

Aspects of Doctoral
Research at the
Maryvale International
Catholic Institute
(Volume One)

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Edited by

Andrew B. Morris

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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| Acknowledgements | vii |
| Preface | viii |
| Contributor Profiles | x |
| Part 1: Maryvale International Institute of Higher Education and Catechesis | |
| Chapter One..... | 2 |
| The Maryvale Institute of Further and Higher Education: Its Background and History <i>Andrew B. Morris</i> | |
| Chapter Two | 6 |
| Nine Doctoral Theses: A Brief Introduction <i>Andrew B. Morris</i> | |
| Part 2: Theological and Philosophical Analysis: Three Studies | |
| Chapter Three | 16 |
| Does the New Testament Teach Resurrection in Death? <i>Stephen Yates</i> | |
| Chapter Four | 50 |
| The Material World in Light of Catholic Teaching <i>Scott Powell</i> | |
| Chapter Five | 84 |
| The Development of the Use of Reason in Karol Wojtyla and its Influence in John Paul II's <i>Fides et ratio</i> <i>John Orr</i> | |

Part 3: Aspects of Evangelisation, Catechesis and Religious Education

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter Six | 116 |
| Between Worlds: Communicating the Catholic Faith to Young People in the Western Deanery of the Archdiocese of Nairobi | |
| <i>Eleanor Gibson</i> | |
| Chapter Seven..... | 173 |
| Science, Religion and Education: Perspectives from Bernard Lonergan | |
| <i>Timothy Walker</i> | |
| Chapter Eight..... | 211 |
| Inculturating a Religious Charism: The Experience of the Salesian Sisters in England 1902-1946 | |
| <i>Mary Treacy</i> | |
| Chapter Nine..... | 246 |
| Revising the Vision: A Critique of how Evangelization was Articulated in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry | |
| <i>Robert Rice</i> | |
| Chapter Ten | 278 |
| Equipping the Catechist of Catechists: A Critical Discussion of Seminary Formation in light of Priestly Ministry in Catechesis | |
| <i>Eric Westby</i> | |
| Chapter Eleven | 315 |
| Towards a Reconciliation of Religious Knowledge and Religious Experience in Children's Catechesis | |
| <i>Mary Michael Fox</i> | |

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This book comprises a selection of edited doctoral research projects undertaken between 2014 and 2018 by students studying at the Maryvale International Catholic Institute of Higher Education and Catechesis in Birmingham and whose graduate awards were validated by Liverpool Hope University

May I record my thanks to all of the doctoral graduates who have generously allowed me to make use of their research, as well as those within the Institute, especially Fr Edward Clare, Director of the Institute and Professor Mary Mills, Director of Postgraduate Research, who supported and facilitated publication of this book.

The brief description of the Institute's background and history in part one of this book is taken, almost in its entirety, from 'St Mary in the Valley: A History of Maryvale' by Beth Mulvey and from the work of the unnamed authors of the various prospectus booklets issued over the past ten years. I thank them all.

I am also most grateful to Bloomsbury Publishing for its permission that enabled this volume to include a contribution from Stephen Yates based on a chapter from his book, 'Between Death and Resurrection: A Critical Response to Recent Catholic Debate Concerning the Intermediate State', first published by Bloomsbury Academic US - an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing PLC - at the beginning of 2017.

Andrew B. Morris - Editor

PREFACE

Established at Old Oscott in Birmingham, England, in 1980, the Maryvale Institute is an International Catholic Centre of Further and Higher Education for Catechesis, Theology, Philosophy and Religious Education. It provides a variety of part-time and distance learning courses to the lay faithful, consecrated religious and ministers of the Roman Catholic Church. Maryvale's degree programmes are accredited by external academic partners. Its Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Philosophy and its Masters (MA) in Catholic Tradition are both validated by the Open University. In association with the Faculté Notre Dame of the Ecole Cathédrale in Paris, the Institute provides two ecclesiastical degrees courses, a Bachelor of Divinity and a Licence in Catechetics, while its doctoral research in Catholic Studies is conducted in collaboration with Liverpool Hope University. Successful students receive an award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from the University.

To be accepted as a doctoral student, applicants are required to meet the entry requirements of both Liverpool Hope and Maryvale. The first cohort to do so, which included students from the USA as well as the UK, began their four to six year course in 2009. The first two students to graduate did so in 2014. By the end of the current academic year, 2017-18, a total of seventeen students have successfully completed their studies and can place PhD after their names.

