

# ***In Good Faith***

A historical study of the provision of religious education for  
Catholic children not in Catholic Schools in New South Wales:  
The CCD Movement 1880 - 2000

Submitted by

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## **Statement of Authorship and Sources**

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

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Signature

## **Abstract**

This thesis provides a coherent documented history of the provision of religious education to Catholic children who did not attend Catholic schools in New South Wales from 1880 to 2000.

The CCD movement is the title generally assigned to a variety of approaches associated with this activity. The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) is an association of clergy and lay faithful, within the Catholic tradition, established in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, devoted to the work of Catholic religious education. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the principal concern of the CCD came to be the religious education of Catholic children who were not in Catholic schools.

The CCD movement has as its core activity the parish-based religious education of Catholic children. The religious educators are generally members of the local parish community. Described traditionally as catechists, these religious educators are, for the most part, unpaid volunteers. The way in which the provision of parish-based religious education is practiced varies internationally, nationally and in the local church, as does the title of the groups who assume responsibility for this activity. The nature of CCD practice is influenced by factors that include the local social, cultural, political, educational and ecclesial contexts.

In Australia, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, over 50 % of Catholic students were attending schools other than Catholic schools. There was significant research literature on Australian Catholic schooling and on religious education in Catholic schools. This included the place of Catholic schools in the history of the Catholic Church in Australia and the contribution of Religious Congregations to the development of Catholic schools. There was little research devoted specifically to the practices associated with the provision of Catholic religious education to the Catholic children not in Catholic schools. This included three distinct groups of Catholic children - those attending State run schools (known also as Public or Government); those attending Independent schools conducted by other Religious Denominations; and, those in isolated areas where no schools were available. This widespread educational and pastoral activity of the Catholic Church in Australia was rarely mentioned in Church histories or accounts of the

development of Catholic education. The CCD movement had existed for over 120 years as the ‘silent partner’ in the history of Catholic Education in Australia.

The purpose of this research was to document the history of the CCD movement within the Catholic Church in Australia. With a specific focus on the development of the CCD movement in the State of New South Wales, this historical study records this development chronologically from colonial times, 1880, to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, 2000. The research identified distinct historical periods and examined the influence of social, cultural, political, educational and ecclesial contexts that have shaped the development of the CCD movement in New South Wales in each era.

The research design for this study was drawn from an interpretative qualitative paradigm. An historical research approach has been used to develop a descriptive history of the CCD movement in an Australian context. Constant Comparative Method of data analysis was used to assist in the identification of the essential features of the practice and significant factors influencing that practice.

The creation and analysis of a coherent historical record of the CCD movement in New South Wales has informed the proposal of an interpretive framework that helps explicate the place and function of the CCD movement within the Australian Catholic Church. This framework incorporates theological, educational and organisational perspectives to provide a model that will assist in the interpretation of the unique situation of the CCD movement in New South Wales, setting its undertakings within the pastoral mission of the Catholic Church and providing a foundation for future research.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Statement of the Topic**

An historical study of provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic Schools in New South Wales: The CCD Movement 1880 – 2000.

### **1.2 The Research Problem**

With a background in religious education and pastoral care, teaching experience in Catholic and government schools and as a member of a local Parish Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) group, the researcher was appointed as Director of the CCD in a medium sized metropolitan Catholic diocese in the State of New South Wales, Australia, in 2000. The appointment of a layperson to such a position followed a trend evident in dioceses across Australia from the mid 1990s – the gradual replacement of clergy and religious with lay leadership at the diocesan, regional and parish levels in the providing religious education for Catholic Children not attending Catholic schools. The CCD movement is the title assigned to the variety of approaches and contexts associated with this activity.

The experience of the researcher as a leader and religious educator (catechist) in the CCD movement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century at a local, diocesan and national level was that of an educational, social and ecclesial practice that was the foundation and source of energy and inspiration for pastoral activity in many local church communities.

The researcher observed that some of the underlying assumptions in the Catholic Church in Australia and the local church concerning existing structures and practices in the religious education of Catholic children not in Catholic schools contradicted the researcher's field experience. These assumptions implied that the future of the Catholic Church in Australia lay mainly in the Catholic school system; that Catholic religious

education occurred only in Catholic schools; and, that the CCD movement was no longer relevant in the Church in Australia today. Such assumptions did not appear to consider the relevance of the CCD movement as an educational and pastoral practice in the local church.

There was little previous research on the history of CCD movement in the local church, in Australia or internationally (Collins, 1983b). This lack of a formal historical record presented a significant challenge for the researcher in attempting to develop a precise contextual understanding of the CCD movement in New South Wales.

In Australia, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, over 50 % of Catholic students were attending schools outside the Catholic school system (Tanner, 2001). The majority were enrolled in the State school system conducted by State and Territory Governments across Australia. A growing minority attended independent Christian schools conducted by other Religious denominations. The role of the CCD movement in the religious education of these Catholic children has received only brief mention as either an educational or pastoral activity of the Catholic Church in Australia in mainstream Church or educational histories. The CCD movement had developed over 120 years as a ‘silent partner’ in the history of Catholic education in Australia. (See Appendix A for Map of Australia indicating location of Catholic dioceses)

### **1.3 Purpose and Goals of the Research**

The purpose of this research was to document the history of the CCD movement within the Catholic Church in Australia. With a specific focus on the development of the CCD movement in the State of New South Wales, this study investigated the local ecclesial, educational, political and social contexts from 1880 to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

An historical analysis was conducted that provided a coherent record of the practices associated with the CCD movement in NSW from 1880 to 2000. In the light of this historical record it was possible to develop a framework that assisted in the interpretation these practices, their “unique situation of operation” and “set the CCD undertakings within the pastoral mission of the Church” (Dixon, 1988, p. 14).

This research study situated the CCD movement in the historical record of the Catholic Church, in particular Catholic education, in New South Wales.

Firstly, it provided a coherent historical record of the CCD movement in New South Wales. Such a descriptive account did not currently exist.

Secondly, through the systematic interpretation of this descriptive historical account it was possible to conceptualise the practices within the CCD movement as part of the pastoral mission of the Catholic Church in Australia.

Thirdly, the analysis of this historical record provided insights into the nature of this essentially parish-based activity and a framework for a broader interpretation of the significant features necessary for effective Australian parish life at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Finally, this research contributed to the development of a greater understanding, in an Australian context, of the role of local faith communities in the lives of the members of the local church and those outside the church.

## **1.4 The Research Question**

The research question and derived sub-questions guided the entire process of the research project. These sub-questions provided the scaffold for the research and are the articulation of the research problem. They were reflected in the conceptual framework for this research. They guided the review of relevant literature, the determination and development of research methods, data collection criteria and data analysis procedures.

Fundamental to this research was the question -

What is the history of the CCD movement in New South Wales from 1880 to 2000?

In the development of a coherent documented historical account the following sub-questions were considered -

1. How have the ecclesial, theological, educational and social contexts defined the practice of the CCD movement?
2. What characteristics of the practice of the CCD movement emerge as common to different historical eras?
3. What characteristics of the practice are common to the local and national operation of the CCD movement?
4. How do the characteristics identified define the operation of the CCD movement?
5. How is the contribution of the CCD movement to Catholic education of significance to the Catholic Church in Australia?

## 1.5 Review of Literature

There was little published material devoted specifically to the CCD movement in the Catholic Church in Australia. The literature cited in this review provided some important historical background to the religious education of Catholic children not in Catholic schools in New South Wales. It was significant for the purpose of this research, to note this subject receives only brief mention, if at all. This literature assisted the researcher in developing an understanding of the historical contexts which informed the interpretation of primary and secondary source material retrieved for each historical period.

Several significant publications provided valuable historical background and perspective on the relationship between the State, the Church and the development of Public (State or Government) School education in New South Wales. The literature can be divided into publications with a general historical focus and those with a specific Catholic historical focus.

Writing from outside the Catholic tradition, Austin (1961, 1963, 1972) traced the history of the evolution of public education in Australia from 1788 to 1900, providing “a complete statement of one important chapter in our social history – the evolution of a system of public education” (1961, p. vi). In acknowledging the “violence of the debate” between Church and State that arose from the State’s rejection of cooperation with the Churches in providing effective elementary education, Austin’s focus was the “men who established the system” (1961, p. vi). Austin (1963) subsequently published a collection of documents to “support and illustrate the argument presented in *Australian Education, 1788 – 1900*” (p. v).

With a specific focus on the history of public education in New South Wales in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, Barcan (1965, 1988) incorporated the initiatives taken by the Churches, including the Catholic Church into an historical analysis which details not only significant events and people but included reflection on the social and political contexts.

The relationship between the Catholic Church and the State are explored from a Catholic perspective in Suttor’s (1965) *Hierarchy and democracy in Australia 1788 - 1870: the formation of Australian Catholicism* and Murtagh’s (1969) *Australia: the Catholic chapter*. In *The Roman mould of the Australian Catholic Church*, Molony (1969)

provided valuable insights into the 'Roman' influence on the ideas and attitudes of the Australian church, specifically the hierarchy.

Shaw (1994) identified religious sectarianism as a by-product of the differing denominational responses to the escalation of lay initiative within the Churches in the 1850s. The Protestant denominations and the Church of England "accommodated much of the lay intervention", whereas the Catholic Church "took alarm at it, and opted for a policy of clerical supremacy" (p. 36). The religious rivalry of the earlier decades of the nineteenth century had, by the 1860s, given rise to religious 'sectarianism' (Shaw, 1994, p. 36). In *The sectarian strand: religion in Australian history*, Hogan (1987) identified education as "the great sectarian political issue of the nineteenth century" (p. 101). Hogan (1987) provided an account of the phenomenon of religious sectarianism and its social, political and economic impact on Australian society up until the 1980s.

In exploring the role of the Catholic laity in the "education question" in New South Wales in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Haines (1972, 1974, 1976) proposed that in choosing to obey the directives of their Bishops the Catholic laity abandoned responsibility for their own religious development and maturity. Haines provided insights into Catholic laity within the Catholic Church, in particular their relationship with the Church hierarchy and the clergy in this historical period. Within the context of the laity, the role played by women is significant to this research. Anne O'Brien (2005), in *God's willing workers: women and religion in Australia*, explored the factors that influenced the role of women in public and private ministry in the Catholic Church over two centuries. O'Brien (2005) noted the way in which women used "a theology of equality and inclusion to empower themselves in an institution that depicted them as a secondary sex" (p. 13). The work of women in the church was regarded as "a natural extension of their traditional role in the home of nurturer and spiritual guardian" (O'Brien, A., 2005, p. 39). The significant contribution of women in voluntary organisations has been recorded in the history of the *Theresians* (Farland, 1998) and the *Legion of Mary* (O'Brien, J., 2005).

The published historical accounts of the work of religious orders (Priests, Brothers and Sisters) also provided some insight into the role of different orders in the provision of religious education to Catholic children not attending Catholic schools. Accounts of the work of the Sisters of Charity (O'Sullivan, 1995), the Sisters of St. Joseph (Burford, 1991) and the Sisters of the Good Samaritan (Walsh, Margaret, 2001) all included brief



reference to the role played by members of the order within the broader context of their particular story. A record of the works of a religious order, the Missionary Sisters of Service, established specifically for working with children and families isolated from Catholic schools and even parishes was found in - *Around the kitchen table with the Missionary Sisters of Service* (Edman, 2008).

Catholic education in Australia, within the Catholic school context, was a significant inclusion in any account of the history of the Catholic Church. In general publications on the history of the Catholic Church in Australia, *The Catholic Church and community: an Australian history* (O'Farrell, 1985); and, *Australian Catholics: the contribution of Catholics to the development of Australian society* (Campion, 1987); are significant. Hutchinson (1994) described the work of O'Farrell and Campion as examples of good religious history providing "sweeping denominational histories" (p.4). O'Farrell (1969a, 1969b) also produced a two volume collection, *Documents in Australian Catholic History Vol I: 1788-1884* and *Vol II: 1884-1968*.

Obtaining Government funding (State-Aid) for Catholic schools became a dominant feature in the life of the Catholic Church from the 1880s until the 1970s. Catholic historians (Campion, 1987; O'Farrell, 1985; Fogarty, 1959a, 1959b) identified and described the impact of the withdrawal of financial support for denominational schools by the 1880s. These accounts further described the response of the Catholic Church in establishing a school system resourced solely from within. Hogan (1977) in his PhD dissertation, *The Catholic campaign for State-Aid in non-state schools in NSW and the ACT 1952 -1972*, provided the historical background and an account of more recent events in this significant political campaign conducted by the Catholic Church.

Fogarty's (1959a, 1959b) historical study - *Catholic education in Australia 1806 -1950* was a publication devoted to the development of Catholic education. This two volume study explored *Catholic schools and the denominational system (Volume I)*, the period 1806 to 1880, and *Catholic education under religious orders (Volume II)*, the period 1880 to 1950. In the introduction to the work, Fogarty (1959a) described the aim:

to study, not only the development of Catholic schools . . . but also the principles underlying that development . . . it was a question . . . of integrating into one piece of work a study which, while remaining largely historical, would be at the same time pedagogical and philosophical. (p. xix)

In Chapter 11, *Reorganisation and Reaction*, Fogarty (1959b) described the expansion of the system to *Children not in Catholic Schools* (pp. 453 – 457). The entry provided a brief account of the response to the two significant groups of children – those in isolated country areas where there was no Catholic school and those Catholic children who attended a State school in area where a Catholic school was provided. Fogarty (1959b) concluded “by the mid-century, this practice of providing religious instruction for Catholic children in State schools had become more or less general throughout the whole of Australia” (p. 457).

In a two volume social history of Catholics in Australia, Turner (1992a, 1992b), described Catholic education in two periods 1889 – 1939 and 1940 – 1990 as part of a broader historical account of Catholicism spanning those specific time frames. Turner (1992b) noted that by 1922 “not all Catholics sent their children to Catholic schools” (p. 230) and cited statistics from O’Connor’s (1936) paper at the 1936 Australian Catholic Education Congress, *Religious Instruction in State Schools in cities and towns where there are Catholic school* as evidence of this. Turner (1992b) described briefly the response, initiated by Rev. T.J. McMahon in Western Australia, in providing religious education to children in remote outback areas - “the bush” (p. 245 -247). In the second volume of this work (1940 – 1990), Turner (1992b) provided some further statistical data relating to Catholic children not in Catholic schools which supported an argument entitled “Begrudged even the essentials” (p. 132 - 135).

Rossiter (1983) in his exploration of “distinctions and interrelationships between confessional and non-confessional religious education in Australia” included an account of the provision of religious education in Government schools in all Australian states. The focus of the account provided for New South Wales was “limited to a consideration of the Rawlinson Report (1980)” (Rossiter, 1983, p. 299). Rossiter (1983) noted “the Rawlinson Report can be regarded as significant in that it endeavoured to establish the education validity of both education in religion and education in faith” (p. 318). Rossiter’s research was a significant resource for the interpretation of the context for the provision of religious education to Catholic children attending Government (State) schools in New South Wales.

Siebert (1984), writing on the CCD movement in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, described the task of the catechist in Government schools and emphasising the need for support

from the local Catholic school and the parish. Maria Walsh (2001) provided some historical details of State School Religious Education in Queensland as background to an explanation the cooperative (ecumenical) model operating in that State.

From his experience in the Archdiocese of Sydney in New South Wales, Dixon (1988) discussed the parish-based nature of the CCD movement acknowledging that the national picture is “complex and diverse ... not yet come into focus” (Dixon, 1988, p. 11). This paper provided some anecdotal observations, although not supported by research, of the CCD movement in the local context. Dixon (1988) noted the “absence of an interpretative model” adequate for description of the “unique situation of operation” of the CCD (p.14). A model, when articulated, would “set the CCD undertakings within the pastoral mission of the Church” and state the catechists’ sense of purpose in “pastoral, educational and theological terms” (Dixon, 1988, p. 14). The need for such a model still exists in 2011. One of the purposes of this thesis, through the development of the historical record of the CCD movement, was to provide such an interpretative model.

There was little research devoted specifically to describing practices associated with the provision of Catholic religious education of Catholic children not in Catholic schools (Ivers, 1999, 2000, 2002; Rossiter, 1981, 1983; Welbourne, 2001). Curriculum development issues for religious educators outside of Catholic schools was the focus for researchers in the Archdiocese of Melbourne in the 1960s (Garland, 1981) and more recently in the Archdiocese of Sydney (Ivers, 1999, 2000, 2002). Welbourne (2001) in a *Review of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine* in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn identified and synthesised elements of the practice of the CCD movement in Australia at local parish, diocesan and national levels. The report from the review (Welbourne, 2001) was the most comprehensive research (unpublished) on the CCD movement in Australia to date. The report identified major themes in the CCD movement across Australia and brought “complex and diverse issues” (Dixon, 1988, p. 11) into focus. Seven major themes were identified - recruitment and formation of catechists; parish-based programs; program structure and modes of delivery; ecumenical cooperation; diocesan and local structures; national network; and funding (Welbourne, 2001, p. 50).

## **1.6 Outline of the Structure of the Thesis**

Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to the study. An overview of the literature that has formed the background in the identification of the research problem and the formulation of the research question and related sub-questions has been presented.

The research method is described in Chapter 2. Particular attention is given to the features of historical inquiry relevant for this study.

In Chapter 3, with the use of some significant secondary source material, some important historical background for the thesis is presented. Firstly, an account of the foundation of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) during the period of the Counter Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and its development in Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries; and, then a description of developments in colonial New South Wales prior to 1880.

Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 examine the period from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until 1955. This period was a time marked by a recognition and response in the provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the call for catechetical renewal in the universal church by Pope Pius X and the response of the Australian Catholic church to that Roman direction. Chapter 5 describes the background to the growing recognition of the need for the provision of religious education for the significant number of Catholic children not in Catholic schools. Chapter 6 traces the development of the response to Catholic children in isolated rural areas where there were no Catholic schools and Chapter 7, the response to Catholic children attending Government (State) schools in metropolitan Sydney.

Chapter 8 provides an account of the re-establishment of the CCD in the Archdiocese of Sydney and other dioceses of New South Wales. It contains a description of a period of development of structures and practices necessary for the CCD operation in the Archdiocese of Sydney (1959 - 1965) followed by a period of significant expansion and growth (1966 - 1971).

Chapter 9 describes the CCD movement in NSW in the period from 1972 until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It was a period in which some of the established practices of the previous period were maintained in the face of significant challenges.

The concluding chapter of the thesis, Chapter 10, which provides a description and brief analysis of the key practices identified in the CCD movement, suggests an interpretive framework for the provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools and provides some recommendations for future direction and research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The research method for this study was drawn from the interpretative qualitative paradigm. History is a mode of qualitative inquiry involving recognised qualitative research methodologies, such as, concern for context, for undertaking research in natural settings, for integrity of experience, and for interpreting and explaining experience (Edson, 1988, p. 47). This historical inquiry combines a descriptive intent, providing a detailed historical account, and an interpretative intent, which together may make it possible to develop a holistic and dynamically rich history (Kenny & Grotelueschen, 1980, in Merriam, 1998, p. 39).

Through the study, understanding and interpretation of the past aimed to “link the old with the new” (Gay & Airasian, 2003). Data related to past occurrences, actions and decisions, known as sources, were systematically collected and analysed to “make connections and locates cause” (Howell & Prevenier, 2001, p. 4). With the aid of contextual interpretation, an historical study can challenge myths and assist in the explanation of current events and the exploration of application of knowledge from the past to present practice (Gay & Airasian, 2003).

#### **2.2 Research Design**

Historical research method that is essentially descriptive was used to develop a detailed account of the phenomenon being studied over a period of time. The research strategy addressed the ‘what’ research questions. It produced contributions to knowledge of the past which, in turn, contributed to the existing body of knowledge, “the history” (Marwick, 2001). The addition of an interpretative dimension to historical research addressed the “how” and the “why” research questions.

The research question focused on the development of a description of the CCD movement in New South Wales over the historical periods identified from the research data. The sub-questions for this research directed it from a purely descriptive outcome to one that includes analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

### **2.2.1 Data Collection**

A significant feature of historical research was that the researcher must work with pre-existing data, known as sources. The source material in historical research involves:

The systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events . . . an act of reconstruction in a spirit of critical enquiry designed to achieve a faithful representation of a previous age. (Cohen & Manion, 1990, p. 31)

Sources are the materials from which historians construct meanings (Howell & Prevenier, 2001, p. 19). In this research, as in historical inquiry generally, the data collected took the form of secondary and primary sources. The distinction between secondary and primary sources is explicit. Secondary sources are produced *after* a particular era using primary sources from that era. Primary sources are created in the time *within* the time period being studied (Marwick, 2001). The distinct yet complementary nature of secondary and primary source material is an essential element of good historical research. The integration of the distinct functions of secondary and primary sources is at the heart of the research strategy (design) in historical research.

### **Secondary Sources**

Secondary sources are the articles and books written by historians that have converted the “raw material” provided by the primary sources into history.

Secondary sources are usually the starting point of any historical research. Significant secondary source material that provided a starting point for this research included general publications on the history of education in Australia and New South Wales, particularly the work of Austin (1961, 1972) and Barcan (1965, 1988); the History of the Catholic Church in Australia, *The Catholic Church and Community: an Australian History* (O'Farrell, 1985) and *Australian Catholics: the Contribution of Catholics to the Development of Australian Society* (Campion, 1987); Fogarty's (1959a, 1959b)

historical study - *Catholic Education in Australia 1806 -1950*; Farland's (1998) *History of the Theresians*; and Turner's (1992a, 1992b) *Social History of Catholics in Australia*.

It is through the use of these key secondary sources that gaps in knowledge of the past were identified; significantly the absence of a coherent record of the provision of religious education for Catholic children who were not attending Catholic schools. Secondary sources also exposed explanations that were poorly nuanced, such as, the changes that occurred in the attitudes of the Australian hierarchy in the 1930s (Fogarty, 1959b, p. 456), fundamentally suspect, such as, the understating of the numbers of Catholic children enrolled in State schools in different historical periods (Fogarty, 1959b, p. 453). Myths too were exposed. One key example was to challenge the dominant myth of the united Catholic community in the creation of Australian Catholic schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ryan, 2001).

A second significant function of the use of secondary sources was the essential role of such data in the development of a research strategy in this historical research. The researcher's preconceptions of the topic and preliminary ideas were derived in part from secondary source material. Marwick (2001) described the strategic significance of secondary sources:

The study of secondary sources is absolutely essential in evolving a strategy. A strategy entails the mastering of the existing secondary sources, and the identification of questions that require answering and the problems that need solving . . . and at least a provisional inventory of the types of sources to be examined. The strategy is open, not predetermined; but it is not haphazard. (pp. 163 – 164)

Examples, in this research, included accounts of significant events in the secondary sources, such as the New South Wales Public Instruction Act 1880 and the provision of Government aid to Catholic schools in the 1960s, which provided key points of reference for the interpretation of data collected related to these periods within the timeframe of the research 1880 - 2000.

Another function of secondary source material was that it provided the researcher with some preliminary signposts to archival collections that may contain relevant primary sources for the study. This was a significant starting point in historical inquiry as the development of knowledge of the past in this research method must rely significantly on primary source material. Secondary source material directed the researcher to significant



archival collections such as the Sydney Archdiocesan Archives (SAA) and those of religious orders, including the Sisters of St Joseph, Sisters of Charity, and the Sisters of the Good Samaritan.

Secondary sources remained a significant point of reference during the entire period of data collection and informed the content of the final thesis.

## **Primary Sources**

Primary source material refers to material that has been:

derived ‘naturally’, ‘organically’ . . . ‘in the ordinary course of events’, from human beings and groups of human beings living their lives, worshipping, making decisions . . . going about their business or fulfilling their vocations, recording, noting, communicating as they go, very occasionally, perhaps, with their eye on the future, but generally in accordance with immediate needs and purposes. (Marwick, 2001, p. 164)

In this research, the primary source material was located in the archival collections of dioceses, diocesan agencies, local parishes and religious orders. Primary data sources were accessed from colonial and state education authorities, the Vatican, Catholic Bishops conferences, national and state, Catholic education organisations, national and state. Oral testimonies and oral histories were used as a primary source in this research.

Using Marwick’s (2001) “taxonomy of primary sources” (pp. 166 – 172) as a guide, the primary sources collected for this research included: *documents of record* (documents recording something that actually happened), for example, papal encyclicals, pastoral letters, formal documents from the Vatican or the local church and legislation, such as, the Public Instruction Act 1880 and the Education Reform Act 1990; *handbooks, directories, guides*, for example, the *Handbook of the Theresian Club*(1957), *Australasian Catholic Directory*, Catechist Training Course directories (1960 – 2000), textbooks; *surveys and reports* – the Rawlinson Report (1980), the National Catholic Education Commission report (1972) and the Welbourne report (2001); accounts of meetings and minutes; letters; newsletters and secular and church newspaper accounts; *diaries and memoirs*, for example, *Motor Mission Happenings* (1960s and 1970s); records of conference proceedings – particularly Education Conferences in the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and, polemical, hortatory and prescriptive documents, such as, pamphlets and sermons.

The task of the collection of primary source material for this research involved a cycle of data collection and review of the evidence provided by the primary source/s collected and, as a result of that review, the determination of future data collection strategies.

### **2.2.2 Data Analysis**

Historical research involves the collection of data with the knowledge that what is collected is incomplete, fragmentary, ambiguous and even faulty. Accepting passively and uncritically the data collected will result in a descriptive account, which would add little to the pre-existing body of knowledge on the topic. Such an approach may also result in invalid conclusions being drawn from the research. Data analysis must involve the researcher in processes that actively subject historical records to analysis, validation, comparison and criticism.

In this research there were three levels of data analysis. The first level, the narrative description of phenomenon, was addressed in research sub-question 1 - *how have the ecclesial, theological, educational and social contexts defined the practice of the provision of religious education for Catholic children not attending Catholic schools?* The second level of analysis, involved the identification of categories or themes that emerged during the development of the narrative. This was the focus of research sub-questions 2 and 3 - *what characteristics of the practice of provision of religious education for Catholic children not attending Catholic schools emerge as common to different historical eras; and, what characteristics of the practice are common to the local and national operation of the CCD movement?* The next level of analysis, constructing an interpretive framework, was the subject of research sub-questions 4 and 5 - *how do the characteristics identified define the operation of the CCD movement; and, why is the contribution of the CCD movement to Catholic education of significance to the Catholic Church in Australia?*

Data analysis in this research commenced with the collection and preparation of material from the literature review and continued for the duration of the research project. This continuous analysis avoided a backlog of unanalysed source material and determined the direction of the research through the provision of a steady stream of feedback to inform further data collection activities. This repeated comparison of information obtained from the sources and the identification of categories and themes that assisted in the

development of an interpretive framework followed a form of the *Constant Comparative Method* (CCM) for data analysis (Merriam, 1998; Robson, 2002).

Historical research demands procedures to verify the origin and accuracy of statements about the past (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 79). In this research an initial assessment and evaluation of data gathered occurred before further analysis was conducted. An important consideration in the analysis of data in historical research is that the data being used was not produced in the first instance for the purpose of research (Anderson, 1990). Allan and Skinner (1991) suggest every source be assessed with six questions in mind:

- Is the document what it claims to be?
- What is the relation of the author to the event?
- What is the record trying to show?
- How representative is the document of the written record?
- What does the document mean?
- What is the researcher's relation to the subject? (p. 121-123)

Questions 1 to 4 involve the process of *Historical Criticism* involving external and internal criticism. Question 5 relates to *Context Analysis*. Question 6 accounts for the personal bias of the researcher in the data evaluation process and concerns *Trustworthiness*. These three areas influencing data analysis are addressed below.

### **Historical Criticism**

Historical criticism is a method of data analysis in historical inquiry that permits the selection of data for further analysis and interpretation. A process of historical criticism was used in this research to evaluate the source and the data *before* it was added to the case. This evaluation of historical data yields reliable data that can then be called historical evidence. Historical evidence forms the body of validated facts and information that can be accepted as trustworthy that is, a valid basis for further analysis and interpretation and for inclusion in the final thesis (Cohen & Manion, 1990, p. 40).

Historical criticism of the data collected in this research was undertaken in two stages. The first stage, *external criticism*, involved an appraisal of the authenticity of the source – including its date, author and the document legitimacy. This included a consideration of the conditions under which the particular source was produced, the intentions that motivated it, the historical context, and the events that preceded it and those that

followed it. An assessment of the source as a primary or secondary source also occurs at this stage.

The second stage, *internal criticism*, was an evaluation of the accuracy or worth of the content of the source – assessing the extent of bias, omission, and consistency of account with other data (Gay and Airasian, 2003). It was here the researcher, as an interpreter of the past, addressed “important epistemological issues concerning the kind of knowledge any source can reveal, about our ability to have unmediated access to the past, about intentionality, outcome, and the relationship between the two” (Howell & Prevenier, 2001, p. 60). Internal criticism, in this research involved the use of several acknowledged elements of source criticism. Firstly, an assessment of the genesis of the source – “what kind of institution produced the source, with what authority, under what circumstances? What surrounding events gave the date or place a special meaning?” (Howell & Prevenier, 2001, p. 62) Internal criticism also required an assessment of the intended meaning of the source and the authority, competence and trustworthiness of the author/observer.

Historical criticism assigns more credibility to information recorded at the time and to multiple attestations / representations of the information. It assists in the identification of primary sources. All data collected in this research was subjected to processes of historical criticism before it was used in further analysis and interpretation in the research process.

### **Context Analysis**

“Historical inquiry is context-specific” (Edson, 1988, p. 47) - historical approaches to research share a common understanding. People, events and ideas cannot be understood apart from the historical context. This context must be precise, not general or theoretical. In historical research care must be taken to avoid the imposition of modern thought patterns on an earlier era (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 79). In historical inquiry, context analysis attempts to answer the question, “What did this document mean at the time it was produced?” By asking this question of each document, meaning could be derived from the context. If the context is imperfectly understood the meaning of the source may be distorted. Further analysis will therefore be flawed.

Contextualising strategies in data analysis attempt to understand the data in context (Maxwell, 1996, p. 79). These strategies look for relationships that connect statements and events within a context into a coherent whole.

The context analysis of the CCD movement in each of the historical periods identified was a means of understanding the unique circumstances of that period, the assumptions operating and the impact on persons and institutions within that particular period. Such analysis required, at the practical level, an attention to the language used in the document, the meanings of key words and descriptions that needed to be interpreted for that particular historical period. At the theoretical level, the ecclesial context of each period included the consideration of theological, educational and social perspectives, and provided a lens through which to evaluate, analyse and interpret the data collected.

### **Content Analysis**

Content analysis is a technique of data analysis applied to data in documents to provide a systematic description of the contents of the documents (Anderson, 1990, p. 121). The interpretive dimension of content analysis, ‘getting at the spirit of the issue (*Zeitgeist*)’, makes it a valuable tool for data analysis in this research. Examining the content of data source in historical research can illuminate the different facets of the source, focus on the formation of relevant categories for analysis and examine the consequences implied by that overt content (Jacobs, 1990). Content analysis can also be used to uncover “essentially contested concepts” (Gallie, 1964, p. p. 158). These concepts, embedded within content, once uncovered allowed for an accurate historical understanding of the CCD movement in Australia.

The research questions for this study were addressed by a method that used content analysis as a tool for data analysis. Each historical period involved “latent” content analysis - the process of identifying, naming, and categorising the primary patterns and themes in the data (Robson, 2002). Latent content analysis, described by Jacobs (1990) as “content assessment”, relies on inference and interpretation on the part of the researcher, a “high-inference system” (Robson, 2002, p. 354). The aim of this stage of analysis was not only to produce descriptive information but also through constant comparative method of data analysis to identify the complexities within each period. Care was taken not to develop a superficial summary of the categories but rather focus on

the complexities within each period, understanding the local dynamics, with the aim to see the patterning of categories that applied to the CCD movement (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **Trustworthiness of the Research**

Trustworthiness refers to the believability of the findings of the research project (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Maykut & Morehouse (1994) described questions of trustworthiness as: “To what extent can we place confidence in the outcomes of this study? Do we believe the research reported?” (p. 145).

There has been considerable debate amongst qualitative researchers as the relevance of the traditional measures of trustworthiness in research: validity and reliability. Guba and Lincoln (1999) suggested the terms credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability be used to describe the standards of trustworthiness for disciplined enquiries in the naturalistic paradigm. The use of the more familiar terms, validity and reliability, originating in the rationalist research paradigm, is supported by Robson (2002), Merriam (1998), Stake (1995) and Maxwell (1996). Robson (2002) sees a possible answer is to find alternative ways of operationalising the terms, validity and reliability, in ways appropriate to the conditions, circumstances and goals of qualitative enquiry.

In the design, methods (data collection and analysis) and the final reporting, the researcher aimed to depict, in enough detail for the reader, the background that supported the research conclusions – “to show they make sense” (Merriam, 1998, p. 199). In a naturalistic study, trustworthiness cannot be guaranteed by certain techniques and methods but by the quality of the evidence presented and the conclusions drawn from that evidence. At all stages of this research project, given the emergent design of this research, the threats to trustworthiness were continuously assessed and reviewed. This process was incorporated into the research design.

### **Threats to Trustworthiness**

*Validity* refers to “the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 87). Threats to validity in

qualitative research are dealt with once the research is in progress (Robson, 2002). Some threats identified in the research are described below.

*Internal validity* (credibility) deals with the question of how the research findings match reality. Threats to internal validity identified in this research included firstly, those specifically related to historical inquiry. The development of an historical account for each historical period, particularly the earlier periods, relied heavily on historical documents such as manuscripts, laws, transcripts of speeches; archives covering official minutes or records, files, personal letters, memoranda, parliamentary papers; official publications, newspapers and magazines, catalogues, photographs, recordings, log books and research reports (Cohen & Manion, 1990).

Problems related to data collection included those related to lack of direct observation. A narrow focus for the collection and interpretation of data may limit the view of reality for the particular period. Data scarcity due to inability to locate or access sites where primary sources are housed or poorly maintained archival records may lead to an excessive reliance on secondary sources and the risk of closing the historical inquiry too early. This may involve the failure to find data confirming or challenging the view of reality presented. An inability to confirm earlier historical data may result in systematic bias as the data may be incorrect or biased in interpretation.

Threats related to data analysis included the narrowing of the focus for a particular era. The use of current perspectives to interpret data rather than those of the era to which it relates (*presentism*) was another threat. This included the definition of the meanings of key terms and words in the context in which they have been produced.

Interpretation of the data must take into consideration the relationship between intent and consequences (Guba & Lincoln, 1999). Intent of a statement or event cannot be inferred from the consequences. Failure to determine intent in historical inquiry results in value bias and hence inaccurate description of the reality in a particular period.

Data collection and analysis methods, historical criticism, data management and context analysis, described above assisted in managing the threats outlined above. The validity of a source (external criticism) and the validity of a piece of evidence (internal criticism) were assessed through the use of historical criticism.

Triangulation, a strategy involving the collection of data from a diverse range of sources, reduced the validity risks in this historical inquiry. Triangulation was possible in this research through the use of a variety of document sources, written from differing perspectives, for different purposes, by different authors and / or in a range of locations. This process assisted in reducing the threat to validity from systematic and value bias.

In this thesis, the provision of a rich description (Merriam, 1998) allowed readers to determine how closely their situation and experience matched the research findings and hence the transferability of the findings. It is a comprehensive dissertation that is integrated, synthesised and provides a chronological presentation of the research findings inviting the reader to reflect on the relevance of those findings to their own situation.

Researcher bias was also a significant threat to validity (internal and external) in this project. The researcher, a participant historian (not an outsider) has worked in the field, and acknowledged a particular bias in an earlier discussion (*Research Problem*, 1.2, p. 1). The assumptions and preconceptions of the researcher may have introduced subjectivity to data collection, analysis and interpretation. This threat was reduced by strategies such as peer debriefing and support, and the maintenance of an audit trail in the form of a detailed reflexive research journal.

Reliability (dependability and confirmability) in qualitative research is related to the dependability and consistency of the sources used and of the research findings obtained from those sources, individually and collectively. The researcher aims for the outsider to concur that, given the data collected, the findings make sense – they are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 1998). In this research, the division of the thesis into historical periods that were designed in conformity with the data collected (periodisation) allowed the outsider to follow the development of the research findings through consistent and transparent approaches in data collection, analysis and presentation.

Independent judges, examiners and readers assess the reliability of research. In data collection, the failure to recognise or even find valuable data presents a threat to reliability. In data analysis the loss of valuable data is also a threat. An audit trail that described how the data was collected, how categories and themes were derived and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry assisted the researcher in addressing this threat to reliability. Researcher bias was also a threat to reliability. Strategies to address



this threat have been discussed above. In the reporting of results, reliability may be compromised by poor report writing. An additional threat is the length of this final report. If it is perceived to be too long or too detailed it may not be read.

The research design incorporated procedures for data collection, and data analysis included several elements that increased the trustworthiness of the research findings. These include historical criticism, context and content analysis and periodisation.

## **2.3 Ethical Issues**

The research project relied significantly on data collected from documents. The data was collected from public records and as such is subject to open scrutiny or in aggregated forms that may be anonymous. Ethical issues arose in this research in the collection and analysis of private documents (for example, archival materials such as personal letters) where access was approved to these documents for the specific purpose in this project, care needed to be taken that the data was not used for a clearly different purpose.

Data from interviews and oral histories was collected to supplement data collected in the more recent historical periods. Suitable participants were identified and interviews conducted. An *Ethics Clearance* was obtained in the appropriate manner from the ACU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (See Appendix B – Letter to Participants).

Ethical issues related to data analysis centred on the researcher as the primary instrument and hence the potential for researcher bias. The planning, conducting, analysing and reporting of this research aimed to present an unbiased account that was as accurate and honest as possible.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The research method for this study was based on historical analysis, a method of discovering from records and accounts knowledge of the past. This method was used to develop a chronological description of events, actions and decisions in the history of the CCD movement in New South Wales and provided an historical account of the provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools. This account was then used in further analysis and interpretation of the practice.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **HISTORICAL PROLOGUE**

In this chapter, with the use of some significant secondary source material, some important historical background for this thesis is presented. In Section 3.1, an account is given of the foundation of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) during the period of the Counter Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and its development in Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Section 3.2 provides a description of developments in colonial New South Wales which were to have profound impact on the nature of the provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools.

### **3.1 The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine**

#### **3.1.1 Introduction**

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) was established as a parish-based lay organisation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the goal to provide religious education to all those in need (Mongoven, 2000).

*The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* defines the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) as the “official organ for the catechetical instruction of the Catholic laity” (McBrien, 1995). *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* describes the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) as “an association of the faithful devoted to the work of Catholic religious education” (Krause, 2003, pp. 94 -95). While established over four hundred years ago with clear organisational guidelines, the nature of the activity that it embodied is arguably the Confraternity’s most enduring and more easily identified feature. Known by other names or left unnamed, the Confraternity is a *lay organisation* with a parish-oriented structure, whose broad activity is the provision of religious education to all – children and adults – deprived of such formation (Collins, 1983a, p. 147).

Three essays by Joseph B. Collins (1983a, 1983b, 1983c) have made a significant contribution to the study of the history of the CCD movement in Europe and the United States of America (USA). Collins (1983a) traces the beginnings of the CCD in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century reflecting on the social and ecclesial context of its foundation, its growth in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the reasons for its decline in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Another essay provides an account of the modern revival of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States of America. This revival was due, in part, in response to the papal encyclical *Acerbo nimis: On Teaching Christian Doctrine* (Pius X, 1905) (Collins, 1983b). The third essay connects the establishment of a National CCD in the dioceses across the USA from 1902 to 1935 to the 1905 encyclical, the response of the local church and the leadership of Bishop Edwin V. O'Hara of Kansas City, Missouri (Collins, 1983c). The following account of the origins of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine draws extensively from these three sources.

### **3.1.2 Origin in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century**

The origin of the CCD can be found in what is in essence a pastoral response to the social, ecclesial and educational needs of the 16<sup>th</sup> century during the Counter Reformation movement. Established as a parish-based lay organisation, the CCD provided religious education for those who were deprived of such education (Mongoven, 2000). The potential for clergy and laity together to interpret the needs and develop a plan of action suitable for the local context was a significant characteristic of the CCD movement.

In the medieval Church there was no popular, formal, doctrinal instruction of children and adults. Episcopal schools were largely for the instruction of the clergy and pulpit instruction was the order of the day for the people. The culture of Christendom was a means of socialising the individual into the practice of the faith (Dixon, 1995). Schools offering Christian doctrine were scarce and available only for the wealthy and the “level of religious education, even among the clergy, was at an all-time low” (Collins, 1983a, p. 147). The challenge presented by the 16<sup>th</sup> century reformers found little critical resistance among the people and was appealing in its simplicity (Meredith, 1984).

Church authorities had become aware of the need to educate the people on matters of the faith, particularly in times of great spiritual unrest. In response to this challenge groups were formed in a number of Italian cities to undertake the task of instruction. In 1536 a young priest, Castellino de Castello, established one such group, known as ‘The Company of Christian Doctrine’ in Milan, which developed into “schools of Christian Doctrine” for children, youth and uneducated adults. Similar schools were soon established throughout Milan and across northern Italy. The success of the schools of Christian Doctrine was due largely to the groups of enthusiastic lay catechists who volunteered to hold regular schools of religion for the poor and uneducated (Collins, 1983a, p. 147).

In 1556, towards the close of the Council of Trent (1545 –1563), a decree was issued that instruction of Christian Doctrine should be given in parishes on Sundays and festivals (feast days) throughout the year.

In 1560, Marco de Sadis-Cusani, a layman from Milan, travelled to Rome and with the help and support of a local priest, Father Henry Pietra, founded the Society of Christian Doctrine (*Compagnia della Dottrina Cristiana*). The stated purpose of the society was to “gather children from the streets of Rome and teach them the holy Faith”. Within ten years, over 40,000 boys and girls attended classes wherever spaces could be found in private homes, gardens, churches and in the open air when weather permitted (Gilpin, 1972).

In 1571, Pope Pius V (1504-1572 elected 1566), acknowledged the good already accomplished by the Schools of Christian Doctrine and recommended that bishops establish them in every parish. These schools prospered and were divided into two distinct groups. The first had priest instructors who formed several different religious orders known as the ‘Teaching Orders’ (*Dottrinari*). In the second group the laity continued to teach under the title Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD). The social and ecclesial context in the 16<sup>th</sup> century at the time of the Reformation and Counter Reformation determined the origin and structure of the Confraternity – a part of diocesan and parish system. The local parish was the vehicle for the Church of that time to minister to people throughout their lives developing and strengthening their faith through instruction and administering the sacraments.

When Charles Borromeo was appointed Cardinal Archbishop of Milan in 1565, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine schools were already well established throughout the archdiocese. Through his enthusiastic support of the Confraternity and insightful understanding of the essence of its function, (Saint) Charles Borromeo is today recognised as a founder of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD). His work gave the Confraternity its early structure, pastoral guidelines and juridical status. This was in the form of a comprehensive guide for the directors and participants in the Confraternity schools – *A Constitution and Rules of the Confraternity and Schools of Christian Doctrine for use in the Province of Milan*. The *Constitution* described the broad philosophy of the School of Christian Doctrine program in spiritual and moral formation. The *Constitution* also described in detail the specific objectives and features and details of external structures designed to support Parish Confraternities united in what was known at the time as a “Company of Schools”. It prescribed principles and methods that can be recognised at the core of the activity of parish-based lay religious educators throughout the centuries, particularly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century renewal of what is the essential spirit of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

The *Constitution* included directions on the format and content of the religious instruction provided. The material was to be doctrinally sound and appropriate for the individual learner – taking into consideration the age, educational experience, personal potential and social context. Prayer was to be included in the period of instruction. The time to be devoted to each period of instruction was set as were the number per class group to ten participants. The desired characteristics and skills of the catechists were described in the regulations – “Catechists should be kind, understanding and motivated by the fact that they are sharing the same ministry that was exercised by Christ and the apostles” (Collins, 1983a, p. 148). The *Constitution* stressed the importance of the careful selection and training of the leaders (directors) and catechists (teachers) before they are ceremonially inducted into the Confraternity. The role of the laity was to work in partnership with the clergy in all Confraternity activities. In the objectives of the Confraternity of Milan:

The *Constitution* provided description of the Parish Confraternity with the pastor in charge of a variety of officers (laypersons) performing a variety of duties including – teachers, helpers, fishers or home visitors, disciplinarian, record keepers and librarians.

This activity was to be supported by external Diocesan support in the form of a Confraternity bureau, consisting of a supervisor, coordinator and staff whose roles were teaching and spiritual formation.

The educational activity of the Parish Confraternity of 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy engaged both children and adults. Problems experienced by these Confraternities were recorded and foreshadowed those challenges to be faced by those who engaged in the activity in the centuries to come. One problem was the shortage of qualified helpers to meet the demands of the large numbers of learners wishing to enrol in the schools. A second problem was the accusation that insufficient 'doctrinal matter' was imparted in the Confraternity schools. A third problem was the belief that the teaching of Christian Doctrine was a function of priests only (a tradition with its origins in the Middle Ages) and that unordained men and women (the laity) were not permitted, under any circumstance, to teach the subject (Collins, 1974/1983a). At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Pope Paul V gave full approval to lay men and women to teach in the Confraternity schools. Another problem was the low esteem in which the priest and the people held the catechists. Pope Benedict XIV (1742) and Pius X (1905) tried to dispel this image (Collins, 1983a, p. 151).

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine schools laid the foundations for the development of the Sunday Schools and the Parish schools in modern time. There are records (Collins, 1983a, p. 152) that indicated that by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Confraternity of St Dorothea in Rome offered free education in both religion and elementary subjects to poor children and youth.

### **3.1.3 Developments in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

The educational, ecclesial and social potential of the CCD was recognised by the popes of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, and throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. During this time the influence of the organisation extended gradually throughout the world. In 1710 more than 271 different Confraternities were part of the Roman Archconfraternity from most European countries (Collins, 1983a, p. 152).

## **Ireland**

Father Martin Brennan (1934) documented the history of the Confraternity in Ireland in the publication, *The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Ireland, 1775-1835*. Collins (1983b) cites Brennan's account of the work of the Confraternity during a period of more than a century in Ireland when all teaching of religion was banned under penalty of death:

The Confraternity had a great part in preserving the Faith of the Irish people during those penal days . . . In every parish lay people of both sexes were enrolled in the twofold object of their own sanctification and the religious instruction of their children. (Brennan cited in Collins, 1983b, p.152)

Rosemary Raughter (1997) in describing the charitable activity of women in the recovery of Irish Catholicism from the penal era at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century draws attention to the role of Confraternities in Catholic resurgence among the laity:

the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, established in Wexford and in St Michan's parish in Dublin at the end of the century, was primarily concerned with religious instruction . . . the membership in Dublin appears to have been largely female, and all of the ninety-six teachers listed for St Michan's parish for the year 1799-1800 were women. (Raughter, 1997, p. 472)

## **United States of America**

In the United States, the need for the CCD was found in the unsatisfactory conditions for Catholic education that prevailed in the thirteen colonies and the difficulties faced by Catholics attempting to provide religious training for the children in the atmosphere of climate of postcolonial pluralism at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Collins, 1983b). Its growth was erratic, "growing in fits and starts . . . Its origin in one place sometimes marked the date of its demise in another" (Collins, 1983b, p. 158). The catechetical provisions of the Plenary Councils of Baltimore in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were formed from the encyclicals, decrees and synodal laws from Rome during that time. In 1852, the Council put forward obligations of pastors and parents requiring Christian instruction of all classes. It called for Parish schools to be built and, acknowledging this may not be possible in all areas, directed that formal lessons in the catechism be provided for Catholic youth not attending Parish schools (Collins, 1983b, p. 161). The second Council in 1866 provided more specific emphasis to both the need to establish Parish schools and that the CCD be set up where the local community was unable to build such schools:

Since public schools are the only places where daily education is available, it is all the more urgent to use all possible means to minimize the harm, which may come to Catholic pupils. For this reason catechetical instruction and the schools of Christian Doctrine should be established. Pastors should have boys and girls meet in their own church on Sundays and holydays and even more often in order to teach them the elements of Christian Doctrine with zeal and diligence. (Collins, 1983b, p. 161)

The third Council in 1884 reinforced the view of the need for Catholic education for every child. This, ideally, should take place in Catholic schools. A notable feature of the Councils of Baltimore is that they encouraged the provision of religious instruction to Catholic children who attended public schools. As the State did not make provision for religious education to take place within their schools it was the responsibility of the local church to make provision for such religious instruction. In this context, the establishment of the CCD, based on the 16<sup>th</sup> century model, was easily understood and accepted.

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the CCD went into decline as a result of changes in the educational, social, ecclesial and political climate (Collins, 1983b). Papal decrees and synodal proclamations attempted to promote the work of the Confraternity in catechetical formation. Of particular note is a review of the contribution of the Confraternity in the *Motu proprio* of Benedict XIV in 1759, which urged universal establishment across the world. This document was to be used extensively by Pius X in justification for his call for the Confraternity's revival at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The reasons for this decline included - the local Parish or institution under the direction of Religious Congregations taking over the catechising work of the Confraternity, that is, religious education became the responsibility of organisations and agencies; a decrease in membership of the Confraternity and efficiency leading to a shortage of teachers; a deficiency in the training that was offered to catechists; neglect of the structure and demands of the Confraternity in places where it had been active; failure of the clergy and parents to support the activity with interest and enthusiasm; the difficulty of providing religious education for people of all ages and degrees of religious literacy; and a change in the pedagogy of Christian Doctrine (Collins, 1983b).



## **3.2 The Australian Context in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

The development of educational systems in the colonies took place throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1833 Governor Bourke, in the colony of NSW, established a common school system. Within this system, the State assumed responsibility for the basic schooling of children in the colony. At the same time a growing number of Church schools were being established. Although the relationship between religion and State education was generally accepted, there was considerable dispute about the form and content of religious teaching in the curriculum. By the middle of the century a compromise, dual system, was devised. At State level, through a Denominational Schools Board, Church schools were subsidised. At the same time, a Board of Commissioners for National Education was incorporated to supervise a system of schools based on the Irish model. The Commissioners recommended the use of the Irish Scripture readers as a regular part of the curriculum. This religious instruction was to be given by a person approved by the parents, within schools hours. This system was adopted in NSW (1848), Victoria (1851), Queensland and Tasmania (1859). The establishment of the dual system signified legislative recognition of a principle that religion was a part of State education. It also demonstrated a public reluctance to entrust all elementary education to the State (Rawlinson, 1980).

### **3.2.1 Setting the Direction for Catholic Education: 1866 – 1905**

The rapid expansion of the Australian population in the decade of the Gold Rush (1850s) and the changing character of colonial politics related to the dual system presented serious challenges for the existing policy. By the mid 1870s Government schools in all colonies were required to provide a measure of religious teaching within the general curriculum. From this time divergences in colony/State approaches began to appear. From 1872 to 1895, all six colonies enacted legislation aimed at creating structured and comprehensive educational systems that were able to respond the needs of Australian society. Colonial legislators withdrew state-aid to non-government (denominational) schools. All colonies faced the problem of the place of religion in schools that were ‘free, public and secular’. Around the common premise, “religion would not be entirely excluded from Government schools” (Rawlinson, 1980, n.2.7, p. 10) the individual Colonial responses varied significantly.

In NSW, the Public Instruction Act (1880), made no attempt to alter the religious education provisions. Education in Government schools included ‘general religious teaching’ (unchanged from the previous legislation [1866]) and ‘special religious instruction’ where visits by religious teachers were possible for “not more than one hour per week” (Rawlinson, 1980, n.2.9, p. 10).

In 1879 the Bishops of NSW issued a Joint Pastoral, *Catholic Education*, condemning “the principle of secularist education and those schools founded on that principle” describing such schools as contravening “the first principle of Christian religion” and as “seedplots of future immorality, infidelity, and lawlessness, being calculated to debase the standard of human excellence and corrupt the political, social and individual life of future citizens” (O’Farrell, 1969a). At the heart of what was to become a long and bitter debate in Australian society was the preservation of the religious, political and social status of Catholics – Catholic separatism provided security for Catholic interests – Catholic schools became a symbol of Catholic unity (O’Farrell, 1985).

In 1882 17% of Catholic school age children in New South Wales were attending public schools (Barcan, 1988). Catholic parents who sent their children to Government schools were to be refused the sacraments. Catholic clergy were not allowed to enter government schools, despite the provisions of the 1866 Public Schools Act (Section 19) and the 1880 Public Instruction Act (Section 17) permitting children of any one religious persuasion to be instructed by a clergymen or other religious teacher of such persuasion for not more than one hour each day (Austin, 1972, p 176). The *Sydney Morning Herald* in October 1884 criticised this stance of the Catholic authorities:

As matters stand, the Roman Catholic Clergy, rather than give their children religious instruction in a Public School, leave them without religious instruction whatever. That may be a consistent course, but we fail to see it is a remarkably Christian course. (O’Farrell, 1985, p. 242)

O’Farrell (1985) observed, “The episcopacy reasoned that to allow such instruction would be to countenance the state system, which the church condemned in principle, and to countenance Catholics attending that system, which was also condemned” (p. 242).

Patrick Moran was appointed Archbishop of Sydney in 1884. At the time of his arrival in Australia, in September 1884, the Catholic Church and the governments of the colonies were involved in a debate of major public importance related to the provision of education. Originating in the 1860s and 1870s, the struggle between the Catholic Church

and the New South Wales government related, in essence, to the withdrawal of funding for denominational schools (Kildea, 2000).

The attitude of Cardinal Moran on the matter of education was evident in his letters and public statements. In a speech delivered at the opening of a *School-Church* at Leichhardt, Cardinal Moran described the schooling system

There are two systems which nowadays face us in this matter of education; one, for convenience called the secular system; the other the religious system . . . if schools of the country declare they are secular, that they exclude religion from their walls, we naturally judge them as they are presented to us. If there is any religion attached to them it is invisible, and we cannot form an opinion of it. (*The Express*, 1885, p. 19)

Again, at Leichhardt in 1886, Cardinal Moran described the flaws in secular education:

The secular school system teaches the child to develop the will without the safeguards of religion, and if we were to suppose that all these schools were guided only by the spirit of atheism, it would follow that the people would become atheists. (*The Express*, 1886, p. 10)

In 1885 the bishops of Australia and New Zealand met for the first time in plenary council. Under Cardinal Moran's leadership their task was to set the agenda for Catholicism in their part of the world. The Australian bishops "determined that the first building in a new parish should be its school. Build the school, use it for Sunday Mass, until you can build a church" (Campion, 1987, p. 55). By 1885 Catholic schools had become, what they were to remain, "a major focus of parish life, episcopal concern and lay activity . . . the parochial school could be considered the single most distinctive feature of Australian Catholicism" (Campion, 1987, p. 56).

The previous year, 1884, in Baltimore, the bishops of the United States held their third plenary council facing questions such as:

How do we convince the laity of the vital importance of Parish schools? Should the bishops take a clear-cut stand and require pastors to build parish schools? Should they require recalcitrant parents, under pain of sin, to send their children to parish schools? (Augenstein, 2003)

The American bishops decided on a moderate path stating:

No parish is complete till it has schools adequate to meet the needs of its children and the pastor and the people of such a parish should feel that they have not completed their entire duty until that want is supplied. (Augenstein, 2003)

### 3.2.2 Religious Education for Catholic Children not in Catholic Schools

#### The Christian Doctrine Society

Turner (1992a) cited evidence from the Catholic newspaper, the *Freeman's Journal* (1864, September 10 and 24) of the existence of *The Christian Doctrine Society* in the Catholic Church in Sydney. The society provided instruction in the catechism to numbers of children at least equal or greater than any other confraternity in Sydney (p. 199). The *Australasian Catholic Directory* (1854) provided a description of the Society of Christian Doctrine:

The members of this Society meet every Sunday at three o'clock . . . The object is to make a *revision* and to give a fuller explanation of the portion of the catechism that the children have studied at their respective schools during the week, and likewise to teach catechism to those who have no opportunity of learning it. There is also a class for adults. (p. 97)

This society clearly drew its description from the 16<sup>th</sup> century charter of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. Reference is made in subsequent publications of the *Australasian Catholic Directory* to the existence of the Society of Christian Doctrine at St Mary's Cathedral (1858), Windsor (1861), St Francis, Sydney (1882), Albion Park (1882), Berrima (1882), Waterloo (1882), Milson's Point (1882) and Parramatta (1882). St Francis, Sydney, records "the children (600) assemble in St Francis Hall Sunday evening for Catechism taught by members of the Christian Doctrine Society assisted by two Sisters of the Good Samaritan" (*Australasian Catholic Directory*, 1882). This account provided an indication of the involvement of the laity in the educational activities of the Society.

#### Sunday Schools

Further evidence of parish-based provision of religious education apart from that which would have occurred within the Catholic schools in this period can be found in the reports made by parishes to the Archdiocese of Sydney. From 1867 to 1874 the number of Catholic Sunday schools increased from 116 to 253 (Barcan, 1988, p. 120). The *State of the Mission* report for Petersham Parish (1877) recorded that sixty children attended *Sunday-School*. Ten children were noted as attending public schools in the district. In 1891 there were 429 Catholic Sunday schools operating. These schools were principally

providing *Catechism* classes for Catholic children who were not attending Catholic schools (Barcan, 1988, p. 163).

Dating from approximately the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Archdiocese of Sydney, included in documentation preparing for Episcopal visitations to each parish, a request for numbers of average attendance at Catechism, the frequency of Catechetical instruction provided by the Pastor and the membership number for sodalities including Christian Doctrine sodality. Statistical data was also collected on attendance of Catholic children at public schools in the parish. These reports provided support for the fact the children who attended public schools, in some of the parishes in the Archdiocese of Sydney, were receiving religious instruction through the Society of Christian Doctrine and/or through visitations to the local public schools.

### **Rural Response**

In the Pastoral Letter produced at the Second Plenary Council of the Australasian Archbishops and Bishops in 1895, the hierarchy encouraged the clergy in remote and thinly populated areas that could not support a Catholic school to provide catechists to teach the children on Sundays or any convenient time. In some areas country families were to take on the catechist's role (Turner, 1992a).

### **3.3 Conclusion**

Social, legal and political factors in colonial Australia of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, influenced by a changing educational context, resulted in all colonies establishing Government school systems by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. State aid was withdrawn from all denominational schools. Significantly, all colonial legislations retained the place of religious education within Government school systems. The response of the Catholic Bishops of Australia set the ecclesial context for the provision of religious education to Catholic children not attending Catholic schools.

Discussing the dominant myth of the creation of Australian Catholic schools, Ryan (2001) stated that such a myth “extinguishes aspects of the historical record which may be useful, even essential, for the present and future of the schools” (p. 226). The myth Ryan described saw Australian Catholic schools established in the 1870s and 1880s, the

time when state aid was withdrawn from non-government schools. The united leadership of the bishops, supported by religious sisters and brothers from Europe and the Catholic community in general, fought against the Protestant and secular forces that contrived to expel the Catholic schools from the funding of the national/state school systems.

Another aspect of the myth that stressed unity in the face of adversity did not acknowledge the dissent and ambiguity in the responses that existed within the Catholic community during the last three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ryan, 2001). One such ambiguity was that “families in large numbers did send their children to government schools, in the face of sustained attacks from the clergy” (Ryan, 2001, p. 226).

The dominant myth of the creation of Australian Catholic schools described by Ryan (2001) may have extinguished aspects of the historical record of the provision of religious education for Catholic children not attending Catholic schools and delayed the official establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine by nearly fifty years in the Church in Australia.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **A CALL FOR CATECHETICAL RENEWAL:**

#### **1905 – 1920**

The prohibitions of the Australian Bishops, in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had not prevented Catholic parents from sending their children to public schools but had denied many of those children an opportunity for receiving Catholic religious education. This chapter commences by providing an examination of the situation in New South Wales at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pope Pius X's encyclical *Acerbo nimis*, which sets the scene for universal catechetical renewal in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is analysed as is the response of the Australian church.

#### **4.1 At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Three significant groups of Catholic children were not receiving religious education - students at State schools in towns and cities where Catholic schools were available; those in State schools in isolated communities with no Catholic school; and those living in remote rural settings where no form of school was available.

At beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 44% of Catholic school age children were attending State schools (O'Farrell, 1985). By 1905 the greater percentage of those Catholic children attending State schools in New South Wales were not receiving Catholic religious instruction despite the provision for this in the 1880 Public Instruction Act.

Reports collected in the parish census from Richmond Parish (western Sydney) in 1902 and 1906 noted that the priest regularly went to the public schools of the district to teach catechism. This evidence is supported in a letter from Peter Board, Under-Secretary, Department of Public Instruction (NSW), where he notes 797 visits paid by Roman Catholic clergy to Public schools in 1905 of a total of 42,481 visits to provide special religious instruction (Board, 1906, October).

The Catholic community was aware of the numbers of Catholic children attending State schools. The *Freeman's Journal* (1906) reported on the State schools and Catholic attendance in 1906. The article provided a commentary on the publication of the Department of Instruction Report for 1906 and criticised many aspects of the reporting procedures and the information made available in the report. It noted a decrease in both the number enrolled and the number regularly attending the State schools between 1900 and 1906. In this context the article in the *Freeman's Journal* (1906) offered “some remarks on the number of Catholic children attending Public schools”. The article stated that the Catholic children who attend these schools often had no choice as in many places the Public school was the only one available: “Catholic schools cannot be established except in fairly populated localities, while nearly 2000 small Public schools are scattered over our extensive territory, where they are availed of by Catholic children as well as by others” (Freemans Journal, 1906).

In countering an argument made in the secular press (Sydney Morning Herald, 1906, December 31) discussing the number of Catholic children attending State schools, the article in the *Freeman's Journal* claimed that in fact the relative number had decreased since 1881:

In 1881 the mean quarterly enrolment of Catholic children in the Public schools was 30,165; at the end of 1906 the number was 30,169. . . In the interval the Catholic population of the State has increased over 90 per cent. (Freemans Journal, 1906)

The statistics included in the article to support this argument are outlined in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

*Catholic Children in Public Schools as a Proportion of Catholic Population (NSW)*

Year	Catholic Population	Number of Catholic Children in Public Schools	Number per 1000 of Catholic Population
1881	207,606	30,615	147
1891	286,911	27,121	94
1901	347,286	31,618	91
1906	396,000	30,169	76

From: Freemans Journal (1906). [Newspaper Clippings]. (Kelly Papers, T2311). Sydney Archdiocesan Archives, Sydney, Australia.



