover, they could be properly prepared in head, heart and hands to teach the subject well. Another path to be taken should be the setting up of an appropriate administrative system and mechanism including checkpoints along various levels of the school management to ensure that all parties concerned are genuinely participating in the process of promoting RE.

The three reform policies discussed in this paper are proposed to tackle hindrances that may be encountered along these two inroads. While the first and third policies aim at reforming the school administrative system to strengthen the implementation of RE in both the narrow and broad senses, the second one tries to deal with the key issue of the professionalism of RE teachers. All these three policies should be implemented as much as possible closely linked and mutually reinforcing if the effect of synergy is to be attained. It is the view of the Task Force that all of them should be adopted at the same time with a transitional period of 5 years.

The determination of the Curia plays a pivotal role in translating the proposals of the Task Force into official policies to be adopted by all Catholic schools in Hong Kong. So far, the Curia has been positive and yet cautious towards the policy proposals. Having given the green light in principle, the Curia has asked the Task Force to work out the details of the proposals, taking into consideration the feedback from school principals and RE teachers. If the Bishop is seen being positive and serious with the implementation of these policies, getting them accepted across all schools in the diocese should not be difficult, even though the religious orders and Caritas are relatively autonomous in running their schools.

At individual schools level, most RE teachers believe that obstacles to successful implementation come primarily from the attitude of the school management. The support from the school management is seen even more decisive than the determination of the diocese or the receptivity of the RE teachers who are directly affected by the policies (Caritas Institute of Higher Education, 2017). Therefore, the Catholic Education Office should be prepared to convince the principals that these policies are necessary, feasible and desirable, if RE is to be reformed.

All the three reform policies are supported by practicing RE teachers in general (The Task Force on Religious and Moral Education, 2018). On the policy of spe-

cialized teaching at RE, their only worry is that RE teachers might not be allowed to take up another subject at the same time, which, however, will not be the case. In fact, the Task Force recommends that a teacher with about one-third of her teaching load devoted to RE can already be accepted as a subject specialist of RE.

On the policy of requiring a professional qualification, there is obvious controversy among RE teachers over an option of counting teaching experience as a qualifier. Generally, those who have already completed the recognized training course offered by the Diocesan Catechetical Centre tend to oppose such an option, while those who are experienced and yet untrained would ask for a waiving arrangement (Caritas Institute of Education, 2017). The latter are joined by some principals who are worried about a shortage of manpower in the RE team if the status quo is upset too radically. The diocese is still waiting for the outcome of the final round of consultation among school leaders before making the final decision.

The policy of appointing a senior member of staff to serve as a coordinator of RE in both the broad and narrow senses is undeniably the most challenging proposal. Many principals complain that it is not always easy to identify a Catholic teacher who is both competent and competitive among the potential candidates for promotion to a senior post. Based on the principle of fairness, the school management cannot show favouritism towards Catholic candidates in the process of selection. In fact, the Catholic schools in Hong Kong have been much respected and praised for their non-discriminative policy to the non-Catholic staff members. Therefore, it is envisaged that this policy might take a period longer than 5 years to implement in some schools to allow schools to identify and develop potential candidates for promotion from among their Catholic teachers.

Conclusion

As argued by Gellel (2017), Catholic Religious Education is an essential element of the teaching ministry of the Church. Whether Catholic schools are fighting a lost battle in a highly secularized society in Hong Kong is still debatable. It is indisputable that RE as the vehicle of the identity of a Catholic school deserves the greatest effort by the diocese authorities, the school management and frontline teachers to be reformed to the extent that it can address challenges coming from both inside and outside the school. Whether the three reform policy proposals can be brought forward to a new stage depends on the support by RE teachers for the pride and professionalism of their discipline, the sense of crisis and urgency among the school principals and the impetus provided by the Catholic Education Office with its Task Force as the spearhead of the reform. Above all, however, the view of the Curia is regarded as the most decisive factor. Its blessing will give these reform policies a chance of consolidating consensus among the many different stakeholders.

References

Buchanan, M. T. (2005). The REC: Perspectives on a complex role within Catholic education. *Journal of Religious Education, 53*(4), 68–74.

Buchanan, M. T. (2015). Leadership sustainability: Supporting religious education leaders in the school context. In M. T. Buchanan & A.-M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 91–101). Berlin: Springer.

Caritas Institute of Higher Education. (2017). *Results of opinion survey on three policies of religious education for Catholic schools in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong.

Catholic Education Development Committee RME Task Force. (2017). *Strategies to improve RME in Hong Kong Catholic schools* (Unpublished report commissioned by Catholic Education Development Committee).

Catholic Education Office. (2013–2017). *The implementation of RME in school* (Unpublished consultancy reports commissioned by the Incorporated Management Committee of diocesan schools in Hong Kong).

Chan, N. K. (2015). Religious education in Hong Kong Catholic schools: Past, present and future. In M. T. Buchanan & A.-M. Gellel (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Catholic religious education in schools* (pp. 131–142). Berlin: Springer.

Chan, N. K., & Ng, V. W. K. (2017). Ideals and reality of religious and moral education in Hong Kong catholic schools: From the perspective of practicing teachers. *Hong Kong Journal of Catholic Studies, 8*, 345–389.

Cheng, Y. C. (2017). Xianggang Jiaogai: Sanbu Bianzou (*Education reform in Hong Kong: Three variations*), Xianggang: Zhonghua shu ju you xian gong si.

Cook, T. J., & Hudson, W. J. (2006). Toward the professionalization of Catholic high school religion teachers: An assessment of religion teaching as a profession. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 9*(4), 399–424.

Curriculum Development Council. (2012). *Moral and national education curriculum guide (primary 1 to secondary 6)*. Hong Kong: Education Bureau.

Denig, S. J., & Dosen, A. J. (2009). The mission of the Catholic school in the Pre-Vatican II Ear (1810–1962) and the Post-Vatican II era (1965–1995): Insights and observations for the new millennium. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 13*(2), 135–156.

Education Commission. (2000). *Reform proposals for the education system in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Everington, J. (2016). 'Being professional': RE teachers' understandings of professionalism 1997–2014. *British Journal of Religious Education, 38*(2), 177–188.

Gellel, A.-M. (2017). Putting Catholic religious education on the map. *Revista Pistis & Praxis: Teologia e Pastoral, Curitiba, 9*(3), 699–720.

Hong Kong Catholic Truth Society. (2018). *Hong Kong Catholic directory*. Hong Kong: The Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong.

Hordern, J. (2015). Teaching, teacher formation, and specialised professional practice. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(4), 431–444.

Ingvarson, L., Beavis, A., & Kleinhenz, E. (2007). Factors affecting the impact of teacher education programmes on teacher preparedness: Implications for accreditation policy. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 30*(4), 351–381.

Lau, Y. K. (2017). Xianggang Tianzhujiao Zongjiaoke Chuzhong Jiaokeshu Bianpe Yanjiu (*A study of change of junior secondary school textbooks of Catholic religious education in Hong Kong*). Unpublished Ed.D. thesis manuscript, the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Poland, S., Colburn, A., & Long, D. E. (2017). Teacher perspectives on specialisation in the elementary classroom: implications for science instruction. *International Journal of Science Education, 39*(13), 1715–1732.

Pope Benedict XVI. (2009). *Address of his Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholic religion teachers, 2009*. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2009/april/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20090425_insegnanti-religione.html.

Sikes, P., & Everington, J. (2004). 'RE teachers do get drunk you know': Becoming a religious education teacher in the twenty-first century. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice, 10*(1), 21–33.

The Task Force on Religious and Moral Education. (2017). *Report on the RME survey conducted in Dec 2016*. Hong Kong: Catholic Education Development Committee.

The Task Force on Religious and Moral Education. (2018). *Report on the RME survey conducted in Dec 2017*. Hong Kong: Catholic Education Development Committee.

Dr. Francis Nai Kwok Chan is Co-Head of the Centre for Religious, Spiritual and Moral Education of Caritas Institute of Higher Education in Hong Kong. He has been the Chief Curriculum Officer of the Catholic Education Office of Hong Kong, a Senior Lecturer of the Hong Kong Institute of Education and a Senior Curriculum Officer of the Hong Kong Education Department. His research and teaching expertise lies in the preparation of teachers of religious and moral education, history and civic education. He received his B.A., M.A., and Cert Ed from the University of Hong Kong, M.Ed. from the University of Bristol, and Ed.D. from OISE, University of Toronto.

Chapter 50
Catholic Youth Associations' Activities in All-Day Schools in Germany: Opportunities and Limits

Claudia Gärtner, Rebekka Krain and Laura Otte

Current Challenges for Religious Education in Germany

Traditionally, in Germany, great meaning is given to Roman Catholic Religious Education (RE) at school and to Catholic youth association in Catholic religious education. In public schools, RE has historically grown to become a regular part of pupils' education, and the Catholic youth association is a meaningful part of the strong German Catholic culture. Due to increasingly strong societal and religious movements, these two relevant spaces of learning have experienced challenges and have partaken in their own transformation through critical dialog, self-reflection and trial and error.

Germany has a long tradition of half-day schooling. But in the last years throughout Germany, all-day schools have been introduced because of school policy reasons (shortening of the school time at the Gymnasium from 9 to 8 years), pedagogical motivation (new rhythm of learning times) and societal needs (extension of child care services). Through this process, new and exciting spaces for RE have been created, as the following empirical research project "kajuga" will show. The acronym "kajuga" comes from the German project title "Katholische Jugendverbandsarbeit und Ganztagsschule" which means Catholic youth association work and all-day schooling. The research group of the University of Münster chaired by Judith Könemann and the University of Dortmund chaired by Claudia Gärtner explores the new spaces for Catholic religious education arising from the engagement of Catholic youth associations in schools. To be able to grasp the reach of these movements, and the appearance of a new space for Catholic religious education, the societal and religious changes will be outlined in the first place to draft in the second step the current challenges

---

C. Gärtner (✉) · L. Otte
TU Dortmund University, Dortmund, Germany
e-mail: claudia.gaertner@tu-dortmund.de

R. Krain
WWU Münster University, Münster, Germany

of religious education in school and of Catholic youth association. In the third step, "kajuga" will be presented and initial findings of this research project will show changes in Catholic religious education in Germany.

Societal and Religious Changes and Challenges for Religious Education

The situation of religion in Germany can be characterized by increasing religious pluralism and secularization. 28.5% of the population belongs to the Roman Catholic Church, 26.5% are Protestant and about 5% are Muslim. The latter has constantly grown in the last years due to migration, but at a clearly lower rate than the medial representation partly suggests. 36.2% of the population professed no religion/are non-denominational (Fowid, 2016), which is indeed the fastest growing group in the last years. Lastly, 3.9% belong to various denominations. The numbers vary markedly in different regions (eastern–western, rural–urban regions of Germany). These denominational groups have developed to contain a multitude of pluralities within themselves. In Germany, religion is mostly an individual matter as religious institutions are losing more and more influence on the individual religiousness of its believers. Opposing trends can be seen in parts of the Muslim population and in smaller Christian groups, for which religious authorities and institutions often play a big role in terms of life and faith orientation.

