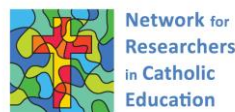


# Research in Service of Catholic Education Practice



## Interviews in Honor of Professor Gerald Grace

Edited by Quentin Wodon, February 2022



St Mary's  
University  
Twickenham  
London

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This report is a product of the volunteer-led [Global Catholic Education](#) project which aims to contribute to Catholic education and integral human development globally with a range of resources, including a blog, events, guidance on good practices, publications, and data. The author is especially grateful to the colleagues and friends of Professor Grace who accepted to be interviewed to share their thoughts about his contributions to research on Catholic education. The idea of this collection came after the festschrift that Sean Whittle edited for Professor Grace's retirement from Saint Mary's University in November 2021. The report is co-sponsored by Saint Mary's University, Twickenham, London, and by the Network for Researchers in Catholic Education. The author works with an international development agency, but this report was produced on his volunteer time and should not be seen in any way as representing the views of his employer, its Executive Directors, or the countries they represent. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in the study are solely those of individual interviewees.

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The photo shows Professor Grace giving his inaugural lecture St Mary's University Twickenham, London.

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## FOREWORD

John Lydon  
Professor at St Mary's University

It is a privilege to be invited to write the foreword to these interviews in honor of Professor Gerald Grace who has made a distinctive contribution to the Catholic Educational mission internationally.

Professor Grace has held academic appointments at King's College London and the University of Cambridge. He was then appointed to his first chair as Professor of Education at the Victoria University of Wellington New Zealand. He was later appointed Head of the School of Education at the University of Durham. And he was most recently appointed as the first Professor of Catholic Education at St Mary's University.

Professor Grace established the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education in 1997 at the Institute of Education, the first center of its kind in Europe. This Centre has had a significant impact in the world of Catholic education, both nationally and internationally. Three major initiatives are worthy of signposting on this auspicious occasion.

First Professor Grace, alongside his internationally renowned colleague Rev. Professor Joseph O'Keefe, SJ, of Boston College, edited, assembled, and published the *International Handbook of Catholic Education*, a major study in two volumes, which was the first ever international survey of the challenges facing Catholic schools across the world. A copy of this book was presented to the then Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI on 5th December 2007 who described the International Handbook as "a great work for the Catholic Church".

Second, the launch of a new journal entitled *International Studies in Catholic Education* was once again a first, this time the first ever interdisciplinary and international journal devoted to the systematic study of Catholic education, in all its forms, across the world. This

journal, published by Routledge, was launched in March 2009.

Third, in September 2016 Professor Grace took the decision to locate the Centre and the journal at St Mary's University, thereby enhancing St Mary's position as a key part of the global Catholic education community and contributing to stronger links with the Vatican in general and the Congregation for Catholic Education in particular. The launch of the Centre was marked by an Inaugural Lecture in which Professor Grace spoke eloquently on the theme 'Catholic Education Research and Scholarship at St. Mary's: the achievements of the past and the challenges for the future.'

Since 2016 Professor Grace has been involved in a number of projects internationally, foremost among which has been his securing of funding for post-doctoral research to develop research capacity on Catholic Education. Three post-doctoral students were mentored to progress their research towards publication outputs. This project is known as CERIAN, which stands for the Catholic Education Researchers in Africa Network. A considerable amount of funding (almost £200,000) was achieved and a second tranche has been committed by Porticus.

The interviews in this collection, encompassing an international array of esteemed education professionals and academics and edited by Dr. Quentin Wodon with a considerable degree of expertise, celebrate the significant contribution made by Professor Grace in the world of Catholic Education, thereby encapsulating his lifework. The range of contributors encompasses academic colleagues, fellow researchers, former students and the current Director of the Institute of Catholic Education here at St Mary's.

We may leave the last word to Cardinal Michael Miller, Archbishop of Vancouver and former Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education:

*“Gerald Grace’s work has covered so many aspects of Catholic education. He has consistently maintained a firm grasp of the*

*realities of the work of teachers. His research interviews with headteachers of inner-city schools have highlighted the ‘spiritual capital’ which sustains the vision and dedication of so many. He has not hesitated to respond both to system failures and to new challenges.”*



Photo: Professor Grace, friends, and colleagues gathering for his retirement from St Mary's University.

## FOREWORD TO THE FESTSCHRIFT New Thinking, New Scholarship, and New Research in Catholic Education

Vincent Nichols MA, M.Ed., STL  
Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster & Chancellor of St Mary's University, London

This foreword was written by Cardinal Nichols for the festschrift *New Thinking, New Scholarship, and New Research in Catholic Education: Responses to the Work of Professor Gerald Grace* edited by Dr. Sean Whittle and published by Routledge. The festschrift was prepared on the occasion of Professor Grace's retirement from St Mary's University. This foreword is reprinted here with permission from Routledge. The electronic version of the festschrift is available in open access.

The words 'Catholic' and 'Education' undoubtedly belong together. They belong together in the life of the Catholic Church across the centuries and in every part of the world. The presence of the Catholic Church always unfolds into the work of education. Wherever a community is formed, there education begins. It is sustained in the richness of the monastic tradition and in the wide variety of partnerships with governments and regimes in the provision of education available to the families and children which make up a society. These two words certainly belong together in the experience of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Indeed, Catholic Education is one of our treasures and most important contributions to the life of these countries.

In every one of these circumstances, the motivation and inspiration for education provided by the Catholic Church has been elaborated, examined, revised and reinvigorated time and again. This has certainly been the case, in England and Wales, over the last 170 years, in constant dialogue and partnership with public authorities. Most consistently, the perspectives and convictions of faith have shaped the vision of education put forward by the Church. Its argumentation has proceeded from the desire and right of parents to have an effective choice in the kind of education offered to their children.

The work of Professor Gerald Grace has contributed very significantly to this process. I am therefore pleased to be able to offer these few words as a Foreword to this volume which celebrates that contribution in a timely and fulsome fashion.

His work has covered so many aspects of Catholic Education, often from refreshing perspectives. He has consistently maintained a firm grasp of the realities of the work of teachers. His interviews with head teachers working in inner-city areas have highlighted the 'spiritual capital' which sustains the vision and dedication of so many. This has also contributed so significantly to his research into the nature of school leadership in England, and the key role of Catholic head teachers as guardians of the 'mission integrity' of Catholic schools. At the same time, his serious academic scrutiny has helped to move the arguments supporting Catholic Education into a setting where it can be assessed in the light of scholarship and research as well as conviction. He has also not hesitated to highlight both failures and new challenges.

In a similar vein, his work has broadened to encompass the international aspects and features of Catholic Education, most notably in the journal he launched in 2009. The journal *International Studies in Catholic Education* has grown remarkably since then, such that it is now accessed in 112 countries. It monitors the challenges found and the responses to them by Catholic and other faith educators across the world. Contributions to this volume from around the world pay tribute to this achievement, as do the contributions from the Jewish and Muslim communities.

We are rightly accustomed to speaking of work in Catholic Education in the language of vocation. This highlights not only the effort so often made by those in Catholic Education, going beyond terms of contracts, but also the sense of service in the name of Jesus Christ which informs that admirable dedication. This language of vocation is most properly applied to Gerald Grace. This is the dedication of his life. He has known that his 'calling' has been to ensure that Catholic Education is respected on all levels. In order to serve that aim, his establishment of a prominent university-based Research Centre has been pivotal. It is, therefore, most appropriate that this tribute to his work is being published to mark the time when he finally relinquishes his position as Director of the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education at St Mary's University.

The work of Catholic Education is essentially and always a work of partnerships. This has never been truer than at the present moment when a combination of factors – social, political,

financial and cultural – challenge the nature and even the very survival of Catholic Education in this country. New partnerships are needed in order to counter these challenges. Such partnerships require mutual trust and confidence and the common ground of the vision which informs this much-valued project. The contribution of Gerald Grace to this vision, and to its expression in so many different circumstances and cultures, has never been more relevant. So, I take this opportunity of thanking Professor Gerald Grace for his outstanding work, well appreciated not only in this volume but by so many around the world. In 2014, he was appointed by his Holiness, Pope Francis, as a Knight of the Order of St Gregory the Great (KSG) for 'his services to Catholic Education, nationally and internationally'.

Thank you, indeed.

Vincent Nichols MA, M.Ed., STL  
Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster &  
Chancellor of St Mary's University, London

## INTRODUCTION: GERALD GRACE, A CHAMPION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH TO INFORM PRACTICE

Quentin Wodon

Professor Grace retired at the end of November 2021 from St Mary's University Twickenham, near London in the United Kingdom where he managed the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education. Previously, he had a long academic career with appointments at King's College London, the University of Cambridge, Victoria University of Wellington New Zealand, and the University of Durham as Dean of the School of Education.

Through his scholarship, Professor Grace has had a profound influence on research and practice in Catholic Education, not only in the United Kingdom, but also globally. In particular, he launched in 2019 *International Studies in Catholic Education*, a new journal that has since become a reference in the field. A total of 13 volumes have been published so far with two issues per year, and the journal is going strong!

Part of Professor Grace's influence not only on research but also on the practice of Catholic education came from the fact that he always encouraged research that could inform practice. He was at ease with theory and conceptual thinking, as well as with the theological and ethical foundations of Catholic education. But he also got into the trenches, leading innovative work with school teachers and principals. Some of Professor Grace's most influential essays were collected a few years ago in *Faith, Mission and Challenge in Catholic Education*, a volume published by Routledge (see Box 1). Also influential was the two-volume *International Handbook of Catholic Education* which he edited with Professor Joseph O'Keefe, SJ.

Another essential reference is the festschrift edited by Dr. Sean Whittle and published by Routledge in honor of Professor Grace at the time of this retirement. It is not every day that a

major new research publication on Catholic education is available in open access! The festschrift is aptly titled *New Thinking, New Scholarship and New Research in Catholic Education: Responses to the Work of Professor Gerald Grace*. Apart from the foreword by Cardinal Vincent Nichols reproduced above and an introduction and a conclusion by Dr. Whittle, it includes twenty contributions from some of the leading scholars in the field (see Box 2). The chapters are equally divided into essays assessing Professor Grace's contributions in the United Kingdom and those assessing the relevance of his work in other countries, including papers from scholars working in Australia, Chile, France, Kenya, Ireland, Malta, the Philippines, Scotland (well, still part of the United Kingdom), Thailand, and the United States. This is essential reading!

### **Box 1: Selected Works of Gerald Grace**

A collection of some of the essays published over the years by Professor Gerald Grace is available in a volume published in 2017 by Routledge entitled *Faith, Mission and Challenge in Catholic Education: The selected works of Gerald Grace*. As per its synopsis, the volume brings together 15 essays among others on: the interactions of faith, mission and spirituality in the development of Catholic education; how to replace ideology, polemic and prejudice in discussions about faith-based schooling with evidence-based argument; understanding the distinctive nature of concepts such as 'leadership' and 'effectiveness' in faith-based education; using 'mission integrity' as a key concept for the evaluation of contemporary Catholic schooling; examining the interactions of Catholic values, Catholic curriculum and educational policy developments.



## **Box 2: New Thinking, New Scholarship, and New Research in Catholic Education**

Foreword by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Westminster, UK

Introduction by Sean Whittle, St Mary's University, Twickenham

### **Part 1: Gerald Grace's Influence in the UK**

1. The 'Calling' of Professor Gerald Grace by James Arthur, University of Birmingham
2. Gerald Grace, Spiritual Capital, the CRDCE and ISCE by Paddy Walsh, UCL Institute of Education and St Mary's University, Twickenham
3. International Catholic Education Studies: A New Academic and Professional Field Develops by Richard Pring, University of Oxford
4. Graceful Listening and Educational Rhetoric by John Sullivan, Liverpool Hope University
5. Researching Spiritual Capital in Catholic Education: On the Need for Theoretical Frameworks and More Empirical Work by Ann Casson, Canterbury Christchurch University
6. Gerald Grace and the concept of 'Spiritual Capital': reflections on its value and suggestions for its future development by John Lydon, St Mary's University Twickenham
7. Sociology and Catholic education: the contribution of Gerald Grace by Meg Maguire, King's College, London
8. May "Grace" Be With You Always: Gerald and Jewish Education by Helena Miller, London School of Jewish Studies
9. Catholic Education and a New Christian Humanism: in Honour of Grace by Caroline Healy, St Mary's University, Twickenham
10. Gerald Grace and the philosophy of Catholic education by Sean Whittle, St Mary's University, Twickenham

### **Part 2: Gerald Grace's influence internationally**

11. Measuring the Contributions of Catholic Schools Globally by Quentin Wodon, The World Bank Washington DC, USA
12. Catholic Schooling in Chile: The Need for Rebuilding Spiritual Capital Within the Rules of the Market Culture by Cristóbal Madero SJ, Alberto Hurtado University, Santiago, Chile
13. The Future Trajectory of the Narrative of Catholic School Religious Education by Graham Rossiter, Australian Institute for Theological Education, Sydney
14. Professor Gerald Grace's Innovations in Catholic Education as guide for Future Research by Jacinta Mary Adhiambo MCEM, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya
15. 'Spiritual Capital' and 'Charisms' in the Mission of Catholic schools - For a Dialogue Between a Sociologist and a Theologian Involved in Catholic Education by Francois Moog, Institut Catholique de Paris
16. The Mission of the Catholic School and the Preferential Option for the Poor by Stephen McKinney, University of Glasgow, Scotland
17. Proving and Improving: Gerald Grace's Model for Evaluation of Catholic Schools – a Practitioner Perspective From Ireland by Marie Griffin, Independent Researcher, Republic of Ireland
18. Mentoring for Catholic School Leadership in a Religious Congregation by Kaetkaew Punnachet, Boonraksa Sritrakul, Atchara Supavai SPC St Joseph's Convent School, Bangkok, Thailand
19. Teaching Catholic Religious Education and Islamic Studies in a Monopoly - Catholic Small State by Mary Darmanin, University of Malta
20. A Response by a Student to the Work of Grace and Future Research and Policy: Development in Catholic Education in the Philippines by Joanna Marie S. Oliva, Assumption College, Manila

Conclusion by Sean Whittle, St Mary's University, Twickenham.