Given the number of Catholic schools that were established in that 25-year period, this increase would be expected. In fact, the question that the article did not address was - Why had the number of Catholic children not decreased to an even greater extent? Putting aside arguments related to the validity of the statistical data presented in the Freeman's Journal article, there is evidence that a significant number of Catholic children attended Public schools and the majority of those children were not receiving religious education due to the prohibitions in place or geographic isolation.

Leaders of the Catholic Church in Australia in restating their opposition to the State system of education effectively denied the reality of increasing numbers of Catholic children not attending Catholic schools and their need for religious education (O'Farrell, 1969a). In the local church there is evidence of a response from clergy, religious and lay to this need (O'Farrell, 1969a; Turner, 1992a).

In a letter to Cardinal Moran (1904, March 24) Bishop John Dunne, Bishop of Bathurst (1901-1919), replied to the Cardinal's invitation to a meeting of the Bishops:

You said there was no particular business to be dealt with and in reply I said we could easily find something practical that would be for the benefit of our people. There is a great difference of opinion in practice amongst [sic] many of the clergy about the questions I have submitted . . . 3rd Whether the attendance of children at Public Schools should be a reserved case for Parents or left to the Pastor's judgement. (1904, March 24)

It was into this Australian context that Pope Pius X's call for the establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the encyclical *Acerbo Nimis* (On Teaching Christian Doctrine) was received by the Catholic Bishops.

## **4.2 *Acerbo Nimis* – A Pastoral Response: 1905**

Pope Pius X's the encyclical letter, *Acerbo Nimis* (*On Teaching Christian Doctrine*), was written in response to the challenges presented by the social, educational and ecclesial contexts at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They are described as "this very troublesome and difficult time" (Pius X, 1905, n.1). Pope Pius X (1905), attempted to challenge the impact of modern society on religion and decreed "the society known as the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine is to be canonically established in each and every parish" allowing local communities to determine the nature of the organisation according to particular times and circumstances (Meredith, 1984).

‘*At this very troublesome and difficult time*’, the opening words of Pius X’s Encyclical, *Acerbo Nimis* (On Teaching Christian Doctrine), promulgated on 15 April 1905, provided the framework for the interpretation of the document and an understanding of the Pontiff’s motivation for its publication. The title of the document set the theme for the whole document by giving what comes after, a context. The Latin title, *Acerbo*, is to ‘make bitter’, to aggravate, and *Nimis*, makes it even stronger. It is ‘very much’, ‘too much’, ‘excessively very bitter’ was the interpretation of the ‘signs of the times’ by Pius X and, in Latin, his mood was even more sombre than that captured by the English translator. The commonly used subtitle, *On Teaching Christian Doctrine*, related to the way the problems of the times would be addressed by the Church at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in these ‘most bitter’ times.

In responding to these most bitter of times the encyclical returned to the prescriptions of the Council of Trent related to the “teaching of truths of religion” (Pius X, 1905, n.11) from which St Charles Borromeo developed the original Charter of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (Collins, 1983, p. 148) and the echoing of these prescriptions by Pope Benedict XIV (1742) in the Constitution “*Esti minime*” in the form of preaching and teaching (Pius X, 1905, n.12). In *Acerbo Nimis* Pope Pius X made no reference to other Papal statements, particularly those from the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, related to religious instruction or Christian education in general.

*Acerbo Nimis* was more pastoral than theological or philosophical in its focus (Collins, 1983a). It prescribed pastoral structures for the provision of religious instruction. To face the “enemy” (Pius X, 1905, n.1) of *modernism* (a term often used to condemn many ideas and movements within the Catholic Church) a common theme during the papacy of Pius X. An emphasis was placed on the importance of knowledge of Christian Doctrine and a process of catechetical instruction based on the use of the Catechism (Pius X, 1905, n.19, n.24). It called for the canonical establishment of “the society called the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine” (Pius X, 1905, n.22) in every parish. Biographies of Pius X (Giuseppe Sarto) provided some insight into the reason for such a response (Burton, 1951; Falconi, 1967; Forbes, 1954).

The encyclical was promulgated early in the pontificate of Pius X (1903-1914). A review of subsequent writings of Pius X reveals a development of core themes identified in *Acerbo Nimis* (Pius X, 1905). A later encyclical on Catholic Action in Italy to the

Bishops of Italy, *Il Fermo Proposito*, encouraged the involvement of the laity in many aspects of the work of the Church. The encyclical commemorating the death of St Charles Borromeo in 1910, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* drew attention to the work done in Milan in teaching religion and establishing the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (Collins, 1983a).

If the value of the encyclical in determining subsequent understanding and action in the provision of religious instruction was to be judged purely by the number of occasions it was referred to in Church documents in the past 100 years then it would be regarded as a document of lesser significance.

Why was it then that *Acerbo Nimis* was proclaimed by Catholic theologians and religious educators (Collins, 1983a; Mongoven, 2000) as laying the groundwork for catechetical renewal in the 20<sup>th</sup> century? To answer this question, it was necessary to examine the text of the encyclical. An understanding of the text of the encyclical would also assist in the analysis of the differing Episcopal responses. The encyclical can be divided into two sections – the first descriptive followed by the prescriptive section.

The descriptive section of the document, sections n.1 -n.16 (Pius X, 1905), supported the conclusion that “what we have said so far demonstrates the supreme importance of religious instruction” (Pius X, 1905, n.17). In providing an assessment of the situation in the world at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as “troublesome and difficult” (Pius X, 1905, n.1) the document presented the cause of the troubles as “ignorance of things divine” (Pius X, 1905, n.1). The universal nature of this lack of knowledge is outlined (Pius X, 1905, n.2). What must be addressed, that is, regaining the “knowledge of divine things” provided the frame of reference for Pius X’s to espouse the teaching of all things intellectual (Pius X, 1905, n.3). This was an encyclical about the importance of Christian teaching, which aims to reveal God to humans.

The place of Christian teaching in revealing God was developed further - “Christian teaching commands us to honour God by faith, which is of the mind, by hope, which is of the will, by love which is of the heart” (Pius X, 1905, n.4). Religious instruction provided the opportunity for the individual to fulfil their Christian duties (Pius X, 1905, n.6). Those to be taught were those whose minds were “shrouded in the darkness of

crass ignorance” (Pius X, 1905, n.5) either through choice - “open eyes”, or involuntarily - “blind”.

Pius X introduced the term “pastors of souls” (Pius X, 1905, n.7), specifically describing the role of the priest (Pius X, 1905, n.7 -n.11), in the provision of religious instruction. This was then expanded, subtly, to include others in teaching roles in the church – “pastors, either personally or through others, must explain the truths of religion” (Pius X, 1905, n.11).

A reference to the decrees of the Council of Trent (Pius X, 1905, n.12) related to instruction of Christian Doctrine, reinforced the acceptance through the ages of the centrality of religious instruction in the role of the pastor. The use of words similar to the original texts from Trent provided a powerful connection between this document and that resulting from the Counter Reformation Council. As this original decree led to the establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Pius X established the historical justification for the canonical establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine later in the encyclical (Pius X, 1905, n.22).

An explanation of the complementary roles of preaching, ‘the explanation of the Gospel’ and catechetical instruction, ‘the teaching of Christian Doctrine’ was developed from the foundation of the Constitution *Esti minime* (1742) of Benedict XIV (Pius X, 1905, n.12).

The task of the catechist in the teaching of catechism (term used to describe the provision of religious education in general) was described (Pius X, 1905, n.13 -n.14) in words that echo those in the *Constitution and Rules of the Confraternity and School of Christian Doctrine for Use in the Province of Milan* which were developed by St Charles Borromeo in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The practical nature of the task of the catechist in making “a comparison between what God commands us to do and what is our actual conduct” (Pius X, 1905, n.13) and exhorting the simplicity and a plain speaking approach in all catechetical instruction (Pius X, 1905, n.14) reflected Pius X’s parochial roots (Burton, 1951) - “Teaching of Catechism, when rightly done, never fails to profit those who listen to it” (Pius X, 1905, n.14).

The emphasis placed on the instruction of “adults and those who are advanced in years” (Pius X, 1905, n.15) acknowledged the universal and perennial need for religious instruction and the intergenerational aspects of that education.

Finally, there was a warning that if “the duty of catechetical teaching is either fulfilled superficially or altogether neglected” (Pius X, 1905, n.16) then there was little hope for an improvement in the current situation of the world:

It will not do to say, in excuse, that faith is a free gift from God bestowed upon each one at Baptism. True enough, when we are baptised in Christ, the habit of faith is given, but this most divine seed, if left entirely to itself . . . is not like the mustard seed which ‘grows up . . . and puts out great branches’ (Mk 4:32). So too, the Christian, born again of water and the Holy Spirit, has faith within him, but he requires the word of the teaching Church to nourish and develop it and makes it bear fruit. (Pius X, 1905, n.16)

In exhorting the maintenance or restoration of the teaching of Christian Doctrine, Pius X (Pius X, 1905, n.17) evoked the words of Benedict XIV, “there is nothing more effective than catechetical instruction to spread the glory of God and secure the salvation of souls” (*Esti minime*, 1742 in Pius X, 1905, n.13).

A comparison could be made between the effort of Benedict XIV in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and that of Pius X at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in attempting “to promote catechetical formation everywhere” (Collins, 1983a, p. 156). The elevation of the “dignity of the teacher of the catechism . . . appreciating his work” (Benedict XIV, 1742; Pius X, 1905, n.22) and urging the re-establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine as the way of providing universal catechetical formation (Benedict XIV, 1759; Pius, 1905, n.22) were themes present also in *Acerbo Nimis* despite the separation of more than 150 years.

Pius X called for “uniformity everywhere” and directed that the six regulations that were to follow (1905, n.19 - n.24) be “observed and carried out in all dioceses throughout the world”. Firstly, the regular teaching of the Catechism to children and young people on Sundays and holy days echoed the decrees of the Council of Trent and the Milan Charter of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. At particular times, Sacramental preparation, Lent, Easter instruction was to be given with “a very special zeal” (Pius X, 1905, n.20-n.21).

In decreeing the canonical establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Pius X (1905, n.22) acknowledged the reality of the scarcity of priests in some areas and the lay support that such an organisation would provide in the teaching of the Catechism. This specific provision was later incorporated into the Code of Canon Law, instigated by Pius X but not promulgated until 1917, three years after his death - “The local ordinaries

are to see that in every parish there shall be established the Confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament and Christian Doctrine which, when canonically established, are *ipso facto* aggregated to the corresponding Archconfraternity at Rome” (Code of Canon Law, 1917, Article 711.2).

Particular reference was made to the provision of classes of religion to instruct “young people who attended public schools from which all teaching is banned” (Pius X, 1905, n.23) and the attention that needed to be given to adult instruction (Pius X, 1905, n.24). In order to achieve these six decrees (Pius X, 1905, n.25-n.27) the importance of careful preparation of pastors and teachers for the task of teaching Christian Doctrine was emphasised.

The encyclical, *Acerbo Nimis*, reflected the challenges that Pius X had assessed as a threat to the Church at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His response was a document with a pastoral focus (Collins, 1983a, p. 154) calling for an overhaul of the structures of parish catechetical ministry. A passionate, if not somewhat pessimistic assessment of the times, may have overshadowed the essential elements of catechetical renewal available to the Church that are embedded in the document. Such elements included: the proposed development of a systematic approach for the provision of religious instruction, regular lessons with specific themes and a methodology of teaching distinguished from that of preaching; a clear inter-generational approach, with children, youth and adults identified as those in need of instruction with implications of life-long learning for both the teacher and those that were being taught; and, the notion that such catechetical instruction should be available to all walks of life, rich and poor, the otherwise well educated and those with little educational experience. This instruction was to be provided by priests (‘pastors of souls’ Pius X, 1905, n.7) with the assistance of others (Pius X, 1905, n.11) as teachers (Pius X, 1905, n.10) and lay helpers (Pius X, 1905, n.24). Special reference was made to the importance of instruction of those who attend public schools where religious instruction was banned (Pius X, 1905, n.23).

In mandating that the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was to be established canonically Pius X saw a ‘ready-made’ organisation to provide the necessary framework for parish catechetical activity not just locally but “in all dioceses of the world” (Pius X, 1905, n.18).

### **4.3 Differing Responses to the Call for Renewal in *Acerbo Nimis***

The response from individual provinces and dioceses to Pius X's call for catechetical renewal was essentially a function of the local social, ecclesial and educational influences.

#### **4.3.1 United States of America**

By the time of the publication of Pope Pius X encyclical *Acerbo Nimis*, a culture for acceptance of the decrees contained in the encyclical existed in the United States. The six directions (Pius X, 1905, n.19 -n.24) provided the basis for the development of guidelines for the provision of religious education in the local church that were lacking in the directives given in the Baltimore Councils.

In the decade following the publication of *Acerbo Nimis* individual parishes in the USA began to organise the Confraternity and by the 1930s, parochial, diocesan and national structures had been established across the country (Collins, 1983b).

The growth was sporadic and experimental in nature but generally characterized by an increase in the level of organisation and structural support. In 1934 the Episcopal Committee of the CCD was created and a National CCD Centre established in 1935. The CCD and its model of religious education had become a significant force in Catholic education in the United States influencing the future directions in the field. It became “a living witness to a vital part of the history of Catholic education in the USA” (Collins, 1983b, p. 158). Bernard L. Marthaler (1997) described the CCD beginning as a lay apostolate in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the years of significant achievement to the period following Vatican II.

#### **4.3.2 Australia**

The climate within the Catholic Church in Australia and the place of the church within Australian society at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were not conducive to the open and enthusiastic reception of Pius X's (1905) exhortation in *Acerbo Nimis* for catechetical renewal and the establishing of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in every parish. For the Irish hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Australia at the beginning

of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Encyclical of Pope Pius X on the Teaching of Christian Doctrine presented a serious challenge for their established loyalty to Rome (Molony, 1969).

The most influential figure in the leadership of the Catholic Church in Australia was Cardinal Patrick Francis Moran. O'Farrell (1985) described Moran's Catholic world:

The clergy ruled. A docile laity knew its place: its male and female components knew their roles and tried to act them out. Within the fold there was little questioning, a great number of unthinking assumptions and habits of mind, strict rules, and concentration on the forms and emotions of piety. (p. 261)

Moran was recognised as the dominant personality in the Catholic Church in Australia at that time (de Luca, 1993; O'Farrell, 1985). Technically, Moran's authority was limited to the Archdiocese of Sydney (de Luca, 1993). In discussion of Moran's response to the musical reforms mandated Pius X's *Motu Proprio*, 'Tra Le Sollecitudine' de Luca (1993) noted:

As Australia's senior cleric, he had a nationwide moral influence, which exceeded the legal limits of his nominal power. His pre-eminent authority in Australian ecclesiastical affairs would have certain impetus to the implementation not only in Sydney, but also throughout Australia generally . . . had he chosen to espouse them. (p. 16)

A response to *Acerbo Nimis* was found in Cardinal Moran's (1905) *Circular to the Clergy* of the Diocese of Sydney. The introductory paragraph of the circular provided a clear indication of the position Moran would take in addressing Pope Pius X's encyclical:

We may avail . . . to begin to carry out, as far as feasible in this missionary country, the precepts and instructions regarding the teaching of Christian Doctrine, which were . . . conveyed in the Holy Father's beautiful Encyclical on the Catechism. This important Encyclical touches particularly on three heads, viz.: -the Catechism, the Catechetical Sermons, and the Christian Doctrine. (1905)

Cahill (1986) noted in a biographical description of Moran, that Moran felt that the Pope's concerns about *modernism* were not relevant to Australian conditions. As foundational argument in *Acerbo Nimis* is the development of a model to combat modernism, it is likely therefore that the precepts even in this high doctrinal matter were also regarded by Moran and the Australian Bishops as being of minimal relevance to the Church in Australia.

Cardinal Moran carefully chose the use of the term 'missionary country' in this context. The Vatican had classified Australia as a "missionary country" and as such the laws for the more settled European situation did not apply in Australia. Moran's use of this term



would give him the grounds to argue that the reforming intentions of the encyclical were inappropriate generally to the Australian church and more particularly to Sydney. This would justify the incomplete account of the document presented to the Clergy of the Archdiocese of Sydney in 1905.

The Circular to the Clergy (1905) was written in two sections. In the first section, Cardinal Moran paraphrased the descriptive section of *Acerbo Nimis* (Pius X, 1905, n.1 - n.16).

A comparison of the two documents revealed several significant inconsistencies. Cardinal Moran's descriptive discussion is strongly focused on instruction of children with scant mention of adult instruction. Another inconsistency is the inclusion, by Cardinal Moran, of praise of the teaching of Catechism in Religious Schools, stressing the duty of parents and strong criticism of secular schools and education – a clear response to the local situation, without consideration of the almost contradictory position advocated in Pius X's encyclical. A third inconsistency lies in Cardinal Moran's failure to emphasise the distinction made by Pius X between the catechetical roles of teaching and preaching and the importance of training and preparation in the delivery of catechetical instruction.

Cardinal Moran (1905) in noting the commendation of the encyclical to establish the Christian Doctrine Society (Pius X, 1905, n.3) commented - "in almost all our city and suburban parishes the Religious Communities are already engaged in carrying on the work of this admirable society". Dixon (1995b) noted that during Cardinal Moran's episcopate (ca 1908) there is evidence in the archives of the Archdiocese of Sydney that the Society of Christian Doctrine continued to operate as a parochial group under authorisation from the Cardinal. The religious instruction in parochial Sunday Schools of Catholic children not attending Catholic schools would have been part of its charter. There is no indication in the Cardinal's communication to the Clergy that there could be a possibility of extending this work to Catholic children and young people in the Government schools, where it was not banned, even though it was an expressly stated need in the encyclical:

In the larger cities . . . let classes in religion be organised to instruct in the truths of faith and in the practice of Christian life the youths who attend public schools from which all religious teaching is banned. (Pius X, 1905, n.23)

Finally the emphasis given to the importance of lay involvement in catechetical work in *Acerbo Nimis* (a foundational feature of the CCD movement) received little attention in Cardinal Moran's circular.

The second section of the Circular to the Clergy (1905) stated, with reasonable accuracy, the six 'precepts' of the encyclical (Pius X, 1905, n.19 - n.26).

Did the Bishops and Clergy see their obligations with respect to a response to *Acerbo Nimis* fulfilled in the widespread existence of the Society of Christian Doctrine in the local church? Cardinal Moran's statement in the circular seemed to indicate this to be the case. Some Catholic children who were attending Government schools attended the Society's Sunday school programs – this was fulfilling some of the intention of the encyclical.

Did the Catholic hierarchy see the precepts of the encyclical extending to provide Catholic special religious instruction in Government schools or only interpret them through the lens of Catholic School operations? Given the passion of the debate related to the provision of education that found its origin in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Australian society and continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the latter interpretation is more likely.

#### **4.4 A Variety of Responses in New South Wales: 1909 - 1919**

Father Henry W. Cleary speaking at the Third Australasian Catholic Congress in Sydney in 1909 articulated the prevailing attitude of the Bishops and clergy at that time:

Far removed from the true principles of religious education are the three systems in vogue in the various States of Australasia. These are (1) "the right of entry: for denominational religious instruction; (2) the so-called "unsectarian" and "undenominational" system of biblical instruction (in which the sectarian Authorised Version of the Scriptures is commonly used); (3) the outright secularisation of public instruction and the exclusion of religion and religious influence from the school life of the child. (p. 130)

In providing a critique of the three systems outlined from a Catholic perspective Cleary identified the key issues underpinning the prevailing attitudes of the Catholic hierarchy.

The first issue was the separation of religious instruction from the broader school curriculum. The first system, in operation in New South Wales at that time, ‘the right of entry’ for denominational religious education was further described by Cleary (1909):

Under the system, public instruction is, in substance, non-religious. It is rescued from utter Godlessness only by a few stolen moments of more or less perfunctory religious instruction in a withering atmosphere of State agnosticism . . . religious instruction given in an atmosphere unfavourable to religious faith and feeling, in moments in which God is permitted, on sufferance, to intrude for a brief half hour or so into the hard and unyielding secularism of the rest of the curriculum . . . religious instruction, imparted in such surroundings as are here contemplated, can seldom rise above the level of a mere drill. It will often fall to the level of mere formalism, an intrusive unreality foreign to the real business of life; for the quarantine or divorce of religion from the secular instruction of the curriculum destroys the bond that exists between the two, while the greater thought and care given to the former can hardly fail to impress the child-mind with a sense of the superior importance of secular to religious knowledge. (pp. 130 –131)

The second issue related to the influence of the other Christian Churches – Protestant – on the nature of religious instruction that was provided in public schools:

The idea of an “unsectarian” and “undenominational” system of religious instruction arose in these countries out of efforts at an educational compromise among the rival Protestant denominations. There is, of course, no such thing as “unsectarian” or “undenominational” religious instruction . . . Catholics, at least, will never accept any maimed, mutilated or lifeless teaching in matters of faith, or any compromise affecting the principles of religious education. (Cleary, 1909, p. 131)

Cardinal Moran’s personal stance on this matter was made clear in his response to two telegrams from the Archdiocese of Brisbane. During a debate in parliament in Queensland concerning the Bible in State Schools the Protestant denominations claimed that Cardinal Moran supported those churches in their efforts to have the Bible read in the State schools of NSW and that the Cardinal was one of the compilers of Sydney scripture lessons. His reply to the telegrams left no doubt of the Cardinal’s position on the matter – “S. [scripture] lessons universally disregarded here and repeatedly condemned by me . . . Scripture lessons are avidly Protestant and have been repeatedly condemned and denounced by me and all Catholics” (Moran, 1910, October 19).

The third issue was the belief of the Catholic hierarchy that secularisation of public education and the marginalisation of religious instruction in that system “arose naturally and logically out of the anti-religious philosophy . . . which sought to blot Christianity out of the souls of men” (Cleary, 1909, p. 131). This challenged the long held Catholic

belief in the intimate union between religion and education. Public education built on this premise contained implied “highly sectarian set of dogmas regarding religion” which was “forced by law upon the public schools in various parts of Australia” (p. 132).

Cleary (1909) described these implied dogmas:

That religion in education is inconsistent with, or hostile to, or at best unnecessary to, the true life-aim of the child; that the exclusion of religion from education promotes the true life-aim of the child; and that the immemorial teaching of Christendom as to the need of an intimate union of religion and education is, so to speak, a piece of heretical pravity. (p. 131)

Cleary (1909) raised two further issues, firstly, that of funding of education and, secondly, the role of parental choice. The denial of government funding for schools established by the Catholic Church was the single most divisive issue, from the perspective of the Catholic hierarchy and some members of the Catholic community:

These parents that accept them [the dogmas] are rewarded with the free education of their children; those that cannot in conscience accept them must either smother their conscientious convictions in return for value born of free education, or they must pay a double or continuing tax or fine – one for the education which they cannot in conscience accept, the other for the education which they can. (p. 132)

The attitude of the Catholic hierarchy towards the provision of religious instruction in public schools is encapsulated in the address given by Cardinal Moran at the first Catholic Educational Conference of New South Wales in January 1911. A report on the proceedings of the conference recorded:

The Cardinal had something to say about the question of priests visiting public schools to give religious instruction, remarking that in the archdiocese they were forbidden to do so, although the reports of the Education Department made it appear that they paid 900 such visits last year . . . The principle of not allowing priests to teach Religion in the State schools was a correct one, inasmuch as it showed the condemnation by the Catholic Church of the entire State system of education, a system she has always condemned, and must always condemn. (Moran, 1911, January)

During the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was evidence of a growing recognition of the needs of Catholic children and their families in isolated rural areas of the State. In a paper entitled, *The Apostolate of the Back Blocks: How to advance the interests of religion in remote country districts*, presented at the Third Australasian Catholic Congress in Sydney in 1909, the Very Reverend P. Lynch observed:

Religious teachers could if they would give most effective help to Sunday Schools by assisting in the training of Apostolic workers . . . Colleges and convents would do untold good in the cause of Sunday School success if they

gave fitting attention, in primary and secondary schools, to organising elements of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. (Lynch, 1909, p. 101)

Cardinal Moran described the nature of the visits reported by the Education Department:

Those visits were in remote country districts, where there were no Catholic Schools, and where the children were obliged to attend State schools. The priests merely called at the schools to assemble the children for preparation for the Sacraments, but did not actually teach them in the schoolroom, taking them to a neighbouring house, if available, or otherwise gathering them under a gum tree. (Moran, 1911, p. 31)

At the Catholic Educational Conference of New South Wales (1911, January) Bishop O'Connor, Bishop of Armidale (1904 – 1930), moved a motion that “outlying districts where Catholic pupils are forced by circumstances to attend non- Catholic schools, the clergy should make adequate provision for the instruction of such children” (*Catholic Educational Conference of New South Wales*, 1911, p. 39). Bishop O'Connor recalled the “determined fight” of Cardinal Moran’s predecessor, Archbishop Vaughan, and the Bishops of NSW at the time of the introduction of the current Educational system in 1880 – “a fight that has continued to this moment”. Without leaving any doubt of his support of the current opposition of the Catholic Church with respect to the State system of education the Bishop noted:

In remote country districts, where they could not possibly erect schools, and where groups of Catholic children were obliged to attend State schools, the most convenient place to assemble them for religious instruction would be at those schools, in a neighbouring church, house or elsewhere. (Catholic Educational Conference of New South Wales, 1911, p. 40)

Bishop O'Connor used an example from the parish of Moruya, a rural parish on the south coast of New South Wales, in the Archdiocese of Sydney. In this parish there were sixty-five State schools scattered within its boundaries. The difficulty for the priest was evident in providing instruction for Catholic children in these schools while continuing his other duties. Bishop O'Connor appealed for something to be “done for those poor children who were so isolated”. Cardinal Moran (1911) responded, in agreeing with Bishop O'Connor, noted that:

the rule in the Archdiocese was that in places where there was no Catholic school, and the children were compelled to attend a State school, the priest could go to the school and assemble them for the preparation of the sacraments or instruction, but to teach within the school building was strictly prohibited . . . he [the Cardinal] fully approved of teaching elsewhere . . . bring the children to a neighbouring church or house, or elsewhere. He did not think they should enter the school except in case of the extremist necessity. (p. 40)

The Cardinal's position was clear:

The prohibition was to continue to show the hostility of their clergy and people to the entire system of State education . . . they must make it plain there was no peace with the system as far as Catholics were concerned. (1911, p. 40)

With the election of Labour governments, State and Federal, in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Catholic Church continued the education debate with renewed enthusiasm. Parish records indicated a growth in both the Catholic school enrolment and those attending public schools.

In 1916 the State Government Statistician reported that of 84,062 Catholic children enrolled in schools in the year 1914, 33,628 (40%) were in public schools and 50,434 (60%) in Catholic schools (Kildea, 2000, p. 7).

In Australia, the pastoral response, that is the essence of *Acerbo Nimis*, was not to come from 'above', that is, from the Church hierarchy, but rather from 'below'. Local communities responded to the need to include the Catholic children not attending Catholic schools, significantly Catholic children in State schools, in the comprehensive vision of catechetical instruction outlined in *Acerbo Nimis*.

An example of such a response from 'below' can be found in the letter written by Father Peter Klein (1917, June 15) St Mark's, Drummoyne (a city parish in the Archdiocese of Sydney) to Archbishop Kelly (Archbishop of Sydney 1914 -1940):

The methods which I have followed for the past 15 years in favour of catholic Public School children are to 1. Make their parents good catholics [*sic*] and get them to send their children to a catholic school. 2. Teach the children themselves before their first communion and Confirmation, when the Public School teachers allow them to come over to me during schools hours; I find also that I have to teach them apart from the catholic school children 3. Different expedients during the year after their Public school hours. In this I have had very little success. . . . The Public School is a system; we have to fight it with a system. Sporadic expedients here and there lead up to little. (1917, June 15)

Father Klein requested, from the Archbishop, the names of "one or two other priests" with whom he could share personal experiences of working with the Catholic children in Public schools. No response from the Archbishop could be found in the archival records.

## **4.5 The Spirit of *Acerbo Nimis***

Through the encyclical *Acerbo Nimis*, Pius X (1905) had laid the foundation for catechetical renewal in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Mongoven, 2000). Growing from a revival of religious education in the parish through the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, this renewal had much broader social, educational and ecclesial ramifications. It influenced methodology and content in religious education and catechesis, lead to reformulated goals, and acknowledged the need to focus on adult catechesis. Cultural situations were recognised as sources of catechesis.

The seeds of the change lay in the spirit of *Acerbo Nimis*. In reading the signs of the times Pius X distilled the essential requirements and responsibilities of catechetical education in such a way as to be relevant members of the local Catholic communities.

In 1917 the Code of Canon Law was promulgated. It required that the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine be established in every Parish. It would be another two decades before the Catholic hierarchy of Australia were to make any official response.

The motivation for this response was to come through forces from ‘above’ and ‘below’.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RECOGNITION OF THE CALL FOR CATECHETICAL RENEWAL:**

#### **1920 – 1955**

In this chapter, the background to the growing recognition of the need for the provision of religious education for the significant number of Catholic children not in Catholic schools is described and discussed.

#### **5.1 Establishment of a Catechetical Office in Rome: 1923**

In 1923 Pope Pius XI was concerned that the catechetical provisions of the 1917 Code of Canon Law had not been appropriately adopted. He issued, in the *Motu proprio*, *Orbem Catholicum* (June 23, 1923), a direction to establish a catechetical office, as part of the Sacred Congregation of the Council in Rome, with the special work of guiding and promoting the catechetical movement everywhere throughout the Catholic Church.

In June 1924 this office sent a letter to all ordinaries (Bishops). This letter was published in the *Australasian Catholic Record* in 1925 (Sacred Congregation of the Council, p. 10-11). In order to operate effectively within its charter to promote and regulate a universal movement for religious instruction in the Church (Sacred Congregation of the Council, 1925, p. 10), the catechetical office requested information in response to a series of questions related to the condition of religious instruction in each nation and the systems employed locally. The twenty questions were divided into three sections: religious instruction in parishes, religious instruction in colleges, and, religious instruction in public schools. No record of the responses to this request could be located. The publication of the request in the *Australasian Catholic Record* – a journal which, at the time, was specifically directed for clergy readership – would have had the effect of raising the awareness to the expectations of Rome in the area of religious instruction.



## **5.2 A Conditional Recognition in the Australian Church**

In October 1918, the first Conference of the Archbishops of Australasia was convened in Melbourne. Present at the meeting were the Archbishops of Sydney, Melbourne, Wellington (New Zealand), Hobart, Adelaide and Brisbane and the Apostolic Delegate (The Archbishop of Perth was unable to attend because of a rail strike). It was during this meeting that the role of Priest in catechetical instruction was discussed.

The Archbishops reinforced the Roman instructions from previous papal encyclicals and the recently published Code of Canon Law (1917) concerning the requirement of the Priest to teach the Catechism on Sundays, if not, he should do so on week days. The centrality of “the story of the Life of Our Lord” in catechetical instruction was emphasised (Archbishops of Australasia, 1988, p. 182). The importance of the provision of instruction for the teachers themselves was emphasised in the context of a discussion focused on the insufficient care by parents and teacher for the education in religion of children and young people. On the question of the withholding of absolution for parents who send their children to State or non-Catholic schools in towns or district where Catholic schools are available the Archbishops stated:

That is, properly speaking, not a reservation of sin, but is used as a statutory admonition to parents thus acting against the wishes of the Church and the spiritual welfare of their children. The child should not be denied Absolution. (Archbishops of Australasia, 1988, p. 189)

The reality was that regardless of the repeated exhortations from the hierarchy and some clergy during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not all Catholics sent their children to Catholic schools, in fact, there were increasing numbers departing from ‘the rules’. Appeals were made ranging from those directed to a parental sense of justice in 1922 - “It is up to every Catholic mother . . . to see her child gets a sound Catholic education. It is certainly not giving them a fair deal” (Turner, 1992a) to total condemnation in 1936:

We must therefore conclude that Catholic parents who, without episcopal sanction, send a child to a non-Catholic school when a Catholic school is available are guilty of a mortal sin. They are incapable of receiving the sacraments while the child continues at any of these schools (Foley, 1936, p. 86).

These statements provide indirect evidence to the reality that Catholics were sending their children to State schools.

In 1934 the Australian Bishops lifted their prohibition on lay Catholic catechists entering State schools. The clergy were still prohibited from teaching in State schools and the ban on Catholic parents sending their children to these schools remained in place, as did the ecclesial prohibitions (Farland, 1997, p. 31).

In late 1935, in New South Wales, the Consultors in the metropolitan Archdiocese of Sydney, asked Fr Collender, of the '*Vigilance Committee*' to "deal with the question of how, consistently with Catholic principles and legislation, our children who attend the Public Schools may best receive instruction in their holy religion" (Sheehan, 1936a). Archbishop Sheehan reported that the Vigilance committee had prepared a report to be presented to the synod.

### **5.3 Roman Directions for Local Catechetical Activity: 1935**

In January 1935, the Catechetical Office of the Holy See, under Pope Pius XI, issued a decree on Catechetical Instruction in the Catholic Church, *Provido sane consilio* (On Better Care and Promotion Catechetical Teaching). The changing political, social and economic scene in the world had created a level of urgency in the Universal and local Church for catechetical education for all the faithful that was based on sound doctrine and delivered by competent educators. The document reflected the call of Pope Pius X in *Acerbo Nimis* (1905) for the establishing of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in every parish:

There exists in our time a splendid proof of this diligence in the Encyclical Letter *Acerbo Nimis* of Pope Pius X . . . . In this encyclical the ever-vigilant Pontiff first set forth the advantages that flow properly and solely from catechetical instruction . . . he thereupon enacted legislation to provide for the teaching of Christian Doctrine not only to boys and girls but also to youths and to adults as well. (Holy See, 1935, n.7)

*Provido sane consilio* invoked the regulations related to the obligations for the provision of catechetical education found in the 1917 Code of Canon Law (Book III, tit. XX, chap. I, Canons 1329 -1336) - "Here the provisions relating to catechetical instruction, made obligatory throughout the universal Church, are duly stated and proposed as law" (Holy See, 1935, n.8).

The document acknowledges the efforts of the local Church in improving “the teaching of the catechism” (Holy See, 1935, n.10). The most significant obstacle to successful teaching of Christian Doctrine is cited as the carelessness of parents:

Many of whom are ignorant of the things of God and who accordingly do little or nothing for the religious education of their children. This is indeed a serious situation; for when parents are either neglectful or deliberately opposed, there is practically no hope that the children will receive a religious training. (Holy See, 1935, n.11)

The subordination of the role of the Church in the direction of the education of its faithful through political policies of some countries further challenges parents who are:

Overcome by indifference or their own fickleness of mind or weakened by the pressure of circumstances, offer neither opposition to the unjust laws nor do they give attention or care to the catechetical instruction of their children. (Holy See, 1935, n.12)

Mixed marriages, the lack of interest on the part of the learners, being distracted by things of the secular world, and poorly prepared teachers are also cited as impediments to the effectiveness of the instruction.

The role of the Bishop was affirmed and they were encouraged in their efforts and labour to spread catechetical instruction and their authority to legislate in their local dioceses “in all matters that pertain to the instruction of the people in Christian Doctrine” (Holy See, 1935, n.18).

The nature and scope of catechetical instruction was further emphasised:

Pastors and others having the care of souls should ever bear in mind that catechetical instruction is the foundation of the whole Christian life, and to its proper performance all their plans, studies and effort should be directed . . . thus in this work they are to become all things to all men that they may gain all men to Christ, and be able to show themselves as faithful ministers and dispensers of the mysteries of God. Let them carefully determine the souls who need to be nourished with milk, and those who have a need for more solid food. (Holy See, 1935, n.19)

The role of the lay person in assisting the pastor was reinforced. The establishment in each parish of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine to accommodate this lay participation was encouraged in accord with Canon 1333:1 (Code of Canon Law, 1917) and the original exhortation of Pius X in *Acerbo Nimis* (1905).

The direction from the Sacred Congregation, approved by Pius XI, included the reinforcement of Canon 711:2 (1917) related to the establishment of the Confraternity of

Christian Doctrine to include all “capable of teaching and promoting catechetical instruction, especially teachers in the schools and all who are skilled in the science of teaching children” (Holy See, 1935, n.25). The document called for the establishment of parochial classes of Christian Doctrine supervised by the pastor and employing approved methods of teaching. Secondly, to address the ‘indifference of parents’ to this parish-based instruction; Pastors were encouraged to ensure children have sufficient knowledge of the catechism before being admitted for the reception of the sacraments of Penance and Confirmation. They were to advise parents of their obligation to provide their children with catechetical instruction (Canon 1335, Code of Canon Law, 1917). The classes were to be made sufficiently interesting as to make children eager to attend them. Regular examination of the classes by the Bishop was to be encouraged. The third exhortation related to the importance of ongoing religious instruction for adults through the “explanation of the catechism on Sundays and holy days among the faithful in words suited to their capacity to understand” (Canon 1332, CCL, 1917).

The Catechetical Office provided some guidelines for the Bishops “to be well adapted to the end desired” (Holy See, 1935, n.32). These included the establishment of a diocesan catechetical office to direct catechetical education in the diocese. The chief functions of this office were outlined. These were:

- a. In parishes, in schools, and in colleges, Christian doctrine be taught by qualified teachers employing the traditional form of the Church;
- b. At stated times catechetical conventions and other meetings in the interests of religious education shall be held for the purpose of discussion and study of the methods best suited for catechetical instruction;
- c. A special Course of Lectures on Religion be offered each year to those who teach Christian doctrine in parochial and public schools, in order to increase the quality and depth of their knowledge. (Holy See, 1935, n.34-36)

Bishops were also encouraged to establish a Catechetical Day in each parish to direct the mind of the Christian people to the importance of religious education in the life of the Church. Faced with the possibility of the scarcity of priest for this task, the Bishops were called upon to engage “capable catechists” a source of which could be the growing number of “Catholic Action” groups at work in the local Church.

In the USA the decree from the Holy See assisted Bishop Edwin O’Hara in the establishment of a national office for the CCD. From this point the CCD movement in

the United States became a highly organised and public work of the Church (Collins, 1983c, pp. 185-186).

The impact on the Church in Australia was less public but nonetheless resulted in subtle but significant changes in attitudes and action by the mid 1930s.

## **5.4 Broadening the Catholic Education Agenda: Australian Catholic Education Congress, Adelaide: 1936**

The first Australian Catholic Education Congress was held in Adelaide between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of November 1936. The Congress was both educational and Eucharistic. The program for the conference, whilst focussing predominantly on a variety of aspects of Catholic Education in the Catholic Church in Australia also included the formal inauguration of the Catholic Women's League.

At the time of the first *Australian Catholic Education Congress*, held in Adelaide in November 1936, the number of Catholic children of school age in Australia was 334,054 – 220,309 (just under two-thirds) were in Catholic schools. At that Congress the need to respond to the growing numbers of Catholic school age children in State schools was clearly stated (O'Connor, 1936). The inclusions of four sessions specifically related to the provision of religious instruction to Catholic children not attending Catholic schools was a public statement of the concern that existed within Catholic Education circles and the Catholic Church for these children and their families. A further session addressing the need for Catholic Adult education focused on another often overlooked aspect of Catholic education.

### **5.4.1 Competing Needs: The 'Education Question'**

The Catholic Church leaders clearly demanded the State Governments provide financial support to Catholic education by funding Catholic schools (State-aid). The injustice to the taxpaying Catholic, who chose to send their children to Catholic schools, thus paying 'twice' for education, was at the heart of political and social agenda of the Catholic hierarchy. Condemnation of the Catholic parents in their choice to send their child to a school other than a Catholic school became the second most significant public statement made by Church leaders.

Archbishop Sheehan, at the Australian Catholic Education Congress held in Adelaide, Australia, in November 1936, stated the position of the Catholic hierarchy of Australia on the 'Education question' in the mid-1930s:

In our address to you today on the subject of Education, we shall speak briefly of the Church, the State and the family; the limits of the State's power, and the State's injustice to the catholic parents of Australia. Though we demand redress of a grievance, we do so in the spirit of kindness, and with a desire to serve the true interests of the civil government in every part of the commonwealth. (Sheehan, 1936b, p. 50)

Most Reverend Archbishop Sheehan, Coadjutor-Archbishop of Sydney, gave the opening address for the Congress on behalf of the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church in Australia. The issue at the essence of the Education debate since the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the role of the Catholic Church in Australia and its responsibilities and rights in the education of the Catholic people, was restated clearly and emphatically:

God has provided for our principle need by means of three societies – the Church the State and the Family. He has given us His Church so that under her spiritual government and direction we may learn to know, love and obey Him . . . He has invested the State with authority in temporal affairs . . . [He has] instituted the Family . . . [to] bring forth children and train them as worthy members of the Church and State . . . The Church and the State are perfect societies, since each possesses all means necessary for the attainment of its end; each is autonomous; each is supreme in its own domain . . . The Family is the nursery of the Church and the State. It is not a perfect society; . . . it is entirely dependent on the Church for its spiritual life; it is entirely dependent on the State for all the great advantages and opportunities that can be found only in civilised community. (Sheehan, 1936b, p. 50)

Archbishop Sheehan outlined the way in which the power of the State should be used and how it has been misused in the local context related to marriage and education.

Connecting the two in the 'State's failure to respect the natural rights of parents':

The State is the guardian of education, as it is the guardian of marriage. It is its duty to provide all parents with equal facilities for the education of their children. All over Australia, the State has established its own schools. The majority of Australian parents accept them as satisfactory; but a minority, and a very large minority, consisting chiefly of Catholic parents, strongly object to them and refuse to avail themselves of them. The duty of the State to the minority is clear. The State is bound by natural law to give proportionately the same financial assistance to the minority as it gives to the majority. But the State, to the disgrace of all Australians who have supported it in its policy of injustice, has failed in its duty. (Sheehan, 1936b, p.53)

At the heart of the 'education question' for the Catholic Church were the injustices related to the loss of funding for Catholic schools in the 1880s. This was still and would

remain so for another thirty years the central political platform argued by the Church hierarchy. Archbishop Sheehan reinforced this position strongly in his address:

Catholics are bound by State law to see that their children are educated; Catholics are bound by State law to pay their taxes, part of which goes to the State schools and no others. Catholics, therefore, are bound by State law either to accept a type of education of which they strongly disapprove, or to forgo all educational benefits from the taxes which they have paid and establish a school-system of their own. They have chosen the latter alternative, and we thank God for it. But they should never have been asked to choose. They should never have been compelled to contribute towards the education of other people's children and pay in full the education of their own. The State has done them a grievous wrong, a wrong all the greater because our people are not the most affluent section of the population, and are feeling more than others the pressure of these difficult times. The State's treatment of them deserves to be stigmatised in terms which we prefer to avoid . . . In setting up a school-system the State acts merely as a delegate of those parents who approve of the system; if, therefore, it acts justly, it will give objecting parents equivalent financial support for the system they prefer. The State has no right to invade the discretion of parents; it is not their master or dictator; The title "State School" or "Public School", at present used, is a misnomer; What are called "State Schools" or "Public Schools" should be called undenominational or secular or neutral, or any one of a dozen other names, according to the nature of the education they give. They have no right to a name which suggests an exclusive claim to State favour and assistance. The entire generation of future citizens is equally entitled to the patronage of the State; no section should be treated as pariahs. (Sheehan, 1936b, pp. 53-54)

On the rights of Catholic parents:

The Catholic parents of Australia are not Catholics under compulsion, but as free men and women. As Catholics, they freely and loyally accept the teachings of the Church and obey her laws . . . she [the Church] tells them that the school which they select is to be a place, not merely of intellectual, but of moral and spiritual development, and that its entire work must be animated by the spirit of the Saviour. (Sheehan, 1936b, p.54)

On the Laws of the Church on education as found in the Code of Canon Law (1917):

Catholic children are to be educated in schools where not only nothing contrary to faith and moral is taught, but where religion and moral training occupy first place. Parents and all those who take their place have the right, as well as a most serious obligation, to provide for the Christian Education of their children. Canon 1372

Catholic children shall not attend neutral, non-Catholic, or mixed schools – that is to say, any school open to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. The Bishop of the diocese alone has the right to decide, in accordance with the instructions of the Holy See, under what circumstances and with what precautions, it may be tolerated that Catholic children attend such schools. Canon 1374

The Archbishop added:

Observe the terms of the second law: the attendance of Catholic children at Non-catholic Schools may sometimes be "tolerated". This means that it is an evil

which is permissible only to avoid a greater evil; that it remains an evil, no matter what arrangements may be made to protect the children's faith and give them religious instruction; and that, consequently, it must be terminated at the first opportunity. The State's boycott of our schools is, therefore a strain on the Catholic conscience. The State, whether designedly or not, is attempting to undermine the loyalty of our people to their Church; it has added to financial oppression and the violation of parental rights the objectionable tinge of a religious persecution. (Sheehan, 1936b, p. 55)

With these final words, the Archbishop left no uncertainty as to the position of the Australian hierarchy at that time.

#### **5.4.2 The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine as a Model**

The opening lecture of the education sessions entitled *The Papal Encyclical of 1929 on Education* was delivered by the Very Reverend Alphonsus Foley, CP, on the Papal Encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri* (Pius XI, 1929) and the obligations of parents in the matter of Christian Education (Foley, 1936).

Foley (1936) confirmed the position of the Australian Catholic hierarchy that had been in place for over fifty five years. Catholic parents were duty bound to send their children to a Catholic school if one was available and if they ignored this obligation they would be guilty of grievous sin and denied reception of the Sacraments (p. 86). He acknowledged that there may be circumstances where Catholic parents are obliged to send their children to non-Catholic schools. In these cases the Bishop approved, and in many cases realised a responsibility, to assist these parents in fulfilling their obligations. This was a reality for the Bishops of Australia, recognised in their plenary meeting of 1895. Catholic families who lived in isolated rural towns where there was no Catholic school or even more remote locations where no school existed in any form were in need of assistance to fulfil their religious and moral duty as educators in faith for their children. This was a significant challenge for the Church in Australia.

To minimise the grave dangers that beset the child obliged to attend a non-Catholic school, the parents must make the religious instruction a matter of daily care . . . they are obliged to prepare themselves to instruct the child, to procure the necessary books and reading matter for themselves and the child, to take advantage of every means in their power of giving religious and moral instruction, if they are to satisfy the duties implied by their title of Christian parents.(Foley, 1936, p. 86)

Foley (1936) also acknowledged that "through lack of opportunity or through unworthy parents" a number of Catholic children were attending non-Catholic schools despite the



existence of a parochial school in their local area. The establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine by the local Ordinary in every parish, as required in Canon Law (1917), was identified as another method of helping parents fulfil their duties in the faith education of their children. Foley drew attention to Rev Raymond Prindiville's (1932) definition:

The Confraternity is a parish society of zealous men and women who enjoy the necessary qualifications of knowledge, virtue, and strength, and whose principle work is to instruct those catholic children who do not attend the parish school (Foley, 1936, p. 88).

The details of the organisational structure and the specific nature of the work of the Confraternity were left to the local Church to suit the conditions peculiar to every diocese. This flexibility, Foley noted, "renders it easy of adaptation in Australia". A possible model was suggested:

With members trained in catechetics, this Confraternity, under the direction of the parish priest or the Bishop, could instruct children and adults in those parishes which have no Catholic schools. It could function in those parts of a parish remote from the church or from a Catholic school. Even in parishes well supplied with Catholic schools its members could labour to bring the children of careless parents to Catholic schools, and could keep in touch with Catholic children who have left school. (Foley, 1936, p. 88)

Foley (1936) cited the success of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in many dioceses of the United States, where its highly organised structure followed two possible models: parish-based (Los Angeles) and diocesan led (Pittsburgh), as a positive indication of the possibilities for addressing the need for religious instruction of the Catholic children not attending Catholic schools in Australia. For the first time the religious instruction of these children was publicly named as a part of the broader work of Catholic Education and the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine proposed as the organisation responsible for this work.

#### **5.4.3 Reaching Rural Families – Correspondence Courses**

In three of the Education sessions at the Congress, programs of religion lessons by correspondence to meet the needs of isolated rural families were described. These sessions were: *Religious Instruction of country children where there are no schools* (Rev John T MacMahon); *the national correspondence course - A course of Religious Instruction for children beyond the reach of Catholic schools* (Rev J Hannan); and, *Religious Instruction by correspondence: Archbishop Sheehan's letters* (Mother Angela

OP - Maitland, Country NSW). These three sessions outlined the work that was being done in the provision of religious instruction to the Catholic children in isolated rural areas across Australia who had no access to Catholic schools. A detailed account of this rural response is provided in the following chapter (Chapter 6).

#### **5.4.4 Religious Instruction in State Schools**

A significant paper to support Foley's (1936) contribution was given at the Congress by Rev T. J. O'Connor. In this session, Rev T. J. O'Connor (1936), Diocesan Inspector of Schools, Archdiocese of Sydney, argued for the Catholic Church to provide religious education for Catholic children not attending Catholic schools in cities and towns.

In the concluding paper of the education sessions entitled *Religious Instruction in State schools in cities and towns where there are Catholic schools*, O'Connor (1936) noted that more than one third of the Catholic children in Australia attended state schools and 63% of these children lived in city and town areas where Catholic schooling was available. He argued for the provision of religious instruction for these children because "the grave danger facing these children lies in the fact that their purely secular education will give them an irreligious outlook on life" (p. 359). Failure to do so would leave them prey to movements such as Communism and materialism prevalent in the society of the day. The Catholic Church could not afford to abandon these children regardless of the choices of their parents.

The statistical snapshot given by O'Connor (1936) provided an indication of the growing need to provide religious instruction for these "forgotten Catholic children":

Combining all States in Australia the population of Catholic children is 333,054. Of these there are 220,309 Catholic children in Catholic schools; there are 113,745 Catholic children in State schools. There is more than one-third of Australia's Catholic children being educated in State schools, of these 71,649 are in the State schools of cities and towns . . . in New South Wales there are 489,031 Catholics. In Catholic schools there are 82,521 Catholic children . . . there are 41,124 catholic children in State schools; and of these 25,000 are in the State schools of cities and large town areas. There are 7000 more Catholic children in the State schools of the city and town areas of New South Wales than there are pupils being educated by the Christian Brothers throughout Australia and New Zealand. (p. 360)

O'Connor's (1936) description of the response in the Archdiocese of Sydney and other regional cities and towns in NSW is explored in Chapter 7.

## 5.5 Shifting Attitudes and Positions

The Fourth Plenary Council of the Bishops of Australia and New Zealand was held in December 1937. The attitude of the Bishops on the question of Catholic children attending non-Catholic schools was reinforced in decrees 625 - 629 concerning Religious and Catholic Schools:

625. In keeping with Canon 1374, Catholic children must not frequent non-Catholic, neutral or mixed schools – such, namely, as are open to non-Catholics. It belongs to the local Ordinary alone to decide in what circumstances and with what cautions against the danger of perversion attendance at these schools may be tolerated.

626. If, with the ordinary's permission, Catholic children frequent a public school, the parish priest should take special measures to care for their Catholic instruction, visiting the school personally, or through others, once a week or oftener, and providing teaching for the Catechism to them, on Sunday, in the Church.

627. If, notwithstanding the prohibition of the Council, parents send their children to a public school, the parish priest should, according to the rule prescribed by the ordinary, help them the best way he can.

628. Parents who, without grave cause and without necessary cautions against the danger of perversion, allow their children to frequent non-Catholic schools, sin mortally, and a confessor must, in case of stubborn refusal, deny absolution to the one who thus shows himself to be disposed.

629. In the external forum, judgement regarding gravity of cause and sufficiency of cautions is reserved to the Ordinary. (1937, pp. 13 - 14)

In interpreting these decrees in the light of the previous decrees and directions, indicating the position of the Catholic hierarchy on the matter of Catholic children not attending Catholic schools, a shift can be detected from the previous hardline attitudes. In the text of decrees n.625, n.626 and n.627 there is evidence of the growing acceptance of the reality that Catholic children were attending public schools and the realisation of the obligations that the Church had in their faith education.

The harder line taken by the metropolitan Archdiocese of Sydney and the authority of the parish priest in these matters can be found in the Statutes of the Diocesan Synod of Sydney held in December 1942. The statement reinforced the Canon 1374 in the Code of Canon Law (1917) and Decree 625 from the Fourth Plenary Council but gave more power the local parish priest in these matters:

b. The Parish Priest of the parent or guardian is deputed (*sic*) by the ordinary to judge the gravity of the reason and the sufficiency of the precautions taken in particular cases. He may not delegate this faculty to another, for example, his assistant priest. (Archdiocese of Sydney, 1942)

The prohibitions of Decree 628 were emphasised in the Statutes but the more moderate decrees from the Plenary Council (626 and 627) requiring recognition of the need to care for the faith education of Catholic children not attending Catholic schools was not included. Once again omission can be interpreted as a result of the hardline attitude maintained by the metropolitan hierarchy and promoted amongst the clergy.

The 1942 Synod Statutes related to attendance at State Schools were repeated in those produced as a result of the Diocesan Synod of Sydney held in December 1951.

Whilst the prohibitions were still in place from the century before, the attitude of the Bishops was clearly changing. The Archbishop in his handwritten comments on St Peters (Surry Hills – inner Sydney) Parish Report noted that “the Catholic Children attending Public Schools (150 in total) are to be looked after carefully and effectively” (1938).

## **5.6 Establishing the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in NSW**

In 1938 Archbishop Kelly, the local ordinary to the parishes of the Archdiocese of Sydney issued certificates acknowledging the establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in each parish in accordance with Canon 711.2. The first such certificate was issued to the Cathedral Parish of St Mary’s on April 30 1938. By May 8 1938 one hundred and forty-three certificates had been issued to parishes in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

This action by the Archbishop may have prompted the following correspondence to the journal the *Australasian Catholic Record* by “Lux” (a pseudonym). The journal at that time was published for the clergy only. The question and the response by Rev W. O’Flynn give an indication of the understanding and attitude that existed within the ranks of the Australian clergy. *Lux* (1938) asked the question – “Dear Rev. Sir, Is it not true that long before today the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was ordered to be established in every parish, and, if so, how is it that this has had so little effect?” (1938, p. 372). Rev. W. O’Flynn responded to this question by quoting the special precepts of Pope Pius X from the encyclical *Acerbo Nimis* (1905) as related by Cardinal Moran in his Circular to the Clergy of the Diocese of Sydney (Moran, 1905).

O’Flynn (1938) gave his interpretation of the intervening thirty year period:

The Holy Father, looking out upon the world, saw devastation all around in the matter of education. France had banished her religion teachers, everywhere godless governments were striving to drive god from schools. But in England, Ireland, Scotland and Australia our Bishops had retained a firm hold on the education of Catholic children, with the happy result that our system included, and goes far beyond anything contemplated in the Encyclical *Acerbo Nimis*. (pp. 373-374)

O'Flynn (1938) uses the example of the establishment of "free day-schools, for both religious and secular education" in Rome during the Counter Reformation to address the "utterly inadequate" instruction given by the Confraternity on Sundays and feast days. He draws a favourable comparison of these free day-schools with the religious education provided in the existing Catholic school system in Australia – "[they are] doing the work of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in a way the Confraternity could never hope to attain" (1938, p. 374). The value of instruction given by "qualified teachers, and not by devout lay people, whose occupation in life is something other than teaching" indicated an underlying prejudice towards the parish-based provision of religious instruction and the involvement of the laity in such an activity (p. 374). This was a common theme in the response of the hierarchy to this work. By omission, O'Flynn (1938) gave no acknowledgement of the existence of a significant number of Catholic children who are not receiving the benefits of Catholic religious education because of the energy and focus of the Australian Bishops and priests on the establishment and maintenance of Catholic schools as a symbol of Australian Catholicism. This perhaps is the group to which a growing number of clergy, like *Lux*, were beginning to ask questions related to the narrow interpretation of Pope Pius X's encyclical and the subsequent directives from Rome by the leadership of the Catholic Church in Australia.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

During the 1920s and 1930s the position of the Catholic hierarchy on the question of Catholic children not attending Catholic schools had shifted. There was a more clear focus on the spiritual welfare of the child, while the condemnation of the parents assumed greater importance. A broader understanding and acceptance developed of the requirement of the Priest to provide catechetical instruction on Sunday and even during the week. The role of the laity had become a significant feature in this recognition and the response.

These changes had been influenced, in part, by the strong and consistent focus from Rome in reinforcing the call for catechetical renewal contained in *Acerbo Nimis* (1905). Another significant influence in the change of attitude during the 1920s and 1930s was the response to the clearly perceived need to provide religious education for Catholic children who were not attending Catholic schools by clergy, religious and laity. Chapter 6 explores the rural response and Chapter 7 the response in metropolitan Sydney and the larger town in New South Wales.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **RESPONSE TO THE RURAL NEED:**

#### **1917 – 1955**

### **6.1 Religious Instruction for Catholic Children in Isolated Rural Areas**

In a pastoral letter of 1896, the Archbishops and Bishops of Australia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenary Council, encouraged clergy in remote and thinly populated areas that could not support a Catholic school to provide catechists to teach the Catholic children:

In these cases it will be incumbent on the clergy to arrange with parents and others who are competent to impart religious instruction, to gather the children together on Sundays or other convenient times, and set them their tasks and explain the Catechism to them . . . the priest should in every case make frequent visits to those Christian Doctrine classes. (1896, p. 21)

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century one significant group of Catholic children who were not receiving religious education were those living in the remote rural locations with no access to any schools. In some areas country families were to take on the catechist's role (Turner, 1992a). In the 1920s an initiative came from Western Australia that was to influence all States and Territories in Australia. This chapter will examine what was done to meet the specific need of these children and their families.

### **6.2 Religion by Correspondence: a *Home Mission***

Rev J.T. McMahon was born in Ennis, Ireland in 1893 and ordained a priest in All Hallows College, Dublin, in 1919. He arrived in Perth, Western Australia, in 1921. In 1922, Archbishop Clune appointed McMahon Diocesan Inspector of Catholic Schools in Western Australia. Working in this role McMahon discovered that many Catholic children lived in isolated country regions with no access to a school of any form – Catholic or State. These children were by this time experiencing the positive results from the practical response of the State Education Department of Western Australia in 1918 to

provide secular instruction through correspondence lessons (Bourke, 1978). Their parents requested from their Church a similar program for Religious Instruction.

McMahon (1928) recalled how he first became aware of the need of isolated families in rural Western Australia:

My duty as Diocesan Inspector of Schools in the Archdiocese of Perth brought me to a small town in the wheat belt during the month of October 1922. Walking along the street on the afternoon, I met a man whom I had known in Perth. . . . He had taken a block in this new wheat area, about sixty miles inland from the small township. . . . There was no school for his family, as they were the only children within miles. Knowing my purpose in the little town he asked: "Do you intend doing anything for the children in the Bush? Can it be nothing to you that the children of our country are growing up a godless race? Are the years of youth to pass by without any religious foundation being laid?" (p. 6)

One month later, following a visit to the Group Settlements in the southwest of Western Australia, McMahon (1928) described the conditions of families in these settlements set aside for newcomers to the State:

The newcomer is supplied with a cheerless and comfortless shack . . . made of Hessian, supported by wooden posts . . . roofed with galvanized iron . . . a home for a mother and fourteen children, the youngest of which was born that month. The mother had been educated at an English convent . . . there, in the Bush, a mother was faced with the upbringing of that large family. (p. 7)

Mass among the new settlers was at rare intervals and could not reach the most isolated. The Catholics were spread across the Group Settlements over vast distance with no transport available.

McMahon's travels across the vast state of Western Australia as Diocesan Inspector of Schools led to a heightened awareness of the harshness of the country, the isolation endured by the Catholic families who lived there and the physical challenges these conditions presented for the parents of the many Catholic children living in such circumstances. McMahon resolved to respond the needs of this 'home mission'.

Describing his 'conversion' to the cause of the "Bushies" following these experiences McMahon (1928) wrote:

I thought of the enthusiasm for China and the Far East, and the laudable missionary spirit that is alive in our midst. Yet, I could not refrain from the thought that we have a "Near West" at home, calling for our help. (p. 7)

In February 1923, one hundred and sixty teachers from Catholic schools gathered for their Annual Teachers' Conference in Perth. McMahon appealed for volunteers to assist in



responding to the need of the “Bushies”, in particular three Religious Sisters to commence the work of setting up a correspondence school to provide lessons in Christian Doctrine for isolated Catholic children. Three Religious Sisters responded: Mother Augustine (Loreto Convent, Swanbourne); Sister Mary Liguori (Convent of Mercy, Victoria Square, Perth) and Sister Mary Ignatius (St Brigid’s Convent, West Perth).

Thus the organisation of the ‘Catholic Bush Mission’, better known as “The Bushies’ Scheme”, was established in the Archdiocese of Perth in 1923.

The founding group of four set about planning the promotion and implementation of a program aimed at teaching “religion doctrine by correspondence programs” for Catholic children unable to attend Catholic schools due to the vast distances between the outback communities of the state. This became known as “The Perth Plan” (McMahon, 1928). A description of the scheme was given in the Diocesan Journal, made known to country pastors, boarding schools and through the Society of St Vincent de Paul. As McMahon travelled to the remote outback areas of Western Australia in his role as Diocesan Inspector, he took every opportunity to make the scheme known explaining the plan to the people of the bush.

From the initial planning a practical and successful scheme was developed by Rev J. T. McMahon for the teaching of religious doctrine to isolated Catholic children by correspondence lessons. The Scheme became known ‘*Religion-by-Post*’.

McMahon (1928) described the response to the scheme as “immediate and general” (p. 8). Table 6.1 provides a description of the growth of the scheme during the first four years of its operation in Western Australia.