Through the extensive deinstitutionalization of religion and faith, classical spaces of religious education have also lost their importance. Many children and teenagers only seldom get in touch with religion through parishes or Catholic youth work. In Germany, within the widely spread Catholic youth associations, which are an important part of Catholic youth work, the processes of pluralism and deinstitutionalization are strongly noticeable. In a lot of families, religious education has a very low priority as well. Often RE at school is the only place adolescents deal with religion, which demonstrates its high relevance for the religious educational processes. Thereby neither in RE at school nor in Catholic youth associations can it be assumed that all of its members have experienced any (homogenous) religious socialization.

These changes strongly affect the traditional spaces of religious learning (school, parish, youth association) in their self-concept. They put into question the historically grown, strongly defined structures and furthermore the understanding of religious education. To this effect, the demonstrated societal and religious changes in the last years led to developments and differentiations within religious education, as clarified in the following through focusing on RE and Catholic youth associations.

Religious Education at Schools in Germany

As an introduction, the legal framework for RE in (public) schools may be briefly outlined. For decades, RE at German public and church schools has been a so-called "res mixta" (Paul, 1995; Stoodt, 2001). The state and religious associations are responsible for RE, as the state determines and supervises the framework (theological faculties, state religious teacher education, finances, etc.). The contents are then brought in line with the religious or secularized communities, especially with regard to the curricula and textbooks. Although there is officially a separation of church and state, RE is enshrined in the "Grundgesetz" (Basic Law) and is a standard subject in public and church schools. This Basic Law counts for all federal states in Germany with the exception of the federal states where another state law was in existence on 1 January 1949 ("Bremer Klausel"). Through this and the stately long-term suppression of religion in the GDR, different models took shape after the German reunification (Lehtiö, 1983; Rothgangel & Ziebertz, 2016). The responsibility for development of RE is not limited to the Christian churches, there is, for example—regionally different, and mostly in a very small number—also Jewish, Islamic RE and even Buddhist RE in Berlin. Especially, Islamic RE is being developed at the moment, which has strong political support, although it is followed with a high (and critical) interest by the public. Pupils may also abstain from RE at school. In some federal states, they have to replace the subject by joining alternative classes, such as ethical education (Rothgangel & Schröder, 2009).

Regarding Catholics, there is a so-called "Trias" of Catholic RE: Catholic teachers, Catholic pupils and content accepted by the Catholic Church, though in practice the ideals of the "Trias" often cannot be met due to the above-mentioned factors of religious pluralism and secularity. Therefore, more and more often, denominational-cooperative models are being introduced in which Catholic and Protestant pupils are being educated by turns from a Catholic and a Protestant teacher in one learning group (Kuld, Schweitzer, & Tzscheetzsch, 2009; Woppowa, Isik, Kammeyer, & Peters, 2017). In practice and sometimes even officially, as in Hamburg, interreligious learning communities are also being established (Doedens & Weiße, 1997; Weiße, 2008; Ipgrave, Knauth, Körs, Vieregge, & von der Lippe, 2018).

The understanding of Catholic RE in schools has been shaped through the Würzburg Synod of 1974 (Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, 1974). In this document, the bishops phrase the basis of the, until today, most influencing correlation didactics, and concurrently a significant differentiation between parish catechesis and RE in schools. RE is aimed at making the Christian faith comprehensible in the light of life and life in the light of faith understandable (correlation didactics). The Synod establishes responsible reasoning and behaviour in religious questions as the goal of RE, but not faith or religiosity. Thereby, RE is open to sceptical and non-believing pupils and has a mostly cognitive, reflective orientation. Particularly, this correlative orientation of RE is getting increasingly problematic due to the lack of religious socialization and through the breaking of religious traditions. Pupils can refer less and less to relevant religious experiences that can be made interpretable in the context

of RE. Facing these problems, a variety of religious educational and didactic models are nowadays being developed and discussed, which cannot be further explained in detail in this article. These models act mostly towards the assumption of a strongly subjective-oriented term of RE. The individual's ability to self-educate and gain maturity on religious matters lies at the centre of RE—not the passing of religion or tradition. In many cases, out-of-school spaces are being established, with partners that give pupils the opportunity for (new) religious experiences and possibilities of interpretation.

Next to these developments, which are a result of the changing German religious landscape, RE is affected by further societal and political changes. As already mentioned, half-day schools are replaced or complemented by all-day schools in many places. Schools cooperate in extracurricular areas with external partners, e.g. sports or cultural associations. Through this, it is possible for the establishment of new cooperatives between schools, religious communities and non-religious associations. At the same time, extracurricular time for pupils is constantly decreasing, exacerbating the issue of time for students to partake in Catholic youth association or parish activities.

The German "Grundgesetz" (Basic Law) gives the opportunity for religious communities to offer services, pastoral care, religious retreats or pupil prayer groups at schools. In the last few years, some Catholic youth associations take this opportunity and try new ways of engagement in school.

(Catholic) Youth Associations in Germany

Presently, (Catholic) Youth Associations represent an organizational form of extracurricular youth work that has increasingly developed during the transition to the twentieth century (Wendt, 1991). The core idea until today is that adolescents campaign for adolescents and their (age specific) interests and needs. "In youth associations and youth groups, the youth ministry has been commonly and jointly responsible, organized and formed by young people themselves. Their work is meant to be permanent and is generally geared towards their own members, but can also be directed towards young people who are not members. Through youth associations and their aggregations, young people's needs and interests are being embodied and represented" (§12 Abs. 2, KJHG, free translation). Additionally, youth association work is characterized by volunteering and voluntary commitment, and has traditionally been organized in groups. Moreover, Catholic youth associations claim to live their daily lives in the Christian faith (BDKJ-Bundesvorstand, 2015).

The term "youth association" is not strictly defined and cannot be precisely differentiated from other youth-characterized organizational forms (youth groups, projects, youth departments of more widespread organizations, etc.). A way to define youth associations more precisely is to differentiate them from (open) youth work. It also dedicates itself mainly to the organization, care and education of adolescents outside of the family, school and work, however, in a different directed organizational form.

It is more about adults working for the youth, and not a self-organized peer group per se—this can also be made clear with regard to the historical roots of youth work (Müller, 1991).

Looking at today's Catholic youth work, it is close to pastoral youth care, in which full-time employees offer activities for adolescents, while youth associations describe a genuine self-organized work by adolescents themselves. Both forms of ecclesiastic youth work often take place in the location of the parish, some also have their own accommodation, in which they can organize their meetings. Principally, Catholic youth associations can be called more autonomous in the face of the church and the associated municipal structures.

This differentiation works more in theory than as a strict practice. In this light, the unique profile of the research field of "kajuga" is highlighted: Youth association work that traditionally characterized the slogan "youth for youth". The following overview of the historical development of this field gives the opportunity to categorize the changing landscape of (Catholic) youth associations in the face of the above-mentioned (traditional) principles. Here, one may also gain an impression concerning its relevance today and why youth associations and schools are coming closer together.

The first "golden-age" of youth associations in Germany was at the beginning of the twentieth century, during the Weimar Republic. At this time, 1.5 million young people were organized in Catholic associations until their abolishment by the National Socialist regime (Schwab, 1997). The youth association's work was destroyed; however, Catholic principles continued to be practiced often under the pretense of pastoral youth care (Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, 1999). After World War II, a reactivation of the association was pursued by a number of young people, such that during the foundation of the still existing umbrella organization, the "Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend" (BDKJ; meaning: German Catholic Youth Federation), over 10 associations were established (Schwab, 1997). But the detachment from municipal structures, and the integration into the BDKJ, did not take place without previous inter-church discussions on the determination of the relationship between pastoral youth care and youth association work (Tillmanns, 1999). The church youth work that was merged during the National Socialist regime developed in the after-war-years into the above-mentioned two pillars of pastoral youth care, and youth association work.

By the late 1950s, it became apparent that the associations could not just establish themselves seamlessly into the structures and traditions of the pre-war era (Riekmann & Epstein, 2014). The youth associations themselves proclaimed a crisis: low participation, sinking membership numbers and helplessness concerning goals and formation of a new self-awareness. They identified themselves increasingly as locations for educational work that had a complementing function to parenthood and schooling (Deutscher Bundesjugendring, 1983). This new identification caused a distancing between the old and new guiding principles for youth association work, leading to a greater meaning for full-time work, whereas previously there had only been a loose organization of volunteers. An increasing professionalization of youth associations started at that time (Münchmeier, 1991). Latest with the student move-

ment (from 1965– ca. 1970) further reforms came: The initially worn togs, neckerchiefs, hats, badges of ranks, etc. disappeared and everyday wear became the dress code for association members. Further examples of this development are the abolishment of gender segregation and the given priority to political activities (Riekmann & Epstein, 2014). After this, "socialization of the youth associations" (Münchmeier, 1991, p. 86, translation by the authors), the associations reestablished some sense of normality without any further great paradigm shifts. In 1990, the above-mentioned Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz (KJHG; meaning: Child and Youth Services Act) came into force, and the work of the youth associations became legally enshrined. Concurrently, German reunification led to the question of how youth association work can be reestablished in the East-German federal states, and how the previous youth association work wished to be represented in the wider structure (Gadow & Pluto, 2014).

The Catholic Youth Association is a significant player within the wider group of youth associations in Germany. According to the BDKJ (2017), 660,000 children and adolescents participate. The Catholic youth association also went through the described development outlined above. Furthermore, it has been, and still is, influenced by the church. Here, the relationship between the Catholic youth association and the wider pastoral youth care was negotiated. The contribution of the Catholic youth association is continually discussed concerning the Catholic religious education. Currently, Catholic youth associations are extremely exposed to the recurring requests concerning positioning and assertions regarding church-held views. On the one hand, extracurricular opportunities for adolescents are constantly growing; they can choose between diverse (non-) religious activities. On the other hand, school is reducing pupil's free time, especially by the expanding of all-day-schools. Increasing religious plurality and the Christian break from tradition, the number of Catholic/Christian adolescents is decreasing. The Catholic youth association must, in terms of their principles, reorient towards the constantly changing social pressures, the secular orientation and the adolescents' needs.

The movement towards all-day schools and the growing spectrum of choice of after-school activities in all-day schools can be seen as a reaction toward the changing framework to make youth association work more attractive. "Kajuga" aims to further explore the opportunities and challenges resulting from this.

The Research Project "Kajuga"

By examining the cooperation of Catholic youth associations with (all-day) schools in Germany, "kajuga" fits directly into the already outlined developments and discussions.

Against this background, "kajuga" investigates how Catholic youth associations cooperate with all-day schools, and captures data regarding the conceptual organization and its implementation in the practice of youth association offers to pupils in (all-day) schools. Second, changes and consequences regarding the school system

and the youth associational work are explored. Overall, it is hypothesized that religious education and practical–theological concepts referring to the traditional spaces of religious education "school", "parish" and "youth work" have to be refreshed and reframed accordingly. Therefore, the mutual changes to the (all-day) schools and youth associations as well as their cooperation have to be taken into account. The project aims towards the development of a qualitative, empirically founded and (religiously) pedagogical reflective theory of youth associational work at all-day schools.

