

## CATHOLIC TEACHER EDUCATION



Foundations series

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March 2021

### KEY MESSAGES:

- Teachers are the key to the success of a school. A highly skilled teacher will always encourage students to engage meaningfully with the curriculum, encouraging an ethical and coherent response to what has been learnt and offering practical opportunities for the application of knowledge.
- Teachers for Catholic schools will benefit from solid and cohesive programmes of personal and religious formation. Furthermore, the teacher in the Catholic school is called professionally to develop a firm understanding of pedagogy rooted in the Church's philosophical, theological and cultural traditions.

### Introduction

Catholic Teacher Education refers to the broad range of academic and pastoral processes which offer students recognized qualifications (and accreditation) to teach in Catholic schools. It is an essential strand in any discussion of the current and future direction of Catholic education.

Teachers are the key to the success of a school. A highly skilled teacher will always encourage students to engage meaningfully with the curriculum, encouraging an ethical and coherent response to what has been learnt and, where appropriate, offering practical opportunities for the application of knowledge. Teaching students to use the skills of reflections and critical enquiry to develop an ethical and 'wisdom-driven' response to inherited knowledge is a contemporary pedagogical priority.<sup>1</sup> In this light, how teachers are formed for service in Catholic schools is one of the pressing research questions we currently face.

<sup>1</sup> G Biesta, 'The Future of Teacher Education: Evidence, Competence or Wisdom', *Research on Steiner Education* (ROSE), Vol. 3, No. 1, 2009, pp. 8-21.

### Box 1: Knowledge Notes

**What is the mission of the Global Catholic Education website?** The site informs and connects Catholic educators globally. It provides them with data, analysis, opportunities to learn, and other resources to help them fulfill their mission with a focus on the preferential option for the poor.

**Which topics are covered in the Notes Series?** The series explores achievements and challenges for Catholic schools globally, including in terms of enrollment, reach to the poor, academic performance, parental priorities, costs and affordability, and religious education. Interesting innovations are also featured.

**What is the focus of this note?** Dr. Leonardo Franchi from the University of Glasgow reflects on Catholic teacher education, arguing that it may bring together in a creative format theoretical knowledge (philosophy), the story of shared practices (history), how people learn (psychology) and the importance of religious faith (theology), thus contributing to wider educational thinking and the life of the Church.

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## Teacher Education: General Signposts

The field of Teacher Education (sometimes called Teaching Training) involves study of a number of hot topics around wider aims of education. The principal foci are the extent to which liberal and vocational frameworks of education hold sway and what this means for the development of sustainable academic and professional models of Teacher Education.

The importance of high-quality Teacher Education as a driver of school improvement should not be underestimated. It is related to wider discussions on how aims of Higher Education should stress concepts such as Graduate Attributes and employability.<sup>2</sup> To underline the importance of Teacher Education, UNESCO established the *International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030* and its *Vision* and *Mission* offer solid foundation blocks for the development of a research-informed understanding of Teacher Education:

### **Vision**

*The vision of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 is clear: teaching should be a valued profession and every learner should be taught by qualified, motivated and empowered teachers within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems.*

### **Mission**

*To achieve this vision, the TTF's mission is to mobilize governments and other stakeholders for the advancement of teachers and quality teaching, acting as a catalyst of global, regional and national efforts through advocacy, knowledge creation and sharing, and country support and engagement.*<sup>3</sup>

Given the importance of education for politicians and policymakers, debates on how to develop Teacher Education are rarely straightforward. International scholarly bodies lead thinking and facilitate international dialogue using the traditional means of conferences and policy documents.<sup>4</sup> The audience for such events tends

to be composed of academics and policy makers, not teachers and students. As prospective teachers are both students and teachers, all sites of Teacher Education—universities, teacher colleges and schools—must be bridges between academic study / policy formulation and teaching practice (or 'practicum').<sup>5</sup>

This leads to another hot topic: is the school or the institution of Higher Education the principal site of learning for prospective teachers? If the former, are class teachers sufficiently familiar with the latest research to provide a robust theoretical foundation; if the latter, are university-based staff (even if former classroom teachers), too far removed from the daily life of schools to offer constructive advice on practice? What these debates mean for Catholic Teacher Education is explored below.