Table 6.1  
*Growth in Religion-by-Post Scheme: February 1923 – December 1926*

Year	Enrolment	Teachers	Districts
1923	270	3	3
1924	400	6	6
1925	769	7	7
1926	1093	10	10

Note: from McMahon, J. T. (1928). The Perth Plan for teaching religion by correspondence. Dublin: Browne & Nolan Limited. p. 8.

Following initial contact by the families expressing interest in the correspondence scheme every effort was made to ensure that all interested were adequately catered for. An *Information Circular* was sent to parents in an attempt to gain a profile of each child to be enrolled in the *Religion-by-Post* Scheme – their age, the standard of schooling achieved, and religious knowledge. In each district where the scheme operated attempts were made to visit the parents in their homes to ascertain the home conditions. This permitted adaptation of the instructional material and pattern to be adapted for the individual child and their learning environment. All material was provided to the child free of charge so that the financial circumstances of the family would not be a barrier to the religious instruction of their children.

The “Bushies” Scheme initially consisted of correspondence classes, which became known as *Religion-by-Post*. The development of two significant initiatives during the first three years of the scheme enhanced the effectiveness of the provision of religious instruction by correspondence. The first initiative, established at the outset of the *Religion-by-Post* Scheme, was the “Adoption Movement”. Through this initiative Western Australian Catholics were invited to adopt a “Bushie”, providing personal support for bush children and their families and funding for the resources and postage cost necessary in the *Religion-by-Post* scheme. The second initiative developed from McMahon’s assessment of the scheme’s progress in 1925. This became known as the Religious Holiday School and its associated Country Boarding School Scholarships.

In July 1924, at the request of Archbishop Sheehan (coadjutor Archdiocese of Sydney) editor of the *Australasian Catholic Record* (1924-1935), an article on the bush mission in Western Australia, written by Rev. J. T. McMahon was published in the journal. In this publication entitled, *Religion-by-Post*, McMahon (1924) made “known to the clergy of Australasia a scheme of teaching Religious Doctrine by means of correspondence” (p. 17) to the Catholic children in the bush in the Archdiocese of Perth. In 1931 another article authored by McMahon, *Solving the Bush Problem in Australia* was published in the *Australasian Catholic Record*. This article outlined in greater details the “four divisions” into which the Bushies’ Scheme was organised in Western Australia (McMahon, 1931) – *Religion-by-Post*; The Adoption Movement; The Summer School Camp and Country Boarding School Scholarships. McMahon described for the clerical and religious readership of the journal at that time, the merits of the scheme, the

similarities to developments in the USA and some proposals for a tentative program of national action. It was not until the mid-1930s that any of the elements of the Scheme were considered for adoption by other dioceses across Australia and New Zealand.

It is pertinent to reflect on the history of the development of the scheme in Western Australia as its adoption in the eastern States of Australia, particularly New South Wales, was greatly influenced by these developments.

### **6.3 The *Bushies' Scheme* in Western Australia**

#### **6.3.1 Religion-by-Post**

In 1924 the *Religion-by-Post* Scheme relied entirely on correspondence material consisting of a personal letter to the child written by a religious sister assigned to them and lesson material for religious instruction.

McMahon (1924) described the personal communication with the child as the “root principle” (p. 18) of the scheme. The success of the Scheme relied on the informality and personal focus of the “chatty, affectionate, intimate, friendly” note (McMahon, 1928, p. 10) that accompanied the monthly delivery of lesson material to each child through the post:

Each month a letter is written to each child on the rolls. . . It is a child's letter and receives a child's response. A bond of affection is created between Sister and the child through that personal note. Religious Instruction is no longer a task. The effect of this relationship has been marked on the children. (McMahon, 1924, p. 19)

This personal communication between the child and the teacher created a connection between the two allowing the teacher to become a spiritual parent or guardian (McMahon, 1924).

In some cases, particularly where parental support was lacking due to ignorance or lack of interest, it was the companionship experienced by the child from the personal letter that kept the child connected to the program. McMahon (1936b) reflected that this personal communication was important in three ways: the child received a letter addressed to themselves to which they felt duty bound to reply; the reply written by the child indicated to the teacher the progress of the student better than the responses to set questions in the lesson material; and, finally, the parents needed to assist their children in

reading and responding to the correspondence received and by doing so often moved from indifference and ignorance to support of the program and a better understanding of, and commitment to, their own faith.

The cooperation in the home was an essential element to the success of any form of correspondence teaching. The letters, received with great joy and excitement by the child, were taken in to the family home. The personal communication and the instructions were read aloud in the family circle. Prayers were learnt and practiced by the entire family. Children too young to participate in the program waited anxiously for their turn to become involved. The Catholic faith of the entire family was enriched by the pastoral experiences of the *Religion-by-Post* scheme. The *Religion-by-Post* lessons were most successful when the parents were aware of, and acted upon, their responsibility for the religious education of their children.

In a favourable assessment of the results of the first years of the *Religion-by-Post* scheme McMahon (1928) drew from comments received from parents. One parent wrote in appreciation:

The children are very interested in the Catechism lessons. It is a great relief to me to get someone to take up their religious instructions, as it has often worried me to see them growing up here in the Bush, without any knowledge of their Holy Faith. (p. 24)

Another parent described the effect of a special gift arriving by mail:

The children were delighted with the Rosary beads. They wanted to get them straight away. I think they were praying nearly all day yesterday, for I told them they cannot have their beads till they know all their prayers. (p. 24)

It was often the effect of the letters written by the religious sister to their child that drew the parents into the teaching process and ultimately to renew their own faith commitment. This is exemplified in extracts from correspondence received by McMahon (1936a) from families involved in the scheme. One mother reflected:

I can truthfully say, dear Sister, that since you became my friend through the correspondence lessons, I am a new woman. I feel happy to think that I am like the old Catholic I used to be. (p. 79)

A father shared his experience:

Tom is still learning his catechism, we thank you for the literature you sent. I do not mind admitting, Sister, that I have learned ever so much more about the Catholic Faith than I ever knew, just through reading Tom's instructions. So, in teaching Tom, you are teaching me, also. Last Sunday I lay for three hours

reading the Gospel of St. Luke, which you sent Tom, and I will help him to read it also. (p. 79)

The instructional material accompanied an introductory note. During the first years of operation of the *Religion-by-Post* scheme, there were no printed leaflets or uniform lessons. The Sisters working with McMahon wrote their own lessons each being individually tailored to the child and their particular circumstances. Exercises that focused on Prayers, Catechism, Bible History Stories and the Mass book were set monthly.

When on a tour of bush-homes in the early years of the Scheme, McMahon found that the initial assumption on which lesson preparation was based was unfounded. Many parents, whether due to ignorance or as a result of disinterest, had not given their children a basic instruction in their Catholic Faith. Lessons, prepared for the Catholic children in the bush, which were based on the presumption of a certain fundamental level of knowledge of their faith proved ineffective. It became necessary to begin the preparation of the material from the perspective that the children knew nothing about their faith.

McMahon also discovered that the centralized approach adopted in the early years led to inconsistencies in the scheme. The original approach of conducting all correspondence classes from Perth with lessons for individual children written by a Religious Sister assigned to that child led to confusion when local families were able to compare lesson material. The development of *Religious Holiday Schools* from 1926 provided the opportunity for the establishment of a system of religious instruction by correspondence based on parochial centres, which proved to be more successful many enduring into the 1970s.

The correspondence classes catered for four distinct groups – those living in isolated places with no access to school; those living in small country towns and settlements where the Catholic children attended the State school; young people beyond Primary school age who had previously no opportunity to receive religious instruction; and, catechists, to be assisted through instruction, teaching aids and books.

### **6.3.2 The Adoption Movement**

Another aspect of the “Bushies” Scheme which proved “invaluable in winning public appreciation of the scheme and providing material help” was the Adoption Movement

(McMahon, 1924, p. 19). From the outset of the *Religion-by-Post* scheme, appeals were made to Catholic laity in the Archdiocese to adopt a child in the bush. This captured the imagination of the Catholic community of Western Australia and was embraced with great enthusiasm. The *Adoption Movement* was a pastoral initiative that appealed to the Catholic laity's sense of mission. It was founded on the principles of Christian charity as evident in the practical action of the community and the processes of networking and mentoring. It was formative both for the giver, Catholic laity in towns and cities, and those who received, the child in the bush, and their family. The movement became clearly identified as an activity defining the work of the Lay Apostolate. McMahon (1928) reflected "the Adoption movement has opened up an avenue for the exercise of these practical acts of charity which the lay apostolate demands and expects from a Christian people" (p. 40).

The rapid growth of the *Adoption Movement* was characterized by diversification of its applications. McMahon (1928) recorded that by 1928 there were several distinct elements in its organisation. These elements included the adoption of individual "Bushies" and their families by member of the Catholic community living in towns and cities sending them Catholic literature. On the completion of their use in their own home, individuals and families were encouraged to send their Catholic periodicals to their adopted child and/or their family in the bush accompanied by a letter expressing the support and best wishes of the sender. Another application involved a town school adopting a group of "Bushies" living in the same district. This could be the support of individual children or the support of a catechist's work where several children were gathered together in towns where there was no Catholic School. Sodalities adopted a correspondence class district and supplied the Sister in charge with writing materials, postage and books. They also sent the children and their families a plentiful supply of Catholic literature. Catholic Women's Organisations were involved in fundraising to support the Scheme. And finally, through the donations from individuals and parish communities, scholarships could be offered for "Bushies" to attend country boarding schools for Summer School Camps.

The success of the *Adoption Movement* was recognised by the Education Departments of Western Australia and South Australia who developed schemes whereby State Schools in the city adopted less well equipped country schools. McMahon (1931) reported that two

centres for the Correspondence Classes in Western Australia had been adopted internationally; one by a school in Dublin, Ireland and another by a school in the USA.

Although there is no documented evidence, there was little doubt that the *Adoption Movement* would have done much to break down the prejudices that existed in Catholic society related to those Catholic children who did not attend Catholic schools.

### **6.3.3 Religious Holiday Schools**

McMahon, on his regular visits to the bush, met with the children enrolled in the Scheme, talked with their parents and tested the work of the correspondence classes. His greatest concern became the Catholic children in homes where parents were not mindful of their responsibility in the religious formation of their children. In these cases the impact of the correspondence lesson on the children was greatly diminished. He looked for a way to awaken the “indifferent home from its lethargy” (McMahon, 1928, p. 46). There were still districts where McMahon travelled in rural Western Australia that were unaware of the scheme. He realised the need to find other ways of advertising the work. Three years into the operation of the *Religion-by-Post* scheme, McMahon (1928) acknowledged that “we had barely touched the edge of the problem” (p. 46).

McMahon was a visionary Australian Religious Educator. His capacity for reflective and innovative leadership was evident in the responses he proposed to the reality of the problems he saw for the Catholic families in the bush, in particular, their children. Although the *Religion-by-Post* scheme had achieved much good in the three years since it was established in the provision of religious education for the isolated Catholic children in the bush, McMahon realised something more was needed. He put a proposal to the Archbishop for approval to conduct a pilot residential school, a Summer School Camp, in the summer of 1925 -1926.

On the evening of December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1925, 100 boys, aged 8 to 17, from rural areas across the state of Western Australia arrived at the Brighton Hotel, Cottesloe (half way between Fremantle and Perth). The three week Religious School Camp that followed became known as the “Cottesloe Experiment” (McMahon, 1936a, p. 81). The program involved mornings and evening that were devoted to “teaching and practice of religion” (McMahon, 1936b, p. 332) and afternoon for recreational activities such as cricket and swimming:

Fourteen Sisters devoted their holidays to the work of preparing the boys for the Sacraments, each Sister taking a few boys. It was a period of intensive preparation. There was morning Mass in the camp, during which another priest explained the ceremonies . . . Each evening we said the Rosary before the grotto of Lourdes . . . We had a public procession of the Blessed Sacrament . . . an Oblate Father gave the boys a day retreat . . . the Archbishop administered confirmation to the “Bushies” in the Cathedral . . . We brought the boys around Catholic Perth, visiting all the religious institutions, inspecting charities which the church assumes . . . we had Mass on the open at the Lourdes Grotto for First Communion Day . . . The boys learned to sing the Benediction service in a few days. The hymn singing was a delight to all . . . our ‘Bushies’ faced teams from the Christian Brothers’ schools, and our “eleven” was victorious in the three matches. (McMahon, 1928, p. 49)

The transformation in the boys who attended the camp was evident. McMahon (1928) noted the impact on the participants - “Many came to us unable to bless themselves, and they left us confirmed Christians with a foundation upon which future lessons by post could be built” (p. 47); and, the organisers - “The “Bushies” left us apostles, eager to bring not merely to their families but all other to share with them in the blessings of “Religion-by-Post” (p. 50).

Identifying the Summer School Camp as one of the four key features of the “Bushies Scheme” at work in Western Australia, McMahon (1931) reflected on broader pastoral impact of the activity:

The enduring fruit of the Cottesloe School-camp was to awaken in our people a consciousness of their obligation to help the spiritually needy. It had a good effect on the bush parents, some of whom were indifferent about the religious instruction of their children, and the others, who were over-anxious, were greatly relieved to see our scheme in action. (p. 44)

McMahon (1936b) described the impact of the experience on the *Religion-by-Post* scheme during a presentation of a paper at the Australian Catholic Education Congress in Adelaide in 1936:

It was an experiment, the first of its kind in this land. We who lived with the boys during these busy, happy weeks learned much. At Cottesloe the Sisters conducting the correspondence lessons were present as teachers. This personal contact with real live Bushies was invaluable to them. . . . When the boys had left us for their distant homes, we teachers discussed the three weeks experience, and the correspondence lessons, and unanimously agree that teaching by correspondence needs some foundation to build upon. (p. 332)



#### 6.3.4. Country Boarding School Scholarships

McMahon proceeded to restructure the *Religion-by-Post* scheme in 1926 confident in the prediction that the correspondence lessons will work best when they follow the experience of a Religious Holiday School. The changes to the scheme involved the establishment of parochial centres for correspondence classes in religion. The centralized organisation of the scheme from Perth was abandoned.

The new centres for *Religion-by-Post* correspondence lessons were to be in country towns. The establishment of each centre followed a *Religious Holiday School* held in the area. The development of these schools became a focal point of the *Religion-by-Post* scheme. In order to conduct these schools, country convents were converted into boarding schools during school vacation periods. Religious Sisters provided accommodation for the children below cost and voluntarily gave their holiday time to teach the children and prepare them for the Sacraments. McMahon used the financial resources available through Country Boarding Scholarships, developed as part of the *Adoption Movement*, to cover the costs of the Religious Holiday Schools. Thus McMahon was able to ensure that every child had access to the school regardless of their family's financial resources. The schools were coeducational as many parents wished siblings to remain together when away from the family home. Whilst this presented further challenges to the running of the holiday program the Sisters proved extremely resourceful in meeting that challenge.

By 1931 there were nine centres – three in Perth and six in the country (McMahon, 1931). In 1936, McMahon (1936b) described the extent to which the practice had evolved:

Today our policy is to form a centre of the correspondence classes in every country parish, beginning with the enrollment [*sic*] of the first Religious Holiday School there. . . . A parochial unit under a Parish Priest enables him, on his visits to the scattered homes of his district, to check up on the classes, to see whether they are suitable or not, and to speak words of encouragement to parents and children. (p. 341)

The introduction of *Religious Holiday Schools* had maintained and strengthened the key element of the personal communication to the child receiving their religious instruction by correspondence. From the *Religious Holiday School*, held in convents and Boarding Schools in rural areas, the teacher and the pupil had come to know each other, this personal knowledge strengthened the bond between the teacher and their remote student.

The local centres for the correspondence school, usually located in the convent in the town, meant not only could the priest visit the families but also more regular contact with the teacher, a Religious Sister from that convent, was possible.

Whilst in residence at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., in 1927, McMahon became aware of the problems in rural America and the similarity of the issues arising from the isolation of rural Catholic families and the religious education of their children. The response of the Catholic Church in the USA, the organisation of Rural Religious Vacation Schools, had been a similar one to that which he had initiated in Western Australia. These parallel developments had occurred, each without knowledge of the other's work. In 1923, under the leadership of Father Edwin V. O'Hara, later bishop and archbishop, the Catholic Rural Life Bureau introduced Religious Vacation Schools during the summer months of July and August in Midwestern and southern rural areas of the USA. O'Hara's contribution to the religious education of Catholic children not in Catholic schools in the USA is well documented. Collins (1983c) describes the history of the CCD in America as "a chronicle of the life of this priest and bishop for more than forty years" (p. 176). In the years that followed, McMahon drew from his understanding of the developments of the Religious Vacation Schools in the USA to further develop those in operation in Western Australia.

From the American experience, McMahon was inspired by the rapid growth of the Religious Vacation School scheme in many dioceses across America and realised the National potential of the system for the Catholic Church in Australia. In an article published in the *Australasian Catholic Record* in 1931, McMahon (1931) gave a detailed account of the "Bushies" Scheme in Western Australia and the developments in the USA, estimating - based on statistical information from 1921 - that across Australia "one-third of Catholic children were receiving no systematic instruction in their religion" (p. 47). He argued "It is foolishness to wait for a time when we shall have all Catholic children in Catholic schools; What shall we do for this one-third now?" (McMahon, 1931, p. 47) In reply to his rhetorical question McMahon (1931) urged the clergy and religious of the Catholic Church in Australia to think nationally in facing the challenge of providing religious instruction to these children. City and country dioceses should share the responsibility. McMahon (1931) proposed a tentative program based on six points:

1. The formation of a Rural Confraternity of Christian Doctrine . . . in every diocese under a national director. This Confraternity would offer an

opportunity to all interested to help the work. An official organ, published at first quarterly, and later each month, would assist the movement considerably. A national executive could do for the “bush problem” what the Rural Life Conference is doing in the USA.

2. Give the financing of the scheme to whatever organisation of women that already exists in the diocese, and make it an important part of their social programme as it is for the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women in the USA.
3. Organize the teaching supply in each diocese among the Sisters. Offer training opportunities for lay people who are willing to conduct classes in the country. Propose to the presidents of Australian seminaries the American plan for adoption as part of the ordinary studies pursued by seminarians.
4. To hold, as soon as possible, a national conference, to discuss the child in the bush, and to take national action on the matter. The diocesan inspector of schools may act as delegated until a diocesan director is appointed. The country boarding school scholarships as at work in W.A., or the Religious Vacation Schools of the U.S.A., seem to offer the best solution. An adaption may be made that would suit the particular needs of each diocese.
5. Our Catholic papers should assist by giving the “adoption-movement” the same publicity that the English papers give the “Forwarding-Scheme”.
6. Some follow-up is necessary whether the W.A. plan or the American plan is used. Correspondence teaching of religion is useful, and it can easily [*sic*] be organized on the same lines as W.A. (p. 54)

McMahon repeated these suggestions in *The Child in the Bush: Religious Holiday Schools* five years later (McMahon, 1936a, p. 100). By the mid 1930s there were signs that some of McMahon’s suggestions were being taken into consideration. It was not until a general meeting of the hierarchy of Australia on Monday November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1935, in Melbourne, that the Bishops resolved unanimously to give their official blessing and support to all Correspondence schemes. Some of the schemes were already in operation – the Western Australian *Religion-by-Post* for nearly twelve years. In their approval of correspondence schemes for the purpose of providing religious instruction to Catholic children not attending Catholic Schools, the Bishops directed that:

The lessons in such a course should be sound in doctrine and expressed in clear and simple language; they should hold the interest of the child, inspire him with the love of God and move him to lead a truly Catholic life. (McMahon, 1936a, p. 86)

At the Australian Catholic Education Congress, Adelaide, in November 1936, three papers were presented in the Education Sessions on the subject of correspondence lessons for Catholic children in isolated areas. One paper was presented by Rev J. T. McMahon (1936b), outlining the features of the “Bushies Scheme” in Western Australia. The second paper, presented by Rev J. Hannan (1936) described “The National Catholic Correspondence Course”, an initiative from Melbourne, Victoria. The third paper on

correspondence lessons was presented by a Dominican Sister, Maitland (NSW), Mother Mary Angela (1936), on the use of Archbishop Sheehan's Letters as the foundation Religious Instruction by correspondence in New South Wales.

#### **6.4 National Catholic Correspondence Course**

The Catholic Missions Office was opened in Melbourne in 1935 to serve as the National and Diocesan headquarters of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies. It represented a practical outcome from the Mission Section of the National Eucharistic Congress held in that city in December of the previous year. Religious instruction of Catholic children in remote areas of the nation had been identified as a significant 'Home Mission' and was included in the work of the office. Citing the success of correspondence schemes in the Archdiocese of Perth and some other local initiatives in other parts of Australia, Father J Hannan, Director of the Societies and Manager of the Missions Office, outlined the launching of a correspondence course to operate on a larger scale. Such a National approach would provide a cost effective way of delivering "the maximum of uniform and efficient religious education" (Hannan, 1936, p. 345).

This 'national' scheme initially involved the four dioceses of Victoria and the Diocese of Goulburn in NSW. Two Religious Sisters from the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto Sisters) provided support for the correspondence scheme.

In May 1935, statistics related to the possible extent of the scheme and preliminary program of religious instruction were submitted to a meeting of the hierarchy in Melbourne. Approval was given for the development of a National Catholic Correspondence Course to provide for the religious education of children living in remote districts where there were no Catholic schools. Funding was allocated for its operation.

In July 1935, the first lessons were despatched from the Melbourne-based office to 7000 children in the five founding dioceses. Hannan (1936) described the rapid growth that occurred in the months that followed:

By December 1935, the numbers had risen to over 14,000 children, with the addition of further parishes in the diocese mentioned and the participation in the course of diocese of Port Augusta (July, 1935), Adelaide (August), Hobart and Toowoomba (September). During this year, the diocese of Rockhampton, Lismore and the Northern Territory have been included in the operation of the

national course, and the number actually receiving lessons on November 1<sup>st</sup>, was 23,926. (pp. 345 - 346)

The majority of the children who participated in this scheme lived in towns and small communities where there was no Catholic school. Expressing the commonly held belief in Catholic leadership circles at that time, Hannan (1936) argued, that by necessity these Catholic children attended a State school where the education they received on a daily basis, was “deliberately Godless and entirely secular” (p. 346). With this in mind, the fundamental assumption underpinning the scheme of instruction was:

the necessity of keeping the children continuously under a course of religious education during the years of their school life. It strives to supply, in this way, the want of a Catholic school where children do not merely learn the truths of the Faith, but have them continuously kept before their minds. (Hannan, 1936, p. 346)

Details of the diocesan involvement in this scheme in the first half of 1936 are summarized in the Table 6.2.

Table 6.2

*Enrolment National Correspondence Course: November 1, 1936*

STATE/TERRITORY	DIOCESE	FAMILIES	CHILDREN
Victoria	Melbourne	998	2179
	Ballarat	1510	3744
	Sandhurst	1224	3132
	Sale	633	1492
New South Wales	Goulburn	1484	3455
	Lismore	1036	2638
South Australia	Adelaide	605	1471
	Port Augusta	245	604
Queensland	Toowoomba	1090	2797
	Rockhampton	118	1279
Tasmania	Hobart	416	1118
Northern Territory	Northern Territory	14	27
			23,926 (TOTAL)

Note: From Hannan, J. (1936). The National Catholic Correspondence Course. In *Australian Catholic Education Conference: Adelaide, Australia November 8th - 15th* (p. 351)

The key features of instruction through this correspondence scheme were outlined in Hannan’s (1936) presentation at the congress. The instructional material catered for

children aged from 6 to 15 years in a two-step series of lessons. A Junior Course (ages 6 to 10) and Senior Course (ages 11-15) covered content related to Christian Doctrine, Bible history, lives of saints, and prayer and devotions. The Senior Course repeated the material covered in the Junior Course but at a greater depth. The presentation and language was developed to account for the age level of the participants. A Supplementary course covering the Church and Sacraments was available at both junior and senior level for those who have completed the basic course. Lessons aimed at imparting “general instruction in Faith that will teach the children to value their Catholicity, and to appreciate the necessity of a good life” (Hannan, 1936, p. 346) were distributed from the central office in Melbourne fortnightly.

A significant educational challenge in the conduct of a correspondence program was the development of a personal association of the teacher and the student. As McMahon had discovered over ten years earlier, this personal interaction, a key factor in the achievement of effective education in Faith in any religious education program, had proven critical to religious education by correspondence. Due to the large numbers in the program, just under 24,000, it became necessary for the organisers of the National Correspondence Scheme to modify the approach of sending a personal letter regularly to each child. Instead they were sent such a communication at the beginning of the program to introduce the series of lessons not with each lesson sent. Like the Western Australian experience, the response from the children and their parents was enthusiastic and positive – “literally thousands of personal letters have come to the office from children in Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia expressing their delight at the first letter they have ever received”(Hannan, 1936, p. 347).

The Parish Priest had a key role in the organisation of the scheme. They were to play an active role in establishment of the scheme in their local Parish, providing the contact details for all families in their parish with children under the age of fifteen who were unable to attend a Catholic school. In some cases, although the priest visited the State schools, they were encouraged to enrol those children in the correspondence course as well because of the continuity of instruction provided by such a course. The priest was to monitor the program at a local level providing the centralized office with material that would assist it in the ongoing maintenance of the correspondence lessons to the children

in his parish. Finally, he was to report to the Parish community on a regular basis on the operation of the course in the parish.

A letter to the parents accompanied the first lesson of the course. They were reminded of the key role they had to play in the education in faith of their children. The lesson material that was to be provided was only meant to supplement that role and not replace it.

The scale of the operation from the centralized Melbourne office was astounding - twelve dioceses, 252 parishes, 23,929 students at thirteen different stages of instruction, with an estimated 1,750,000 lesson sheets being duplicated in a year. Rotational mailing meant 12,000 letters were posted out each week.

The operation of summer schools was not part of the work of the Catholic Mission Office. Hannan (1936) noted that a program of summer schools had been developed in several parishes participating in the correspondence course. These schools appeared to be modelled on the Western Australian *Religious Holiday Schools*:

With the cooperation of the parishioners, the children are brought to the parish centre during schools vacation time and housed in the convent boarding school or with private people in the town. They spend a week or ten days in instruction in the ceremonies of the Church, making their Confession and Communion, etc., and in revision of the lessons they had learned . . . during the year. (Hannan, 1936, p. 350)

Hannan (1936) reflected on the value of the summer school for Catholic children in isolated areas:

The advantages of this method are manifest . . . the parish church is the spiritual centre of the people in the district, the parish priest the person primarily responsible for their spiritual welfare. By a scheme of parochial summer schools, all the children of the parish are brought into personal contact with the parish priest, and they receive their spiritual training from the one whom they are to depend, as Catholics for the rest of their lives. (pp. 350-351)

The National Catholic Correspondence Course also facilitated a scheme similar to the *Adoption Movement* in Western Australia. This was done to the extent that it enlisted the assistance of the Catholic Girls' Guild and girls' Secondary Schools to send Catholic papers and literature to families in remote areas of the diocese using the correspondence scheme.

## 6.5 Religion by Letter: New South Wales

Dr. Sheehan, the Coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney, as editor of the *Australasian Catholic Record*, had encouraged Rev. J. T McMahon to publish an article in the journal in 1924 on *Religion-by-Post* in Western Australian. Although aware of the scheme of correspondence lessons operating in the Archdiocese of Perth, it was not until 1935 that the Archbishop launched a similar scheme in the Archdiocese of Sydney. This scheme became known as *Religion by Letter*.

Under the leadership of Archbishop Sheehan the matter was investigated to find a scheme suitable for the local situation. At a meeting of expert religious and lay teachers held at St Mary's Cathedral, the issues were discussed, the difficulties weighed and analysed. As a result, a scheme was drawn up to take in to account such difficulties and impart knowledge of the principal truths of doctrine of the Church.

Archbishop Sheehan devoted over twelve months to the development of a series of lessons designed to meet the local needs. Each lesson took the form of a letter to the pupil and hence the scheme became known as 'Religion by Letter'. The Letters, written by Archbishop Sheehan were based on the text developed by him in the 1930s, *A Child's Book of Religion for Use in the Home and the School* (Sheehan, 1934). The scheme was adaptable for use in correspondence and oral instruction. Following Sheehan's text in both content and style, the Letters provided three levels of instruction named: "First Confession", "First Communion" and "Confirmation". Each level or grade consisted of ten lessons. Initially thirty lessons in total were written – the first ten (Lessons 1 - 10) to provide instruction on First Confession; the next, Lessons 11 - 20, for First Communion and the final set, Lessons 21 - 30, for Confirmation. The Sacramental focus followed throughout the lesson sequence and assisted the children and their families to prepare more fully for an active Christian life.

The material of each letter was written and presented in such a way "that the children themselves would be capable of learning from them with very little assistance" (O'Connor, 1936, p. 361). The letters were posted monthly to the children. The format of each letter in the series remained consistent throughout the program: Firstly, the lesson commenced with an area of doctrine presented in letter format commencing with the greeting – 'My Dear Child'. A prayer was included at the end of the content material.



This prayer “expressed the thoughts and sentiments awakened in the child, during the reading of the letter” (McMahon, 1936a, p. 86). For example, following a letter on the Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, in a ‘First Confession’ - Fifth Letter (the lowest grade) - the prayer read:

Dear Jesus, I know that you are God; I know it was you who made the whole world; and yet you were born in a stable; You were born like the poorest of the poor. You did that for my sake. You came into the world to open the gates of Heaven to me. Dear Jesus, I love You. (Sheehan, 1936c)

The prayer was followed by a series of questions, to which the child was asked to write down their responses and send them to the person (usually a Religious Sister) who mailed the Archbishop’s letter to them. The questions were designed to assist the child in reviewing the story around which the Letter was based. Replies and comments were returned to the child.

McMahon (1936a) reported an enthusiastic response from both the Catholic children and their parents to the *Religion by Letter* scheme in New South Wales.

Initially the letters were written for children aged eight years and older. The demand from parents for a similar program designed for younger members of their families lead to Archbishop Sheehan writing a series of lessons for these under eight year olds “learning through the viva-voce method until they could learn to read and write” (O’Connor, 1936).

From the start of the scheme in February 1936, O’Connor (1936) reported that 50,000 copies of the letters were printed and distributed in the country and city/town centres of NSW each month. In the first year of operation *Religion by Letter* provided for the religious instruction of 22,850 of the 41,124 Catholic children in New South Wales who were not attending Catholic schools in more isolated locations and rural areas. Six of the eight dioceses in the Province participated in the scheme.

Table 6.3 provides a summary of the response of the participating NSW dioceses in 1936.

Table 6.3

*Enrolment in the Religion by Letter Scheme (NSW) in 1936*

NSW Diocese	Number of Children not attending Catholic schools receiving instruction
Sydney Archdiocese	16,000
Bathurst	2,000
Armidale	1,500
Wagga	1,500
Maitland	1,100
Wilcannia-Forbes	750
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,850</b>

Note: From McMahon, J. T. (1936a). *The child in the bush: Religious holiday schools*. Sydney: Pellegrini.

At a meeting of the Bishops of NSW on September 24, 1936, in Sydney, a decision was taken not to use the National Correspondence Scheme in the Province of NSW. The following statement was sent to the Bishops of Australia:

The doubts which we entertained as to the practical value of the theoretically excellent programme of work, outlined at the General Meeting of the Bishops which was held at Melbourne May 1935, have passed into the definite conviction that, owing to the vastness of our country, each Province should deal with the problems of Catholic Action as they present themselves in its own territory, and that, in the few cases in which national uniformity is desirable, it can be sufficiently attained by means of correspondence or otherwise. We have therefore decided that henceforth we shall confine our attention to the religious welfare of our own province. (NSW Bishops, 1936, September)

At the end of 1936, all eight dioceses in the Province of NSW were engaged in schemes providing religious instruction by correspondence to Catholic children not attending Catholic schools. Lismore withdrew from the NSW Religion by Letter scheme earlier that year and Goulburn were using in the National Correspondence Scheme. The remaining six dioceses had adopted Archbishop Sheehan's scheme – *Religion by Letter*. Thirty thousand Catholic children were receiving religious instruction by correspondence in the Province of NSW.

The success of the *Religion by Letter* scheme for the Catholic children in isolated rural areas in New South Wales was described by Mother M Angela OP (1936) in a paper

delivered at the Education Congress – *Religious Instruction by correspondence: Archbishop Sheehan's letters*.

In NSW a combination of the centralised approach, as developed in the National Correspondence Scheme, with core lesson material (the letters) distributed from the Archdiocese of Sydney and localised implementation and management of the daily operation of the program, similar to that which had developed in Western Australia was adopted. Each diocese adapted Archbishop Sheehan's letters, the format of the material, the method of its use and nature of the distribution, to suit their local context. Two examples of this local adaptation can be found in the Dioceses of Maitland and Armidale.

#### **6.5.1 Diocese of Maitland**

As soon as the letters written by Archbishop Sheehan became available the Bishop of Maitland, Rev Dr. E Gleeson, introduced the program into the diocese. He put a proposal to the Superiors of the Dominican Sisters, who had been established in the Diocese for a number of years, to coordinate the working of the *Religion by Letter* scheme. The sisters accepted the offer.

At the request of the Bishop, the priests of the Diocese were to provide to the sisters a list of names of Catholic children in their parishes who were not able to attend Catholic schools. The sister then needed to grade the children to determine their suitability with respect to the three grades of lesson material available. Initially their ability in the secular school subjects was used but this proved unsatisfactory. Many of the older students were "quite ignorant of the fundamentals of religious knowledge" (Angela, 1936, p. 355 ) as they had received little or no religious instruction up to that point in time. It was necessary for these older children to commence at a lower grade and progress more rapidly through the lessons than the younger children.

A letter from the series written by Archbishop Sheehan was sent out to each child once a month. Initially over 1000 letters were posted out and only 204 children returned their answers for marking. The Sisters continued to mail the letter out to all the children and a steady increase in enrolment was recorded as the year progressed. By the end of 1936 the returns were up to 900 (Angela, 1936, p. 357).

The diocesan monthly publication, *The Newcastle and Maitland Catholic Sentinel* (*The Sentinel*), was to be used as a way of communicating with the children and their families enrolled in the *Religion by Letter* scheme. To this end, the bishop directed that the publication be delivered to every Catholic home in the Diocese. In this way the scheme was also promoted in the wider diocesan community. Commencing in the August 1935 edition, each month the Sisters wrote a general summary of the mistakes in the children's answers, with some necessary comments and placed it in *The Sentinel*. This appeared in diocesan publication under the title *Religious Instruction Correspondence Scheme*. This practice continued until August 1956.

As with the other correspondence schemes, the key to the success of the lessons was the personal communication between the teacher and the students. Initially the corrected papers were not returned to the individual students, but within a short time the value of this personal feedback was realised. As well as publishing a summary of the correct responses and the mistakes made each child received his or her paper corrected with personal comments of encouragement from the teacher.

The communication from the teachers not only encouraged the children but also their parents. It provided some suggestions for the parents of the children receiving the correspondence lessons of ways of assisting their children do the lessons. In teaching their children, the religious understanding of the parents was also enhanced. One of the unrecorded benefits of the religion by correspondence scheme must surely have been the education of the adult community as well as the children.

At the request of Bishop Gleeson, the first Summer School for Catholic children of the bush was organised for the Christmas Holidays of 1938/1939. In presenting this direction to the Clergy of the Maitland Diocese at their annual conference in September 1938, the Bishop saw the Summer School as providing a week's course of intensive religious training for the Catholic children in remote parts of the Diocese who were attending State Schools (*Sentinal*, 1939, February). The announcement appeared in *The Sentinel* in October 1938.

Dear Children . . . All the bush children, learning religion according to the Correspondence Scheme, are to be invited to Newcastle during the Christmas Holidays for what is called a Summer School . . . there will be games, swimming and all sorts of fun. But with them you will get more lessons on your religion. There will be Masses, Benedictions, prayers, etc. You will see the beauty of the

Catholic Church better than you ever did before. The Priests, Sisters and people of Newcastle are already beginning to get ready to receive you and make you very happy. (p. 17)

The report on the Newcastle Summer School appeared in *The Sentinal* in February 1939. It provided an account of the success of the inauguration of this event. From December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1938, to January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1939, one hundred and ten children between the ages of six and seventeen attended a Summer School in Mayfield, a suburb of Newcastle. Forty-eight boys were housed at the Murray-Dwyer Orphanage under the direction of the Sisters of Charity and sixty-two girls at San Clemente Dominican Convent with the Dominican Sisters. Separate schools operated for the boys and girls. The Bishop made regular visits to both schools and presented every student with a prayer book, rosary beads and a holy picture. The daily program started with morning Mass, followed by religious instruction periods from mid-morning to lunch and from lunch to mid-afternoon. Late afternoon was recreational time. In the evening, there were prayer sessions concluding with Benediction. For the boys, Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of St Joseph assisted the Sisters of Charity. For the girls, the Director of the Dominican Sisters was Mother Angela, head of the *Religion by Letter* scheme in the Diocese. Several local priests actively participated in the daily program.

### **6.5.2 Diocese of Armidale**

In 1935, the Bishop of Armidale, Rev Dr. Coleman, approached the Mother Superior of the Ursuline Sisters inviting the sisters to assume responsibility for introduction and conduct of the *Religion by Letter* scheme in the Diocese. Following consultation with members of the Armidale Ursuline Community the sisters “voted unanimously for the adoption of the Correspondence Scheme” (Carlton, 1980). Mother Mary Stanislaus Murray OSU was appointed to direct the conduct of a Correspondence scheme for Catholic children in the Diocese who were unable to attend Catholic schools. The sisters would be based in the Ursuline Convent in Armidale.

Bishop Coleman arranged for permission to use the *Religion by Letter* material developed by Archbishop Sheehan from the Archdiocese of Sydney. He then travelled to the outlying areas of the Diocese of Armidale visiting parishes and collecting the names of Catholic children who were not receiving religious instruction. These children were either unable to attend any school or attending the State school in small towns where

there was no Catholic school. In the years of the operation of the *Religion by Letter* scheme in the Diocese the Parish Priest was to remain responsible for the provision of the names of children eligible for the program.

As part of their formation into religious life in the novitiate, prior to profession, the novices in the Ursuline Convent in Armidale were required to work in the *Religion by Letter* 'office'. Sister Mary Rose O'Dwyer OSU was a novice in the Ursuline Order in Armidale in 1935 when she was appointed to work with Mother Mary Stanislaus on the *Religion by Letter* scheme in the Diocese of Armidale. Sister Mary Rose recalled that Mother Mary Stanislaus was an excellent classroom teacher who, after she became deaf, could no longer work in the classroom – the *Religion by Letter* scheme was ideal for the use of her teaching skills. Bishop Coleman gave her the freedom to conduct the program as she saw fit and she was able to adapt the scheme to the age of the children and produce many excellent worksheets to accompany the program. In response to request from the parents, Mother Mary Stanislaus developed junior worksheets for the younger brothers and sisters of those children receiving Archbishop Sheehan's letters (Sister Mary Rose O'Dwyer, Interview, October 25, 2006). She continued to direct the scheme from Armidale in the 1940s and 1950s. Sister Mary Rose and Sister Ursula O'Dwyer (who worked in the *Religion by Letter* office in Armidale in the 1950s) remember Mother Mary Stanislaus as a person of great wit – an intelligent lady – a creative educator who kept up to date with educational practice and tried to apply them to the correspondence lessons. For that time, she was quite innovative. She held a personal interest in each child receiving the correspondence lessons – “she made the lessons really personal – it was a real ministry for her” (Sister Mary Rose O'Dwyer OSU and Sister Ursula O'Dwyer, Interview, October 25, 2006).

Initially the numbers were quite significant. In 1936 the returns for the scheme of *Religion by Letter* in the Diocese of Armidale indicated that 1500 children were receiving regular instruction (McMahon, 1936a). During the years of its operation, as was the case in other dioceses, the numbers diminished due to the growth of the towns and establishment of Catholic Schools in more centres. By 1953 the number receiving instruction was 465 and the total number of students who had been enrolled in the scheme since 1935 was 4227. ("Ursuline Nuns: Roman order of St Ursula - Diocese of Armidale", *n.d.*)

In their work in the scheme, each sister was allocated a small group of children (usually 10) with whom they corresponded. The lessons were sent to the children by mail and their responses to the questions and other material was due back at a set time. The lesson content was focused on the Sacraments and the liturgical year. They did not rely on the catechism or rote learning. Mother Mary Stanislaus modified the letters written by Archbishop Sheehan to make the material interesting for each age group with worksheets produced in the convent at Armidale. Sister Mary Rose O'Dwyer OSU recalled that:

Every first Sunday of the month was 'RBL' Sunday - we all got to and got everything ready to be mailed the next day . . . we saw that we had everything ready to return – what they had sent in, the corrections, some advice and the new sheets. (October 25, 2006)

## **6.6 Conclusion**

In his autobiography, McMahon (1969) reflected on his experience as the founder of the “Bushies Scheme”:

In 1923, I was a young priest, and undoubtedly simple, but I had the daring of youth to cherish a dream. In spite of buckets of official cold water and a chorus of derision from my confreres, I persisted and the dream came true. (p. 86)

The correspondence classes catered for four distinct groups – those living in isolated places with no access to school; those living in small country towns and settlements where the Catholic children attended the State school; young people beyond Primary school age who had previously no opportunity to receive religious instruction and catechists, to be assisted through instruction, teaching aids and books.

These correspondence lessons were to provide the foundation material for the development of teaching programs used by the catechists who were recruited to teach in the State schools during the 1960s. The *Religion-by-Post* scheme, developed as a local pastoral response, provided the foundation for the development of religious education of Catholic children in State schools in Australia in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **RESPONSE TO THE METROPOLITAN NEED:**

#### **1917 – 1955**

The response to the need to provide religious instruction to the growing numbers of Catholic children attending schools other than Catholic schools in the metropolitan Archdiocese of Sydney and the larger rural towns in New South Wales was influenced by two significant developments. Firstly, the response to the call for catechetical renewal, discussed in Chapter 5, and secondly, the growing encouragement for the laity to participate in the apostolic work of the Church - Catholic Action.

#### **7.1 Catholic Action: the Role of the Laity**

In 1927, Pope Pius XI gave the term, Catholic Action, its classical definition as “the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy”. Pius XI called for every Catholic lay person “without distinction of age, class, civil status, party or race” to help in an active way in “the restoration and continuation of that apostolate which has been exercised from the first centuries of the Church, from the days of the first propagation of Catholic truth”.

Catholic Action was a lay apostolate in which, organised work of the laity was performed under the direction or mandate of a bishop in the fields of dogma, morals, liturgy, education, and charity. Composed solely of laypersons assisted or directed by priests or religious, the Lay Apostolate held as its objective to work for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. In Catholic Action the laity actively helped the Hierarchy to achieve this end, thus “it is apparent that the task of these laymen is, in a certain sense, the very same mission as that of the Hierarchy and of Jesus Christ” (Pius XI). The Theresian Handbook described Catholic Action:

Dependant on the Hierarchy – with the right and duty to form, organise and direct it in a way that is determined by them for the purpose of saving souls; requires the special mandate of the Hierarchy for its existence; remains subject and



subordinate to the Hierarchy in all things; an organised apostolate – social action; a cooperative work – consists in the harmonious cooperation of a number of organisations, associations or societies having the same general aim – the salvation of souls; each group possessing a specialised sphere of activity, a specific work and aim assigned to it by the Hierarchy. (Handbook of the Theresian Club, 1957, pp. 48 - 50)

The development of the organisations involved in the religious instruction of Catholic children in State schools was influenced by the approach taken to the call for Catholic Action and the formation of the lay apostolate in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

## **7.2 Catholic Religious Instruction in State Schools**

In the concluding paper of the education sessions of the Australian Catholic Education Congress in 1936 Rev T. J. O'Connor (1936), Diocesan Inspector of Schools, Archdiocese of Sydney, argued for the Catholic Church to provide religious education for Catholic children attending State schools in cities and towns where there were Catholic schools.

O'Connor (1936) outlined several challenges experienced in the provision of Catholic religious instruction in State schools in New South Wales. The first challenge was to find a sufficient number of trained teachers given the numbers of children involved. The second was to develop a scheme of teaching these children, given the range of ages, infants, junior and senior students and the varying degree of religious knowledge and practice of the children, noting some were not even baptised. Finally, considering the challenge involved in adopting a teaching program that was relevant to the diverse circumstances, city and country, given the scarce financial resources available.

O'Connor (1936) urged:

It is an absolutely necessity for the Catholic Church to instruct the Catholic children attending public schools in the city and town areas, because of the dangers of the day, which are hostile not only to the Catholic Faith, but all kinds of religion. (p. 364)

O'Connor (1936) described the results of the necessary combination of the country correspondence scheme and the instruction scheme in the city and the town. Following a review of the variety of religious correspondence lessons and programs that were operating in Australia at the time the conclusion was drawn that the existing material was unattractive for both teachers and pupils. The subject matter was not appropriately focused on the child as the learner. The use of the “technical [green] catechism” was also

unsatisfactory, as it required support material for the teacher to effectively explain it to the children. The limitations of the layperson in using the correspondence lessons or the catechism were described:

They were discovered to be positively dangerous in the hands of lay people, who, in attempting to bring them to life were inclined to rely very much on their emotions or the telling of “sugar-stick” or exaggerated stories of the lives of saints . . . The green or technical catechism could only be brought to life by virtue of the personality and knowledge of the teacher. As this is difficult with even religious teachers, on no account should lay teachers, especially untrained lay teachers, no matter how zealous, be relied upon to explain efficiently and correctly the doctrines of the Church. (O'Connor, 1936, p. 360)

O'Connor (1936) noted the success of Archbishop Sheehan's *Religion by Letter* scheme in the metropolitan, suburban and provincial areas in the more dioceses in New South Wales:

It was found that using the system of “Religion by Letter” that the danger of employing untrained teachers was overcome. It is a foolproof system by the use of which ordinary intelligent people can teach Catholic faith and morals with the confidence that they will not be committing serious blunders. So the difficulty of supplying lay teachers with subject matter simple enough for smaller children to understand and interesting enough for the children in older classes was overcome. The subject matter dealing with the truths of our holy religion could now be placed without any misgivings in the hands of inexperienced lay teachers, because even if they simply read the lessons to the children or taught them to read the lessons, and in addition got them to answer the questions, they could be instrumental in helping the children to become religious and to comprehend the graces that the Sacraments would give them if received properly. (pp. 361 - 362)

With this lesson material, lay teachers were encouraged to seek Catholic children who were not attending Catholic schools and provide them with Religious Instruction. At all times the underlying aim was to encourage the child to enrol in a Catholic school to receive the maximum religious benefit to be gained only in a Catholic school education. O'Connor (1936) observed that this approach resulted in “bringing many of the children to the Catholic schools” (p. 362).

O'Connor (1936) asked the question: What were the main reasons given for Catholic children living in the cities and large town areas of New South Wales attending the State schools? The lay teachers reported from conversations with the children and their families the following reasons were of significance in the mid-1930s:

(1) They are the children of a certain type of mixed marriage in which the Catholic party is neglectful of the Catholic religion; (2) they could not pay the fees. Even though they were not asked for any fees, their sense of pride would

not permit them to attend a Catholic school because they would be in contrast to the children who were paying; (3) there were dangers of traffic, especially in the city, in the case of very small children; (4) the necessity existed in some Catholic primary schools of procuring uniforms; (5) their parents and grandparents were educated at the public school and were never instructed in the Catholic faith, so the children had not the slightest interest in religion; (6) there are the children of that type of mixed marriage that leads to indifference. They will always attend the State schools. (O'Connor, 1936, p. 362)

Dealing with Catholic children attending the State schools in the city and suburban areas of the Archdiocese of Sydney required a different strategy. The ninety parishes of the Archdiocese were divided into eleven centres. Each of the areas contained approximately the same number of Catholic children who were currently attending State schools. Within these areas the scheme operated in each local Parish. O'Connor (1936) used the following example to illustrate the working of the scheme:

In the parishes of the city and the eastern suburbs the Theresian Club has at the present time 1441 children under instruction by 21 teachers. On their first enquiry they found that out of 40 Catholic girls in a public school only one child was attending Mass. Out of 200 Catholic children attending a certain State school only about five knew anything about Christianity, to say nothing of Catholicity. They have been the means of having 131 children baptised, 292 prepared for First Confession and First Communion, 120 children Confirmed, and 215 of the Children have returned to the Catholic schools. Eventually, all of these 1441 children will receive sufficient instruction to enable them to receive the Sacraments. (pp. 362 – 363)

At the time of presenting the paper at the Congress, O'Connor (1936) indicated the intention of the Archdiocese, with the support of Archbishop Michael Kelly, to establish a *Diocesan Mission House* with the purpose of establishing a centre for the training of lay teachers in the latest methods of teaching religion.

O'Connor (1936) reported the Archdiocesan results since the scheme commenced in February, 1936:

282 children have been baptised, 1616 have made their First Confession, 1629 have made their First Communion, 626 have been confirmed, and 16,000 are under instruction. More than 2000 Catholic children in the Archdiocese of Sydney have returned this year from State schools to the Catholic schools. (p. 363)

Table 7.1 indicates the level of activity in specific parishes chosen by O'Connor (1936) as example parishes in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

Table 7.1

*Level of Activity in Selected Parishes in the Archdiocese of Sydney 1936*

Parish	Baptisms	Confessions	Communions	Confirmation	Returned to Catholic School	Under Instruction
Ashbury	6	12	12	-	14	123
Bankstown	8	24	24	-	32	201
Darlinghurst	16	78	78	-	28	110
Edgecliff	9	41	41	16	80	105
Golden Grove	9	14	14	-	-	190
St Fiacre's, Leichhardt	3	28	28	-	33	188
Maroubra	5	50	50	-	19	210
Newtown	2	60	60	112	54	422
Randwick	15	143	143	107	36	316
Waverley	13	158	158	64	17	227
Waterloo	1	30	30	15	40	301

Note: From O'Connor, T. J. (1936). *Religious instruction in State schools in cities and towns where there are Catholic schools*. Paper presented at the Australian Catholic Education Conference: Adelaide, Australia November 8th - 15th, Melbourne.

O'Connor (1936) concluded that for the Catholic Church:

To ignore the Catholic children attending State schools in the city and large town areas throughout Australia would be to ignore a Catholic child population nearly as great as the number of Catholic children in Catholic schools in New South Wales. It would be similar to cutting off a whole State from the Catholic Church in Australia, and, since children are like a multiplication table, the problem in fifty years would be completely out of hand. (p. 363)

O'Connor (1936) reflected on the current attitude and existing policies related to the families of Catholic children who were attending State schools:

We help in every way the children whose parents are dead or in straightened circumstances, but are not the children of those parents who are spiritually dead in far greater need of our assistance? It is useless to make an appeal to the parents or to put spiritual penalties on them . . . the only way it seems possible to meet the situation is to deal with the children themselves . . . To say that Catholic children in State schools in the cities and town areas should be ignored is to take the same attitude towards them as the State Governments adopt toward the children of Australia; that is to leave them without any knowledge of God. We must instruct all State school Catholic children if we are to avoid aiding and abetting the State Governments in their stupid scheme of non-religious education. (pp. 363 - 364)

O'Connor (1936) emphasised that to succeed in this endeavour, it is the children that must be engaged and influenced in the State school classrooms by lay catechists:

It is found that the children, on hearing the Catholic lay teacher speak of the Church, realise so fully the injustice that is done to them by their parents that numbers of them insist on their parents sending them to the Catholic school. The visits of the Catholic lay teacher arouse the interest of the parents, and many of them, on reading the lessons of instruction, have been induced to come back to the Sacraments and their religious duties. (p. 364)

O'Connor's (1936) paper concluded with a 'call to action' in every diocese in Australia. Whether the children are taught in the State school or in some Catholic parochial building would be the decision of each local Bishop, the resources required are "money and teachers" (p. 364). The necessity of the use of lay teachers was emphasised. Given the number of the children involved, O'Connor (1936) acknowledged the importance of the recruitment of lay teachers for this task, as there were insufficient numbers of religious brothers and teaching sisters. The model adopted in New South Wales was proposed as a possible template for the rest of Australia.

From the 1920s to 1955 Catholic communities in New South Wales, the clergy, religious and the laity responded to the need created by the increasing numbers of Catholic children attending State schools in cities and towns. Several significant groups were involved in the provision of religious education for Catholic children not attending Catholic schools at that time.

### **7.3 The Catechists' Guild**

*The Catechists' Guild* was founded in the 1930s by Richard Murphy SJ with the aim to "bring about the christianising (sic) of a society that was seen as pagan and materialistic" (Dixon, 1995a, n. 2.3.1). In 1938, the organisation turned its attention to providing religious instruction for Catholics in State schools. Courses were organised for catechists organised into parochial guilds. In the early 1940s there were approximately 300 Guild members, attending 190 schools and instructing 7,540 children. By the end of 1942 the number of children receiving instruction from Guild members had reached 10,000.

A report in the *Catholic Weekly* (4 January, 1945) stated that, in the Sydney metropolitan area in 1944, more than 300 teachers were giving religious instruction to 5465 Catholic children in State schools (Turner, 1992a, p. 133). The report named several significant

groups also involved in religious education of Catholic children in State schools at that time. These groups, active in the period from 1920 to 1960, included, the Theresians (Farland, 1998), the Legion of Mary, St Joseph's Guild for Catholic Laymen and the Grail (Turner, 1992b).

By 1945 these four societies were considered by the diocesan leadership as part of the Catechists' Guild (Dixon, 1995a). There were seventy catechists who were not members of any particular society that were also members of the Catechists' Guild (Langdon, 1946). Father Tom Pierse, the Sydney Diocesan Director of Education, was the Chaplain for the Guild. Father Pierse described the training program operating for catechists in 1945:

Each society is responsible for the training of its own catechists who must be approved by the local parish priest before operating in his parish. They must spend a certain time in teaching Christian Doctrine in one of the R.C. schools under the supervision of one of the R.C. school teachers of classes in the R.C. school under supervision. The society reports to the Director that someone is trained and capable to teach R.I. in State Schools and he issues them a Catechist Certificate, authorising them. (Langdon, 1946)

Catechists were supported through meetings which were conducted seven times a year. Lectures and similar catechist training activities were a regular feature of these meetings. Another form of support was the provision of textbooks. These were developed by the Archdiocese designed specifically for use by the volunteer lay catechists.

The Theresian Club and the Legion of Mary were the two largest societies in the Catechists' Guild.

## **7.4 The Theresian Club**

An organisation of lay women, the Theresian Club, was founded in 1918 in Sydney by Sister Mary Therese Cotter to care for the spiritual and material needs of needy families. The Theresians were the first lay catechetical group established in the Archdiocese of Sydney, visiting both Catholic and State schools (Sisters of Charity of Australia, 1996).

In the *Handbook of the Theresian Club* (1957), the Club is described as a specialised, efficient unit of the Lay Apostolate. In the Foreword to the handbook the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Sydney, James Carroll, wrote:

There have been Apostles, Clerical, Religious, Lay, in every age of the Church. Theresians are Lay Apostles in Twentieth Century Australia . . . they devote their time and talents to the work of instructing children in the knowledge of God, of bringing these little ones closer to Christ Our Lord, of guiding them to partake of the riches of Grace, conferred through the Mass and the Sacraments. They assist these children to partake in the benefits of the Redemption. This is the work of Apostles. (1957, Foreword)

In 1998, Cardinal Edward Clancy, Archbishop of Sydney, reflected on the significance and scope of work of the Theresian Club:

The Theresian Club founded at St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst by Anna Cotter (Sister M. Therese, R.S.C.) has made a significant contribution to the spiritual, educational and charitable work of the Church in the Archdiocese of Sydney over the past eighty years . . . the Theresians have carried out their apostolate for the children of the poorer families in the inner city suburbs with indefatigable zeal and dedication. (Farland, 1998, Foreword)

#### **7.4.1 Beginnings: 1918 -1935**

Farland (1998) noted that the archival records of the Sisters of Charity and the Theresian Club contain scant records of the early years (1918 -1930) of the club. Dr Keogh reflected in a letter to Sister Therese in 1951, "It started unobtrusively . . . like a living organism, which grew and then bore fruit. It was not set up by an order from above . . . so its beginnings were barely recorded" (Theresian Archives cited in Farland, 1998, p. 19).

The *Handbook of the Theresian Club* (1957) contained a description of the origin and early growth of the club. In early 1918 the club had begun to take shape:

Towards the end of a course of religious instruction of converts, a Sister of Charity, Sister Mary Therese, suggested that six girls form a girls' club. The aims of the club would be the personal sanctification of its members and the spiritual interest of the needy children in congested areas of the city. On May 19, 1918 . . . six girls, under the direction of Sister Mary Therese, the foundress of the club, consecrated themselves to Mary Immaculate, and pledged themselves to work, under the patronage of Therese of the Little Flower (now St Therese of Lisieux), to help the souls of the spiritually neglected children in the inner city suburbs. (Handbook of the Theresian Club, 1957, p. 2)

In an historical account of the Theresians, Helena Farland (1998) recalled the context in which the Theresians were established:

WWI was not yet over and life was particularly difficult for people in the poorer districts of Sydney like Darlinghurst. The resources of the Catholic Church were largely spent on churches and schools to maintain the faith among the majority. However barely 50% of Catholic children attended Catholic schools and the rest

were let slip through the net largely unattended. It was for these neglected children that Sister Therese formed her club. (p. 1)

The headquarters of this new club, known as the Theresian Club, was at St Vincent's Hospital, Potts Point (inner city - Sydney).

Farland (1998) noted some of the reasons why single girls and young women were attracted to the Club in its foundational decade. The Club had a charismatic leader, Sister Therese and enthusiastic young neophytes who appealed to their hearts as well as their heads. It offered an attractive programme, both social and spiritual; a good educational experience for its members; companionship with like-minded people; and gave its members an opportunity to make a contribution to improve the spiritual and temporal needs in the lives of many people. "The Theresians offered single girls and young women a carefully structured opportunity corporate initiative and some responsibility . . . As a lay organisation they worked under the direction of religious" (Farland, 1998, p. 26).

During the 1920s the Theresians continued to diversify their work and take a more prominent position in the Catholic society in the Archdiocese of Sydney. In 1928, members of the club processed as an organisation behind the Theresian banner during the Sydney Eucharistic Congress. Later that year the Theresian Club was formally invited to send representatives to the celebration of the completion of St Mary's Cathedral.

Farland (1998) described the main work of the Theresians in the late 1920s as "the instruction in their faith of children in public schools" (p. 27). The way in which this work was carried out was determined by two significant factors. Firstly, the membership restriction of single girls and young women meant that most members were working in full time jobs and were unable to visit State school to teach Catholic children during weekdays. The second factor was the prohibitions in still in place from the Australian Bishops related to Catholic children attending non-Catholic schools. Catechists were not permitted to visit State Schools. In this context the Theresians visited the homes of these children, brought them to Mass on Sunday and conducted Sunday school classes to provide religious instruction. The educational apostolate of the Theresians was "one of the earliest, most basic and most important works of the Church and it was through this educational orientation that the Club grew" (Farland, 1998, p.28).



The work being done and the growth in membership of the Theresian Club from many areas across metropolitan Sydney aroused the interest of the parochial clergy:

The Theresians themselves . . . realised that there was a need in their own parishes for the work they were doing in the city areas, and, at the invitation of their pastors, new centres were established in various parishes. (*Handbook of the Theresian Club*, 1957, p. 3)

By 1930, the Theresian Club was established in 10 parishes in Sydney with a membership of seventy. The Theresians were one of the first groups in Australia to respond to the request from Pope Pius XI request for Catholic Action - lay people to bring Christ's message to all.

With the lifting by the Australian Bishops' of the ban on catechists going into State Schools to teach Catholic children in 1934, the Theresians started visiting State Schools during school time to provide regular religious instruction. The first three schools were in inner Sydney – Plunkett St, Westbush and Glenmore Road. A total of 410 Catholic children received instruction in that year (Farland, 1998, p. 38).

#### **7.4.2 Development of a Constitution and Rules**

By the mid-1930s, the membership of the Theresians was growing and branches of the club were operating in a number of suburbs in metropolitan Sydney. To maintain the integrity of the organisation, there was a need to provide a focus for the members through the development of clearly articulated guidelines. Following the establishment of an Executive committee consisting of a President, vice-presidents, secretary and assistant secretaries, the first task was to prepare *The Theresian Club - Constitution and Rules* (The Theresian Club, 1935) for approval by the hierarchy. The *Constitution and Rules* were approved by Archbishop Michael Sheehan, coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney in May 1935. The document articulated the *Aim* of the Club, “doing in Australia the work of Catholic Action”, and the *General Objects* - “The personal sanctification of the members; and active co-operation in the Church's work of advancing the reign of Christ the King” (The Theresian Club, 1935).

The special objects listed in the constitution and rules give an indication of the diversity of the work conducted by the Club in 1935:

Visitation of homes to seek out children in need of religious instruction;  
Formation of classes for the purpose of imparting religious knowledge to children, and preparing them for the Sacraments; Conducting classes for women

who are careless in the practice of the faith or estranged from it all together; Instruction of converts; Visitation of hospitals and distribution of good literature; the broadcasting of good literature when visiting; Mailing instructive literature to catholics in remote districts where the services of a priest are unavailable; Zeal on behalf of Catholics who have fallen away from the faith; The formation of Study Circles ; Seeking out and encouraging converts to the faith; Sewing guilds for providing garment for the poor; and making preparation in the homes of poor invalids for the reception of Holy Communion. (The Theresian Club, 1935)

The work of the Theresians was gradually incorporated into the *Diocesan Secretariate of the Lay Apostolate* in the Archdiocese of Sydney. In the next ten years, 1936 -1945, as a result of this incorporation, the main work of the Theresians would increasingly focus on the task of Religious Instruction of Catholic children attending State Schools in the Sydney metropolitan area. The practice of home visitation, Sunday Schools and after school hours Sacramental preparation and Religious Instruction classes continued to be a significant part of that task for the Club members. The Church hierarchy and their local parishes asked the Theresians to provide Religious Instruction during school time to Catholic children in the State schools. Given the membership restrictions – single girls and young women many of whom were in full time employment – it was necessary for a revision of the membership structures.