Research Design of the Empirical Study "Kajuga"

"Kajuga" is a qualitative empirical study. Surveys are done as expert interviews, group discussions as well as through participant observations at eight chosen (all-day) schools. Through this, interview records analysed and interpreted, and finally reflected within the framework of different theoretical discourses. These discourses include the already mentioned discussions and developments that will therefore be summarized in the following: Reflections upon the concepts of youth associational work with a view to their realization within-school conditions; discussions on all-day education as well as on German all-day school development in general, and in this context also with a view to cooperation with extracurricular partners; reflections on cooperation, in light of current schooling processes; discussions on all-day schools as opportunities for religious education and as learning spaces that also take into account their boarders; and the relation of the youth associational courses at all-day schools to others, e.g. school pastoral courses.

In addition, data concerning cooperation between youth associations and (all-day) schools have been captured with the help of a Germany-wide online survey. The survey has been sent to all dioceses within the BDKJ. Through this survey, a first overview of the cooperation between Catholic youth associations and (all-day) schools in Germany was made possible.

To choose concrete projects and schools for the project sample, "kajuga" cooperates with two regional associations of the BDKJ in the north-western part of Germany, that both have a superordinate structure and organization of youth associational work at the learning space (all-day) school. Both associations extend to partly urban and partly rural areas. On average in these regions, the proportion of Catholics lies at around 30%. In one of the two BDKJ-associations, the cooperation of (all-day) schools and Catholic youth associations is only organized at church schools, while in the second mentioned area, church and state schools cooperate with the youth associations. With a view to these differences, it is to be taken into account that the cooperation in the formerly mentioned area has arisen through episcopal initiatives, while in the latter it has grown rather in response to local needs. In both described areas, four cooperation projects per area have been undertaken.

The three-part methodical approach—consisting of expert interviews, group discussions and participant observation—is used at all of the eight locations. Thereby, an intensive research and a detailed, multi-perspective representation of the cooperation

of Catholic youth associations at the (all-day) schools is possible. This methodical procedure also explicitly aims to survey various participants' perspectives.

Guideline-based expert interviews with the headmasters are carried out in schools and with the leaders of the associations, as well as with the coordinators and the executing members of the projects "on site". The interviewed experts, therefore, come from the two different systems "school" and "youth association", and they differ in their roles and also regarding full-time and voluntary activities. The goal of the expert interviews is to capture data from different knowledge bases and perspectives concerning engagement and specific projects. Furthermore, group interviews with about five to six pupils, who take part in the extracurricular activities in the all-day schools, will be done. This gives the participants' perspectives, and within that, the perspective of the actual recipient of the course contents.

In the third methodical approach, the youth associational activities are being investigated via participant observation. In the foreground, there is especially the question of the dimensions of (religious) education, the (visible) goals of the courses such as didactic mediation and interaction processes within the group, with a view to the topic and the concern of the course.

Initial Findings and First Insights into the Results

It is possible to make some general observations through the insights to the field of youth association work in schools concerning changes and differentiations in the field of Catholic religious education.

Catholic religious education changes at those schools which offer additional youth associational-based activities that widen up the repertoire of spaces of religious education. In Germany, one may find many instances of individual, and in many places locally grown cooperation, whereas there is only little area-wide and superordinate structured cooperation. This can also be confirmed by the organizations examined by the Germany-wide online survey. However, the two west-German areas with their bigger organizational structures and networks were chosen for "kajuga".

These two structures contrast in the sense that they may be more closely described by the phrases bottom-up and top-down: In one of the two chosen BDKJ-associations, over the years, local cooperation between mostly single youth association initiatives and schools have grown bottom-up. Meanwhile, a coordination centre has been set up by the BDKJ for those organizations in the area. In the other regional association, the responsible diocese has effectively ordered the BDKJ to establish school cooperation with church schools in this area (top-down).

The associational course offerings themselves are highly varied and range from after-school-homework supervision to the education as group leaders and religious projects within the church year. The pursued objectives (e.g. supporting pupils professionally with their homework or training group leaders) are being described and judged by the interviewed experts in different ways. Discussions about the desired target group of these offers are rising, in which it becomes clear that denomina-

tional target groups or homogeneous religious courses are not the aim. Furthermore, the question is raised to what extent youth associations want to gain new members through their work and/or to what extent producing skills and competencies with an explicit Christian orientation can and should be realized.

In addition, the concrete structuring of all-day schooling is anything but uniform. All-day schooling so far does not have a specific Germany-wide definition especially with regard to content. This represents a rather large hurdle in the contact and collaboration with the schools and the cooperation partners from different areas. While politically prescribed framework conditions exist, there is still the desideratum to define all-day schooling in terms of content and not just nominally. In practice, the research project "kajuga" not least faces the challenge to distinguish in some particular cases all-day schooling in the (formal) political sense and schools with an all-day offer that formally would count as a half-day school. In light of these plural and of these partly fluid structures, contents and goals, it is not a surprise that recently neither of the executors of the cooperation nor the research project "kajuga" can finally judge the contribution of Catholic religious education. So far "kajuga" can neither work out best practice examples nor an in-itself consistent theory of youth associational Catholic religious education in schools. With a view to the practical–theological three steps "seeing, judging, acting", religious education at schools in Germany in conjunction with youth associational work finds itself in the state of fascinated "seeing".

New Spaces for Catholic Religious Education? Perspectives Out of the "Kajuga" Project

It seems predictable that Catholic religious education at school is going to become even more plural through the described cooperation and school politics, but also through religious and societal developments in Germany. With a view to this learning space, it also means RE as an established curricular subject is no longer the only source of religious education at schools. When representatives of religious communities such as the youth associations help to shape school life, and act especially also within the all-day offer of a lot of schools, it does not only lead to an extension of the offer of religious education in schools, but also potentially has an impact on RE as a school subject and also for further school offers such as within-school pastoral care.

It is to be kept in mind that Catholic religious education in schools will be on the one hand more diverse through the religious plurality in Germany, and the corresponding expansion to Islamic, Jewish, etc. RE, as much as through the introduction of additional subjects such as practical philosophy. On the other hand, youth associational work in schools contributes to the diversity of religious offers in schools, whereby it deals with decidedly singular denominational course offers in the fewest cases.

Since the Würzburg Synod of 1974, and the therewith related renewed understanding of religious education, Catholic RE became more and more a subject-orientated space. This basic subject orientation is also part of the youth association work. Yet with the difference that through the named core principles like, for instance, the democratic and participative basic orientation, the children's and adolescent's participation is intended in a completely different way than in RE in schools. Catholic youth associations enable on the one side structural, but also with regard to content, creative forms of experience-based (religious) learning of children and adolescents. These plural forms of participation have an effect on the youth associational target setting: It allows more freedom through children's and adolescent's own target setting and less objectively goal-orientated learning. This differentiates this work significantly from RE in schools, in which teachers—deriving from the curricula—set the learning targets. It is not surprising that the youth associational work in school is connected to a hope that these generate experiences which are the learning conditions of correlative RE. But the previous insights into the projects indicate that the subject-orientated proprium of youth associational work in schools is hard to realize. Partly, youth associational offers seem to assimilate well to the system, when, for example, homework supervision is taken over. This has also been perceived and discussed appropriately by the Catholic youth associations. In this sense, the participation of Catholic religious education at schools offers numerous opportunities but also challenges for the youth associations. The intensity of the internal youth associational discussions, if and how school cooperatives come into question, indicates that tension between youth association work and school will be kept current and stay controversial moving forward. The plurality and the differentiation of the course offerings suggest that here is an exciting religious educational field of experimentation, which theoretically must be outlined first as an independent space of religious education, and a proper theoretical formulation has yet to be built. "kajuga" offers first insights into this space.

References

Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend (BDKJ) (2017). *Der BDKJ – Über uns*. Retrieved from: http://www.bdkj.de/der-bdkj/ueber-uns/.

Bundesvorstand des Bundes der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend (BDKJ) (2015). *Der Anteil der Verbände an der Sendung der Kirche. Beitrag zu einer Theologie der Verbände*. Retrieved from: http://www.bdkj.de/fileadmin/bdkj/bilder/referat_kirche-jugend/Broschuere_BDKJ_Theologie-der-Verbaende2015_FINAL300415.pdf.

Deutsche Bischofskonferenz (1974). *Der Religionsunterricht in der Schule*. Bonn.

Deutsche Bischofskonferenz (Ed.) (1999). Richtlinien für die Katholische Jugendseelsorge. In R. Tillmanns (Ed.), *Der Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend und seine Mitgliedsverbände. Zweiter Band: Rechts- und Grundlagentexte zur katholischen Jugendverbandsarbeit* (pp. 411–414). Berlin: Duncker and Humboldt.

Deutscher Bundesjugendring (Ed.) (1983). Selbstverständnis und Wirklichkeit der heutigen Jugendverbandsarbeit (1962). In M. Faltermeier (Ed.), *Nachdenken über Jugendarbeit. Zwischen den*

fünfziger und achtziger Jahren. Eine kommentierte Dokumentation mit Beiträgen aus der Zeitschrift "deutsche Jugend" (pp. 119–122). München: Juventa.

Doedens, F., & Weiße, W. (1997). *Religionsunterricht für alle. Hamburger Perspektiven zur Religionsdidaktik*. Münster: Waxmann.

fowid (Forschungsgruppe Weltanschauungen in Deuschland) (09.04.2017). *Religionszugehörigkeit in Deutschland 2016*. Retrieved from: https://fowid.de/meldung/religionszugehoerigkeiten-deutschland-2016.

Gadow, T., & Pluto, L. (2014). Jugendverbände im Spiegel der Forschung. In M. Oechler & H. Schmidt (Eds.), *Empire der Kinder- und Jugendverbandsarbeit. Forschungsergebnisse und ihre Relevanz für die Entwicklung von Theorie, Praxis und Forschungsmethodik* (pp. 101–192). Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien.

Ipgrave, J., Knauth, T., Körs, A. Vieregge, D., von der Lippe, M. (Eds.) (2018). *Religion and dialogue in the city. Case studies on interreligious encounter in urban community and education*. Münster: Waxmann.

Kuld, L., Schweitzer, F., & Tzscheetzsch, W. (2009). *Im Religionsunterricht zusammenarbeiten. Evaluation des konfessionell-kooperativen Religionsunterrichts in Baden-Württemberg*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Lehtiö, P. (1983). *Religionsunterricht ohne Schule*. Münster: Comenius-Institut.

Müller, C. W. (1991). Jugendverbände und Jugendpflege. In L. Böhnisch, H. Gängler, & T. Rauschenbach (Eds.), *Handbuch Jugendverbände* (pp. 231–240). Weinheim/München: Juventa.