As mentioned in my contribution to the festschrift edited by Dr. Whittle, I first met Professor Grace three years ago at a conference on Catholic education organized by the University of Notre Dame in Rome.

He was a consummate scholar ... and salesman! We were on the same panel. As soon as the session ended, he asked me, as he did with so many others, to prepare a contribution for *International Studies in Catholic Education*. I gladly obliged. He was interested in particular about the ability (or lack thereof) of Catholic schools to reach the poor. This has long been a passion for him. We recently edited a special issue of the journal on sub-Saharan Africa. In his foreword as editor of the journal, he emphasized the issue of learning poverty – i.e., the fact that too many children do not manage to read and understand an age-appropriate text by age 10. He wrote:

*“The ground-breaking study produced by the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome in 1977 The Catholic School, decided that ‘first and foremost’ the Church (and by implication other faith based systems) should provide educational services to three categories of the Poor i.e. the economic poor, the family support poor and the faith poor.*

*What we have tried to do in this issue is to extend our understanding of service to the poor, by bringing our attention to the needs of the ‘learning poor’ in Africa and to challenge us to find the necessary educational reforms to enable them to fulfil their talents. This is a challenge both for State-provided and for Faith-provided schooling in that continent to work together in partnership for the future.”*

Professor Grace was influential as a scholar who cared deeply about the preferential option for the poor. He was also a wonderful person to be around, always willing to help others and thereby touching their lives. The collection of interviews included in this report is a testament not only to the importance of his scholarly work,

but also to his personal qualities, which I witnessed personally as well.

The second time I met him was in London a year later, again thanks to a conference on Catholic education organized by the University of Notre Dame. I have two vivid memories from that week. The first is when he asked for the microphone to speak. In a playful mark of respect, a friend of his brought the microphone to him on a small red cushion saying ‘Your Grace!’ The second memory is about how he was the perfect host for a visit to St Mary’s University where he had asked me to give a talk. The event was wonderfully, including the venue, his remarks, and the reception afterwards. But he went further: he took the trouble of dropping me back by car in London at my hotel after the event. Apart from his scholarship, his personal qualities and the friendship he extended to others, I suspect, are one of the reasons why his work on Catholic education has been so influential.

As a small token of appreciation, this volume brings together 13 short interviews about the work of Professor Grace. The first interview was conducted with Professor Grace himself in 2019 and is reproduced here. The other interviews were conducted in the summer and fall of 2021. A dozen colleagues and friends have graciously accepted to share some of their reflections on Professor Grace and on his work. Many more could and would have contributed, but to bring this small project to completion, it was necessary to limit the number of contributions. This compilation is available online on the [Global Catholic Education](#) website, where each of the interviews is also available individually.

In the interview with Professor Grace, I asked him about the areas where he believed more research was needed. He suggested three main areas: (i) Catholic Education and service for the Poor; (ii) the effectiveness of the spiritual, moral and social cultures of Catholic schools; (iii) the education and formation of Catholic school leaders and teachers.

These themes are echoed by his friends and colleagues. Their interviews are organized around the following questions:

- 1) Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?;
- 2) How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?;
- 3) How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?;
- 4) In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in Catholic education?;
- 5) How can Catholic education scholars make sure that their research is useful to practitioners?;
- 6) What are for you the most critical areas of future research in Catholic education, and why is that?;
- 7) What is your advice for graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education?; and
- 8) Is there a personal anecdote of your interactions with Prof. Grace that you would like to share?

While each of Professor Grace's friends and colleagues answered those questions differently, there is a form of collective wisdom that emerges from the interviews in terms of priority themes for future research in Catholic education, advice to students who may be considering a doctorate, and of course who Professor Grace is as a person apart from his scholarly contributions.

After the interview with Gerald Grace, the interviews are listed by alphabetical order of their authors. A few highlights of the various interviews are provided below. We hope that you will enjoy reading these interviews, appreciate the influence that Professor Grace has had on research in Catholic education, and for those who do not know him personally, realize how wonderful and generous a person he is!

**Gerald Grace,  
Professor at St Mary's  
University**



*“Catholic schools are committed to forming young people in spiritual, moral and social ways, understanding the importance of working for the common good and for helping to build a better world. There are many research issues raised here.”*

*“In many countries, the commitment to education for the poor is not being realized effectively because of school budget problems... More research [is needed] not only into why this is happening but also, what new approaches ... can begin to change this situation.”*

**Sr. Jacinta Mary  
Adhiambo, Missionary  
Congregation of the  
Evangelizing Sisters  
of Mary**



*“[Prof. Grace] has greatly contributed to practice and research in Catholic Education... [e.g.] spiritual capital and the option for the poor in Catholic schools, the contributions of religious congregation in Catholic education and the challenge of secularization that face Catholic schools in the 21st century.”*

*“Catholic education scholars should ensure that ... their research is useful to the practitioners... They should also have meetings with the education stakeholders and share with them research briefs.”*

**David Finchman,  
Senior Lecturer and  
Senior Fellow at St  
Mary's University**



*"Gerald has long been critically engaged in the educational debate with regard to challenges facing leaders within Catholic schools in a secular and market-driven society. His work not only ... confronts ... the implications of these challenges, ... but he also offers practical encouragement and guidance."*

*"His work and his reputation as a leading international scholar ... has been a major influence on the Catholic community worldwide. He is a leader and exemplar in the field of Catholic education."*

**Leonard Franchi,  
Lecturer at the  
University of  
Glasgow**



*"Gerald's work on religious /social capital is fundamental to the essence of Catholic education: What drives us? What is it we wish to communicate? How can we best communicate to others that which we have received? These are perennial questions but Gerald has forged a path which draws on insights from other ways of thinking about education."*

*"Gerald was one described to me fondly as the man who never knowingly left home without a tie..."*

**Anne Lise Gordon,  
Director of the Institute  
for Education at St  
Mary's University**



*"I remember one of my first meetings with Prof. Grace over lunch in the refectory at St Mary's. Such wide-ranging and enjoyable discussions! [...] I also remember being inspired by Prof. Grace's active encouragement and support for me as a Christian (albeit not Catholic) woman in leadership."*

*"Prof. Grace is a real gentleman ... and he has the most beautiful handwriting in the world! I have also seen a steelier and more rebellious side to Prof. Grace, inspired by his values and commitment."*

**Marie Griffin,  
Chairperson of the  
Catholic Education  
Partnership, Ireland**



*"Prof. Grace encourages people to do research in Catholic education and to write it up. This might seem like an easy job but it's not! Many practitioners are engaging in interesting innovative practice and research but often lack the time, experience, confidence, and motivation to write up their work."*

*"When I went to meet him first in London, he was welcoming and so easy to talk to... Prof. Grace lives the mission of kindness, humility and servant leadership. This is good!"*

**Caroline Healy,  
Course Lead, MA in  
Catholic School  
Leadership, St Mary's  
University**



*"In my view, Prof. Grace's contribution to research in Catholic education concerns building it and developing it as an important sub-discipline of education in its own right... Founding a journal to build contributions from all over the world, not just Europe, ... has been outstanding."*

*"It has been fun being his office neighbor for the past five years and spending time during busy schedules taking short breaks and just being happy colleagues and companions on our Catholic education journey together, laughing at Gerald's ever-witty banter."*

**John Lydon,  
Professor at St  
Mary's University**



*"The concept of 'spiritual capital', defined... as 'resources of faith derived from a religious tradition', in my opinion, represents one of Professor Grace's main contributions to research in Catholic education."*

*"Perhaps my fondest memory is of Professor Grace insisting that, in the middle of NCEA 2009 in Anaheim, we hire a car and I drive him to the Mass on Easter Sunday at the Basilica of San Juan Capistrano... [But] while in Anaheim he refused my request to journey to the burial place of a former USA President whose politics he disagreed with profoundly!"*

**Fr. Cristobal Madero, SJ,  
Professor at Universidad  
Alberto Hurtado**



*"The work of Gerald Grace is fundamental for approaching the tension between Catholic schools benefiting from the rules of the market and at the same time risking their identity because of that."*

*"Gerald is a reminder that to be meaningful and helpful, Catholic schools in today's society need to have ministers, teachers, and leaders who conceive of the school and its role not only as a creator of social, economic, or cultural capital, but who also serve as mentors of spiritual capital."*

**Helena Miller, Director  
of Degrees at the  
London School of  
Jewish Studies**



*"Gerald was, for many of our students, the first visiting professor who allowed them to think about and discuss Jewish Education in relation to Catholic education and Catholic schools."*

*"[At] the annual Research in Jewish Education Conference in London... Gerald took the conference by storm..., giving participants at that conference the opportunity for deep reflection and analysis of our Jewish education settings and contexts, through his examination of Catholic schools and education."*

**Sr. Kate Punnachet,  
Sister of Saint Paul  
of Chartres**



*“My research has been based on Prof. Grace's writing and his ideas, especially on the concept of ‘service to the poor and the marginalized.’”*

*“During my time as his student and his secretary, Prof. Grace always focused and talked about the pillars of Catholic schooling... I have been greatly influenced by the example he sets as a “Catholic” teacher. He is kind, nice, and always ready to help anyone who comes to see him.”*

**John Sullivan,  
Emeritus Professor  
at Liverpool Hope  
University**



*“Gerald Grace is someone who has stood between the living tradition of our faith and contemporary educational policy developments; he has interpreted one to the other and built bridges between them.”*

*“Here was a writer who could fearlessly expose the unwelcome implications of the managerialist language that swamped the reading of school leaders, someone who combined a stout defense of Catholic education at the same time as acknowledging its shortcomings.”*

**Sean Whittle, Visiting  
Research Fellow at St  
Mary's University**



*“One of the impressive qualities of Gerald Grace is his charm and wit. He is also a person with a strong sense of mission: working as a researcher at the service of Catholic*

*education... I distinctly remember Gerald politely but firmly speaking to a junior colleague about the need for gravitas and seriousness in relation to this work. This is important advice which we all need to take note of.”*

*“I would encourage graduate students to emulate the approach of Gerald Grace – go into Catholic schools and find out what is going on. Keep the focus on high quality empirical analysis.”*

**Box 3: The Global Catholic Education Project**

[Global Catholic Education](http://www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org) is a volunteer-led project to contribute to Catholic education and integral human development globally with a range of resources. The website went live symbolically on Thanksgiving Day in November 2020 to give thanks for the many blessings we have received. Catholic schools serve 62 million children in pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools globally. In addition, more than 6.7 million students are enrolled at the post-secondary level (data for 2019). The Church also provides many other services to children and families, including in healthcare, social protection, and humanitarian assistance. Our aim is to serve Catholic schools and universities, as well as other organizations contributing to integral human development, with an emphasis on responding to the aspirations of the poor and vulnerable. If you would like to contribute to the project, please contact us through the website at [www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org](http://www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org).

## INTERVIEW WITH GERALD GRACE, EDITOR OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon and reproduced in the Spring 2020 edition of the *Educatio Si Bulletin* February 2020*



### EXCERPTS:

- “Catholic schools are committed to forming young people in spiritual, moral and social ways, understanding the importance of working for the common good and for helping to build a better world. There are many research issues raised here.”
- “In many countries, the commitment to education for the poor is not being realized effectively because of school budget problems... More research [is needed] not only into why this is happening but also, what new approaches ... can begin to change this situation.”

#### What motivated you to launch the academic journal, *International Studies in Catholic Education*?

I first tried to answer this question in the Preface and Mission Statement of the journal issue in ISCE Vol 1 No1 March 2009, 1-4 when we launched.

In 2007 I had completed with the assistance of Professor Joseph O’Keefe, SJ, a large scale survey of Catholic Education research and evaluation in 35 countries across the world as reported by 60 researchers and analysts. The whole project took five years to complete and it was finally published by Springer, Dordrecht as *International Handbook of Catholic Education: Challenges for school systems in the 21st Century*.<sup>1</sup> Part 1 reported chapters from North America and Latin America and from Europe (West and East). Part 2 reported chapters from Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Australasia.