## Catholic Teacher Education

When we add in 'Catholic' to already fraught debates on the aims of education and the best way to educate prospective teachers, another layer of complexity unavoidably appears.

The first layer of challenge is in working out how Catholic Teacher Education programmes can support the mission of the Catholic teacher in contemporary schools. This involves, for example, decisions on the extent to which faith formation of the teacher is a 'professional' requirement for accreditation to teach in a Catholic school.

The second challenge comes from deciding how far to align the priorities of Catholic schools with the priorities of the wider political systems in which Catholic educational institutions are located. While dialogue with other ways of thinking is demanded of Catholic educators, where boundaries are drawn is a work in progress.

When addressing the vision/mission of Catholic Teacher Education and its potential as a partner in dialogue with secular voices, it is important to remember that Catholic educators offer a specifically *Catholic* philosophy of education to underpin and shape the life of the institution.<sup>6</sup> What are the key elements of this?

In the first place, parents are the primary educators of their children, not least in matters of faith formation. This

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*Teachers* (ICET)<sup>4</sup> all seek to enhance teacher quality through research and practitioner engagement.

<sup>5</sup> F Caena, *Initial Teacher Education in Europe: An Overview of Policy Issues*. Brussels: European Commission, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Pope Francis suggests a culture of encounter and accompaniment as signs of a Church on pilgrimage. See, for example, Diego Faresi, *Pope Francis: How a Culture of Encounter is Changing the Church and the World*, New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 2015.

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<sup>2</sup> This way of thinking is inherent in contemporary educational thinking as demonstrated by the importance given, for example, to Graduate Attributes and Employability Factors as necessary outcomes of Higher Education. The UK-based Higher Education Academy offers an overview of Graduate Attributes which it summarises as follows 'components which relate to the mastery of subject-specific knowledge, study skills, digital literacies and other 21st century skills. See

<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/graduate-attributes-framework>

<sup>3</sup> <https://teachertaskforce.org/who-we-are/our-mission>

<sup>4</sup> For example, the *International Study Association on Teacher and Teaching* (ISATT), *Teacher Education Policy in Europe* (TEPE) and the *International Council for the Education of*

position is in line with the Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26:

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.<sup>7</sup>

In *Divini Illius Magistri - On Christian Education* (published in 1929 - the only Encyclical on education), Pope Pius XI noted that the family is 'an imperfect society, since it has not in itself all the means for its own complete development'.<sup>8</sup> Civil society hence works with the family in the search for the common good. The *Declaration on Christian Education* articulates this by accepting the state as one of the 'authors of education' along with the family and the Church.<sup>9</sup> This requires ongoing dialogue.

Second, building on the contribution of the parents to the child's integral development, the Catholic school needs a curriculum aligned to the mission of the school. This has been noted by the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome on many occasions, but with special prominence in 1988:

*A Catholic school must be committed to the development of a programme which will overcome the problems of a fragmented and insufficient curriculum. Teachers dealing with areas such as anthropology, biology, psychology, sociology and philosophy all have the opportunity to present a complete picture of the human person, including the religious dimension. Students should be helped to see the human person as a living creature having both a physical and a spiritual nature; each of us has an immortal soul, and we are in need of redemption. The older students can gradually come to a more mature understanding of all that is*

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948. <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

<sup>8</sup> Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri - On Christian Education*, 1929, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Gravissimum educationis - Declaration on Christian Education*, 1965, 3

*implied in the concept of "person": intelligence and will, freedom and feelings, the capacity to be an active and creative agent; a being endowed with both rights and duties, capable of interpersonal relationships, called to a specific mission in the world.*<sup>10</sup>

Catholic schools, of course, are a component part of many national school systems.<sup>11</sup> Each national system of Catholic education operates as part of the educational ecosystem of particular states. With education prey to a degree of political interference on a number of levels both locally and globally, it is vital to devise effective and sustainable Catholic Teacher Education programmes capable of offering educational experiences of high academic and professional quality. In other words, a Catholic understanding of curriculum needs teachers who can successfully navigate a professional path through its multiple demands. Catholic Teacher Education is the key to the success of this endeavour.