Münchmeier, R. (1991). Die Vergesellschaftung der Jugendverbände. Von den fünfziger Jahren bis zur Politisierung. In L. Böhnisch, H. Gängler, & T. Rauschenbach (Eds.), *Handbuch Jugendverbände* (pp. 86–92). Weinheim/München: Juventa.

Paul, E. (1995). *Geschichte der christlichen Erziehung, in 2 Bdn*. Freiburg: Herder.

Riekmann, W., & Epstein, A.-T. (2014). Empire der Jugendverbandsarbeit bis 1990. In M. Oechler & H. Schmidt (Eds.), *Empire der Kinder- und Jugendverbandsarbeit. Forschungsergebnisse und ihre Relevanz für die Entwicklung von Theorie, Praxis und Forschungsmethodik* (pp. 19–99). Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien.

Rothgangel, M., Ziebertz, H.-G. in cooperation with Klutz, P. (2016). Religious education at schools in Germany. In M. Rothgangel, R. G. Jackson & M. Jäggle (Eds.), *Religious education at schools in Europe. Part 1 Central Europe* (pp. 115–148). Göttingen: VandR Unipress.

Rothgangel, M., & Schröder, B. (2009). *Evangelischer Religionsunterricht in den Ländern der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Empirische Daten – Kontexte – Entwicklungen*. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.

Schwab, M. (1997). *Kirche leben und Gesellschaft gestalten. Der Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend (BDKJ) in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Diözese Würzburg 1947-1989*. Würzburg: Schöningh.

Stoodt, D. (2001). Art. Religionsunterricht in Deutschland. Begriff und Geschichte. In *LexRP 2* (col. 1775–1780). Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener.

Tillmanns, R. (1999). *Der Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend und seine Mitgliedsverbände. Erster Teilband: Der BDKJ in historischer und kirchenrechtlicher Betrachtung*. Berlin: Duncker and Humboldt.

Wendt, W.-R. (1991). Jugendverbände im Kaiserreich. In L. Böhnisch, H. Gängler, & T. Rauschenbach (Eds.), *Handbuch Jugendverbände* (pp. 42–48). Weinheim/München: Juventa.

Woppowa, J., Isik, T., Kammeyer, K., & Peters, B. (2017). *Kooperativer Religionsunterricht. Fragen - Optionen – Wege*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Weiße, W. (2008). *Dialogischer Religionsunterricht in Hamburg. Positionen, Analysen und Perspektiven im Kontext Europas*. Münster: Waxmann.

Prof Claudia Gärtner is a Professor in Practical Theology in the Faculty of Humanities and Theology, Department Catholic Theology, University of Dortmund, Germany. Her main research top-

ics at the moment are art in religious education, Catholic Youth Associations' activities in all-day schools, educational design research and Church history didactics.

Rebekka Krain is Research Assistant at the Department of Catholic Theology and its Didactics at the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Münster. She also works for the qualitative empirical study that focusses on the cooperation between Catholic Youth Associations and all-day school called "kajuga".

Laura Otte is Research Assistant at the Department of Catholic Theology at the University of Dortmund. She works on the qualitative empirical study that focuses on the cooperation between Catholic Youth Associations and all-day school, called "kajuga".

Chapter 51
The Medellín Path in the School Institution: The Chilean Case

Patricia Imbarack Dagach and Sergio Riquelme Muñoz

Introduction

In the 60s, the Second Vatican Council represented a profound ecclesial renewal in response to requirements that contemporary culture to the Catholic Church. The church's educational projects were not left on the sidelines with regard to the impact of these transformations. This also meant an updating challenge for the Latin American Church, a change of which the bishops of the region were aware. The Latin American Episcopal Council has existed since 1955, the year in which the first General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate was held. That date marked the beginning of this council, set up with the approval of Pope Pius XII, constituting a pioneering experience of collegiality 10 years before the Second Vatican Council (see De Lora, 2012). In 1968, the second general conference of the Latin American Episcopate was convened in the city of Medellín, Colombia, and its main theme of reflection was "the presence of the Church in the current transformation of Latin America, in the light of the Second Vatican Council". But it was not a simple transfer of the conclusions of Vatican II to the orientations of the Latin American Church, but an attempt was made to deal with the complex realities of the Latin American population and the abysmal inequality between the majority and the national elites. This is a condition that, with nuances and manifestations of global order, persists and stands out up to our days. This was an explicit starting point for Medellín, which "focused its attention on the man of this continent, which lives a decisive moment of its historical process" (Doig, 1990, p. 40). The conference of the Latin American Episcopal Council in Medellín in 1968 and Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio* inspired initiatives such as the Liberation theology movement, the priestly

P. Imbarack Dagach (✉) · S. Riquelme Muñoz
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile
e-mail: paimbara@uc.cl

S. Riquelme Muñoz
e-mail: slriquel@uc.cl

and secular movements of Christians for socialism, the ecclesial base communities, the pedagogy of the oppressed by Paulo Freire and other liberating experiences that contributed to the educational and scholastic field.

In the context of these transformations, the Catholic school in general and the teaching of religion, in particular, created a dialogue with more comprehensive visions of the educational phenomenon, and this results in educational processes which are more suitable for the new generations and more relevant for the requirements of the different societies. In this sense, education can be seen as the process by which a person is formed holistically, through the systematic and critical assimilation of culture. It can be understood as a rich heritage—tradition—that must be assimilated as complex and meaningful codes or clues to live as part of a society (Alliaud & Antelo, 2011; Bernstein, 1990). This requires educators to debate and select perennial values that, from the school experience, prepare new generations to be able "to live in change" in increasingly complex and differentiated societies (Cox, 2011). Thus, the integration of new generations into culture becomes a formative experience of educational value. An education that does not fulfil this function and is therefore limited to prefabricated elaborations will become an obstacle to the development of students' personality. In other words, to paraphrase Arendt (1996, as cited in Larrosa, 2000), if educating consists in making room for the new generations, the educational act is, in short, to receive the tradition selected by the adult world. This reception implies the conservation and maintenance of part of that legacy, so that—ultimately—they can renew the orders of life and thus allow the survival of the historical community. Therefore, the reception and training of new generations would be the way by which the adult world tries to pay the debt that humanity—the debt of life, as Giannini (2007) points out—owes to those who are thrown into the world without prior consultation.

Considering the above, the following question arises: How much of the Medellín discourse is reframed in the school context at the declarative level in its Institutional Educational Projects (manifest, official curriculum) during the period from 1968 to the present in denominational schools?

Problem Statement

From this notion of education, the appropriation of Gospel values and the Magisterium of the Church by the agents of denominational schools is an active and vitalizing practice of pedagogical processes. However, like all phenomena located socio-historically, this appropriation does not occur without tensions that, as this project argues, have their origins in epochal, global and local trends. These forces of culture tend to strengthen, minimize or even postpone and silence the presence of the ecclesiastical discourse, which proposes the values of the Gospel as a valuable component for the educational formative experience. In this regard, this study proposes to determine which elements of Medellín have been recontextualised in educational projects (at a declarative level of school policies) and in the daily experience (level

of curricular experience) of Chilean denominational schools, between the end of the 1960s and today. This requires investigating and analysing these trends and their impact on the school experience.

In this study, the notion of recontextualization is used from the theoretical contributions to the field of education and the curriculum conducted by Basil Bernstein (1990), who pointed out that "the operation by which the discourses belonging to different contexts are (…) relocated in the pedagogical space can be called recontextualisation" (Bernstein & Díaz, 1985, p. 96).

This notion has to do with an intersubjective process, defined by the selection and movement of a set of knowledge from one context to another (for example, from the Medellín document to the school, declarative and/or experiential spaces). This knowledge, when delocalized and relocated in a new context, is decoded, reordered and reinterpreted as a discourse of an instructional and regulatory nature that includes the moral dimensions.

Since its origin in Jesus and in the apostolic preaching, "the Church has never given up saying 'its corresponding word' about social life issues" (Compendio de Doctrina Social de la Iglesia, 2005, p. 7) and it recalls that, above all, it mainly concerns staying faithful for the lay, taking responsibility for ordering the temporal realities according to God (Concilio Vaticano II, Lumen Gentium "en la Iglesia", 1965). In this way, the social doctrine connects the person with the society that, with the light of faith, invites each person,

> to discover himself as a transcendent being, in all the dimensions of his life, including the one referred to the social, economic and political spheres. The social doctrine highlights the importance of moral values, based on the natural law that, inscribed in the conscience, we must recognize. (Consejo Pontificio Justicia y Paz, 2005, p. 8)

Therefore, Catholic education has been closely linked with civil society, where evangelical principles are transformed into educational norms, motivations and goals. Thus, it "constitutes a true pastoral priority, so that people, enlightened by it, are able to interpret today's reality and find appropriate paths for action" (Consejo Pontificio Justicia y Paz, 2005, p. 7).

An example of this is the renewal of the religious life that privileged the marginalized and disadvantaged sectors of society to the detriment of the great schools that served those who could afford them. This renewal, by the Latin American Church, refers to a careful reading of the signs of the times and to the pastoral approach of the 70s. Bishops used this approach while calling to embody the liberating commitment proclaimed at Medellín,

> The task of educating our brothers does not consist in incorporating them into the cultural structures that exist around them, and that can also be oppressive, but in something much more profound. It consists in enabling them to develop themselves as authors of their own progress, developing a cultural world in a creative and original way according to their own wealth that is the fruit of their effort. Especially in the case of indigenous people, the values of their culture have to be respected, without excluding the dialogue of creation with other cultures. (II Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano, 1968)

How much of Medellín remains in schools in this first decade of the twenty-first century? In other words, how much of Medellín has been reframed in specific school

contexts from 1968 to the present? What factors (global and/or local tendencies) would explain that recontextualization? In addition, where is it possible to find and explore the main guidelines and institutional definitions of educational establishments (declarative level of school policy), as well as their daily experience, that could account for the presence of Medellín?

A research area responds to the Institutional Educational Project (hereinafter, IEP). Chile's General Education Law 20,370 of 2009 stipulates that every educational establishment must have an IEP, which establishes the mechanisms that promote the guarantee of the quality of learning and guides the ethical dimension of the establishments. This concretizes their autonomy to elaborate curricular projects that ensure a relevant educational experience for the community that is being educated and that reflects the participation of the diverse actors that constitute the educational community.

The IEP should be the result of a process of diagnosis, reflection and participatory construction of the educational community. It is in this project that, starting from the reality of the context and environment of each school and considering its lights and shadows, the different philosophical and pedagogical visions of the actors are brought together. By doing so, the IEP becomes a tool that gives identity, meaning and continuity to school life not only as an instructional experience but also as a formative experience of the person. It explicitly reflects principles, objectives and structure as an effort to respond to contextualized problems and needs and becomes a proposal to educate a type of subject. Thus, it can be said that the IEP can account for the continuities and discontinuities of an appropriation of ecclesial discourse by schools during more than 50 years of historicity, characterized by political, social, cultural and governmental changes.