By 1937, the Club had introduced two additional membership groups – a Ladies’ and Men’s Auxiliary. (Theresian Club, 1937) The Ladies Auxiliary initially consisted of women who, when single, were members of the Theresian Club but as married women they were no longer eligible for membership. The married women of the Theresian Ladies Auxiliary provided a group of volunteers who were available to teach the Catholic children in the State schools during the school day. The men’s group, initially called *The Catholic Laymen’s Theresian Mission*, formed in October 1936 - “six catholic gentlemen realising the wonderful work performed by the girls of the Theresian Club, formed themselves into a society to do something spiritually for the Catholic men and boys of the Archdiocese” (Farrelley, 1939, August 29).

### **7.4.3 Consolidation: 1937 - 1955**

The lifting of the Bishops’ prohibition related to teaching Catholic children in State schools, the approval of the constitution, and the extension of the membership criteria had a significant impact on the Club:

not just to the multiplication of the work . . . It was the constitution which allowed the spread of the Theresians to other parishes, after an interview in 1937 by its president, Edna Nelson, and secretary, Kath Miller, with Archbishop Sheehan, who gave them permission to extend to other parishes if invited by the parish priest who would be in control of Catholic Action in their own parishes. (Farland, 1998, p. 39)

Farland (1998) recorded that Edna Nelson and Kath Miller “were two of the Club’s most outstanding members” (p. 39). In 1934, Edna Nelson, was a young Catholic single woman working as a high school teacher in the State School system. She was “an impressive woman and could command attention just by walking into the room” (Farland, 1998, p. 39). Invited by a friend who had recently joined the Club, Edna attended a meeting held in a disused casualty section of St Vincent’s Hospital, Potts Point. During an interview recorded in 1995, Sister Vincent Nelson RSC (Edna Nelson) recalled that first meeting and her early work in the club:

I became interested in the friendly approach I met with from the members of the Club and spoke to sister about joining up . . . [I] was given the work of visiting the hospital, Sydney Hospital. We used to have access to the wards on Sunday morning . . . I became interested in the Sunday morning visitation . . . It was work that was done after school teaching hours. (Interview Sister Vincent Nelson rsc, 1995, 14 March)

Edna Nelson was elected President of the Theresian Club in 1936. She held that office until 1947. Under her leadership, from 1936 to 1947, the Theresian Club maintained a clear identity whilst fulfilling the expectation of the hierarchy to become an integral part of the Lay Apostolate in the Archdiocese of Sydney. Sister Vincent Nelson RSC described how she became involved with the catechetical work of the Theresians:

The Theresians were actually in the work before I undertook it too, but I became more interested, not in going into the schools, but in helping with the classes of the children collected after school hours and their preparation for the sacraments. Before I left the Club I was doing one school out Newtown way. The school interest was not the main thing then. (Interview Sister Vincent Nelson rsc, 1995, 14 March)

The report from the Theresians of the 1937 club activities to the *Diocesan Secretariate of the Lay Apostolate* provided a snapshot of the club at that time. The headquarters of the Theresian Club was St Vincent’s Hospital, Darlinghurst. Branches were operating at St Canice’s, St Mary’s Basilica, St Benedict’s (Broadway), Paddington, Ashfield, Newtown, Dulwich Hill, Haberfield, Waterloo, Edgecliff, Stanmore and Hurstville. Twenty-seven Public Schools were visited regularly and 1700 to 1800 children received religious instruction. The original focus of the club in the 1920s on the visitation of the

homes of Catholic children and the instruction of the children in the Parish or home on Sundays or weeknights was described now as to “supplement the instruction WITHIN the schools”. The success of this work was attributed to “consistent and tactful visitation of the homes of the children in our care”. There were 165 Club members, 25 Ladies auxiliary and 39 Men’s auxiliary members. (Theresian Club, 1937)

In 1937 the term Lay Apostolate was used to describe the work of the Theresians. In the Archdiocese of Sydney this work was supervised by the Director of the Lay Apostolate, Monsignor Eris O’Brien - the future Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn (Farland, 1998, p. 32). In July, 1938, O’Brien submitted a proposal to the new Archbishop, Gilroy, for “the coordination of the activities among Catholic Young Women under the Lay Apostolate”. Of particular interest at this time were the activities of the Theresians and the Grail and coordination to prevent the work of these two groups “clashing”. Of the Theresians, O’Brien reported:

This organisation has been doing splendid work, without proper controls and without a proper constitution. It has consolidated its work, existing in nearly 30 parishes . . . Its work is definitely defined (not general, like the Grail). This work is social and catechetical for children of State Schools. Moreover, it “forms” a large body of catholic women, spiritually and socially. (1938, July)

O’Brien’s (1938) proposal to place the Theresians “under the control of the Lay Apostolate and to direct its work . . . to give it a constitution that will make that possible” was approved by the Archbishop on 29 July, 1938. The Theresians became one of a number of groups operating under *Diocesan Secretariate of the Lay Apostolate* in the Archdiocese of Sydney. This was part of the Archdiocesan response to Catholic Action.

At the beginning of 1939, the Theresian Club had branches in 27 parishes and its members were providing religious instruction to around 2,000 Catholic children in 35 State schools. (Farland, 1998, p. 72)

The Theresian Club continued to grow in the late 1930s and into the 1940s. Branches were established in the suburban parishes of the Archdiocese where the support of the parish priest was received. The success of these new branches depended of the local lay leadership. Farland (1998) observed that “Ashfield was fortunate in its leaders and as it usually had more members than needed, it was a strong centre and was able to give help to other parishes which had few Theresians and much need for them” (p. 46).

Penshurst was another example of the successful combination of clerical support and good lay leadership. In 1988, Penshurst Parish celebrated fifty years of catechetical work. In an article published in *the Catholic Weekly* (McLaren, 1988, September 17) the beginning of the work in Penshurst Parish was described:

Our story begins in October, 1938, towards the end of Father O'Kelly's time as parish priest of Penshurst. Some young women, with Irene Hannon as their dynamic leader, formed a Theresian Centre. The other members were Nell Aubrey, Sheila Farrell, Margaret Hannon, Nancy Holdsworth, Cecily Massey, Mary Moore and Lil Reilly. They had fortnightly meetings and Father Eamon Clune was their Spiritual Director. Seeing the great need, the Theresians decided to start Sunday School classes, and began visiting the parents of the children at State schools. The work was an immediate success. (p. 25)

By 1945 there were branches in 40 parishes in the Sydney metropolitan area. The report of the Theresian Club activities for 1944 recorded that 900 Catholic children were receiving religious instruction from 26 Theresian catechists in 24 State schools. In 1944 the Theresians recorded 5100 home visits; 670 children attended after school instruction classes in local Parish centres; 474 children were prepared for sacraments (Baptism - 30, First Holy Communion - 204, Confirmation - 250); and, 140 children were redirected to Catholic schools (Theresian Club, 1944, December). Members of the Theresians contacted Catholic children in State schools, taking them to Mass on Sundays and generally nourishing their spiritual lives often providing instruction in parish centres after school hours on weekdays or Saturday afternoons. Taking their name from St Therese of Lisieux the aim was to practice the 'little way' attainment of sanctity by attention to the here and now details of daily living (Campion, 1988, pp. 109-110).

In December 1946, Father Wallace (Parish Priest of Darlinghurst and part-time Chaplain to the Theresian Club) presented a proposal to Cardinal Gilroy to introduce full-time workers into the membership of the club. In order for the Theresians to play a more active and effective role in the State schools it would be desirable to introduce full time workers into the club. He explained to the Cardinal:

We believe that time for personal contact is an important factor. The centre at Darlinghurst is an interesting comparison. The catechists of the Theresian ladies Auxiliary are in the schools. They follow up the work by visiting the homes during the week . . . experience over the years proves conclusively the impossibility of attempting to cover adequately the work necessary with part-time workers. We realise that we are only touching the fringe of a great and necessary work. (Wallace, 1946, December 14)

In March 1948, the Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney approved a proposal from four Theresians to work full-time in a voluntary capacity for a trial period of twelve months in the Theresian apostolate (Gilroy, 1948, March 18). The scope of the work of the four full-time Theresians, who became known as *Community Workers*, specifically focused on the instruction and pastoral care of the Catholic children attending State schools. It involved catechesis within the State schools; following up of the work in the State schools with home visitations – establishing a contact between the family and the local Parish; conducting holiday programs of instruction and retreats; and, providing instruction for parents (Nelson, 1948, March 4 ). In 1950, there were three full-time Theresians working mainly in the Darlinghurst Parish, inner metropolitan Sydney – Edna Nelson, Alma McManus and Eileen Tier. A report to the Archbishop described the nature of their catechetical work in Darlinghurst and the adjoining Parishes of Haymarket and St. Canice's, specifically with Catholic children attending Crown Street Public School, Albion Street Infant's School and Darlinghurst Public School. The foundational work of providing religious instruction in the State schools on Tuesday and Thursday was supported by home visitations on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and evening Instruction classes for children on Tuesday and senior girls (ages 11-15) on Friday. For the evening classes the children were collected from their homes and brought to the local Catholic primary school by the Theresians. Following a thirty-five minute class based on the Catechism, a variety of recreational activities was provided for the children dependant on their age (Nelson & McManus, 1950, September 25).

In 1948, a new Constitution was developed for the Theresian Club. It was to be the foundation for the future development of the Theresians. Approved by the Cardinal, the Constitution clearly articulated the Theresian Club to be part of the *Lay Apostolate* in the Archdiocese “under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop and his appointed Chaplain General, Mons. Wallace, and the priests in whose parishes the Theresians were working” (Farland, 1998, p. 102). Initially accepted by the Sisters of Charity, in 1949 a new Mother General, Mother Alphonsus, raised objections to the Cardinal. Mother Alphonsus was supported by the President of the Theresians, Miss Edna Nelson, and a Sister of Charity, Sister Francesca, who worked closely with the members of the Club. The objections centred on the role of the *Community Workers* (the full-time Theresians) in the future of the Theresian Club.

An “unhappy division” developed in the Club over the next two years with members split over questions related to the authority of the Sisters of Charity and the introduction of full-time workers (Farland, 1998, p. 103). The matter came to a head when, in May 1951, the Cardinal threatened to close the Club following Mother Alphonsus’ notification that the Sisters of Charity would withdraw their support of the Club if the Constitution was upheld. The Cardinal was insistent that the Theresian Club remain as a lay organisation under the jurisdiction of the Board of the Lay Apostolate. A meeting was called to determine the future of the Club. On 10 May 1951, 191 Theresians and 11 priests gathered at CUSA house. Farland (1998) records that “everybody wished it to continue and it did, as a lay organisation under the authority of the Archbishop, with Sister Therese as representative of the Sisters of Charity” (p. 104).

The 1948 Constitution was upheld and the short experiment of the full-time Community Workers in the Theresian Club came to an end. The three Community Workers resigned from the Club and entered the Sisters of Charity (Farland, 1998). Two of these *Community Workers*, Edna Nelson (Sister Vincent Nelson) and Eileen Tier (Sister Xavier Tier), were to become metropolitan Motor Missioners in 1960s and carry on the ‘Theresian’ model in their work in the new parishes in south-west Sydney. Farland (1998) noted that despite this turmoil and division in the leadership level of the Club over a three-year period “the majority of members went on with their work unaware of what was going on above them” (p. 103).

## **7.5 The Legion of Mary**

Although founded before Pope Pius XI call to the universal church for Catholic Action, the work of the Legion and its emphasis on the involvement of the laity prompted many to regard the Legion of Mary as Reverend Father Maurice McAuliffe (1935) described in the *Australasian Catholic Record*:

The Legion in Catholic Action decked out in attractive and alluring form; throbbing with life so that it wins all to it; safeguarded in a manner stipulated by the Holy Father . . . by prayer and self-sacrifice, by exact system and by complete co-operation with the priest. (p. 373)

The Legion of Mary was founded in Ireland by Frank Duff, a layman, in 1921 (O'Brien, J., 2005). By 1933 the Legion had expanded to a number of countries including Australia.

In the *Summary of Reports* read at the First Annual Meeting of the Legion of Mary in Melbourne in May 1934 it was noted that:

Since the formation of the Curia in June, 1933, the Legion has grown from three Praesidia to thirteen adult and two junior Praesidia . . . with branches outside metropolitan Melbourne and interstate and membership growing to 169 Active members and 764 Auxiliary members. (Legion of Mary, 1934, May)

From the time of the Legion of Mary's establishment in Melbourne in 1933 the clergy and the laity involved in the determination of the nature of its work in the local Church identified the Catholic children outside the Catholic School system as worthy of their attention.

The Praesidia reported among the various works undertaken Children's Sunday Mass attendance, Sunday school classes and writing letters and sending papers to families 'out-back' in West Australia.

Subsequent annual reports confirmed the growth of the Legion of Mary in all States including areas of New South Wales outside the metropolitan Archdiocese of Sydney. The Fifth Annual Report (September, 1938) reports the spread of the Legion "to every State in the Commonwealth – except the Northern Territory" (28 September 1938). The work of the Legion is consistent across the States "helping the priest – in whatever way he wishes – in his pastoral work for souls". In the area of education and faith formation this included preparing the children for Confirmation, bringing children to Sunday Mass, teaching in Sunday Schools, getting children transferred from State to Catholic Schools, and writing letters and sending papers to families isolated in outback regions in Western Australia.

In Broken Hill (far west NSW) the Legion of Mary branch (curia) reported that it "specialises in giving instructions to children in public (or State) schools. An average of about 260 children are instructed weekly, many of them are brought to Mass and the Sacraments" (28 September, 1938).

For a number of years, members from branches of the Legion from other States, particularly Victoria, petitioned firstly Archbishops Kelly then Gilroy for permission to establish the Legion in the Archdiocese of Sydney. In a letter to Archbishop Kelly, Mrs. Gavan Duffy, President of the Senatus in Melbourne, describes the nature of the Legion:



The Legion has been established in Melbourne for about two years. The primary end is the sanctification of its members. With this end in view, the works are undertaken in a spirit of union with Mary for the Kingdom of Christ the King. We do not look for results, it is the spirit in which the work is done that counts not the success or failure as judged by this world's standards. (Duffy, 1934, December 16)

In further correspondence, Mrs. Duffy draws the attention of the Archbishop to the fact that "There are several priests in Sydney who have expressed the wish to have the Legion in their Parishes and who are awaiting your permission to form a Praesidium" (Duffy, 1935, October 22). In response, the Archbishop noted that the Legion of Mary is "not now practical for us here in Sydney" (Kelly, 1936, June 20). It was during this period in the 1930s when the Archdiocese of Sydney was attempting to determine the relationship between Catholic Action as governed by the Diocesan Secretariat of the Lay Apostolate and other groups such as the Legion of Mary.

In this period, priests and other lay Catholics in the Archdiocese of Sydney also requested approval for the establishment of the Legion. In response to one such request from Reverend Father Casmir (St Brigid's Retreat, Marrickville), Coadjutor Bishop Gilroy (1939, March 31) noted the existence of other groups that do the same work - "The Catholic Action Association covers all that would be done by the Legion of Mary and he [Archbishop Kelly] would prefer that you develop to its fullest extent that association; rather than introduce another organisation".

In August 1941, Reverend Father J. B. Rafferty (St Francis Xavier Parish, Arncliffe) wrote to the Archbishop requesting approval for the Legion of Mary to be officially established in the Archdiocese. He commented that in the parish for some time a "small Catholic Action group" had been working based on "the principles of the Legion of Mary" and that the "movement has proved practical, stable and effective". Father Rafferty observed - "The spiritual result seemed to have increased in proportion as members have assimilated the doctrinal training and discipline of the Legionary movement" (Rafferty, 1941, August 29). Father Rafferty's letter also gives some insight into the lack of cohesion in the Lay Apostolate and the attitude of the clergy at that time that it lacked a parochial focus. The Legion of Mary was seen as a potential source of unity and clarification of the work of the Lay Apostolate.

Mr. Denis Kelly (Erskineville), following a meeting with the Archbishop, responded to the “difficulty” expressed by the Archbishop with respect to the Legion of Mary. He replied “That the Legion cannot receive that measure of hierarchical direction which is essential for Catholic Action; and that sanction and approval do not constitute direction” (1941).

In the consideration of these applications, two significant features of the Catholic Church in NSW at that time were evident. Firstly, the desire of the Archbishop for the Legion of Mary in the Archdiocese of Sydney to be subject to the “direct control of the Archbishop” and to “commence in parishes where the pastor was anxious to have it” is indicative of the extent of Episcopal and clerical control exercised over this and similar areas of the lay apostolate in the 1930s and 1940s (Gilroy, 1942, March 10). The second feature of note was the desire for the work of the Legion of Mary in the Archdiocese of Sydney to be under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop and to report directly to the Concilium in Dublin, bypassing the Melbourne-based Senatus in Australia. This is an indication of the tension that existed in the leadership of the two largest metropolitan Archdioceses in Australia.

In March 1942, following several years of petitions from members of established branches of the Legion of Mary in Melbourne and Brisbane, firstly to Archbishop Kelly and then Archbishop Gilroy, approval was given to establish branches of the Legion of Mary in the Archdiocese of Sydney. In reply to Father Rafferty’s request, Archbishop Gilroy conveyed his approval for the establishment of the Legion of Mary as an auxiliary of Catholic Action in the Archdiocese of Sydney. The Archbishop commented - “I should like to see the Legion functioning in each Parish as a recognised parochial unit of Catholic Action” (1942, March 10). Father Rafferty was appointed as the Spiritual Director for the Legion of Mary. He held this position through the 1940s and 1950s.

Once officially established, the Legion of Mary became involved in a variety of activities. One of its most notable works was associated with the religious instruction of Catholic children not in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

The General Report of the Legion of Mary in the Archdiocese of Sydney (1946) records details of the “Catechetical Work” undertaken by members (catechists). This work included the conducting of Sunday school classes for children and attending State

schools involving 102 classes across the Archdiocese taken each week and about 2700 children receiving instruction. Part of this work was the preparation for the Sacraments of Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. An annual retreat was conducted for boys attending State schools. An annual Conference of catechists was held to assist members who were involved in the Catechetical work. The Diocesan Inspector of Schools addressed the conference in 1946.

In the 1947 Annual Report (Legion of Mary) 110 Catechists were instructing 3,791 Catholic children attending State schools. This religious instruction appears to have been undertaken in the Parishes on Sundays – a form of Sunday school. One-day retreats were organized throughout the year. Home visitations played a significant role in the work of the Legion of Mary. Through the visitations, contact was made with the Catholic families of children attending the State schools in the Parish. In 1947, the Legion's report records a total of 39,006 homes were visited. From these visits Catholic children were invited to attend the Sunday Schools and Retreats, children were "returned to Catholic Schools" and the parents received Adult instruction. The formation of the Legion members for this work was well attended to. Monthly Catechist Conferences were held. These conferences involved lectures by priests and lay people in which problems associated with the work were discussed and lessons were prepared. Spiritual formation received significant emphasis through the provision of weekend retreats for members.

During the 1940s, the number of Parishes establishing Praesidia of the Legion of Mary continued to grow. By 1954, there were 119 Senior Praesidia in the Archdiocese of Sydney. There were 104 Catechists giving weekly instruction to 1400 children attending State schools. Additional catechetical work included instruction given by 5 catechists to 200 children in Scheyville Migrant Holding Camp.

The sound parochial foundations of the Legion of Mary sodality in the provision of religious instruction and pastoral care for Catholic children attending State schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney was to provide significant structural support in the re-establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the Archdiocese in the late 1950s.

## 7.6 The Religious Teaching Trust

Evidence of independent parish initiative in the provision of religious instruction for Catholic children attending State schools in the metropolitan area can be found in the establishment, in June 1937, of the *Religious Teaching Trust* as a legal and financial entity in the Archdiocese of Sydney. An initiative of the then Parish Priest of Enmore, Very Rev. Archpriest John Martin, the use of the funds held in trust was:

To provide a salary or salaries of a lay teacher or teachers to teach religion to Catholic children attending State public schools in the Parish of Enmore as at present defined.

Should however in the opinion of the Trustees the needs of the Catholic children in the State public schools in the Parish of Enmore as at present defined be sufficiently provided for the Trustees may apply the whole of the income or any portion thereof not required for the hereinbefore stated object to provide a salary or salaries for a lay teacher or teachers to teach religion to Catholic children attending State public schools in any other Parish of the Archdiocese of Sydney at the discretion of the Trustees.

Should however in the opinion of the Trustees the objects above set out in (1) and (2) of this clause be sufficiently provided for to apply the income or any portion thereof not required for the furtherance of objects set out in (1) and (2) of this clause for the furtherance of religious education within the State of New South Wales in a manner directed by a majority of the Archbishop for the time being of the Archdiocese of Sydney and the catholic Bishops for the time being of New South Wales. (Archdiocese of Sydney, 1937)

The signatories of the Trust Deed indicated the broad acceptance of such an enterprise within the Archdiocese of Sydney at the time. It provided the first documented evidence of the cooperation of the hierarchy, the Catholic School system and Parish-based activity in the provision of religious education for Catholic children not attending Catholic schools in a metropolitan area in NSW. The signatories were: the Parish Priest of Enmore, Very Rev. Archpriest John Martin, the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Sydney, Right Reverend Monsignor James Meany, the Director of Catholic Primary Education in the Archdiocese of Sydney, the Very Reverend John Christopher Thompson, the Diocesan Inspector of Schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney, the Reverend Timothy Joseph O'Connor and the Diocesan Consultor for the Archdiocese of Sydney, the Very Reverend Edward O'Brien. The Trust Deed acknowledged the authority of the Parish Priest to appointment lay teachers within his parish notifying the Trustees of these appointments and sets an upper limit to the salary payable per teacher of one hundred pounds per annum.

Initial difficulties in engaging a lay teacher necessitated an amendment to the Trust Deed. The following note appeared in the Legal Notice section of the newspaper, The Sydney Morning Herald, on August 5, 1939:

The deed of trust directed the application of income to a salary of not more than £100 a year to a lay teacher or teachers of religion to Roman Catholic children attending State schools in the parish of Enmore. There are four such schools in the parish. It had been found impossible to obtain the services of lay persons qualified to do the teaching required . . . the trust could not be administered because of the provision relating to lay teachers. They have been unable to obtain the services of a lay teacher for the purposes contemplated at the salary offered. The work would involve bringing together children of varying ages from the different schools at varying hours of the day and evening. (Legal Notices, 1939)

As a result the word 'lay' was deleted from the original trust deed in every instance and the intention of the trust more clearly defined as charitable for the purpose of the advancement of religion and the teaching of religion.

The record of the accounts of the Religious Education Trust from 1937 until 1952 indicated in 1939 and 1940 two Priests drew a salary from the trust. In September 1942, Miss Kathleen Donovan was employed. From 1942 through to 1952 lay teachers were employed under the terms of the trust, teaching in State High schools and Primary Schools. The schools attended by the part and full time teachers (all of whom were women) were listed in the ledger: Sydney Girls High; Fort St Girls High; Darlinghurst Infants, Forest Lodge Primary and Demonstration School, Mortdale, Kingsgrove, Birchgrove, Balmain, Miranda, Como, Erskineville, Alexandria, Darlinghurst Boys, Crown St Boys. A number of metropolitan parishes in the Archdiocese of Sydney made use of the funding available through the Religious Teaching Trust with the schools attended located in parishes in the inner west, eastern and southern suburbs of metropolitan Sydney (The Religious Education Trust, 1937 -1952).

## **7.7 Conclusion**

In the 1950s, the official policy of the Catholic Church was as it had been for the previous 70 years – opposed to the provision of religious education to Catholic children in government schools with penalties for parents who chose to send their children to those schools. The Diocesan Synod of Sydney (1951) confirmed in its statutes the decrees of the Fourth Plenary Council (1937), the position of the hierarchy for over 85 years:

#### Attendance at State Schools

51(a) In accordance with the Code of Canon Law (Canon 1374) and the Fourth Plenary Council (Decree 625) Catholic children must not attend non-Catholic schools except when: (1) there is grave reason; and (2) due precautions are taken against the danger of perversion.

(b) The Parish Priest of the parent or guardians is deputed (sic) by the ordinary to judge the gravity of the reason and the sufficiency of the precautions taken in particular cases. He may not delegate this faculty to another e.g. his Assistant Priest.

(c) Parents who send their children to non-Catholic schools without the requisite permission are guilty of grave sin. Unless such parents manifest sincere signs of repentance and amendment they are not disposed to receive Absolution. (p. 29)

The reality was that local responses continued to vary considerably from that policy.

By the mid-1950s, the provision of religious education for Catholic children attending State schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney was operating with the official support of the Cardinal. The local Parish Priest was responsible for the recruitment and training of lay catechists to undertake this work in the State schools of his parish. In many cases the Catechist Guild, particularly the Theresians and the Legion of Mary provided that support for the priests.

The response to the call for catechetical renewal, whilst not universally taken up in local parishes, had resulted in the development of training courses for catechists, textbooks for them to use in the classroom and support and recognition of the CCD movement within diocesan structures.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CCD Re-establishment in New South Wales:**

#### **1956 - 1971**

With the rapid growth in the Australian population following the end of the Second World War from 1945 into the 1950s, the Catholic Church in Australia was faced with a new challenge for its schools. Post-war migration brought to the cities and large rural centres migrants from a number of central European countries. Many of those migrants were Catholics who had not experienced a Catholic Education system that had flourished in Australia for over eighty years. Nor had they experienced the uniquely Irish/Australian clerical prohibition placed on the parents of children in an attempt to encourage them to send their children to Catholic schools. Their commitment to the Catholic School System could not be expected. The number of school age children increasing exponentially by the middle of the 1950s as a result of this migration and the rapid increase in the local birth rate (known as ‘the baby boom’). In some areas where Catholic Primary Schools had been established they were unable to accept the number of Catholic children applying to enrol in the school.

This rapid growth in post-war years with the baby boom and the influx of immigrants to Australia created enrolment and accommodation problems for Australian education systems, both Government and Catholic.

### **8.1 Formal Re-establishment of CCD: 1956 – 1959**

In 1955 the Parish Priests of the Archdiocese of Sydney were asked to conduct a survey of the number of Catholic children in State schools in the Archdiocese. At the Clergy Conference held on 28 September 1955 the assistance of the Parish Priests was acknowledged and the results reported. There were over 15,000 and possibly 20,000 Catholic children attending State Schools in the Archdiocese (*Clergy Conference Minutes 1940 - 1960*, 1955, #21). These numbers surprised the Archdiocesan leadership and at the following Clergy Conference in December (20 December 1955) Cardinal

Norman Gilroy (Archbishop of Sydney - 1940 to 1971) made the following statement concerning the Catholic children in State schools in the Archdiocese – “Every Public School must be visited regularly. Instruction should also be given outside school hours if practicable” (*Clergy Conference Minutes 1940 - 1960*, 1955, #9). The Cardinal announced that he had appointed Father Kevin McGovern to assist the pastors in this specific matter.

Bishop Patrick Lyons (Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney - 1950 to 1956) was asked to be responsible for “giving effect” to the plan announced at the synod “for the more thorough religious instruction of Catholic children attending public schools in the archdiocese of Sydney” (Lyons, 1956a). Bishop Lyons was assisted in this task by Monsignor Freeman (later Cardinal Freeman), Chaplain to the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine; Father Slowey, Diocesan Inspector of Schools; and, Father McGovern. In a *Circular to the Parish Priests of the Archdiocese*, dated 25 January 1956, Bishop Lyons outlined the details of the plan for “Religious Instruction of Children in Public Schools” (Lyons, 1956a). The proposed date for commencement of this strategy was Monday, 13 February 1956. The plan described in the circular was as follows:

Over and above the instruction of these children by catechists during school hours, which should continue to be given as at present, religious teachers will take the children for extra instruction outside school hours at a time to be arranged by the parish priest with the religious. (Lyons, 1956a)

The letter described the suggested locations for this after school hours instruction urging the Parish Priest to consider the alternative that “is likely to be better for the child” as the guiding principle. The Catholic School buildings rather than the Church were recommended as the place where the religious instruction should take place. The reason given by Bishop Lyons:

This would help to emphasise in the minds of the poorly instructed children the difference between a church and a school. It might also lead to their gradual enrolment at a Catholic school, since pleasant relations will undoubtedly grow up between them and the religious as time goes on. There is the further point that teaching aids will be readily available in the schools. (Lyons, 1956a)

To implement the plan locally, Parish Priests were encouraged to work with the religious brothers and sisters working in their parish. Bishop Lyons confirmed that the support for the involvement of the religious orders had already been received from the leaders of these communities. In particular “The Sisters of Charity have offered the services of the



Theresians . . . also members of the Legion of Mary and the Society of St Vincent de Paul, will be useful (as well as the catechists)” (Lyons, 1956a).

As part of the plan, Bishop Lyons continued:

It is intended that the lay catechist engaged in the apostolate of instructing our children in public schools should be enrolled in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, so that they might enjoy the spiritual favours attached by the Church to membership. (Lyons, 1956a)

Bishop Lyons (1956a) concluded the communication asking the Parish Priests for information about the State Schools within their Parish boundary; names and contact details of the lay catechists providing instruction in these schools; and specific details of the additional instruction being given by religious teachers in response to the proposed plan including the commencement date.

After the plan had been in operation for one month, Bishop Lyons proposed a gathering of the lay catechists in four designated centres in the Archdiocese. The meetings would take place on a Sunday and religious teachers would “speak to them and recommend suitable textbooks” (Lyons, 1956a). The response from the Parish Priests was less than the Archdiocesan hierarchy had expected and these meetings did not occur.

In the months following the distribution of the Circular from Bishop Lyons, Father McGovern, at the request of Cardinal Gilroy, visited ninety Parish Priests to make an assessment of the local response to the request of the Cardinal and the Circular from Bishop Lyons. In August, following a request from Bishop Lyons (1956c) to Cardinal Gilroy, Father J.M Haseler, Woollahra Parish, and Father Ken Byrne, Ashbury Parish, were seconded to assist Monsignor Freeman and Father McGovern in promoting the work of religious instruction for Catholic children not attending Catholic schools to the Parish Priests in the Archdiocese of Sydney (Lyons, 1956d). Following his appointment Father Byrne visited a further twenty Parish Priests. By the end of August 1956 a total of one hundred and ten Parish Priests had been visited with the aim of assessing the response to the Cardinal’s statements at the Clergy Conferences in 1955 (September and December) and the Circular from Bishop Lyons (25 January 1956). It was hoped that these visits would encourage the Parish Priests to embrace the twofold nature of the work “to see that lay catechists visit all public schools for the religious instruction”; and “to provide extra instruction for the children by Religious Brothers and Sisters outside school hours” (Lyons, 1956d).

Prior to the Archdiocesan Clergy Conference in September 1956, Father McGovern (1956) prepared a *Report on Public Schools* for Cardinal Gilroy. The report outlined the observations that Father McGovern had made as a result of the visits that he, and Father Byrne, had made in their consultation with the Parish Priests in the Archdiocese. He noted that “in many Parishes there does not appear to be a full realisation of the gravity of the situation. There is a tendency to look on Catholic Public School children as hopeless, for whom nothing can be done” (McGovern, 1956).

Father McGovern (1956) identified the importance of the support of the Parish Priest in the success of the scheme of extra instruction outside of school hours:

Where priests have visited the home of the children, the success has been the greatest. In some cases instruction has been successful, but in the majority of cases the instruction has lapsed completely . . . Parish Priests complain of the very real difficulty of getting the children along for instruction even on a Sunday morning. (McGovern, 1956)

On the support given by the Parish Priests for the scheme, Father McGovern (1956) concluded:

I am convinced that the extra instruction would have been better attended had more effort and interest been devoted to the effort. The whole scheme stands or falls on local interest . . . Much can be accomplished if individual priests make a point of visiting the homes of the children and put in an occasional appearance at the instruction. It will serve as an encouragement to both Religious teachers and children. (McGovern, 1956)

The support of the Parish Priest for the scheme proposed by Bishop Lyons in January 1956, or rather the lack of such support was reported by Father McGovern as the most significant challenge to the success of the scheme. In the report, Father McGovern (1956) noted “many priests have had no contact with their children in Public Schools”.

Father McGovern (1956) identified some other challenges. Firstly, the difficulty of getting Catholic children who attended “Central schools” (Secondary/High schools) to attend Parish based instructions due to the fact that these schools were generally located some distance from the Parish site. Many State schools were still without catechists (lay catechists or Priests), especially the State High Schools; the consequence of this being that the Catholic children attended Protestant religious instruction. Finally, many of the Catholic children attending the State schools did not attend Mass and the majority, at the conclusion of the sixth grade (approximately twelve years of age), had not been instructed for First Communion.

The improvement in the overall position of the response in the Archdiocese to the “problems arising from the attendance of Catholic children at Public Schools” (McGovern, 1956) was achieved in 1956 through the work of the laity in organisations such as the Legion of Mary, the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Theresians and through direct appeals to the Catholic trainee teachers. Father McGovern (1956) reported the Legion of Mary organising retreats for State School children with the plans for an extension of the scope, number and location, of this activity. Local conferences of the St Vincent de Paul Society in the southern part of the Archdiocese, Sutherland-Cronulla area, had organised a retreat for boys. Father McGovern had addressed individual Councils of the Society and as a result received many offers of assistance in the visitation of homes and the provision of transportation for the children to the Parish-based instruction. At this time, Father McGovern (1956) noted, “the Society was in the process of making the problem a special work”. Special works in the Society were developed to satisfy needs that arise in the local council area (The Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1991). The Society did not officially agree to provide resources to support this work until August 1963.

In a letter to Cardinal Gilroy, on the eve of the Archdiocesan Clergy Conference, Bishop Patrick Lyons recommended that the Cardinal speak to the clergy about the “extra instruction for Catholic children at public schools” (Lyons, 1956c). Bishop Lyons expressed his frustration at the failure of Parish Priests to appoint catechists to teach in State schools during school hours:

We have more than 20,000 children in the public schools . . . There is obviously a big responsibility to see that there are catechists for the public schools . . . The priests must accept this responsibility. (Lyons, 1956c)

And to support and encourage the out of school hour’s instruction in their parishes:

To ensure that children are mustered for extra school-hour instruction by the Religious teachers, the parish priests have much to do. They should visit the homes of the children, arrange for people to gather them for instruction outside school hours (such as Legion of Mary, Theresians, St Vincent de Paul). They should call at the Catholic school occasionally to meet and get to know the children when [they] come for instruction. (Lyons, 1956c)

Bishop Lyons recommended that the Cardinal speak to the priests at the Clergy Conference of the importance of the Archdiocesan initiative to teach the Catholic children attending State schools:

I think it is essential to emphasise that this scheme for the souls of so many children is a serious matter of conscience for the priests. I cannot imagine anything more important in their pastoral visitation. If they take an interest, the scheme will be a success. Otherwise it will not be a success. (Lyons, 1956c)

The minutes of the Archdiocesan Clergy Conference held on 26 September 1956 recorded the Cardinal's direction to the clergy on the matters of extra instruction for children in State schools

Each Pastor has the onus of seeing that there are catechists to give Religious Instruction to Catholic pupils in all the Public schools in his parish. He has further obligation for arranging for such children to attend additional religious instructions to be given outside school hours by Religious sisters and brothers. (*Clergy Conference Minutes 1940 - 1960*, 1956, #14)

On October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1956, Bishop Lyons sent a letter to the Parish Priests of the Archdiocese of Sydney to advise them of "zonal meetings being arranged for catechists engaged in the work of instructing Catholic children attending Public schools" (Lyons, 1956b). The purpose of these meetings was to allow religious teachers and the priests assisting in this apostolate to suggest to catechists teaching methods for use in the limited time available during their weekly visits to State schools. In a hand written insert to this letter Bishop Lyons noted that these meeting were scheduled for "November 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> in eight centres covering all parishes" (Lyons, 1956b). There is no evidence that these meetings were conducted as proposed.

With the appointment of Bishop Lyons as coadjutor Bishop of Sale (a Victorian rural diocese) on 11 October 1956 (Synan, 2000) the responsibility for the promotion of the apostolate for the Catholic children in State schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney was transferred to Monsignor James Freeman. On 9 December, 1956, James Freeman was appointed as auxiliary Bishop of Sydney.

At the Archdiocesan Clergy conference in June 1957, Cardinal Gilroy once again appealed to the clergy to address the responsibility they have in the provision of religious education for the Catholic children attending State schools in their Parish. This time the appeal was presented as a legal obligation conforming to the 1917 Code of Canon Law. The minutes of the conference record the Cardinal's appeal:

In order to conform with the Code of Canon Law and in view of the critical situation arising from very large numbers of Catholic children in State Schools, it is desirable that the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine should be established in every Parish without delay. (*Conference of Clergy*, 1957, June 26)

The clergy were asked to obtain a leaflet outlining the constitution of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and a suggested plan for organising it in a parish. They were advised that approval for the formal establishment of the Confraternity must be obtained from the local Ordinary and that Bishop Freeman would assist the clergy in this process. This was the first indication of the development of a Diocesan management of the provision of religious education for Catholic children attending State Schools.

From the statement made by the Cardinal at the next Archdiocesan Clergy Conference (25 September, 1957), it could be concluded that the response of the clergy to the Cardinal's June appeal was poor:

The establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine is of obligation in every Parish. Those pastors who have not yet established it are requested to communicate with His Lordship Bishop Freeman at their earliest convenience. The Religious Instruction of Catholic children attending Public schools is a matter of conscience for the pastors concerned. (*Conference of Clergy*, 1957, September 25)

The apparent lack of success in gaining the support of the clergy, in particular, the Parish Priests in the Archdiocese could be explained by the conditioning of this response through over 85 years of declarations for the hierarchy condemning the choice of parents and any attempts to provide religious education for these children by members of the clergy or, until the 1930s, the laity.

In 1958, after attempting to promote the religious instruction of Catholic children in State schools as a parish-based (parochial) initiative for three years with apparently little success, the Archdiocesan leadership looked for a new direction. This direction consisted of two complementary strategies.

The first strategy took the form of a direct request from the Archdiocesan leadership to religious orders to supply personnel for the religious instruction of Catholic children in State schools in the Sydney metropolitan area. Many Religious Orders responded generously to this request. This approach was adopted in a number of other dioceses in New South Wales and across Australia. Many of the Religious Brothers and Sisters who worked in this area of religious instruction for Catholic students attending State schools were called *Motor Missioners*.

The second strategy was the establishment of a centralised Diocesan management structure for the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine – providing strong leadership and

tangible support for the growth of the work in the parishes of the Archdiocese. The aim was to establish the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in each parish. The development of diocesan support structures was to assist the parishes in this task. Metropolitan dioceses Australia-wide also adopted this second strategy establishing centralised Diocesan management of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

## **8.2 The Motor Mission**

The Catholic Apostolate known as the Motor Mission is a uniquely Australian response to the need to provide religious education to Catholic children not attending Catholic schools. The unique circumstances of the Catholic Church in the Australian cultural and physical environment were the impetus for such a response. Originating from the pastoral response of the clergy and religious ministering to the families in the isolated areas of the Australian outback, the name, Motor Mission, was derived from the need in this apostolate for a motor vehicle, as the distances to travel from school to school for weekly lessons, visiting homes and conducting sacramental programmes were significant. The activity of the Motor Mission is part of the history of many of the metropolitan and rural dioceses of Australia (Fagan, 1983).

### **8.2.1 Background**

The historical roots of the Motor Mission can be found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the foundation of the two Australian orders of religious women, the Sisters of St Joseph and the Sisters of the Good Samaritan.

Saint Mary of the Cross (MacKillop) was aware of the isolation of Catholic families in small rural communities both in towns and on large outback farming properties. In response to this need small convents were opened with only two or three sisters as the community, this “revolutionised religious life” (*The Scapular*, 1962) and created the environment from which the apostolate of the Motor Mission grew. There are accounts of the vast distances travelled by Saint Mary of the Cross and the sisters to give religious instruction in places with no Catholic schools and where priests seldom visited. Travelling in a borrowed horse and buggy or by Cobb & Co. coach, this missionary work reached the entire family with the sisters attending to the religious instruction of adults and children alike.

The *Annals of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan* (1857-1938) gives an account of the pastoral journeys of Archbishop Polding in the 1860s and 1870s by horse and buggy to the outlying districts of the Sydney region, including Campbelltown and Wollongong. Polding was accompanied on these visits by two sisters to assist him in the work of catechetical instruction to communities where Churches were being erected. Classes were formed and both children and adults received instruction and were prepared for the sacraments. The visitations were often extended over a number of weeks with the sisters finding accommodation in the local Presbytery, once again escaping from the norm of 'enclosure' of religious life at that time in the Catholic Church. This would allow time for the sisters to "drive out many miles in the bush searching for souls" (Annals, 1857-1938). In his letters, Archbishop Polding refers to Mother Mary De Sales Maloney, Sister Mary Angela Carroll, Sister Mary Agnes Hart, Sister Mary Gertrude Byrne and Sister Mary Benedict Lawn as sisters specially chosen by the Archbishop for this work. He gave clear direction on the nature of the catechetical instruction emphasising "the necessity of keeping to the words of the simple catechism" (Annals, 1857 -1938).

### **8.2.2 Beginnings of the Modern Motor Mission**

In the 1940s Father John C. Wallis, a priest of the Archdiocese of Hobart, Tasmania, founded an Australian congregation of religious sisters originally known as the *Home Missionary Sisters of Our Lady (The Rosary Sisters)*. As a young priest in the Archdiocese of Hobart, Father Wallis became aware of the needs of people in isolated rural communities. He had a vision, similar to that of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and Archbishop Polding in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, of a community of women who would go out to those people. He saw their mission would be to enable people to deepen their faith and know they were an integral part of the wider Church community and supported in their commitment to their families (Missionary Sisters of Service, 2004). An account of the early history of the congregation records:

In 1944 Alice Carroll, Joyce O'Brien, Gwen Morse and Kath Moore responded to the vision of a young priest and began a community of religious women in Launceston, Tasmania, Australia. Their rule was simple, allowing for freedom of action necessary for their missionary work. They left convents, drove cars and went into the outback. At a time when religious life was traditional and more restrictive, this community had an Australian pioneering spirit which responded to the needs of the times. (Missionary Sisters of Service, 2004)

The work of the community included the setting up and conducting of correspondence courses for children in remote areas, visiting isolated families and preparing children for the sacraments. The particular focus was the outback areas of Australia where settlements are so remote that the Catholic children did not have access to a Catholic school or in fact to any established schools, for many, all their secular education was conducted by correspondence, which was later supplemented by 'School of the Air'. Father Wallis (1956) described the work:

A more accurate statement of their mission might be 'to all the children beyond the reach of the Catholic school.' In a very true sense – the 'outback' is right on the outskirts of many of the cities and larger towns. There are children in these areas every bit as much religiously underprivileged as those of the most remote and isolated country districts. (p. 29)

Initially, they called each of their homes *Rosary House*; because of this, in some places, they were called the Rosary Sisters. With a motto of '*into the highways and byways*', the sisters stayed in church sacristies, if necessary, and would eventually obtain, in 1949, a mobile caravan pulled by a utility truck for their outback missions. The caravan was used in Tasmania until 1960.

In 1957, Bishop Martin Fox of Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese, a huge rural diocese that occupies the western half of New South Wales, invited the Home Missionary Sisters of Our Lady (The Rosary Sisters) to establish a mission in the diocese. The response of the community was to send four sisters from Tasmania to the central New South Wales town of Parkes. From Parkes, the sisters conducted correspondence courses for the Catholic children living in remote areas and travelled to all areas of the huge diocese to conduct classes for Catholic children and their parents. The Parkes community was the first mainland foundation for the sisters. It represented the beginning of the rural Motor Mission in New South Wales. The work from the Parkes community continued until 1992. In 1969 a sister commenced a solo apostolate in Broken Hill (Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese), a large rural town close to the New South Wales and South Australian border. This work continued until 1983. In 1971, the name of the congregation was changed to the Missionary Sisters of Service.

The isolation of Catholic children in rural Australia that restricted their access to Catholic school education has been and will continue to be an ongoing challenge for the Catholic Church. Religion by Correspondence, Summer Camps/Retreats and the travelling



religious education teachers became significant ways in which for religious education and pastoral support was provided to these isolated Catholic children and their families.

The work of the Rosary Sisters inspired the establishment of a 'motor mission' in many rural areas across Australia. In 1956, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, acting on a request from Archbishop Beovich of Adelaide, established the first Motor Mission in the Adelaide Hills. This was the first time the term *Motor Mission* was used to describe the work. The historical significance of this first official request from the Catholic hierarchy to establish this Apostolate in the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not escape the Sisters of St Joseph. In their newsletter *The Scapular*, (December 1962- January 1963) they wrote:

History has a way of repeating itself, and as in the beginning of the Congregation, South Australia was the setting for the first experiment in this direction, when in 1956 two Sisters and a car set out on the first apostolic journey in the Adelaide foothills, just ninety years after Mother Mary MacKillop of the Cross opened her first school at Penola. (The Scapular, December 1962/ January 1963, p.11)

The success of the Adelaide Hills Motor Mission led to the establishment of similar missions in the Archdiocese of Adelaide at Barossa Valley and Peterborough to the north.

In announcing the commencement of the Motor Mission in the Diocese of Lismore (New South Wales), in 1960, the Diocesan Newspaper, *Catholic Life*, reported on the work of the Home Missionary Sisters of Our Lady in Wilcannia-Forbes by way of describing the operation of the Motor Mission in the Diocese of Lismore:

From their convents the Sisters set out for various country areas. Having a caravan attached to their car, the Sisters "camp" in the one locality for several weeks. During this time they prepare children for First Communion and instruct converts and older children. When this work is finished they move to another district. Contact is maintained with the children by correspondence lessons sent from their Home Convent. (1960)

It was in the climate of crisis in Catholic education in the mid 1950s that the hierarchy and some of the clergy in Catholic dioceses across Australia realised the necessity of providing for the religious education of Catholic children who found themselves, for whatever the reason, to be outside the Catholic School system of education. Once again, as in the latter half of the 1800s, to secure the establishment of the Catholic School system, many of the Australian Bishops were to call upon the religious orders to assist in this broadening of the mission of Catholic Education in their local dioceses. Archbishop

Beovich of Adelaide described this call for the establishment of the Motor Mission ministry as one which would set in motion a framework of teaching for bringing faith education to the increasing number of Catholic children who could not be catered for by the Catholic school network. (Trower, 1998, p. 141)

The establishment of the Motor Mission in South Australia came to the attention of the Archbishops and Bishops of New South Wales at a time when the pressure experienced by the growth of the Catholic school age population was causing significant problems in the metropolitan Archdiocese and the rural dioceses across the State.

### **8.2.3 The Rural Motor Mission in New South Wales**

During 1960, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart established rural Motor Missions in the Diocese of Lismore and the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn.

The establishment of the rural Motor Mission in the Snowy River area in the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn, southern NSW is described in the newsletter, *The Garland of St Joseph* in July 1961:

In January, 1960, a Motor Mission by Volkswagen was undertaken by the Sisters of St Joseph, to give Religious Instruction to Catholic children attending State schools chiefly in the Snowy river area. The scheme embraces three parishes and includes thirteen schools. The distance of these schools from Jindabyne ranges from three miles to one hundred and sixteen miles, totalling an average of 650 miles per week. The Sisters . . . two in Community . . . are stationed in Jindabyne. Programme consists of weekly instruction, of one-hour periods. The classes are divided into two groups . . . Senior and Junior. . . Outside school hours the Sisters undertake an extra hour's period in each parish during which the children are assisted to memorise the Catechism questions, as set in the Syllabus. These classes are held where most convenient . . . Church . . . Convent . . . Home . . . The parents are most appreciative, and on the whole, cooperative. Other works include . . . visitation of homes, formation of sodalities . . . choirs from the schools. (July, 1961, p. 174)

In the same year, two Sisters of St Joseph, Sister Patrick and Sister Ita, commenced work in the Motor Mission in Lismore Diocese. Based at South Lismore in the existing convent, the sisters visited 30 country State schools and gave religious instruction to around 250 Catholic students (*Catholic Life*, 1960).

Rural Motor Missions had been established in every State of Australia and metropolitan Missions existed in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney by the end of 1964.

#### **8.2.4 The Metropolitan Motor Mission in New South Wales**

In the Archdiocese of Sydney the established work of the Theresians and the Legion of Mary continued in a number of parishes but was not able to keep up with the rapidly growing number of Catholic children enrolled in State schools.

In 1958, a new religious order, the Brothers of St Gerard Majella, was established in Sydney with the express purpose of working with the Catholic children in State schools in the Archdiocese.

In 1959, following a number of less than successful requests to clergy for a parish based response to provide religious instruction for the Catholic children in State schools of the Archdiocese, the decision was made to invite the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart to establish a Metropolitan Motor Mission in the Blacktown area of western Sydney. This was the first metropolitan Motor Mission in Australia.

Following similar invitations to several other religious orders, metropolitan missions were established in 1960 by the Sisters of Charity at Liverpool, south western Sydney, Good Samaritan Sisters at Dee Why, the Northern beaches, and the Sisters of St Joseph at Central Bankstown. The Christian Brothers commenced teaching boys in Secondary schools in all of the established mission areas.

Sister Vincent Nelson RSC described the establishment of the metropolitan Motor Mission in Liverpool/Mount Pritchard, south-western Sydney, in 1960:

The first thing was to become familiar with the parish itself, the extent of the parish, where the schools were, the knowledge of the streets, to meet the Principals of the schools and talk over with them the conditions that would apply as far as we were concerned; the days vacant for the actual lessons; also the number of children, the availability of rooms, the times the lessons would be . . . My next work was to meet with the ministers who were also in each school with their religious instruction. (Interview conducted 14 March 1995)

Sister Vincent Nelson RSC recalled the importance of the motor vehicle in their metropolitan missionary work:

When I was appointed to the work, we were given a station wagon. We picked the children up in the outside (sic) where there was difficulty in getting to places and we'd take them to their place of instruction which might have been a church or a hall for instruction and then take them home after the instruction and deliver them to their homes. (Interview conducted 27 March 1995)

The work of the metropolitan Motor Mission provided much needed support for the CCD Central Committee and then the CCD Diocesan Office in the 1960s in their efforts to re-establish the CCD. In 1966, members of the Motor Mission were invited to become members of the inaugural CCD Diocesan Council. Initially, Brother Peter McCracken CFC represented the Motor Mission.

The work of the Motor Mission involved not only providing religious education to Catholic children in school time within the State School classroom but also included: the visiting of the homes of the families of these children; conducting of additional classes outside of schools hours at the State school or in Parish buildings (including Sunday School); transporting children to and from the Church for Mass on Sundays and on other occasions; the preparation of children for the Sacraments of Initiation; the conducting of weekend retreats for upper primary and secondary school students; and, the support and training of a growing number of dedicated parish-based lay catechists. The motor vehicle was a vital resource in this mission.

For the early Motor Missioners there were many challenges regardless of the context of the mission, metropolitan or rural. Sister Shirley Fagan RSJ (1983) recalled some of these challenges in an article published in *Go-Spread the Good News*, the gazette of the Sydney Diocesan Catechist Committee, in June 1983. These included the working within a state school system; the challenge of only a 30 to 40 minute period as against the more liberal provisions of the Catholic school environment to which they were accustomed; the physical demands of travelling within a limited time in order to keep to established timetables; the lack of understanding and acceptance of their ministry from some within the church – priests, religious and laity – ‘*You should be back teaching in the Catholic school*’ and ‘*You’re wasting your time with those children*’; and the apparent lack of response from some of their pupils and their families.

Sister Shirley Fagan (1983) then described some of the “many sunny and bright moments” experienced by the Motor Missioners. These included the readiness of the children, especially in the Primary schools to absorb all they were given; the openness, frankness and the lack of inhibitions of the pupils; the response of large numbers being prepared for the sacraments of Confession, Communion and Confirmation; the fact that many children received Baptism as a result of home visitation by the missioners; the gratitude of some parents because their children had religious to care for them (they no

longer felt that they were outcasts); the return of some parents to the practice of their faith; and, as a result of our visitation being in a position to help not only spiritually but also materially those of the families who were in need.

Other religious orders involved in the Motor Mission in New South Wales and across Australia included the Brothers and Sisters of St Gerard, Sisters of Mercy, Presentation Sisters, Schoenstatt Sisters, Marist Sisters, Sisters of the Society of Mary, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Brigidine Sisters, Missionary Sisters of Service, the Dominicans, and Religious of the Sacred Heart (Fagan, 1983).

The Motor Missioners continued to have a direct influence on the CCD movement until the mid-1990s. The Motor Mission became an important structural element in the establishment of Diocesan/Archdiocesan Confraternity of Christian Doctrine leadership and management in the 1960s. Initially, as much needed teachers in the local government schools, the Motor Missioners then responded to the increasing need for catechists by recruiting and training lay catechists and finally they supported local parish catechists in roles as regional and diocesan leaders. Motor Missioners provided leadership in all areas of the CCD ministry in the 1970s and 1980s. The work of religious in the CCD in this era involved the provision and development education programs for both the students in the government schools and the lay volunteers who came forward to assist in the teaching of these children. In the 1990s they prepared the ministry for the transition to lay leadership of the ministry at the Regional and Diocesan levels. This commenced in the middle of the decade with the appointment of the first lay Director of the CCD in the Archdiocese of Sydney, Mr. Peter Ivers.

### **8.3 Establishing the Archdiocesan Organisation: 1959 - 1965**

In 1959, Auxiliary Bishop James Freeman called a meeting of the priests in the Archdiocese of Sydney and announced that the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) was to be established in the Archdiocesan office under the leadership of Doctor Cornelius Duffy, Director, and Father Richard Davey, Secretary. The stated purpose of the office of the CCD was to support the provision of Catholic *Special Religious Instruction* in State schools. *Special Religious Instruction* (SRI) was the title given in the legislation (The Public Instruction Act 1880) for the provision of religious instruction by Churches in State schools.

By the end of the 1950s, it was evident that the problem for Catholic Secondary education would be even worse than that in the Primary school sector. Parents were left little choice but to enrol their children in the local State School.

In the metropolitan dioceses, across Australia, especially Sydney and Melbourne, rapid urban population growth had resulted in an urban sprawl which saw new Parishes established on the outer fringe of the metropolitan dioceses. With the coming of large housing schemes in these areas designed to accommodate the growing population, the Parish Catholic school, if it had been established, very quickly was unable to meet the demand of the local Catholic population and the majority of Catholic children in such Parishes found themselves in the State schools.

Statistical surveys in 1960 in the Archdiocese of Sydney reported 20,141 Catholics in State Primary schools, 6,794 in State Secondary schools - a total of 26,935 Catholic students attending State schools were receiving regular religious instruction. There were 730 lay catechists - 631 primary school catechists and 99 catechists in secondary schools (Dixon, 1995b). By the end of the decade, in 1970, there were 77,836 Catholic students in State schools receiving regular religious instruction – 53,836 Primary age students and approximately 24,000 Secondary students. There were 2,258 lay catechists. The trend across the state of New South Wales was similar. In 1960, there were 66,588 Catholic students enrolled in State schools in NSW – 11.1% of the total State school population and 28.4% of the Catholic school age students. By 1970, the number of Catholic students in State schools was 147,701 – nearly 20% of the total State school student population and 42.8% of Catholic school age students (*Supplement to the report on the State school situation*, 1971, May). The growth in the number of Catholic students not attending Catholic schools in the metropolitan and regional areas of NSW called for a focused and rapid response from Diocesan leadership across the State.

Both metropolitan and rural dioceses called on Religious Orders to assist by providing personnel for this rapidly growing area of mission. Several significant features of present day CCD operation were developed in the Archdiocese of Sydney in the ten year period following the official reestablishment in 1959 (Dixon, 1995b). These included the development of Diocesan structure; centralised curriculum development; catechist training and formation; and, the ongoing support of catechists in their local parish context. The most urgent need was the recruitment and training of catechists to teach the

growing numbers of Catholic children attending the State schools in the Sydney metropolitan area and the regional dioceses. The majority of catechists were volunteers – mainly women with little or no teaching experience. Training for the volunteers and the availability of appropriate teacher materials for the lessons material were of the highest priority.

This development in the Archdiocese of Sydney was foundational for the CCD operational models that existed in all NSW Dioceses at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **8.3.1 The Central Committee and Regional Structure**

In 1960, the Central Committee of the CCD was established in the Archdiocese of Sydney. The Central Committee consisted of an Episcopal Chairman (Bishop Freeman) and an Executive Committee – a Director (Doctor Cornelius Duffy) and four priests – Fathers Richard Davey, W. Delaney, Ronald Hine and William Malone. The Committee was based at Theresian House, 370 Victoria Street Darlinghurst. This was initially a low-key operation with the Director and the Secretary available once a week on a Wednesday morning for ninety minutes (Dixon, 1995a).

During the first three months of 1960, meetings of the clergy were organised across the Archdiocese to explain the new organisational approach. This approach involved the appointment of a Priest in each area (Vicariate) to the role of Secretary. Each Vicariate was to be divided into sections or regions that would be supported by a priest. This support required the priest to visit each parish in his region explaining the scheme and assisting the Parish Priest in the establishing on the CCD within his parish. The reports and statistics collected from these local Parish visits were used by the Central Committee to assist them in the organisation and effective use of the limited resources available. This grassroots contact with the local Parish Priest connected to a centralised diocesan structure made it more difficult for him to ignore the request to establish the CCD and develop structures within the parish to ensure the provision of religious education for the children in their parish who were attending state schools.

A memorandum, probably issued by the part time CCD secretariat to the Diocesan Committee, circulated in late 1961, outlined the “plans for development of catechetical apostolate for children attending State schools, and formation and consolidation of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine” (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, 1961a). The general

organisation of the CCD focused on development in two equally important areas – the centralised diocesan organisation and well organised parish groups or cells. The role of centralised diocesan structure was outlined in the memorandum:

The central organization must play the role of the secretariat responsible for such things as catechist training, establishing of syllabus, publication of texts, contact with state education department, and even ultimately for the attendance of a catechist at each school, and the work of religion (religious) in state schools. (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, 1961a, p. 2)

At the time when this memo was circulated the secretariat existed “in embryo” and the training centres, established in 1960, “would be under its (the secretariat) control, and be its instrument for regional activity” (1961a, p. 2).

The purpose of the centralised Archdiocesan CCD structure was to assist the parochial CCD structure. The canonical responsibility of the Parish Priest (Code of Canon Law, 1917) was maintained. The local responsibility for recruitment, supervision, coordination and initial training of catechists at regular meetings was encouraged and supported by the Central Committee and Regional coordination.

The second important area identified in the memorandum (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, 1961a) was the significance of local parish organisation:

The C.C.D. is a lay organization for a lay apostolate, and the development of parish groups or cells is essential for its effectiveness . . . The ultimate aim should be the establishment of C.C.D. groups in each parish. The members of such groups will be catechists, and regular meetings besides providing help in teaching method, personal spirituality, and knowledge of the faith, offer the change (chance) to organize the work of the parish more effectively. (p. 2)

Some proposed steps for establishing these parish groups included the encouragement of the catechists to recognise the value of forming such groups for their mutual support, spiritual formation and development of teaching skills; introduction of information sessions for seminarians and young priests to emphasise the value of these parish groups; the central CCD secretariat to assume an advisory role to support priests in their efforts to establish the parish groups; request the approval of the superiors of religious congregations to allow local religious to act as master teachers for the catechists; and, to publish a regular bulletin for catechists providing articles and information to inform them in their work and notification of meetings and training opportunities (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, 1961a, p. 2).



The goal in the early 1960s was to establish a CCD group in every Parish in the Archdiocese of Sydney. This target was to be achieved through the establishment of local support through a regional coordinating body helping the parishes of the region. These regional coordinating groups were supervised by a centralised Archdiocesan secretariat, which would evolve from the inaugural Central Committee (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, 1961a, p. 3). To achieve the concept of local support for the Parishes in 1961 the Archdiocese was divided into seven catechetical regions based on the locations of previously established catechist training centres. The regions included Leichhardt, Parramatta, Darlinghurst (later to be located at Randwick), Dee Why, North Sydney, Hurstville and Bankstown. In each region, a priest was appointed as regional secretary. In 1964, another five catechetical regions were created (including Blacktown, Liverpool, Sutherland, Gosford and Toronto) bringing the total number of regions at the beginning of 1965 to twelve (Dixon, 1995b, p. 11).

The initial focus of the Central Committee, during these foundational years, was the urgent need to provide Catholic religious instruction for the rapidly increasing number of Catholic children in State Primary and Secondary schools. The State legislation was unchanged from the original 1880 Public Instruction Act. The Act made provision for regular access (up to 1 hour a week) to State schools during school hours for “visiting Ministers of Religion or their representative” (as it had been for eighty years) to provide Special Religious Instruction (SRI) – religious instruction for their particular denomination (1880 Public Instruction Act). The initial priority of the CCD, effectively the Central Committee, was the provision of an approved and appropriate teaching program and the training of teachers, most of whom were parish-based volunteers, for the provision of Religious Instruction in the educational context of a classroom.

During this time the CCD Central Committee became aware of a “wider task”, the need for pastoral care and parish involvement for Catholic children who did not attend Catholic schools to complement the thirty to sixty minutes of Special Religious Instruction received in the State school once a week (Dixon, 1995b, p. 12). This pastoral care and connection to Parish communities was part of the well-established work of groups that had been involved in the apostolate to the children not attending Catholic schools for many years prior to the re-establishment of the CCD in 1959. The integration of instructional and pastoral work had been part of the local Parish ministry of the

Theresian Club since 1936 (Archdiocese of Sydney), the Legion of Mary since 1942 (Archdiocese of Sydney and Regional New South Wales Dioceses) and more recently, the rural and metropolitan Motor Missioners (Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart – commenced in Sydney in 1959; Sisters of Charity and Sisters of the Good Samaritan – commenced in Sydney in 1960). Whilst these groups were present in a significant number of parishes in the Archdiocese of Sydney, the reality was that many parishes were not receiving any pastoral support.