Some brief historical details offer a helpful context for the discussion. Teacher Education as a distinctive educational phenomenon emerged as part of the well-documented rise of mass education in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The related commitment to the expansion of Catholic schools required suitable Catholic Teacher Education programmes. This sociological and cultural shift afforded the Catholic Church at this time a welcome opportunity to learn from its own educational history and find therein inspiration on how best to form its teachers.

Catholic education, including Catholic Teacher Education programmes, was traditionally under the auspices of Religious Orders and Teaching Congregations. This is no longer the case. The predominance of lay teachers in schools is a significant feature of the contemporary Catholic educational landscape. The Congregation for Catholic Education describes this shift in the teaching force as an example of a 'shared mission' between Religious and lay people.<sup>12</sup> How this 'shared mission' is

<sup>10</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 1988: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_19880407\\_catholic-school\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html).

<sup>11</sup> G. Grace & J. O'Keefe (Eds.), *International Handbook of Catholic Education: Challenges for School Systems in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Part 1* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> A research priority is to investigate how lay people can continue the particular charisms of the Religious Orders and Teaching Congregations members of the Orders/Congregations are no longer present in substantial numbers in schools. See Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*, 2007.

supported remains a work in progress, as will be shown below.

### Catholic Teacher Education: The View from Rome

The Second Vatican Council explored the nature of Christian education in *Gravissimum educationis*- the Declaration on Christian Education, published in 1965.<sup>13</sup> The fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration was marked by an international gathering of Catholic educators in Rome in 2015. The title of the Conference, *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion*, captured the non-negotiable place of education in the Church. It offered the participants a unique opportunity to assess progress in making the insights of the *Declaration* a reality in Catholic schools.

As is standard practice, an *Instrumentum laboris* (working document) was circulated in advance of the 2015 conference. Its content had emerged from two high level meetings in Rome mandated by the 2011 Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Catholic Education: the first was an Expert Seminar in 2012 with the second being a Plenary Assembly of the members of the Congregation for Catholic Education in 2014.<sup>14</sup>

Given the importance of education to the life and mission of the Church, the agenda for the 2015 conference was wide. Catholic Teacher Education was one of the areas identified for discussion.<sup>15</sup> A section of the *Instrumentum laboris*, headed 'Challenges for Catholic Schools', had this to say on 'The Challenge of Teachers' Lifelong Training':

*In this kind of cultural context, teacher training becomes essential and requires rigour and depth; without this, their teaching would be considered as not credible, unreliable and, therefore, unnecessary. This kind of training is urgent, if we*

*want to rely on teachers who are committed to and concerned with our Educational Project's evangelical identity and its implementation in the future. It would not be advisable to have a "double population" of teachers in Catholic schools: what is needed, instead, is unity among the teachers, who together are willing to embrace and share a specific evangelical identity, as well as a consistent lifestyle.*

### Places and Resources for Teacher Training

*Who can ensure this kind of training? Can specific places be dedicated to this task and be identified? Where can these kinds of trainers be found for teachers?*

*Here are some possible suggestions:*

- *National structures and their offices.*
- *Diocesan structures: vicars or diocesan directors of teaching activities, in synergy or partnership with training institutions. We should really think about the opportunity to centralize the training of lay people with ecclesial responsibilities and religion teachers in one single diocesan facility. On the one hand, this choice would lead to a stronger identity, but it would not provide the answer to a difficult question: how can this kind of training be adapted to needs that are typical of learning contexts? We should not forget that teachers have specific professional identities, with their peculiar features, that should be taken into account during training.*
- *Religious congregations.*
- *Catholic universities or institutes.*
- *Parishes, deaneries or monasteries as centers for retreats or spiritual support for educators.*
- *Networking, e-learning.*<sup>16</sup>

The responses to the issues raised in the *Instrumentum laboris* were collated and published as the *Lineamenta* - the foundation text for the 2015 World Congress.<sup>17</sup> In a section entitled 'Challenges, Strategies and Perspectives that Emerge from the Response to the Questionnaire of the *Instrumentum Laboris*', Part 4 of the *Lineamenta* explores 'The Challenge of Education and Faith' with a relevant subsection headed 'Recruitment and

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[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_20070908\\_educare-insieme\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20070908_educare-insieme_en.html)

<sup>13</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Gravissimum educationis* - Declaration on Christian Education, 1965.