<sup>1</sup> Grace, G. and J. O’Keefe (eds.). 2007. *International Handbook of Catholic Education*, Two volumes, Dordrecht: Springer publications.

#### Box 1: Interview Series

**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.

**Why a series of interviews?** Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with Gerald Grace, the founder of the journal *International Studies in Catholic Education*. Professor Grace explains why he founded this new journal and the gap it aims to fill in the research literature on Catholic education.

Visit us at [www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org](http://www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org)

These volumes were well received as the first ever international survey reporting research, scholarly and fieldwork studies of Catholic schooling in different countries and I received many invitations to discuss the findings at international conferences across the world.

However, I realized that these texts had a number of serious limitations. The first was simply the price for the two hardback volumes i.e. about 500US\$. This meant that they could only be purchased by academic libraries in small range of countries. They would have limited impact.

The second was that the whole survey had revealed that many of the Catholic Universities which I contacted for 'research reports on Catholic schools' had no research to report! I was shocked to learn this and, as Editor, had to ask them therefore to write about 'what research on Catholic schools in your country should be done in the future?'. There was obviously a lack of interest and resource in many Catholic Universities about systematic research into the challenges facing Catholic primary and secondary schools in their own countries.

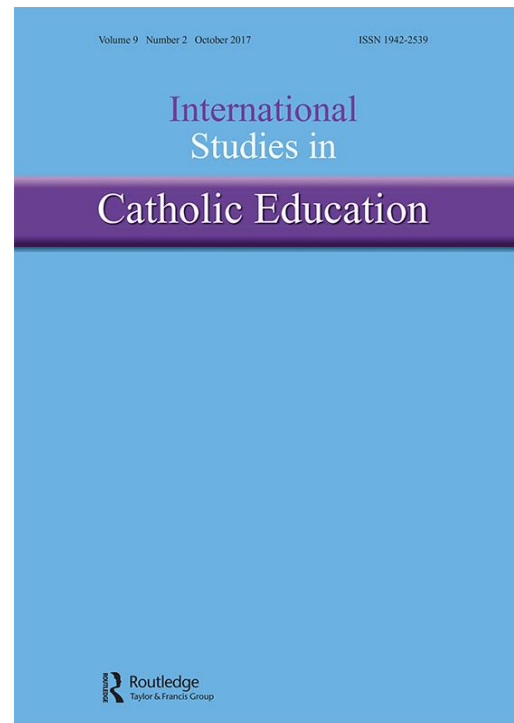
The third was that IHCE provided a survey valid as at 2007. How could the field of Catholic Education research and scholarship be updated after 2007? That was an important question to be considered.



Photo: Professor Grace at Saint Mary's University.

I realized that the answer had to be the creation of the first ever international and interdisciplinary journal devoted to systematic research and scholarship in the field of Catholic Education Studies (CES) to deal with this challenge.

Therefore, I launched the journal in 2009. I was motivated to do more than produce one survey in 2007 but also to generate a continuing flow of research and scholarship on an annual basis.



Visual: International Studies in Catholic Education.

### What have you learned from the articles published in the journal?

As an interdisciplinary journal devoted to the study of Catholic education, in all its forms across the world, I understood that this great educational mission would benefit from contributions from different disciplinary perspectives. We therefore welcomed articles from Theologians, Philosophers, Historians, Education Researchers (qualitative and quantitative), Social and Economic scientists, Natural scientists, School leaders and Teachers and member of Religious Congregations who had played a large part in establishing the mission across the world.

These contributions have come in practice from different intellectual cultures of analysis which can be comprehensively described as research, scholarship, evaluation and personal reflective accounts. Today, empirical research is very powerful but other perspectives can also be illuminative. We need a catholic approach which includes interdisciplinary analysis.

You ask what I have learned from the articles published in ISCE between 2009 and 2019 and also those ready to be published in 2020. I give a summary answer: I have learned that Catholic educators have welcomed these articles and are using them to support their own work in different ways. The publishers (Routledge) have supplied us with data showing full text downloads of articles by year. When we began in 2009 there were just 354 but by 2014 this had risen to 6353. In 2016 there were 8727 and by 2018 it had reached 13,940 article downloads. This



shows that the articles are having some impact and are providing a service values by schools, colleges, universities and Religious Congregations across the world. I invite your readers to submit articles for possible publication in future issues of ISCE.

What is being constructed ... is nothing short of the creation of a new academic and professional field of International Catholic Education Studies... We now have 60+ countries accessing ISCE.

To be the Editor of an international journal is to be located in a rich learning environment and I have learned much about Catholic Education by reading quality articles with different disciplinary modes of analysis. What is being constructed from all of these articles is nothing short of the creation of a new academic and professional field of International Catholic Education Studies. We need to involve scholars and researchers from Catholic and Secular universities and from International Agencies in this field of enquiry in the future, as well as school leaders and teachers acting in the role of 'practitioner researchers'. University and school partnerships for research projects should be developed.

We now have 60+ countries accessing ISCE but the major contributors of articles are, at present, from the Developed World e.g. USA, UK, Australia and various European states. However, to try to compensate for this imbalance we have scheduled two special issues in 2020-2021- one focusing on Catholic education reports from Africa (guest editor Quentin Wodon) and one focusing on reports from Latin America (guest editor, Cristobal Madero, SJ).

#### **What are the areas where you believe more research is needed?**

In terms on content, my personal list would include the following: (1) Catholic Education and service for the Poor; (2) The effectiveness of the spiritual, moral and social cultures of Catholic schools; (3) The education and formation of Catholic school leaders and teachers

##### **(1) Catholic Education and service for the Poor**

The Catholic Church proclaimed the following mission commitment for Catholic Education internationally when it declared in 1977 that 'First and foremost, the Church offers its educational service to the Poor' (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, para 58)<sup>2</sup>. The Congregation went on to say that 'If the Catholic School were to turn its attention exclusively or predominantly to

<sup>2</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education. 1977. The Catholic School, Vatican City, Libreria Editrice, Vaticana.

those from the wealthier social classes, it could be contributing towards maintain their privileged position.



Photo: Professor Grace with Pope Benedict XVI.

The world survey of the impact of Catholic Education reported in 2007, International Handbook of Catholic Education had shown that, in many countries, the commitment to education for the poor is not being realized effectively because of school budget problems. What I have called, 'the strategic subsidy' from the Congregations is declining. This is a major contradiction in the theory and practice of Catholic schooling worldwide and it needs much more research not only into why this is happening but also, what new approaches in policy and practice can begin to change this situation, see for instance, Chile (Aristimuno 2020)<sup>3</sup>. We need to renew the mission integrity of Catholic education in its service for the poor.

In many countries, the commitment to education for the poor is not being realized effectively because of school budget problems... More research [is needed] not only into why this is happening but also, what new approaches ... can begin to change this situation.

<sup>3</sup> Aristimuno, A. 2020. Challenges for Catholic Schools in Contemporary Uruguay, *International Studies in Catholic Education* 12(1): 51-61.

## **(2) The effectiveness of the spiritual, moral and social cultures of Catholic schools**

The Catholic School document of 1977 proclaimed the Post-Vatican II ideals for the formation of students in these terms: 'the Catholic School forms part of the saving mission of the Church especially for education in the Faith' (para 9); 'cultural pluralism leads the Church to affirm her mission of education to ensure strong character formation ...to foster truly Christian living and apostolic communities equipped in a spirit of cooperation to the building up of the secular society...to mobilize her educational resources in the face of the materialism, pragmatism and technocracy of contemporary society' (para 12).

In other words, Catholic schools are committed to forming young people in spiritual, moral and social ways, understanding the importance of working for the common good and for helping to build a better world. There are many research issues raised here.

Catholic schools are committed to forming young people in spiritual, moral and social ways, understanding the importance of working for the common good and for helping to build a better world. There are many research issues raised here.

To what extent are Catholic schools, in age preoccupied with measured test and examination results, also effective in religious and spiritual formation of the young and in the shaping of their characters in moral and social terms?

More research with the adult alumni of such schools is needed to evaluate to what extent a Catholic education has lasting effects upon the spiritual, moral and social-occupational commitments of students later lives. The final assessment of effectiveness is shown in adult outcomes. As it is written, 'by their fruits you will know them!'

## **(3) The education and formation of Catholic school leaders and teachers**

In the section of the Catholic School (1977), under the heading 'the pastoral care of teachers', the critical role of school leaders is recognized in these terms: -

'by their witness and their behavior teachers are of first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools. It is therefore indispensable to ensure their continuing formation through some form of suitable pastoral provision ... also connected with the art of teaching in accordance with the principles of the Gospel' (para 78).

This is a call for holistic personal and professional development which goes beyond technical updates for

more effective subject teaching. There is reason to believe that such provision is largely neglected at present and we do need more research into pastoral and spiritual formation programmes for school leaders and teachers, as well as the programmes for increasing their knowledge of better learning and teaching methods. Catholic teachers should be person formers and not only knowledge and skills transmitters. They are shaping the citizens of the future.

[We] need more research into pastoral and spiritual formation programmes for school leaders and teachers, as well as the programmes for increasing their knowledge of better learning and teaching.

## **What is spiritual capital and why is it important?**

The concept of 'Spiritual Capital' I originated in my research report, *Catholic Schools, Mission, Markets and Morality*.<sup>4</sup> I had interviewed 60 Catholic headteachers working in challenging inner city Catholic secondary schools in London, Birmingham and Liverpool in the UK. Analyzing their responses to my research questions, I came to the conclusion that the majority of them were possessed by what can be called a 'vocation' or an 'inner spiritual strength' which sustained them in the day to day challenges of their work. They characteristically related their Catholic faith to their practice in schools.

As a background to my fieldwork, I had read the important work of the French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu<sup>5</sup> and his valuable analytical concepts of 'Social capital', 'Cultural capital' and 'Religious capital' however, my participants seemed to have a form of capital which was different from these and in the last chapter of my book I expressed this internal resource which they possessed as 'Spiritual Capital'. This was not Bourdieu's religious capital. I defined it as: 'Resources of faith and values derived from commitment to a religious tradition' (p. 236).

As to why this has been and still is, an important resource for Catholic Education internationally, may I suggest that your readers consult my article: 'Renewing spiritual capital: an urgent priority for the future of Catholic education internationally', published in *International Studies in Catholic Education* in 2010.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Grace, G. 2002. *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality*. London and New York: Routledge Falmer. See also Grace, G. 2017. *Faith, Mission and Challenge in Catholic Education*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

<sup>5</sup> Bourdieu, P. 1986. The Forms of Capital, in J. McPherson (ed), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 241-258.

<sup>6</sup> Grace, G. 2010. Renewing Spiritual Capital: an urgent priority for the future of Catholic education internationally, *International Studies in Catholic Education* 2(2): 117-28.

## INTERVIEW WITH SR. JACINTA MARY ADHIAMBO, MISSIONARY CONGREGATION OF THE EVANGELIZING SISTERS OF MARY



*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon  
August 2021*

### EXCERPTS:

- “[Prof. Grace] has greatly contributed to practice and research in Catholic Education... [e.g.] spiritual capital and the option for the poor in Catholic schools, the contributions of religious congregation in Catholic education and the challenge of secularization that face Catholic schools in the 21st century.”
- “Catholic education scholars should ensure that ... their research is useful to the practitioners... They should also have meetings with the education stakeholders and share with them research briefs.”

### Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?

I am Sr. Prof. Jacinta Mary Adhiambo from the Missionary Congregation of the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary founded by Very Reverend Fr. John Maregoni and Rt. Rev. Sisto Mazzoldi both of happy memory.

My current apostolate entails teaching, mentoring, and carrying out community service at the Catholic university of Eastern Africa in Kenya. With my teaching role, I spread the good news of Jesus Christ by ensuring that my students experience the compassion and love of Christ through the way I carry out my duties as a professor, administrator, researcher and mentor of post graduate students. At the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, I encourage students and staff to appreciate Catholic identity expressed in the core values: Prayer, witness of life, truth/ honesty, excellence, competence and decency, and commitment. As I develop the intellectual aspect of the students, it has always been my joy to inculcate the gospel values in them. My classroom is the context of challenging students to develop holistically so that two do end up with intellectual giants who are moral dwarfs. In the process of research mentorship, the values of integrity and truthfulness are emphasized so that the outputs in terms of a thesis or dissertation are original.

### Box 1: Interview Series

**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.

**Why a series of interviews?** Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with Sr. Jacinta Mary Adhiambo from the Missionary Congregation of the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary. The interview is part of a series in honor of Professor Gerald Grace's retirement from St Mary's University.

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I have passion for research in Catholic Education and have published articles in the same area. I have had opportunity to mentor three young authors to contribute articles on Catholic education.

**How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?**

A conference on Global Catholic Education organized Kellogg Institute for International Studies University of Notre Dame that took place in Rome on 25th to 27th April 2018 was a blessing to me from God. I first met Prof. Grace was during the conference where he presented a paper on Catholic Education. During the introduction of participants, I learnt that he was the Editor of International Studies in Catholic Education. In the same conference, I also presented a paper on Catholic Education in Kenya: Scope and challenges. After my presentation, Prof. Grace invited me to do a paper to be included in the 2019 volume of International Studies in Catholic Education.