This first book in a series is concerned with the outcomes of that doctoral research programme. It seeks to both provide an overview of breadth of work by its students – and some members of Maryvale staff – and their contribution to new knowledge in the area of Catholic Studies, a wide field including history, literature, philosophy, spirituality, theology – including pastoral and practical theology – evangelisation, catechesis, religious education and Newman studies. After briefly explaining the background to the Institute's genesis, its development and the range of its current doctoral research programme, the book presents nine extracts grouped under two main headings. In the first there are edited versions of three theses concerned with different theological and philosophical topics. The second section has six entries describing research into aspects of evangelisation,

catechesis and religious education. Extracts presenting textual analyses, commentaries and empirical case studies appear in the second volume of doctoral research undertaken at the Maryvale Institute.

Combining disparate research into a single manuscript has necessitated some adaption of the various original writing styles to ensure some consistency in presentation. For example, I have used UK English spelling though many students have used other formats depending on their home location. Nevertheless, I have kept, as far as possible, their individual writing styles while attempting to produce a reasonable degree of uniformity in presentation. In doing so I appreciate that my preferences may, in some cases, seem to prevail over that of the author, and for that I apologise. I trust it will not irritate academic or general readers, nor detract from the contents of individual extracts.

I must thank all the former students for their agreement in letting me undertake this task. I hope that they will be content with the compromises that I have made in editing their work which, I trust, in no way detracts for the contents of their original contributions to this field of study. Any errors or inaccuracies which may have resulted are my responsibility alone.

Andrew B. Morris - Editor

CONTRIBUTOR PROFILES

Sr Mary Michael Fox is a member of the Dominican Order - also known as the Order of Preachers. As a constitutive part of their vocation, Dominicans have always embraced the life of study realizing that the proclamation of the Gospel requires both a profound understanding of Scripture and Christian tradition, as well as a presentation of the Catholic faith that is intellectually engaging and morally persuasive. Dominican study therefore is always directed toward a mission of preaching, teaching, and salvation of souls.

She completed her studies at Maryvale in 2017, and was awarded a PhD for her thesis exploring the reconciling religious knowledge and experience in children's catechesis inherent in the methods promoted by Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

She is an adjunct professor of catechetics at Aquinas College, Nashville, Tennessee. Since 2008, she has been a primary instructor for the College's Catechist Formation Program serving the dioceses of Nashville and Knoxville. Her most recent endeavours includes the co-creation of the College's Centre for Evangelization and Catechesis which supports the work of catechists by providing workshops, retreats and formal study of the Catholic Faith. Rooted in the Dominican charism, the Centre trains parents, teachers, and parish volunteers in a contemplative approach to catechesis that engages both the mind and heart.

Sr Eleanor Gibson was born in Scotland in 1955 and joined the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (Salesian Sisters) with whom she made her first religious profession in Kendal, Cumbria in 1975. In 1985, she applied to be part of the Congregation's expansion into the African continent and since 1986 has belonged to the East African Province of Our Lady of Hope.

She has been involved in a variety of youth pastoral and catechetical works in both the formal and non-formal sectors in each of the four countries of East Africa where she has served; Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania and Ethiopia. She has had a pioneering role in the newly erected Province to which she belongs, being privileged to witness the transition from an

initiative of mission *ad gentes* to the establishment of a Province in which the major leadership roles are already held by African Sisters.

She holds a BA in English Literature and Religious Studies from the University of London, and an MA in Pastoral & Educational Studies from the Maryvale Institute/Open University. Following those two periods of successful academic study she began doctoral research in 2011. Her thesis explored the inherent tensions and complications involved in communicating the Catholic faith to young people in the Western Deanery of the Archdiocese of Nairobi who simultaneously inhabit two conflicting cultures; one steeped in their traditional African roots, the other influenced by the all-pervading mores of modern western secular liberalism. She graduated in 2015 and is currently Director of the Institute of Youth Studies in Tangaza University College, Nairobi, Kenya which is run jointly with the Salesians of Don Bosco.

Rev Dr John Orr is a priest of the diocese of Knoxville, Tennessee, USA, currently at Saint Mary's Athens in McMinn County. As a transitional Deacon during the summer of 2000 he worked in Hamilton County (Saints Peter and Paul, Erlanger Hospital). In the seventeen years since his ordination he has served as a Priest in Knox County (All Saints 2001; Knoxville Catholic High School 2002-2008; Saint John Neumann 2002-2006; Holy Ghost 2009-2016); in Cumberland County (Saint Alphonsus 2006); in Anderson County (Saint Therese 2006-2009) and in Monroe County (Saint Joseph the Worker 2016-2018).

He obtained his first degree (Bachelor of Philosophy - PhB) from the Catholic University of America in 1991. Subsequently he was awarded the degrees of Master of Art (MA), Master of Divinity (MDiv) and MBA, and graduated with a PhD from Maryvale in 2014.