<sup>14</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion*, 'Presentation', 2015. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_20140407\\_educare-oggi-e-domani\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.html).

<sup>15</sup> NB: as an international organization, the Catholic Church requires reliable translations of key terms. This is particularly important in education when words like 'training', 'education' and 'formation' are often used interchangeably despite their different nuances in national and international debates. For more on this as applied to Catholic education, see L. Franchi, 'Authentic Religious Education: A Question of Language', *Religions* 2018, online: <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/9/12/403>.

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<sup>16</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education (2015). *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion*.

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_20140407\\_educare-oggi-e-domani\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.html).

<sup>17</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *World Congress on Catholic Education: Educating Today and Tomorrow, A Renewing Passion - Lineamenta*, 2015. This booklet was issued to all participants free of charge. More information is available here: <http://www.educatio.va/content/cec/it/eventi/congresso-educare-oggi-e-domani/educating-congress.html>.

Training of Teachers,' where it highlighted possible responses to three challenges viz. Recruitment, Training and Retention

## Addressing the challenges

### Recruitment

There is a significant challenge in recruiting young people with the necessary qualifications and commitment to the practice of the faith. This is leading to increasing numbers of teachers in Catholic schools who, although not opposed the "Catholic values" also 'lack the depth of a lived experience in the faith.'<sup>18</sup> To address this, some consideration should be given to 'introducing formal systems of human resource management'. This could include such strategies as 'psychological test, an interview and a short lesson.'<sup>19</sup>

### Training

In too many countries the training of teachers is 'uniform' and has little space for training opportunities specifically designed for those who wish to teach in Catholic schools.<sup>20</sup> To address this, the key factor is cooperation between Catholic schools and universities. This should lead to 'more effective coordination' in the training processes for teachers.<sup>21</sup>

### Retention

There is a concern over the Catholic school sector's capacity to retain high quality staff. A reason for this is financial with State schools often in a better position to offer more favourable working condition, including pay.<sup>22</sup> To address this, improvements in the 'mechanisms for accreditation and qualification' should lead to a greater degree of inter-institutional coordination as a complement to the 'market as a system of staff selection and recruitment'.<sup>23</sup>

The present Knowledge Note will now explore how teachers can 'embrace and share a specific evangelical identity, as well as a consistent lifestyle.' It will do so with reference to documentation from the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome.

The substantial body of work produced by the Congregation for Catholic Education offers rich contemporary insights on issues arising from the teaching

of the Second Vatican Council's *Declaration on Christian Education*.<sup>24</sup>

A prominent theme of the Congregation's work in recent years is the significance attached to intercultural dialogue in schools. 'Intercultural dialogue' in this case refers to i) interreligious dialogue and ii) the dialogue between 'religion' as a phenomenon and other ways of thinking.

In 2013, the Congregation published a lengthy document, *Educating for Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love*. It had the following to say about the formation of teachers:

*The time spent in formation must be used for reinforcing the idea of Catholic schools as being communities of fraternal relationships and places of research, dedicated to deepening and communicating truth in the various scholarly disciplines. Those who have leadership positions are duty-bound to guarantee that all personnel receive adequate preparation to serve effectively. Moreover, they must serve in coherence with the faith they profess, and be able to interpret society's demands in the actual situation of its current configuration. This also favours the school's collaboration with parents in education, respecting their responsibility as first and natural educators.*

*Formation that is particularly dedicated to promoting sensitivity, awareness and competence in the intercultural field can be advanced by paying attention to the following three essential markers:*

*a) integration: this has to do with the school's ability to be adequately prepared for receiving students of different cultural backgrounds, responding to their needs regarding scholastic achievement and personal enhancement;*

*b) Interaction: this has to do with knowing how to facilitate good relationships among peers and among adults. There is an awareness that simply being in the same physical environment is not enough. Encouragement must be given to curiosity about other people, openness and friendship, both in class and in places and times outside the school. Thus, situations of distancing between people, discrimination and conflict can be avoided and repaired.*