The vision of the CCD Central Committee was that the complementary activities of Special Religious Instruction for Catholic children attending State schools and the pastoral care of those children (and their families) could be best achieved by establishing a close working relationship between the Diocesan CCD, through the Central Committee, and the sodalities and societies already engaged in this type of work (Dixon, 1995b, p. 12). To address the needs of the many parishes in the Archdiocese who were not receiving the support from the established sodalities /societies or Motor Missioners, Bishop James Freeman (Episcopal Chairman of the CCD Central Committee), asked the Society of St Vincent de Paul “if it could use its resources to help those engaged in the Apostolate” (Tobin, 1964, June 15). The President of the Metropolitan Central Council, Brother L. Keegan “advised Bishop Freeman that the Society would be very privileged to assist in the Work” noting that “the Third Object of every Conference was to give religious instruction to Catholic children not attending Catholic Schools” (Tobin, 1964, June 15).

On 12 August 1963, Bishop James Freeman (Episcopal Chairman of the CCD Central Committee) convened a meeting of representatives from the “central executives of Catholic societies engaged in the apostolate” including the St Vincent de Paul Society (Dixon, 1995b, p. 12). A report, prepared by Father Ron Hine, entitled *Apostolate to Children attending Public Schools* (12 August, 1963, as cited in Dixon, 1995b) provided the focus for the meeting discussion.

The report provided a ‘snapshot’ of the CCD in the Archdiocese of Sydney four years into its operation. The elements of a successful organisation of the apostolate to the Catholic children not attending Catholic schools included “provision of adequate instruction in the time allowed in State schools; provision of additional instruction outside school time; pastoral Care to give pupils the support and encouragement, which

their families fail to give” (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964a, p. 3). The central role of the Parish Priest was once again emphasised:

the prime responsibility for the organising this apostolate to children who do not attend Catholic schools rests on the Parish Priest. The Cardinal-Archbishop has directed that priests either give instructions in the public school, or arrange for someone to give it for him. Moreover, the priest’s ordinary responsibility, for his parishioners, includes the pastoral care needed by these children. (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964a, p. 3)

The role of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was to assist the priests in this complicated and difficult task. The coordinating role of the Central Committee of the Confraternity – a committee of priests - was endorsed. The constitution of the CCD in the Archdiocese of Sydney included the members, all catechists who actively engage in the work of instructing the children who attended public schools, and the Central Committee. The role of the Central Committee was to act “as a Secretariate, supplying services which enable Parishes and Catechists to carry out the work of instruction more effectively . . . It also acts as a liaison between parishes and sodalities engaged in this apostolate to coordinate their efforts” (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964a, p. 4). A number of regions had been established across the Archdiocese to facilitate the work of the Central Committee whilst maintaining local autonomy. The report further elaborated the tasks of the Archdiocesan Confraternity:

Recruiting, placing and supervision of catechists; setting a syllabus and publication of teaching aids; training of catechists; assisting the motor mission religious; promoting instruction outside school time; liaison with N.S.W. Department of Education; liaison with the C.C.D and education offices in other dioceses. (1963, cited in Dixon, 1995b, p. 12)

The four tasks given particular emphasis were the provision of a “Syllabus of Instruction” to provide a uniform and well resourced program for use in the State school context; assisting Parishes in the training of Catechists; keeping contact with Catechists and supporting them in their work; and, finally, to cooperate with other societies / sodalities, such as, the Theresians, the Legion of Mary and the St Vincent de Paul Society, in providing additional instruction for children outside school time and in promoting pastoral care of these children (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964a, pp. 4-7).

The CCD Central Committee sought assistance from the societies and sodalities specifically in the task of additional instruction and pastoral care. The goal was for every child from a public school, at the primary level, to attend an additional class of religious

instruction outside school time each week. The plan was to establish a Parish School of Religion in each parish that would operate on the weekends or after school, similar to the type of CCD program that had been in operation in United States of America since the 1930s. The Central Committee of the CCD planned to publish booklets for the instruction sessions outside of school hours in the Parish context to complement the material developed for religious instruction in the State school. The establishment of Youth discussion groups within the Parish or in conjunction with the local Catholic High school were proposed for High School students.

Additional activities such as days set aside for instruction, Retreat days and ‘holiday schools’ of two or three days were also proposed as a way of providing additional instruction and to “give the child a familiar, relaxed contact with Priests – perhaps with Nuns and Brothers and with ordinary Catholics . . . As a result they begin to feel they belong to the Church” (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964a, p. 10). For Primary school pupils these days were to take place in the local parish. A regional approach was suggested for the Secondary school pupils.

Father Ron Hine (CCD Secretariat) outlined focus for the work of the CCD for 1965 at the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Confraternity Committee meeting in November 1964. The first task would be improving the quality of religious instruction with greater effort in the recruiting and training of catechists. The second task would be to increase the amount of time devoted to the instruction of Catholic children attending State Schools. This would involve the establishing of Schools of Religion in each parish to increase the availability of out of school hour’s religious instruction. The final task would be to establish a Catechetical Supply Centre.

Doctor Duffy (CCD Director), speaking at the Society of St Vincent de Paul’s Confraternity Committee meeting, described the nature of the CCD work in at the end of 1964:

This was a work which would grow more enormous as time elapsed. We are not losing but, with a huge increase in the total population, the number of Catholic children in State schools, will naturally increase and the time will come when this work of education of Catholic children in State Schools will become equally as great as the work of all our Catholic schools. And this work is in the hands of the laymen of the Church. (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964, November 23)

In the report prepared by Father Ron Hine (12 August, 1963, as cited in Dixon, 1995b), two differing views about the future direction of the Diocesan office of the CCD were put forward. The first was for the continuation of the established “low key operation” and the second, was a case for the “development of an organisational structure to keep pace with the growing undertaking and have full-time staff” (Dixon, 1995b, p. 12). The proposed plan for centralised diocesan management also involved the recruiting and training of catechists at a diocesan level, providing the Archdiocese with a “pool of trained catechists” (Dixon, 1995b, p. 12) to be offered to assist parishes in cases where they were unable to find a sufficient number of local volunteers as catechists for the State schools in the Parish. The proposal for a centralised management approach prevailed.

The development of a more balanced – shared authority – structure where the CCD maintained its parochial base under the leadership of the Parish Priest and the Central Committee supported that leadership was challenged by the inconsistency of the response of the Parish Priests in the Archdiocese in accepting the need to provide religious instruction and pastoral support for the growing numbers of Catholic children attending State schools in their parish. This fundamental challenge was clearly stated by the CCD Director, Doctor Duffy at a meeting of the Society of St Vincent de Paul’s Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Committee in November 1964:

It has been a long struggle, but we have succeeded at last in converting the Bishops to the need for such work. Now we are faced with the task of converting the Parish Priests and though this presents problems and we will encounter such remarks, as ‘we never did this fifty years ago,’ Parish Priests are not beyond conversion. In years to come, when books are written about us and our times, it will never be said that we did not recognise the existence of this problem and it will never be said that we did not face up to the problem. (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964, November 23)

With the ultimate goal of developing best practice in the work of the CCD at a parochial level, the “pattern of authority structure of the Church influenced the choices in structuring the CCD . . . the CCD followed the pattern to be observed in dioceses and the universal Church – centralized policy with decentralized administration” (Dixon, 1995b, p. 15). In this early phase of the development of the CCD, the development of regional officers and a centralised secretariat were signs of an emerging bureaucracy. During the first six years of operation (1959 -1965) it became increasingly common for roles and functions to be designated by the Central Committee with the development of coordination and control structures (Dixon, 1995b, p. 15). Examples of this approach

included the establishment of Regional Centres for catechist training managed by a local Priest Secretary with Diocesan-determined format and content and the development of a centralised program for the training of catechists and the teaching curriculum. The control exercised by the Central Committee was indirect but effective in ensuring a uniform approach was adopted on many aspects of CCD operation across the Archdiocese. This approach was to gradually extend to all dioceses in the New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory province.

The nature of the CCD in New South Wales was significantly influenced by the '*within a school classroom*' context in which religious instruction could be given due to the local State legislation. As an educational activity the provision of religious instruction for Catholic children in State schools required teacher training, a teaching program and the associated resources. This requirement was also evident in the CCD operation in dioceses and parishes in the USA. The unique Australian challenge for this activity lay in the physical separation of the Parish site and all its resources from the place of delivery of the religious instruction, the State school classroom – a secular environment. In a Church where the Catholic school (an institution) and not the Parish (a local community of faith) had been regarded as the focus of pastoral activity for over eighty years a new paradigm was needed. In the 1960s, as it had been for nearly thirty years, the development of institutions managed by religious professionals was the characteristic of the Church's pastoral strategy. The pastoral model that was available as a reference was that of the Catholic school system and its management. In fact, in the early years (1959 – 1971) the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the Archdiocese of Sydney was "funded through the Catholic Education Office and one of the members of the Central Committee (Fr. R. Hine) was on the C.E.O. staff" (Dixon, 1995b, p. 16).

### **8.3.2 Societies and Sodalities**

#### **Society of St Vincent de Paul**

In the latter half of 1963, Bishop James Freeman (Episcopal Chairman of the CCD Central Committee), asked the Society of St Vincent de Paul "if it could use its resources to help those engaged in the Apostolate" (Tobin, 1964, June 15). The President of the Metropolitan Central Council, Brother L Keegan "advised Bishop Freeman that the Society would be very privileged to assist in the Work" (Tobin, 1964, June 15).

The Society of St Vincent de Paul designated the assistance of the CCD apostolate in the Archdiocese of Sydney as a ‘Special Work’ under the objects of the Society - “The third object of the Society of St Vincent de Paul is that members apply themselves to the religious instruction of Catholic children not attending Catholic Schools” (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964a, p. 1). In 1964, the Society established *The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Committee*. A handbook was published in March 1964 to provide a guide for Committee members in their new work – assisting the apostolate to Catholic children not attending Catholic schools. The introduction to the handbook contained as description of the task:

Instructing children and adults in the truths of the Faith is one of the original works of the Society. A problem confronting the Church at present is the adequate religious education of children who do not attend Catholic Schools. To mobilise the forces of the Society into this field, a Special Committee has been formed. Each parochial Conference is to have a brother in charge of the work. The present Handbook is written as a guide to this Brother. (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964a, p. 2)

The handbook outlined the areas in which the Society, through its local conference representative, could assist the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine at a parochial and diocesan level. The ‘Confraternity brother’ was cautioned that the ultimate decision of what is to be done in each Parish rests with the Parish Priest – their role is to assist as directed by him. The nature of the work fell into three main categories - the first, *Instruction in Public Schools*; the second, *Records*; and, the third, *Additional Instruction Outside of School Time*.

Acknowledging that most Conference members would be unable to act as catechists due to their full-time employment commitments, the Society was to assist in the provision of religious instruction during school hours in the State schools by being active in the recruitment of catechists; the providing of financial support for the Catechist in the purchasing of “teaching aids and religious objects, such as: Rosaries and Prayer Books for pupils”; and, arranging transport for Catechists to attend training courses and other gatherings arranged by the CCD.

On response to a specific request from the Central CCD Secretariat, the local Conferences of the Society were to assist with the development and maintenance of systematic records of Catholic children attending State schools in each parish. It was suggested that:

with the approval of the Parish Priest, the Brother in charge of the work keep, on file, a record card for each child. The information recorded should include name, address, school, age, Sacraments received, plus some indication of family background. (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964a, pp. 7 - 8)

The most significant work of the local St Vincent de Paul Conference was the support of additional religious instruction outside of school time. This included assisting the Parish Priest in the development the Parish School of Religion through recruitment and training of teachers, enrolling children, provision of financial support to purchase teaching aids, and maintaining class records. Other activities that were proposed included days of instruction, one-day retreats and holiday schools for Primary school age children and days of instruction and one-day retreats for Secondary school pupils.

The Handbook described the formal ways in which the Conference Brother may contact and assist the local Catholic children attending State schools. The emphasis was on the opportunities for providing pastoral care for these children and their families:

the greatest call on the talents of the Brother in charge is to organise the sort of moral support, which the public school child needs in order to stay faithful to the practice of his religion. The two chief sources of moral support are: personal contacts and membership of Catholic Sodalities. (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964a, p. 15)

The model for the local St Vincent de Paul Society Conferences would be found in the work of the Theresians and Legion of Mary and more recently the metropolitan Motor Missioners. Conference Brothers would visit the homes of the Catholic children attending State schools explain the arrangements for additional instruction and provide transportation for the children if necessary.

The inaugural meeting of the Society's Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Committee was held in April 1964. The minutes of the meetings of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Committee from 1964 until 1969 provide some insight into the work carried out by the Society of St Vincent de Paul during this period in support of the CCD apostolate. This work included organising one day retreats for Primary schoolchildren, visiting the homes of the Catholic children attending State schools, transporting children to Mass on Sunday and School of Religion additional lessons conducted in the Parish. The Society cooperated with the Legion of Mary in conducting parish-based one day retreats for primary school children known as *Children's Parish Days*. A report on the retreats held in southern Sydney on 19 April 1964 at Caringbah and 26 April 1964 at Gympie noted:



These retreats were an outstanding success. God alone knows the spiritual benefit these days will be for the children . . . the wonderful spirit that existed amongst all Societies taking part in this Work was most edifying and shows what can be done in every Parish. (Tobin, 1964, June 15)

Other reports in 1964 included: a Retreat at Five Dock attended by 100 primary school age children; Kingsgrove – Bankstown conducted a retreat at Earlwood for Secondary School Boys – 29 boys attended; a ‘Children’s parish Day’ (10 October) at St Anne’s, Bondi Beach, in cooperation with the Legion of Mary and Theresians; a ‘Children’s parish Day’ (November) at Manly Vale – 90 children attended – cooperation with the Motor Mission sisters; a ‘Children’s parish Day’ (29 November) – 70 children attended; and, a Parish Retreat for children at South Auburn (15 November) (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964, November 23).

The reports from the district Conferences also recorded visiting of the homes of both Primary and Secondary students in the local Parishes, transporting children to Mass on Sunday and out of hour’s religious instruction in the Parish precinct. During this first year of the involvement of the Society in the CCD, its members assisted in the local distribution of the official CCD newsletter, *The Catechist* and in the planning for the establishment of *the Confraternity’s Information and Supply Centre*. A Confraternity Committee had been established in nearly 50% of the parishes in the Archdiocese. At the final meeting of the Committee for 1964, in November, Father Ron Hine (CCD Secretariat) addressed those present, congratulating the Society for the contribution made over the past 12 months. “Much has been accomplished in the past year. In fact, I do not believe the Committee could have done more than it has done, for it has had to face major problems” (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964, November 23).

The agenda for the first meeting of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Committee in 1965 reflected the focus of their work for the year ahead. It was in direct response to the challenges outlined by Father Ron Hine at their previous meeting. The Confraternity Committee was to continue its efforts in the support of out of school hour’s religious instruction through the organisation of *Children’s Parish Days* and the establishment of Parish-based Sunday Schools for Grade 5 and 6 Catholic children in State schools. Members would continue to support the recruitment of and training of Catechists in their local Parish and oversee the distribution of the official newsletter of the CCD, *The*

*Catechist*. The Society was to take responsibility for the management of the Catechists' Centre to be established in the first half of 1965 (Tobin, 1965, January 7).

### **The Legion of Mary**

In 1956, a special report was prepared for the Senatus of Australia in preparation for the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Legion of Mary in Australia. The work of the Legion in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory was outlined in the report. The Legion of Mary was active across the State and Territory, in metropolitan Sydney, large regional centres, for example, Newcastle, Bathurst and Canberra, and rural towns. The report makes particular reference to the "special Legionary activity in this State – the instruction of Catholic children who attend State schools". In the report it was noted that:

Over 150 Legionnaires were engaged in this work, and over 4000 children have been instructed each week. Of this number 500 have been prepared for their First Holy Communion, and 630 children have attended nine one-day retreats that have been organized for Catholic pupils attending State schools. (The Legion of Mary, 1956)

A particular feature of the Legion of Mary in New South Wales was its close parochial links. Non-parochial work was not emphasised as much as in other States possibly due to local interpretation of the nature of Catholic Action and the Lay Apostolate. A significant non-parochial work of the Legion that continued for several years was the weekly instruction of the Catholic children at the Scheyville migrant camp in Sydney.

The Annual Reports of the Legion of Mary in the Archdiocese of Sydney from 1955 to 1960 record a growth in the number of Praesidia and therefore the parish-based provision of catechetical instruction to Catholic children attending State schools in school hours by members of the Legion in New South Wales.

The Table 8.1 provides a summary of the data recorded for the provision of weekly instruction of Catholic children attending State schools in these reports.

Table 8.1  
*Legion of Mary Religious Instruction: 1956 -1960*

Reporting Year	Catechists	Children Receiving Instruction
1956	127	4000
1957	140	4821
1958	186	5810
1959	205	6127
1960	223	6875

From: The Legion of Mary, 1956, May 25, 1957, May 24, 1958, May 23, 1959, May 22, 1960, May 27.

From 1956 to 1960, the Annual Reports of the Legion of Mary Sydney Praesidia recorded the additional (out of school hours) catechetical work of the members. This work included Sunday school classes, instruction giving to children in migrant centres on the weekends, preparation of children for the Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation, and one-day weekend Retreats. In the twelve-month period to May 1956, members of the Legion of Mary conducted nine one-day retreats involving a total of 630 Catholic children from State schools. The catechists reported that “these days give the children a better understanding of their Faith through contact with the Priests and Nuns” (The Legion of Mary, 1956, May 25, p. 3). In 1958, the Legion steering committee (*Comitium*) recommended that the one-day retreats be held in individual Parishes. The impact of placing the local Parish as a focal point for the one-day retreats in the next twelve months was significant. There was an increase in the number of retreats conducted to fifteen (ten in 1957) and the number of children involved to 1,090 (602 in 1957) (The Legion of Mary, 1958, May 23; 1959, May 22). From May 1959 to May 1960, fourteen Retreats were conducted with 1,180 children in attendance (The Legion of Mary, 1960, May 27, p. 9).

Catechists’ Conferences were developed as a significant means of training Legion catechists. These conferences were described as “a great help to the Catechists . . . they learn much from each other and from the talks given by Priests and Legionaries experienced in the work”(The Legion of Mary, 1956, May 25, p. 3). The Annual reports from 1956, 1957 and 1958 indicated that two conferences were held each year. These Conferences developed for Legion Catechists only “in order that they may learn more of

the Legion spirit which should permeate their work” (The Legion of Mary, 1958, May 23, p. 5). In twelve months between May 1958 and May 1959, three Legion Catechists Conferences were held with an average attendance of 50 to 60 catechists (The Legion of Mary, 1959, May 22, p. 6).

In 1956, religious brothers and sisters received a request from the Cardinal to conduct additional religious instruction classes outside of school hours once a week for the children attending State Schools. The Legion Praesidia assisted by contacting parents and bringing the children for instruction (The Legion of Mary, 1956, May 25, p. 3).

This growth in the work of the Legion of Mary in the provision of religious instruction for the Catholic children attending State schools from 1956 - 1960 coincided with the call by Cardinal Norman Gilroy for the establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD), in all parishes of the Archdiocese. Many of the clergy and laity would have once again recognised the catechetical work of the parochial Legion of Mary Praesidia was already well established in many metropolitan parishes. Those parishes were able to make a swift response to the Archbishop’s request.

In the Archdiocese of Sydney in 1960, Legion of Mary catechists accounted for 30% of the catechists and provided religious instruction for 35% of the Catholic children attending State schools. The development of the catechetical work of the Legion of Mary during the 1940s and 1950s was to provide a foundation for the parochial organisation of the CCD that emerged in the Archdiocese of Sydney in the 1960s. Significant features of such organisation included an established pattern of visitation to the State schools to provide religious instruction for Catholic children with complementary out of school hours instruction and activities; the provision of parish-based support by clergy, religious and more experienced lay catechists; and, the recognition of the importance of spiritual formation and technical and religious training as an assistance to the catechist in the performance of the particular task of religious instruction in the State school environment.

The Legion of Mary catechists incorporated the new teaching material provided by the CCD Central Committee into their teaching activities. In the 1960 Annual report it was noted that “Catechists find that the new system of teaching the Faith is very helpful. At the time of inauguration [of the CCD], the Legion Catechists were instructed to contact

their Parish Priests for training in the new method” (The Legion of Mary, 1960, May 27, p. 9). Legion catechists attended the training courses and conferences develop by the Diocesan CCD Secretariat whilst maintaining the program of special gatherings for Legion Catechists.

At the Conference of Bishops of South East Asia held in Manila in December 1958, the Bishops expressed concern as to the value of lay catechists related to the general competency, skill and need for adequate training. They acknowledged that the Legion of Mary had been of widespread value in providing large number of zealous catechists in the region.

### **The Theresian Club**

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Theresians struggled with: a decline in membership; the challenge of increasing number of Catholic children attending State schools; and, the task of establishing a relationship with the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

A message from Cardinal Gilroy to the Theresians recorded in the minutes of the 1957 Annual General Meeting noted:

The need for many zealous Theresians to teach the Faith to Catholic children attending State schools was never greater than present. By endeavouring to give some faith to little Catholic children who had none, or by conserving the Faith of those who had, Theresians were carrying out a genuine apostolate. Those who teach are only God’s instruments. (Gilroy, 1957, October 7)

In a report to the Club’s Executive Meeting in October 1959, Theresians were encourage to use the worksheets being provided for the instruction of children attending the State schools to ensure a uniform standard of teaching. The Theresians reported using the worksheets and catechist’s notes provided by the Archdiocese. Demonstration lessons were recorded and played back for review and discussion at the fortnightly Theresian Club meetings (1959, October 1).

In 1961, the report from the Annual General Meeting indicated that “a strong representation of Theresians attended the catechetical instructions arranged for the Archconfraternity of Christian Doctrine in various centres and received their Diploma (Grade 1)” and noted that “these lectures were found to be most helpful in planning

lessons for teaching and preparing children for the sacraments” (Phillips, 1961, February 21). In 1962, it was reported “many Theresians” attended the new Grade II Diploma course.

In August 1963, two delegates from the Theresian Club (Ella Hutchison – President; and Rita Barrie) attended the meeting convened by Bishop James Freeman (Episcopal Chairman of the CCD Central Committee) to discuss the pastoral care of Catholic children not attending Catholic schools and their families within the context of the Parish. An outcome of this meeting was suggestion from the CCD Secretariat that the Theresians take responsibility for Sunday retreats for Girls. This request from the CCD Secretariat indicated to Theresian members that the new CCD leadership did not really understand or appreciate the core work of the Club, home visitation and accompanying children to Mass on Sunday. A subsequent request from Father Malone (CCD Secretariat) for Theresians to act as “hostesses” for the Catechist Rally on Sunday February 2, 1964, further aggravated the relationship. The relationship between the Theresian Club and the developing CCD organisation continued to deteriorate. In June 1965, Doctor Duffy (CCD Director) attended the Theresian Executive meeting. After giving an outline of the development of the CCD over the past six years, Doctor Duffy explained that “the Theresian Club must visualize itself as a very important segment of the Confraternity body”, and expressed the hope that the two organisations could work in closer liaison. With changes that occurred in the CCD structure in 1966, the Theresian Club was represented on the new *Diocesan Council of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine*.

In 1970, in a letter to other Theresians, Pat Brownlee, who had joined the Theresians in the 1940s, reflected on the future of the Club. There were four options – increase membership; allow the Club to be taken over by the Confraternity; stand out alone; or disband. On the second option, Brownlee reflected on the relationship between the Theresian Club and the CCD:

What is there to be taken over? Who is to be taken over? Some years ago we were asked to look after . . . weekend retreats for girls. I don't think we flatly refused . . . Perhaps this was our undoing . . . But somehow I feel we've failed. Perhaps our attitude of 'we were first in this field don't encroach on our territory' was implied . . . And some how I think the Confraternity has also failed by not insisting on taking over our work or insisting that we do what they wished . . . Maybe we've both failed – one because of lack of courage – the other because of pride . . . (Brownlee, 1970, March 31)

Of the third possibility - standing alone – Brownlee suggested to the members:

If we stand out alone we must surely die. So our thinking must change. The whole Church is changing and we must change too . . . Perhaps our change has to be the little way of St Therese – that we ourselves are nothing but the powers that be (in this case the Church or Confraternity) can do with us what they will. (Brownlee, 1970, March 31)

Brownlee concluded by proposing that the Theresian Executive approach the CCD and explained the Club's position offering the parish-based work of the Theresian visiting the homes of the Catholic children attending State schools and conducting after hours instruction for the children and their parents – “collecting and organising” - as a blueprint for these activities to be managed by the CCD. The Theresians regarded this connection with the Parish at the heart of the work – “this surely must be the aim of the Confraternity”.

In 1975, the Annual Report of the Theresian Club provides an insight into the work of the members at that time:

The members of the Theresian Apostolate Catechists group, trained in catechetics through the CCD training course, follow a full-time programme in preparing Government school children for the sacraments and in Christian living and commitments. These instructions are given out of school hours, mostly, although some members are free enough to attend normal scripture classes in the state school. In parish centres the Theresian works under the direction of the Parish Priest. Sisters . . . assist when needed. Home visitations have proved a fruitful area and gives parents the encouragement to support the catechesis of their children. (*Theresian Club Annual Report*, 1975)

During the 1980s, the Theresian Club membership continued to decline. Farland (1998) reflected:

Gradually regional centres for Theresian teaching had faded as the CCD took over. Members became older, with no younger ones taking their place. Perhaps the younger ones no longer saw the need, as the CCD was the official Church organ for teaching State school children. (p. 125)

In 1980, Vera Woodhouse (nee Green) became President of the combined groups within the Theresian Club: Catechists; Companions of St Therese; and the Ladies Auxiliary. Woodhouse had joined the Theresians in 1934, and after her marriage in 1961, became a member of the Ladies Auxiliary. It would be her task to lead the Club during its final years.

In June 1989, the decision was made to close the clubroom and the children's clothing shop, which had been run by the Ladies Auxiliary for 22 years. In a letter to the

Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Edward Clancy, Woodhouse described the Club's situation at the beginning of the 1990s:

We now have very few Theresians carrying out the apostolate for which we were originally formed e.g. to bring the knowledge and love of God to catholic children attending state schools. Those still active continue to work with members of the C.C.D. . . . we will continue our apostolate for as long as possible using the annual interest from our invested funds. (Woodhouse, 1990)

In his response to the letter from Vera Woodhouse (1990), the Archbishop acknowledged the work that had been done by the Theresian Club:

What wonderful work the Club has done over the years, and what wonderful spirit still prevails, obviously, among the current members, few though they might be now. The great good that the Theresians have done, especially for the children in State schools, and for priests by means of their prayers, is probably only known by God in its entirety, but there are many living that can testify to some of it at least. The church in Sydney is certainly richer spiritually for the Theresians and owes them a great debt of gratitude. (Clancy, 1990)

During the next ten years, the Club's invested funds were used to support catechists working in parishes in need of such support wherever the Theresians were still working. In this time, Theresian records show that \$45,000 was distributed to parishes in the Diocese of Broken Bay, the parishes in the Eastern Region CCD region of the Archdiocese of Sydney and individual parishes in the Archdiocese of Sydney and the Dioceses of Parramatta, Wollongong and Maitland Newcastle including Ashfield, Bensville, Belmont, Bonnyrigg, Brighton, Cammeray, Campsie, Cooma, Drummoyne, Haberfield, Haymarket, Heathcote, Lewisham, Leura, Liverpool, Matraville, Mascot, Miranda, Marrickville, Revesby, Rose Bay, Rozelle, Shellharbour, Tempe, Wallsend, and Waterloo (Farland, 1998, p. 129).

In 1991, the Cardinal Freeman Medal for Service to Religious Education was awarded to the Theresian Club. In the course of their correspondence, both Vera Woodhouse (1990) and Archbishop Clancy (1990) agreed on the importance of the need to record the history of the Club over its seventy-two year history. During the 1990s, this task was undertaken by Dr Gregory Haines and completed by Helena Farland (1998) in the publication of *The Theresians: Following the little way – Spreading the faith 1918 - 1998*.

### **8.3.3 The Development of a Curriculum: 1959 – 1965**

Another challenge in the establishment of the CCD in 1959 lay in the provision of an appropriate curriculum and support materials for the inexperienced lay volunteer



catechists to use in provision of religious instruction in the State school classroom. The Central Committee was also concerned with consistency of content and standard in development of a program to be taught across the Archdiocese:

After the Confraternity was reorganised in 1959, the **first task** it undertook was issuing a **Syllabus** of instruction, to be followed in the public schools, together with suitable texts for both teachers and pupils . . . A syllabus was quite essential to ensure systematic progress in instruction. A certain amount of matter was prescribed for Grade I, something additional for Grade II, and so on. This uniform syllabus throughout the diocese meant that a child can move from suburb to suburb, but there will be a certain continuity in his religious education. (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964a, pp. 4-5)

Material was required for the weekly half hour lessons that the catechists were able to give. The Central Committee identified the suitability of the Correspondence worksheets that had been developed by Sister Mary Peter RSJ (Kathleen Dwyer), and used by the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, North Sydney, for children in isolated rural areas. A committee was established, under the supervision of Father Ron Hine and Sister Mary Peter, to develop worksheets and teacher's notes. The lesson material from the correspondence course, developed to be used a family setting by the individual student, was updated and formatted to suit delivery in a school setting. Teacher's notes were developed for each lesson/worksheet which provided the catechist with support and clear direction on how to teach each lesson.

By the beginning of 1960, a series of Worksheets for pupils and Lesson Notes for teachers, in accordance with the syllabus, was published by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. They were printed and distributed by the Catholic Press Newspaper Co. Ltd. These worksheets were prescribed for use in all religious instruction given in public schools (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964a, p. 5). In the diary that was kept of their work – *Motor Mission Happenings (1960 – 1970)* – the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, who commenced working in the Motor Mission in the Manly Warringah region of the Archdiocese of Sydney in January 1960, recorded:

Worksheets in religion have been found to have a very useful place in this new scheme of public school instruction. The children will at least be taking some evidence of their religious instruction into their homes, and the work they do in between weekly lessons will help to consolidate such instruction. (Sisters of the Good Samaritan, 1960 - 1970)

A Catechists' Conference was held on 28 February 1960, at St Joseph's Convent, North Sydney. The focus of the gathering was to explain the lesson material and the use of the

Teacher's notes (*Catechist Notes*) developed by the 'syllabus' committee. A report on this event in the Legion of Mary Annual Report (1960, May 27) noted "an inspiring and instructive lecture on the system now employed was given by Rev. Sister M. Peter to approximately 280 Catechists" (p. 9).

The Worksheets (and supporting Catechists' Notes) were divided into five groups: Juvenile A Group for Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Class; Juvenile B Group for 2<sup>nd</sup> Class; Juvenile C Group for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Classes; Junior Group for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Classes; and Intermediate Group for High School. There were 10 Worksheets for each Group. Each Worksheet would cover four lessons. Br H. I. Jackson (Christian Brother and Motor Missioner) (1962) described the use of this system of Worksheets:

The Syllabus for the year is set out by a series of ten Worksheets, one being given to the boy every four weeks. A Worksheet consists of four pages of information and two of questions and activities to aid assimilation. The teacher covers the matter in three weeks, revises it in the fourth and gives out the Worksheets which are begun in school and completed at home. On the following week the answer sheets are collected for correction and returned to the boy the next class . . . The Worksheets also help to keep the parents in touch with Religious Instruction being carried out in the school. (p. 217)

The approach used in the development of this program of religious instruction for Catholic children in State schools was aligned with prevailing model for religious education in Catholic schools at the beginning of the 1960s – the Kerygmatic approach. The notes provided to the Priest Lecturers for the delivery of Talk 10 in the Doctrine Lectures – *Teaching the Faith* – indicated that the catechists were given a background to this approach and its use:

We must teach religion as the **good news** of salvation. The point of the Catholic religion is not just that we must do certain things if we wish to avoid eternal damnation . . . The point is the reverse of the same truth . . . This prospect of eternal salvation and life should permeate our teaching of religion with a sense of joy and gladness. Not only is faith something good, it is good news. To safeguard all that is implied in the concept of "news", the catechist must take care to present the faith as a **unified message** [*sic*]. The same idea is expressed by saying we teach the **kerygma**, or that we must have a **kerygmatic approach**. (Hine, 1964, p. 44)

This approach to religious instruction was very different from the way in which many volunteer lay catechists would have experienced religious instruction as students. The use of the traditional Catechism, the question and answer format, the importance of memorisation, the supremacy of knowledge over experience were elements of an

approach to religious instruction (Dogmatic approach) that had been used in classroom education for over one hundred years. The Kerygmatic approach encouraged teachers to engage the student's imagination through a variety of teaching activities such as "singing, gestures and creative movement, miming, puppetry, storytelling and dramatisation, modelling and construction activities, creation of class and individual books, nature collection and excursions" (Ryan, 1997, p. 41). The catechists needed to be enlightened, encouraged and empowered in the use of this new approach to religious instruction through the use of the prescribed CCD program. This was to become a significant feature of the Catechist Training course developed by the CCD Committee in the early 1960s.

An essential element of the Catechist Training Course was the explanation and demonstration of the new method of religious instruction. This was achieved through the study of the Student Worksheets and the Catechists Notes, which accompanied them. A part of the Catechists Diploma Grade 1 training course, introduced in 1961, the third session, *Special Methods*, focused on the use of small group tutorials to provide specific help for catechists for the age level/grade that they were teaching. The Handbook (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1961) provided those involved in the preparation and presentation of the course, particularly the Special Methods tutors, with some background:

Our Catechists need precise help about the precise task they have to tackle . . . The special Tutorial Groups will pay particular attention to the use of the Worksheets which have been prescribed by Episcopal Authority for use in Public School instruction. (p. 2)

The purpose of these groups was made clear to the Tutors:

The Special Tutorial Group, for people who are teaching a particular grade, aims to show them how to apply what they have learned in the Doctrine and Method Lectures to their teaching of that particular grade, and how to make use of the "Worksheets" and "Notes for Catechists" prescribed for the grade. (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1961, p. 15)

The time spent in the tutorial groups was to give the tutor an opportunity to explain the lesson, within the prescribed framework that the catechist would be required to give in the following week:

It is to be based on the Worksheets, and should aim to show the Catechists how to use the "Notes for Catechists" in preparing the lesson from the "Worksheet" . . . Quite often, the Tutor will be able to think of better ways to present the lesson, but they are asked to follow the "Worksheets" and the "Notes for Catechists"

because these are the tools the Catechists have to use in their instructions.  
(Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1961, p. 16)

With the development of the Grade 2 and Grade 3 Catechist Training Course in 1962 and 1963 respectively, the use of the Worksheets and the Notes for Catechists continued to be emphasised in the *Special Method* session.

In September 1962, the Australian Catholic Bishops issued textbooks for religious instruction and prescribed their use in Catholic schools throughout Australia. *Catholic Catechism Book One* was developed for Grades 5 and 6 and *Catholic Catechism Book Two* for Secondary School students. A *Teacher's Book* was produced with each textbook. In September 1964 the *My Way to God* series was published and prescribed by the Australian Hierarchy for use in Grades 1 to 4 in Catholic schools. A *Teacher's Book* was produced with each Student textbook. Each teacher's book contained a section with lessons plans "for the use in Government Schools" (Bishops' Committee for Education, 1964, p. 235). For example, in the *Teacher's Book Three* (1964), plans for thirty lessons are listed and cross-referenced to chapters in the student textbook (p. 237). A detailed lesson outline was then provided for each lesson listed (p. 237 – 269). These outlines included the *Aim* of the lesson, *Preparation* suggested for the catechist, notes for the *Introduction* and *Presentation* of the lesson, *Application* providing an activity for the child to follow up on what had been presented in the lesson and a *Closing Prayer*.

Table 8.2 contains a sample of the notes provided for the catechists in the Grade 3 Teachers Book.

Table 8.2

*Notes provided for the Catechists in the Grade 3 Teachers Book- My Way to God*

## LESSON 9 – LISTEN, YOU WHO HAVE EARS

### AIM

To help the children realize that their true happiness lies in following the teaching of Jesus Christ.

### PREPARATION

Pictures of rich man, poor man, people listening to Jesus, and people reading Gospel or listening to the sermon at Mass.

### INTRODUCTION

What did our last lesson tell us to do? (Lift up your eyes and look!)

What did the farmer sowing his seed remind us of?

How were the apostles saved at sea?

### PRESENTATION

In our first few lessons we learned how to *stop* and think of God, our last lesson told us how to *look* for God, and today we are going to learn how to *listen* to God.

Do you all like stories? Stories make us happy, and God wants us to be happy, but not just happy for a little while. He wants us to be happy *forever*. Where shall we be forever? Who will teach us how to find this happiness? (Jesus, our Master and Teacher.)

We shall listen to some of the stories Jesus Himself told.

One day Jesus said to many of His friends gathered about Him:  
“Blessed are the poor in spirit?”

Do you know what “blessed” means here (Happy.)

Did Jesus mean the poor people are happy? (Draw comments.)

Enlarge on:

Not worrying about being rich,  
Not wishing to have all that others have,  
Not thinking only of bodily needs, which brings about neglect of our souls,  
Become rich in other ways, saying our prayers, going the Mass on Sundays,  
Being obedient at home and at school, being kind to everyone.

Jesus told the story to show us the difference between the very rich man who wanted everything he could get, and a poor beggar. (Tell the story of rich man and Lazarus.)

Rich man, thought only of self, punished in hell.

Poor man, never complained, never envied rich man, tried to please God.

*Note:* Obtain from children a few suggestions how to practise being “poor in spirit.” (Add a few practical examples, be satisfied with what your parents give you, don’t keep wanting what you see other boys and girls have, share your things with others, etc.)

Many other stories Jesus told us, and still tells us, to help us to know God, love God, and serve God, and so be happy with Him forever in heaven.

When can we hear more of his stories? (Draw from children, reading the Bible, listening to the priest at Mass, etc.)

### APPLICATION

Draw a picture of people listening to Jesus when He was on earth, and another picture of people listening to His words today.

### CLOSING PRAYER

“I will listen to the Lord,  
for His words are of peace.”

*Note.* From Bishops' Committee for Education (1964). *My way to God: Three Teacher's book*. Sydney, Australia: E. J. Dwyer. pp. 245 – 246.

With the publication by the Australian Bishops of the new Catechisms and textbooks for religious instruction in Catholic schools, the CCD Committee realised that the original worksheets and catechists' notes were no longer adequate. A syllabus committee undertook the work of redrafting the syllabus and revising the worksheets and catechists' notes. The first material for the revised edition was published in December 1963 (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964a, p. 5).

During 1964 and 1965, supplementary material for after school hours and weekend catechesis was produced. It was based on the core syllabus delivered to Catholic students in State schools and designed to complement this program (Tobin, 1965, June 21).

Other dioceses in New South Wales and across Australia used the *Worksheets and Notes for Catechists* (Follett, 1962, February 27). There was even an inquiry from the Catechetical Office in the Diocese of Menevia in Wales. In the details of the publisher of the material used in the Archdiocese of Sydney, Father P. J. Breen (1962, January 29) noted:

I have heard from many sources that Australia is way ahead of Europe in producing simple courses of Religious Doctrine and religious Teaching Aids, but unfortunately it seems to be impossible to get any of these in England and Wales.

The development of curriculum material for religious education, both within Catholic schools and beyond that setting, was influenced by a variety of factors ecclesial, socio-economic, political and cultural. Ivers (2000) identified three contextual factors significant in the development of the curriculum material for religious education of Catholic children not attending Catholic schools - the location for delivery of the program, the teachers delivering the program and the ecclesial concern for orthodoxy (p.47).

The New South Wales Public Instruction Act (1880) had provided a framework through which religious groups could provide religious education to children from their particular religious persuasion within State schools. Although the Catholic Church had not officially taken advantage of this provision of the Act until the late 1950s, by this time a well-established process existed to respond to the provisions of the 1880 Act. The teaching of religious education in State schools by representatives of approved religious groups carried with it the responsibility for those groups to ensure that the teachers were properly authorised and that those teachers used an authorised teaching program. The

Education Department required that teachers from a particular Religious persuasion must use a program properly authorised by that Religious group. Departmental restrictions of access, allowing a period of no more than 1 hour per week (which in reality averaged 30 minutes per week) for Special Religious Instruction (SRI) also influenced the development of curriculum material. The external influence of the requirements of the Education Department placed significant limitations on the content that could be covered in the curriculum and, to some extent, the method of delivery.

Perhaps the most significant influence on the method of delivery developed within the curriculum was the reality that the majority of catechists were volunteers. The volunteer catechist was typically a person who had no formal qualification in teaching and little time to devote to extensive lesson preparation. The curriculum material developed needed to provide support material for the catechist that included clear directions, achievable lesson goals and, for each lesson, suggested content, method, and sequencing.

Another factor influencing the revisions of Special Religious Education (SRE) curriculum materials in the period from 1960 to 2000 had been the concern for orthodoxy. The priority for the centralised development of the curriculum material was based as much on this concern as it was of the external requirement from the Education Department for an authorised teaching program from each approved Religious providers.

The three factors identified by Ivers (2000) related to curriculum development- the location for delivery of the program; the teachers delivering the program, and the ecclesial concern for orthodoxy; were also influential on the development of the training programs for catechists.

### **8.3.4 Training and Formation of Lay Catechists**

The need for catechists (teachers) was so great that the *Motor Mission*, the Legion of Mary and the Theresians could not provide sufficient personnel for the growing number classes of Catholic children in the State schools. Volunteer lay catechists were needed to fill the many gaps. They were mainly married women who were at home raising their young families – they were to form a ready and willing volunteer force. One of these volunteer catechists recalled:

My eldest daughter had just started school and my second daughter was 1½. One afternoon when Father was visiting our home, he said ‘I’ve got a job for you’.

That is how I became a catechist in my Parish in 1960. (M.T. Arneman, personal communication, April 18, 2005)

This story reflects the way in which many lay women were recruited to teach Catholic children attending the State schools in their local Parish in those early days.

Immediately it was recognised that these volunteers needed some basic training to equip them for the task. The training of catechists was described as “the basic need” in a memorandum outlining the “plans for development of catechetical apostolate for children attending State schools, and formation and consolidation of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine” (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, 1961a).

The three factors identified by Ivers (2000) related to curriculum development that is, the location for delivery of the program, the teachers delivering the program and the ecclesial concern for orthodoxy, were also influential in the development of training programs for catechists for the next four decades.

In the first year of the formal establishment of the CCD, 1960, catechist training took place “on a once a month basis in various centres” (CCD Archives, 1960a). In September 1960, a meeting was held between the members of the CCD Diocesan secretariat and representatives of the Motor Mission - religious sisters and brothers working in metropolitan Sydney parishes teaching children in State schools and in some cases training lay catechists to assist in this work. A memorandum was prepared by the secretariat to outline some preliminary ideas for the “Formation of Catechists’ Training Courses” (CCD Archives, 1960a).

The proposal was to develop a systematic basic training course for the Archdiocese ensuring that all catechists, regardless of their parish resources, would receive a uniform level of training. The initial plan was for the course to be offered in weekly sessions of 1½ hours duration for a period of ten weeks.

The purpose of the basic training course was to provide catechists with basic teaching skills for the classroom context of their work (training in “method”) and “doctrinal instruction to supplement their present knowledge of religion” (CCD Archives, 1960a). In correspondence to a priest in rural NSW two years after the commencement of the training course, Father Ron Hine explained the basic assumptions underlying the course structure:



Catechists, as a general rule, are people who are a long way out of school and are out of touch with academic learning. They find it difficult to relate the theoretical things you tell them to the practical situations they meet. The training . . . has to be adapted to the practical situation and so it would be most valuable if, in between lectures, they were able to put into practice some of the things that they had learned. (Hine, 1963, June 14)

The each weekly course session would be divided into three specific areas of input – doctrinal instruction, general method and special method (CCD, 1961b). The first part of each session was to be devoted to doctrinal instruction. The purpose of this instruction was described in the original proposal:

Doctrinal Instruction - intended mainly to instruct the Catechists themselves; to fill them up with knowledge and love of the faith; to inspire them in their work by showing them it is a great vocation and to give them the right attitude to religion, (e.g. love of God – rather than sheer duty out of fear of hell) . . . this aims ultimately at making them better teachers, but it is done by making them better Catholics; giving them for themselves, what they will later give, out of their own fullness to those they teach. (CCD, 1961b)

The doctrinal instruction, allocated a time of 25 minutes, was to be given as a lecture to all catechists. It was recommended that this session be given by a priest – “someone who would be willing to follow any syllabus which was finally laid down” (CCD, 1961b). The brochure produced to advertise the first Catechists’ Training Course commencing in February 1961 outlined the content for the Christian Doctrine lectures. The topics to be covered included – “unity and trinity of God; incarnation and redemption; church; baptism and confirmation; mass and communion; confession; prayer; the commandments; training in chastity; and the four 1<sup>st</sup> things” (CCD, 1961b).

Instruction in “General Method” was to follow the Christian Doctrine lectures in each weekly session. During this segment (duration 20 minutes) catechists would be given instruction in “the general techniques to be used in the classroom – lesson planning, presentation, discipline etc” (CCD Archives, 1960a). This instruction was to be given by a qualified religious brother and sisters working in the field of State school religious education. The brochure advertising the first course to commence in February 1961 outline the content to be covered in the method lectures – “aim of teaching; presentation of a lesson; the art of storytelling; how to use a picture; flannel boards; questioning; the psychology of the child; discipline in the classroom; and, catechist’s place in school and parish” (CCD, 1961b).

The third section of the weekly session was devoted to “Special Method”. This involved working in smaller groups based on the specific teaching area of the catechist:

all that intend to teach kindergarten and first class would be in one group; the second class teachers in another; another groups for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class teachers; 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class; and 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year – each group would be under the care of its own tutor-instructor. (CCD, 1961b)

In these smaller groups, the tutor, a religious brother or sister, would assist their group in applying the principles of doctrine and general methods introduced in the earlier sessions to the catechist’s particular teaching area. The remainder of the 35 minutes set aside for this small group session was to be devoted to “analysing and explaining the lesson which is due to be given in the public school the following week” (CCD Archive, 1961b).

The catechists were required to attend all ten sessions of the course. The secretariat developed an enrolment card to ensure accurate records were maintained. Initially there was a proposal to give some form of “special project”, to be reviewed by the tutor, at the end of the course. This was developed in the form of a weekly assignment to be completed by the course participants and presented in the small group tutorial the next week. A special certificate of qualification, Diploma in Catechetics Grade 1, was designed. This award was signed by the Bishop and the Director and presented to all catechists who successfully completed the course.

Sister Mary Philip SGS was part of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan Motor Mission at Dee Why and attended the September meeting where the proposal for the Catechist Training Course was discussed. She described the response of the local lay catechists in Nowra (Wollongong Diocese) and in the Manly/Dee Why area:

Everyone was very enthusiastic when I gave them an outline of what they were going to do. The idea of graduating with a Catechist’s Certificate was quite attractive. The ladies found them [the notes] most helpful and were all high in their praise of the suitability of the various suggestions. (Phillip, 1961, February 21)

The proposal for a training course for catechists was accepted and in late 1960. Cardinal Gilroy made a special appeal for lay catechists to provide regular instruction for Catholic children attending State schools. 600 people attended the first Catechists’ Rally at St Benedict’s, Broadway. At this rally Father Ron Hine announced the proposed course for catechists that would commence in the New Year (Sisters of the Good Samaritan, 1960 - 1970, 1966, December 9). The Catechist Rally and retreats, both introduced in 1960,

were to become regular events on the CCD calendar from this time onwards. They were key activities in the training and formation of many volunteer lay catechists.

The first Catechists' Training Course in the Archdiocese of Sydney commenced in February 1961. With the goal of having the training available for catechists as close to their home parish as possible, seven training centres were established across the diocese. These centres included Leichhardt, Parramatta, Darlinghurst and Dee Why on Friday evenings; North Sydney and Hurstville on Monday evenings and at Bankstown on Tuesday evenings. The centres were established in the local Parish Catholic school with the exception of Darlinghurst (CCD Diocesan offices) and Parramatta (Our Lady of Mercy College).

The challenge for the CCD Diocesan Central Committee was to ensure uniformity of format and content in the program offered at training centres across the Archdiocese. In preparation for the commencement of the first training courses in February 1961, the CCD Diocesan Secretariat produced a handbook for the lecturers and tutorial staff. The handbook provided detailed information about the course and its prescribed content (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, 1961b). Each Training Centre was to provide the same program, in both format and content.

Each February, in the week prior to the commencement of the training course, the lecturers and tutors for the course gathered for at least a day (in the 1970s up to three to four days) to review the content for the course and receive a briefing from representatives of the Diocesan Committee (later CCD Diocesan Office) about the content and procedures for the course. Initially, 1961 - 1963, these meetings were directed by the Diocesan Secretariat when the content and format of the three course levels was still in the developmental phase.

Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> February 1962

This afternoon at St. Joseph's Convent, Mount Street, North Sydney, Dr. C. Duffy presided at a meeting of the Lecturers and Tutors for the Catechists' Training Course to recommence soon . . . After Father Hine had outlined the Grade 2 Course, the Lecturers and Tutors divided into their respective Tutorial groups to discuss the plans to be followed. (Sisters of the Good Samaritan, 1960 - 1970, pp. 10 - 11)

There was a consistent attempt by the CCD Diocesan leadership over a sustained period (possibly forty years) to ensure uniformity of delivery of the Catechist Training Course. This course in its fundamental structure and objectives was still in operation in the

Catholic Dioceses in NSW at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With the appropriate modification of the content over the years, the CCD Catechist Training Course developed in the early 1960s would represent the longest continually running adult education activity for lay adult Catholics in Australia.

The Handbook of Catechists Training Course (February, March, April 1961): a ten lesson course in fundamental teaching techniques leading to Catechists Diploma Grade 1 (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, 1961b) listed the personnel for each of the seven training centres. The lecturers and tutorial staff included several priests (Fathers E. Clancy, C. Hatton, F. Higgins, F. Mecham, J. McLaren and K. Walsh) and representative from the De la Salle Brothers, Christian Brothers, Sister of St. Joseph (Correspondence and Training Schools, North Sydney and Motor Mission at Blacktown and Bankstown), Sisters of the Good Samaritan (Dee Why Motor Mission), Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of Charity. The Introduction (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, 1961b, pp. 1-3) provided some historical background, the basic structure of the course and the conditions for the award of the diploma. It included a description of the role of the Priest Organiser – “Each centre is to be under the charge of a Priest Organizer, who will act for the Central Organizing Committee in managing and directing of the Training Course” (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, 1961b, p. 2). Subsequent sections of the handbook included notes for the Priest Organiser, the lecturers in Christian Doctrine (Doctrinal Method) and Method Teaching (General Method) and the tutors for the special group (Special Method).

Table 8.3 outlines the Handbook content set for Week Three of the Training Course.

Table 8.3

*Third Night – Catechist Training Course – Grade 1 1961*

Course Structure	Notes Provided by CCD Central committee
<p>Christian Doctrine</p> <p>Week 3 subject: The Life of God; the Blessed Trinity</p> <p>Format: Lecture Duration: 25 minutes</p>	<p>“This talk is to be kept off the level of mere mental puzzle. It is especially important that the catechists should see the Trinity as “our” mystery. Here and now, we have a special relationship with each of the Divine Persons in eternity, our happiness will be sharing in the life of the Trinity. This is the mystery of faith in which our life is immersed. Preface of the Trinity is a prayer suited for this Talk. You may have to explain some of the phrases of the Nicene Creed used in mass . . . “God of God, light of light etc.”” (p. 9)</p>
<p>Teaching Method (General Method)</p> <p>Format: Lecture Duration: 20 minutes</p>	<p>Lesson Planning – the structure of a lesson</p>
<p>Special Tutorial Groups (Special Method)</p> <p>Format: Small Groups Duration: 35 minutes</p>	<p>“(a) Discussion -</p> <p>1) Following in from Doctrinal Talk 3, speak of the usual procedure in Junior Grades of teaching first about the Father who created us; and then the Son, He sent to save us; and the Holy Spirit sent to make us Holy; and then about the mystery of the Blessed Trinity – (not the Trinity first). Different to the order in the Catechism, but it is the order used by God in making known the Mystery to us.</p> <p>2) Start showing the type of aid you want the trainees to make in their project, and try to get them to work collecting materials needed.</p> <p>(b) Demonstration –</p> <p>Analyse the Doctrine and demonstrated the next Lesson – bringing out the essential points of the structure of a lesson as in Method Talk 3.” (pp. 21-22)</p>

Adapted from: CCD Archdiocese of Sydney (1961). *Handbook of catechists' training course* (February, March, April 1961). Unpublished manuscript, Sydney. (pp. 9; 21-22)

During the 10-weeks in which the first course was conducted in 1961, the CCD secretariat produced six bulletins for organisers, lecturers and tutors to keep the members of each training centre in touch with the progress of the course in other centres. The

bulletins contained information to assist each centre in its delivery of the course. For example, the supply of course materials, teaching notes to accompany the student worksheets; the progress of the agreed activity for the participants to complete, a book of Teacher's Aids developed for each catechist; and tips for tutors to give the catechists:

Tutors might encourage catechists to take a moderate size picture, statue or crucifix with them and place it in a prominent position in the classroom during the lessons. It would bring something of a religious atmosphere to the school. (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, 1961b)

The *Diploma in Catechetics Grade 1* was presented to the catechists at the end of the final (week 10) session. A formal ceremony was designed by the CCD secretariat and distributed to each centre organiser for implementation. This ceremony included the reading of a letter from Bishop Freeman, the CCD Episcopal Chairman, to the graduating catechists. Bishop Freeman expressed his gratitude for their work with Catholic children in State schools and “for the immense amount of trouble and inconvenience that you are putting yourselves to in order to promote your own efficiency” (CCD Archives, 1961c). At the graduation ceremony a representative from the Central Committee announced two initiatives to provide further support for catechists. The first was a follow up session being planned for Term 2 (September) to continue the support initiated for the catechists in the inaugural training course. This session was to review their progress since completing the course and provide information of future plans. The second initiative was the introduction of optional one-day retreats for catechists in the latter part of 1961. This second initiative was an acknowledgement that the spiritual formation of the catechist was as significant as the knowledge and skills training provided in the training courses, “Retreats can help, for the catechist's work is apostolic – a vocation” (CCD Archives, 1961c).

The introduction of formal training and formation for volunteer catechists in 1961 was regarded by some as “the first step in (the) ultimate plan to have only qualified catechists teaching in schools” (CCD Archives, 1960b). The response to the initial Training Course was far greater than had been anticipated in the planning stages. In preparation for the course it was thought that each centre would have about 50 catechists enrolled in the course, a total of 350 in the Archdiocese. The number of catechists enrolled in February 1961 was at least 660 (CCD Archives, 1961a) and possibly as many as 800 (CCD Archives, 1961b).

The success of the basic training course in the first term of 1961 encouraged the CCD Central Committee to make plans to develop further training courses to follow the completion of the first basic course. In a memorandum (CCD Archives, 1961b) presenting the “plans for development of catechetical apostolate for children attending State schools, and formation and consolidation of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine” the initial success of the basic training course was noted and plans for development in the training of catechists over the next three years were outlined. The next step in the training of catechists involved the development of additional lectures for the Diploma Grade 1 graduates:

These same 800 need further training, so in 1962 they should receive a second series of lectures – a total of 15 hours – Doctrine and Method – leading to diploma grade 2. And in 1963 a third training course of a further 15 hours in Doctrine and Method leading to diploma grade 3 . . . this should mark the end of the Basic Training; the standard of grade 3 should be held up as desirable for all catechists of the diocese – so the basic requirements for catechists . . . be a course in Doctrine and Method which lasted 45 hours. (CCD Archives, 1961b)

The initial content of the Diploma Grade 2 and 3 courses is outlined in Tables 8.4 and 8.5.

Table 8.4  
*Contents – Catechists’ Diploma Grade II*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Doctrine Lecture</b>	<b>Educational Psychology</b>
<b>1</b>	God’s plan of Revelation	The Pre-school child
<b>2</b>	The Mystery of the Church	The School-child
<b>3</b>	The Church Teaching	The Adolescent
<b>4</b>	The Church ruling and sanctifying	The Learning Process
<b>5</b>	The Bible	Habitual Knowledge
<b>6</b>	The Sacraments	Motivation
<b>7</b>	Baptism and Confirmation	Remembering and Forgetting
<b>8</b>	The Sacrament of Eucharist	Behaviour Problems
<b>9</b>	The Eucharist, the perfect sacrifice	Individual Differences
<b>10</b>	A Vision of Church	Learning – an active process

From: Manual of the Catechists’ Training Course (For Diploma Grade II): A resume of lectures in Christian Doctrine and Educational Psychology. (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, n.d.)

Table 8.5

*Contents – Catechists' Diploma Grade III*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Doctrine Lecture</b>	<b>Special Catechetics</b>
<b>1</b>	Christian Living	Catechisms
<b>2</b>	Christian Living (continued)	The Catholic Catechism
<b>3</b>	Sin	Content of the Catholic Catechism
<b>4</b>	Conscience	Preparation for Communion
<b>5</b>	Sacrament of Penance	Teaching the Mass
<b>6</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> Commandments	Preparation for Confession
<b>7</b>	Commandments – Selected Questions (continued)	Formation of Conscience
<b>8</b>	The Virtue of Purity	Confirmation
<b>9</b>	The Virtue of Modesty	Education in Purity
<b>10</b>	Teaching the Faith	Religious Lesson an Act of Worship

From: Hine, R. (1964). *Catechists' training course: Grade III*. Sydney: CCD Archdiocese of Sydney. (p. 2)

The third step in the diocesan plan for the training of catechists was to conduct the Diploma Grade 1 course at the beginning of 1962 and 1963. This decision resulted from the reality that every year it was estimated approximately 100 new catechists would need to be recruited (CCD Archives, 1961b). The growing number of Catholic children attending State schools and the need to replace retiring volunteer catechists resulted in an annual demand for the recruitment of new catechists. These new recruits would need to commence the basic training at the Grade 1 level.

By 1963 basic training courses at Grade 1, 2 and 3 levels were operating concurrently at several training centres across the Archdiocese. In addition to the original seven training centres operating since 1961, centres were established at Blacktown, Gosford and Toronto.

The Grade 1 and 2 diplomas were distributed at the conclusion the course, on the tenth night, in a local ceremony in each training centre. The Episcopal Chairman of the CCD, Bishop Freeman, presented the Grade 3 Diplomas in a separate ceremony at St Patrick's Church, Parramatta (for Parramatta and Blacktown centres) or St Mary's Cathedral crypt (for all the other centres).

In the first four years of the operation of the CCD in the Archdiocese of Sydney, a great deal of time and energy had been devoted to the development of a basic training course for catechists. The Central Diocesan Committee provided the vision and direction for



what was considered to be the most important need in the provision of religious education to the Catholic children in State schools – well-trained teachers. The CCD secretariat, although only operating part-time, was able to provide the necessary support for the ten catechist training centres that were established providing personnel and resources to conduct the developing the three-tiered program. The brothers and sisters in the Motor Mission, as well as others from a number of Religious Orders provided the personnel required to conduct the courses in the Archdiocese of Sydney and other Dioceses in NSW. They were responsible for the development of the Catechist Training Courses in their respective Dioceses in the 1960s and 1970s. Diary entries from the Motor Mission sisters from the Manly Warringah region in Sydney record their involvement in the development of the Training Courses and the cooperative nature of the work.

Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> October

A meeting was held today at St Joseph's Convent, Mount Street to discuss together with Sister M. Peter Chanel, who is a Tutor during the Training Course. Also present, besides Father Hine who presided, were two Sisters of St Joseph from the Bankstown Motor Mission, and Sisters M. Peter and Carmel from the Correspondence School at Mount Street. The purpose of the meeting was to arrange a suitable procedure for Tutorial groups for Grades 1 and 2 Catechists on each night of the Training Course. (Sisters of the Good Samaritan, 1960 - 1970, p. 20)

At a follow up meeting on Sunday, 10th November 1963, the proposed outlines for the Tutorial Groups were discussed and amended according to the suggestions from those present. Following a review of each program the final proposal was sent to Father Hine.

In the Archdiocese Sydney the pattern of a planning meeting for all those involved prior to the commencement of the Training Course and meeting/s following the course to review and revise the course content or approach was established in the early 1960s. It was a pattern that was maintained for four decades and ensured that the Catechists Training Course remained under the direction of the Diocesan CCD office and met the needs of the lay volunteers.

In 1964, "refresher nights" were introduced for those catechists who had completed all three Grades of the Training Course. These gatherings would provide an opportunity for further training and updates on the latest teaching material and methods as well as a forum for experienced catechists to share ideas (Sisters of the Good Samaritan, 1966, December 9).

The approach of the CCD Central Committee in developing a systematic training program for volunteer lay catechists was ground breaking work in Australia. Advertisements promoting the Catechist Training Courses for local catechists in the Archdiocesan newspaper *The Catholic Weekly* attracted considerable interest from metropolitan and rural dioceses across Australia and New Zealand.

In a letter to Father Ron Hine, CCD secretariat (18 April, 1962), Father Frank Martin (Catholic Education Office, Melbourne) described the introduction of a Catechist training program into Melbourne Archdiocese based on the Sydney course format and notes. Following a preliminary session held on 1 April “to give immediate assistance to those catechists already working” (1962, April 18), seven courses were planned to commence in different locations across the archdiocese in late April and early May of 1962. A further five were to commence in June of the same year.