The meeting in Rome was the beginning of my interaction with Prof. Grace. He sent me the author guidelines and I embarked on the paper was finally published in October 2019. The publication of the said article bore other fruits in that, Prof. Grace requested me to mentor a few religious sisters who would be interested in writing on their involvement in Catholic Education in Kenya. I identified three sisters: An Assumption Sister of Eldoret, Franciscan Sister of St. Ann and an Evangelizing Sister of Mary to write case studies on Catholic Schools run by their respective congregations. These articles are likely to be published before the end of 2021. At Prof. Grace's proposal, I was nominated as an editorial board member of the International Studies of Catholic Education from January 2021. My interaction with Prof. Grace within the three years has been of quality. This is why, when I was approached to write a chapter in the book to celebrate his legacy in the contribution to Catholic Education, I did so without hesitation. I greatly value our interaction in the last three years and I am sure the networking will continue to research on Catholic education.

**How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?**

Having gone through some of his writings, he has greatly contributed to practice and research in Catholic Education. Some of the themes that caught my attention are: the notion of spiritual capital and the option for the poor in Catholic schools, the contributions of religious congregation in Catholic education and the challenge of secularization that face Catholic schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In addition, as the Editor of the International Studies in Catholic Education, he looked for article contributors from different parts of the world and wished that Catholic universities had access to International Studies in Catholic Education by subscribing to the journal.

**In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in Catholic education?**

As said earlier, Prof. Grace strengthened my interest in research in Catholic Education. I have publications in Catholic education and will continue to engage in research in the same area.

**How can Catholic education scholars make sure that their research is useful to practitioners?**

Catholic education scholars should ensure that the outcome of their research is useful to the practitioners by publishing their findings in the international journals on Catholic education or studies, so that they reach many practitioners. They should also have meetings with the education stakeholders and share with them research briefs considered important for practice in the field of education.

**What are for you the most critical areas of future research in Catholic education, and why is that?**

This interview is timely in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic that has greatly affected education sector. Catholic schools have been greatly hit in Africa especially in those areas where education is inaccessible to the poor who are disadvantaged and do not have access to online learning. With the Covid-19 pandemic era, when there is a paradigm shift from face to face to online learning. What happens with those who cannot afford gadgets needed for online learning? It is in view of this that I present critical areas of research that could include: Equity in Catholic education in the post Covid-19 era; Management of Covid-19 protocols; Spread and containment in Catholic schools.

Other areas may also deal with the sustainability of Catholic education amidst secularization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and parental engagement in Catholic education. This is because often times parents especially in some parts of Africa tend to transfer their parental roles to the teachers. The spiritual aspect that is emphasized in Catholic schools may not be welcomed by all parents especially those who believe that what matters is academic performance for transition to other levels of education.

**What is your advice for graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education?**

For graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education, I would advise them to review the research done and books written by Prof. Grace. I would also challenge them to subscribe to International Studies in Catholic Education so that they are exposed to the research done in different parts of the world to enable them to identify research gaps. It would also be advisable that they read the International Handbook for Catholic Education in addition to other

documents by the Catholic Church related to Catholic education.

**Is there a personal anecdote of your interactions with Prof. Grace that you would like to share?**

My interaction with Prof. Grace has taught me a great deal that one's passion for a given area in research energizes her/him to explore more to make the field understood. Prof. Grace's search for information on Catholic education makes him very instrumental in the practice and research in Catholic education. He is a blessing and a mentor in my scholarship and publication.

## INTERVIEW WITH DAVID FINCHAM, SENIOR LECTURER AT ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY



*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon*

*August 2021*

### EXCERPTS:

- “Gerald has long been critically engaged in the educational debate with regard to challenges facing leaders within Catholic schools in a secular and market-driven society. His work not only ... confronts ... the implications of these challenges, ... but he also offers practical encouragement and guidance.”
- “His work and his reputation as a leading international scholar ... has been a major influence on the Catholic community worldwide. He is a leader and exemplar in the field of Catholic education.”

#### **Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?**

I am Dr. David Fincham. I have been involved in Catholic education for over forty years as an English teacher in a Catholic secondary school, Head of Year, Head of House, First Deputy Headteacher and Acting Headteacher.

Formerly a Programme Director of the MA in Catholic School Leadership programme at St Mary's University, I now lecture on that programme and supervise doctoral researchers.

#### **How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?**

I first met Gerald at St Mary's in 2006 when he was the External Examiner for the MA in Catholic School Leadership but I was already familiar with his work.

#### **Box 1: Interview Series**

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**Why a series of interviews?** Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with David Finchman, Senior Lecturer and Senior Fellow at St. Mary's University (Twickenham, London). The interview is part of a series in honor of Professor Gerald Grace's retirement from St Mary's University.

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**How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?**

Gerald has long been critically engaged in the educational debate with regard to challenges facing leaders within Catholic schools in a secular and market-driven society.

His work not only exposes and confronts with credibility the implications of these challenges in an accessible academic language but he also offers practical encouragement and guidance for those negotiating the dilemmas facing leadership at the level of 'the chalk face'.

His work and his reputation as a leading international scholar in the context of Catholic education has been a major influence on the Catholic community worldwide. He is a leader and exemplar in the field of Catholic education.

**In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in Catholic education?**

I began my doctoral research in Catholic education in 1996. During the course of my studies, like many others, I became familiar with Gerald's work and, in particular, from its inception in 1997, the work produced by the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education (CRDCE). When I completed my doctoral research in 2002, my supervisor drew attention to Gerald's ground-breaking work, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality*, which had recently been published, and he advised that, before submitting my thesis, I should include some references to this publication.

**Is there a personal anecdote of your interactions with Prof. Grace that you would like to share?**

I had the privilege of being invited to meet Gerald at his home. He took the opportunity to show me various souvenirs and presents that he had collected on his travels to various countries around the world, where he would speak at international conferences. In his house, there were many and diverse statues, icons, and other artefacts of a religious nature on display.

On the wall of the stairway, in ascending order, there was arranged a series of images of the stations of the cross. I studied them for a few moments. He then asked me if I had noticed anything unusual about them. It felt like a test. I mused reflectively (afraid of revealing any ignorance on my part) and offered tentatively: 'Are they all there?' After a pause, he nodded. He confirmed that two of the images were missing.

He then regaled me of the story of how these images had come into his possession. He had been invited to Buenos Aires to give a presentation at an international conference. During his time in the city, he was escorted by a driver called José, who acted as both guide and translator, and accompanied by a religious sister, who had been given permission from her Superior to travel there with him.

On one occasion, José took Gerald and the religious sister to a well-known market in the city, where they spent the morning looking at the commodities and wares that were on sale. On one of the stalls he came across the images of the stations of the cross and, through José, he made some enquiries. José negotiated a price on Gerald's behalf but the price the stallholder was asking was too high.

The religious sister discouraged Gerald from pursuing the matter as she said that the images were too expensive. But Gerald persisted and, on further inspection, he pointed out to José that the set was broken – two of the images were missing. José therefore resumed his conversation with the stallholder and negotiated a new (and significantly lower) price, which Gerald was then pleased to meet.



Photo: Gerald Grace and David Finchman.

## INTERVIEW WITH LEONARD FRANCHI, LECTURER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW



*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon*

*August 2021*

### EXCERPTS:

- “Gerald’s work on religious /social capital is fundamental to the essence of Catholic education: What drives us? What is it we wish to communicate? How can we best communicate to others that which we have received? These are perennial questions but Gerald has forged a path which draws on insights from other ways of thinking about education.”
- “Gerald was one described to me fondly as the man who never knowingly left home without a tie...”

#### **Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?**

I work in the School of Education in the University of Glasgow, Scotland. We are the 4<sup>th</sup> oldest university in the Anglophone world (founded in 1451). The University, the Bishops’ Conference and the Scottish Government are in a partnership to support Catholic teacher education in our institution. My academic interests are in this field. I teach on a wider range of programs at undergraduate, masters and doctoral level.

#### **How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?**

I first met Gerald when he came to the University of Glasgow for the launch of the St. Andrews Foundation for Catholic Teacher Education in 2013. I had been appointed as the first Director of the Foundation and invited Gerald to be one of the speakers at our inaugural event. The principal speaker was Archbishop (now Cardinal) Gerhard Müller. Since then we have kept in touch by email and participated together at various events. I was especially delighted when he agreed to speak at the London launch in 2018 of one of my edited books, *Reclaiming the Piazza II*, at St Mary’s University, London.

#### **Box 1: Interview Series**

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**Why a series of interviews?** Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with Leonard Franchi, Lecturer at the University of Glasgow. The interview is part of a series in honor of Professor Gerald Grace’s retirement from St Mary’s University.

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**How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?**

Gerald's main contribution, I would say, is the example he gives of diligence and hard work. He could have stepped back and had a 'normal' retirement but he decided that the mission of Catholic education was too pressing for that. We must thank him for this example.

**In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in Catholic education?**

Gerald's work on religious /social capital is fundamental to the essence of Catholic education: What drives us? What is it we wish to communicate? How can we best communicate to others that which we have received? These are perennial questions but Gerald has forged a path which draws on insights from other ways of thinking about education. This has encouraged me to consider just what the essence of dialogue is when applied to Catholic education.

**How can Catholic education scholars make sure that their research is useful to practitioners?**

This is a great question.

First, it is important to say that one of the serious challenges to the research-practice nexus today is the paywall and the expensive academic book. If research is not readily available to read, then it too easily becomes an arcane discipline reserved for the select few. To address this, scholars should work with publishers who offer

reasonably-priced volumes. (Gracewing is a great example.)

Second, there is a need to engage in formal and informal dialogue with practitioners in schools to explore how the research-practice nexus should look like. Working together, we can offer something fresh which will have a positive impact on our young people.

**What are for you the most critical areas of future research in Catholic education, and why is that?**

There are many candidates for this list. I would place teacher formation near or at the top. This is the medium by which critical issues such as educational poverty, climate issues, the nature of the human person, and the role of religion in society can be studied in the depth they deserve.

**What is your advice for graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education?**

Talk to various people about your broad ideas and then focus on a particular project. Don't rush into it and make sure that you find suitable supervisors. Then just go for it!

**Is there a personal anecdote of your interactions with Prof. Grace that you would like to share?**

Gerald was one described to me fondly as the man who never knowingly left home without a tie...



Photo: Gerald Grace at the launch of Leonard Franchi's book *Reclaiming the Plaza*.

## INTERVIEW WITH ANNA LISE GORDON, DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION AT SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY



*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon  
August 2021*

### EXCERPTS:

- “I remember one of my first meetings with Prof. Grace over lunch in the refectory at St Mary's. Such wide-ranging and enjoyable discussions! [...] I also remember being inspired by Prof. Grace's active encouragement and support for me as a Christian (albeit not Catholic) woman in leadership.”
- “Prof. Grace is a real gentleman ... and he has the most beautiful handwriting in the world! I have also seen a steelier and more rebellious side to Prof. Grace, inspired by his values and commitment.”

### Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?

Since September 2018, I have been Director of the Institute of Education at St Mary's University. One of the privileges of this role has been the opportunity to get to know Prof. Grace in his capacity as Honorary Professor and Director of the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education. The Institute of Education at St Mary's is proud of its contribution to initial teacher education and ongoing professional development of teachers, with a strong and clear commitment to Catholic education. Prof. Grace, together with other expert Catholic colleagues, sets the tone for many of our endeavors and service to Catholic education at St Mary's University.

### How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?

I remember one of my first meetings with Prof. Grace over lunch in the refectory at St Mary's. Such wide-ranging and enjoyable discussions! We shared our different memories of Durham University and our passion for all aspects of education. I also remember being inspired by Prof. Grace's active encouragement and support for me as a Christian (albeit not Catholic) woman in leadership.

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**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with Anne Lise Gordon, Director of the Institute for Education at St. Mary's University in London. The interview is part of a series in honor of Professor Gerald Grace's retirement from St Mary's University.

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**How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?**

Although I am not directly involved in the world of Catholic educational practice and research, the influence of Prof. Grace's work is impressive, particularly the impact of his writing on the scholarship and research of so many others. His excellent editorship of the *International Studies in Catholic Education* journal over many years has extended our understanding of Catholic educational research far and wide.

**In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in Catholic education?**

I have learnt much from Prof. Grace's writings over the years, particularly his focus on Catholic values and the distinctive nature of Catholic school leadership. Prof. Grace sets exacting standards for himself and has inspired me to try to do the same!

**How can Catholic education scholars make sure that their research is useful to practitioners?**

At St Mary's University, we work with more than 500 primary and secondary schools each year for initial teacher education and professional development for teachers, including MA and PhD studies. Above all, teachers want up-to-date evidence- and research-informed guidance to improve practice in schools and have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people.

**What are for you the most critical areas of future research in Catholic education, and why is that?**

We have a significant shortage of Catholic religious education teachers and senior school leaders for our schools, so research to support development in these areas is essential.