*c) Recognizing the other person: one must avoid falling into the trap of imposing one's own views on the other person, asserting one's own lifestyle and one's own way of thinking without taking into*

<sup>18</sup> *Lineamenta*, p. 217

<sup>19</sup> *Lineamenta*, p. 218

<sup>20</sup> *Lineamenta*, p. 218

<sup>21</sup> *Lineamenta*, p. 219

<sup>22</sup> *Lineamenta*, p. 218

<sup>23</sup> *Lineamenta*, p. 219

<sup>24</sup> This body of work should be studied alongside the material for the 2015 World Congress on Catholic Education.

account the other person's culture and particular emotional situation.<sup>25</sup>

This list of suggestions is a reminder that Catholic Teacher Education at its best draws on a wide body of evidence and practice to ensure a research-informed set of programmes and related experiences which values the integral education of the student. How can this be done?

### **Catholic Teacher Education: Some Ways Forward**

The issues highlighted above bring to the fore the challenges facing Catholic Teacher Education. In particular, we note the multiple sites of teacher education in universities, teacher colleges and schools, recognizing that such diverse provision does impede to some extent the development of universal guidelines. A deeper challenge, however, is how to manage and support the catholicity of our institutions and related programme material, especially in the context of a perceived diminishing religious commitment among young people. This leads to issues around the establishment of fair and robust processes for identifying suitable candidates for teaching,

To address the challenges, a contemporary rationale for Catholic Teacher Education is needed. The St Andrew's Foundation for Catholic Teacher Education at the University of Glasgow has formulated the following as a 'rationale' for Catholic Teacher Education:

*Catholic Teacher Education (CTE) is the aggregation of academic and pastoral processes which inform the development of those who aspire to teach in Catholic schools. CTE equips intending teachers in Catholic schools with the content knowledge and methodological awareness necessary to be a successful teacher in the contemporary Catholic school. Underpinning the formation of Catholic teachers is the need to integrate a host of professional and religious values into their personal lives and so exhibit the unity of life which is at the heart of sound Catholic education.*<sup>26</sup>

There are two points worth highlighting: Prospective teachers require robust academic preparation, both in universities and/or schools. Teachers for Catholic schools will benefit from solid and cohesive programmes of personal and religious formation, thus encouraging them

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<sup>25</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education (2015) *Educating for Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love*, 77-78.

<sup>26</sup> University of Glasgow St. Andrews Foundation for Catholic Teacher Education, *Rationale for Catholic Teacher Education* <https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/education/standrewsfoundation/rationaleforcatholicteachereducation/>.

to cultivate virtue and self-giving.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the teacher in the Catholic school is called professionally to develop a firm understanding of pedagogy rooted in the Church's philosophical, theological and cultural traditions.<sup>28</sup> Catholic schools play a key role globally and are hence showcases for the Church's educational and cultural traditions. This sociological reality requires an educational language which can speak fluently to all people, not just those 'on the inside'.<sup>29</sup>

The journey toward such high ideals needs solid foundations in theological knowledge. Some initial theological signposts are, therefore, necessary. This is a prerequisite for Catholic educators, not simply an accessory to other branches of knowledge. The Catholic educational mission, while always affirming educational hospitality to people of all religious traditions and none, needs teachers with good doctrine, pastoral sensitivity and an open, culturally-nuanced worldview. To make this happen, some careful alignment of theology and education is necessary.

### **Aligning Theology and Education in Catholic Teacher Education**

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is an essential text for Catholic educators. Careful study of its content helps deepen our knowledge of the Catholic educational tradition. To help in aligning the *Catechism* with thinking in education, there follow three selected extracts from the *Catechism* and some related educational implications.<sup>30</sup>

#### **Theme 1**

#### **A Catholic Understanding of the Human Person: Catechism of the Catholic Church**

The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God; it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude. It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfilment. By his deliberate actions, the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by

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<sup>27</sup> The important role of the teacher in the life of the Catholic school emphasized in many Magisterial documents and in Policy Documents from Bishops' Conferences. A very good overview of this theme is found in Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in the Catholic School*, 1988.