All of this is illuminated with distinctions of the contemporary curricular theory; According to Pinar (2004), the school curriculum is what the elders choose to narrate to young people. It is also a place where the reunited generations collide and struggle to give sense to the world. Based on this, the school will be understood as an inter-subjective domain that can lead to intergenerational and political disputes to decide what values will be passed on to the new generations (Cox, 2006). Pinar (2004) states that this meeting takes place as a highly complicated conversation between the adult order (world) and the possible orders of childhood and youth affected by the school experience. In this complex interaction, it responds to the ultimate purpose of delivering the word of God (Larrosa, 2007) while integrating the offspring of the tribe into the "great conversation of humanity" (Pinar, 2004). The obvious moral dimension of the school experience that teaches and shows, not only skills and notions, but possible ways of being and living together, is evident (Delors, 1996; Purpel & McLaurin, 2004).

The curriculum, understood as a transfer of the world (Giannini, 2007), occurs at several levels that when identified as more or less explicit allow us to observe and analyse the complexity and implications of the school experience which comprises a centrally designed official curriculum (ministerial level) planned and delivered by the teachers, received or experienced by the students and evaluated (all of these levels constitute the manifest curriculum) and includes also a hidden curriculum. The hidden

curriculum is what is not explicitly stated as the purpose of schooling but that from an unofficial, underground and implicit level becomes an experience that governs, guides and shapes attitudes, values, behaviours, orientations, knowledge and skills that are communicated at school. This, articulated with the manifest curriculum, constitutes what literature identifies as the real curriculum (Gimeno, 2010; Gimeno & Pérez Gómez, 1996), a notion that tries to give a comprehensive explanation of the totality and complexity of the school meeting between educators and students.

This is a broader line of research that also represents the voice of the main actors of the educational world. However, this paper only presents the findings of the first phase of the research.

The guiding research question is based on the tension and the paradox that postmodernism, as a global tendency that declares its scepticism about grand narratives, supposes for the school space, understood as a curricular field. The teacher's curricular work—teaching—requires a narrative that constitutes the epic story about what the contents are (what) and the purpose (what for) of the school task which, if it aspires to have the educational value of being significant and relevant for the new generations, is developed by each community on a daily basis.

Methodology

To achieve the aforementioned goal, the research team worked using a qualitative research approach, inspired by preceding investigations about educational curriculum (Cox, Bascopé, Castillo, Miranda, & Bonhomme, 2014a, b), considering that our goal was to address the narrative that emerges from the IEP. This narrative deals with the way in which the Medellín discourse is reframed, or not, in school documents, and consequently in school spaces and in particular in the curriculum understood as a broad notion. The analysis is based on the quantification of citations of the analysed IEPs that explicitly mention a set of 10 analytical categories that were extracted and defined from the document of the Episcopal Conference of Medellín. The citation privileges a unity of meaning, which could encompass more than one category, implying that the same citation can be counted and classified more than once.

Operationally, the methodological strategy implemented for the construction of the content analysis instrument of the Institutional Educational Projects was divided into two phases: the first is related to an exhaustive review of the Medellín document and the identification of categories of analysis, and the second is linked to the research of these categories in the educational projects of the schools.

These categories refer to the main topics presented by the Medellin document and that were identified by the two researchers responsible for that task. Once the categories were identified, they were divided into three phases. In the first phase, they were comprehensibly defined by one of the two researchers, based on the significances offered for these notions by the Medellin document. In the second phase, these preliminary definitions were checked and completed by the other researcher in charge of the investigation. Finally, in the third phase, the categories were pre-

sented to the entire team which included the main and assistant researchers, students and professors in education, the social sciences and theology, to be discussed and refined. This refining process promoted the appropriation of the categorical matrix by the investigation team in charge of codifying the selected PEI.

As a result of this process, a categorical matrix was established with the following definitions:

Awareness: Create a critical awareness of the reality of injustice (local, national and continental) in order to encourage each and every person to commit to personally and collectively contribute in a concrete and effective way to change the reality of injustice into a fair order.

Education: An action that promotes the development and universal right to education that is relevant, liberating, democratic and a source of awareness, with teachers that are prepared to make this process easier in a historical context in which education has reproduced excluding socioeconomic and political orders. It has to include the students and their families as people with a relevant role in education and as affected by injustice. It includes an evangelizing, liberating and catechetical role related to Catholic education that has to be open to the ones that do not share the faith in Jesus Christ.

Church: A community of all the believers that does not reduce itself to the hierarchy: neither to the priests nor to religious people. It recognizes the key role of the laity, which is Christ-centred, focusing on the paschal mystery, seeking to form a "new man" within communities that are committed to the transformation of the death realities and to work with and for the helpless. It lives in humble conditions and for the poor ones. It is linked to education and to different spheres of the lay world, including the social, political, cultural and economic, having the catechetical roles of evangelizing and liberating.

Historical moment: It refers to (i) diagnosis or reading of the context to reveal death and injustice realities with the aim to determine the paths of action for its transformation; (ii) movement/tension that it is produced when there is change from one historical situation to another.

Oppression and injustice structures: Structures that maintain "social sins": needs, and unfair connections between people, regarding social, cultural, economic and political spheres.

Poverty: An intersubjective situation, the result of relationships of injustice, the absence of socio-cultural integration and the lack of social, cultural, economic and political goods.

Justice, fair order: Establishment of an order that it is built with the collaboration of all the individuals of the local, national and regional community. It implies building peace that goes beyond the negative definition of peace as the simple absence of conflict and includes the fight to change the social, political, economic and cultural inequality.

Economy that is aligned with the social doctrine of the church, and oriented to justice, fraternity and national and Latin American development, as a way to create a more human order.

Development: The change of unfair and oppressive conditions into fair, decent and human conditions that aim towards the creation of a new type of human being and world order in which peace is an essential process and component.

Politic: Democratic and committed participation of all the citizens without any exception in the decisions that concern the community, whether local, national or regional, through representative and legitimate institutional channels that make such participation in decision-making effective in a peaceful way. This implies a *political class* committed to the common good of society and to the democratic mechanisms mentioned above.

After this process of defining the categorical matrix, under the guidance of the researcher responsible for the exercise, the team carried out a collective exercise of categorizing some of the PEIs of the sample. In addition, there was a discussion about previously codified quotes in the context of some of the categories of the matrix. Both of these exercises were developed with the aim of calibrating the judgment of the PEI's codifiers selected for the analysis.

Finally, as a result of this coding operation of the IEP, a database was built which made it possible to reveal and interpret the extent of the defined categories' presence: the emphasis, deficit or even the absence of them.

In this context, it was considered that IEP documents are units of analysis through which it is possible to identify values, beliefs, foundations and ways of conceiving the educational reality. Ultimately, it contributes to the effective construction of that reality. This way of conceiving IEPs as containers of discourses on reality is what allows their analysis.

Sample Design

A non-probabilistic sample was used, for convenience based on the selection of "types", characteristic of Social Sciences. Although it does not provide representativeness, it does allow a way to tackle a complex phenomenon whose first approach has an exploratory nature. The "types" are designed according to an intentional sample of establishments around homogeneous and contrasting criteria. The homogeneous criteria are inspired by three elements: first, the stratification according to socioeconomic level. This element status is a combined economic and sociological measure of a person's job readiness and individual or family economic and social position. This is in relation to other people, based on their income, education and employment. When analysing the socioeconomic level of a family, the income of the household, the levels of education and occupation are analysed, as well as the combined income compared with the individual incomes. The personal attributes of its members are also analysed. Second, the establishments provide at least high school general education (In Chile, high school education corresponds to secondary education, a stage in formal education that goes after primary school. Its objective is to train students to start higher education studies. After the completion of secondary

education, it is usual to opt for the labour world, professional training or studying at the university). Finally, the establishments belong to the Metropolitan Region of Santiago de Chile.

The definition of "theoretical types" underlies the concept of representativeness, characteristic of qualitative designs, i.e. from this perspective, the central issue is not the quantity or extension of certain features, but rather the reconstruction of experiences and meanings associated with certain social and individual phenomena.

Although 15 cases were planned, our sample was finally made up of 13 establishments: 1 of a lower class and 3 establishments for each of the following levels: medium-lower class, medium class, upper-medium class and upper class.

Results

First, regarding the distribution of categories according to schools and socioeconomic level, the following can be asserted.

When reviewing the distribution of the categories according to schools and socioeconomic level, there is a greater heterogeneity as the socioeconomic level of the educational establishments grows. In this case, the results show a greater diversity in the presence of contents of the Episcopal Conference of Medellín. At the same time, as the presence of the categories diversifies, the central contents of the message of the post-conciliar Church—such as injustice and structures of oppression and poverty—disappear. Likewise, the presence of the Education category, in all the considered socioeconomic levels, tends to be the one with the higher degree of presence compared to the rest of the thematic categories in each school. The strong presence of Education in an upper-middle and middle class school stands out. However, in the lower-middle class level, that presence is accompanied in several cases by a similar presence of Justice and Historical Moment. Additionally, at the upper class level, there is a case in which the presence of Awareness, Education and Justice is remarkably similar to each other. Finally, at the lower-class level, with only one school, there is a remarkably balanced distribution of mentions of the following categories: Education, Structure of oppression, Church and Poverty.

Second, in relation to the explicit presence of each of the ten categories, for the set of schools whose IEPs have been analysed, the research findings are the following:

The Education category has 52 citations in the total IEPs analysed, which makes it the top thematic priority for this group of schools. With approximately 50% fewer mentions, and in decreasing order, there are Poverty, Church and Justice (29, 25 and 21 citations, respectively). Meanwhile, the categories Awareness (11 mentions) and Development (8 mentions) have a notorious deficit in the mentions of the analysed documentary corpus. Finally, the categories minimally mentioned or are almost totally silent in the IEPs of these schools are Historical and Political Moment, with five mentions each. The Economy is the category that, from the researched set, has the weakest presence, with only 1 mention.

Third, our findings allow us to distinguish the degree of presence of each of these categories disaggregated by the socioeconomic level to which the ten Catholic schools considered in this study belong.

It is possible to distinguish two ubiquitous categories that have some explicit presence in all the socioeconomic levels considered. Those categories are Education and Poverty, which in the upper and upper-middle levels both have the highest number of mentions (28 and 17 citations for Education and 9 and 17 citations for Poverty). At the other end of the spectrum is the Economy category, practically absent from all socioeconomic levels, apart from the upper class (1 citation). In the same way, the category Structures of oppression is totally ignored by the different socioeconomic levels analysed, with the exception of the upper middle level (3 citations).

However, if we include the perspective of the socioeconomic levels, the lower class level, made up of a single school, stands out as the one with the largest number of categories ignored in the EIPs analysed, with education and poverty being the only ones with a minimal presence (1 citation each). At the other extreme, the upper and upper-middle class levels are the ones that mention in their IEPs almost all the categories investigated, except for Oppression structures at the upper class level and Economy at the upper-middle class level. These two socioeconomic levels are also the ones with the higher presence of the thematic categories in comparison to the rest of the levels considered in this analysis.