Sister Mary Loyola SGS had recently assumed responsibility for Religious Education by Correspondence in the Diocese of Rockhampton when she wrote to her congregational leader requesting notes from the Catechist Training course advertised in the *Catholic Weekly* in late January 1961. She described her situation:

I have charge of Religious Correspondence in the Diocese and we have 1840 pupils on the roll. I try to visit every State school during the year. If only I could get a definite plan for lay catechists . . . I have six State school teachers, including a High School teacher, who are most anxious to do their best. (Loyola, 1962)

In New South Wales requests came from lay catechists in the Archdiocese of Canberra - Goulburn, Priests in the Northern Tablelands area, near Tamworth and religious sisters working in the Diocese of Wilcannia Forbes. In a letter to Father Ron Hine in November 1962, Judith Follett, a lay catechist and the Honorary Secretary of the Canberra Catechists' Guild reported on the establishment of the Sydney Catechist Training Course in Canberra:

Our course for Catechists is at last set down for a definite date, 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1962. With the kind permission of the parent organisation, Sydney, we hope to follow the Sydney Course. Dominican Fathers will give the doctrinal lectures and the rest will be handled by the Ursuline Sisters. (Follett, 1961)

In subsequent correspondence with Father Ron Hine in late February 1962, Follett described the situation in the training course that commenced earlier that month:

Our course is proceeding well, with enrolment of forty . . . Catechists seem generally enthusiastic. The Ursuline Sisters are at present providing demonstration lessons in the State schools in some areas. A Diploma has been

designed and printed, along the lines of the Sydney Diploma, for distribution at the end of the course. Already we are thinking about the “lesson material” we have been asked to prepare by way of “examination”. (Follett, 1962, February 27)

In June 1962, 45 Canberra Catechists received the *Diploma of Graduation for Grade 1* from Archbishop Eris O’Brien after completing the Catechist Training Course (Follett, 1962, February 27).

In November 1963, Sister Mary Luke (Home Missionary Sisters of Our Lady – Rosary Sisters) wrote to the CCD Sydney Secretariat on behalf of the sisters responsible for the formation of lay catechists in the Diocese of Wilcannia Forbes (far west New South Wales) with a request for the handbook for the Catechist Training Course.

Another request from rural New South Wales came from Father Brennan, Parish Priest of Werris Creek (Northern Tablelands, NSW). Father Brennan wrote to Father Ron Hine, CCD Secretariat, in June 1963 on behalf of the clergy in the district. Catechists in the parishes of Tamworth, West Tamworth, South Tamworth, Manilla, Quirindi and Werris Creek were in need of assistance to do the work required in the local State schools.

Father Brennan described the situation in his Parish:

I have 12 Catechists here who do a wonderful job in the Parish State Schools. However, they have never received any real help to do the work. Their best asset is their goodwill. . . . A course of training would help these ladies very much and be a wonderful encouragement to them. (Brennan, 1963, June 10)

Father Brennan asked for an adaptation of the CCD Sydney Catechist Training Course to be available for the Catechists in his district.

In his reply Father Ron Hine sought assurance from Father Brennan that his request for assistance from the metropolitan archdiocese had the approval by the local education authorities. Rather than one continuous week of training, Father Hine proposed plan to run weekend schools over two or three weeks. Although a week of continuous training would be suitable because of the distances to be travelled by the Catechists, Father Hine explained his preference for consecutive weekend sessions:

We have found it most useful in the Sydney Training Course that Catechists were able to go away from a lecture and try to put into practice in their own teaching situation some of the principles that had been taught to them and then, when they had a chance to come back to the next lecture, they were able to discuss with the lecturer the difficulties they encountered in their own classrooms . . . Two or three

weekends with a fortnight in between would seem to be worthy of your consideration. (Hine, 1963, June 14)

### **8.3.5 Training for Priests in Catechetics**

The experience of the Cardinal in the latter years of the 1950s in the attempts of the hierarchy to persuade the clergy to establish the CCD in the parishes of the Archdiocese presented another challenge for the CCD Central Committee. A file note appeared in the CCD archives (1960) - “The Cardinal asked that thought be given to ways of improving the catechetics at Manly”.

The reluctance of many priests in their response to the Cardinal’s direction could be accounted for in two ways. The first consideration was the fact that the priests were being asked to adopt a position with respect to the Catholic children attending State schools that was the absolute opposite to the directions given to them by the Church leadership for over eighty years. The second consideration was that many priests were unfamiliar with the changes that were occurring in the classrooms of both Catholic and State schools.

There was recognition of these challenges faced by priests in their parishes when it came to working with catechists in the State schools. An early initiative of the CCD Central Committee was to address this problem. Father Ron Hine, CCD secretariat, requested that Father James Madden at St Patrick’s College, Manly (the archdiocesan seminary) consider the introduction of a catechetics course into the training program for the seminarians. Father Madden replied proposing the following:

The hour set for catec[h]etics in the programme is from 4:15 to 5 pm each Tuesday. The students to attend the course would be the fourth year divines. Perhaps you could round off the series about early October. The course suggested seems what is desired and would prepare the young priests for the instructions they will have to give in the near future. (Madden, 1960)

Father Ron Hine saw the need for a more practical experience for the young priest to supplement the theoretical training they received in the seminary. In a letter to Cardinal Gilroy, Father Ron Hine proposed a “Course in Pedagogical Training for Priests of the Archdiocese during their first year on the Mission” (Hine, 1961). Following consultation with the brothers from the Christian Brothers Training School at Strathfield (inner-west Sydney) Father Hine suggested a plan for the course. The training required a twofold commitment from the priests. The first commitment in the course involved the priests

attending a series of meetings at Strathfield for talks and discussions. The focus for these meetings would include topics such as “the main questions of teaching techniques; class control and discipline; planning and preparing a lesson; techniques of questioning; and the organisation and training of catechists” (Hine, 1961). The second commitment required each priest to prepare and give a lesson at St Patrick’s College, Strathfield, under the supervision of a Christian Brother.

The first training course for priests commenced in July 1961, at the Christian Brothers Training College, Strathfield. At the initial meeting, held on Friday 21 July at 3pm, the priest participants were given an overview of the training course and a talk on lesson preparation, class control and teacher-pupil contact. The final session of the meeting was devoted to the allocation of times for each priest to teach two practice lessons under supervision at St Patrick’s College, Strathfield. They were required to complete this teaching task before the second meeting planned for Wednesday 30 August. This second meeting was a six-hour Symposium, which focused on some key aspects of the priest’s work in catechetics. This included the technique of questioning, class control and discipline, and training and organising catechists in the parish. There was scope for additional topics to be discussed based on the priest’s classroom experience. Before the final meeting in the training course scheduled for 3pm on Friday 13 October, the priests were required to teach two more supervised lessons. The final meeting provided an opportunity for the priest participants to review and discuss the significant aspects of the course.

Reflecting on the success of the initial training program for new priests, Cardinal Gilroy observed “The priests themselves have told me that they have benefited especially from the supervised lessons each of them gave, and from the individual criticisms given by the Brothers after each lesson” (Gilroy, 1961) .

Following a review of the 1961 experience the course was revised in 1962 to include a session where the priest could observe and discuss a demonstration primary and secondary level lesson at St Patrick’s College Strathfield. The lesson observation was included in the program prior to the priests teaching their own lessons.

Cardinal Gilroy acknowledged the role that Father Ron Hine had played in the development of this program for the priests of the Archdiocese “I am deeply grateful for

all that you personally have done to assist young priests to teach Catechism. This is a most important exercise of Sacred Ministry” (Gilroy, 1962).

Further revision took place in 1963 with the demonstration lesson being conducted in a State school, not a Catholic school. Motor Missioners were the classroom teachers observed in this instance. The program was expanded to four meetings and included a seminar entitled – “Pastoral Care of Children in Catholic schools”. In this seminar, the relationship of the priest with the Parish primary school and the “Regional Brothers’ High School” were discussed (*Catechetics Course*, 1963). The second seminar, entitled “Pastoral Care of Children attending State schools”, focused on “instruction by catechists and priests in State schools and contact with children outside school time” (*Catechetics Course*, 1963).

In 1964, the program was expanded to six meetings commencing in June with the final meeting in late October. The increased time was devoted to the role of the priest in the Catholic primary and secondary school; the application of the principles of pedagogy covered in the program to “sermons”; and, aspects of the spiritual life of a diocesan priest (*Catechetics Course*, 1964). The pattern established in the 1964 continued until at least 1966.

### **8.3.6 Other Developments**

Two significant networking and support structures for the parish-based catechists were developed in these first years of the official CCD operation in the Archdiocese of Sydney; the production of a newsletter; and, the establishing of a resource centre for the supply of catechetical support materials.

#### **Production of a Newsletter**

In September 1963, a newsletter-style magazine, *The Catechist*, was launched to maintain contact with those catechists who had completed the three levels of training (Dixon, 1995b, p. 11). The CCD Central Committee was concerned that groups of catechists were completing the Grade III Diploma and they were losing contact with the Archdiocesan vision for the development of the CCD in their local context. The newsletter was distributed through the local Parishes, three times per year, to coincide with each school term.

In November 1966, Father B. Larkey was appointed editor of *The Catechist* for a period of twelve months. The production of a newsletter continued until 1971.

### **Establishment of a Catechetical Resource Centre**

At the final meeting of the Society of St Vincent de Paul Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Committee in November 1964, Father Ron Hine outlined the objectives proposed by the CCD Central Committee for the development of the CCD in 1965. The “three pronged programme” was founded on the goal to “increase in the quantity and quality of the instruction given to Catholic children in State Schools”. The establishment of a “Catechetical Supply Centre” was the third objective designed to significantly contribute to the quality of instruction both in school and out of school hours. Father Hine elaborated on this objective:

Out of this Centre should come a great fund of ideas and a great deal of good advice. It must be a Centre to supply us with the essential tools to do a first class job for the children. (Society of St Vincent de Paul, 1964, November 23)

The CCD Central Committee invited the Society of St Vincent de Paul to take the establishment and management of a Catechetical Centre as part of the support given to the parochial catechists by the Society.

The vision for such a centre outlined in a memorandum on the Catechetical Supply Agency, included the provision of the ordinary teaching resources required by the catechists in teaching Catholic children both within the State school classroom and out of school hours. There was already a growing need for such resources from the catechists teaching in the State schools. In using the *Notes for Catechists* to improve the lessons provided, catechists were given advice on suggested “teaching aids” for each lesson. Catechists who had attended the Training Courses were given further detailed guidance in the value and use of these “teaching aids”. Such material included – pictures, flash cards and symbols, and flannel boards. In time, with the planned development of additional material for parish-based religious instruction to complement the lessons being given in school hours, teaching resources would be available for this work.

Another aspect of the role of the Catechetical Centre was to provide raw materials, free of charge, for the catechists to make their own teaching resources – “light cardboard for flash cards; heavy cardboard for backing; material for flannel charts; special pencils and

colouring materials; plastic and mica; drafting books; barrel clips and staples of various sorts; coloured paper” (Hine, c 1964).

A Catechetical Centre would be able to provide, at cost, devotional goods such as, rosary beads, prayer books and missals, for the catechist to supply to the students in their classes. The Centre would, also supply resources (e.g. film strips; movies; tape recordings; records) for activities, such as one-day retreats and holiday camps. Another role for the Centre would be that of a library for catechists. Father Hine reflected:

As the catechist becomes more and more experienced, he has the need for a greater knowledge of the subject, and he cannot be content just to teach the same lessons from the Catechists Guide, year after year. He needs to read books on catechetics and the methods of teaching religion, and he needs to consult other textbooks and books of suggestions for teachers in order to get new ideas for his lessons. (Hine, c 1964)

In early 1965, the Society of St Vincent de Paul opened a Catechists’ Aids Centre on the first floor of Ozaman House, Sydney. In 1969, a second Catechetical Centre was established at Burwood (inner-western suburb of Sydney).

### **Other Initiatives: A Television Program**

Between 1962 and 1967, the Sisters of the Good Samaritan produced a television program called *Flying High*. Over five years, twenty-seven sisters were involved in the writing of scripts for a program that aimed to provide religious instruction using television as the vehicle of delivery.

The Catholic Weekly (1963, April 11) reported on this venture:

More than a word of praise to the Sisters of the Good Samaritan who have been producing “Flying High” (Saturday’s Channel 9, 1.55pm) . . . The Sisters started with nothing and from nothing have gone along patiently teaching themselves by their own mistakes and gradually improving with pleasant visuals and fluent nun-speakers. Children can really learn fundamentals of religion in a pleasant and easily absorbed manner. (as cited in Trower, 1998, p. 148)

## **8.4 A Period of Expansion and Growth: 1966 – 1971**

In 1966, there were 43,622 Catholic students attending State schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney – a 62% increase since 1960. Of this total number of students, 31,263 Catholic children were in State Primary schools - an increase of 52% since 1960; and



12,539 Catholic children were in State Secondary schools – an increase of 82% since 1960. The number of parish-based lay catechists had increased by 50% to 1,093.

The Archdiocesan hierarchy needed to raise the profile of the apostolate to Catholic children in the parishes who did not attend the Catholic school:

At the direction of the Cardinal Archbishop the religious education of Catholic children attending public schools is to be undertaken in the name of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, so that in each parish there are to be two agencies responsible for the religious formation of children; one, the Catholic School, and the other, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, c1966)

At the beginning of 1966, the Cardinal established a full time Diocesan Office of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine as its executive with the task of “organising and promoting the apostolate to Catholic children attending Public Schools” (Hine, 1966, July 6). Father Ron Hine was appointed fulltime Secretary, responsible for the administration of the office and reporting to Bishop Freeman. The role of the Catechist’s Centre was expanded to include “the provision of expert advice, promote training, and produce and supply religious education materials”. This development has been interpreted as a movement towards a centralised bureaucratic shape for the organisation that was necessary due to the “complexity of the work” (Dixon, 1995b, p. 16).

Was the purpose of the Diocesan Office one of control or coordination? The role of the CCD Diocesan office could be best judged by methods it employed to organise and promote the apostolate to Catholic children attending State schools. How did the newly established CCD Diocesan Office view the CCD in Sydney? Some insight into to this can be gained from the briefing paper prepared for the members of the new Diocesan Council in October 1966:

[The] concept then is that each Parish will have two educational bodies, one, the Catholic School and the other, The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. . . the name of the Confraternity is used for all the various activities undertaken for the good of Catholic children attending public schools. . . our aim now is that it must become as real and definable an organisation in the Parish as the Catholic School itself. . . it is necessary to establish the Confraternity in places where there are no catholic schools to undertake the religious education of the children in the Parish. (CCD Diocesan Office, 1966, p. 4-5)

A clear priority in the Archdiocese of Sydney was the development of the CCD at the parochial level:

The project of religious education of the children attending public schools in most Parishes is undertaken in a fairly piecemeal sort of fashion and it is essential that a further development takes place so that a formal organisation comes into operation. (CCD Diocesan Office, 1966, p. 6)

In order to achieve this goal, the CCD Diocesan Office adopted a strategy of regular regional consultation with the clergy of the Archdiocese.

#### 8.4.1 Regional Meetings of Priests

In 1966, the first of a series of annual regional meetings between the Episcopal Chairman and the priests in the Archdiocese were conducted. From June to October, Bishop Freeman convened regional meetings of the priests in the Archdiocese to “discuss the problems of religious education of Catholic children attending Public Schools” (Hine, 1966). The focus of discussion at those meetings was a position paper entitled, *Suggestions for the Development of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Parishes*, prepared by Father Ron Hine (1966) in the CCD Diocesan Office. The paper outlined the background, the development of the CCD in the Archdiocese to date and the proposed next stage – “the formal setting up of the Confraternity in every Parish”. The paper presented a vision of the role of the CCD in the parish and suggested a framework for the Parish as the centre of activity for the apostolate to Catholic children attending State schools. The discussion paper provided a clear record of the position of the Confraternity of Christian in the Archdiocese of Sydney in 1966.

Three key areas in need of attention and coordination within the Parish were named: *instruction in school time; additional instruction outside of school time; and, pastoral care*. The first, *instruction in school time*, focused on the development of support for the local team of catechists who provided regular weekly lessons within the State school classrooms for Catholic children. The Parish Priests were encouraged to develop a local catechist teams:

There is a need to co-ordinate the instruction being given by the catechists in various grades of the State school. It is no longer sufficient for them to work as individuals . . . they must be formed into a **Catechist Group** or Guild which will hold its regular meetings, have appropriate officers, and provide catechists with the help and support they need to be able to carry out their difficult task in a satisfactory manner. (Hine, 1966)

The second area for attention and coordination, *additional instruction outside of school time*, involved three distinct activities and approaches. The first activity was the additional regular instruction for primary pupils out of school hours:

The situation can be met by the establishment of a **Parish School of Religion** operating at week-ends after school. Such a school would operate for about six to eight months a year, enrolling State school pupils from Grade 3 to Grade 6, following a formal programme of instruction coordinated with the programme being followed in scripture periods in school. (Hine, 1966)

The additional regular instruction for High School pupils outside school time needed a different approach. This area was proving to be more complex and challenging. In the first seven years of CCD operation in the Archdiocese, there had been little success in developing a model for out of school hours instruction for Catholic students attending State High schools.

Another approach in supporting the additional instruction outside of school time was the development of special events or activities such as retreat days, evening retreats, holiday schools and holiday camps. This drew on the experience of models that had proved effective over many years (even those operating prior to the reestablishment of the CCD in 1959):

Such occasions offer the much needed opportunity to pupils for the reception of the sacraments and participation in the offering of the Mass. They are means of making-up in some measure for what is missed by non-attendance at a Catholic school. (Hine, 1966)

The third area presented to the clergy for attention and coordination in the local parish was the need for the provision of *Pastoral Care* for the Catholic children (and their families) who attended the State schools – “Children attending State schools not only lack sufficient knowledge of their faith, they also suffer from a lack of **involvement in the life of the Church**. It is difficult for them to become part of the parish family” (Hine, 1966). It was not sufficient to teach the Catholic children in the State school and provide a variety of out of school hour’s activities; there was a need for a home visitation program so that the children and their families become familiar with the priest, religious and other members of the parish. The model here was taken from the Theresians, Legion of Mary and, more recently, the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

The proposal was for an integrated approach within the parish so that all the different groups involved in the variety of activities suggested would work with a coordinated

vision of the work of the apostolate in the parish. The nature of the proposal was presented in considerable detail.

The first step was to establish a Catechists' Guild as a unit of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in each Parish. The Guild should meet twice a term; operate under the direction of the Parish Priest or his nominee (a priest); have a catechist appointed as secretary; appoint a religious teacher from the local Catholic school as advisor; and with membership consisting of all catechists and helpers in the Parish. The key agenda items for the regular meeting of the Guild would include allocation of classes; supply of worksheets; preparation and provision of teaching aids; planning of activities for pupils outside school time; and, cooperation with other sodalities of the parish in these activities (Hine, 1966). The formation of parish-based catechist groups was regarded as the "next phase of the development of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the Archdiocese of Sydney". The catechists' group was an essential unit of the CCD in a parish. In the draft *Handbook for the Parish Catechist Secretary* (1966), this catechists' group was to assume three main tasks:

To provide religious instruction in State schools in the time allowed; to provide occasions for the reception of the Sacraments and attendance at Mass during any release time available; to co-operate with other parish sodalities to arrange schools of religion, home visitation etc. (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, c1966)

It was recommended that all the catechists in the parish regardless of their teaching location (State school or parish school of religion) be members of the parish catechists' group.

The second step in the proposal was the establishment of a Parish Council of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine which was to be "the body which co-ordinates the activity of all individuals and groups in the parish engaged in the work for children attending public schools" (Hine, 1966). The Parish Council of the CCD would reflect, in structure and purpose, the planned Diocesan Council for the CCD:

The Council is to operate under the guidance of a Director, who is to be the parish priest or a priest appointed by him. It should have as its members lay people and religious who co-operate with the Director in the planning and carrying out of the apostolate in the parish, and who are each given responsibility for a particular activity. (Hine, 1966)

The regional meetings of Parish Priests with the Episcopal Chairman of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine occurred annually between 1966 and 1968, and in 1970 and 1972.

On each occasion, a discussion paper was prepared by the CCD Diocesan Office to present an update since the previous gathering and current issues for discussion.

In 1967, the meetings were conducted between June and October in the Archdiocese of Sydney. The discussion paper developed by the CCD Diocesan Office (1967), *Suggestions for further development of Confraternity of Christian Doctrine*, restated the need of the Catholic children attending State schools in each parish, for instruction in and out of school time and pastoral care. It was noted that the three immediate steps were identified in 1966 to meet these needs. Firstly, the establishment of formal groups of catechists in each parish; the allocation of specific tasks related to pastoral care to sodalities or other groups in the parish; and, finally, coordination of meetings of the two groups. It was reported that the first step had been achieved in most parishes and the other two steps had been achieved to some level.

The discussion paper identified two issues that were of significant concern at that time. The first was the rapid increase in the number of Catholic children attending State high schools and the second, the need for parent education. These issues were to appear in the discussion papers for 1968, 1970 and 1972.

#### **8.4.2 The Diocesan Council of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine**

As part of the development of the CCD in the Archdiocese, a *Diocesan Council of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine* was established to advise the Episcopal Chairman, Bishop James Freeman, in “policy matters affecting the work throughout the whole of the Archdiocese” (Hine, 1966, July 6). From the briefing paper prepared for the members of the new Diocesan Council in October 1966:

The most important function of the Diocesan Council is deciding policy and settling on long and short range plans for the development of the Confraternity. Since policy grows out of the problems to be met, the following list of present and coming problems is submitted as a means of indicating some of the policy decisions which will gradually have to be made by the Council. (CCD Diocesan Office, 1966, p. 12)

The list contained twenty-five items considered current or potential “problems” which were to form the agenda for the new CCD Diocesan Council. Outlined in Table 8.6, they provided a perspective of the situation in the CCD Archdiocese of Sydney in the latter half of 1966.

Table 8.6

*List of Present and Coming Problems for the CCD*

1	The recruiting of catechists not only for work in school time but also in the Parish Schools of Religion. It seems important to attract and to find an opportunity to use the services of men, as well as women, and also professional people especially graduates.
2	Improvement of the standard of Catechist Training
3	The establishment of a permanent (not necessarily full time) training centre which will operate throughout the whole year.
4	The provision of more Motor Missions, after a thorough investigation into the best way to make use of services of Brothers and Sisters of the Motor Missions.
5	In conjunction with 4. above establish a means of supervising the catechists in much the same way as teachers in Catholic schools are helped and guided by supervisors.
6	Stabilisation of the method of financing Motor Missions and the work of Religious in State schools.
7	The production of modern teaching aids including audio-visual material for the use of the catechists together with constant revision and improvement of the syllabus and the texts for religious instruction.
8	Improvement of the methods of financing the Confraternity work at the parish level.
9	The establishment of Catechetical Centres in parishes without the service of a Catholic school.
10	An investigation into the need of Catechetical Centres in parishes which have Catholic schools, with special concern for the parishes of the inner city area which have special problems of low religious practice even among families whose children attend Catholic schools.
11	The establishment of Parish Schools of Religion.
12	Experimentation with various methods such as social, study and discussion clubs to find a way to provide additional instruction to secondary pupils outside of schools time.
13	Investigation of the possibility and value of holiday schools and camps.
14	Development of the techniques of parish Days of Instruction, Retreats and similar occasions.
15	Development of the YCS among Catholic State High school pupils.
16	Development of a close liaison with State school authorities to ensure that maximum use is made of the school time available for instruction.
17	Exploration of the possibility of arranging for catholic teachers on the staff of State schools to give religious instruction
18	Development of liaison and cooperation with authorities of various denominations responsible for religious instruction in State schools.
19	Investigating the possibility of obtaining more time for instruction in school time.
20	The drawing up of a formal constitution for the CCD in the Archdiocese.
21	The development of parent education programme perhaps not only for the parents of State school pupils but parents of all Catholic children.
22	Development of a system of religious education of handicapped children, mentally retarded, deaf, spastic, blind and multiple handicapped children.
23	Development of specialised training courses for catechists to enable them to teach handicapped children as above.
24	A spiritual training for catechists to give them a more complete apostolic outlook.
25	Surveillance of the present moves being made by non-Catholic churches for an agreed syllabus for religious instruction.

Adapted from: CCD Diocesan Office (1966). Survey of problems associated with religious education of Catholic children attending public schools. [Briefing paper]. CCD Archives, Sydney, Australia. p. 12

The membership of the Council was determined by invitation from the Episcopal Chairman and reflected the range of individuals and groups involved in the task of providing religious instruction for Catholic children outside of the Catholic schools at that time. Representatives of lay catechists, the clergy of the Archdiocese, the Diocesan CCD staff, religious orders active in the State schools, including Motor Missioners, and the various societies were to form a core group of those involved directly in the apostolate in the Archdiocese. The first meeting of the Diocesan Council was held on Friday 21 October 1966. Representatives from the Clergy (3); the Conferences of Major Superiors of Clerical orders, Brothers, Sisters; the Motor Mission; Syllabus Committee; the Society of St Gerard Majella; the Theresian Club; the Catholic Youth Organisation; State School teachers; the Society of St Vincent de Paul; the Catechist Centre; the Catechists (2); the Legion of Mary; the Newman Graduate Society and the Society of Christian Doctrine were present at this inaugural meeting.

The guidelines for the operation of the Council were set out in the *Chairman's Minute*, which formed part of the Agenda in this first meeting. The position of Monsignor Dr. C Duffy as Director of the CCD in the Archdiocese was confirmed, as was that of Father Ron Hine as Secretary of the CCD. Father Hine was to be responsible for the administration of the Diocesan Office and was to bring "all matters relating to policy and action of the Confraternity . . . before the Council" and implement the decisions of the Council (Diocesan Council of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1966, October 21). Bishop Freeman clearly stated the intended role of the Council:

The Council has been established by His Eminence the Cardinal to assist me in the development of the work of the Confraternity in the Archdiocese of Sydney. I intend to have all matters both of policy and action considered by the Council. The Council is the governing body of the Confraternity. (Diocesan Council of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1966, October 21)

At the initial meeting, the Council was asked to review the material discussed at the recent regional meetings of the clergy. To inform the deliberations of the Council at future meetings it was resolved that:

The Council undertake a survey of the Parishes in the Archdiocese to see the present situation and at the same time stimulate C.C.D. activities . . . the survey be done by considering a number of parishes at each meeting. (Diocesan Council of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1966, October 21)

Each Council meeting included a review of the reports received from ten to twelve parishes that were surveyed in the preceding month. The surveys provided some statistical details of the operation of CCD in the parish, including the number of State schools in the parish; the number of Catholic children attending State schools; and, the frequency of lessons in school time. Details of the structure and support that existed in each parish to meet the needs of the Catholic children attending State schools were also canvassed. Information about the organisation of the catechist group and the existence of groups such as the Legion of Mary, the Theresians, St Vincent de Paul, Catholic Youth Organisation (CYO), the involvement of the parochial Catholic school and the Motor Mission was collected. Over a period of twenty-one meetings from October 1966 to October 1968 every parish in the Archdiocese was surveyed, particular needs were assessed and a Council member assigned to follow-up with particular parishes.

From October 1966 to October 1968, the Council met regularly, generally once a month from March through to December. With the appointment of Bishop Freeman as Bishop of Armidale, the Diocesan Council was dissolved in late 1968. It reformed in June 1969 under the Chairmanship of Bishop Kelly, the new Episcopal Director of the CCD. The Council continued to meet regularly until the end of 1971. Matters discussed at Council meetings included operational items such as the Catechist Training Course and other training and formation activities, the production of the newsletter – *The Catechist* – and the development of the Catechetical Supply Centre. Several key issues emerged in the minutes of the CCD Diocesan Council in the first five years of its operation. These included attention to the instruction on Catholic students attending State High schools in school time and after hours; the development of Parent Education programs; and, the development of CCD Schools of Religion.

### **Catholic Students attending State High Schools**

Between 1960 and 1966, the number of Catholic students in State Secondary schools had almost doubled. The situation at the end of 1966 is summarised in Table 8.7.



Table 8.7

*Teaching Catholic Pupils in State High Schools in 1966*

<b>Archdiocese of Sydney: Regions</b>	<b>Number of Parishes</b>	<b>Number of High Schools</b>	<b>Number of R.E. lessons per week</b>	<b>Number of Catholic Pupils</b>	<b>Catechists: Lay Male</b>	<b>Catechists: Lay Female</b>	<b>Catechists: Priest</b>	<b>Catechists: Religious (not Motor Mission)</b>	<b>Catechists: Motor Mission</b>
Leichhardt	12	15	42	1205	1	20	10	0	2
Hurstville	9	14	28	712	1	11	8	0	3
Gosford	3	4	16	582	0	8	4	0	0
Epping	7	11	30	743	1	4	10	1	0
Dee Why	8	10	36	831	0	6	9	0	10
Blacktown	10	14	66	1959	1	7	9	1	19
Bankstown	7	13	45	1326	0	6	11	0	14
Liverpool	8	13	67	2182	3	13	8	0	21
Parramatta	11	14	41	1214	1	5	8	3	6
Randwick	11	14	36	887	2	19	10	0	2
Sutherland	5	6	12	324	0	3	5	0	0
North Sydney	10	14	35	691	3	14	11	1	0
	101	142	454	12656	13	116	103	6	77

Adapted from: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (1966). Analysis of situation in State High schools - regions. [Annual Statistical Returns]. CCD Archives, Sydney, Australia

From 1966 to 1970, the number doubled once again. This rapid growth in the number of Catholics attending State schools was caused by several factors including the growth in that age sector of the population, the number of students staying longer in school, and the inability of Catholic Secondary schools to accommodate all the Catholic secondary school age students. The rapid growth in the number of Catholic students attending State high schools presented a number of challenges to the Archdiocesan CCD and the local Parish communities.

At the 1967 regional meetings of the Clergy in the Archdiocese of Sydney, the provision of religious education to Catholic students attending State high schools was the main item for discussion:

Without a doubt the most difficult part of the apostolate is that directed to public school youth, but it is the most urgent. One helpful factor is just now making itself felt. In recent years a great improvement has taken place in the religious education given to pupils in State primary schools and these children are now moving into high schools. (CCD Diocesan Office, 1967)

A key question addressed was how to improve the standard of religious instruction given in weekly lessons in the State school. The solution proposed was:

to increase the number of trained catechists so that eventually each catechist would not have more than 20 pupils, all of whom belonged to the same grade or form, for it is the personal influence of the catechist on each pupil that is paramount for this age group. (CCD Diocesan Office, 1967)

A number of strategies were developed to recruit catechists to teach in the Secondary schools. These included a particular focus of the recruitment of lay male catechists who were “in a position to devote an hour or so a week to religious instruction in a school near their place of employment”; the release of Catholic school religious staff for a period to teach in a nearby State high school; “to enlist the cooperation of Catholic teachers on the staff of State high schools”; encourage Primary catechists who are teaching grades 5 and 6 to consider teaching the lower grades in a State high school (CCD Diocesan Office, 1967).

Another issue was the provision of activities for the young people attending State schools outside of school time. With the establishment of large Regional State High schools outside the parish boundaries, many of the Catholic children attending these schools were not readily able to identify with their local parish. In 1967, the CCD office produced a document entitled *Setting up the Second Unit of the Parish Confraternity of Christian*

*Doctrine for Apostolic Work among Public school Youth of the Parish* (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1967). The first unit being the Catechists' Group, the purpose of the second unit was to "keep contact with high school students and to organise discussions, retreats, seminars and the like for them" in the local parish setting (CCD Diocesan Office, 1967). In September 1967, to assist in the introduction of CCD Youth Activity groups in each parish, the CCD Diocesan Office conducted a training course for lay volunteers interested in parish-based Youth activities in ten regions in the Archdiocese. 572 representatives from 106 parishes attended this initial training session (Hine, 1967b). Similar training courses were conducted in 1968 and 1969. In 1969, 300 lay volunteers were enrolled on the training course conducted from February to April. By 1970, this aspect of CCD training had been incorporated in the courses conducted at the regional Catechist Training Centres at the beginning of each year.

In June 1968, the CCD Diocesan Office reported that 25 parishes had established CCD Youth Activity Groups (CCD Diocesan Office, 1968). Twelve months later, a further 10 parishes were active in this area (CCD Diocesan Office, 1969, June).

### **Parent Education**

The development of a parent education program was an initial goal for the newly established CCD Diocesan Council in October 1966. At the first meeting (21 October, 1966) "the possibility of helping parents with the religious instruction of their children" was discussed (Diocesan Council of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1966, October 21).

Two factors are likely to have influenced the CCD Diocesan leadership in the Archdiocese to look to develop an organised response to the particular need of parent education. The first would be the practical experience of the Theresians and the Legion of Mary in adopting home visitation as part of their apostolate to Catholic children attending State schools for many years prior to the re-establishing of the CCD in 1959. More recently, the religious sisters in the metropolitan Motor Mission had incorporated home visitation and parent education in their local ministry. The second factor would have been the influence of the Church teaching in documents from the Second Vatican Council in clearly defining the role of the parent, both rights and responsibilities, in the formation of their children. The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*

described the family as “the domestic church”, in which “parents should, by their word and example, be the first preachers of the faith to their children” (Paul VI, 1964, n.11). The *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)* further defined the role of parents:

Parents will energetically acquit themselves of a duty which devolves primarily on them, namely education and especially religious education. (n.48) . . . The family is a kind of school of deeper humanity. But if it is to achieve the full flowering of its life and mission, it needs the kindly communion of minds and the joint deliberation of spouses, as well as the painstaking cooperation of parents in the education of their children. (n.52) (Paul VI, 1965)

This document also gave explicit direction for those in positions of authority:

All those, therefore, who exercise influence over communities and social groups should work efficiently for the welfare of marriage and the family. Public authority should regard it as a sacred duty to recognize, protect and promote their authentic nature, to shield public morality and to favor the prosperity of home life. The right of parents to beget and educate their children in the bosom of the family must be safeguarded. (Paul VI, 1965, n. 52)

During 1967, a sub-committee of the CCD Diocesan Council developed a proposal for a pilot Parent Education program. A program was first trialled in Bondi Parish in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney. The Parent Education pilot program consisted of a “short course in religious enquiry”, three sessions held monthly over three months, for the parents of children enrolled for First Holy Communion. Parents of Catholic children from all schools, Catholic and State, in the parish were invited to attend the program (Sealey, 1967).

At the regional meetings of the priests in 1967, parent education was described as “another pressing problem”:

Since home life is the basis of true Christian life, further religious education to guide parents in their duties is essential . . . parents as the adults of today need to be given an increasing understanding of the meaning of the faith in the context of the modern world (CCD Diocesan Office, 1967).

At this meeting, it was suggested to the priests that a parent education program should be established in each parish to include parents of all children, both Catholic and State school.

In September 1968, the CCD Diocesan Council initiated a pilot scheme of CCD Parent Education in six parishes – Blacktown, Bondi, Concord, East Granville, Revesby and Ryde (Hine, 1968, June 14). The scheme focused on the preparation of parents for the

First Confession and Communion of their child. In some cases, the response was disappointing. Bishop Freeman reported “the response to the pilot scheme for parent education being conducted at St Mary’s Concord received little support from State school parents . . . after considerable efforts these parents gave little response to the invitation to attend” (Hine, 1968, October 11, #384). Following a review of the pilot in November 1968, a decision was made to extend the program to all parishes in the Archdiocese in 1969.

At regional meetings of the priests in 1970, a report was given of the progress of the CCD Parent Education initiative since the last meetings held in 1968. During that period of time, about fifty parishes had been contacted and invited to commence a program of parent education within their parish. The purpose of the program was “to help parents understand their role as religious educators and give them some assistance about how this role is to be exercised” (CCD Diocesan Office, 1970). The programs, which were conducted around the time of the children’s reception of First Holy Communion and Confirmation, were reported as the most successful. The CCD Parent Education programs emphasised the importance of the role of the Parish in this form of adult education:

Such C.C.D. parent education programmes do not intend to dislocate excellent work between parents and teachers existing in Catholic Schools at the moment, but the C.C.D. feels the need for coordination on a Parish basis in the present circumstances is essential. (CCD Diocesan Office, 1970)

The CCD Diocesan Office continued to encourage the establishment of Parent Education programs in the parishes into the 1970s.

### **CCD Schools of Religion**

From 1959 to 1965, the operation of the CCD had been funded directly by the Cardinal and local parish initiatives. During 1966, changes were made in the method of financing the work of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. This appeared to be prompted by a review of the way in which Catholic Education was financed in the Archdiocese of Sydney, in particular, the system by which parishes subsidised Catholic schools (Hine, 1966, June 21). In 1965, Cardinal Gilroy established the Catholic Building and Finance Commission (CBFC). This Commission, a committee of bishops, parish priests, Catholic Education Office (CEO) representatives and laity with financial, legal and building

industry expertise, assumed responsibility for the “financing, rationalisation, planning and building of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese” (Luttrell, 1996, p. 40). A centralised system of Catholic Schools, a ‘systemic’ system, was created as Religious Congregations agreed to place their schools under this Diocesan financial scheme. The CCD Diocesan Office, concerned that the financial needs of the CCD, particularly the Motor Mission, should not be overlooked in any such review, canvassed Parish Priests in parishes supported by the work of Motor Missioners to assess that need. The response confirmed the importance of the Motor Missioners in the foundation and ongoing development of the work of the CCD, particularly in the fast growing outer suburbs of Sydney.

The development of an annual budget for the CCD that included budgets for the CCD office; the Motor Missions and the work of the Schoenstatt Sisters working in the Parish of Mt Druitt, western Sydney, was part of a strategic approach to the consolidation of the work of the CCD in the Archdiocese (Freeman, 1966, October 10). The CCD Diocesan Office administered the payment of Religious stipends to the Motor Missioners, not the individual parish or parishes. In effect, Motor Missioners became full-time staff of the CCD Diocesan Office in the Archdiocese located in ‘regional’ centres. The changes in financing arrangements for the Motor Mission were also accompanied by structural changes, which included the proposal for each Motor Mission to adopt the name of CCD School of Religion. A Priest Manager and Principal would be appointed to each CCD School of Religion and the Motor Missioners, usually two religious sisters, would be the full-time staff of the school. In a letter to the Clergy regarding the proposal to establish CCD Schools of Religion, Father Ron Hine explained the reasons for the change:

One motive for the change was to constitute the Motor Mission activities in such a way that they would be eligible for exemption from sales tax but more importantly the Motor Missions have to be more fully adapted to meet the growing problem of increased numbers of Catholic children enrolled in State Schools. (1967a)

In some rapidly growing outer suburbs of Sydney there were no Catholic schools or insufficient places in the existing Catholic schools. The CCD Schools of Religion were established in districts where large numbers of Catholic children did not attend Catholic schools. They involved either a single parish or, more usually, the combining of a number of parishes. Whilst drawing on the operational practice of the existing metropolitan Motor Missions in Sydney, the proposed tasks of the CCD School of

Religion called for “quite a change of emphasis in the activities of the religious in the State School apostolate and will have a significant effect over a number of years” (Hine, 1967a).

One of the chief tasks of the CCD School of Religion involved the provision of classes and discussion groups for State schools children outside of school hours in the local parishes. This included First Communion classes and Confirmation classes and supporting local youth groups. The second task was to work cooperatively with local catechists in the provision of religious education in the local State schools. These full-time religious staffs of the school were to:

Give religion lessons in the State Schools of the parish or region but always in conjunction with the catechists. The Parish Catechist’s group retains primary responsibility for teaching in State Schools and the religious of the CCD Schools of Religion work with and through the Catechists’ Groups . . . teach in some classes in State Schools . . . visit classes taught by catechists to help and guide them in their work . . . supervise and help catechists in all schools . . . attend meetings of Catechists’ Groups of the parish or region . . . assist pastors in any way possible in organising catechists. (Hine, 1967a)

A formal constitution was drawn up for each CCD School of Religion outlining the operational features of the School. In January 1968, following negotiations with Motor Missioners and representatives of Religious Orders in the latter part of 1967, the first six CCD Schools of Religion commenced in Bankstown – including the parishes of Bankstown, Punchbowl, Bass Hill, and Greenacre with the Sisters of St Joseph and Brothers of St Gerard; Blacktown - with the Sisters of St Joseph and Brothers of St Gerard; Seven Hills – including Lalor Park with the Sisters of St Joseph and Brothers of St Gerard; Liverpool – including Lurnea with the Sisters of Charity and Brothers of St Gerard; Mt. Druitt – Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary; and, Dee Why – including nine parishes in the northern beaches area north of Sydney with the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. Father Ron Hine reported to the CCD Diocesan Council meeting in March 1968:

Work done by the Motor Mission personnel in the past had been re-organised and was now concentrated in certain areas under the title of ‘CCD School of Religion’. These Schools of Religion would provide a base for the work of full time religious and a Centre from which to organise after school care of these children. (Diocesan Council of the CCD, 1968, March 8, #298)

In 1969, there were 23 religious brothers and sisters working full time in State school religious instruction in CCD Schools of Religion. In July 1969, in an attempt to develop

closer cooperation, regular meetings of these full-time staff commenced. Initially, the meetings were held twice each school term - one week prior to the CCD Diocesan Council meetings. This group was to have a significant influence on the direction of the CCD in the following years. Whilst the term 'CCD School of Religion' was understood as a structural and operational reality, it did not replace the term 'Motor Mission' or the use of 'Motor Missioner' to describe the full-time staff.

### **Lay Involvement**

The majority of catechists in the Archdiocese of Sydney were members of the laity, mainly women. This was recognised in the initial membership of the CCD Diocesan Council with laity filling the representations from the Theresian Club; the Catholic Youth Organisation; State school teachers; the Society of St Vincent de Paul; the Catechist Centre; the Legion of Mary; the Newman Graduate Society and the Society of Christian Doctrine. In addition, there were two lay catechists - a total of ten lay representatives on the Council.

In 1969, following recommendations from the CCD Diocesan Council, a Diocesan Catechist Committee (DCC) was established to provide a forum for "specialised discussion about matters pertinent only to lay catechists" (Doherty, 1969, October 3). Members of the committee were nominated from the regional meetings of the Parish Catechist Secretaries. The committee met three times a year (one meeting per term). The first meeting was held on 21 November 1969. Three items were listed on the agenda for the inaugural meeting – the role of the committee, CCD training course for 1970 and recruiting catechists. The work of the committee was promoted through publications such as *The Catholic Weekly* and the CCD newsletter, *The Catechist*.

### **8.4.3 Curriculum Development**

By 1967, the Catechist Training Course was the main vehicle for teaching catechists "how to instruct children in their care in accordance with the Diocesan Syllabus for the religious instruction of children in state schools" (CCD, 1967, p. 7A). The CCD Syllabus committee had developed a program of instruction for each grade "in line with the official books of religion and Catechisms published by the Hierarchy of Australia for use in Catholic schools" (CCD, 1967, p. 7A). Based on the two Catechisms (Book 1 for



upper primary school children and Book 2 for lower secondary) and four junior religion texts (*My Way to God* series), the published texts for religious instruction in State schools for each grade were presented as a series of worksheets (four lessons each) for each grade. The use of this syllabus material was prescribed:

Ten worksheets for each grade allow one to be used each month. At the beginning of the month the catechist distributes a worksheet to each pupil. During the month, the catechist gives four lessons based on matter contained in the worksheet, and at each lesson he assigns a part of the worksheet to be completed by the pupils as homework. (CCD, 1967, p. 7A)

Lesson plans, entitled '*Catechist Guide*', were also developed by the CCD syllabus committee for each grade to assist catechists in the preparation of lessons based on the worksheets. This mirrored the provision of a 'Teachers Book' for teachers in Catholic schools at that time. The correct use of the '*Catechists Guide*' was the focus group training in the syllabus and special method section of the Catechist Training course.

Correspondence from a local catechist group indicated some of the practical challenges faced in the use of this material:

At our Catechist meeting on Friday last, we had great discussion over worksheets for 1968. Some Catechists decided not to use them again, because the children don't return them and this seems such a terrible waste. As for myself I have 30 children 6 and 7 years of age, in first and second class. They like the worksheets, but as some can't read they are not returned. Would it be possible to have simple sheets made for these children. I am lucky if I get 6 sheets back out of 30. Their parents should help I know, Father, but they just don't. Would it be possible to have a cheap book form printed, which could be used as part of the lesson. A book for each term, at a cost of 20 cents, which I think the parents may contribute. Cheaper if possible. Even 10 pictures which the children could write on. This is my 3<sup>rd</sup> year of teaching and I find that letting the children write and draw in an exercise book helps them to remember. They would love a special scripture book I'm sure. I love my work father and have learned a lot myself. Some days I feel my lesson has been a flop, then a little child comes along and says something which makes me feel it's all worthwhile. (Brown, 1967)

Father Doherty, CCD Secretary, replied:

We should not feel that the worksheet can only be effective if returned entire and correct to the catechist. The worksheet has been proven to be an effective teaching aid during the class itself; also that some concrete evidence of the matter the pupil is being taught should be taken into the home, gives us some indirect contact with the parents . . . the main reason for the continuance of the worksheet system in class is that this constitutes the required syllabus in the religious teaching in State Schools . . . perhaps the training personnel at the Catechist Training Centre might be able to suggest methods to overcome this difficulty. (1967, November 23)

In 1967, the CCD syllabus committee focused its attention on developing an extension of the worksheet system for the upper forms in Secondary schools. The title of the series of teaching materials produced was *Spotlight*. Consisting of eight sixteen page booklets that were “produced in a more elaborate style than the worksheets making use of two-colour printing and photographs” (Hine, 1967, August 11).

By the end of the 1960s, methods of catechetical instruction had changed and new Catechetical Guidelines were developed for Catholic schools. The earlier texts and guides were developed based on the Kerygmatic approach to religious education. With the influence of Vatican II, International Catechetical study weeks and the publication of *The Renewal of Education in Faith* by the Australian Episcopal Conference in 1970 there was a need to revise the approach to catechetical instruction. *The Renewal of Education in Faith* (1970) provided:

a number of statements establishing a vision for catechesis based on an understanding of life experience catechesis . . . the aim of the document was to establish foundational principles for the production of catechetical materials and the formation of catechists. ( Ryan, 1997, p. 168)

The need for revision of the CCD texts and lesson guides presented a number of challenges. Firstly, the CCD had insufficient human resources (“manpower”) to “re-write texts and lesson guides for each and completely revise the catechetical ideas available at present” (Minutes of the thirtieth meeting of the Diocesan Council of the CCD, 1970, April 3). The impact of changes on the lay volunteers was a significant consideration;

The possible alternative appeared to be to focus our resources on re-writing new Catechist’s Guides for perhaps Junior 1, 3, 5 and Senior 1. The advantage of this decision could be seen in not providing the disturbing influence of an entirely new catechetical style for those working at present and yet gradually introducing more contemporary catechetical ideas into the current system. (Diocesan Council of the CCD, 1970, April 3, A.102)

In the latter half of 1970, the CCD Syllabus committee, Sister Peter O’Dwyer, Sister Loyola Carmody and Brother Gerard Rummery developed guidelines for a revision of the syllabus in response to the new catechetical approach. The revision was conducted in stages with Grade 1 and Form 1 programs developed for use during the 1970s. The Grade 1 program was entitled *Joy for Living* and the Form 1 program *Growth* (Hine, 1970, October 2).

The introduction of the new program, *Joy for Living*, represented the third change in the curriculum for Catholic children in State schools over the previous decade of CCD operation in the Archdiocese of Sydney. A further revision of the Catechist Training Course was necessary and local seminars to update trained catechists were essential in explaining this new approach in religious education in the program. Father Doherty (CCD Diocesan Office), speaking at a seminar for Infant grade catechists at Mulgoa (Western Sydney) on 20 September 1971, described the foundations of the new program:

‘Joy for Living’ has attempted to find the words and experiences of Australian children of about 5, 6, of 7 years of age. It tells them about God, and what He means in their life, and the teacher by her attitude can bring the value of being a Christian to them . . . the basic thing we want to present, to be a Christian is to enter into a new joyful experience which the earliest Church called good news. If we ever forget this we are reducing it to just a question of obligation and laws. (Gorman, 1972, February)

The aim of the lessons was to:

Emphasise the idea of joy, particularly to get them to understand that the teacher catechist is giving them something joyful and exciting. They are a special person with a special name, that each human being is a unique creation of God. (Gorman, 1972, February)

The content of each lesson is “based upon doctrinal ideas, it uses songs, games and activities to bring out that idea” (Gorman, 1972, February). For the catechist preparation and attitude, Father Doherty offered the advice:

Always read the Reflection for Catechist which gives you the meaning behind the songs and games, if you understand that these are part of the experiences you are going to feel happier. Do not try to test them to get answers back. The child is going to understand at a much more personal level that I am a special person because God made him special. They will not be able to put this into words. (Gorman, 1972, February)

#### **8.4.4 Catechist Training and Formation**

By the end of 1965, the key elements of catechist training and formation in the Archdiocese of Sydney were in operation: An Annual Catechist Rally, a three level Training Course, an annual Retreat and “refresher” courses for those who had completed the Training Course. These became the model for other Dioceses in NSW and across Australia.

There were two significant factors that called for a revision of the original Training Course content used from 1961 to 1966. The first factor was the influence of the

documents of *The Second Sacred Ecumenical Council of the Vatican* (Vatican II – 11 October 1962 to 8 Dec 1965) and the change they called for in the Universal Church. This impacted on both the Doctrine and Method content. The second factor was the changes necessary in the CCD syllabus for Religious Instruction in State schools due to the introduction of “official books of religion and Catechisms published by the Hierarchy of Australia for use in Catholic schools” (CCD, 1967, p. 7A). This called for a restructuring of the methods, content and overall approach.

The CCD Diocesan Office saw its role in organising the courses as “a service to the parishes of the Archdiocese” (CCD, 1967, p. 1A). In order to coordinate the ongoing revision of the Training Course, a Syllabus Committee of the CCD was formed. Initially, Father Ron Hine and Sister M. Peter (Kathleen Dwyer) RSJ were the initial members of the committee.

The course was developed as an “inservice course” – it was expected that those enrolled would be engaged in active catechetical work. The awards of Diploma II and III were contingent on the individual being an active catechist. An essential element of the training received in the course was related to the ability of the catechist to use the Diocesan Syllabus for Religious Education in the field – “The precise aim of the Catechist Training Course is to teach catechists how to instruct children in their care in accordance with the Diocesan Syllabus for the religious instruction in state schools” (CCD, 1967, p. 7A).

In 1967, eleven centres were in operation for the Catechist Training Course with 700 catechists enrolled in the first year of the Course (renamed Diploma I). This represented a 70% increase from the 1966 enrolment. A new training centre was opened at Sutherland with 120 new catechists enrolled for the Diploma I course. The CCD Diocesan Office reported that approximately 1,200 catechists were enrolled in the First, Second and Third year courses in eleven centres across the Archdiocese (Brown, 1967). A handbook distributed to the regional organisers described the general structure of the course:

At each level the course lasts ten weeks with weekly sessions of 1 ¾ hours’ duration. Each session has the following parts:-

- (a) Lecture in Christian Doctrine
- (b) Lecture in Method

- (c) Group training in the syllabus and special method for a particular grade of children. (CCD, 1967, p. 1A)

Table 8.8 provides an outline of the structure and syllabus for the CCD Training Course in the Archdiocese of Sydney in 1968. Table 8.9 provides a comparison of topic heading from the 1963 Grade 2 course and 1968 Diploma II course.

Table 8.8

*Outline of CCD Catechist Training Course 1967 – Archdiocese of Sydney*

	DIPLOMA 1 COURSE	DIPLOMA 2 COURSE	DIPLOMA 3 COURSE
DESCRIPTION	An elementary course for the novice catechist.	An advanced course for catechists who have at least one year's teaching experience	A senior course for catechists who have at least two year's teaching experience
SYLLABUS: DOCTRINE	Catholic Faith as Good News of Salvation	The Church, the People of God – a study of the organisation, nature and sacramental life of the Church	Christian Living – a study of the Commandments and principle of moral training
METHOD	Basic technique of teaching.	Further analysis of teaching technique and of the religious values to be achieved through their use.	Education and Religious Psychology – simple facts of the psychology of learning related to teaching method
GROUP TRAINING	<p>Instruction in the doctrinal approach to be used in instructing children of a particular grade.</p> <p>Coaching in ten lessons to be given by Catechists to a particular grade in state schools in accordance with lesson plans in Catechists' Guide.</p> <p>Training in the use of worksheets and supervision of preparation of teaching aids suitable to the grade taught by catechists</p>	<p>Instruction in the doctrinal approach to be used in instructing children of a particular grade.</p> <p>Further training in lessons to be given in state schools, leading to a better understanding of lesson planning.</p> <p>Further training in the preparation of teaching aids suitable to grades taught by catechists.</p>	Revision and further study of teaching techniques to develop initiative and competence.

From: CCD Training Course – Regulations (1967) pp. 1A – 3A

Table 8.9

*The Development of the CCD Catechist Training Course in the 1960s*

Week	Doctrine Lectures (c 1963)	Doctrine Lectures (c1968)	Educational Psychology (c1963)	Teaching Method (c1968)
1	God's plan of Revelation	The People of God	The Pre-school child	Growth in Faith – the aim of the Catechist
2	The Mystery of the Church	The Servant Church	The School-child	The Twofold Movement of a Religion Lesson
3	The Church Teaching	Christ teaches in and through His Church	The Adolescent	The Steps of a Lesson and its Twofold Movement
4	The Church ruling and sanctifying	Sacred Scripture	The Learning Process	The Bible in Catechesis
5	The Bible	The Liturgy	Habitual Knowledge	Liturgy and Witness in Catechesis
6	The Sacraments	Baptism and Confirmation	Motivation	Witness and Doctrine in Catechesis
7	Baptism and Confirmation	The Eucharist (1)	Remembering and Forgetting	Memory in Christian Doctrine
8	The Sacrament of Eucharist	The Eucharist (2)	Behaviour Problems	The use of Pictures in the Religion Lesson
9	The Eucharist, the perfect sacrifice	Christian Unity	Individual Differences	Preparing for Communion Discussion Techniques
10	A Vision of Church	The Church in the Modern World	Learning – an active process	Preparing for Confession A structure for Group Catechesis

From: Manual of the Catechists' Training Course (For Diploma Grade II): A resume of lectures in Christian Doctrine and Educational Psychology. (CCD Archdiocese of Sydney, n.d.); Hine, R. & Sister Peter, (c1968). *Catechists' training course*. Sydney, Australia: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. (Hine & Sister Peter, c1968)

The influence of Vatican II and the development of an Australian approach to Religious Education can be seen in the “Notes of Lectures in Doctrine and Teaching Method”(Hine & Sister Peter, c1968) – the prescribed content for the Diploma II Training Course.

In total, nine of the sixteen documents promulgated by the Council were named in the Catechist Training Course notes (Hine & Sister Peter, c1968). The four Constitutions: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (1964); *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (1965); *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (1963); and *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* (1965) were addressed in the notes for Lecturers in Doctrine. Talks 1 - 3, *The People of God*, *The Servant Church* and *Christ Teaches in and through his Church* were developed around key teachings of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*). Reference was made to the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) and two Decrees - Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church (*Christus Dominus*) (1965) and Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*) (1965). Talk 4 – *Sacred Scripture* was developed around the document Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) and Talk 5 – *The Liturgy*, drew from the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) for the lecture content. Talk 9 – Christian Unity, contained “the teaching and guidance the Council has given us in regard to our search of Christian Unity” drawing from the Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) (1964). Talk 10 – The Church in the Modern World – draws the title and content from the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*). The final lecture concluded with a description of “some of the attitudes we’d expect to find in a ‘Vatican II’ Catholic” (Hine & Sister Peter, c1968, p. 46 -47).

The notes for the Lectures in Teaching Method refer to the Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum Educationis*) (1965):

Vatican Council II in its Declaration on Education speaks of catechetical instruction as the Church’s foremost means which ‘give clarity and vigour to faith, nourishes a life lived according to the Spirit of Christ, leads to a knowing and active participation in the liturgical mystery and inspires apostolic action’. (Hine & Sister Peter, c1968, p. 50)

An objective of the Teaching Method Lectures was to assist the catechist in the use of the Diocesan Syllabus for religious instruction in State schools. With the introduction of



“official books of religion and Catechisms published by the Hierarchy of Australia for use in Catholic schools” (CCD, 1967, p. 7A) between 1962 and 1964, the CCD Diocesan Office decided to align the Syllabus used for Catholic children attending State schools to that in the series of prescribed in catechetical texts for use in all Catholic schools in Australia. This required a complete revision of the Worksheets and Catechist Guides/Notes developed in 1960 and 1961, and consequently, a revision of the content of the Method lectures and the structure of the activities in the Tutorial segment of the Catechists’ Training Courses.

Mrs. V. Whitefield, Catechist Secretary for Our Lady of the Way Parish, Sylvania (southern Sydney) wrote to Father Hine with some feedback and suggestions based on the catechists’ experience of the 1967 Training Course:

Of the nine Catechists teaching in the two state Primary schools in our Parish, two were earning their third year certificate, one, her second year certificate, and the other six, their first year certificate. We have all felt we learned a great deal which would be very beneficial in giving our lessons to the students and would like to commend the priests, brothers and sisters who were our instructors for their sincere interest and helpfulness . . . suggestions . . . helpful if the tutorials could cover the lessons a week ahead as many people taught on Tuesday or Wednesday in which case they were unable to benefit fully from the help given during the tutorial on Tuesday night. . . would it be possible to organize the tutorial so that the lessons could be given in the same order as we would be giving them in the schools . . . the unrealistic approach to the homework assignments. . . the amount of homework assigned has proven a barrier in obtaining additional catechists . . . finally the demonstration lesson is not very helpful as it is given under ideal conditions i.e. in a Catholic school. . . it would be more beneficial if trainees could sit in on a lesson given by a lay teacher in a state school. (Whitefield, 1967, October 16)

In 1969, a total of 1,216 catechists (63% of catechists) were trained in Diploma I, II or III, with 308 completing the three-year course and graduating with Diploma III. Twelve training centres operated across the Archdiocese in the first term of the school year. In 1970, 1248 catechists (55% of catechists) were trained – 715 in Diploma I; 306 in Diploma II; and 227 in Diploma III. In 1971, 1,431 catechists (61% of catechists) were trained – 927 in Diploma I; 306 in Diploma II; and 198 in Diploma III (CCD, 1969, 1970, 1971).

Over 6,000 parish-based lay catechists, mainly women, received a minimum of fifteen hours of basic training in the five year period from 1967 to 1971. This training included the most up to date material that was based on the teachings of Vatican II and the

developing modern catechetical approaches. This was perhaps the most consistent and sustained approach the Adult Education in the Catholic Church in New South Wales for that time.

#### **8.4.5 Further Developments**

##### **Daytime Catechist Training Courses**

In response to the requests from a significant number of parishes across the Archdiocese, a daytime Catechist Training course was run for the first time in September, October and November 1968. The course following the structure and content of the well established evening courses. Father Ron Hine reported the success of the initiative to the CCD Diocesan Council – “Ninety-one trainees enrolled for the course in Diploma 1 and Diploma 2 – 71 trainees for Diploma I and 20 for Diploma II” (Hine, 1968, October 11). The success of the 1968 daytime training course conducted at Broadway (inner city) encouraged the CCD to run it in two locations in 1969 – Broadway and Parramatta (Western Sydney).

The development of the daytime Catechist Training Courses faced a number of challenges. The first was the availability of a suitably located venue as many courses were conducted using rooms in Catholic Primary and Secondary schools that were not available for the daytime course. The second challenge was the availability of tutors to conduct the course.

##### **Youth Activity Leaders – the “Second Unit” of Parish CCD**

In 1968, a training course for Youth Activity Leaders was formally introduced as an option to the CCD Training Course for Catechists held over 10 evenings during first term. This additional course would formally support parishes in meeting the request from Diocesan CCD that a “second unit” of the CCD be established in each parish (CCD Diocesan Office, 1967, 1968). The course was designed to assist those who had volunteered to be Youth Activity Leaders to establish and maintain Youth Activity Groups in the parish providing a range of “religious and social functions for High school pupils outside of school time” (CCD Diocesan Office, 1968, p. 9AA). In 1969, three hundred trainees enrolled in the course conducted during Term 1 (CCD, 1969).

### **First Communion Catechists**

In October 1968, the CCD introduced a special five week course for catechists and other interested parishioners to develop skills in the preparation of children for First Communion. Fifty- eight trainees enrolled in the course. Participants in this course received lectures and workshops on relevant doctrine and teaching method specific to assist them in the use of worksheets and lesson guides developed by the CCD syllabus committee for parish-based instruction of children for their First Holy Communion (Hine, 1968, November 8).

### **An Advanced Course for Catechists**

In response to the demand from many catechists across the Archdiocese, in June 1970, the CCD commenced a five week *Graduate Training Course* for those catechists who had completed the diploma of graduation after three years training (Doherty, 1970, May 8). One hundred and forty-two catechists enrolled for the course, which was held at two centres: the Legion of Mary Building, Broadway – Thursday morning, 92 enrolled; and Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta – Thursday evening, 50 enrolled (Doherty, 1970, June 5).

### **Seminars – Catechists for the ‘Mentally Retarded Child’**

In May 1970, the CCD Diocesan Office responded to a request from catechists whose work involved religious instruction of “the mentally retarded child”. A seminar was held in which 19 Lay catechists and 3 religious sisters were able to share their experiences, define the problems, receive some input (an Audio-visual lecture and guest speaker) and discuss and share some practical teaching skills and religious teaching aids for the particular context (Doherty, 1970, May 26). A follow up seminar was held later that year. These meetings /seminars continued in 1971.

## **8.5 Conclusion**

The period from 1956 to 1971 marked the re-establishment of the CCD in the Archdioceses of Sydney and Canberra-Goulburn and the other dioceses of New South

Wales. This was done with the very public support and persistent exhortations of the Catholic hierarchy.

In a period when Catholic schools could no longer provide places for the number of Catholic children seeking enrolment, the number of Catholic children not attending these schools became a significant pastoral and educational issue. For the CCD movement in New South Wales, this fifteen year period was characterised by the formal establishment of Diocesan, Regional and local structures to support the provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools. These structures drew significantly from well-established patterns from the previous twenty years.

This was also a period in which it appeared that the long fought campaign for the provision of government funding for non-government schools was lost. At this time, the rapidly expanding CCD movement experienced a brief but significant period of being well resourced both in human and financial terms.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **From Mission to Maintenance:**

### **1971 - 2000**

In 1970, the Australian Bishops acknowledged the growing numbers of children outside the Catholic system in *The Renewal of Education in Faith* (1970). These children were recognised as “a special and vitally important field of apostolate” (Australian Episcopal Conference, 1970, p. 171). The task of providing Christian formation for these children within the local church in Australia was seen as one “as important as maintaining or developing our Catholic school system from the seventies of last century” (Australian Episcopal Conference, 1970, p. 171).