During his six years at Knoxville Catholic High School he acted as Spiritual Director and taught courses across the age spectrum, including basic Catholic doctrine, morality, philosophy, music appreciation and religious understanding – covering such topics as vocations, church documents, and ecumenism.

He is a prolific author. He has written articles on Catholic Church Music (2004; 2005) and has several books published by CreateSpace including The Second Vatican Council and the Interpretation of Scripture (2011), Dogmatic Questions and Answers for the Year of Faith (2012), Reason in Wojtyla/John Paul II (2014) Year of Mercy Pilgrimage (2016) and four

volumes on different aspects of The New Evangelisation (2013-17). His most recent, *Reflections on Pope Francis's Encyclical, 'Laudato si'*, which he co-edited, was published by Cambridge Scholars in 2017.

Scott Powell oversees the Aquinas Institute for Catholic Thought at the University of Colorado, where he teaches theology, podcasts, writes and organizes the Institute's annual lecture series, and is a resource for students looking for answers about their Catholic faith. He has also taught at Denver's Augustine Institute, and has spent over a decade teaching Scripture to groups of all ages.

He began his studies at the Maryvale Institute in 2011, successfully defended his thesis on ecology and St. Paul, and received his doctoral award in 2016. A book based on his thesis entitled 'An Environmental Ethic for the End of the World; An Ecological Midrash on Romans 8:19-22' will be published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in 2019.

Scott and his wife Annie are the founders and directors of Camp Wojtyla, a Catholic adventure programme for youth. They live just outside Boulder, Colorado, with their children, Lily, Samuel and Evelyn.

Robert Rice was born in Elgin, Illinois in 1972. He married Jennifer on June 28th 1997 and they have seven children – John, Kolbe, Robert, Elliana, Maria, Joseph and Aidan.

He obtained a Bachelor's degree (BA) from Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida in 1994. A Master's degree, Masters of Arts in Theology and Christian Ministry, from Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, followed three years later and he began his doctoral studies at Maryvale in 2011, graduating in 2016. His doctoral thesis was a critique of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry, the conclusions of which he has shared with the Bishops Conference. Subsequently, he has been involved in various conversations with the Church authorities regarding the possibility of a new youth ministry document. The driving force behind his work, whether it is through teaching, preaching, writing, or music is his intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, which sustains and illuminates his work as a teacher of evangelization and catechesis, as well as the ministry opportunities to evangelize and catechize others through the spoken and written word.

In addition to his formal academic responsibilities as Associate Professor of Catechetics, at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, a post he has held since 2004, he is Head of Youth Ministry Concentration, Director of

Masters of Arts in Catechetics and Evangelization and Creative Producer for an (as yet) untitled web-series. While not strictly a requirement of his professorship he has given hundreds of concerts and comedic performances across the country using his gifts of music and humour to witness to God's love through his roles as Director of Youth Ministry at the Church of St. Ambrose, Latham, New York (1997-2000), LIFE TEEN North Eastern Area Coordinator, also in New York (2001-2004) and as Worship Leader at Youth and Adult Conferences, Franciscan University of Steubenville, (2005 to present).

Sr. Mary C. Treacy is a member of the international religious institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, also known as the Salesian Sisters.

After studies in philosophy and education in Turin and a 1st class Hons degree from Liverpool University, she spent many years working in formation on three continents for candidates to religious life, pre-seminarians and full-time lay catechists. She has lectured in the Institute of Salesian Studies in Berkeley, California, on the history and spirituality of St. Mary Mazzarello and the Salesian Sisters and holds postgraduate degrees from the Universities of South Africa (UNISA) and Wales (Lampeter). Her interests lie in British and Italian Catholic history, particularly that of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a special emphasis on the development of women's religious orders and the new communities of consecrated life.

She was one of the first cohort of students undertaking doctoral research at Maryvale beginning in 2009 and graduating in 2016 after successfully defending her thesis 'The problems of inculturating the charism of a religious order: the experience of the Salesian Sisters in England & Ireland (1902-1946).' She is currently based with the Salesian community in Kent where she has a number of roles, bursar; provincial delegate for co-operators; support worker with destitute refugee women teaching English and a governor at the Salesian School, Chertsey. She is a member of the Catholic Archives Society, the Catholic Record Society and the Associazione di Cultori di Storia Salesiana (ACSSA). In any spare time that she has she enjoys painting and cooking.

Timothy Walker obtained his first degree in Chemistry from the University of Oxford where he was also an organ scholar. It was during that time he developed his interest in the interrelationship between science and religion and his love of sacred music.