Discussion

The Second Vatican Council represents the specific understanding of the need for the Church to,

> scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in a language intelligible to each generation, it can respond to the perennial questions that men ask about this present life and the life to come. (Second Vatican Council, 1965, par. 4)

It meant a change in the relationship of the Church with the modern world in which all its members are called to contribute in an important way to its work, and called to respond to the challenges that contemporary societies present for all human beings.

Understanding how the guidelines of Medellín have been reframed in Institutional Educational Projects (declarative level of school policy) and in the daily experience (curriculum experience level) of Chilean denominational schools from the late 1960s to the present represents the opportunity to understand and articulate new clues about the work of the "new Church" in educational establishments. The Catholic Church has been linked to educational work from its very beginning, orchestrating its evangelizing action with educational tasks, which work was accentuated after the Council message.

One should not ignore the fact that the Medellín discourse appropriates a particular issue, i.e. the Latin American context, where bishops themselves state that

the continent's education is called to respond to the challenge of the present and the future so that it could liberate human beings. For the bishops, education is "the key instrument" to free the masses from all servitude and make them ascend from less human to more human conditions (Conferencia Episcopal Latinoamericana, 1968).

This liberating education considers that educational structures should be oriented towards the transformation of unjust situations, transforming the dominant social and economic structures. Therefore, for the Latin American bishops, the task of education is not a simple one, in a continent where injustices and inequalities are long-standing historical structures. If the situation of an underdeveloped continent is not considered, the need to improve the quality of life is neglected.

Within this framework, and considering the findings of this research, what initially stands out is the precariousness of the presence of the Medellín's categories in the educational projects analysed. Most of the establishments have not appropriated, or lost the appropriation and have neglected—the comprehensive categories that Medellín offers as key elements to read and interpret the social and cultural realities *according to the Church's language* and intervene as necessary.

The thematic hierarchy that can be extrapolated from our findings allows us to conjecture about the scarce presence of the categories mentioned above. First, the categories whose degree of presence is deficient and minimal (Awareness, Development, Historical Moment, Politics, Structures of oppression and Economics) refer to essential areas and experiences of personal and collective existence in increasingly complex, unequal and differentiated societies. From the point of view of Medellín, these categories refer to competencies associated with the critical reading of contexts by subjects educated in an attitude of responsible and active commitment to the transformation of these areas. However, it is also true that the categories of awareness and structures of oppression could seem anachronistic in the current era in which the formative processes focus on enabling individual promotion or, at least, on mere job training. Thus, how much is contemporary education, as a reflection of a society and its interests and of the Catholic school itself, in line with these aforementioned domains of existence that, being of a more socio-political order, transcend the transmission of content that is functional to individual work development? And to what extent does the teaching staff of the contemporary Catholic school possess the professional competencies that the categories of Medellín demand of an educator, even more so in the teaching of religion and the role that the teacher within the Catholic school has?

Second, the category with the highest degree of presence turns out to be Education. This makes it possible to hypothesize that in the IEPs analysed, the strongest impact of Medellín is precisely about the issue that is inherent to the Catholic school: the comprehensive formation of new generations. Something similar happens with the categories of intermediate presence (poverty, church and justice): they are notions strongly present in Medellin and they seem to have remained as issues against which the Catholic school cannot and should not remain indifferent.

It is important to highlight the relationship established between the categories of Medellín's discourse and the socioeconomic level of the educational establishments whose IEPs have been analysed. This is essential since low-socioeconomic-level

establishments show little or no presence in most of the concepts investigated. In this scenario, however, it should be noted that there are categories, namely, Education, Poverty and Church that are present in the IEPs of all socioeconomic levels considered. We hypothesize that they represent what has been inherited from Medellín in schools of different socioeconomic levels, while representing part of the "common sense" of any Catholic church institution that pays attention to the orientations of its pastors in contemporary society, including the educational institutions.

The most absent categories throughout the various socioeconomic levels considered are development, structures of oppression, economy, historical and political moment. It is worth asking why the reported absence is accentuated at the more deprived socioeconomic levels. Based on this, a possible hypothesis is the absence of an official discourse that transcends the borders of institutionalism and that is channelled to levels of greater vulnerability with the same clarity that is received at the more privileged levels. The complexity of the discourse of the Latin American Bishops requires a reconceptualization to be understood and appropriated by structures such as education, especially by the Catholic schools located in contexts of socioeconomic and cultural disadvantage.

With these findings, we also hypothesize that the time in which we are living is facing several attacks reactive to the critical and transformative discourses, such as that of Medellín. The Church itself has at times reacted against its most prophetic manifestations of commitment to the *crucified of today*, amid the passion of the world, to announce Easter. The initial reformist impulses of the Church and the States have been overshadowed because of the dictatorial regimes that governed a good part of Post-Conciliar Latin America and their neoliberal heritage.

In this regard, if, as the Delors Report (1998) pointed out, education consists in learning to know, do, be and live together, the counterweight role of the Catholic school in the face of an individualistic market culture that has become dominant because of these historical processes is of paramount importance.

Finally, the implications and research projections of the presented investigation point to the need and to the possibility to broaden the study, based on the many fundamental topics of the Medellin document in a series of IEPs (declarative level of the curriculum) and the daily experience (curriculum experience level) of the schools that developed these IEPs. Further to this research, which has proven to be valuable, its projection to daily school life through the collection and analysis of speeches and the perception of students, teachers, directors and parents will allow making relevant comparisons between the declarative and experience level of the school curriculum so as to explain the detected deficits in a more comprehensive way, and thus have a clearer sociological dimension that has to be taken into consideration. At a school intervention level, at which researchers should collaborate with the schools, additional investigation would provide clues to the analysed schools that are relevant for them to evaluate and update their own IEPs. Moreover, out of these particular case analyses, there could be a detachment of principles and theories of a more general order that could be beneficial to other denominational school communities to enrich their theoretical and practical repertories. They will then have the necessary tools for the responsible and capable management of the evaluation and updating processes

of their IEPs, which, in the Chilean context, are expected to be done regularly and systematically for the quality of the formative processes that are developed and managed by the school.

References

II Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano (Medellín, Colombia). (1968). *La Iglesia en la actual transformación de América Latina a la luz del Concilio*. Santiago de Chile: Paulinas.

Alliaud, A., & Antelo, E. (2011). *Los gajes del oficio: Enseñanza, pedagogía y formación*. Buenos Aires: Aique.

Bernstein, B. (1990). *Poder, educación y conciencia. Sociología de la transmisión cultural.* Barcelona: El Roure.

Bernstein, B., & Díaz, M. (1985). Hacia una teoría del discurso pedagógico. *Revista Colombiana de Educación, 15*.

Consejo Pontificio Justicia y Paz. (2005). *Compendio de la doctrina social de la Iglesia*. Buenos Aires: Conferencia Episcopal Argentina.

Cox, C. (2006). Construcción política de reformas curriculares. *Profesorado. Revista de Currículum y Formación del Profesorado, 10*(1), 1–24.

Cox, C. (2011). Currículo escolar de Chile: génesis, implementación y desarrollo. *Revue International de Education de Sevres, 56,* 1–9.

Cox, C., Bascopé, M., Castillo, J. C., Miranda, D., & Bonhomme, M. (2014a). Citizenship education in Latin America: Priorities of school curricula. *IBE Working Papers on Currículum Issues*, 14. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002279/227975e.pdf.

Cox, C., Bascopé, M., Castillo, J., Miranda, D., & Bonhomme, M. (2014b). Educación ciudadana en América Latina: Prioridades de los currículos escolares. *IBE Working Papers on Curriculum Issues No. 14.* Ginebra: UNESCO Oficina Internacional de Educación. Retrieved from www.org/ïleadmin/user_upload/Publications/Working_Papers/education_ciudadana_ibewpci_14.pdf.

De Lora, C. (2012). Del Concilio a Medellín, Hoy. Congreso Continental de Teología. San Leopoldo, Brasil, 7 a Octubre 11, 2012.

Delors, J. (1996). *La educación encierra un tesoro*. Santiago de Chile: Santillana. Ediciones UNESCO.

Delors, J. (1998). *Learning: The treasure within*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Doig, K. G. (1990). *Diccionario: Río Medellín Puebla*. Lima: VE.

Giannini, H. (2007). *La metafísica eres tú. Una reflexión ética sobre la intersubjetividad*. Santiago de Chile: Catalonia.

Gimeno, J. (2010). *Saberes e incertidumbres del currículum*. Madrid: Ediciones Morata.

Gimeno, J., & Pérez Gómez, A. (1996). *Comprender y transformar la enseñanza*. Madrid: Morata.

Larrosa, J. (2000). *Pedagogía profana. Estudios sobre lenguaje, subjetividad y formación.* Buenos Aires: Novedades Educativas.

Larrosa, J. (2007). Dar la palabra. In *La experiencia de la lectura. Estudios sobre literatura y formación* (pp. 653–672). México: FCE.

Pinar, W. (2004). *What is curriculum theory?*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Purpel, D., & McLaurin, W. (2004). *Moral and spiritual crisis in education*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Second Vatican Council. (1965). Constitución dogmática sobre la Iglesia.

Dr. Patricia Imbarack Dagach obtained her doctoral degree in Education Sciences from the Pontifi cal Catholic University of Chile (UC) and received her degree in clinical psychology and is a Professor in Learning and Development at the School of Education, UC. She has taught at several universities, teaching courses in the area of learning development in children and adolescents. She was a researcher at the Centre for Studies of the Ministry of Education between 2011 and 2014 and is currently the Director of the Interdisciplinary Centre for the Study of Religion CIERUC. She also serves as a member of the advisory board for academic pastoral work at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. She has also worked as a consultant for the dissemination of documents and reports on education in the Archdiocese of Santiago. Her research focuses predominantly on the development of teachers and Catholic education.

Dr. Sergio Riquelme Muñoz is a member of the Faculty of Education, and the Centre for Religious Studies of the Pontificia Universidad Católica, Chile. He researches in the areas of Teacher Education, Citizenship Education, Curriculum, and Educational Policies, while lecturing in the Programme of Catholic Religious Education at PUC. He is also a member of the Community of Experts IBE-UNESCO.

Chapter 52
Religious Education in the Secularized Netherlands

Monique C. H. van Dijk-Groeneboer

Introduction

Being a religious educator in Western Europe, especially in the highly secularized Netherlands, is a complicated job, as the figures of religious affiliation other than that corresponding to the religious identity of the schools will show. Like many Western European countries, the Netherlands is a pluralistic, multi-religious and secularized country. Originally, the Dutch were mainly Protestant and Roman Catholic. But when Dutch figures on religious adherence are compared to world figures, it transpires that the Netherlands has high percentages both for the Christian religion (40%) and for no religion (49%), whereas world percentages are lower, both for Christians (33%) and for those of no religion (12%). On the other hand, Dutch rates for other religions are lower than world rates, thus 5% of the Dutch population is Muslim (world 22%), 0.5% is Hindu (world 14%), 0.5% is Buddhist (world 7%) and 5% profess some 'other religion' (world 12%) (see Johnsons and Grim (2013), for world percentages; Schmeets and Mensvoort (2015), for the Dutch figures).