**What is your advice for graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education?**

Network actively, with purpose, with esteemed colleagues in Catholic education at St Mary's University and beyond. Follow your passions in Catholic education as this is most likely to lead to high-quality research with impact.

**Is there a personal anecdote of your interactions with Prof. Grace that you would like to share?**

Prof. Grace is a real gentleman, always polite and considerate ... and he has the most beautiful handwriting in the world! I have also seen a steelier and more rebellious side to Prof. Grace, inspired by his values and commitment to justice, that shines through on occasions when needed, and always with positive outcomes.



Photo of Prof. Grace taken on St. Mary's campus.

## INTERVIEW WITH MARIE GRIFFIN, CHAIRPERSON OF THE CATHOLIC EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP IN IRELAND

*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon*

*August 2021*



### EXCERPTS:

- “Prof. Grace encourages people to do research in Catholic education and to write it up. This might seem like an easy job but it’s not! Many practitioners are engaging in interesting innovative practice and research but often lack the time, experience, confidence, and motivation to write up their work.”
- “When I went to meet him first in London, he was welcoming and so easy to talk to... Prof. Grace lives the mission of kindness, humility and servant leadership. This is good!”

#### Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?

My name is Marie Griffin and I am the Chairperson of the Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) in Ireland. The CEP is an oversight body for Catholic education at the primary, second-level and third-level in Ireland and has a remit to be an authoritative voice for Catholic education. Catholic schools make up approximately 89 percent of schools at the primary level and nearly 50 percent at the second-level in Ireland. At the third level, the number of Catholic colleges has been reduced significantly, particularly in the area of teacher training. Part of CEP’s role in the future will be to bring cohesion to Catholic education across the sectors while acknowledging that the primary sector has to become more diverse and that Catholic primary schools will have to be divested to the State.

#### How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?

I met Prof. Grace when I was CEO of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish Schools’ Trust), which is a patron of 107 second-level Catholic schools across Ireland. Prof. Grace gave a keynote address to the CEIST annual conference in 2015 and we have kept in touch since then.

#### Box 1: Interview Series

**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.

**Why a series of interviews?** Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with Marie Griffin, Chairperson of the Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) in Ireland. The interview is part of a series in honor of Professor Gerald Grace’s retirement from St Mary’s University.

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In his keynote address, Prof Grace presented a model for evaluating the mission of Catholic schools to match the performative evaluative model used by the State inspectorate. While such a mission evaluation has not yet been formalized in Ireland, it will be a necessary future step for Catholic schools.

**How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?**

Prof. Grace encourages people to do research in Catholic education and to write it up. This might seem like an easy job but it's not! Many practitioners are engaging in interesting innovative practice and research but often lack the time, experience, confidence, and motivation to write up their work. Having Prof. Grace as a gentle persuader, supporter, and scaffolder is very enabling. He is also a very good source of scholarship about what is going on in Catholic education across the world.

**In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in Catholic education?**

Prof. Grace encouraged me to do an article for International Studies in Catholic Education and I would never have done so otherwise. The article charted the first decade of CEIST, an Irish education trust company. I looked at the origins of CEIST, the reasons for its establishment and how it engaged with a number of stakeholders in its early years and subsequent progress. The article proved very useful for the Trust company itself, hopefully for other such companies, and as a chronicle of the first such education trust company in Ireland.

**How can Catholic education scholars make sure that their research is useful to practitioners?**

By staying close to practitioners, co-writing with them, getting feedback and engaging in practice in schools themselves where possible. Useful research almost presents itself to researchers from the agenda that is taking place in schools. CEIST always has a workshop at its annual conference for presentations by teachers in the schools that are currently engaging in research. It is always very well received and attended, and it gives other teachers and leaders ideas for practice.

**What are for you the most critical areas of future research in Catholic education, and why is that?**

Listening to the voices of parents because if they don't send their children to Catholic schools, there is no future. In Ireland, many parents are vocal about the lack of choice of school type, particularly at the primary level. The

Church acknowledges that more diversity is needed and is very willing to divest schools to the State. However, there are many parents who actively choose Catholic schools for their children and would want to retain that choice as well. It will be important to know why those parents choose Catholic schools, what they want for their children, and how the Catholic sector can respond. It will also be important to have Catholic parents more involved in the faith lives of their children and not leave all faith formation to schools.

**What is your advice for graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education?**

Get some practice as a teacher in a Catholic school first so that they can truly understand their area of research. If researchers don't understand how schools work, they can make basic errors in research design (e.g. asking too much of busy schools at particularly busy times of the school year) and/or in recommendations. Having school experience also gives researchers credibility with their colleagues at the coalface. In doing my own doctoral research, for example, being able to engage with Principals, as a former Principal myself, made it more worthwhile for the work and hopefully for the participants.

**Is there a personal anecdote of your interactions with Prof. Grace that you would like to share?**

When I went to meet him first in London (I was visiting there), he was welcoming and so easy to talk to. By the time he came to the CEIST conference, he was like an old friend. Prof. Grace lives the mission of kindness, humility and servant leadership. This is good!



Photo: CEIST team with keynote speaker Prof. Gerald Grace at the 2015 CEIST Conference.

## INTERVIEW WITH CAROLINE HEALY, COURSE LEAD, MA IN CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP, ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY



*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon  
January 2022*

### EXCERPTS:

- “In my view, Prof. Grace’s contribution to research in Catholic education concerns building it and developing it as an important sub-discipline of education in its own right... Founding a journal to build contributions from all over the world, not just Europe, ... has been outstanding.”
- “It has been fun being his office neighbor for the past five years and spending time during busy schedules taking short breaks and just being happy colleagues and companions on our Catholic education journey together, laughing at Gerald’s ever-witty banter.”

**Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?**

I am Senior Lecturer on the Doctor of Education (EdD) Programme and PhD doctoral supervisor at St Mary’s University, London, as well as a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. I am privileged to lead the MA in Catholic School Leadership Programme as the previous director, Professor John Lydon, enhanced its student numbers greatly which is benefitting current Catholic schools in the UK and Ireland in terms of succession planning in leadership. Professor Gerald Grace is one of the well-known former eminent external examiners of the programme, alongside Richard Pring. He has continued to take an interest in the students, their dissertation research and programme numbers since then.

I have had roles in higher education for nearly 30 years and have experience of teaching in the systems of the UK, United States and Ireland and carrying out research in collaboration with a number of European countries. I am the National General Secretary of the Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools and Colleges for England & Wales which represents the majority of Catholic schools. In addition, I am also an elected member of the Council of the Catholic Union of Great Britain, to advance Catholic education in the public arena.

#### Box 1: Interview Series

**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.

**Why a series of interviews?** Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with Caroline Healy, Course Lead, MA in Catholic School Leadership, St Mary’s University, Twickenham, London. The interview is part of a series in honor of Professor Gerald Grace’s retirement from St Mary’s University.

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I am also part of an exciting philanthropic-funded research project concerning the research capacity-building of post-doctoral researchers from Africa which was a project initiated by Prof. Grace during a conversation in Rome with African colleagues. I have been involved in the facilitating of seminars on distinctive leadership nationally and internationally. Finally, I am a trustee of the St Mary's university charity SHOCC which promotes student and staff volunteering in schools and orphanages in Africa.

My current research interests concern formation of Catholic school teachers and leaders, Catholic school leadership, distinctive Catholic identity, maintenance of religious charisms, parents as primary educators and inclusion of the disadvantaged and vulnerable in Catholic education. My recent publications included a chapter in an edited volume, *Irish and British Reflections on Catholic Education* co-authored with Professor John Lydon entitled 'Shepherding Talent – a informal formation programme for aspiring school leaders. I was also most honored to be invited to write a chapter entitled 'Catholic Education and a New Christian Humanism: in Honour of Grace' for Professor Gerald Grace's festschrift *New Thinking, New Scholarship and New Research in Catholic Education: Responses to the Work of Professor Gerald Grace*.

**How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?**

I first met Professor Grace at a conference of the Association of Catholic School Schools and Colleges of England and Wales in 2015 which was held in Chester, in North West England. He was giving a keynote on distinctive leadership and his talk was inspiring because it was counter-cultural to the usual talks on leadership I had previously listened to. However, I had heard of Professor Grace by reputation many years before. In London in 1996, my then PhD supervisor, the distinguished late Professor Maurice Kogan, discussed the work of Professor Grace and how he was doing outstanding work creating new knowledge and a discipline in the area of Catholic education.

This foresight led to the creation of journal in Catholic education, *International Studies in Catholic Education*. Leading American researchers at the University of Notre Dame, have not surprisingly referred to Professor Grace and his close colleagues as the most eminent researchers in Catholic education in Europe and ones who continue to contribute to empirical research and new knowledge in the area of Catholic education. Since 2016, when Professor Grace moved his journal of and Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education (CRDCE) to St Mary's, I have been most fortunate to know him as a fellow colleague and friend.

**How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?**

In my view, Prof. Grace's contribution to research in Catholic education concerns building it and developing it as an important sub-discipline of education in its own right, so much so that we are still discussing it today. Further, he is a distinguished academic that has led debates in the field and contributed significantly to new knowledge and concepts in this area, especially 'spiritual capital' and 'mission integrity'. Founding a journal to build contributions from all over the world, not just Europe, but also Africa and Latin America has been outstanding. These contributions help sustain Catholic education as a distinctive education sector among other offerings.

In practice, Prof. Grace has always been since his early career as teacher, keen to include and provide interesting opportunities and experiences for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, including taking students to the cinema and theatre. He embodies the Catholic education principles of the importance of a holistic education and inclusion for all.

**In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in Catholic education?**

In practice, Prof. Grace has influenced me by the importance of professionalism at all times and service. He is committed to his duties and responsibilities and this extends not just to colleagues, but also students, recently continuing to supervise a doctoral student who was taking a rather long time to complete.

In terms of research, Prof. Grace's commitment to empirical research and visits to schools to speak to people on the frontline is very valuable indeed. One such example was holding a conference in a school in North London focused on the contribution of Catholic schools to social justice in 2020. Gaining contemporary school leader and teacher perspectives is really paramount for moving the disciplinary field of Catholic education forward and disseminating their recommendations. Being close to schools is extremely significant for producing cutting-edge research and not just sitting in an 'ivory tower', so that everyone is made aware of contemporary successes and challenges in Catholic education.

**How can Catholic education scholars make sure that their research is useful to practitioners?**

First, it is important to disseminate research outside academia and research conferences by participating in conferences and seminars for practitioners. Good examples of these types of gatherings include Diocesan Executive Headteacher, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Aspiring Middle Leader Conferences. Other conferences include the Catholic Association of

Teachers Schools and Colleges and the Association of Catholic Chaplains in Education. Including articles in communications with schools that are accessible such as in *Networking: Catholic Education Today* which are read widely by practitioners and serving school leaders is very useful.

Second, include practitioners in the empirical research and gather their opinions so that their voice is included in the current debates on Catholic education. Educators and academic researchers should come together to produce the best research possible so that is accurate and endeavors to arrive at the truth. This is really critical in an age of increasing secularization and calls for the removal of funding from schools with a religious character that some sections of civic society claim are exclusive.

**What are for you the most critical areas of future research in Catholic education, and why is that?**

The continued examination of formation programmes and their impact on the Catholic education sector is essential to provide the next generation of school leadership, especially in an era where senior leaders are choosing not to step-up and take on headship roles. Why there are less female leaders of secondary schools also requires evaluation. Increasing academization of schools will also require deep analysis in time and reflection on the positives of working collaboratively while critically considering the potential negative impact on individual founding school identities and distinctive religious charisms being lost to a more generic Catholic identity.

**What is your advice for graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education?**

My initial advice is to focus on a topic that will enhance practice or the professional setting graduate students already may be working in, as this will produce authentic research and it will be easier to engage in consultation with other expert professionals in terms of conceptual frameworks and findings. This will produce higher quality research than working in isolation.

My other key advice is to become involved as much as possible in Catholic education networks to receive feedback on initial research findings and endeavor to become involved in the work of academia, particularly if graduate students wish to change careers and move into the higher education sector. Becoming knowledgeable on research methods and ethics, data management, intellectual property and publishing are essential researcher development in this regard.

**Is there a personal anecdote of your interactions with Prof. Grace that you would like to share?**

I really enjoyed organizing the Catholic Union of Great Britain's Lenten Lecture in 2017 when Prof. Grace gave a lecture on 'Do our Catholic Schools have Mission Integrity?' which was really thought-provoking for the wide-ranging audience and demonstrated how his research is useful to civic society. In addition, supporting Professor Grace in a library project to ensure that all his body of work was in the St Mary's University and freely available electronically to all, including the two volumes of the *International Handbook of Catholic Education* he co-edited and *Faith, Mission and Challenge: the selected works of Gerald Grace in Catholic Education*. This generosity of allowing others, especially students, to access research without any restrictions is to be highly applauded. Professor Grace also invested considerable personal funds making his 2021 festschrift volume open access, demonstrating his commitment to sharing knowledge and the truth widely.

