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Ursuline Preparatory School Warley
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School of the Year Award

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Philippines is creating rapid shifts in this area, being the 8th most gender equal country worldwide. Further, how Catholic education institutions have far-reaching impacts on families and communities in everyday practice. This study is original in that it is one that requires an understanding of while Catholic education institutions are largely private funded institutions in The Philippines, they have a duty to uphold the mission of the Catholic Church to serve the common good by providing women for service as well as leadership. This is the challenging balance for high-powered professionals that this dissertation will endeavour to explore and advocate for, in one of the first studies of its kind in relation to the Philippines.

Research will be Conducted on Catholic Character Education

The second All Hallows Scholar is Kerry MacFarlane, a teacher at Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School in Bournemouth. Kerry wishes to research how Catholic Character Education contributes to the formation of children in primary schools. Kerry states in her proposal that there has been a recent national resurgence in research into character development across a range of disciplines, including education. This renewed attention to Character Education has led to its explicit inclusion in recent educational policy.

In the new Ofsted Framework for Inspection, there will be a judgement on the personal development of learners by evaluating how schools support children to develop their character. In 2017, the DfE surveyed 880 schools which showed that 97% sought desirable character traits among their students (White, Gibb, Lea & Street, 2017). Kerry's outlines show how her research will build on other studies which demonstrate that character education contributes towards positive outcomes for children promoting intrinsic wellbeing (Lickona, 1996; Kristjánsson, 2013; Walker, Roberts and Kristjánsson, 2015). Kerry observes, however, that while evidence of such an impact is not easily accessible or measurable, character education has been linked to increased academic achievement, improved classroom behaviour and emotional and mental wellbeing.

The fundamental aim of Catholic schools is a commitment to the education of the whole person through a 'personal integration of faith and life', and 'the gradual formation of conscience in fundamental, permanent virtues' (Congregation for Catholic Education,

1977). However, at present, there is little research relating to character education within the Catholic education system in England and Wales. It is of keen interest within this project to address this gap in existing research with a specific focus on identifying and evaluating the holistic impact of Catholic Character Education on the formation of the scholar.

Kerry identifies that the primary goal of Catholic Character Education is evangelisation and transformation - to seek to develop the character of Christ in our pupils and young people, which leads ultimately to human flourishing for the benefit of society and the common good. Human flourishing is Beatitude: 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full' (John 10:10). Catholic Character Education fundamentally serves the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and has the potential to be both dynamic and empowering for children and young people. Likona (2003) reminds us that success in character education must focus on the impact it has on each individual: 'we build a moral society one child at a time'. Character Education seeks to cultivate the acquisition and development of virtues associated with common morality. Further, 'schools should and do aid students in learning to know the good, love the good, and do the good' (Jubilee Centre, 2017). It is the essence of 'doing' - the implementation of practical wisdom, that is an area of central interest in this research.

The project raises a myriad of questions which will be explored as part of the study: what is the impact of an implicit and an explicit culture of character education? How are virtues taught?; how are they put into practice?; are they developed habitually?; how does character education impact on moral choices? What are the potential benefits to the individual and to society?; how can we renew our moral culture through character education? what is the nature of the impact that character education has on pupils to help them in the pursuit of the fullness of life and the common good?

Kerry's project proposes to interpret how Catholic character education serves to promote value-based aspiration or 'sought' character. Key research in the field of Catholic Character Education, led by Dr Christopher Devanny (2017), as part of wider studies conducted by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, investigated how Character Education is taught and understood in Catholic schools. His report acknowledges school ethos as the single

most significant component in supporting character education. Devanny identified character education as implicit in the vast majority of schools, rather than being explicitly taught as part of the curriculum. His research highlighted that virtue literacy had not been developed because of a reliance on Gospel values to shape ethos, in the absence of the explicit teaching of virtue. The report also recommended that schools should develop opportunities for critical reflection in order to support the development of virtue reasoning. At present, there is little or no further research available which allows primary schools to interpret how to promote virtue reasoning and virtue practice in a Catholic context.

Kerry rightly points out that there is consensus among educationalists about the goal of Character Education, but exactly how schools seek to foster formation of pupils through the vehicle of Character Education needs deeper exploration and justifies further research. In order to flourish in fullness with Christ, we need to do virtue, not just know virtue. Cooling (2010) proposes that the true purpose of education is that acquired knowledge and skills must be applied and utilised to enhance critical thinking and reflection and to seek social justice. Knowledge must bring societal benefit and help to make us more human. Likona (2001) defines character education in terms of its psychological components - 'knowing the good, desiring the good and doing the good'. These strands of cognitive, emotional and behavioural form the basis upon which we can interpret the potential power of Catholic Character Education - to advance the desire to do good and to act upon the virtue knowledge acquired, on our journey to become closer to God. A Catholic approach to education starts with discernment. We discern when we listen for and recognise God's call to us on how to bring about the common good.