<sup>28</sup> It is important to critique 'sloganing' in Catholic education. Common currency phrases like 'Gospel values' and 'Catholic ethos' deserve much deeper scholarly examination.

<sup>29</sup> Adapted from Rymarz, R. and Franchi, L. *Catholic Teacher Preparation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Preparing for Mission*, (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Ltd.), 2019.

<sup>30</sup> Adapted from Rymarz and Franchi, (Eds), 2019. See also the 'Five Essential Marks of Catholic Schools' in M. Miller, *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools* (Manchester NH: Sophia Institute Press), 2006, Chapter III.

moral conscience. Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth. With the help of grace they grow in virtue, avoid sin, and if they sin they entrust themselves as did the prodigal son to the mercy of our Father in heaven. In this way they attain to the perfection of charity.<sup>31</sup>

### **A Catholic Understanding of the Human Person: Educational Implications**

The school is the community where the family is assisted in the integral education of the child. The Catholic school is called to promote human flourishing through 'a call to centre everything on God.'<sup>32</sup> Education, therefore, cannot be reduced to a sum of processes dictated by market forces and political ideology. The human person, not matter his/her faith background, is called to live a life of virtue so as to place disinterested love (Caritas) at the heart of society. The dignity of each person must be respected at every level. The Catholic school takes seriously the need to encourage the active co-operation of pupils, parents and teachers in the life and management of the school community, thus allowing the institution to become an exemplary model of Catholic Social Teaching.

#### **Theme 2**

### **The Relationship between Faith and Reason: Catechism of the Catholic Church**

What moves us to believe is not the fact that revealed truths appear as true and intelligible in the light of our natural reason: we believe 'because of the authority of God himself who reveals them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived'.<sup>2</sup> So 'that the submission of our faith might nevertheless be in accordance with reason, God willed that external proofs of his Revelation should be joined to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit.' Thus the miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, the Church's growth and holiness, and her fruitfulness and stability 'are the most certain signs of divine Revelation, adapted to the intelligence of all'; they are 'motives of credibility' (*motiva credibilitatis*), which show that the assent of faith is 'by no means a blind impulse of the mind'.<sup>33</sup>

### **The Relationship between Faith and Reason: Educational Implications**

All knowledge has its source in God. Faith tells us that our reason is an essential element of education. In developing curricula for Catholic schools, a pedagogical focus has to

be on showing how knowledge is authentically communicated to different audiences. To be clear, a Catholic educational community values its faith tradition as an indispensable source of energy for further research into the world we inhabit. For the Catholic school, education is the opening of the human mind to that which lies beyond our human comprehension, not just those phenomena and data which can be measured.

#### **Theme 3**

### **The Importance of Ritual: Catechism of the Catholic Church**

In the Church's liturgy the divine blessing is fully revealed and communicated. The Father is acknowledged and adored as the source and the end of all the blessings of creation and salvation. In his Word who became incarnate, died, and rose for us, he fills us with his blessings. Through his Word, he pours into our hearts the Gift that contains all gifts, the Holy Spirit.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Importance of Ritual: Educational Implications**

The liturgical life of the Church gives necessary order to the life of the Catholic school. It gives members of the school community an opportunity to experience *communio* in a worldwide cycle of prayer. The Liturgical Year is whole-school spiral curriculum, presenting afresh each year the theological and cultural capital at the heart of the Church's life. Liturgy, moreover, reminds us that the end of all human activities is transcendent. The beauty of the Liturgy, as expressed in music, architecture and visual art, is a focus for reflection on the triad of Truth-Beauty-Goodness.

The three themes set out above offer some rich material for consideration of the nature of teaching in a Catholic school today. The Catholic educational project, however, begins with and remains rooted in prayerful study of Scripture: the Gospels as the records of the teaching ministry of Jesus and the remainder of the New Testament as the record of the teaching ministry of the early Christians. Both are sources to which Catholic educators must turn regularly.

### **Moving Forward: Practical Suggestions**

How does the Church respond to the key question set out in the *Instrumentum laboris* for *Educating Today and Tomorrow*: "Who can ensure this kind of training? Can specific places be dedicated to this task and be identified? Where can these kinds of trainers be found for teachers?"