Finally, it has been fun being his office neighbor for the past five years and spending time during busy schedules taking short breaks and just being happy colleagues and companions on our Catholic education journey together, laughing at Gerald's ever-witty banter. The photo below was taken in 2021 to celebrate Professor Grace's birthday in his Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education (CRDCE) at St Mary's University, London!



Photo: Professor Grace with Prof. John Lydon and Dr. Caroline Healy.



## INTERVIEW WITH JOHN LYDON, PROFESSOR AT SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY



Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon  
January 2022

### EXCERPTS:

- “The concept of ‘spiritual capital’, defined... as ‘resources of faith derived from a religious tradition’, in my opinion, represents one of Professor Grace’s main contributions to research in Catholic education.”
- “Perhaps my fondest memory is of Professor Grace insisting that, in the middle of NCEA 2009 in Anaheim, we hire a car and I drive him to the Mass on Easter Sunday at the Basilica of San Juan Capistrano... [But] while in Anaheim he refused my request to journey to the burial place of a former USA President whose politics he disagreed with profoundly!”

#### Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?

I hold degrees in education and theology from the Universities of Durham, Liverpool, and Surrey. My doctorate focused on teaching as a vocation for lay teachers in a contemporary context. I am Professor of Catholic Education and Editor of the journal *International Studies in Catholic Education* at St Mary’s University, London. Prior to this I was the Programme Director for the MA in Catholic School Leadership at St Mary’s University. I also taught at the University of Notre Dame, London Global Gateway. Before my career in higher education, I served as a school leader for over 30 years in Salesian schools.

Significant areas of my scholarship and research focus on spiritual capital, Catholic school leadership, the maintenance of distinctive religious charisms and the relationship between these and competing school paradigms in the 21st century which focus on the marketization of education and school effectiveness in the UK. I am a doctoral supervisor and mentor to post-doctoral researchers from Africa who are enhancing their research capability in the area of Catholic education.

#### Box 1: Interview Series

**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.

**Why a series of interviews?** Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with John Lydon, Professor at St Mary’s University, Twickenham, London. The interview is part of a series in honor of Professor Gerald Grace’s retirement from St Mary’s University.

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I was recently appointed leader for education of the Catholic-Inspired NGO Forum, working in partnership with the Vatican Secretariat of State. I am also a founding member of the International Catholic Education Alliance and Global Researchers to Advance Catholic Education (GRACE). I serve as a member of the Executives of the World Union of Catholic Teachers, the Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools and Colleges of England & Wales and the Catholic Union of Great Britain.

**How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?**

I first met Professor Grace in 1998 when he was invited by Professor John Sullivan to give a lecture at one of the seminars for graduate students (included me) who had embarked upon the MA in Catholic School Leadership, a programme which Professor Sullivan had instituted in the previous year. I remember being inspired by the erudition of his contribution, focused on one of the chapters of *School Leadership: Beyond Education Management*, a ground-breaking text published in 1995. I remember thinking at the time that we were privileged to be in the presence of three giants of Catholic education research, with the late Professor Terrence McLaughlin being present alongside Professors Gerald Grace and John Sullivan. Professor Grace's presentation inspired me to suggest to the Salesian Provincial that he be invited to deliver the keynote at the first Salesian Conference on Catholic Mission in 1999 in Coventry.

**How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?**

The concept of 'spiritual capital', defined by him initially as 'resources of faith derived from a religious tradition', in my opinion, represents one of Professor Grace's main contributions to research in Catholic education. I have written a chapter about this in Professor Grace's recent festschrift published in 2021, *New Thinking, New Scholarship and New Research in Catholic Education: Responses to the work of Professor Gerald Grace* (2021, London: Routledge). This contribution of spiritual capital became very significant for me in practice when Professor Grace was appointed as External Examiner for the model formation programme, the MA in Catholic School Leadership in 2005 at St Mary's University, London.

I directed the programme and developed the curriculum with a focus on capacity building in the area of spiritual and theological capital to 'bridge the gap' between theoretical underpinnings and school practice for graduate students who were also Catholic school leaders. The programme provides school leaders with an opportunity not only to become familiar with the Catholic Church's rich teaching on education, but also to become more effective school leaders by developing both secular and spiritual competencies. As External Examiner, Professor Grace

could see the concept of spiritual capital being developed in practice and described it as a flagship MA programme "... (with) excellent resourcing ..., innovative modes of study and outreach, ... quality teaching and highly professional tutorial guidance. It is also well informed by Church documents on ecclesiology, Christian principles and education." Professor Grace's work on the mission of Catholic education and fidelity to it in practice has also inspired me to develop this as a major theme for graduate students to consider in their assignments and reflections. His commitment to the Catholic Church's mission to the poor has been equally inspirational and has motivated me to underline this theme in the MA in Catholic School Leadership programme.

**In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in Catholic education?**

Whilst Catholic education benefits from the spiritual capital formed in the past, it is vital that this spiritual capital is sustained by nurturing future leaders in Catholic schools. At St Mary's, the MA in Catholic School Leadership and the Shepherding Talent CPD Programme make a significant contribution in maintaining the spiritual and religious mission in Catholic schools by supporting the continuing professional development and formation of Catholic school leaders. A number of MA students have been promoted to positions of leadership and a high number in senior Catholic education leadership positions have progressed to doctoral studies. More women than men are currently participating in the programme and participation has been widened in the UK and internationally through rolling out new modes of study. The programme also attracts well-established diocesan leaders and those in multi-academy trusts. This development of spiritual capital of school leaders takes place by developing a community of learners and online tasks, which enables them to be more critically reflective.

**How can Catholic education scholars make sure that their research is useful to practitioners?**

Professor Grace has had a major influence on how we have conceptualized various programmes I just described at St Mary's, bridging the gaps between research and practice. As for me, teaching as a vocation and the continued formation of formators is an example of my research informing school practice in the classroom. In exploring the concept of teaching as a vocation in Christian tradition, it is important to articulate the essential interconnectedness between four elements: Christ as the foundation of Christian vocation – biblical perspectives, focusing particularly on the concepts of discipleship, emulation and charism; the way in which that vocation has developed within Christian tradition; historical perspectives focusing on two Religious Orders and current critical scholarship concerning teaching as a vocation and vocation demonstrated in the perceptions

and motivations of practitioners. Recommendations from this research are applicable in practice, for example for the maintenance of formation programmes both at Diocesan and Religious Order level.

**What are for you the most critical areas of future research in Catholic education, and why is that?**

Maintaining Catholic identity in the midst of the significant decline in religious trusteeships is a contemporary leadership challenge, but it is also an opportunity to strengthen the identity of all schools among a family of schools. Critical solidarity between Church and government is seminal in this context as Catholic schools in the UK are primarily funded by the state. Key sub-themes include the revisiting of the transmission of religious charisms by lay headteachers and Catholic identity in a changing cultural context. Further, the promotion of theological literacy, religious education and raising awareness of governance and inspection of schools with a religious character in the UK continue to be critical areas for research. Finally, research on the central mission of the Church and the promotion of mission integrity in regard to service of the poor and vulnerable in schools and the wider service to the Common Good are perennial concerns that require attention.

**What is your advice for graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education?**

My first piece of advice is to research on a topic which will combine theory and practice and inspire real improvements on the ground in Catholic education at all levels and something which will uphold the central mission of Catholic schools, which is to serve those at the peripheries. Doctoral students are producing some excellent case studies of the work of religious orders, dioceses and schools. All of this is adding to the empirical research base of Catholic education. For example, one of my international doctoral students from Tanzania, Rev. Fr Auson Mushoshi, recently completed his doctorate in 2021 on his local diocese of Bukoba.

I also encourage students to participate in seminars, colloquia and conferences to disseminate their research and receive feedback from others, and to publish as they are completing their doctoral journey. One of my doctoral students, the Provincial of the Salesians of Don Bosco in the UK, Very Rev. Fr James Briody, is researching on the maintenance of the Salesian charism in a new era of religious trusteeship and lay headships. Another international doctoral student, Br Joao Carlos Do Prado, a member of the General Council of the Institute of the Marist Brothers based in Rome, is researching on the leadership and the Marist charism and he will be ready to complete and publish his work shortly.

Encouraging networking is also important. Two of my current doctoral students have been recipients of scholarships from the All Hallows Trust in Ireland. These scholars have benefitted by being able to engage with other doctoral students researching on Catholic education in Ireland as part of the Global Researchers Advancing Catholic Education (GRACE) Network. I also invite graduate students to other networks I am involved in, including the World Union of Catholic Teachers (WUCT), Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools and Colleges (CATSC), National Catholic Education Association (NCEA America) and the Network for Researchers in Catholic Education (NfRCE).

**Is there a personal anecdote of your interactions with Prof. Grace that you would like to share?**

Taking 'anecdote' to mean an interesting story about a real incident or person, there are so many that it is difficult to choose one, as he has been a fantastic mentor and I am privileged to follow in his legendary/hallowed footsteps as editor of the international journal he founded. We have attended many Conferences together including presenting papers at the National Catholic Education Convention (USA) and more recently at an International Conference sponsored by the University of Notre Dame Indiana which took place at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in The Vatican during which the photograph below with Cardinal Versaldi was taken. Perhaps my fondest memory is of Professor Grace insisting that, in the middle of NCEA 2009 in Anaheim, we hire a car and I drive him to the Mass on Easter Sunday at the Basilica of San Juan Capistrano, one of the twenty-one famous sites along the California Missions Trail founded by Saint Junipero Serra in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The fact that we had also joined the celebration of the Easter Vigil the previous evening confirms Professor Grace's unswerving and devout faith. While in Anaheim he refused my request to journey to the burial place of a former USA President whose politics he disagreed with profoundly!



Photo: Professor Gerald Grace, Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, and Professor John Lydon at the Vatican.

## INTERVIEW WITH CRISTOBAL MADERO, PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSIDAD ALBERTO HURTADO



*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon*

*August 2021*

### EXCERPTS:

- “The work of Gerald Grace is fundamental for approaching the tension between Catholic schools benefiting from the rules of the market and at the same time risking their identity because of that.”
- “Gerald is a reminder that to be meaningful and helpful, Catholic schools in today’s society need to have ministers, teachers, and leaders who conceive of the school and its role not only as a creator of social, economic, or cultural capital, but who also serve as mentors of spiritual capital.”

#### **Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?**

My name is Cristobal Madero, a Chilean Jesuit priest working in the educational apostolate for more than 15 years. I have been a chaplain and taught theology and philosophy in three different high schools in Chile: Colegio San Luis, Colegio San Alberto, and Colegio San Ignacio. I switched from a practitioner to an academic track in 2014 when I travelled to California to study for a Ph.D. in education policies at UC Berkeley. For the last three years, I have been working at the Jesuit University in Santiago: Universidad Alberto Hurtado. I study the evolution of Jesuit schools in the XX<sup>th</sup> and XXI<sup>th</sup> century and the transformation of the Catholic education subsystem in Chile and Latin America.

#### **How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?**

I haven’t had the honor of meeting Gerald personally, but long before the pandemic, online communication helped us to get in contact. It was the year 2013, I was finishing my Master’s thesis at Boston College, and I wrote a paper about Paulo Freire’s theological roots. My advisor suggested I submit the article to International Studies of Catholic Education, a journal I didn’t know at that time.

#### **Box 1: Interview Series**

**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.

**Why a series of interviews?** Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with Cristobal Madero, Professor at Universidad Alberto Hurtado. The interview is part of a series in honor of Professor Gerald Grace’s retirement from St Mary’s University.

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As the editor, he contacted me with the good news of having the paper accepted to be published. Since that first moment, I felt Gerald's encouragement to pursue scholarship in Catholic Education specifically related to Latin America, my region. Over the years, I send one or two more collaborations to the journal, and in 2019 Gerald invited me to co-edit a special number on Latin America.

**How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?**

The work of Gerald Grace is fundamental for approaching the tension between Catholic schools benefiting from the rules of the market and at the same time risking their identity because of that. Gerald has also critically observed how Catholic schools deal with two impactful processes. One of these processes is secularization. The other is the hegemony of capitalism and its logic in the realm of education. I believe the notion of spiritual capital has provided the field with an essential concept to think about the role of Catholic education in general and Catholic schools in particular.

**In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in Catholic education?**

The work of Gerald has influenced me in two ways: one scholarly and another personally. Scholarly speaking, I have always used his concepts of spiritual capital and market values to analyze Chilean Catholic schools. These two concepts have been actual lenses to focus on what is essential and relevant from a research standpoint. Personally speaking, he has helped in ways he may not know. The last decade has been a difficult time for the Catholic Church in Chile which is going through what is probably the greatest crisis in its history. The institutional decline is added to the crisis caused by abuse, especially sexual, conscience, and power abuse perpetrated by representatives of the Catholic Church. In this sense, Catholic schools face in Chile a crisis caused by its leaders. The schools lost freedom and autonomy not by an oppressive or anti-clerical state, but because of the lack of accountability within the Church itself. The Catholic school in Chile today is looked upon with suspicion by the institution that has oriented, recognized, and sponsored it. It is the hope of educators and formators in school, for the sake of a quality education focused on the values of the Gospel whose message is more necessary than ever before, that the Catholic Church is up to the tremendous challenge that the school faces in times of convulsion.