After receiving a degree in theology from Durham University and obtaining a PGCE from St Martin's College, Lancaster, he taught Religious Education in a Catholic secondary school for seven years. He began his post-graduate doctoral studies at Maryvale in 2010. Given Tim's previous academic background and professional interests his research - how the thought of Bernard Lonergan can be used to explore the relationship between the ways in which science and religious truths are presented and understood within the secondary school context – he was very concerned with the concept of an appropriate pedagogy in schools with a religious character. He successfully defended his thesis in 2015.

Tim currently works at the School of the Annunciation, based at Buckfast Abbey in Devon, where he is involved in helping to develop the academic and administrative infrastructure of the School. He also contributes to course development, lecturing and tutoring, particularly in the area of philosophy.

Eric Westby is an assistant professor of theology and catechetics at Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio. He successfully completed his doctoral studies at the Maryvale Institute in 2016, offering for his thesis a critique of seminary formation in light of priestly catechetical ministry, entitled 'Equipping the Catechist of Catechists.' He holds a Master of Arts degree in Theology and Christian Ministry from Franciscan University, from where he was the first student to complete the University's Certification in Catechetics. He also holds a Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies from the Centre for Ministry Development, and has been involved in parish catechetics since 1988.

Eric is a regular presenter at the summer St. John Bosco Catechetical Conference at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, and is the founder of two web-based resource centres for Catholic Youth Ministry (ymcentral.com) and for RCIA leaders and co-ordinators (rciacentral.com). He also directs the Institute of Catholic Theology in Phoenix, Arizona. But most importantly, he is husband to Nikki and father of five beautiful girls.

Stephen Yates is a longstanding member of staff at the Maryvale Institute. He is currently the Programme Director for the MA in Catholic Applied Theology, a post he has held since 2000. He contributes to the design and teaching of modules on catechesis, religious education, Christian anthropology, prayer and the spiritual life, moral formation, and research methods.

Stephen's academic background is in philosophy, catechesis, religious education, and philosophical theology. His current research interests include: the intermediate state and the *anima separata*; purgatory and prayers for the dead; philosophical accounts of identity through death and resurrection; Catholicism and evolution; the doctrine of hell; and the cult of relics. He has authored a number of articles/conference papers on various aspects of catechesis, anthropology and eschatology. He began his postgraduate research while teaching at Maryvale under the auspices of the Open University before transferring to Liverpool Hope University towards the end of his studies and becoming the first Maryvale/Hope student to graduate with a doctoral award (PhD) in 2014.

In January 2017 his thesis was published by Bloomsbury Academic as *Between Death and Resurrection: A Critical Response to Recent Catholic Debate Concerning the Intermediate State*.

Stephen is husband to Ruth and father to Joseph, Maria, Raphael, Elizabeth, Gabriel, Benedict and Sophia.

PART 1:

MARYVALE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CATECHESIS

CHAPTER ONE

THE MARYVALE INSTITUTE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION: BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

ANDREW B. MORRIS

An Historic Spiritual Environment for Academic Work

Maryvale lies at the centre of the ancient settlement of Oscott, about five miles from Birmingham City Centre. It occupies a unique place in the history of the Catholic Church in England. Catholic worship has been celebrated continuously on the site for over 1000 years. The oldest part of the present building, originally called Oscott House, was the home of the Bromwich family, and the base for the local Catholic mission during the 17th and 18th centuries. Andrew Bromwich was one of the last priests to be imprisoned towards the end of the penal period, and when he inherited the family house he gave it over for the use of the Church as the English mission emerged from the shadows with the gradual relaxation of the anti-Catholic laws.

From 1794 to 1838 it became the first seminary established in England and, being placed under the patronage of Our Blessed Lady, became known as St Mary's College, Oscott. When the seminary was relocated to a new and larger building in 1838 (in the area of Birmingham that is still called New Oscott) it was used as a school until, in 1846, it became the home of Blessed John Henry Newman and his community of fellow converts. Following ordination in Rome, Newman established the first English Oratory there and renamed the house Maryvale.

After the Oratory moved to central Birmingham, Maryvale briefly became the novitiate for the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and was visited by their founder, St Eugene de Mazenod. Then for nearly 130 years it housed an

orphanage run by the Sisters of Mercy until they left in 1980 when it assumed its present role as a centre for adult faith formation.

The Maryvale Institute – Purpose and Mission

From its inception the Maryvale Institute sought to provide opportunities for lay people, clergy and religious to achieve a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith and to appreciate more clearly its joyful message for the lives of individuals and communities. It stands within the Catholic theological tradition and draws from that tradition an insistence, not only on the foundational importance of faith for theological reasoning, but also on the place of reason in the response of faith.

The mission of Maryvale Institute is to be a leader in the provision of lifelong learning for all, and provide research opportunities, in Catholic Evangelisation, Catechetics, Theology, Philosophy and Religious Education in order to serve Christ's mandate and his Church's mission of evangelisation in contemporary society.