From 1963, State and Federal governments began to provide funding for Catholic schools through a variety of aid packages. Luttrell (1996) noted that:

The biggest boost came in 1973, when the newly elected ALP Federal government . . . brought in a school funding program based on ‘needs’. Since Catholic schools were the most needy, they received an enormous injection of funds. This took the heat out of the State aid debate. (pp. 39 - 40)

With funding now available for Catholic schools, their survival seemed assured. This also ‘took the heat out of’ the diocesan efforts in the provision of religious education for Catholic children not attending Catholic schools. The urgency evident in the re-establishment of the CCD in the late 1950s and energy and initiative of the 1960s and early 1970s dissipated. As a result, in the next three decades the pastoral imperative expressed in the *Renewal of Education in Faith* (1970) was not reflected in the provision of resources, both human and financial, at a local, diocesan, provincial or national level. Evidence for this can be found in the archival records for this period. By the end of the 1970s these records lacked a coherent and systematic structure - there were many ‘gaps’. There is no evidence of record maintenance in the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Accounts of local development of the CCD movement in the 1970s in the Sydney and Melbourne archdioceses have been recorded in unpublished reports (Dixon, 1995b) and a

thesis dissertation (Garland, 1981) respectively. A review of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn conducted by Dr. Louise Welbourne (2001) provided a local snapshot from the late 1990s and a brief description of the NSW and National perspectives.

In the final decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century several significant factors have been identified that influenced the nature of the CCD movement in NSW.

One factor was the impact of the *Second Vatican Council* on catechesis and religious education in the Church. Hobson and Welbourne (2002) identified and described two areas of particular importance to religious education that were dealt with by the council – revelation (*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* (1966)) and ecclesiology (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)* (1966)) (Abbott, 1966). The International Catechetical Study Weeks of the 1960s and the documents from the *Second Vatican Council* led to the development of a catechetical directory and other key documents on evangelisation and catechesis in the 1970s. A new style of catechism in the 1990s resulted in a revision of this catechetical directory. These universal documents provided a framework for those involved in the leadership of the CCD, the training of catechists and the development of curriculum materials for use in the CCD activities.

Another factor was the contribution of the enthusiastic leadership of individuals who were motivated by a passionate belief in the mission embodied in the CCD movement. Initially members of the clergy and religious brothers and sisters provided leadership in the metropolitan and rural dioceses. Gradually, in the 1980s and 1990s, lay men and women began to replace these early CCD leaders. In particular, the work of the Motor Mission was a foundational influence in the development of the CCD. The activity of the Motor Mission is part of the history of many of the metropolitan and rural dioceses of Australia (Fagan, 1983). The impact of the Motor Missioners was endorsed by Father Carol Grew in the 1982 Annual CCD Report where he noted, “To date the most successful venture in the Public school apostolate is the Motor Mission” (Grew, 1982).

A third factor was the influence of networking within the CCD movement and with external groups where there was a common interest or goal. This networking assisted in the development of internal and external resilience of the organisation.

Another significant factor influencing the character of the CCD movement in different states and territories of Australia was the revision of local Education Acts during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Rossiter (1981, 1983) provided a detailed analysis of these changes and the impact on the provision of religious education in local contexts. The character of the CCD movement in the local church has been significantly influenced by the local legislative contexts.

## 9.1 Major Church Documents

The climate of change was also evident at catechetical congresses held in the 1960s and 1970s (Hobson & Welbourne, 2002; Warren, 1983, 1997). In the four decades since Vatican II several documents, related to catechesis and religious education, have been published by the universal church and by national conferences of bishops. These documents included: the *General Catechetical Directory* [GCD] (1971); *On Evangelisation in the Modern World* [EN] (1975); *Catechesis in Our Time* [CT] (1979); the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] (1994); and the *General Directory for Catechesis* [GDC] (1997). *The Renewal of Education in Faith* (1970) and *We Preach Jesus Christ as Lord* (1977) were two significant examples of local documents from the Church in Australia during the post-Vatican II period (Ryan, 1997).

Maurice Ryan (1997) listed and described briefly the “large number of documents on catechesis and its implications for the pastoral work of the Church” produced by official Church sources since Vatican II (pp. 167-172). The catechetical renewal, including Kerygmatic reforms and life centred approach, proved to be highly contentious reforms in the Church. The development of diocesan and local responses for the provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s was not immune to the controversy and conflict created by these reforms (Dixon, 1995b; Garland, 1981). Ryan (1997) observed, “Church documents were published as a means of resolving conflicts within the Church and to offer direction and clarity” (p. 167).

Hobson and Welbourne (2002) commented on the inconsistency of language related to the nature of religious education within and between Church documents:

Most Roman documents presume a catechetical framework. The lack of linguistic clarity is a confusing aspect because the term catechesis dominates the

official Roman literature and . . . is used interchangeably and synonymously with the term religious education. (p. 59)

During the 1970s, three significant universal documents the *General Catechetical Directory* [GCD] (1971), *Evangelii nuntiandi* (On Evangelisation in the Modern World) [EN] (1975) and *Catechesis tradendae* (On catechesis in our Time) [CT] (1979) and two documents from the Australian Episcopal Conference - the *Renewal of Education in Faith* [REF] (1970) and *We Preach Jesus Christ as Lord* (1977) were published. They were produced in response to a period where “the relationship and possible tension between a focus on the kerygma, with its emphasis on doctrine and salvation history, and a focus on the life experience and cultural context of the learner” (Regan, 1996, p. 369). They are recognised as influential documents for Australian Catholic schools (Hobson & Welbourne, 2002, p. 59; Ryan, 1997, p. 167). This influence was also evident in the provision of religious education to Catholic children not in Catholic schools both in the context of teaching within the State schools and the parish-based ‘out of school’ instruction.

### **9.1.1 Renewal of Education in Faith (REF): 1970**

In August 1970, the Australian Episcopal Conference published *the Renewal of Education in Faith* [REF]. The document was an English translation of a document for the Italian Episcopal Conference published in February 1970 (*Il rinnovamento della catechesi*) with an Australian supplement. It “provided a vision of catechesis based on an understanding of life experience catechesis” (Ryan, 1997, p. 168). The Australian Bishops wanted to establish the foundational principles for the development of catechetical resources and the training and formation of catechists in the light of Vatican II and international catechetical study weeks of the past decade. The Australian Supplement (pp. 122 - 127) provided additional material that arose from, and hence was relevant to, the unique context of the Church in Australia. It is the first official Australian Church document to acknowledge the provision of religious education to Catholic children who did not attend Catholic schools. The Australian Supplement contained the comment:

A very large minority cannot find places in our system and the increase in the Catholic population has been such that in the foreseeable future it seems that there will continue to be a large minority of Catholic children in Government schools. These children are a special and vitally important field of apostolate. (Australian Episcopal Conference, 1970, pp. 124 - 125)



On the Christian formation of these Catholic children in State schools, the Bishops stressed, “it is a task that one might almost say is as important as the task of maintaining or developing our catholic school system was from the seventies of the last Century” (p. 125). The Bishops emphasised that it was the responsibility of the local Church to integrate these children into local Church life at the parish and regional levels. The provision of resources, personnel, finance and equipment as well as a program of teaching adapted to the unique needs of the task of teaching in the State school should be a priority for the local Church. The apostolate and witness of religious teachers and catechists to Catholic children not attending Catholic schools was recognised as equivalent to that in the Catholic school. In making particular reference to the lay catechists, the Bishops noted:

These catechists, mostly busy housewives, are accepting of an apostolate that is often genuinely heroic. Often they see very little result for their labour, but their ultimate influence is one of the major factors in Catholic life in this decade. The extreme urgency of their task and their own whole response deserve the full support of the Church through its various institutions. (Australian Episcopal Conference, 1970, p. 125)

The *Renewal of Education in Faith* (REF) provided a long overdue official recognition of the provision of religious education to Catholic children not in Catholic schools. However, the Australian Bishops were criticised for adopting a document from a very different context with a “token appendix on the Australian scene . . . to continue to impose principles from outside rather than research them from inside the experience of the local Church” (Rummery as cited in Ryan, 1997, p. 168). Further criticism came from the use of a mixture of Church language and educational concepts in the document, which rendered it inaccessible to classroom teachers (Malone as cited in Ryan, 1997, pp. 168 -169).

### **9.1.2 General Catechetical Directory (GCD): 1971**

In April 1971, the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy issued *Directorium Catechisticum Generale*, the *General Catechetical Directory* (GCD). The GCD is “considered the parent document of those that have influenced religious education” (Hobson & Welbourne, 2002, p. 59). The GCD was a product of the Second Vatican Council and influenced by the international catechetical study weeks of the preceding decade. Influenced also by the catechetical directories issued by the church in France in 1964 (*La Directoire de Pastorale Catechetique*) and the Italian Bishops in 1970 (*Il rinnovamento*

*della catechesi*), the ‘directory’ was a relatively new literary form in the Catholic Church (Mongoven, 2000, p. 65). The catechetical directory “by its nature and form contains directives, guidelines, exhortations, proposals, recommendations and procedures” (Pollard, 1996, p. xi).

The GCD (1970) was “concerned chiefly with ministry of the word, focusing more on pastoral action than on principles of education . . . The directory represents a studied effort to give orientation – direction – to catechetical theory and procedures” (Marthaler, 1973, p. 255). The purpose of the GCD, as stated in the forward, is “to provide basic principles of pastoral theology . . . by which pastoral action through which ministry of the word can be more fittingly directed and governed” (Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, 1971, p. 9). The GCD contained 150 references to fourteen of the sixteen documents of the Second Vatican Council clearly establishing the Council as “the foundation for a renewed catechetical ministry” (Mongoven, 2000, p. 66). Mongoven (2000) concludes:

The GCD moved the church from an instructional model of catechesis into an anthropological model which focused on the experience of the people and their faith. It changed catechesis from a one-dimensional task (instruction) to a multidimensional ministry in which the catechist and the community integrated four tasks into one ministry of catechesis: building community, sharing the church’s stories and beliefs, working for justice, and praying together. (pp. 67 - 68)

In September 1971, the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy convened an International Catechetical Congress in Rome to discuss the GCD and its role in the church. At the Congress, Archbishop James Knox (Melbourne), a member of the Congregation for the Clergy, read a statement, which appeared in the formal conclusions:

The Delegates of the Congress are appreciative of the spirit and intention in which the *Directorium Catechisticum Generale* has been published . . . It contains updated orientational guidelines rather than prescriptions. The Directory will serve as a basic document meant to be adapted to local cultural and pastoral situations of each country under the guidance of the local Episcopal Conference in consultation with the Holy See. (Atti del Congresso as cited in Marthaler, 1973, pp. 255 -256)

### **9.1.3 On Evangelisation in the Modern World (EN): 1975**

Pope Paul VI promulgated the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (On Evangelisation in the Modern World) (EN) on 8 December, 1975. The document was a response to the 1974 Synod of Bishops, which had as its focus for discussion

evangelisation as a ministry of the church. Arising from a concern that often parish catechesis focused on church members who were still in need of evangelisation, Pope Paul VI addressed “the need for the church to proclaim more intentionally and more forcefully the love of God to all - both those outside and those within the Catholic community” (Walters, 1996, p. 150). *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) situates teaching at the heart of the Church’s mission, evangelising - “Evangelising is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise, that is to say in order to preach and teach . . .” (n.14, p. 161).

*Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) stresses the primary importance of witness in the proclamation of the Gospel. Living an authentically Christian life is “an initial act of evangelisation” (n.21, p. 164). This proposition is reinforced later in the document:

For the Church, the first means of evangelisation is the witness of an authentically Christian life, given over to God in a communion that nothing should destroy and at the same time given to one's neighbour with limitless zeal. As we said recently to a group of lay people, ‘Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.’ (n.41, pp. 171 - 172)

#### **9.1.4 We Preach Jesus Christ as Lord: 1977**

In 1977, the Bishops Committee for Education (Australia Episcopal Conference) issued the statement - *We Preach Jesus Christ as Lord*. With the subtitle *Handing on the Faith*, it was a “statement on the evangelising mission of the Church in Australia today” (Bishop's Committee for Education, 1977, p. iii).

In discussing the genesis of this document, Fleming (2002) noted *We Preach Jesus Christ as Lord* did not have the full support of the Australian Bishops and as such represented “divisions within the Australian hierarchical Church about the nature and content of religious education . . . there was confusion and hostility about the role of Catholic schools and the religious education programs that were offered in them” (p. 44). The division centred on the acceptance of the theology of the Second Vatican Council and its influence on religious education teaching materials in both Catholic schools and in the provision of religious education to Catholic children not in Catholic schools. The Bishops issuing of the statement *We Preach Jesus Christ as Lord* (1977) represented that group within the Australian hierarchy who promoted the theology and materials of Vatican II.

*We Preach Jesus Christ as Lord* (1977) made reference to eight documents from the Second Vatican Council, the *General Catechetical Directory* (1971), the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), and the *Renewal of Education in Faith* issued by the Australian Episcopal Conference in 1970. The introduction situated *We Preach Jesus Christ as Lord* in the local and universal teaching of the Church in the late 1970s, stating firstly what the document was NOT, that is, a catechetical directory. At time of the publication of *We Preach Jesus Christ as Lord*, an Australian National catechetical directory had not been produced. The GCD (1971) had encouraged local Churches to adapt the directory to reflect and respond to the specific needs of the local church:

The subject covers points which are unique and often very much different in the various parts of the Church. National directories will have the task of filling out this outline and applying it to the circumstances of individual countries and regions (n.1, p. 13).

The Bishops reflected on the development of a national directory in the introduction to *We Preach Jesus Christ as Lord* (1977):

An Australian Catechetical Directory is desirable, but much research and consultation will have to be done before it will be possible to issue one. Such a directory would have to account for the needs and aspirations of the people of Australia in this last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (p.vii)

The Bishops in outlining the purpose of the document (1977) drew on a statement from a Pastoral Statement on Religious Education issued by the Australian Episcopal Conference in 1975:

This present document is offered as a ‘small contribution to that complete process by which the entire People of God in the Australian Church will search for the most authentic way to live the faith and the most effective means of passing it on to future generations. (p. viii)

*We Preach Jesus Christ as Lord* (1977) was a statement from the Australian Bishops that was concerned with “some of the broader issues that are involved in the task of preserving the faith intact and handing it on to future generations” (p. viii). It was written to encourage and support priests, theologians, parents, teachers and catechists in what Pope Paul VI had identified as foundational in the evangelising mission of the church, preaching and teaching.

The Bishops’ introductory statement focused on change - in the world and Australia (Chapter 1) and the response of the church to these changes (Chapter 2). Chapters 4, *The Teaching Church* parts 1 and 2, examines those groups within the church that have

special responsibility “in teaching Catholic doctrine” (p. 25) - the Magisterium, theologians, priests, ecclesial communities; parents teachers and catechists.

#### **9.1.5 Catechesi Tradendae (On Catechesis in our Time) (CT): 1979**

In 1977, Pope Paul VI called the Bishops together for a Fifth International Synod on ‘*Catechesis in our Time, especially for children and young people*’. Incorporating the response of the Bishops prepared for the final assembly of the synod in October 1977, the apostolic exhortation - *On Catechesis in our Time* (CT), was written by Pope John Paul II. In the introduction, Pope John Paul II provided the background to his writing of the exhortation, which was started by Pope Paul VI and taken up by Pope John Paul II.

A central theme of the document (John Paul II, 1979) can be found in paragraph #26 - “Since catechesis is a moment of aspect of evangelisation, its content cannot be anything else but the content of evangelisation as a whole”. Catechesis situated within the context of evangelisation is defined:

Catechesis is an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life. (John Paul II, 1979, n.18)

Systematic catechesis is another theme of the document. Ryan (1997) observed that the development of the concept of ‘systematic catechesis’ was an attempt to address division that arose from the “practice of experiential catechesis” (p. 169). Systematic catechesis is “not improvised, deals with essentials; is sufficiently complete, extending beyond an initial proclamation; and initiates the learner into the fullness of Christian life (CT, 21)” (Regan, 1996, p. 369).

Pope John Paul II (1979) gave special mention to the contribution of lay Catechists:

I am anxious to give thanks in the Church's name to all of you, lay teachers of catechesis in the parishes, the men and the still more numerous women throughout the world who are devoting yourselves to the religious education of many generations. Your work is often lowly and hidden but it is carried out with ardent and generous zeal, and it is an eminent form of the lay apostolate, a form that is particularly important where for various reasons children and young people do not receive suitable religious training in the home. How many of us have received from people like you our first notions of catechism and our preparation for the sacrament of Penance, for our first Communion and Confirmation! The fourth general assembly of the synod did not forget you. I join with it in encouraging you to continue your collaboration for the life of the Church. (n. 66)

The importance of the Parish was emphasised:

the parish community must continue to be the prime mover and pre-eminent place for catechesis . . . the parish is the major point of reference for the Christian people, even for the non-practising. . . we must continue along the path of aiming to restore to the parish. . . more adequate structures and. . . a new impetus through the increasing the integration into it of qualified, responsible and generous members. (John Paul II, 1979, n. 67)

In paragraph #69 in *Catechesis in our Time* (1979) “religious instruction dependant on the Church” in non-confessional or public schools is supported and all efforts, acknowledging the diverse circumstances, were encouraged.

During the 1990s, two significant documents were published that influenced the provision of religious education for Catholic children in Catholic schools and beyond those schools. These were the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) and the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997).

#### **9.1.6 Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC): 1994**

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* represented a departure from the post-Reformation idea of catechisms as textbooks for use in an educational context. Pope John Paul II described this new catechism as “a sure and authentic reference text for teaching catholic doctrine” and a reference for the preparation of national and local catechism (Mongoven, 2000, p. 80). The purpose of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was “to encourage and assist the writing of new, local catechisms in accordance with local cultural situations” (Ryan, 1997, p. 170). It provided a systematic presentation of the Church’s teaching and pastoral practice. Hobson and Welbourne (2002) observed, “if used critically, its exposition of Catholic doctrine may contribute towards making accessible empirical knowledge that can be interpreted and critiqued by critical religious educators” (p. 65).

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* were incorporated in the 1997 revision of the Teachers’ Manuals for the *Joy for Living* series in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

The development of the new style of Catechism, the “what of catechesis” necessitated the revision of the rationale for catechesis, the “why, how and who of modern catechetical

theory”, that was presented in the *General Catechetical Directory* published in 1971 (Ryan, 1997, p. 170).

### **9.1.7 The General Directory for Catechesis (GDC): 1997**

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *General Directory for Catechesis* are “indispensable to one another” (Mongoven, 2000, p. 81). They are “two distinct but complementary instruments at the service of the Church’s catechetical activity” (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, n.120).

The Directory (1997) “attempts to provide a theologico-pastoral principles drawn from the Church’s Magisterium, particularly those inspired by the Second Vatican Council, which are capable of better orienting and coordinating pastoral activity of the ministry of the word and, concretely, catechesis”(n.9).

The GDC emphasised the relationship between the two activities of catechesis and religious education as distinct yet complementary and described “the proper character of religious instruction in schools” (n. 73). It recognised the different context in which this religious instruction occurs - the Catholic school and state schools or non-confessional schools (n. 74) and acknowledged the dynamic nature of the life and faith of the students receiving instruction whether they are “believers”, “searchers” or “non-believers” (n. 75). The Directory affirmed the right of Catholic students to “learn with truth and certainty the religion to which they belong” (n.74).

The influence of the *General Directory for Catechesis* is evident in the diocesan training and formation programs for catechists in most dioceses in NSW. The content and approaches used in these Adult Education programs and the Curriculum material used in the CCD has been influenced by the framework provided by the six fundamental tasks of catechesis described in the *General Directory for Catechesis*.

## **9.2 National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) Report: 1972**

In 1969, the Australian Episcopal Conference (AEC) formally established The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC). The scope of the Commission was defined in the following terms “the role of the Commission will be to locate the needs in Catholic education and advise the Australian Episcopal Conference on appropriate action to meet

these needs” (The National Catholic Education Commission, 1972, August, p. 2). The AEC stated three basic reasons for the establishment of the NCEC:

- (a) The Vatican Council’s repeated stress on the need for consultation, and for the involving in consultation of representatives of all contributing to the Church’s tasks.
- (b) The existence of problems in Catholic education sufficiently grave to threaten a crisis of confidence.
- (c) The fact that certain problems are national as well as local, and cannot be easily solved on a sectional basis. (The National Catholic Education Commission, 1972, August, p. 2)

The task included a review of the Church’s current commitment to education, the demands likely to be made in the future and of the resources available to meet the demands. The focus was on educational issues of school aged children, that is, at the primary and secondary school education. The members appointed to the NCEC met on three occasions over three years – 1969, 1970 and 1971. Representation of religious education of children not in Catholic schools was through the religious teaching orders that had developed a special interest in this area. Sister M. Peter O’Dwyer RSJ (Kathleen O’Dwyer), a Sister of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, was the representative member from New South Wales. During the first three years of the Commission, Father Ron Hine, Sister Vincent Nelson and Father Doherty (from CCD Sydney) were also co-opted members.

One of the underlying assumptions on which the work of the Commission was based included the following statement:

Insofar as an increasing number of Catholic children will (according to predictions) receive part or whole of their education beyond Catholic schools, increasing attention should be given to the means of serving religious education of children so placed. (The National Catholic Education Commission, 1972, August, p. 5)

In chapter four of the report (1972, August), *Catholic Schools: Current and Future Development*, the current situation for Catholic schools was presented in quantitative and qualitative terms. In the conclusion to the chapter, the Commission emphasised there was “the need to choose”, make a planned decision, in respect to the future role of Catholic schools in Catholic education, rather than “drift”. The Commission endorsed the historical position of the Catholic Church in Australia, reinforced by Vatican II teaching - “that opportunities for full Catholic schooling should be made possible for all Catholic children whose parents want such schooling for their children”. It encouraged



Catholics to “be prepared to work for a more equitable application of the educational expenditure of the nation” to more fully realise the ideal. It conceded that “the Catholic community has come closer to fulfilling this ideal in the past than in the present, despite the increased volume of public assistance” (The National Catholic Education Commission, 1972, August, n.53).

The Commission proposed two options based on the assessment of the current situation and the future projections. The first was to continue the present “drift” which would result in a falling number of Catholic children in Catholic schools, a greater emphasis on Secondary schools, rising costs for parents resulting in families with lower financial resources being able to afford Catholic schooling. The second was to make a planned decision to make Catholic schooling available to a greater number of children whose parents want Catholic schooling for them. The Commission concluded that either option “carries with it the corollary that additional effort would be applied to the religious education of Catholic children, enrolled beyond Catholic schools for part or all of their school life” (The National Catholic Education Commission, 1972, August, n. 53). To this end, the Commission devoted its attention to *Religious Education beyond Catholic schools* (Chapter 5), which provided a snapshot of the national, hence New South Wales, situation in the early 1970s.

### **9.2.1 A ‘Snapshot’ – Religious Education not attending Catholic Schools**

#### **Statistics**

Table 9.1 provides an indication of the number of Catholic children not attending Catholic schools in 1965, 1969 and 1970. These figures understate the number of Catholic children beyond Catholic schools as they reflect returns from dioceses that have included only the Catholic children being taught, not the total number of Catholic children. The returns from the Archdiocese of Sydney during this period were an example of this. In 1970, the only State Department of Education to publish enrolment figures by religious affiliation was NSW. The figures included the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Table 9.2 compares the figures for Catholic Diocesan estimates for NSW and the ACT presented in Table 9.1 to the NSW Department of Education published figures.

Table 9.1

*Percentage of Catholics not attending Catholic Schools – 1965, 1969 and 1970*

STATE	Catholics at School	Catholics not attending Catholic Schools	
	Number	Number	%
1965			
NSW	262,952	77,035	29.3
Victoria	206,840	60,888	29.4
Queensland	93,494	24,106	25.5
South Australia	52,088	25,482	49.9
Western Australia	48,052	17,175	35.7
Tasmania	18,127	7,622	42
Nth Territory	2,645	1,080	40.8
ACT	7,442	1,884	25.4
Australia	691,620	215,022	31.1
1969			
NSW	306,592	117,062	38.2
Victoria	242,032	92,236	38.1
Queensland	109,568	35,244	32.2
South Australia	60,493	35,175	58.1
West Australia	59,335	26,648	45
Tasmania	20,596	10,182	49.4
Nth Territory	4,393	2,426	55.2
ACT	11,368	4,184	28.7
Australia	814,397	323,190	39.7
1970			
NSW	310,756	121,547	39.1
Victoria	247,291	96,689	39.1
Queensland	109,280	34,512	31.6
South Australia	66,375	40,559	61.1
West Australia	52,051	28,781	46.4
Tasmania	20,271	9,955	49.1
Nth Territory	4,828	2,746	56.9
ACT	12,385	4,703	28.2
Australia	833,520	339,520	40.8

From: The National Catholic Education Commission (1972, August). *The education of Catholic Australians*. Australia: NCEC. p. 62.

Table 9.2

*Number of Catholic children – comparison Diocesan estimates to DET published figures*

	<b>Estimate (Table 9.2)</b>	<b>DET Published figures NSW + ACT</b>
1965	78,919	91,000
1969	121,243	137,742
1970	126,250	146,701

From: The National Catholic Education Commission (1972, August). *The education of Catholic Australians*. Australia: NCEC. p. 63

## Personnel

The report identified four categories for those who were working to provide religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools: Priests, lay and religious staff of centralised diocesan offices (named as CCD office in some cases); Parish priests; full-time catechetical workers; and, part-time catechetical workers.

Two models had developed for centralised diocesan administration of this work. In the first model, the CCD office operated separately from the Catholic Education Office (responsible for Catholic school administration). This model existed in the Archdiocese of Sydney and would be developed in most of the regional dioceses in NSW, for example, Bathurst, Lismore and Maitland-Newcastle. In the second model, the CCD office / operation was part of the Catholic Education Office. This model existed in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and in NSW regional dioceses of Canberra-Goulburn and Wagga Wagga. In the larger dioceses, such as Sydney and Melbourne, separate roles had been established such as the production and distribution of teaching resources (both within the diocese and to other dioceses across Australia), the development and managements of the training of catechists and coordination of the teaching efforts across the diocese (The National Catholic Education Commission, 1972, August, pp. 65-66).

The NCEC report (1972) acknowledged the involvement of the Parish priests in the coordination of the work of the catechists in their parish, often directly taking classes

with “varying confidence in their aptitude and training for such work” (p. 66). A significant challenge, particularly in metropolitan areas, was the provision of religious education in high schools:

High schools . . . draw their enrolment from many parishes. This leads to a dispersal of children from a parish to many schools . . . The fact that a large Secondary school, drawing its enrolment from up to a dozen parishes, should not make it the sole responsibility of the parish of its location. (The National Catholic Education Commission, 1972, August, p. 66)

In the Archdiocese of Sydney, the provision of resources for religious education in State secondary schools had been and was to remain a significant focus for Diocesan and regional coordination. During the latter part of the 1960s, an effort had been made to establish a second unit of the CCD in each parish with the specific focus of parish-based ‘out of school hours’ instruction and formation for children attending State high schools.

Full time Catechetical workers, lay and religious, were involved in the “apostolate to children in government schools”. The initial involvement of full-time religious in rural areas was foundational to the work in those dioceses. This was the case for the Bathurst, Lismore, Armidale, Maitland-Newcastle, Wagga Wagga, Wilcannia-Forbes, Wollongong and Canberra-Goulburn (outside of the ACT). This took the form of correspondence lessons and / or visits to local State schools to provide weekly religious education classes for the Catholic children, many were known as Motor Missioners. From the late 1950s full-time religious sisters and brothers worked in the rapidly growing outer suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne, they became known as the metropolitan Motor Mission. The NCEC report (1972, August) described the contribution of these full-time catechetical workers:

The apostolate has grown with considerable flexibility, and has served a number of functions. These include the following broad categories:

- i. School centred responsibilities, e.g. direct teaching in government schools, liaison with principals in government schools.
- ii. Parish or Regional responsibilities, e.g. direct teaching on a parish basis, the development of youth groups at both primary and secondary levels, home visitation, programming for adult education / parent education, recruiting and training catechists, the development of catechetical aid centres. (p. 67)

In New South Wales, these full-time catechetical workers were essential for the establishment and development of the parish, regional and diocesan structures and processes that supported the provision of religious education to Catholic children not in Catholic schools.

The largest group of part-time catechetical workers were the lay catechists. The NCEC report (1972, August) noted “the recruitment, the training, and the coordination of the work, of such teachers has been increasingly a characteristic of the efforts of the Church in the ‘sixties” (p. 68). In 1971, the Commission estimated that throughout Australia approximately 10,000 laypersons were involved in the provision of religious education to Catholic children not in Catholic schools. In the Archdiocese of Sydney in 1971, there were 2,463 part-time lay catechists – 25% of the national total. The Commission reported (1972, August):

In every diocese, efforts have been made to give improved training to catechists, only a fraction of whom are professionally trained as teachers. There are parallel efforts to improve the quality of teaching materials at the disposal of the catechists and some of this material has reached a high level of excellence. (pp. 68 – 69)

The challenges experienced included: the lack of positive acceptance of non-professional visitors to the State school; limited visual aids; and, meeting children briefly and infrequently. The challenges of the primary school setting were multiplied in the secondary school. The Commission noted that the majority of part-time lay catechists were women and that the “increased tendency of women to re-enter the workforce may limit the day-time supply of teachers for catechetics” (p. 69). Many religious orders had provided part-time workers to support the parish, regional and diocesan work. In particular, religious sisters and brothers were involved in parish-based out of school hour activities and as lecturers and tutors in the catechists training programs.

### **Other Resources**

The need for additional financial support was identified by the Commission: “there is still a problem of balance between support, financial and moral, of this apostolate and the apostolate of Catholic schools” (1972, August, p. 69). The Commission recommended that state-wide direction and coordination of the work in providing religious education to Catholic children not in Catholic schools should be considered and financial resources should support such an arrangement.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The Commission (1972, August) recognised that:

Catholic Education and Catholic schooling are not co-terminus concepts. . . those contributing to Catholic education should have an interest in and a concern for, the educational welfare of all Australian children, and for all schools serving those children. . . the quality and effectiveness of religious and moral education of all Australian children should be a special object of that interest and concern. (pp. 94 – 95)

The Commission recommended that the religious development of children enrolled beyond Catholic schools should be considered an integral part of the Church's educational role. In supporting this integration, the Commission (1972, August) concluded that:

An adequate part of the human and material resources available to the Church should be devoted to this task, both at the local and central levels. Bodies set up for discussion and determination of educational policy in the Church from the parish to the national level should be concerned with the needs of all Catholic children, and should include membership of persons devoted to work with those Catholic children whose education substantially takes place beyond Catholic schools. (The National Catholic Education Commission, 1972, August, p. 97)

The Commission recognised the need to widen the scope of religious education of adults, especially parents, in consideration of the primary role parents play in the education of their children and development of parish programs of religious education.

### **9.3 CCD Archdiocese of Sydney: 1972 - 2000**

#### **9.3.1 Diocesan Development: 1972 - 1984**

In January 1971, Father Carol Grew, on returning from Catechetical and Theological study at Corpus Christi College in London, was appointed as Secretary of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Sydney. In the same year, following the resignation of Father Ron Hine, Father Carol Grew was appointed Director of the CCD in the Archdiocese of Sydney. Father Grew was Director of the CCD in the Archdiocese of Sydney from 1972 to 1984. It was the second decade of the official operation of the CCD in the Archdiocese - this was a period of consolidation. Father Grew was faced with the challenge of the diminishing interest of the hierarchy in the provision of religious education to Catholic children not in Catholic schools evidenced in a reduction of resources both human and financial for the work of the CCD.

The 1976 CCD Sydney report defined the broad aim for its activities as “the education in faith of those not reached by Catholic schools” (CCD, 1976, p. 1). By 1976, most

parishes had a catechist group. Only 22 parishes were recorded with no Parish Secretary and 46 parishes “benefited from the services offered by the CCD Schools of Religion” (Dixon, 1995a, p. 27).

The 1970s was a period of growth in the leadership of the laity in the CCD operation. The Diocesan Catechist Committee (DCC) was well established. The committee consisted of lay catechists, known as Regional Secretaries, who were elected representatives, one from each of the fourteen CCD regions in the Archdiocese. By 1976, the Diocesan Council had ceased to function effectively and was replaced by a centralised Diocesan Planning Team consisting of Priests, catechists and motor missionaries. The DCC was becoming a significant advisory body to the CCD Office. In 1977, the CCD Director, Father Carol Grew, stood down as chairperson of the DCC to make way for the election of a lay person to the position. In 1980, Carmel Carlton, the chairperson, described the contribution of the DCC, in the first edition of the DCC sponsored newsletter - *Go: Spread the good news*:

One of the most important committees in the C.C.D. is the Diocesan Catechist Committee. It is the ‘official place’ for the voice of the Catechist. Meeting quarterly at Polding House, Regional Secretaries, by election, serve a two year term of membership. . . Through its efforts, recent times have seen the introduction of a Calender for Catechists, Parish Secretaries’ Training Day, Parish and Regional Reports for the Planning Committee and the presentation of this Gazette. (Carlton, 1980)

In 1974, there were six full-time lay catechists employed through the Mt Druitt (Western Sydney) CCD School of Religion. The six women were paid a stipend of \$80 per month. In 1975, a lay catechist, Mr. Norm Pepper, was appointed as a full-time staff member of the Mt. Pritchard School of Religion.

The CCD Schools of Religion scheme, established in 1967, was expanded in the 1970s. It was to provide a significant regional organisational structure in the archdiocese at a time of diminishing resources for the work of the Diocesan leadership.

### **9.3.2 CCD Schools of Religion**

During the late 1960s, six CCD Schools of Religion were established in districts where large numbers of Catholic children did not attend Catholic schools. These Schools of Religion had provided much needed support to the efforts of the Diocesan CCD Office in providing local support for the growing numbers of lay catechists. In the early 1970s,

with the continued increase in the number of Catholic children attending State schools in the Archdiocese, there was a growing need for more catechists to provide religious education for these children. The CCD Diocesan Office looked towards the Religious Orders to provide members from their congregation to establish more CCD Schools of Religion.

In July 1974, Bishop Kelly, Episcopal Chairman of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, wrote to the leaders of the Religious Orders and described the current situation:

I am again appealing to you on behalf of the Catholic child at the State school. This apostolate is a growing concern in the Archdiocese as well as for the whole of Australia. In Sydney nearly 64,000 Primary school Catholic children attend State Schools. This number is growing at the current rate of 1600 per year while the number of Catholic Primary school children appears to be diminishing at a similar rate. At the Secondary level catechists and clergy teach just under 24,000 pupils. This gives a total of 87,500 Catholic children in State schools. (Kelly, 1974, July 12)

Bishop Kelly outlined the current work of the religious staff in CCD Schools of Religion:

There are now 28 religious who work in this apostolate full time. These religious have to teach as well as train catechists, prepare syllabus material, run retreats, holiday camps and whatever activities they can develop for the religious education of these 87,000 pupils and their parents. If ever there was a missionary endeavour this is it. The Holy Father has stressed the need for Evangelisation. Working with the State school child is fully in mind with this papal call. (Kelly, 1974, July 12)

In June 1977, Father Carol Grew, made another request to the leaders of Religious Orders “for a religious sister to join a team for full time engagement in the training and formation of catechists, their organisation and the preparation of suitable curricula for use within the schools” (Grew, 1977, June 28). At that time there were 35 religious working in CCD Schools of Religion (Motor Missioners), 2500 catechists and just fewer than 100,000 Catholic children attending State schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

Table 9.3 traces development of the CCD Schools of Religion in the Archdiocese of Sydney from the first schools established in 1967.



Table 9.3

*Establishment of CCD Schools of Religion in the Archdiocese of Sydney: 1967 - 1984*

Year	Location	Religious Order
1967	Bankstown	Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart
	Liverpool	Sisters of Charity
	Dee Why	Sisters of the Good Samaritan
	Seven Hills	Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart
	Blacktown	Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart
	Mt Druitt	Schoenstatt Sisters
1973	Merrylands <sup>1</sup>	Marist Sisters
1974	St Mary's	<sup>2</sup>
1975	Hurstville <sup>3</sup>	Presentation Sisters
1975	Gosford	Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart
1975	Katoomba	Sisters of Charity
1975	Petersham	Marist Missionary Sisters
1975	Wahroonga	Sisters of Mercy
1975	Croydon/Ashfield	Sisters of Mercy
1976	Drummoyne	Presentation Sisters
1977	Rooty Hill <sup>4</sup>	Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
1977	Bass Hill	Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart
1977	Sadleir <sup>5</sup>	Sisters of Charity
1978	Smithfield	
1978	Fairfield	Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart
1980	Moorebank	Sisters of Charity
1981	Sutherland	<sup>6</sup>
1983	Leichhardt	
1984	Kogarah	<sup>7</sup>

Adapted from: CCD Archives - CCD School of Religion Files

## FOOTNOTES:

1. From 1978 became Parramatta
2. Employed lay catechists
3. Established as a Resource Centre
4. From 1983 became Eastern Creek
5. From 1983 Sacred Heart Sisters
6. Pilot scheme - Regional Coordinator
7. Employ catechist to teach in the High schools

In 1978, reports from the CCD Schools of Religion indicated that the core activity of the religious staff was the support of the catechists in the parishes serviced by the school. This involved the training of new catechists, providing demonstration lessons, class visitation in all schools, tutorials for specific grades each week, relief teaching, coordination between the State school and the parish catechists, convening regular meetings of parish catechists and assisting in Regional CCD activities such as Training Courses, Retreats and Syllabus days. In the report from the CCD School of Religion (Motor Mission) on Sydney's Northern Beaches, Sister Mary Hugh Smith SGS described her work:

I see my main role as a liaison person who aims at keeping up the morale and confidence of the Catechists. I feel I must keep abreast with new trends and methods in Catechetics, and put these into operation in the school situation . . . I need to be available to organise the Catechist - recruiting, training, rostering, and at times counselling. (Smith, 1978)

The CCD School of Religion was responsible for the support of parish-based Sacramental programs for the Catholic children attending State schools. This involved the development and coordination of First Communion and Confirmation programs and in some cases Baptism programs. In most cases, the Sacramental program involved classes being held in the Parish outside regular school hours. The parish catechists taught the children and, at the same time, the Parish Priest or the CCD School of Religion sisters provided instruction for the parents. Sister Mary Hugh reflected on this aspect of the work:

Seven afternoon classes for the Sacraments are directly under my care . . . with these classes we endeavour to have six Parent Meetings . . . these meetings are an opportunity to help parents prepare their children for the Sacraments and also involve them in Parish life . . . this is the first Meeting between these people and the Parish Priest. (Smith, 1978)

Other work undertaken by CCD Schools of Religion included support for parish based Children's Liturgy of the Word and Adult formation programs for family and mothers' groups, weekend training days and retreats. Sister Mary Aloise (Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary, Mt Druitt) reflected on this work with adults, "The aim of adult education is to increase the knowledge and appreciation of faith, formation of one's personality and offer help in regard to educating one's children. Social, moral and psychological are also being discussed" (1978).

The reports on the CCD Schools of Religion consistently identified providing religious education in the State Secondary schools as the most challenging aspect of the work.

Sister Mary Hugh Smith SGS reflected on her involvement in the Dee Why Motor Mission (CCD School of Religion):

I have found the work in this field very demanding, but the most fulfilling that I have undertaken in my religious life. The apostolate certainly stimulates enthusiasm . . . In my eight years in the Motor Mission, I have experienced a growth in all areas of the work. The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine has given us the support and confidence that has helped us press forward in times of hardships and frustrations. The Catechist groups are certainly a very viable group in their own Parish situation, and their happiness, enthusiasm and dedication is communicated to many others. (Smith, 1978)

There is evidence in the CCD Archives that the Schools of Religion continued to operate in the Archdiocese of Sydney until 1988. The operational model developed in the CCD Schools of Religion from 1967 to 1988 became the foundation for the CCD Regional offices/services introduced in the three metropolitan dioceses in Sydney in the 1990s.

Religious Sisters and Brothers who formed the staff of the CCD Schools of Religion were often called Motor Missioners. Some of them were the original members of the Motor Mission in the late 1950s and during the 1960s. A conference of the Motor Missions in the CCD Schools of Religion was held annually from 1971 to 1986. An elected executive represented the Motor Missioners on the Diocesan Planning Team.

### **9.3.3 Review of the CCD: 1984**

In 1982, a decision was made to undertake a comprehensive review of the CCD in the Archdiocese of Sydney. The decision was made in response to questions and challenges raised by the clergy related to the ongoing provision of funding for the CCD operation in the archdiocese. The aim of the review, coordinated by Father Richard Dixon, CCD Secretary, was to provide a rationale for the work of the CCD, in particular, relationship to “the value of the CCD, the principles on which it was based, its priority in parish responsibilities and the desired outcomes as a basis for attracting and allocating funding” (Dixon, 1995a, p. 36). The purpose of the study stated in the introduction of the Report of the Committee (Dixon, 1984) was:

to provide the local Church with a basis for the CCD pastoral action which is the result of theological reflection. The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine is the umbrella term for a pastoral action of the local Church which is diverse and complex. The need to “get on with the job” which has been ever present in the

CCD for the last twenty years or so has lead to this diversity and complexity. (pp. 3 – 4)

### **Parish CCD Operation**

The work of the CCD was defined as a parish-based activity with activities / strategies at a school and parish level.

The school level strategies involved the provision of Special Religious Education (SRE) in State Schools to Catholic students by Parish Based volunteer lay catechists. In 1982, there were 60,063 Catholic Primary students receiving SRE, in the Archdiocese of Sydney, “95% of catholic Primary pupils received regular SRE in 580 schools” (Dixon, 1984, p. 21). This represented 46% of Catholic primary school aged children in the Archdiocese. There were 2,986 catechists – 2,800 lay, 140 religious and 46 clergy. There were 21, 386 Catholic Secondary students receiving SRE – 38% of the estimated total number attending State schools. Of those Catholic students receiving Catholic SRE, 16,000 were in weekly classes; 2,800 in small discussion group; 1,700 in seminars and 800 in a combination of seminars and small group discussions. There were 310 catechists – 215 lay, 40 religious and 55 priests.

Parish level strategies included Sacramental programs, Sunday school, Children’s Liturgy, Youth groups and Christian Living Weekends. The support and ongoing formation of the Parish Catechist group was included as a Parish level strategy.

### **Diocesan CCD Operation**

The Diocesan CCD Office existed to provide overarching support for the Parish CCD operation. The role of the Diocesan CCD Director was clearly articulated in the report:

A priest is appointed by the archbishop to manage the diocesan office and be responsible for the pastoral activity of the CCD at diocesan level. It is his task to frame diocesan policy in keeping with the Church’s teaching and directives and to see to the implementation of the goals and strategies arising from that policy. (Dixon, 1984, p. 41)

Two key members of the Diocesan Office staff were the *Motor Mission Consultant and Programme Coordinator* and the *Catechist Advisor*. The *Motor Mission Consultant and Programme Coordinator* represented the needs of the Motor Missioners who, by 1982, were the staff of the CCD Schools of Religion in the Archdiocese. The role included:

responsibility for coordinating the CCD Training course and inservice days; involvement in syllabus teams and final editing of the material produced; representing the archdiocese on the Inter-Church inservice development committee and contact person for Catholic SRE re departmental inservice. (Dixon, 1984, p. 42)

The *Catechist Advisor* was a layperson “with considerable experience as a catechist who is available to catechists for advice and consultation”. The role included “co-ordinating of Catechist Sunday preparations; obtaining and recording annual statistical returns and training course results; the representative of the Diocesan Office on the Diocesan Catechist Committee and liaison person” (Dixon, 1984, p. 42).

Three significant advisory groups existed in 1984 to support the work of the Diocesan Office – the Planning Team, the Diocesan Catechist Committee (DCC) and the Motor Mission Conference. Membership of the Planning Team included priests, catechists and motor missionaries. The group met four times a year - an annual strategic planning meeting and four quarterly meetings to “review decisions and attend to any current business” (Dixon, 1984, p. 42). The DCC provided a means for catechists to “contribute to diocesan planning by receiving reports, suggestions and advice on catechetical matters [and] to organize and maintain “Go” magazine and its personnel – editor, manager and committee” (Dixon, 1984, p. 45).

The Diocesan CCD Office supported the parish-based activity at both the parish and the State school levels. At the parish level, it provided coordination of *Catechist Sunday*. The event took place on “the first Sunday after the long weekend in February . . . to publicise and promote the work of catechists, recruit new catechists and advertise the training course” (Dixon, 1984, p. 45). The Diocesan Office, through the Catechist Advisor, provided promotional material, such as posters and brochures, and assistance in the development of the liturgy and other planning. The Diocesan CCD Office coordinated the collection and collation of yearly statistical data from the parishes in the Archdiocese. This data provided assisted in local, regional and diocesan planning. The Diocesan Office developed handbooks and manuals to assist local parish operation. For example, the Parish Secretary’s Handbook, originally developed in the 1960s, was continually reviewed and updated, to assist Parishes in the establishment and support of this vital local coordination role. The Parish Secretary’s Handbook covered the “responsibilities of the various ministries in the parish and diocese and information

useful to the secretary and the catechist group on parish and diocesan organization of the CCD” (Dixon, 1984, p. 46).

At the State School level, the Diocesan CCD Office provided leadership in the development of a common diocesan syllabus for use in Catholic Special Religious Education in the State schools and training programs to support the volunteer Catechist in the delivery of the Diocesan Syllabus.

### **Review Conclusions**

Following broad consultation involving workshops and reflection, the report produced contained the following headings: “an historical overview, a description of the current work and organisation, an analysis of the task environment and of the social and church contexts” (Dixon, 1995a, p. 36).

Dixon (1984) concluded that the CCD was required to “accomplish specific purposes”. Its formal organisational goals (strategic goals) were “the special religious education of all Catholics in government schools in the agreed period; the pastoral/catechetical care of these State school Catholic and their families” (p. 1). The CCD Review (Dixon, 1984) identified the organisational goals that are implicit in the CCD system but not adequately articulated:

the use of volunteer catechists to accomplish the tasks of special religious education and catechesis; training of all catechists to provide effective special religious education and catechesis; support of all catechists technically, spiritually and personally in their work; mobilising of resources by encouraging of sufficient catechists for SRE classes and by providing suitable texts and aids for SRE work; the viability of the organisation economically, technically and in terms of its mission and purpose to ensure survival and growth; the use of desirable and feasible methods to achieve the purposes of the organisation (special religious education and catechesis) and to ensure a certain consistent standard of performance; liaison and co-ordination with the SRE organisation of other churches; keeping the diocese aware of the needs of Catholics associated with State schools. (p. 3)

#### **9.3.4 Diocesan Operation: 1984 - 2000**

After thirteen years as CCD Director in Sydney, in 1984 Father Carol Grew resigned from the position to take up an appointment to Mona Vale Parish as Parish Priest. He had led the CCD in the Archdiocese of Sydney with great passion and commitment to the work of the Motor Missioners and the lay catechists. Father Carol Grew had provided

exceptional leadership during a period of great challenge to the survival of the CCD.

Father Grew's farewell message was published in the Catechist newsletter:

After 13 years behind the pen in the CCD office I am once again back into the parochial fray. Those thirteen years were a joy I would never have chosen but a joy I can now say I am glad I did not miss. The personnel involved the State school apostolate, especially the Motor Mission and the catechists, are the salt of the earth. There are fewer groups as dedicated and self sacrificing as the Motor Missioners. The catechists are the main cream of the parish, not just skimmed off the milk of parochial life for this special work, but homogenised throughout most parochial activities. They too are more than generous. There is no identifiable catechist type. Mr. and Mrs. Catechist are Mr. and Mrs. Catholic – everybody equipped with a love of the faith, a love of children and gratitude for what they have received. It has been a privilege to work with people like this. The student is often taught in an atmosphere that is alien to catechesis, for the school is public and cannot be a community of faith. The children have left their normal class community to be drawn into a Catholic group that is an artificial community. These pupils meet at no other level to build cohesiveness. At a secondary level, the students are accustomed to meet in special study groups but this group is based on some form of commitment and not an academic goal. A difficult task is not the stuff of fear for the catechist. It presents a problem to be solved not avoided. Faith grows in the soil of community and sends out its roots in the nursery of personal attention. The lessons in the State school, no matter how perfectly prepared and delivered, will normally not promote faith where there is no communal support providing a home to belong to, examples to follow and the strengths and joy of good happy company. Community requires solidarity, wholesome fun, seriousness of purpose and a sense of right achievement. (Grew, 1984, October)

In August 1984, Father Richard Dixon was appointed CCD Director. He held this position until his resignation in 1995.

Father Dixon began to implement some of the outcomes from the CCD Review in the shadow of a significant structural and pastoral change in the Archdiocese of Sydney. In May 1986, two new dioceses were formed from the territory of the Archdiocese of Sydney – Parramatta and Broken Bay. There was a period of about twelve months during which the Bishops deliberated on the role of the CCD in the new metropolitan structure. The CCD in the Diocese of Broken Bay began to operate independently from the Sydney office with the Sydney CCD office providing financial and administrative services and coordinating catechist training. Father Carol Grew was appointed the first CCD Director in the Diocese of Broken Bay. In Parramatta Diocese, the direction of the CCD in this new diocese was discussed during a twelve month period of consultation involving clergy, catechists and the full-time CCD personnel in the CCD Schools of

Religion. By 1990, the two new dioceses had adopted a similar organisational structure to that developed in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

During the 1990s, the three metropolitan dioceses worked closely together supporting each other and the resource poor rural dioceses. In this period, the *Joy for Living* program was used in most dioceses in NSW. Diocesan representatives worked together to develop consistency in their Catechist Training Courses developed for the CCD Sydney model.

In 1996, Mr Peter Ivers was appointed as the first lay CCD Director in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the regional dioceses of NSW gradually developed, to some extent, Diocesan or at least Regional structures to support the work of catechists in local Parish communities.

In 1992, the Catholic Education Commission (CEC) Standing Committee of Religious Education in Government Schools (REGS) conducted a state-wide survey. The survey results provided information about the activity of the CCD movements in the eleven dioceses of NSW. The survey indicated the extent of the coverage of religious education to Catholic children attending State schools – Special Religious Education (SRE) was provided for Catholic children in 83% of the State Primary schools in NSW and 60% in State Secondary Schools. From the data collected, it was found that a minimum of 90,600 children were receiving Catholic SRE. Conservatively, at least one-third of Catholic children in NSW attended State schools. There were 5,116 catechists engaged in the provision of SRE across the State. (CEC (NSW), 1994)

Beyond SRE in the State school classroom, 64% of parishes in NSW and the ACT provided some form of religious instruction to Catholic children of school age. This included parish-based Sacramental programs, Sunday Liturgy of the Word for children, youth groups and youth retreats.

Catechists described the work as difficult and “at times appears to achieve very little” but conveyed a sense of fulfilment and a hope that their students may deepen their faith at some point in the future. A profile of a typical catechist was developed from the survey results:



The 'average' catechist is aged between 40 and 60, and is most likely female. They have been teaching catechesis on a voluntary basis for between five and ten years. Each week the average catechist has been taking somewhere between 2 and 4 classes. It is most likely that their delivery mode is in the form of the traditional class situation with 10 to 20 students. They have attended at least one training course, probably two, in preparation for teaching SRE. The average catechist has borne a substantial amount of the cost involved in providing religious education to Catholic students in government schools. (CEC (NSW), 1994)

### **9.3.5 Catechist Training and Formation**

One of the main objectives of the CCD from 1972 to 2000 was to maintain and develop training centres throughout the Archdiocese so that the catechists would not be required to travel long distances for their course. During the 1970s, there were thirteen centres from Gosford in the north, to Liverpool in the southwest, and Katoomba to the west of Sydney.

During the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the Basic Catechist Training consisting of the three levels - Diploma I, II and III - maintained the structure developed in the 1960s.

In 1974, an Advanced Catechist Training Course was developed following suggestions made during the 1974 NSW CCD Conference. The course was conducted at the Catholic College of Education at Castle Hill (north-western Sydney). Available for catechists who had completed the three years of normal catechist training, the advanced course was conducted over two semesters, fifteen weeks in each semester, on Tuesday and Wednesday from 11am to 1pm (CCD Secretary, 1975, April 2).

Another development in 1974 was an attempt by the Diocesan CCD office to introduce a Catechist course for the Seminarians at Springwood in the Archdiocese of Sydney. The plan involved the integration of training on parish-based State school work in each year (1 to 7) of the formation program for priests. There is no evidence that this program was successfully introduced.

In 1974, there was a full revision of Diploma III (CCD Secretary, 1975, April 2). The new format involved the use of lecturers from the seminary and teachers colleges to present specialised topics in areas of theology and religious education theory. Following feedback from the catechists involved in the training course in 1975, the focus of the

Diocesan CCD became the preparation of tutors. In that year, 974 catechists were involved in training and the majority of staff was religious or clergy.

In 1976, a new program was introduced for Diploma II in response to the changes in the understanding of revelation and evangelisation from the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent catechetical documents.

In 1984, the Catechist Training Course for primary school catechists consisted of “a three unit course of studies consisting of twenty hours per unit” (Dixon, 1984, p. 47). The course was designed specifically for the context – the provision of SRE in a classroom setting in State schools. The first and second units (levels) consisted of fifteen hours of educational theory and method, and five hours of theology. The entry level unit, or Level 1, recognised the skills and background of the average volunteer catechist and aimed to provide an elementary introduction on basic teaching skills:

Initial work is done in tutorial groups designed to develop a personal relationship between trainees and tutor. Guidance is given in CCD syllabus according to class level. The theological component is the introduction to the Bible. The educational lectures concern classroom method. (Dixon, 1984, p. 47)

The second unit or level was developed to build on the skills introduced in the first unit to encourage the catechist to become “creative and competent in adapting the syllabus to the needs of the pupil” (Dixon, 1984, p. 47). The educational theory lectures focused on classroom skills and the theological component examined the Church and its current mission drawing significantly from the teachings in the ecclesial documents of the previous two decades.

The third unit or level in the Catechist Training Course adopted a different structure. This unit was divided into ten hours on the basis of catechetics, drawing from the catechetical documents of the previous fifteen years, and ten hours of tutorial style work on Luke’s Gospel. This level aimed at the personal development of the catechist as a religious educator.

The Catechist Training Course was conducted in each of the fourteen CCD regions in the Archdiocese of Sydney. Each centre had a priest coordinator. The Regional Secretary and the priest coordinator were responsible for the local organisation of the training courses including the recruitment of tutors and lectures for each level. In 1982, there were 140 staff at the training centres – 32 priests, 45 religious and 63 lay people. Venues

were often in the local Catholic High school or Primary school (Dixon, 1984, p. 52). The 1984 CCD Review reported that in a two year period, 1982 and 1983, 775 catechists complete the first level of the Catechist Training Course, 210, the second level and 224, the third level (Dixon, 1984, p. 56).

A special course was offered for Secondary school catechists and those involved in parish-based youth ministry. This course focussed on “the life and world of the adolescent, communication skills and insights, classroom discipline, lesson preparation, learning activities, lesson evaluation, adolescent faith, moral and conscience development, method for instruction seminars, youth retreats and liturgies” (Dixon, 1984, p. 48). In the two year period, 1982 to 1983, 79 catechists completed this training (Dixon, 1984, p. 56).

The course structure and content focus that had developed by the mid-1980s was to form the basis for the Catechist Training Courses over the next fifteen years, both in the metropolitan and rural dioceses of NSW. The material in the Level 1, 2 and 3 Catechist Training Course was used in a joint rural diocesan project in the early 1990s to develop a Correspondence Course for catechists in isolated rural areas.

The Diocesan CCD Office in Sydney also developed biannual Diocesan inservice session on the use of the syllabus and local needs. The CCD leadership remained responsive to the local needs developing specific training and formation activities initiated by the demands of local catechists and Parish and Regional Secretaries. Other activities supporting the training and formation of catechists included: the coordination and support of Inter-Church training courses and activities; training for catechist teaching in schools with children with special needs; the annual Diocesan Catechist Rally and Mass; the Catechist newsletter; tutor training course; specific training for Parish and Regional secretaries; annual Regional Retreat days; and the development of regional resource centres at Hurstville and Miranda (Southern Sydney), Brookvale (North Sydney) and the original City centre (Dixon, 1984).

### **The Catechist Newsletter**

By 1972, the CCD newsletter, *The Catechist*, had ceased production.

In 1980, *Go Spread the Good News*, the Gazette of the Sydney Diocesan Catechist Committee was launched as an initiative of the lay catechists. Father Carol Grew (1980, April), in the Director's Letter in the first edition, commended the publication to catechists in the Archdiocese:

This is your magazine, written and designed by catechists, for catechists. It is designed for those necessary sit down moments in your daily life when you inject fresh vitality into your being . . . You have something of value to say to other catechists. Somewhere in your weekly catechetical grind you have had a century winning innings, and the fruit of your success may well be of use to other catechists. (p. 1)

In 1984, the catechist newsletter, *Go Spread the Good News* had approximately 1,500 subscribers from within and beyond the archdiocese (Dixon, 1984, p. 58).

The title of the publication was changed to *The Catechist*, in 1985. Father Richard Dixon, CCD Director, observed – “The new name is not so new. It was the name of the original magazine for catechists in the archdiocese which was first published in 1964. The “new” name, it is hoped will identify the gazette more clearly” (Dixon, 1985). This newsletter was produced by the Archdiocese of Sydney quarterly for the next fifteen years. The publication had become the responsibility of the Diocesan Office by the end of the 1980s. It provided catechists with information about training events, curriculum developments, diocesan and local news, teaching ideas and organisation background and history. In the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the newsletter became a significant communication tool for the Archdiocese of Sydney. The two new metropolitan dioceses (established in 1986) and a number of the regional dioceses in NSW adopted this method of communication with the volunteer catechists.

### **9.3.6 Curriculum Development**

#### **Primary Curriculum: The *Joy for Living* Series**

Revision of the CCD syllabus for Kindergarten to Year 6 continued throughout the 1970s. The *Joy for Living* series provided student text material (a student activity book) and complementary catechist guides (teacher's manual). First used in 1971, there had been two editions on the series in nearly thirty years until 2000. The official publication date of the first edition of the *Joy for Living* series was 1976. Further editions of the program were published in 1987, 1994 and a minor revision in 1997. Peter Ivers (2000),

CCD Sydney Director 1996 – 2002, noted “the *Joy for Living* series can possibly lay claim to being the longest running series of Catholic religion texts in Australia” (p. 45).

The review of the CCD operations conducted in 1982 and 1983 identified the need for revision of the *Joy for Living* syllabus. Father Richard Dixon (1995b), Secretary of the CCD, who had been given the task of coordinating the review, noted the Catechist reports “of a growing difficulty with the current syllabus in communicating with the religious and social situation of the children” (p. 40). The CCD Review report recorded that 90% of the 223 parishes in the Archdiocese of Sydney were using the diocesan curriculum for Special Religious Education in State schools (Dixon, 1984, p. 35). Dixon (1984) commented on the Diocesan syllabus:

The provision of a syllabus goes some way to avoiding catechists presenting their own view of the Church’s teaching. A summary of the Biblical, doctrinal, liturgical and apostolic sources in the syllabus has been prepared. While the syllabus is not a completely exhaustive treatment of all these sources, given the time constraints on its use, it measures up well with the hierarchy of doctrines presented in *Catechesi Tradendae*. (p. 56)

During 1985, syllabus teams were formed for each grade from Kindergarten to Year 6 to develop a second edition of the *Joy for Living* series. The teams included “diocesan office staff plus other persons involved in SRE who are judged to be competent and experienced” (Dixon, c1985). The official publication date of the second edition of the *Joy for Living* series was 1987. The revision process and publication occurred over a number of years, as was the case in the 1970s for the production of the first edition. During this period (1984 -1988), a document was developed outlining the catechetical sources for the Primary curriculum (Dixon, 1985).

Peter Ivers (1999) observed that the use of different writers for different year levels “meant that there was a more eclectic approach to the presentation of material” (p. 11). As a consequence, inconsistencies developed within each year group and across the K - 6 publications. The underlying assumption in the 1987 revision was “that students were already active members of the Church” (CCD-Sydney, 1987, as cited in Ivers, 1999, p.11). In a review of the 1987 edition, Ivers (1999) observed:

The 1987 edition embraced a life experience catechesis approach to the classroom teaching of religion . . . Material was structured around Scripture, doctrine, worship and Christian living . . . lessons in the 1987 edition would begin with a faith response (to consolidate the previous lesson) before briefly moving to life

experience . . . then progressed to an explanation of faith before the lesson concluded with asking for a faith response from the students. (p. 11)

The *Joy for Living* series was adopted for use in the two new metropolitan dioceses formed in 1986 - Broken Bay and Parramatta.

In 1991, plans were initiated to produce a third edition of the *Joy for Living* series. A more comprehensive plan was developed for the production of the 1994 edition than those previously used. Ivers (2000) identified nine stages: reflection on the strengths and weakness of the 1987 edition and key Church documents; the development of a theological framework for the 1994 edition by the CCD Director, Father Richard Dixon; the formation of a Syllabus reference team for each year level drawn almost exclusively from active SRE teachers; the development of a “Scope and Sequence chart”; the formulation of unit outcomes; the writing phase - two teachers were engaged as program writers; gaining ecclesiastical approval for the program; release of the 1994 edition accompanied by in-servicing of SRE teachers; initial evaluation of the K - 6 series; minor revision in response to evaluations; and, in-servicing of SRE teachers (catechists) (p. 46).

In the development of the 1994 edition particular care was taken to ensure the *Joy for Living* series was consistent with the *Celebrating our Story*, the Archdiocesan Guidelines for religious education in Catholic schools. This was the first occasion where an attempt was made to align religious education curriculum for all Catholic children, whether they attend a Catholic or State school.