**How can Catholic education scholars make sure that their research is useful to practitioners?**

I believe the first thing education scholars should do is to know and get involved as much as they can with the schools and their context. By this I mean, not just to read

about schools, students, families, and teachers, but to also visit schools, talk to students and parents, and learn from the teachers beyond their research questions. Most of the time, in my experience, you can tell when a scholar has no idea about what they are talking about. There is a balance that needs to be also present between being on the ground and being technically apt.

**What are for you the most critical areas of future research in Catholic education, and why is that?**

I think there are two related areas critical for research in Catholic education. You cannot understand one without the other. One is the identity of a Catholic School. Why is it that a Catholic school is necessary for society? Why do we need it? In some areas of the world, this question is easier to answer than in others because of the Church's commitment to the poor and, therefore, to give education where nobody else is providing it. There are some places where an answer is not that clear: in richer countries. In both cases, what we need is a clear identity for Catholic Schools. If we don't believe that the center of our educational endeavors is Jesus Christ and his good news for the world, we should close that school. We need to be convinced that the better lesson we can provide children and youth is that Jesus, the son of God, teaches us how to create a better world than the one we have today.

**What is your advice for graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education?**

I would invite them to pursue scholarship with passion and a profound sense of the Signs of the Times, as the Second Vatican Council taught us. This means to be conscious of the treasure Catholic education bears and alert to what the culture and society tell us about what gives life and meaning to life these days. In addition, I would insist that any scholarship in this field needs to be technically excellent. As researchers in the field, we need to show that what we do is theoretically and methodologically up to the best standards.

**Is there a personal anecdote of your interactions with Prof. Grace that you would like to share?**

As I said, Gerald's encouragement has been key for my development as a researcher in the area, and I will be always thankful to him. Gerald is a reminder that to be meaningful and helpful, Catholic schools in today's society need to have ministers, teachers, and leaders who conceive of the school and its role not only as a creator of social, economic, or cultural capital, but who also serve as mentors of spiritual capital. The schools need people who do not avoid living in the tension of the secular and capitalistic, but who learn how to live fruitfully in such a tension.

## INTERVIEW WITH HELENA MILLER, DIRECTOR OF DEGREES AT THE LONDON SCHOOL OF JEWISH STUDIES



*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon*

*August 2021*

### EXCERPTS:

- “Gerald was, for many of our students, the first visiting professor who allowed them to think about and discuss Jewish Education in relation to Catholic education and Catholic schools.”
- “[At] the annual Research in Jewish Education Conference in London... Gerald took the conference by storm..., giving participants at that conference the opportunity for deep reflection and analysis of our Jewish education settings and contexts, through his examination of Catholic schools and education.”

#### Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?

I am the Director of Degrees and co-head of teacher training at the London School of Jewish Studies. I have no experience of working in Catholic Education, apart from when I was training to be a teacher. During my training, at Goldsmiths' College, quite coincidentally all three of my teaching practices took place in Catholic primary schools in London – St. Joseph's on Deptford High Street, Our Lady of Lourdes in Wanstead, and St. Anne's off Whitechapel Road.

They were all well out of the comfort zone of a young Jewish student from a North West London suburb. Those experiences, however, were the best training I could have had. The staff in these schools really showed me how a Catholic religious ethos and religious values could take centre place in a school environment. The dedication of those teachers ensured that their pupils were instilled with a love of their religion as well as the very best of progressive education of the late 1970s.

#### Box 1: Interview Series

**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.

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**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with Helena Miller, Director of Degrees and co-head of Teacher Training programmes at the London School of Jewish Studies. The interview is part of a series in honor of Professor Gerald Grace's retirement from St Mary's University.

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**How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?**

After many years of a career in schools, which I had loved, I found myself training Jewish teachers, and running a Master's Degree in Jewish Education in London. I was involved at the time with RESQUJE (Research and Quality in Jewish Education), headed by Jo Cairns, then senior lecturer in education at the Institute of Education. I was interested to have someone from the Institute come along to the College to talk to my students about teaching in a Christian faith school – a comparison with their own experiences in the Jewish faith sector. Jo introduced me to her colleague, Professor Gerald Grace, and a collegial relationship began which has been maintained over decades.

Gerald was, for many of our students, the first visiting professor who allowed them to think about and discuss Jewish Education in relation to Catholic education and Catholic schools. Gerald's insight and breadth of experience, as well as his very well-developed and singular sense of humor, made him a very popular guest speaker, and thereafter we asked him annually to teach our post graduate students. There is a generation of graduates of that MA in Jewish Education who will never forget the opportunities that Gerald gave them to understand the dilemmas that religious schools face through the lens of contemporary Catholic schools and education.

**In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in education?**

The International Handbook of Jewish Education adds to a growing list of substantial volumes that inform and debate issues within religious education traditions and frameworks. The starting point for the book was a conversation in 2007 with Gerald, who was then editing The International Handbook of Catholic Education. Gerald sat in my office and, in his usual serious and enthusiastic manner, convincing me that a sister publication for, and by the Jewish education community would be a valuable addition to this family of Springer publications, stimulating exchange of knowledge between two religious cultures and traditions. Before an hour had passed, he had also somehow managed to persuade me that, despite having a more than full time job, as well as family responsibilities, I would be the person to make this huge project happen. And, being Gerald, he was right.

Gerald came back to me in 2012, the year I thought I was going to have a rest from writing and publishing, and invited me to contribute an article to his journal. The original reason for this contact in 2012, was that I had invited Gerald to be the keynote speaker at the annual Research in Jewish Education Conference in London. Gerald took the conference by storm. He was able to give

the participants at that conference the opportunity for deep reflection and analysis of our Jewish education settings and contexts, through his examination of Catholic schools and education. And once again, after that conference, a short conversation in the hallway, as Gerald was getting ready to leave, had me agreeing to write an article for him on how Jewish Education and Catholic Education inform each other, through the lens of the respective books and journals we had edited.

**How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?**

During those years when I was busy working on the International Handbook in Jewish Education, Gerald's publishing career was taking him in the direction of Journal editing and from 2009, he has been the senior editor of Catholic Studies, a role he still holds. This role has significantly contributing to scholarship in Catholic education and educational research, giving space to voices and studies from all over the Catholic world. As senior editor, you have an enormous privilege, as well as a responsibility, to shape the discourse in your field, and Gerald has done just that. In addition, I know that the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education was both inspired and led by Gerald, impacting on the work of Catholic schools and colleges, both in the UK and nationally. In short, Gerald has been a hugely significant force for change and development in Catholic education, both in the UK and overseas.

**How can Catholic education scholars make sure that their research is useful to practitioners?**

I can't answer this question from the perspective of Catholic education, but I can answer it from the perspective of Jewish education. All too often, research studies are written up and then sit on shelves gathering dust. Either the enthusiasm to pursue the project has waned, or the researcher is on to the next piece of research, or more often than not, there is just not the capacity or resource – human and financial, to make the bridge between research and practice.

In the Jewish community, we have done the following at various times: (1) Use educational research as a springboard for conversation at practitioner level; (2) Invest in practitioner research – if research begins in the classroom and is conducted by the teachers, we see real chances for change; (3) Use our annual teachers' conferences to discuss research studies in the context of the classroom. And in fact before all of the above, it is vital to conduct research studies that are of relevance to contemporary classrooms.

**What are for you the most critical areas of future research in Catholic education, and why is that?**

Again, I can only speak from my experience as a Jewish educator. I have just finished a six year role as Senior editor of the Journal of Jewish Education – the sister publication of the Journal of Catholic Education. The latest issue of the Journal of Jewish Education is focused on research studies that have been prompted by the Covid pandemic. I am also in the process of conducting a research project, called “Jewish Lives Interrupted”, where we are exploring the challenges (and some opportunities) for teenagers’ Jewish Lives in the past year and a half. We have collected data for almost 1000 teenagers in Jewish schools in the UK, and are just at the stage of beginning the analysis. We are hoping that our analysis will be helpful to schools going forwards. There is no doubt that the fallout from this pandemic will be with us in educational terms for at least a decade. Faith education

has had its’ own unique challenges during Covid – partly because faith (in Christianity and Judaism) is about community, worship, practice and experiences, and not only about cognitive learning. It affects the whole child. How will we make up for lost experiences? How will we make up for the disconnect from the religious community, as well as events and life cycle celebrations and commemorations? How will we support families’ religious lives?

**What is your advice for graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education?**

Go for it! Find an area you are passionate about, identify a researchable question, ask yourself – is this going to be of value to Catholic schools - and follow through. You will be making your mark on the landscape of Catholic education.



## INTERVIEW WITH SR. KATE PUNNACHET, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL AT ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT SCHOOL



*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon*

*August 2021*

### EXCERPTS:

- “My research has been based on Prof. Grace's writing and his ideas, especially on the concept of ‘service to the poor and the marginalized.’”
- “During my time as his student and his secretary, Prof. Grace always focused and talked about the pillars of Catholic schooling... I have been greatly influenced by the example he sets as a “Catholic” teacher. He is kind, nice, and always ready to help anyone who comes to see him.”

#### **Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?**

I am Sr. Kate Punnachet, a sister of Saint Paul of Chartres. I am currently working as assistant principal at St. Joseph's convent school, a Catholic religious private school. Specifically, I am the director of the English programme. There are 1,000 students (of whom 25 are Catholic). I am now trying my best to put my Ph.D. research into practice. I did my research under Prof. Grace's supervision on the topic of servant leadership, and now I am trying to empower all my teachers to have a servanthood attitude in the school. Although in my school, most of the students are Buddhists, I use morals classes to teach them about Catholic values, especially sharing with the marginalized.

#### **How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?**

After I had finished my Master's degree at Liverpool JM University, I looked for a supervisor in the area of Catholic education. I searched Google and the CRDCE webpage popped up. I contacted Prof. Grace, but unfortunately, he told me that he was not able to act as my main supervisor.

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**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with Sr. Kate Punnachet, a sister of Saint Paul of Chartres. The interview is part of a series in honor of Professor Gerald Grace's retirement from St Mary's University.

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I applied to IOE and Prof. Peter Earley became my supervisor. However, when I was a Ph.D. candidate at IOE, I went to see Prof. Grace to ask for suggestions on my research. He told me that he could help me! Thank God for that. Since then, he has really helped me at every stage of my research. He has been a really great teacher in my life. After graduation, when I decided to enter the convent, he came to my clothing ceremony. He has also supported my work in the Catholic school.

**How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?**

I thank God for giving me the opportunity to work as an administrator for Prof. Grace during my life in London. Prof. Grace works extremely hard and contributes all his energy to Catholic education and research. He really thinks about the future of Catholic schools. He has started to work on a Catholic School Handbook and Journal. These are remarkable.

**In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in Catholic education?**

My research has been based on Prof. Grace's writing and his ideas, especially on the concept of "service to the poor and the marginalized." During my time as his student and his secretary, he always focused and talked about the pillars of Catholic schooling, especially exclusion and inclusion. More importantly, I have been greatly influenced by the example he sets as a "Catholic" teacher. He is kind, nice, and always ready to help anyone who comes to see him. I have never seen him refuse to help someone.

**How can Catholic education scholars make sure that their research is useful to practitioners?**

It is obvious that there is a large gap between educational research and implementation. Perhaps, professional

learning communities could be useful for the researcher to get some pre-research data before formulating a research proposal. Also, we should encourage more practitioner researchers.

**What are for you the most critical areas of future research in Catholic education, and why is that?**

During the era of Pope Francis, it could be said that there were many encyclicals, talks, conferences and synods on Catholic education. More recently, the Pope asked all Catholic educators to help finding research and solutions for a Global compact on education. So, the most critical areas of future research should focus more on Catholic values, pedagogy, and Catholic fraternity in the school.

**What is your advice for graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education?**

Firstly, the theological dimension of the Catholic school should be underlining all research frameworks. It should be realized that Catholic education is based on Christ's teaching which is found in the Bible and the Church's teaching. There is the crucial need for separation between any business / industrial model research and Catholic educational research.

**Is there a personal anecdote of your interactions with Prof. Grace that you would like to share?**

Prof. Grace has a great sense of humor. He is very kind and always helpful. When I finished my Ph.D., I brought another sister to meet him and asked him to help her. He said, 'Well, OK'. He guided her and she became one of his administrators. When she finished, I brought yet another doctoral sister to him and asked for his help once again. He said 'Yes, sure', and he helped us all. All three of us really appreciate and love him so much. He has truly given his life to research on Catholic education.

## INTERVIEW WITH JOHN SULLIVAN, EMERITUS PROFESSOR AT LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY



*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon*

*August 2021*

### EXCERPTS:

- “GG is someone who has stood between the living tradition of our faith and contemporary educational policy developments; he has interpreted one to the other and built bridges between them.”
- “Here was a writer who could fearlessly expose the unwelcome implications of the managerialist language that swamped the reading of school leaders, someone who combined a stout defense of Catholic education at the same time as acknowledging its shortcomings.”

#### Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?