The Trust Deed defines its role as a diocesan, national and international college as one that:

- lives and presents the Catholic faith, morality and its contribution to contemporary religious, moral and ethical issues;
- provides a range of formation courses offered primarily, but not exclusively, to lay and consecrated religious members of the Church, especially those involved in catechesis or other lay apostolates;
- takes a self-critical stance as an academic community in monitoring and evaluating its own courses and methods in the light of evidence gathered internally and that provided by external agencies to ensure the highest possible standards and relevance of its academic activities;
- develops its courses and other activities according to the findings of ongoing evaluation procedures and in response to changing needs in the wider community, as advised by the Board of Trustees;
- develops collaborative partnerships with other centres of Catholic theological education in the UK and elsewhere, and other UK higher education providers.

In pursuance of this the Institute provides opportunities for Catholic formation and education through courses across a wide range of subjects

and levels. It is an established centre of further and higher education, an International Catholic Distance-Learning College for Catechesis, Theology, Philosophy and Religious Education specialising in the provision of part-time and distance learning courses. This provision is a distinctive combination of the methodology of distance learning with critical engagement with scripture and tradition, guided by the Church's Magisterium.

Study Programmes – Validation and Accreditation

From its beginnings in the 1980s as a Diocesan Catechetical Centre offering short courses for lay people in the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham, the Maryvale Institute has developed to become an international, distance-learning college offering adult courses from further education to PhD level in a range of Catholic Studies. Students completing one of the adult further education courses receive a Maryvale certificate. The higher education courses are offered through Maryvale's valuable validation partnerships.

It is approved by The Open University as an appropriate organisation to offer higher education programmes leading to Open University validated awards. The Open University validates the BA (Hons) in Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition and the MA in Catholic Applied Theology.

Its status as a Higher Institute of Religious Science (HIRS) is approved by the Ecclesiastical Theology Faculty Notre Dame de Paris, Ecole Cathedrale, Paris. Validated through this relationship are the HIRS programmes: the Baccalaureate in Divinity and the Licence in Catechetics.

The Institute's Postgraduate Research programme, comprising Master and Doctor of Philosophy degrees (MPhil and PhD in Catholic Studies), is currently validated by and through Liverpool Hope University. Within the generic title of Catholic Studies research facilities cover areas of history, literature, philosophy, spirituality, theology, Newman studies, religious education and catechesis.

Distance-Learning

Maryvale developed its learning methodology on that pioneered by the Open University. The use of part-time distance learning means that students can follow complex courses of study leading to publicly-recognised awards whilst maintaining their existing vocational, family and work commitments. Distance learning programmes, generally, are supported

by comprehensive course books and residential schools – providing personal contact in lectures, seminars and structured discussions. Post-graduate students, working for masters and doctoral awards, are allocated academic tutors who are experts in their respective fields, and helped develop the academic skills necessary for their respective disciplines and academic career development. In addition, the Maryvale Library provides books, electronic resources and access to a range of databases of current research. Together these enable access to religious formation and to the immeasurable treasures to be discovered in the Christian Tradition and in contemporary Church teaching and thought.

CHAPTER TWO

NINE DOCTORAL THESES: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

ANDREW B. MORRIS

The extracts in this volume are taken from nine successfully doctoral theses completed by Maryvale students since 2014 and are divided into two groups. The smaller first section comprises three pieces of research concerned with theological or philosophical matters. The second part contains extracts from six theses dealing with differing aspects of evangelisation, catechesis and religious education.

Theological and Philosophical Analysis

Stephen Yates's thesis constitutes an examination of, and contribution to, a discussion conducted within the Catholic theological community since the 1960s concerning the proper understanding of the apparent interval (typically referred to as the 'intermediate state') between the death of individual human beings and the final consummation of all created things.

His study proceeds from an analysis of the arguments of a representative range of scholars who propose various forms of 'resurrection in death' as an alternative to the traditional schema of a post-mortem phase of disembodiment preceding bodily resurrection, as well as the arguments of those who have responded critically to their proposals. This analysis makes clear the Scriptural, philosophical and theological issues which are central to the debate and identifies in connection with each of these a number of 'dialogical lacunae', areas where the various parties in the debate have failed adequately to address points made by one another.

In the light of this analysis, and with the aim of fostering a greater degree of resolution in the debate, he undertakes a sustained exploration of each of the issues identified as central to it, taking care to relate the fruits of

these analyses systematically to the identified lacunae in order to ensure they are satisfactorily addressed.

He concludes that though scriptural, philosophical and theological arguments for some form of ‘resurrection in death’ seem initially to possess considerable force, closer inspection shows them to be unconvincing and the newer theses to be at least as problematic as the traditional schema which they seek to supplant. The ‘traditional schema’ thus continues to be a credible option for Catholic theologians.