Kerry's advocates for the need for the development of practical wisdom as integral to our growth in faith. This is also demonstrated in Cardinal Joseph Cardijn's 'See Judge Act' methodology for theological reflection and interpretation of reality, with the goal being transformative social action and justice. The See Judge Act methodology helps us to explore the relationship between belief and action. Through applying key Catholic Social Teaching principles i.e., the dignity of the human person, the common good, solidarity to various contemporary situations, we are reminded of our central mission as Christians - to build the Kingdom of God here on Earth. In Stage 1 we SEE,

asking questions, seeking information and assessing how we are connected to the situation. In Stage 2 we JUDGE, we determine who is affected, how and why and examine what our faith says. In Stage 3 we ACT, we plan and carry out actions in light of our Faith. In Stage 4 we RESTART the CYCLE - we return to the SEE stage and examine the impact of our actions. In the view of Kerry, this process encourages reflection and critical thinking integral to personal and spiritual growth. This research project will also explore the significance of the Eucharist and its link to formation, as a fundamental source of enlightenment and empowerment in Catholic Character Education. Through thinking, speaking and 'doing' the Eucharist, Scott (2009) describes the Eucharist as Christ's love for

us in action - 'DO this in memory of me', these words are a call to action, reaching out to humanity. 'The Eucharist is dynamite. It can and should explode into action, erupting into solidarity and a commitment to social justice.' This transformative power is echoed in the words of Pope Francis (2020) 'the Eucharist gives us Jesus' love, which transformed a tomb from an end to a beginning, and in the same way, can transform our lives'.

Kerry will explore in this research how schools can use the true meaning of the Eucharist to develop practical wisdom to motivate and inspire action towards the common good. This study will focus on the development of both implicit and explicit approaches to Catholic Character

Education which have not been previously examined through a comparative study of approaches between schools. The project will involve research into the development of an implicit approach in terms of Catholic ethos and culture, as well as more explicit opportunities within and throughout the curriculum and in other aspects of school life. It will include a review of leadership from both staff and students, opportunities for pupil voice and moral action to serve the common good, as well as partnerships with parents and the wider community.

We wish Kerry and Joanna all the best with their research studies over the next few years and look forward to mentoring them.

Keynote Speaker Emeritus Professor John Sullivan 'The Post-Covid Moment - Crisis and Crossroad' CATSC/NfRCE Webinar

The aim of the webinar was to mark the date of the planned jointly organised Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools and Colleges (CATSC)/Network for Researchers in Catholic Education (NfRCE) Conference 2020 at .St Mary's which has been postponed until September 2021. Please save the dates of Friday 24th September and Saturday 25th September 2021 in your diaries!

This was a webinar with a keynote by Prof. John Sullivan, Emeritus Professor of Christian Education, Liverpool Hope University, speaking on 'The Post-Covid Moment - Crisis and Crossroad', which was a reflection on how a range of recent developments, in society and in the Church, some caused by Covid-19, others brought more sharply into view because of the pandemic, cumulatively pose both a challenge and an opportunity for Catholic educators.

The webinar was hosted by CATSC's General Secretary, Dr Caroline Healy and responses were provided to the paper from CATSC's Assoc. Prof. John Lydon and Dr Mary Mihovilovic, together with Dr Sean Whittle, NfRCE Executive Member/ Visiting Research Fellow St Mary's University and Mrs Louise McGowan, Headmistress, Convent of Jesus and Mary College, North London.

The webinar was engaged very enthusiastically with over 90 participants engaged online at one, with international

colleagues represented from Ireland, The Philippines and Ghana in the lively Q & A section which followed the webinar.

Sullivan on Catholic education during Covid-19

In Prof. Sullivan's paper he said that the Covid-19 pandemic cumulatively posed both a challenge and an opportunity for Catholic education. Some issues he had identified prior to Covid were in his view particularly prompted or reinforced by the Covid experience. He had been asked what new spaces he could see opening up in Catholic education - spaces for further dialogue and encounter. These included (among other possible spaces):

- A more honest discussion on sex & relationships, the Church's teaching on homosexuality, & changing modes of sexual identity
- The role of women in the Church
- The benefits and dangers posed by new communication media
- Relations with people of other Christian denominations, other religions and also with humanists and other secularists
- The need for new approaches relating to creation (including environment and climate)
- The question of whether we are being colonised by consumerism
- How we might construct healthier forms of political discourse