After many years of teaching and leadership in Catholic schools (in Lancashire and London) I worked for seven and a half years at (what is now) St Mary’s University, UK. For five of those years I designed, directed and did much of the teaching on the MA in Catholic School Leadership, as well as providing consultancy for many Catholic schools and dioceses. In 2002 I moved to Liverpool Hope University as the UK’s first Professor of Christian Education, becoming Emeritus Professor in 2013.

Since then I have also worked for five years at Newman University, UK as a Visiting Professor of Theology and Education. My strap-line was to help Catholic education to be distinctive, inclusive and effective and to integrate in my teaching and research the intellectual, professional/practical and the spiritual dimensions of being a Christian educator. I work at the interface and as a bridge-builder between Theology and Education.

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**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with John Sullivan, Emeritus Professor at Liverpool Hope University. The interview is part of a series in honor of Professor Gerald Grace’s retirement from St Mary’s University.

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**How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?**

I first met Professor Grace when, as a secondary school Principal, I attended a conference where he was a keynote speaker in the early 1990s. He asked us, as Principals, to submit to him (as part of his own research) a list of ten moral dilemmas we faced as Principals. I found this a very helpful exercise for me to clarify my own thinking. He and I were the opening two speakers at an international conference (in Durham, UK) for academics and professionals involved in Christian education in July 1996. Our paths crossed many times after that, at Catholic education conferences and with regard to International Studies in Catholic Education. I was always impressed by his grasp of the field, the clarity of his communication and his dedication to developing the study of Catholic education as a serious field for academic investigation.

**How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?**

GG is someone who has stood between the living tradition of our faith and contemporary educational policy developments; he has interpreted one to the other and built bridges between them. He has displayed an intelligent and critical fidelity engaged in a sophisticated and nuanced way with secular and secularist trends in education. He offered realism in service of fidelity, resourced by tradition but not restricted by it. Here was a writer who could fearlessly expose the unwelcome implications of the managerialist language that swamped the reading of school leaders, someone who combined a stout defense of Catholic education at the same time as acknowledging its shortcomings. He demonstrated that faith could be expressed credibly in an academic register. He has provided a level of analysis and the development of vocabulary which could assist school leaders in negotiating the dilemmas they faced and as they addressed increasing state intervention on behalf of market approaches to education, forces that appeared to me then, as they do now, as mostly malign. All fields of study have their leading figures, their champions, their exemplars, those who get the field started in a major way. GG has done that for Catholic education.

**In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in education?**

I would say that his influence has been indirect, in that my own decisions about which areas to research and how to investigate them were not drawn from GG. He comes at issues from a sociological and empirical angle, whereas I approach them with a more philosophical and theological orientation (though we both believe it important to bring an historical perspective to bear on topics under review).

He has certainly always encouraged my research over the last 25 years. He also reinforced and confirmed (in scholarly way) the suspicions I already held (before we met) about the deleterious effects of managerialism on the human and divine endeavor of education. And he has modelled something close to my heart as an academic: the importance of clear communication that is accessible to people outside the academy. Too many academics give the impression that being abstruse, esoteric, abstract and immensely complex and difficult to understand are virtues rather than vices.

**How can Catholic education scholars make sure that their research is useful to practitioners?**

Let me refer to two features of my own experience and how I have tried to make my research and scholarship useful for practitioners. First, I have tried to listen carefully to the questions and concerns, the commitments and aversions of the multiple partners who have an interest in Catholic education: students in schools and universities, their teachers, Principals, parents, chaplains, support staff, parishioners, school governors, local and government inspectors, teacher educators, clergy, diocesan officers, and other groups who provide in-service and development opportunities for educators. Although such sources do not determine my own scholarly interests, they do afford strong evidence of neuralgic topics that need untangling and further investigation. Where feasible, I try to relate my own particular concerns and interests to issues that emerge from such listening opportunities. Being constantly involved in communicating with these different constituencies and groups helps me to get a sense of what is understood and not understood about Catholic education and what needs further attention, clarification, affirmation and reinforcement (or rebuttal).

Second, I have been pleased to respond to countless requests over many years to give talks to all these groups about my own research and writing on Catholic education – and such occasions give me fresh opportunities to listen to and learn from others what matters to them. These encounters in turn feed into and greatly help my writing since I hold these audiences and their concerns in my head in the process of working on chapters, articles and books and I bear in mind the level of understanding I gauge is present among my interlocutors – which then influences the language I use, the arguments I develop, what I explain and what I think I can take for granted.

Having said that, I do not believe that all research must be immediately and obviously useful to practitioners; some research can only be useful to some practitioners if they are ready for and open to it and not unduly preoccupied with other priorities. Plus, some blue-skies scholarship that at first sight seems removed from the classroom may

turn out, in due course, to have important implications for practice.

**What are for you the most critical areas of future research in Catholic education, and why is that?**

I have listed a dozen critical areas for future research in Catholic education on p.37 of my chapter 'Diversity and Differentiation in Catholic Education' in *Researching Catholic Education*, edited by Sean Whittle (Singapore: Springer, 2018). But here are four areas that come to mind as being important and which seem in need of further treatment.

First, the relationship between the Church and educational bodies such as schools and universities. What do they expect and need from each other? How do they understand their respective roles in Catholic education and formation? How do they relate to each other? Too often the Church fails to function adequately as an effective learning community or to learn from its schools and universities how to engage and get the best out of people; and too often Catholic schools and universities fail to draw sufficiently from the Church's rich intellectual and spiritual tradition.

The second area is the need to develop an historical perspective and awareness of this intellectual and spiritual tradition, without which Catholic educators find themselves rootless and floundering in the face of insidious and insistent individualism and an often hostile secularism.

Third, the whole area of new technology and communication media needs a constructive and critical interrogation by researchers in Catholic education, if we are to reach up to the needs of our time.

Fourth, in order to engage our culture winsomely, faithfully and effectively, and also as a resource for the curriculum, Catholic education needs to retrieve and build on a renewed Christian humanism.

**What is your advice for graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education?**

Not specifically for research in Catholic education, but any advanced research programme aimed at a doctoral qualification. Among many considerations to be kept in mind by prospective research students the following three seem widely applicable and often insufficiently thought about. First, are you clear about the principal question that your research project seeks to address, the question that will hold together all aspects of your investigation, and to which all subordinate questions should be related. Without this, your research will lack coherence. Second, who do you hope will benefit from your research and how do you hope they might use your research? Without this, your writing will lack a clear sense of audience and is likely also to be weak in drawing out appropriate implications (of your findings) for others. Third, insofar as this lies in your power, think about what kind of supervisor/advisor best suits you and what you hope the student/supervisor relationship will do for you. This relationship is likely to endure for several years; the journey is demanding on both partners and will go through different phases, from dependency on your part to eventually, through your efforts and gradual increase in autonomy and the skillful handling of the relationship by your supervisor, you being recognized as a steward of your discipline, trusted to uphold and promote its ethical and academic standards. Without careful thought about this relationship – and your responsibilities within it – the research journey could become frustrating and more difficult than it needs to be.

**Is there a personal anecdote of your interactions with Prof. Grace that you would like to share?**

I have been touched by how Gerald always prioritizes personal concern for me before we get onto academic or professional matters in our conversations. He regularly asks after the health of my wife (who has undergone various life-threatening operations in recent years). That concern for and interest in persons matters a lot to me and to others.

## INTERVIEW WITH SEAN WHITTLE, VISITING RESEARCH FELLOW AT ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon*

*August 2021*



### EXCERPTS:

- “One of the impressive qualities of Gerald Grace is his charm and wit. He is also a person with a strong sense of mission: working as a researcher at the service of Catholic education... I distinctly remember Gerald politely but firmly speaking to a junior colleague about the need for gravitas and seriousness in relation to this work. This is important advice which we all need to take note of.”
- “I would encourage graduate students to emulate the approach of Gerald Grace – go into Catholic schools and find out what is going on. Keep the focus on high quality empirical analysis.”

#### **Could you briefly introduce yourself and explain what your work on Catholic education entails?**

I am a Visiting Research Fellow at St Mary's University (London) within Gerald Grace's Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education. I serve on the Editorial Board of ISCE. My main work within Catholic Education Studies is to be the secretary for the Network for Researchers in Catholic Education. As such I organize the annual conference and I have played a role in bringing the proceedings of these conferences to the attention of the wider research community.

#### **How and when did you first meet with Prof. Grace and how did you interact with him over the years?**

I first met Gerald in 2008, during the first year of my doctoral studies at the IOE-UCL, on the recommendation of my supervisor. Gerald was already the leading authority on Catholic education and my supervisor thought it would make good sense to sense to make him aware of what I was researching (the philosophy of Catholic education). Meeting Gerald was a pleasure: he was gracious and genuinely interested in what I as a fledgling researcher was aiming to do. I had arrived for the meeting armed with a plethora of questions. I had arrived for the meeting armed with a plethora of questions ready to pick the brains of this eminent thinker.

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**What is the focus of this interview?** This interview is with Sean Whittle, Visiting Research Fellow at St Mary's University (Twickenham, London). The interview is part of a series in honor of Professor Gerald Grace's retirement from St Mary's University.

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We had an engaging conversation and one particular exchange became firmly entrenched in my mind. I had pointed out the need for far more conference events to bring researchers in Catholic education together. Gerald responded with a deep but sincere sense of exasperation. He was already working flat out and had no capacity for this sort of time consuming work! His polite but emphatic response was that I needed to quickly complete my doctoral studies and then start organizing these conference events! As a part-time doctoral student it took me a further five years before I was able to take my viva and pick up a post where I could start this work. I took Gerald's response very much to heart. I have now organised well over a dozen conference type events in aspects of Catholic Education. I have been lucky enough to have Gerald Grace as a keynote speaker at many of these. Since the CRDCE moved to St Mary's I have taken advantage of opportunities to regularly work with Gerald, and in so many aspects of academic life I have regarded Gerald as mentor, from whom I have learned much.

**How do you see Prof. Grace's main contributions to practice or research in Catholic education?**

Gerald's 2002 work is seminal, playing a central role in helping to establish the field of educational studies in the UK. I would argue that Gerald (like Professor John Sullivan) was giving an emphatic response to James Arthur's dire analysis in the *Ebbing Tide* (1995). This analysis maintained that "Catholicity" is seeping out of Catholic schools in England and Wales. This analysis was not grounded in anything like empirical evidence and research. Grace went out to Catholic schools and interviewed serving head teachers. He gleaned high quality evidence and was able to come to a more nuanced and sophisticated analysis of the state of Catholic education in England and Wales. Grace demonstrated the need for careful argument based on first hand research (rather than conjecture and rhetoric) about Catholic education. In this Grace has done an invaluable service to the field of Catholic education studies in the UK. Beyond this Grace has also opened the field up through his editorship of the journal *International Studies in Catholic Education*.

**In what way did Prof. Grace influence your own practice or research in Catholic education?**

My primary research interest is in the theory or philosophy of Catholic education. I have been able to build on Grace's arguments about the need for far more work to be done around the philosophy of Catholic education. It provided an initial impetus, helping to justify why the philosophy of Catholic education needs to be further researched. I was able to see my research as part of a wider goal: furthering the much needed clarity around a robust theory of Catholic education.

**How can Catholic education scholars make sure that their research is useful to practitioners?**

The most obvious way for Catholic education scholars to make sure their research is useful to practitioners is to emulate Grace's approach: to go into Catholic schools and find out what is going on the ground. Good quality empirical research will involve engaging with practitioners, and as such the findings will be relevant to them.

**What are for you the most critical areas of future research in Catholic education, and why is that?**

I would maintain that there are four critical areas of future research in Catholic education: (1) Further work on the aims/philosophy of Catholic education. This is because the traditional focus on 'parental rights' to justify Catholic education has some significant drawbacks (especially as Catholic parents no longer continue to automatically opt for a Catholic schools); (2) A related issue is 'identity' and Catholic education, to further clarify the extent to which Catholic education ought to foster 'Catholic identity'. This brings the focus back to the philosophy of Catholic education; (3) Leadership issues: who ought to lead Catholic schools? Why? How does this leadership link with the leadership/oversight of the Bishops? This is a deeply practical question, certainly in the UK where there have been decades of concerns about there not being enough 'Catholic' head teachers to serve the needs of Catholic schools; (4) How central is Religious Education to the project of Catholic education – is it really the heart of what Catholic education? Should it be central?

**What is your advice for graduate students who may be interested in conducting research in Catholic education?**

I would encourage graduate students to emulate the approach of Gerald Grace – go into Catholic schools and find out what is going on. Keep the focus on high quality empirical analysis of Catholic education.

**Is there a personal anecdote of your interactions with Prof. Grace that you would like to share?**

One of the impressive qualities of Gerald Grace is his charm and wit. He is also a person with a strong sense of mission: working as a researcher at the service of Catholic education. He also has an astute ability to engage with others and to win them around to collaborate with him. Most importantly Gerald is keenly aware of the importance researching Catholic education. I distinctly remember Gerald politely but firmly speaking to a junior colleague about the need for gravitas and seriousness in relation to this work. This is important advice which we all need to take note of.

## Research in Service of Catholic Education Practice: Interviews in Honor of Professor Gerald Grace



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