However, a look at the religious backgrounds of schools produces a different perspective. Most of the 655 secondary schools in the Netherlands are denominational schools, either Roman Catholic (153) or Protestant (133), with 184 public schools, and 185 other non-public schools (Statistics Netherlands, 2016). It seems therefore as though secularization has not happened at all in the educational field.

In fact, what is happening is quite extraordinary. Many schools are still nominally Catholic, but neither their pupils nor the majority of their teachers are much committed to this religion anymore. In most cases, the religious identity of the school is being contested. The hope that young people can be reached and educated as they were previously is unrealistic and must be reconsidered (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Roebben, 2007; Savage, Collins-Mayo, & Mayo, 2006; Ziebertz & Riegel, 2008;

M. C. H. van Dijk-Groeneboer (✉)
Faculty of Catholic Theology, Tilburg University, Tilburg, Netherlands
e-mail: M.C.H.vanDijk@uvt.nl

Zondervan, 2008). This affirms the challenge described earlier of being a religious educator in a Catholic school attended by many pupils who are not Catholics.

The current generation of young people has been given many names, for instance Millennials, Generation Me or the Net Generation (Shapira, 2008; Strauss & Howe, 2000; Twenge, 2014). First and foremost, they are still young; they are shaping their identity, choosing an education and a possible future profession. They are busy dealing with their peers and looking for possible romantic relationships, as our own new research will also demonstrate. The findings from the studies mentioned suggest that most young people primarily believe in their family, in their friends and in themselves as individuals—this can be defined as 'immanent faith'. Research has shown that they do not miss knowledge of faith or going to church. They are glued to their mobile phones so as not to miss anything that is going on in the world around them. Young people are often unaware of the religious backgrounds of their deepest values, because they are religiously illiterates. When pupils become more aware of their values and the way these influence their choices, they will be less vulnerable to confusion due to the overwhelming barrage of information offered on the internet. Moreover, it will help them to find the roots for their values in a religious tradition, as this will give them guidelines and sources to support their choices when dealing with problems.

Given the figures on the denominational affiliation of Dutch schools, it may be asked what it still means to be a Catholic school in the Netherlands. Parents do not choose a school on the basis of its religious identity, but much more because of its accessibility and the quality of the education it can offer. In 2000, over 40% of non-religious parents chose a school with a religious identity, whereas 20% of religious parents chose public or non-denominational schools (Brenneman-Helmers, 2008, p. 24). As a result, the population at Catholic secondary schools is highly diverse, as has been described above (Van Dijk-Groeneboer & Brijan, 2013; see also Faber, 2012; Miedema, Bertram-Troost, ter Avest, Kom, & de Wolff, 2013): 36% of the pupils at Catholic secondary schools were Christian, 53.1% were non-religious, 3.2% Muslim, 0.8% Hindu, 0.1% Buddhist and 6.8% had another religion. The Christians (36%) were 16% Roman Catholics, with the other 20% Protestant or belonging to another Christian denomination. More than half of the entire population of these schools, therefore, is non-religious. Teachers have to be aware of this when teaching religious education at a Catholic school like this. They must realize that their pupils often know little about the Roman Catholic faith, tradition, rituals and so on. Nor do they seem to expect any more that they will be acquiring this knowledge at their Catholic secondary school.

Conducting Research in Catholic Secondary Schools

Our research focuses on the different types of young people that can be found in class-rooms today. A typology (Van Dijk-Groeneboer, 2015, 2017) which we developed describes the different categories of young people that can be found in the classroom.

This typology is the result of many years of studying pupils in secondary schools, combined with a state of the art of all the research, both qualitative and quantitative, that has been carried out on this subject in the Netherlands. Of course, the categories in the typology are ideal types and no pupil can be pigeonholed precisely, but it helps to realize that any given classroom is likely to contain pupils with these different degrees of religious commitment. In addition to this typology, we carry out further research in the Netherlands every 5 years (Van Dijk-Groeneboer & Brijan, 2013).

A lengthy questionnaire was distributed among pupils in secondary schools across the Netherlands in 2017, as part of the longitudinal 5-yearly research project started in 1997. This section will present results about how many of the respondents call themselves Catholics or religious, what values they think are important in life, and what inspires them in their lives.

In 2017, 950 pupils of Catholic secondary schools participated in a digital survey by completing a questionnaire, which took about twenty minutes, either in their classroom or as a home assignment.

Some basic results will be discussed here. Of the 950 pupils, 48% were boys and 53% girls, so the gender ratio is balanced. The respondents were given a list of possible reasons for choosing a Catholic school, and they had to select the answers that applied to them. The ambiance of the school scored highest with 45% of the pupils ticking that box. The distance between home and school was also an important reason, as 38% chose this answer. The fact that friends chose the school was mentioned by 27%, and the reputation of the school by 28% of the pupils. The school's Catholic religious identity was a reason of choice for only 3% of the respondents.

Life Values

An important part of the longitudinal survey is a list with life values, each of which the respondents had to rate as 'very important', 'important', 'none of these', 'important' or 'very unimportant'. 'Being free and independent', 'being happy with myself' and 'enjoying life' are the values mentioned most often. All of them were marked as important or very important by 94% (N = 903). This is in agreement with the results that were obtained twenty years ago in our longitudinal research. Of course, one needs to take into consideration that these results are related with the age of the respondents, who are still at school and live with their parents, and who want to grow up and be free of what other people want them to do.

Teachers should talk about these values in the classroom, show which traditions offer a solid base to build these values on, and help pupils to achieve the goals that they value in life. Rossiter (2011) calls this the need to include a search for the spiritual and moral dimensions in experience and events (p.60); review their life, clarify personal values, and offer a spiritual/moral viewpoint that could be of personal benefit to them (p.61). Music, for instance, can be used to start this dialog, as many of the pupils in our research admit that this helps them to deal with feelings of sadness.

Values associated with faith are most often ranked as unimportant, as was the case in 1997, 2002 and 2007. 'A life guided by God or Allah' was ranked as unimportant or very unimportant by 74% of the respondents. Having trust in God or Allah was (very) unimportant for 61% of the pupils, but 'having faith' was somewhat more to the respondents' liking with only 44% ranking this item as (very) unimportant.

Another question was about the things pupils worry about in their lives. There was a list of 12 options, and the respondents could choose more than 1 answer. 'Bad grades' was the number one answer; 70% of the respondents ticked it as something they worry about. The second most frequent response was 'a loved one is sick or has passed away', chosen by 56%, third: 'my appearance' chosen by 45% and fourth: 'problems with parents', chosen by 41%. 'Society' was also considered a cause of anxiety for almost a third of the pupils (33%), followed by a concern about 'death' (ticked by 28%). Less important reasons for worry were: 'popularity' (19%), 'bullying' (16%), 'relationship problems boyfriend/girlfriend' (13%), 'problems concerning sexuality' (11%) and the 'economic crisis' (10%).

Religious Background

For the purposes of this chapter, the most interesting results are those from the following questions concerning religion and faith. The first question was, 'I identify as….' (N = 954). The group breaks down as follows: Roman Catholic: 12%, Protestant: 1%, Reformed: 1%, Christian: 18%, Jew: 1%, Moslem: 2.5%, Buddhist: 0.2%, Hindu: 0.3%, atheist: 12%, Humanist: 2%, not affiliated: 43% and other religion: 7%. So, in a Catholic school, only 12% of the pupils regard themselves as Roman Catholic and only 20% as Christian or Protestant. This means that not even half of the population in Catholic schools adhere to the Christian faith.

Furthermore, 68% of the pupils never enter a church, chapel, or mosque, nor do they think it will attract them. Only 5% of respondents confirmed that they feel at home in such a religious/sacred space. 6% acknowledge that they have had a religious experience in their lives, and 13% think they know what such experiences are like.

Religion, Faith and Belief

Another question asked about the pupils' opinions on religion and belief. Statements often ranked as 'not important' or 'very unimportant' (N = 826) are: 'I am religious or a believer' 33%, 'I know exactly what and how I believe' 46%, 'I want to believe but do not know how' 15%, 'I think faith is outdated and old-fashioned' 35%. Pupils often do not regard 'being religious' or 'knowing how and what to believe' as important, but neither do they think that faith is old-fashioned. A third of the pupils call themselves religious or believers, whereas 61% disagree with this proposition. A third agree that faith is ancient and old-fashioned, but at the same time, 57% say this is not the

case. Moreover, 27%, 16% and 24% of respondents state that religion will play a part in the life events of marriage, children's upbringing and their funeral, respectively. 14% declare that they read the Bible or Koran frequently or regularly and 10% of the pupils frequently talk with their parents about religion. 16% of all parents go to church often, whereas 28% of the pupils say they are receiving a religious upbringing. We also inquired about the pupils' prayer practices. 16% pray often or very often at meals, 8% pray at night in bed, 8% pray when they are sad and another 8% when they are grateful.

It is also interesting to realize that 47% of the pupils do not think it is necessary to have a religion or religious services to believe, 8% say you do need to belong to a religion and attend services regularly when you believe, and 10% say you do not have to belong to a religion, but you do need to go to church or to the mosque regularly. We also asked the pupils to answer a question about belonging and believing. 6% say they feel connected to a religious institution and are active believers, who use their religion in everyday life. 4% say they are active believers but feel attracted to more than one religious organization. 10% say they are active believers but do not feel connected to any religious organization at all. 24% say they are not active believers but do feel connected to a particular religious institution, whereas 55% of the pupils say they are not believers or belong to a religious institution.

Images of God

We also included a question to find out how they see God. A number of images of God were described in a list and pupils had to state whether they 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed with the image in question (N = 793): 'There is a God who personally cares for every human being' (16% agreed), 'I see God as a man with a beard who sits on a cloud' (19% agreed), 'God is just another word for nature' (10% agreed), 'God is everywhere and always' (23%) and 'God is good and righteous' (28%). It is interesting to see that some respondents continue to subscribe to the image of God as a man with a beard who sits on a cloud, although of course, it is difficult to judge what they really mean when they agree to this proposition. More than a quarter of the pupils agree that God is good and righteous.

These results show that teaching religious education in these Catholic schools is not an easy task, since there is an obvious lack of knowledge of Catholic knowledge, rituals and sacraments, as well as a lack of familiarity with the 'lived faith' of Roman Catholics and its meaning in everyday life.

We asked the pupils what they thought on the purpose of religious education at school was. 5% confirm that religious education leads people to faith, 32% say the subject helps them to look for meaning in life, 60% say it gives an objective overview of world religions, 53% say it helps pupils to communicate about religious questions and only 17% say the subject should not be taught at school.