Unlike the other extracts in this volume which are taken directly from individual theses, Stephen has revised and re-drafted a section taken from his book, *Between Death and Resurrection*’ which, in turn, was based upon his thesis.

The initial impetus for **Scott Powell’s** thesis was provided by debate in the United States concerning Pope Francis’s encyclical letter *Laudato Si* published in 2015, the first time the Church had focused primarily on ecological issues. That debate was controversial and wide-ranging.¹ His thesis is both a resource for discussion and a demonstration that religious viewpoints can address subjects of human existence and human instrumentality as he explores the question of the role of humans in bringing both harm and healing to the natural world. His route for answering that query is the text of Romans 8:19-22, an often misunderstood passage, which he regards as the climax of Paul’s central section of the epistle. In this passage, Paul uses imagery from the Genesis creation stories to describe the role of believers in the work of Christ. His conclusions have echoes of Jewish apocalyptic texts from the Second Temple period, which use similar Genesis imagery.

Scott’s thesis examines the intersection of Pauline study with secular ecological concerns from a Catholic perspective. While many scholars have sought to either overemphasize the usefulness of the Bible in environmental debates, or underemphasize it, Scott proposes a middle way which - while not environmental in the modern sense of the term – is set against the backdrop of what was likely Paul’s worldview, along with that of his original audience. He argues that Paul’s imagery may well have

¹ See, for example, Mills, M., Orr, J. A. & Schnitker, H. (eds) (2017) *Reflections on Pope Francis’s Encyclical Laudato Si*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

been recognizable to his audiences as an eschatological imperative in which both human beings and the natural world play a key role in the redemption offered by Christ. By studying how Paul would have likely received texts like the ancient Genesis creation accounts, and how the Roman community would have likely received Paul's epistle, he suggests modern readers can gain insight into how to receive the epistle today in light of current ecological concerns, and argues the Pauline text can offer clues for how Christianity might engage in facing the world's current ecological problems.

John Orr's thesis examines of the development of the use of the philosophically significant concept of reason in the works of Karol Wojtyla and its influence in the encyclical letter *Fides et ratio* which, as Pope John Paul II, he published in 1998, the twentieth year of his pontificate. John makes reference to specific classical philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, Hume and Kant, Hegel and Blanshard, as well as contemporaries such as Parfit and Singer, and also Belsey, Warnock and Blackburn all of whom have used and considered the concept in order to contextualize reason in Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II.

Prior to his elevation to the papacy Karol Wojtyla worked as a professional philosopher at the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL), writing and teaching. While there are many texts which could have been consulted, John's thesis focuses on the volumes *Person and Community*, *The Acting Person*, and *Fides et ratio*, which, he argues, are representative in that they span his thought from the beginning through to full maturity in classic branches of philosophy - specifically anthropologically, metaphysically, epistemologically, ethically and politically.

Together, they serve to illustrate and understand Wojtyla/John Paul II's thinking. While it is the case that there have been many writers who have examined his work, none have focused exclusively on 'reason'. In doing so, John's thesis advances philosophical study generally and contributes to the existing corpus of 'Wojtyla Studies'.

Aspects of Evangelisation, Catechesis and Religious Education

Eleanor Gibson's study of the Catholic mission to Kenya was undertaken within the context of the Synod on the New Evangelisation which

addressed the topic of a renewed proclamation of the Gospel in today's world. Under the influence of the first Synod for Africa, in recent years the African Church has been particularly concerned with articulating the faith in a more inculturated form, understood generally as the need to express the beliefs of the Catholic Church using words, images, gestures and symbols that are more familiar and meaningful to the people of the continent.

She argues, however, that the trends and value systems of the global, post-modern world has been insinuating itself into Kenyan society and particularly into the lives of urban youth. Her thesis explores how catechesis, as it is currently carried out, prepares the youth to live their Christian vocation within the influences of the wider society to which they are more and more exposed through social media. Consequently, she asserts, it is not clear that either theological reflection, concerned largely with inculturation, or catechesis, with its emphasis on the transmission of knowledge, have accorded this phenomenon the attention it merits. Her thesis is an attempt to draw attention to this neglect.

This extract, combining elements from the introduction to her thesis, most of chapter four and her conclusion, is concerned with the evangelising process and argues the need for better pastoral accompaniment of Kenyan youth to enable them to experience and live the joy of the Gospel, within the cultural reality of their own time. While at the level of theological reflection in the church there is a strong call for a return to those values that are considered typically African, city dwellers have long been involved in a process of adaptation to changed social conditions that have produced what is sometimes referred to as a 'hybrid' identity.