The three-part question requires a feasible and practical response.

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<sup>31</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1700.

<sup>32</sup> C. Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), 2018, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 156.

<sup>34</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1082.

## Proposal

To reform Catholic Teacher Education, a three-stage plan and two clear targets are set out below.

### Stage 1: Evidence of the global provision of Catholic Teacher Education

Stage 1 involves gathering of evidence from Bishops' Conference, Catholic universities and Catholic colleges on the relevant academic programmes and pastoral provision available. The key themes for investigation are: i) what are the curricular priorities for Catholic Teacher Education? ii) where does Catholic teacher education sit in the liberal/vocational debates over the purpose of Higher Education? and iii) what is the role of the school in Catholic Teacher Education? All evidence will be hosted on a website. This will be an observatory of practice in Catholic Teacher Education.

### Stage 2: Evidence of 'effective' Teacher Education practices from wider academic and professional networks

Stage 2 can run concurrently with Stage 1. It will evaluate key international trends in Teacher Education globally. The three key themes above—without the reference to 'Catholic'— would form the core of this exercise and offer significant data to inform current and future discussion on the shape of Catholic Teacher Education.

### Stage 3: Presentation of Evidence

Stage 3 will bring together the evidence gathered above and, in tandem with the Congregation for Catholic Education, publish a series of Position Papers on Catholic Teacher Education.<sup>35</sup> The Position Papers will be circulated widely. Bishops' Conference and Catholic universities and teachers colleges will offer a response. It is a matter for the Congregation for Catholic Education to decide how such an initiative would be managed and any of its findings / recommendations implemented.

Alongside the three stage plan are two targets which together address some of the challenges highlighted in the *Lineamenta*.

The first target is to establish a mechanism wherein shared degrees / professional qualifications are available from different jurisdictions. This will make the best thinking on Catholic education accessible on interactive platforms. Video conferencing offers immense possibilities for enhancing, not replacing, current provision as follows: i) joint/dual masters doctoral programmes for teachers

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<sup>35</sup> This could involve an enhanced role for AVEPRO, the Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties.

and school leaders and ii) sustainable academic collaborations for students on full-time programmes.

The second target is a new dedicated academic journal on Catholic Teacher Education.<sup>36</sup> In the Anglophone world, research in Catholic education is chiefly found in a small set of dedicated journals which do offer a platform for new thinking in the field but there is space for a publication focused specifically on Catholic Teacher Education.<sup>37</sup> This could be an Anglophone or multilingual journal.<sup>38</sup>

## Concluding Remarks

St Anselm's classic definition of theology as 'faith seeking understanding' is also applicable to education. The commitment to 'seeking' implies that Truth awaits us. Catholic Education is an invitation to take part in a lifelong search for meaning by means of prayer/worship, study, dialogue and reflection. It is the teacher's role to make this happen.

Catholic Teacher Education comes from the *beating heart* of the Church. It brings together in a creative format theoretical knowledge (philosophy), the story of shared practices (history), how people learn (psychology) and the importance of religious faith (theology). It is a contribution to wider educational thinking and to the life of the Church.

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*Acknowledgment and disclaimer: The objective of the note is to convey research findings in a rapid and accessible way. The opinions expressed in this note are those of the author only and need not represent the views of the Global Catholic Education project.*

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<sup>36</sup> The writings of the Popes on education are a fine resource. For example, Pope Benedict XVI had much to say about the relationship between education and humanism. An excellent summary of Pope Benedict's thought on education is found in J. Day *Father Benedict: The Spiritual and Intellectual Legacy of Pope Benedict XVI* (Manchester: Sophia Institute Press), 2016, pp. 107-120.

<sup>37</sup> See for example, *Educatio Catholica; International Studies in Catholic Education; Journal of Catholic Education; EducA: International Journal of Catholic Education* (the journal of the Association of Catholic Institutes of Education (ACISE)). Other journals with a strong interest in Catholic education include: *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture; Journal of Religious Education; Journal of Belief and Values; British Journal of Religious Education and Religious Education*.

<sup>38</sup> Of course any new academic journal would need the requisite feasibility studies and business plans.