In conclusion, new teaching methods are highly desirable to bridge this gap between the religious identity of the Catholic school and the education that a highly

pluralistic, predominantly non-religious and diverse population of young pupils requires. When looking for successful religious education methods, teachers should be aware that a variety of approaches is necessary due to the fact that there are different types of pupils in the classroom. Learning *about* religions is very much a necessity for religiously illiterate young people, or 'Tranquillos' (Roebben, 2015; Van Dijk-Groeneboer, 2015, 2017).

For young people who are religiously active in pick-and-mix fashion, 'Spirituosos' (Van Dijk-Groeneboer, 2015, 2017), as well as for 'Legatos', who belong to a religion in certain ways through old patterns involving their grandparents and so on, learning 'from' religion is still very worthwhile, as stories about people and their religious beliefs from the past and the present can provide them with good examples of what religion can mean in a person's life, the coping strategies and comfort it can provide, etc. Learning 'into' religion is a good strategy for the very few who may be termed as 'Fortissimos' (Van Dijk-Groeneboer, 2015, 2017), since it enhances religious reflection, bringing real narrative dialog into your classroom.

Diversity Requires New Teaching Methods

There is much religious diversity in the classroom, even in Catholic secondary schools. It is necessary, therefore, to develop new lessons, activities and materials that Catholic religious education teachers can practice and use to educate the diverse classroom they are facing. These classrooms include pupils who, despite the fact that they are not affiliated with any religion, are interested in religion and are open to entering sacred spaces and to spiritual experiences.

The Tilburg School of Catholic Theology has therefore developed new research strategies that take into account these different categories of young people, as well as the challenges that education faces in the twenty-first century: dealing with digital media skills, career and life skills, including values and behaviours such as curiosity, care, confidence and courage (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Together with the theology students who are training to become secondary school teachers, the faculty of our School has developed new education skills (Kienstra, Van Dijk-Groeneboer, & Boelens, 2017; Van Dijk-Groeneboer, Kienstra, & Boelens, 2017; Van Dijk-Groeneboer, Boelens, & Kienstra, 2016). Activities have been developed that can be incorporated into lessons, as well as complete lessons on certain topics. These are currently being described and tested. Thus, Bibliodrama and interreligious learning through making a personal 'religious passport' are successful new methods, while 'listening', 'giving space' and 'silence' are being piloted in the classroom as new teaching methods. They change the role both of the religious education teacher and of the pupils in the classroom.

A longitudinal study to measure the effectiveness of these lessons and activities has been initiated to conduct evidence-based research of the learning activities that have been developed to further religious reflection. Using new teaching methods, we have tended to be successful in enhancing religious education and learning 'through'

religion. Our strategy is not to expound religious views to convert the pupils, but to elaborate on the discussion of values in the classroom, where each dialog partner has his or her own say, searching for meaning in their own reasoning and decision-making in a genuinely open dialog. This way of teaching is part of the new 2-year programme developed by the Tilburg University Teacher Training in religious education. Lecturers, professors and students explore Catholic theology, religions and didactics, but the programme also offers opportunities and moments for inspiration, such as extracurricular meetings.

It must be emphasized that this diversity in the classroom and the quest for new methods for teaching religious education are not just issues for Catholic schools. The perspectives offered in 'Interfaith Education for All' (Wielzen & Ter Avest, 2017) show that there are all kinds of initiatives to enable teachers, staff and pupils to transform the social environment by learning about the other, his or her religion, faith and worldview, and to appreciate these to a certain extent, thus allowing people, especially in diverse and pluralist countries, to live together in dialog, i.e. enhancing active, social citizenship. Amid the multitude of changes that our world is currently undergoing, including the large migratory movements caused by wars, hurricanes and the uneven distribution of wealth, this will be a challenge for the entire world. Religion and respectful dialog can be of tremendous help in sharing and connecting (Roebben, 2015).

Being a Witness

As several authors have pointed out, it is necessary to enter into a dialog with pupils. Grace (2010) has used the word 'spiritual capital' in this regard. It 'draws upon theological literacy but adds to it the dimension of a personal witness to faith in practice, action and relationships (..), a form of personal empowerment (…): the sustaining resource for everyday leadership in Christian living and working' (p. 120). When a teacher tells pupils about his own religious narratives, for example by sharing a part of his own biography that has made him the teacher he is, with the values he treasures, he will challenge pupils to do the same. Roebben (2015) has written about this and has called it 'inclusive religious education' and 'going on a journey with your pupils' (pp. 34–38). Instead of pointing pupils to where they can find knowledge 'about' religions, the teacher goes on a journey with them and, through narrative dialog, enters 'into' the religions that the participants profess.

In our School of Catholic Theology, the Catholic faith is often the basis for our values and for the choices that are premised upon these values. This cannot and should not be denied. However, every teacher at our School has his or her own history and biography to share with the students and with colleagues. In this way, each story becomes unique and inspiring, instead of uniform and geared to converting others. If teachers are genuine in their own narratives, students will be genuine in theirs, and will come to realize that their own life's story is just as important. The real connection that is thus established will reveal the spirit of each person's own faith, while learning

'through' each other's religion and biographical stories. By introducing this into our educational programme, the entire group of students and teachers will become a learning community in which everyone shares their faith and connects with each other. This is the best example we have to offer to secondary schools. The entire team, including director and managers, can learn and grow by following this way of narrative dialog together. This will mean that the identity of the school is no longer restricted to its name, mission statement and religious education, but will be felt as soon as you enter the school and the classroom. The formation of pupils starts from the moment they first enter the building, and it continues during breaks and other non-learning moments at school. Being a religious community together is the best thing a Catholic school can bring to the lives of young people who are searching for 'who they will be' in their formative years at secondary school.

By creating new religious education methods, and thus forming a learning religious community, the programme developed at our Faculty aims to help teachers in our Catholic schools, providing them with useful materials, and coaching them in their jobs by advising and further educating them. Also, we aim to form religious education teachers who can reproduce this method by being an inspiring dialog partner for the pupils they will be teaching in the future. This will enable Catholic teachers to teach young people in these secularized classrooms to become strong and self-confident, to know their values and their religion, and to be witnesses themselves.

References

Brenneman-Helmers, H. M. (2008). Vijftien jaar onderwijsvernieuwingen in Nederland. *Parlementair onderzoek Onderwijsvernieuwingen, Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 31* 007 nr.7, Den Haag: Staatsdrukkerij.

Crawford, M., e Rossiter, G. (2006). *Reasons for living. Education and young people's search for meaning, identity and spirituality. A handbook*. Camberwell.

Faber, M. (2012*). Identity dynamics at play. A theoretical and empirical analysis of the concept 'religious identity of a school' within a religiously diverse context in the Netherlands*. PhD thesis. Utrecht: Utrecht University.

Grace, G. (2010). Renewing spiritual capital: an urgent opportunity for the future of Catholic education internationally. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 2*(2), 117–128.

Johnsons, T. M., & Grim, B. J. (2013). *The world's religions in figures*. Malden/Oxford: John Wiley and Sons.

Kienstra, N., Dijk-Groeneboer M. van., & Boelens, O. (2018). Religious thinking through using bibliodrama: An empirical study of student learning in classroom teaching. *Religious Education, 113* (2),203–215.

Miedema, S., Bertram-Troost, G., ter Avest, I., Kom, C., and de Wolff, A. (2013). Scholen zonder kerk. In: *Ontkerkelijking…nou en? Themanummer Religie en Samenleving 8*(1), 184–205.

Netherlands, S. (2016). Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. Den Haag/Heerlen: Statline (Last accessed 9 December 2016).

Roebben, B. (2007). *Godsdienstpedagogiek van de hoop*. Grondlijnen voor religieuze vorming, Leuven: Acco.

Roebben, B. (2015). *Inclusieve godsdienstpedagogiek*. Den Haag/Leuven: Acco.

Rossiter, G. (2011). Reorienting the religion curriculum in Catholic schools to address the needs of contemporary youth spirituality. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 3*(1), 57–72.

Savage, S., Collins-Mayo, S. & Mayo, B. (eds) (2006). *Making sense of Generation Y*, London.

Schmeets, H., & van Mensvoort, C. (2015). *Religieuze betrokkenheid van bevolkingsgroepen*. Den Haag/Heerlen: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.

Shapira, I., (19-7-2008). What comes next after Generation X? *The Washington Post,* pp. C01.

Strauss, W., & Howe, N. (2000). *Millennials rising: The Next Great Generation* (p. 2000). NY: Vintage Books.

Trilling, B., & Fadel, C. (2009). *21st Century skills: Learning for life in our times*. San Francisco: Wiley.

Twenge, J. (2014). *Generation Me*: *Why today's young Americans are more confident, assertive, entitled – and more miserable than ever before.* Atria Books.

van Dijk-Groeneboer, M. (2015). Youth ministry - About youth? *Journal of Youth and Theology, 14*(1), 25–45.

van Dijk-Groeneboer, M. (2017). Religious Education in the secularised Netherlands. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 9*(1), 17–28.

van Dijk-Groeneboer, M., Boelens, O., & Kienstra, N. (2016). *Bibliodrama in de klas. Narthex, 16*(4), 62–68.

van Dijk-Groeneboer, M., Boelens, O., & Kienstra, N. (2017). *Geïnspireerde lessen*. Tilburg: Faculteit Katholieke Theologie.

van Dijk-Groeneboer, M., & Brijan, B. (2013). *Kerk uit zicht? Jongeren inspireren!*. Utrecht: Faculteit Katholieke Theologie.

Wielzen, D., & ter Avest, I. (Eds.). (2017). *Interfaith education for all*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Ziebertz, H. G., & Riegel, U. (2008). *Letzte sicherheiten*. Herder: Eine empirische untersuchung zu weltbildern jugendlicher.

Zondervan, T. (ed.) (2008). *Bricolage en bezieling. Over jongeren, cultuur en religie*, Averbode.

Prof. Monica C.H van Dijk-Groeneboer is Professor of religious education at the Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, Tilburg University, and coordinates the Religious Teacher Academy there. For over 20 years, she conducts research amongst catholic secondary school pupils and has developed a typology of youth and their religion in a secular country. She has edited a handbook '*Youth and Religion*' in 2010 Furthermore, she writes articles and gives lectures on this topic as well as on evidence-based new work-methods for catholic religious education.

Correction to: Effective Tools for Pedagogical Change in Religious Education: Experience of Teachers in Hong Kong Catholic Kindergartens and Primary Schools

Wing Kay Vion Ng and Shuet Yan Fion Luk

Correction to:
Chapter 24 in: M. T. Buchanan and A.-M. Gellel (eds.),
Global Perspectives on Catholic Religious Education
in Schools, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-6127-2_24

In the original version of the book, the chapter authors' given and family names were corrected from N. G. Vion Wing Kay and L. U. K. Fion Shuet Yan to Wing Kay Vion Ng and Shuet Yan Fion Luk, respectively. Also, the organization name of the second author, Shuet Yan Fion Luk, was corrected from Caritas Religious and Spiritual Life Education Unit to Caritas Institute of Higher Education. The book has been updated with the changes.

The updated version of this chapter can be found at
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-6127-2_24