Among other sources Sr Eleanor points to Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, who views Africa's commitment to Jesus Christ as a precious treasure that appears to be in 'a crisis of faith and hope,' and to the question raised by Charles Taylor in his book *A Secular Age* as to why, in western society before the sixteenth century it was virtually impossible not to believe in God, but today the opposite is the case, as she explores how the church in Africa can explore its Christian vocation and evangelical mission within the context of the dominance of the secular in the west and its increasing influence on traditional African culture.

In the light of accounts of the nature of scientific and religious knowing by the Canadian Jesuit priest, philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan, **Timothy Walker** explores the contrasting credibility attributed by school pupils to these two forms of knowledge. He suggests a common starting position for many is that science deals with hard facts (and is to be preferred as a route to knowledge) while religion is a matter of subjective belief.

He explores some of the historical and philosophical roots of factors which appear to influence this default position within the contemporary United Kingdom educational context, reviewing a range of positions including those adopted by philosophers of science and those who try to bridge the gap between these two disciplinary areas, before arguing that Lonergan provides a particularly effective way of relating the two by showing how they are both rooted in the same cognitional structure. He then argues how aspects of Lonergan's thought could usefully be applied to the teaching of religious education in Catholic secondary schools with a view to helping pupils better understand the nature of scientific and religious knowledge claims.

His research provides an original contribution to Catholic education, as Lonergan's thought has not been applied to this issue in a secondary school context before, and he highlights its relevance for the various parties involved in the provision and practice of Catholic education.

In an essentially historical analysis **Mary C. Treacy's** thesis investigates the experience of the Salesian Sisters in England 1902-1946 and principal factors which in the early years following their arrival in England in 1902, delayed the inculturation of their specific charism of education according to the 'Preventive System' of their founder, John Bosco.

She argues that the unique gift of the Spirit given to a religious Order's founder is transmitted to his/her early disciples. As such, it is first experienced in the process of foundation of the order which takes material shape in the structures that evolve or are imposed upon it by outside agencies. However, over time, the original force and significance of the charism may be weakened or obscured by accretions resulting from historical, social, environmental or other factors. A particular problem arises if the charism of the order is to take root in another socio-cultural environment. When transported to another culture, several factors may

impede or delay the process of inculturation. A primary one is the lack of understanding of the true nature of the charism by the persons responsible for its implementation.

Sr Mary argues that this emerged as a major problem for the Salesian Sisters who were overly dependent on the local Salesian provincial superior in matters of work and personnel deployment. She suggests that the recognition and advancement of the apostolic dimension of the charism could have been subverted through the allocations of sisters to works perceived of greater urgency than those related to their apostolic identity or local mission. A further important factor, she suggests, was the confusion of the external features enveloping the charism proper to the place of origin, with its spiritual nucleus to be transmitted in different forms, which may, in turn have affected recruitment and formation.

However, her study shows how a negative aspect, such as the undue reliance on the Salesian provincial superior, was offset by the positive one of sending the sisters to work in England. Similarly, the sisters' work for Italian immigrants in London was the antithesis of inculturation of the charism, yet in the early years it was the most flourishing work of the whole province.

Finally, the tentative emergence of a fuller understanding and the nascent inculturation of the Salesian Sisters' charism, she argues, can be seen in the development of education for working class children. Though her thesis is wide ranging, the extract included in this volume is concerned only with the experiences in the English province and is taken mainly from chapter four 'Early Foundations in England – Intention versus Reality'.

In the summer of 1997, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. This document has been extremely influential in the United States in providing a 'vision' on how to 'do ministry with youth.' Its goals and components have been foundational in training, implementing, and assessing youth ministry. **Robert Rice's** study shows, however, that *Renewing the Vision* had some significant deficiencies at the time of its publication that limited its ability to provide an effective framework for Catholic youth ministry in the United States, in particular its articulation of youth evangelization. He argues that this occurred, in part, because *Renewing* did not take into account important elements of youth culture in

the United States. A second reason, reflected in the content and presentation of the document, was that the predominant approach of the Catholic Church in America to youth had been educational or catechetical, not evangelical. Finally, he argues, *Renewing the Vision* did not properly communicate the importance, content, or mission of youth evangelization because it did not sufficiently draw from previous magisterial documents related to that subject.

Almost twenty years later, he suggests that those deficiencies have been exacerbated by historical events (such as the ‘sex scandal’ and the growth of the Latino population in the US), new magisterial documents (such as *The National Directory of Catechesis* and writings pertaining to the ‘New Evangelization’), the discovery of new data regarding teenagers (such as the National Study of Youth and Religion) and the growing number of young people not affiliating themselves with any religion.

By examining the deficiencies the document had when it was published and what has since occurred in the Church regarding youth and evangelization, he concludes that the language of *Renewing’s* is incapable of providing a proper and effective vision for the evangelization of American youth today. Consequently, he argues, most emphatically, for the need for a new document and provides recommendations for how it might provide an effective vision for the evangelization of teenagers in the United States.

As a contribution to the post-conciliar ecclesiological discussion concerning priestly identity and ministry, **Eric Westby’s** thesis offers a critical examination of seminary formation for priestly ministry in catechesis. His study examines three connected areas: priestly identity as established in holy orders, its resulting tasks in catechesis and the formation needed to support these functions.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the source of priestly identity has experienced considerable debate. Some writers rejected sacramental character as the source of priestly identity. In contrast, others maintained that character configures the priest for ministry within the Church, shaping his identity and tasks. While there has been discussion since Vatican II concerning the effects of character in particular priestly ministries (such as the celebration of the Eucharist, pastoring, and preaching), there has been minimal discussion concerning the ontological distinctiveness of the priest

in the ministry of catechesis. There has also been negligible literature concerning priestly catechetical tasks and corresponding formation.

His thesis aims to fill this gap by establishing the integral connection between priestly identity, tasks and formation in catechetical ministry. The sacrament of priestly ordination establishes the ontological identity of the priest. In this sacrament, he argues, the priest is united to Christ, the high priest, who is icon of the Father, good shepherd, and head of the Church. The primary distinction between the priest and lay catechist lies not in ability but in the Christological symbolism established in ordination. Emanating from this ontological identity, the first responsibility of the priest is the ministry of the word, of which catechesis is a particular form. Rather than be considered a specialisation, priestly participation in catechesis is integral and common to his identity and results in particular functions. Directed to the support of the lay vocation, the priest's role in catechesis is to instruct, to ensure catechesis in the life of the Church, and to form catechists.

In light of his identity, his thesis offers a critical examination of the seminary formation needed to equip the priest for catechetical ministry. In order to integrate identity, task and formation, Eric proposes a new form of seminary formation based on the priest's three pastoral ministries, those of word, sacrament and governance. Finally, he offers principles to ensure that formation equips the priest to be the 'catechist of catechists.'

Mary Michael Fox argues that the catechetical project of the past two hundred years can be evaluated as the attempt to reconcile bifurcated concepts in catechesis - namely, doctrine and life, religious knowledge and religious experience, content and method, head and heart. This, she says, has been particularly true of children's catechesis. The goal of catechesis has always been to make disciples of Christ, yet a disciple is constituted by more than a mere knowledge of doctrine: a disciple must know and love the Lord. Thus, the question that has beleaguered catechetical theorists of the 20th and 21st centuries has been, 'How do we catechize others such that they not only know the truths of the faith but that they enjoy a vibrant and intimate experience of God's love and possess a desire to belong to Him?' Her thesis explores possible solutions to that question.

Though there is record of concern regarding catechetical praxis as early as the 16th century, systematic attempts to identify the cause of the bifurcation

and propose solutions are not seen until the early 20th century, with the rise of various catechetical movements. Various attempts to bring together the head and the heart are focused on one or another essential component of catechesis - namely, content, method, or the child. Current attempts appeal to the Church's recently endorsed concept of 'God's pedagogy' as the guiding principle of catechetical content and method. She claims that current difficulties are not the fault of one or another of these components, but the failure to integrate them in a harmonious or symphonic manner. What is necessary, she argues, is apparent in God's own pedagogy of faith, a *periochoretic* relationship between content, method and the child.

Her investigation examines a catechetical approach to children's catechesis that has, she states, for the most part gone unnoticed by catechetical theorists, called *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* (CGS). The CGS approach recognizes that catechetical content is the whole Mystery of God that can never be exhausted. Likewise, the CGS approach recognizes that the child too is a mystery whose nature must be understood. Following the principles of 'fidelity to God and fidelity to man' the CGS approach uses a methodology that brings together these two mysteries in a manner that embodies the pedagogy of God.

She argues that, together, Dr. Sofia Cavalletti (1917-2011) and Professor Gianna Gobbi (1919-2002), discovered a new and effective path in catechetical praxis for children that draws upon Montessorian principles of education and models what, she terms, a 'Rabbinic' style of engaging the scriptures. Finding in it deep similarity with their own religious charism, the Missionaries of Charity adopted CGS in 2009 as their primary method of catechizing children - and even as an element of formation for the Contemplative Branch of the Order.

As a member of the Order of Preachers, Sr Mary Michael, finds the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* approach especially satisfying in light of the characteristics of the Divine Pedagogy set forth in the *General Catechetical Directory*, and argues that CGS approach 'works' to reconcile religious knowledge and religious experience, precisely because it provides a symphonic convergence of the components of content, method, and the child.