A minor revision of the 1994 *Joy for Living* series to more clearly indicate how the series incorporated the Church’s teaching as expressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) was completed in 1997. This revision also incorporated changes arising from an extensive evaluation of the program and its resources in 1996 and 1997 undertaken by Peter Ivers on his appointment as CCD Director in the Archdiocese of Sydney. Ivers published three articles in the *Journal of Religious Education* over a period of three years from 1999 to 2002. These articles contain the first documented research on the curriculum processes used in the development of teaching programs for Catholic children attending State school in New South Wales.

As part of a report on the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn, Dr. Louise Welbourne (2001) conducted a document analysis on the

1994 edition of the *Joy for Living* series of textbooks to determine the suitability for use in Catholic Special Religious Education in State schools. Table 9.4 outlines the criteria for analysis used by Welbourne and the rating of the *Joy for Living* series given for each criterion.

Table 9.4  
*Criteria for Analysis of Joy for Living Series*

	CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5
1	The use of the <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> (1994) as a doctrinal reference by writers of the curriculum.					*
2	Makes available the best current understanding of the theological and scriptural content.				*	
3	An understanding of the distinct but complementary nature of catechesis and religious education. (GDC, 1997, n.73)			*		
4	Outcomes that are intended, observable results of teaching, assessing and reporting.		*			
5	Provision of teacher background and resources.					*
6	Scripture that is age appropriate for the learner to avoid fundamentalism, literalism and the magical.			*		
7	The significance of stages of human growth in a person's growth the religious maturity.					*
8	Respect for, and dialogue with, other religions.					*

From: Welbourne, L. (2001). *Review: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine*: CEC Archdiocese of Canberra Goulburn. p. 44.

Five of the eight criteria rated either 4 or 5, that is, very high or excellent. The *Joy for Living* series (1987, 1994) used three steps in the planning and delivery of each lesson: Exploring Life, Faith Link and Student Response. Referring to Criteria #3, Welbourne (2001) identified the contradiction in using the term 'Faith Link' with the implication of a catechetical approach and the content for the 'Faith Link' section of the teacher's manual and student activity books being "presented as instructional - for an understanding of Christianity" (p. 45). Welbourne (2001) noted when referring to Criteria #4 that "the *Joy for Living* series uses the term Learning Outcomes for each unit . . . they do not serve the purpose of learning outcomes detailed in the literature"(p. 45). A third weakness was identified, in review of Criteria #6, in the programs for Year 1 and 3.

The Scripture passages chosen for inclusion in the textbooks for Years 1 and 3 were “unsuitable for the age groups for which they were selected” (Welbourne, 2001, p, 45).

In the summary at the conclusion of the review of the *Joy for Living* series, Welbourne (2001) noted:

A survey in the United States of America listed the quality of the new and revised textbooks as major reason for successful CCD programs (Parasidis, 1977, p. 507). In the light of this finding an overall bonus of the *Joy for Living* series is that it has been revised; it is especially designed for the specific circumstances of CCD and has been written for untrained teachers. It is also constructed on sound educational principles and is holistic. (p. 48)

Although developed and approved for use in the Archdiocese of Sydney, the *Joy for Living* series was adopted for use by most of the Catholic dioceses in New South Wales. Citing data from the 1998 Annual CCD Report, Ivers (1999) noted “that according to sales figures, the series is used in approximately 700 parishes across Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea . . . it is estimated that 75,000 students use this resource each year” (p. 10).

In 2000, the *Joy for Living* series, Kindergarten to Year 6, was the authorised Diocesan curriculum for 10 of the 11 Dioceses in New South Wales for the provision of religious education to Catholic children attending State schools. In the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), part of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, where access to the State schools for Church-based Religious Education was restricted; the *Joy for Living* series had been used successfully in parish-based *Schools of Religion* for a number of years.

### **Secondary Curriculum: Signs of the Times**

The development of curriculum material for teaching of Catholic children attending State Secondary schools did not receive the same priority as that for the Primary schools.

Horsley (1993) observed:

Unlike the Primary, Special Religious Education (S.R.E) in Secondary schools has had a rather chequered history in NSW as in other states. It has been difficult to recruit and sustain Secondary S.R.E. teachers (catechists) and adequately resource them, given the monetary and personnel limitations at the disposal of the C.C.D. (p. 23)

During the 1970s, curriculum material for Secondary schools was developed using the same guidelines as those adopted for the *Joy for Living* series for Primary school Special



Religious Education. In 1980, a program for use in Year 9 was published and trial programs for Year 7 and 8 were introduced.

The review of the CCD operations conducted in 1982 and 1983 identified the need for revision of the approach to Secondary SRE including the curriculum material available. A significant challenge in the development of curriculum material for SRE in the Secondary state school was related to the variety of teaching/classroom contexts that had developed. These included: weekly classes; small discussion groups; withdrawal groups in a limited time span; and seminars, which occurred as often and monthly and as infrequently as once a year. In response, a survey of secondary catechists was conducted to assess the current use of teaching materials and the particular needs of each context (Dixon, 1995b, p. 37). As a result of this survey, the *CCD Diocesan Planning Priorities for 1985* (CCD Diocesan Office, 1985) included a significant focus on the development of the existing secondary programs “into units of work applicable to the variety of Secondary formats”. During 1985, a Secondary Syllabus team collected lesson material from Secondary school catechists and motor missionaries working in a variety of teaching contexts with lower and middle Secondary school classes. The team developed a series of units of work that could be adapted to the variety of Secondary teaching contexts. This was published in late 1986.

The metropolitan dioceses continued to work together in the development of Secondary school teaching material after the formation of the dioceses of Broken Bay and Parramatta in 1986. In 1988, Father Richard Dixon (CCD Sydney Director), appointed two Brothers of St Gerard, one of whom was Brother Michael Horsley, to investigate current situation and needs relate to the provision of SRE for Catholic students attending State Secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney. A significant finding from the investigation was the need for a “contemporary Catholic SRE Curriculum” (Horsley, 1993, p. 24). Horsley (1993) described the process involved in the development of the *Signs of the Times* curriculum:

Over the course of the next two years an Inter-Diocesan Curriculum Committee was formed and preliminary discussions took place . . . 1990 saw the beginning of a curriculum that would become contemporary in nature, relevant to our times and the lives of young people, and yet embracing a comprehensive look at the Church as it walks beside its people and enters their everyday lives. (p. 24)

The *Sign of the Times* was developed with a consideration of the range of Secondary SRE teaching contexts that existed in the three Sydney Metropolitan dioceses. The Secondary curriculum material could not be presented in the same format as that used in the Primary *Joy for Living* series, that is, specific lesson material for each year level and a teacher's guide for each lesson. Horsley (1993) observed:

Any curriculum content had to be flexible enough to cover all SRE possibilities and at the same time provide enough material for those schools that had SRE classes once a week . . . the curriculum, in terms of its content, does not extend into lesson writing but provides the basic information for a year grouping that can be adapted to the relevant circumstances of the SRE situation. (p. 24)

The *Signs of the Times* curriculum consisted of five strands of study each of which contained several units of work built around the theme of the particular strand. Table 9.5 provides an outline of the structure of the curriculum.

Table 9.5

*Signs of the Times Secondary Curriculum Structure*

Strand	Unit	Unit	Unit	Unit	Unit
<b>Jesus</b>	Jesus, His Origin and Setting	The Gospel and Gospel Stories	Christian Values	Jesus Calls Us	
<b>Community and Ethics</b>	Belonging	Multiculturalism / Pluralism	Truly Human Values	Personal Development as a Catholic	
<b>The World, its Origin and Preservation</b>	Creation	Environment / Conservation			
<b>Signs of the Times</b>	Human Dignity	Social Awareness	Leisure	Work	Heroes
<b>World Religions and Traditional Culture</b>	Religions	Church and Judaism	Christianity	The Catholic Church	

Adapted from: Horsley, M. (1993). *Signs of the times: A Catholic curriculum for Government secondary schools. Word in Life, August*, p.25.

The curriculum development process involved the setting of a focus or “ultimate” question for each topic and then a series of outcomes for each unit of work - Knowledge, Understanding, Values and Attitudes and Skills. A number of “content questions” were developed for each unit, the responses to which provided the basis for the series of lessons in the unit. Strands and the unit were repeated each year from Years 7 to 10 with

developing complexity appropriate to the developmental stage of the students. The *Signs of the Times* curriculum material was developed for catechists teaching Secondary SRE in a diverse range of contexts. The profile of the ‘typical’ secondary catechist (volunteer and untrained teacher) was taken into account in the development of the curriculum.

Horsley (1993) described the additional support:

At the end of each unit of work a series of Resources and Activities have been suggested. The ideas presented were meant to be the beginning and the teachers themselves could, over time, add their own suggestions. To further support these ideas a Resource Folder . . . contains information, stories, activity sheets, maps and other relevant information so the teacher may adequately teach the total program . . . teachers are encouraged to add the Resource Folder themselves. The Folder is designed in a library format with a separate sleeve for each of the five strands. (p. 25)

During the early 1990s (1991 or 1992), the *Signs of the Times* underwent a trial in the three Sydney metropolitan dioceses. For a twelve-month period, 80 catechists planned and presented lessons using the draft curriculum material. Following further modification, the CCD in the Archdiocese of Sydney published the curriculum in 1993. The *Signs of the Times* curriculum would be used in the three Sydney metropolitan dioceses and in some rural dioceses of NSW for the next decade and from the foundation for the development of Secondary SRE curriculum material during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **9.4 Networking**

### **9.4.1 Working with other Christian Churches**

#### **Early Local Cooperation**

During the 1960s, local cooperation developed between the Christian Churches who worked alongside each other in providing religious education for the children in NSW State schools, both in the metropolitan and regional dioceses. Representatives from the other Christian churches had been officially teaching religious education in the State schools for over 80 years. The importance of establishing good working relationships with these representatives was a high priority. Sister Vincent Nelson RSC, who was involved in the establishment of the Liverpool Motor Mission in 1960, recalled the importance of working with the representatives of other churches:

When I had become familiar with the conditions of the schools and made arrangements with the Principals as to suitable times and days, then my next work was to meet with the Ministers who were also in that school with their religious instruction. (Sister Vincent Nelson rsc, 1995 March 14)

The Motor Missioners, who were often involved in the organisation of classes and catechists, worked closely with the Ministers of the other Christian Churches to secure the best arrangements for teaching religious education in the State school classrooms. Accounts of the local cooperation between the Christian Churches in northern Sydney appeared in diary entries for the Dee Why Motor Mission (Sisters of the Good Samaritan), *Motor Mission Happenings*. For example, for the entry dated Friday 9 December 1966:

This morning, we went to the first Combined Scripture at the Forest High School. It followed the usual pattern of singing, Scripture reading, Talk and Prayer. The talk given by the new Baptist Minister was very suited to the High School level and brought home very attractively that Christ was the most important Person to be concerned about at Christmas. (Sisters of the Good Samaritan, 1960 - 1970)

And, the entry dated 3 April, 1969:

Combined Easter service at Dee Why primary and Manly Girls' High. Our contribution at this was to sing "peace" with a guitar -playing, bearded Presbyterian minister. It was intended that the hymn be sung only at the primary school but at the request of the Ministers it was repeated at the High. (Sisters of the Good Samaritan, 1960 - 1970)

With their grass roots experience of the benefits of inter-Church cooperation, it was the Motor Mission members in the CCD Schools of Religion who recognised the potential benefits to be gained from the Christian Churches working together. In a report from the meeting of CCD School of Religion staff (1969, July 29) to the Diocesan Council of the CCD (1969, August 1) the need for cooperation with other Christian Churches was raised: "It was observed that there was a need for joint representation among the various Christian Churches to approach the Department of Education to seek uniform treatment in regard to the teaching of Religion" (*Minutes of the twenty-fourth meeting of the diocesan council of the CCD*, 1969, August 1). The Diocesan Council proposed that a "top level" meeting be investigated by the CCD Diocesan Office to promote some common discussion among the Churches. The initiative to form such an alliance was to come from representatives of the other Christian churches in 1970.

## **Inter-Church Commission on Religious Instruction in Schools**

In 1969, the NSW Committee of what has now become the Australian Association of Religious Education (AARE) convened an ecumenical discussion on Biblical Studies as a Higher School Certificate elective. It was at this meeting that the Chairman of NSW Council of Christian Education in Schools (CCES), Canon Alan Langdon (1992), recalled first becoming aware “of the existence, let alone the work of the CCD” (p. 11). Langdon (1992) observed “it seems incredible” that “a movement of such great significance for special religious education in NSW: the establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) in 1960” (p. 11) was not known to the members of CCES. Langdon (1992) commented on the significance for the other Christian churches of this ‘discovery’:

Those who had borne the burden of decades of coping with ‘school Scripture’ against almost overwhelming odds were challenged by the enthusiasm with which the officers of the CCD and its growing number of lay catechists approached the monumental task of using efficiently the opportunities presented by the SRI provisions of the 1880 Act. The situation was reminiscent of the Anglican response in the 1880s and 1890s. (p. 11)

The relationship between CCES and CCD was to become increasingly significant for the provision of religious education in State schools by Christian religious providers.

In April 1970, the NSW Council of Christian Education in Schools (CCES) with members from the Anglican dioceses, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational and Baptist churches, the Churches of Christ and the Salvation Army, sponsored a State-wide conference on general and special religious instruction in NSW Government schools. Representatives of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Orthodox and Eastern Churches were invited to participate. Langdon (1992) recorded the recommendations from this conference:

That all denominations support general and special religious instruction and that Special Religious Instruction . . . should be implemented at the local level on a principle of flexibility. Effective flexible implementation should not only take into account the relative gifts, priorities and commitments of the clergy and lay teachers, but should be based on a realistic and honest assessment of the total resources and actual potential of the churches for this aspect of their ministry. (pp. 11 -12)

Further cooperative work between all Christian churches following the April conference led to the development in July 1970 of *Draft Guidelines for Inter-Church Consultation at a Local Level*. The guidelines were proposed to improve efficiency and to solve

problems arising in the provision of Special Religious Instruction, particularly in Secondary schools where all Churches were experiencing significant challenges. They were to form the basis of cooperation between the Christian Churches and as such the foundational agreement in the formation of the *Inter-Church Commission on Religious Instruction in Schools* in 1972.

On 26 March 1971, the NSW Council of Christian Education in Schools (CCES) invited interested parties from three Sydney universities, teacher's colleges, and other Christian churches to join conversation about general religious teaching in secondary forms and the possible advantages of having some religious subject accepted as a matriculation elective in the secondary programs of education. Father Carol Grew (1971) noted in the Secretary's report to the Diocesan Council of the CCD that:

The meeting came to no conclusions but further highlighted the preferences allowing the official church representatives to retain SRI [Special Religious Instruction] and to support a new programme of GRT [General Religious Teaching] and possibly some subject to be accepted as an examinable part of the curriculum. (1971, April 15)

Late in 1971 the NSW Council of Christian Education in Schools (CCES), with the backing of the Provincial Anglican Commission, issued an invitation to the NSW Catholic Education Board to co-sponsor the formation the *Inter-Church Consultative Commission on Religious Instruction in Schools*. Following two months of negotiations, Father Carol Grew, reported to the Diocesan Council of the CCD in December 1971 that the NSW Episcopal Conference had officially accepted the invitation. Father Grew noted that this Commission:

Will bring together State representatives from each of the major Christian denominations in NSW to prepare and formulate thoroughly representative proposals on RI [Religious Instruction] in schools for discussion with interested bodies (e.g. Jewish community) and for eventual submission to the NSW Department of Education. The body should provide satisfactory liaison between Christian Churches so that the future of RI in State schools might be thoroughly examined and made more effective. (1971, December 10)

On 6 April 1972, the initial meeting of the *Inter-Church Commission on Religious Instruction in Schools* was held. The initial membership of the Commission consisted of four Anglicans from the Province of NSW; two Presbyterians; two Methodists; one each of Baptist, Congregational, Church of Christ and Salvation Army; three Roman Catholics; one Greek Orthodox; and one Lutheran (Langdon, 1991, p. 44). The NSW Catholic Board of Education appointed the three Catholic representatives to the

Commission - Father A. Doherty (Secretary of the CCD); Father F. Coolahan; and Brother J. Sweeney (Dixon, 1995b, p. 32).

Canon Alan Langdon (1991) reflected the operation of the Commission in the early years of operation of the Commission:

Special funding from the CCES ensured the appointment to the Consultative Commission of a Liaison and Research Officer for 1972. The dedicated efforts of the officer and all members of the Commission facilitated the preparation of detailed documents on all facets of General and Special RE. The many drafts of these documents were regularly checked by the relevant authorising bodies of the member churches. (p. 36)

Father Doherty reported to the Diocesan Council of the CCD on the purpose and progress of the Commission:

Representatives of the NSW Catholic Board of Education have been members of this Consultative Commission over the last two years. The purpose of this forum is primarily to design, where necessary, proposals to the Government about the future of Religious Education in departmental schools. To date the Commission has submitted: 1. That a teacher be appointed as scripture coordinator in each secondary school in NSW; 2. That GRT [General Religious Teaching] be retained in primary schools and that teachers be given better support in its implementation in the future. At present the Commission is reviewing the advisability of recommending GRT for secondary schools. (1973, July 18)

### **Review of the Place of Religious Education in State Schools**

During the early 1970s, the nature of religious education in Australian schools, both Church sponsored and state run schools, was under review. In the public sector “Ministerial Committees of Inquiry investigated the place of religion in education in government schools in all the Australian states” (Rossiter, 1983, p. 1-2). Inquiries were conducted in Tasmania (Overton Committee) from 1970 to 1972; the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) from 1971 to 1973; Queensland (Gutekunst Committee) in 1972; South Australia (Steinle Committee) from 1972 to 1973; Victoria (Russell Committee) from 1972 to 1974; and Western Australia (Mossenson Committee) in 1973 (Rossiter, 1983, p. 167).

In NSW, the *Inter-Church Commission on Religious Instruction in Schools* initiated the inquiry. Following the development of detailed practical proposals for Special Religious Education representatives from the Inter-Church Commission approached the Minister for Education and the Director-General for the Department of Education requesting the

establishment of an official and representative of inquiry. A summary of the historical perspective to NSW inquiry was provided in the final report:

In the context of widespread changes in curriculum construction and teaching methods, and of school structure itself, religious education has come under scrutiny. In several Australian states, official enquiries have been conducted and reports issued. Their practical outcome remains unclear. New South Wales has responded both to the general Australian situation and its own historical developments in the field of education with the appointment of the present Committee in 1975. (Rawlinson, 1980, n.2.20)

In late October 1974, the then Minister for Education, the Honourable Eric Willis, announced the formation of a committee to conduct an inquiry into religion in education in NSW Government schools. On 24 October 1974, a Steering Committee, consisting of five Department of Education members and four representatives from the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Instruction in Schools, was formed to advise the Minister regarding the composition of the committee and its terms of reference. On 2 December 1972, the Minister officially announced the “formation of a Committee, outlining the Committee’s composition and starting terms of reference” (Rawlinson, 1980, n. 1.8):

The terms of reference for the Committee of Enquiry were:

- The place of religion in education in Government schools in NSW;
- The Public Instruction Act: Its background and consequences with particular reference to general religious teaching and special religious instruction in schools;
- Present position of religion in education in Government schools;
- Recommendations for future action. (Rawlinson, 1980, n. 1.9)

The membership of the committee included representatives from the Education Department [5], primary [1] and secondary [1] principals, the Teacher’s Federation [2], Parent organisations [2], universities [1], colleges of advanced education [1], the Jewish Board of Deputies [1] and the Inter-Church Commission [3] (CCD Secretary, 1975, April 2; Langdon, 1991, p.37). The Inter-Church Commission was represented on the committee of inquiry by three members who were nominated and elected to fill these positions. Reverend Canon Alan Langdon (Anglican Board of Education), Reverend B. Stevens (Uniting Church Board of Education) and Reverend Anthony Doherty (Secretary, CCD Sydney) represented the Inter-Church Commission at the inaugural meeting on 29 April 1975. In July 1975, Reverend Carol Grew (Director, CCD Sydney) replaced Reverend Anthony Doherty on the committee.



In a letter to the Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal James Freeman, in October 1975, Father Carol Grew (1975, October 3), CCD Director, presented to the Cardinal the approach the Catholic representation would adopt as a member of the Department of Education inquiry into Religious Education in Schools. The position of the Catholic Church was to support and promote both General Religious Teaching and Special Religious Instruction. Father Grew outlined the main challenges for religious education in State schools in 1975:

[The] inability of the Churches to find sufficient staff; lack of sufficient teaching expertise on the part of the Church visitors; the lack of class unity, where student were drawn from a considerable variety of class levels; insufficient contact between catechists and pupils, thus providing insufficient opportunity to establish appropriate disciplinary and teacher/pupil relationship; lack of status of the catechist and the subject. (Grew, 1975, October 3)

In response to these challenges, Father Grew identified the needs to be addressed. Firstly, by the Department of Education - "A greater flexibility of programming; more appropriate teacher training which could be provided by the Department; greater liaison between religious and school staffs; more appropriate recognition of the catechist by the school staff before the pupil" (Grew, 1975, October 3). And secondly, by the Catholic Church:

A better selectivity of catechists and greater coordination between the school lesson styles and SRI [Special Religious Instruction] lesson styles and better cooperation among priests, religious and catechists; a concern for the work the other Christian communities are doing thus a recognition that we cannot act unilaterally without detriment to the whole SRI programme; the realisation that ecumenism should be taken seriously. (Grew, 1975, October 3)

The inaugural meeting of the committee was held on 29 April 1975. It continued to meet monthly until the publication of the final report in late 1980, a total of sixty-six times (Langdon, 1991). Canon Alan Langdon recalls the variety of methods used in the investigations conducted by committee:

After public invitations through city and country press it [the Committee] received over 900 submissions from individuals and organisations. It studied relevant documentation and reports from Australia and overseas. Having constructed questionnaires, it conducted a state-wide survey of representative samples of parents, principals, students and teachers of religion in government schools. A special effort was made to obtain information from migrant parents, by translating the parent questionnaire into six languages. (Langdon, 1991, pp. 37-38)

During the five and half years (1975 - 1980) in which the committee conducted its investigation, the Inter-Church Commission met each month. Langdon (1992) recalled the focus of these regular meetings “The principal task was evaluating and trialling varied systems of SRE for recommendation to the enquiry committee and ensuring that the churches accepted the responsibilities each system implied” (p. 12). The Inter-Church Commission worked with the focus of developing recommendations for the retention of the dual religious provisions, general religious teaching and special religious instruction.

The Report of the Committee appointed by the Minister for Education to consider Religious Education in NSW Government Schools dated November 1980 was released as a discussion paper by the Minister, the Honourable Paul Landa, in February 1981. The report, entitled *Religion in Education in NSW Government Schools*, carried the caveat - “This report has been made available as a basis for discussion and comment. Readers are asked to note that there is no commitment at this stage by the Minister for Education to implement its recommendations’ (Rawlinson, 1980). The report became known as the ‘*Rawlinson Report*’, as the final committee chairman was Dr. R. W. Rawlinson.

The final date for comments to be submitted to the Minister was 31 July, 1981. The Inter-Church Commission circulated a comprehensive summary to assist member churches in developing a response. This summary was published in the Catholic journal *Word in Life* (1981, Volume 29, Issue 4, pp. 186 -192). In order to ensure the support of all Christian Churches across NSW, the three Inter-Church Commission representatives of the Committee of Inquiry, Canon Alan Langdon, Father Carol Grew and Reverend B. Stevens, travelled throughout NSW conducting ecumenical meetings of clergy and laity in many regional and metropolitan locations. Langdon (1992) recorded that “some 1768 people from the major churches” attended meetings that “endorsed the Report’s Recommendations (those dealing with SRE [Special Religious Education] unanimously)” (p. 13).

Father Carol Grew, CCD Director, was responsible for leading a committee that prepared the response from the Catholic Church to the Rawlinson Report. In the *Response to the Report*, the Catholic Education Commission (New South Wales) expressed support and endorsement for the Report - “Although there are differences in scope and emphases, there is no conflict or significant dissonance between the major conclusions of the report

and the written submission made by the Catholic Education Commission to the Committee in December, 1975” (Catholic Education Commission, 1981, August 19, n.1.3). In the concluding statement of the response, the Catholic Education Commission acknowledged the responsibility of the churches and religious bodies “they will need to critically review their efforts in the past and the resources now available to them and formulate effective development plans to increase both the effort and resources directed into this challenging field” (Catholic Education Commission, 1981, August 19, n. 5.2).

The NSW Government’s response to the Rawlinson Report and the subsequent submissions was slow. In 1983, the Minister announced the implementation of Recommendation 70, establishing a *Consultative Committee on Special Religious Education in Schools*. The initial task for this group would be to advise the Director-General of Education on the implementation of the recommendations of the Rawlinson Report - “to examine practical ways of enabling SRE to operate more effectively in terms of the Report’s principles of flexibility, consultation and cooperation” (Langdon, 1992, p. 13). The committee members included seven representatives of the Inter-Church Commission and representative of the Jewish and Muslim communities, parent and teacher organisations, and the Department of Education.

The representation of non-Christian religious groups on the Consultative Committee was a unique feature of the NSW response to religion in Government schools. Within the scope of the final report (Rawlinson, 1980) was the recognition of the role of non-Christian religious groups:

The Committee affirms that the presence of any religious group in schools for the purpose of providing special religious education at the request of the parents should have the approval of the Department of Education. However, the existing criteria are too stringent in the context of our present pluralistic society; they should be broadened to include all groups which are widely recognised by the community as having essentially the character of a religion. (n. 6.11)

Rossiter (1983) observed that in New South Wales:

Special Religious Education was not seen as the preserve of the Christian churches even if they were regarded as its most prominent exponents. It was regarded more as a ‘multi-faith’ religious education than it was in the other states; as such, its rationale emphasised the theme of multiculturalism. (pp. 306 -307)

In May 1986, the Minister for Education, Rodney Cavalier, announced the endorsement of the Recommendations of the Rawlinson Report (1980, November) pertaining to Special Religious Education, numbers 36 - 65. This action was supported by a

Memorandum to Principals (1986, November) from the Director-General outlining the responsibilities of schools with respect to SRE. By the end of the decade, the Education and Public Instruction Act 1987 and the Education Reform Act 1990, influenced by the four General Recommendations of the Rawlinson Report (1980, n. 1-4, p. 105), had retained the religious provisions of the 1880 Act in updated language (Langdon, 1992, p. 13). The legal provisions for General Religious Education (GRE) and Special Religious Education (SRE) are found in Clauses 30, 32 and 33 of the 1990 Education Reform Act (for specific provisions of the 1990 Act see Appendix C).

The role of Catholic representation on the Inter-Church Commission was significant. It provided greater numerical strength and strong leadership for the Commission in the presentation of a united Christian perspective during a period of critical consultation with bodies such as the Department of Education and representatives of other non-Christian faiths in the 1970s and 1980s. The Catholic representatives on the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools (ICCOREIS) (renamed in the 1980s) continued to provide a model of the benefits of flexible, consultative and collaborative working relationship between the Christian Churches during the 1990s.

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ICCOREIS was regarded as the peak body representing the Christian providers of Special Religious Education in NSW. The stated purposes of the Commission were:

to provide a fully representative context for inter-church discussion on religious education in government schools; to formulate policy for endorsement by member churches and help facilitate the implementation of agreed policy; to represent member churches in negotiations with the NSW Government and the Department of Education and Training; and, to negotiate and maintain liaison with relevant groups and other organisations. (ICCOREIS, 2002, September, p. 9)

Membership from the Catholic Church on the Commission consisted of three representatives “appointed by the NSW Catholic Bishops on the recommendation of the Catholic Conference of Religious Educators in State Schools, at least one of whom being appointed to represent the ‘country’ dioceses” (ICCOREIS, 2002, September, p. 61).

#### **9.4.2 Regional Networking**

In August 1974, a New South Wales CCD Conference was held at Santa Sophia College, University of Sydney. This was the first state-wide gathering for those involved in the work of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. The conference was organised by a

steering committee made up of Diocesan Directors and Coordinators from across NSW. Each Diocese (nine at that time) was invited to send ten delegates and religious congregations working in this area of ministry were asked to send one delegate. Ninety delegates attended the five-day conference - twenty-eight clergy, fifty-eight religious sisters and brothers and fourteen lay people. All NSW dioceses were represented.

The conference program provided an indication of the variety challenges that were facing those working in the CCD in the early 1970s. The program included the following sessions: Input and discussion on learning to accept and work with differing viewpoints; Children and the Eucharist; Children and the Sacrament of Penance; General Religious Teaching; The role of the Religion Co-ordinator; The organisation of the State school apostolate within individual dioceses; The value of Special Religious Education; and, Outside school formation programmes (CCD Sydney, 1974, pp. 1 - 3).

A second State CCD Conference was held in October 1976. Seven dioceses were represented with Lismore and Wilcannia-Forbes absent due to “local problems”. At the conference, each diocese presented the details of their system of catechist formation, which “varied from highly structured programmes in bigger cities to informal gatherings in rural districts” (CCD Sydney, 1976, p. 1).

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, State conferences were held for members of the Motor Mission, Catechist coordinators and regional secretaries.

In July 1987, a meeting of CCD Diocesan Directors /Coordinators was convened at Vaughan College, Marsfield (North-west Sydney). Eight of the eleven NSW dioceses were represented at the two day meeting - Sydney, Broken Bay, Armidale, Wagga Wagga, Maitland, Canberra-Goulburn, Wollongong and Bathurst. This inaugural meeting was held to determine the value of inter-diocesan discussions on matters related to the provision of religious education for Catholic children in State schools. The following issues related to the provision of SRE were discussed: Secondary SRE; joint denominational format and parental choice; catechist training and formation; catechist accreditation; communication with catechists; recruitment of catechists; the status of the CCD; and matters related to resources. As a result of the two-day meeting, the diocesan representatives determined:

that the issues that had surfaced justified meeting and needed further meetings to deal with them adequately . . . the purpose of the meetings would be: to provide

peer consultation on common issues; for professional support and assistance; to share information and connect questions with answers; to engage in issues analysis; to coordinate efforts and program planning; [and] to provide greater access to and influence in the formulation of policy (ICCOREIS, Departmental Committee and Catholic Education Commission). (1987, July)

The meeting pattern was determined for future meetings - two meetings to be held per year, to be conducted in different venues across New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Each diocese would be given an opportunity to host the meeting “to encourage a greater awareness of one another’s situations and a feeling for the local scene” ( 1987, July).

In 1988, the group adopted the name Conference of Diocesan SRE Directors and Coordinators that was modified to Conference of Diocesan SRE Directors NSW and ACT in 1989. In 1990, the title of the group became Conference on Religious Education State Schools (CRESS). In 2000, at the request of the NSW/ACT Bishops, the title of the group became Catholic Conference of Religious Educators in State Schools (CCRESS).

Minutes of the meetings conducted from 1987 to 2000 indicate that the Conference addressed the significant themes identified by Welbourne (2001) - recruitment and formation of catechists; parish-based programs; program structure and modes of delivery; ecumenical cooperation; diocesan and local structures; national network; and, funding (p. 50). The biannual CRESS Conference provided a framework for collaboration and mutual support among CCD leaders in the eleven NSW dioceses. Annual reports from each diocese were tabled and discussed and the representatives of CRESS gave regular reports to all members on ICCOREIS and other external committees.

From 1987 to 1995, CRESS worked within the charter NSW Catholic Education Commission (CEC). Adopting a broad and inclusive definition of Catholic Education, the provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools was included in the CEC charter in a similar way to that in the charter of the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC). One of the first recommendations (1998, May) of the newly established CRESS group was to put forward to the CEC to provide a Standing Committee on Special Religious Education. The inaugural meeting of the *Standing Committee on Religious Education in Government Schools* was held on 26 July,

1989. The Standing Committee was responsible for advising the CEC on Religious Education in Government Schools (REGS) by:

Identifying issues and important developments and their implications for REGS; monitoring developments in policy and practice with regard to general religious education and special religious education; advising on appropriate response to Government and Department of School Education on matters effecting REGS; advising on ways of dissemination of information concerning REGS to diocesan authorities and key people in the Catholic community; advising on the raising of awareness of the place of REGS in diocesan priorities. (CEC, 1989)

The Standing Committee also had responsibility for advising the CEC on matters related to the liaison with other religious groups on issues of common concern related to the provision of Religious Education in Government schools. Membership for the committee was drawn from those individuals who:

have a working knowledge of Religious Education in Government schools . . . would be seen to represent the following facets of Catholic schooling: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine; Inter-church on Religious Education in State (*sic*) schools (ICCOREIS); Teachers; Parents; Parish Priest and Catechists. (CEC, 1989)

In developing an Operational Plan for the Standing Committee for 1992 - 1994 the position of Religious Education in Government Schools was reviewed. Several issues and problems were identified. These included: the role of the Church's mission; using the resources of Catholic schools; the need for a "more sophisticated model" taking into account the differences between country and city needs and requiring greater responsibility from parishes; inadequacy of current financial resources; and, the need for "comparable, valid and up-to-date data" requiring "better coordinated and more systematic attempts at collection" (CEC, 1992, August 17).

As a result of the Catholic Education Commission (NSW) review in 1995, the Standing Committee on Religious Education in Government Schools was dissolved and the connection between the CEC and the CCD abandoned. The CCD was removed from the revised CEC (NSW) Charter. In doing so, the CEC (NSW) and the Bishops of the NSW/ACT Province accepted a narrowing of the definition of Catholic Education to that activity that occurred in Catholic schools.

After the review, the *Conference on Religious Education State Schools (CRESS)* was to report to the NSW/ACT Bishops Conference through a Bishop appointed by that conference – Bishop Peter Ingham. This was the reporting arrangement in 2000.

### **9.4.3 National Networking**

The initiative for National networking came from two sources. The first was the recommendations of the NCEC Report published in 1972, and the second was a direct result of efforts in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, in particular the CCD, to support the use of the 'modern catechetics' approach in religious education in Catholic schools and CCD programs (Garland, 1981). In 1973, a National Catechetical Seminar was held as a prologue to the International Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne. Father Alfonse Nebreda SJ, Director of the East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila and Father Amalorpravadass, Director of the Catechetical Institute in Bangalore, India, were invited as the guest speakers for the seminar. The National Catechetical Seminar attracted 550 participants from across Australia.

A follow-up meeting of key personnel engaged in religious education of Catholic children not attending Catholic schools was held at the end of 1973. Hosted by the CCD in Melbourne, the first National CCD Convention was held from Friday 30 November to Wednesday 5 December, 1973 at Newman College, Melbourne. Father Doherty outlined the program in a report to the Sydney CCD Diocesan Council:

Report on the Current State of Pastoral Care of Government School Children; Theology underlying the Pastoral Care of Children in Government Schools; Religious Education Programme in a Pluralist Society; Communitarian Religious Education; Towards a future in Religious Education; and Changing theological perspectives in religious education. (1973, November 14)

The convention invited representation from all Dioceses across Australia. The fifty participants were involved with the CCD movement in a variety of ways: Motor Mission; Diocesan Leaders; Catholic Education Office; lay persons; priests and students - with experience in catechetics ranging from one to thirty years (Garland, 1981). The Archdiocese of Sydney was represented by Sister Geraldine McGowan RSC and Sister Vincent Nelson RSC.

A second National CCD Convention, to be hosted by the Archdiocese of Sydney, was planned for 1975. At the Diocesan Council Meeting in April 1975, Father Carol Grew (CCD Director) reported that a preliminary meeting of a steering committee would be held to discuss the planning details for the convention (Diocesan council of the CCD, 1975, April 2).



There is no evidence that these national meetings continued to take place in the late 1970s and the 1980s. With Australian education structures operating at a State or Territory level, the changes in legislation in each State in the 1970s influenced the access of the religious groups to State schools. During this period, the development of approaches in the provision of religious education for Catholic children not attending Catholic schools began to diverge. For example, in South Australia (Archdiocese of Adelaide) the decision of the Churches to withdraw from religious education in State schools resulted in the development of programs within the local parishes; in Queensland, enhanced cooperation between the Christian Churches, including the Catholic Church, produced joint denominational programs in the State schools; and in NSW, access was retained for individual religious providers, Christian and other faiths, to teach a denominational religious education program in the State schools.

In 1992, the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) sponsored a consultation and gathering in Sydney as part of the preparation of a statement intended “to raise the awareness of the Catholic Church in Australia to the apostolate of the catechists” (NCEC, 1993, p. iii). Twenty-seven of the twenty-eight Australian Catholic Dioceses were represented at the meeting convened to provide a critique of data collected by the NCEC from a nationwide consultation focused on “the education in faith” of “Catholic students who do not attend Catholic schools” (NCEC, 1993, p. iii). Patricia Brady, who represented the Archdiocese of Adelaide at the Sydney gathering, recalled the experience:

The coming together of so many people engaged in this ministry was an opportunity to set up very worthwhile networking systems. While no formal attempt was made to do this as part of the gathering outcomes, a few diocesan directors expressed their desire continue the contact made at the gathering. A few informal meetings took place within the gathering itself. These meetings and the subsequent phone contacts resulted in the first meeting of what was to become the Australian CCD Association. (2000, July 26)

In the letter inviting diocesan representatives, Father Dixon noted the purpose of the meeting “to see how we might link our various structures for mutual support and sharing the burdens. . . that we investigate some sort of professional association which does not require anyone’s permission and is open to all comers” (1992, June 12). The meeting took place in Sydney in December 1992 and was attended by Diocesan Directors/Coordinators from Brisbane (Don Siebert), Canberra and Goulburn (Jan Cooney), Sydney (Richard Dixon), Parramatta (Terrence O’Loughlin), Perth (Liz

Devine) and Adelaide (Patricia Brady). The group identified some common areas of concern which included formation and training of catechists; shared curriculum and teaching materials; new and future directions, such as, family-based catechesis and distance education; and, research for future directions and resources (Brady, 2000, July 26). During the remainder of the decade, meetings were held in Ballarat (October, 1993), Adelaide (May, 1994), Brisbane (August, 1995), Parramatta (August, 1997), Adelaide (September, 1999) and Perth (October, 2000).

At the Adelaide meeting in 1999, the Diocesan Directors / Coordinators present agreed to formalise the existing network and adopted the name *Australian CCD Association* (ACCDA). The aims of the association were:

to provide a network of support for those involved in coordinating the RE ministry in State schools throughout Australia; to share information especially about resources developed to support the ministry; to highlight examples of effective practice and to share strategies; to identify common concerns and to communicate these concerns to appropriate bodies e.g. NCEC RE committee; to raise the profile of the ministry of RE of Catholic children attending state schools; and, to contribute to our professional development needs. (Brady, 2000, July 26)

Diocesan CCD leaders from every State and Territory in Australia attended the ACCDA meeting held in Perth in October 2000. Representatives from the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) and Australian Catholic University (ACU) were also present.

In developing a national perspective for inclusion in the final report of the review of the CCD in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, Dr. Louise Welbourne (2001) conducted a survey of Diocesan leaders in the CCD across Australia. Welbourne reported seven significant themes in the data collected from diocesan leaders across Australia - recruitment and formation of catechists; parish-based programs; program structure and modes of delivery; ecumenical cooperation; diocesan and local structures; national network; and, funding (p. 50). In the concluding remarks, Welbourne (2001) observed:

the data from the current leaders of the CCD across Australia suggest that the movement has held its ground 'as the best it has been for a number of years . . . [yet] much remains to be done to enable parishes to fulfil their SRE responsibilities'. One way of doing this will be to continue to develop widespread regional and national support structures, with adequate and resourceful personnel, so that local decision making can be fulfilled in a coordinated way. (p. 59)

Welbourne (2001) identified the value of the expertise of the diocesan leaders and their resilience in the face of the many challenges presented in their work. One such challenge was the isolation faced when working in their local dioceses.

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century ACCDA was to continue to provide a forum through which CCD leaders could provide mutual professional support.

Unlike the New South Wales Catholic Education Commission (CEC), the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) retained the broader definition of Catholic Education and included the religious education of Catholic children beyond Catholic schools within the organisational charter. The NCEC retained the spirit of the original 1972 statement:

Catholic Education and Catholic schooling are not co-terminus concepts . . . those contributing to Catholic education should have an interest in and a concern for, the educational welfare of all Australian children, and for all schools serving those children . . . the quality and effectiveness of religious and moral education of all Australian children should be a special object of that interest and concern. (pp. 94 – 95)

In the Review of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, Dr. Louise Welbourne (2001) included a section in the final report entitled “National Perspective” (pp. 49 – 59). Welbourne (2002) noted that “this section of the report will comment on the issues and challenges of providing religious education for Catholic children attending government schools” (p. 49). The major themes that emerged from the data collected from Diocesan leaders across Australia were recruitment and formation of catechists; parish-based programs; program structure and mode of delivery; ecumenical cooperation; diocesan and local structures; national network; and, funding (p. 50).

## **9.5 Conclusion**

At the beginning of the 1970s, Australian Bishops had acknowledged the growing numbers of children outside the Catholic system in the document *The Renewal of Education in Faith* (1970). Here it was stated that these children were recognised as “a special and vitally important field of apostolate” (Australian Episcopal Conference, 1970, p. 171). The Bishops acknowledged that the task of providing Christian formation for these children within the local church in Australia was seen as one “as important as

maintaining or developing our Catholic school system from the seventies of last century” (Australian Episcopal Conference, 1970, p. 171). In the decades that followed, these statements, made in a time when the future of Catholic schools seemed uncertain, were not translated into sustained affirmative action by the hierarchy after Government funding had been received for Catholic schools.

In 1972, the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) recommended that the religious development of children enrolled beyond Catholic schools should be considered an integral part of the Church’s educational role. In order to achieve this goal, the Commission (1972, August) concluded that:

An adequate part of the human and material resources available to the Church should be devoted to this task, both at the local and central levels. Bodies set up for discussion and determination of educational policy in the Church from the parish to the national level should be concerned with the needs of all Catholic children, and should include membership of persons devoted to work with those Catholic children whose education substantially takes place beyond Catholic schools. (The National Catholic Education Commission, 1972, August, p. 97)

In the three decades that followed, the resources made available for the task of the religious development of children enrolled beyond Catholic schools was inadequate. This resulted in the local and central activity of the CCD movement being devoted to the maintenance of structures and practices developed in the 1960s.

The NCEC vision (1972) of an inclusive definition of Catholic education remained in its charter but by the 1990s was not evident in the structures that had developed. In fact, the NSW Catholic Education Commission had removed religious education of Catholic children attending State schools from its charter by the mid 1990s. The development of networks amongst the leaders of the CCD movement in the 1980s and 1990s was a feature of this period. These networks provided significant support for the Diocesan CCD leaders many of whom were individuals charged with the support of the work of the CCD in vast rural dioceses.

During these three decades, the CCD movement in New South Wales was sustained by its local leadership. These leaders, in both metropolitan and rural dioceses, held the strong conviction of the significance of the provision of religious education for Catholic children and recognised the need to support the many thousands of lay volunteers who also held the same conviction.

## **Chapter 10**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **10.1 Introduction**

The focus of this thesis has been a response to the research question - What is the history of the provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools in New South Wales from 1880 to 2000? Of primary importance for the researcher has been the necessity to provide a coherent documented account of that history to address an identified deficiency in the historical record of Catholic education, specifically religious education in New South Wales. As a result of this research, five distinct periods were identified and used as the scaffold for the presentation of the chronological account of the history of the CCD movement in NSW. Within in these periods some significant characteristics of the practice were identified and described.

The concluding chapter of the thesis will provide an overview of the five distinct historical periods in the history of the CCD movement in NSW. From the foundation of this historical account the remaining section of this chapter will focus on - the identification and description of the common characteristics of the CCD movement in each historical period; the presentation of significant issues that have emerged that may impact on the future of the CCD movement with some associated supporting recommendations; the proposal of a possible model for the future interpretation of the CCD movement within the pastoral activity of the Catholic Church; and, finally, some recommendations for future research are suggested.

#### **10.2 Five Distinct Periods in the History of the CCD Movement**

The first period, 1866 – 1905, was a period when Colonial governments including New South Wales, introduced free and compulsory schooling and withdrew previous funding arrangements for Church-run schools. The political and legal decision was opposed by

all Churches, but none more strongly than the Roman Catholic Church. The ecclesial and political decision of the Catholic Bishops to maintain existing Catholic schools and establish new schools as a priority had far-reaching effects. Ecclesial prohibitions on Catholic parents who sent their children to State schools were to impact on the attitude and actions of clergy and laity well beyond 1955 when they were officially withdrawn. The myth that the Catholic laity, or in fact the clergy, were united behind the Bishops in these decision is challenged by the evidence of the numbers of Catholic children who were attending State schools in this period and the work of some clergy and laity in providing religious education in Sunday schools, after school hours and even during school hours taking advantage of the provision for Special Religious Instruction in the Public Instruction Act 1880.

The second period, 1905 – 1955, during which the number of Catholic children not attending Catholic schools gradually increased, was one in which two parallel threads of influence developed. The first, identified as an influence “from above”, was the call for catechetical renewal by Pope Pius X in *Acerbo Nimis* (1905) and subsequent exhortations from Rome to respond to that call. These include the 1917 Code of Canon Law, the establishment of a Catechetical Office in Rome (1923) and the decree on Catechetical Instruction, *Provido Sane Consilio* (On Better Care and Promotion Catechetical Teaching) (Pius XI, 1935, January). The second thread, identified as an influence “from below”, was the evidence of the involvement of the clergy and the laity in a variety of activities focused on the provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools. For Catholic children in isolated rural areas, a comprehensive program of religious education by correspondence was developed. During this period, groups working in metropolitan areas and in large country towns, such as the Theresians and the Legion of Mary, developed a well-organised and coordinated response, for both ‘out of school hours’ and ‘within school hours’ religious education. The correspondence lessons developed for Catholic children in isolated rural areas were adapted to provide the lessons for children in these contexts. Training programs and detailed lesson plans were developed for the “catechists” who were mainly lay women volunteers. In the 1930s, in response to both these influences, the Catholic hierarchy officially lifted the ban on the laity teaching in State schools whilst maintaining the prohibitions on the clergy doing so and parents from sending their children to those schools. In 1938, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was officially established in the Archdiocese of Sydney. During this

period, the development of Archdiocesan coordination of the activities related to the provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools was evident.

The post World War II period was a time of rapid social change within Australia. Population growth through increased birth rates and migration placed pressure on many institutions including schools. In many instances the Catholic schools were unable to cope with the numbers of Catholic children. At the beginning of the third period identified in this thesis, 1955 -1965, due to social pressures and political realities related to funding of Catholic schools, the Australia Catholic hierarchy lifted all prohibitions related to Catholic children attending State schools. In 1955, the Archbishop of Sydney called for the CCD to be established in every parish. The response from the clergy was poor, and by 1959, a Diocesan CCD office had been established to coordinate activities ranging from in school hours religious education in State school to out of school hours Parish CCD activities such as extra lessons, sacramental programs and retreats and camps. This was a period of rapid growth in the CCD activities in the metropolitan area supported by the enthusiastic involvement of religious sisters and brothers (motor missionaries) and volunteer lay catechists. A curriculum for State school Catholic religious education was formally developed using the material from correspondence courses as its foundation. Training programs were developed for the hundreds of lay catechists who volunteered to teach the Catholic children attending State schools. In the rural dioceses of NSW, religious sisters (motor missionaries) travelled hundreds of miles each week to teach Catholic children attending the State schools. In many cases, their work was supported by local lay catechists. During this period, the CCD Diocesan operations received the necessary resources to develop the support structures to encourage the establishment of the CCD in each local parish.

From 1966 – 1971, the resourcing of the local and diocesan operations continued at a level that allowed for consolidation and growth of CCD activities. Curriculum revision saw the CCD material aligned with the material being used in Catholic schools. The influence of the documents of the Second Vatican Council was evident in the catechist training courses and the consultative practices adopted. During this period, consultation with the clergy was formalised by a series of regular meetings and a Diocesan CCD

Council was established to advise and direct the full-time Diocesan Secretariat. Parish-based activities were promoted.

For a period of approximately thirteen years, from 1959 to 1971, the CCD movement in NSW experienced a level of human and financial resourcing that allowed for the development of curriculum materials, training programs, resource centres and local and regional support structures. It was a period in which it was thought that many Catholic schools would need to close due to the apparent failure of the Church to obtain Government funding. There was insufficient funding to open new primary and secondary schools for the rapidly growing areas on the outskirts of the metropolitan areas. It had become essential to address the needs of the rapidly growing numbers of Catholic children who were not attending Catholic schools and to prepare for the time when this would be a major priority in the Church's work.

By 1972, Catholic schools had secured the necessary Government funding to ensure not only their continued operation, but also expansion. In the final period covered by this thesis, 1972 – 2000, the resources made available for the task of the religious development of Catholic children not in Catholic schools was not provided at a level that could sustain the growth and responsiveness of the previous thirteen years. The local and central activity of the CCD movement was devoted to maintenance of structures and practices developed in the 1960s. Limited resourcing, both human and financial, had meant that the capacity of the leadership of the CCD movement, at all levels, to respond adequately to the changing nature of the task and the challenges inherent in those changes was severely restricted. By the end of the 1990s in New South Wales, the task of attending to the religious development of Catholic children not in Catholic schools had contracted to the teaching of Special Religious Education (SRE) in the State school classroom under the provisions of the 1990 Education Act.

### **10.3 Characteristics of the CCD Movement**

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the principal concern of the CCD came to be the religious education of Catholic children not in Catholic schools. The title, the CCD movement, was used to describe this activity regardless of the name used to describe it in each local context and the variety of forms in which it is practiced. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>



century, the CCD movement still exhibits some of the key foundational features of the CCD established 450 years ago.

### **10.3.1 Parish-based Volunteers: the Catechists**

The religious educators, described traditionally as catechists, who, for the most part, are unpaid volunteers, are members of a parish community. The catechist is the enduring and essential feature of the practice. The involvement of the laity, significantly women, in this pastoral activity of the parish over a period of more than 100 years is perhaps the notable feature of the history of the CCD movement. Siebert (1984) described these catechists as the “salt of the earth”. Their motivation has been a deep personal faith and they have been prepared to work enthusiastically under conditions that a formally trained teacher would find difficult to endure. The catechist working beyond the parish precinct teaching in a State school or visiting the homes of Catholic children not in Catholic schools was often the only immediate Church presence for the children they meet. In USA, Reichert (1992) has identified the dedication, adaptability and creativity demonstrated by catechists since Vatican II as reason for the continuing success of the CCD movement, in a variety of different forms. In Australia, these same characteristics of the catechist account for the survival of the CCD.

### **10.3.2 Adult Education and Faith Formation Programs**

Another significant feature of the CCD movement was the provision of programs of adult education and faith formation to equip the catechist for the task of religious education. The majority of catechists had no formal teaching training and their religious formation, except for the occasional homily, had ceased when they had completed their own schooling (if they had attended a Catholic school). Programs for the training and formation of lay volunteers were conducted by the Theresians, the Legion of Mary and the Catechist’s Guild over the four decades from the 1920s to 1960s. The training programs developed by the Sydney Archdiocesan CCD in the 1960s formalised previous training activities into a three-tiered course structure that has endured for another forty years. To date the effectiveness of these programs has not been formally evaluated. There has been a correlation observed, anecdotally, between the satisfaction and longevity of service and the catechist’s participation in training and formation activities. There is also appears to be a relationship between the formal training of catechists and

their subsequent engagement in other Parish based ministry, such as, Sacramental programs. In the past decade, a number of NSW dioceses have introduced a compulsory basic training program for all volunteer catechists.

### **10.3.3 Developing a Curriculum**

A teaching program consisting of a series of lessons adapted from the *Religion by Letter* scheme was available for catechists in the mid 1930s. By 1943, a book of suggested lessons plans entitled “Teaching the Faith” was published by the Archdiocese of Sydney under the direction of Father T. J. Pierse, Inspector of Schools. When the CCD was re-established in the Archdiocese at the end of the 1950s, the first priority of the CCD secretariat was the development of a series of lessons for the catechists to use when teaching in State schools. Training programs for catechists were structured to provide support to these teaching programs. With the publication of the *My Way to God* series and *Catholic Catechism 1 and 2* by the Australian hierarchy, the CCD conducted a complete revision of its teaching material to align with these programs. By the 1970s, the Catechism and the Kerygmatic approaches had given way to Life Experience catechesis. The CCD Diocesan office, this time with significantly limited resources, undertook a complete revision of the teaching program. This process took over eight years to complete. The *Joy for Living* series was the result. In the 1990s, a program for teaching Catholic students in Secondary schools, *Signs of the Times*, was published. By 2000, ten of the eleven NSW dioceses were using the *Joy for Living* program for Kindergarten to Year 6.

In the past decade there has been a move to adopt the outcomes based Religious Education curriculum material used in Catholic Schools for use in the CCD context. To date there has been no evaluation of these curriculum changes.

### **10.3.4 The Parish**

The Parish has been the location of CCD activity from the time of the Counter-Reformation. The provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools had been conducted in the parish precinct, for example, Sunday schools, and by parish representatives in external locations such as the local State schools. Dixon (1988) observed that “the group of catechists remains a vital sector of the parish’s life and mission” (p. 12). The operation of the CCD within a parish has struggled with the reality

that, in Australia, the Catholic school, and not the broader parish community, had become the focus of pastoral activity as a result of the declarations from the 1885 Plenary Council. This was perhaps why it was so difficult to re-establish the CCD in the mid 1950s, relying on the initiative of the Parish Priest. It may also be why many catechists experience, within their parish, a form of “ecclesiological schizophrenia” (Reichert, 1992, p. 166). Essentially, catechists within their parishes have been striving for many years to do alone what is the task of the entire faith community. Within their parish, catechists are “on mission” whilst many others in the parish are “in maintenance” mode (Kennedy, 2001).

## **10.4 Considering the Future: Some Issues and Recommendations**

There are several issues that have emerged from the historical account in this thesis that may have a significant impact on the future of the CCD movement in NSW.

### **10.4.1 More than just SRE in State Schools**

The first issue is the threat that has emerged from the ‘drift’ in the final three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to identifying the CCD operation only with the provision of Special Religious Education (SRE) in State schools. In effect this means that the ability of parishes to continue this work will be determined by decision makers external to the Catholic Church. In the past decade, considerable time and energy has been invested by CCD Diocesan leaders in the political task of maintaining the provision of the Education Act 1990 related to the provision of SRE. There is little evidence of initiatives to develop the capacity of parishes to provide alternatives for providing religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools. A recent report table at the CEC/CCRESS Forum (2007, June) indicated the largest growing sector for Catholic families is the ‘Other Non-Government Schools’. Historically a small minority of Catholic children have attended these schools. Parish based religious education through Sunday Schools and Sacramental programs would have been available for them. The rapid growth in this group adds further importance reclaiming to the central place of the Parish in the provision of religious education for all Catholic children.

## **Recommendations**

The Sacramental program is a common feature in every parish. A recommendation would be to include the coordination of sacramental programs and other programs such as Children's Liturgy of the Word and Youth ministry groups for school aged children into a broader parish-based catechetical program. Special Religious Education (SRE) in State schools would be a 'feeder' for these programs as would religious education in Catholic schools.

Within the ecclesial province of NSW and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), some parishes in the ACT conduct Parish Schools of Religion after school and on weekends. It is recommended that the model of the Parish School of Religion be considered as a viable alternative to the provision of Catholic SRE in State schools.

Another complementary approach would be the use of internet technologies as a vehicle to provide religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools. As the use of correspondence lessons was ground breaking in the 1920s, as were the travelling motor missionaries in the 1940s and 1950s, the CCD movement needs to engage with these communication technologies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It would also be important to engage the local catechists in this planning for two reasons: firstly, to prepare them for a possible change in the focus of their work; and secondly, their local wisdom could provide valuable insights into what would benefit their faith community.

### **10.4.2 Finding an Appropriate Language**

A second issue lies in the confusion generated by the use of a variety of terms to describe the nature of the task performed by catechists. During this thesis the term *religious education* has been used consistently. Terms used to describe the activity include Christian Doctrine (derived from the title Confraternity of Christian Doctrine), Religious Instruction, catechesis, education in faith, education in religion, faith education, Special Religious Education, evangelisation and new evangelisation. Terms used to describe the providers include catechists, religious educators, scripture teachers, SRE teachers and technicians (Ivers, 2001). CCD leaders and catechists in recent times have believed, probably due to a focus on an "in school" model of delivery, that the same or at least

similar language should be used in the CCD context as is used in that of the Catholic school. This has caused considerable confusion of purpose.

### **Recommendations**

At the heart of the CCD activity is the freedom of choice of the parents and the children to participate in the programs offered whether this is in the State school or the local Parish. From this research and the characteristic practices identified within and between key historical periods, it can be concluded that the CCD movement is in essence *a pastoral activity with an educational component*, whereas the Catholic school is predominantly an educational activity with a pastoral component. It is therefore appropriate to use terms such as pre-evangelisation, evangelisation, catechesis and education in faith to describe the CCD activities. It is recommended that an alternative model from that of Catholic schooling be explored for the interpretation of the CCD movement within the Catholic Church.

#### **10.4.3 Developing a Reflective Practice**

A third issue lies in the lack of reflective practice in the CCD operation from the local parish to the Diocesan office. This was evident in each historical period.

### **Recommendations**

As a pastoral activity, the work of those involved is a ministry in the Church. It is here that the use of a model of theological reflection may enrich the understanding of all those engaged in the CCD movement. The invitation for them to think theologically calls them to relate to their religious heritage in a new way. Through this reflection “the tradition is understood as the collective wisdom of the past and the present community” (Whitehead & Whitehead, 1995, p. 104). Engaging in theological reflection shows people that:

tradition is dynamic and growing . . . They recognise that they are carriers and shapers of the tradition, just as it has carried and formed them. . . They grasp – cognitively and affectively – that to be faithful means adapting traditions to new settings. (Whitehead & Whitehead, 1995, p. 104)

The historical account provided in this thesis would offer a foundation for such a reflection on the unique tradition of the CCD movement.

#### **10.4.4 Leadership**

A final issue identified is related to the previous issues discussed. It is the question of need for appropriate leadership in the CCD in which the activities are pastoral in essence, not educational.

Welbourne (2001) observed that CCD Diocesan leaders in 2000 expressed optimism in that the CCD movement had held its ground in the face of significant recurring challenges. They echoed the words of Father Richard Dixon (CCD Director) in 1988:

The present situation is the best it has been for a number of years. Gone is much of the uncertainty of the 1970s about the future of the whole enterprise [CCD] which was produced in part by the finding of various committees of enquiry and the implementation of their findings in varied ways in different states. Yet much remain to be done to enable Parishes to fulfil their SRE responsibilities. (Dixon as cited in Welbourne, 2001, p. 59)

This thesis challenges the validity of the assessment made by Diocesan leaders and questions the narrowness of their focus.

Welbourne (2001) suggested that one way of enabling parishes to fulfil their SRE responsibilities is “to continue to develop widespread regional and national support structures, with adequate and resourceful personnel, so that local decision making may be fulfilled in a coordinated way” (p. 59). Welbourne observed:

The expertise of diocesan coordinators is the best resource the church has to take the movement forward. . . The diocesan coordinators show a remarkable spirit of hope in spite of difficulties they experience . . . the current leaders of CCD in Australia will continue to bring vision to their task and effectively pursue the goals of religious education for Catholic children attending government schools. (p. 59)

By the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, only one of the original eleven New South Wales diocesan leaders was still active in that role. A trend to replace these leaders with lay leaders whose experience has been gained from within the Catholic school system presents a significant challenge for the future of the CCD movement. The experience of these leaders is not appropriately aligned with the pastoral activity at the foundation of the CCD movement.

Leadership at the parish level is a key factor in the successful operation of the CCD or, in fact, any other parish-based ministry. Parish-based CCD coordinators are often volunteers themselves who take on a role of coordination with no formal qualification.

## **Recommendations**

CCD leadership is a pastoral ministry, not an educational activity. There is a need for support from tertiary institutions such as Australian Catholic University and encouragement from Episcopal leaders to provide practical ministry formation programs for CCD Diocesan and parish leaders and other potential leaders in parish-based ministries.

## **10.5 Catholic Practical Theology: An Interpretive Framework**

As stated previously, from this research and the characteristic practices identified within and between key historical periods, it can be concluded that CCD movement is, in essence, a pastoral activity with an educational component. An interpretive framework is proposed to assist in further exploration the issues and recommendations discussed. The framework will provide an integrated and useful instrument that will assist in the organisation of information and diverse perspectives and the development of a deeper understanding of the CCD movement. The proposed interpretive framework is drawn from the paradigm of Catholic Practical Theology.

The specialisation in a specific ministry area, such as the CCD, is a feature of Catholic Practical Theology. It brings “the Catholic Tradition, as a primary conversation partner, into dialogue with specific situations” (Webb, 2006, p. 107). In the case of this research, this specific situation is the provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools. The focus of Practical theology is critically to *complexify* and explore situations (Swinton & Mowat, 2006). The historical account provided in this thesis is the first step in the process of the *complexification* of the CCD movement. This process is to take something which initially “appears normal and uncomplicated and through a process of critical reflection as various levels, reveal that it is in fact complex and polyvalent” (Swinton & Mowat, 2006, p. 13). Within the framework of practical theology, theological reflection on the specific action or area of ministry may result in “an articulation of a new understanding of the practice; and recommendations for its transformation” (O'Brien, 1999, p. 316).

The Catholic practical theologian G. D. J. Dingemans, whose specific focus was catechetics, described practical theology as “an independent branch of theology that studied the praxis of faith and faith communities” (cited in Heitink, 1993, p. 121). For

Dingemans, the discipline of practical theology has both a descriptive and normative character with the improvement of action as its main goal. Figure 10.1 represents diagrammatically the relationship between these three elements. The three hermeneutical circles target the past (Christian tradition as normative), the present (analysis of the current context) and the future (improvement of praxis through agogics – the professional management of intentional change).

Heitink (1993) defines praxis as:

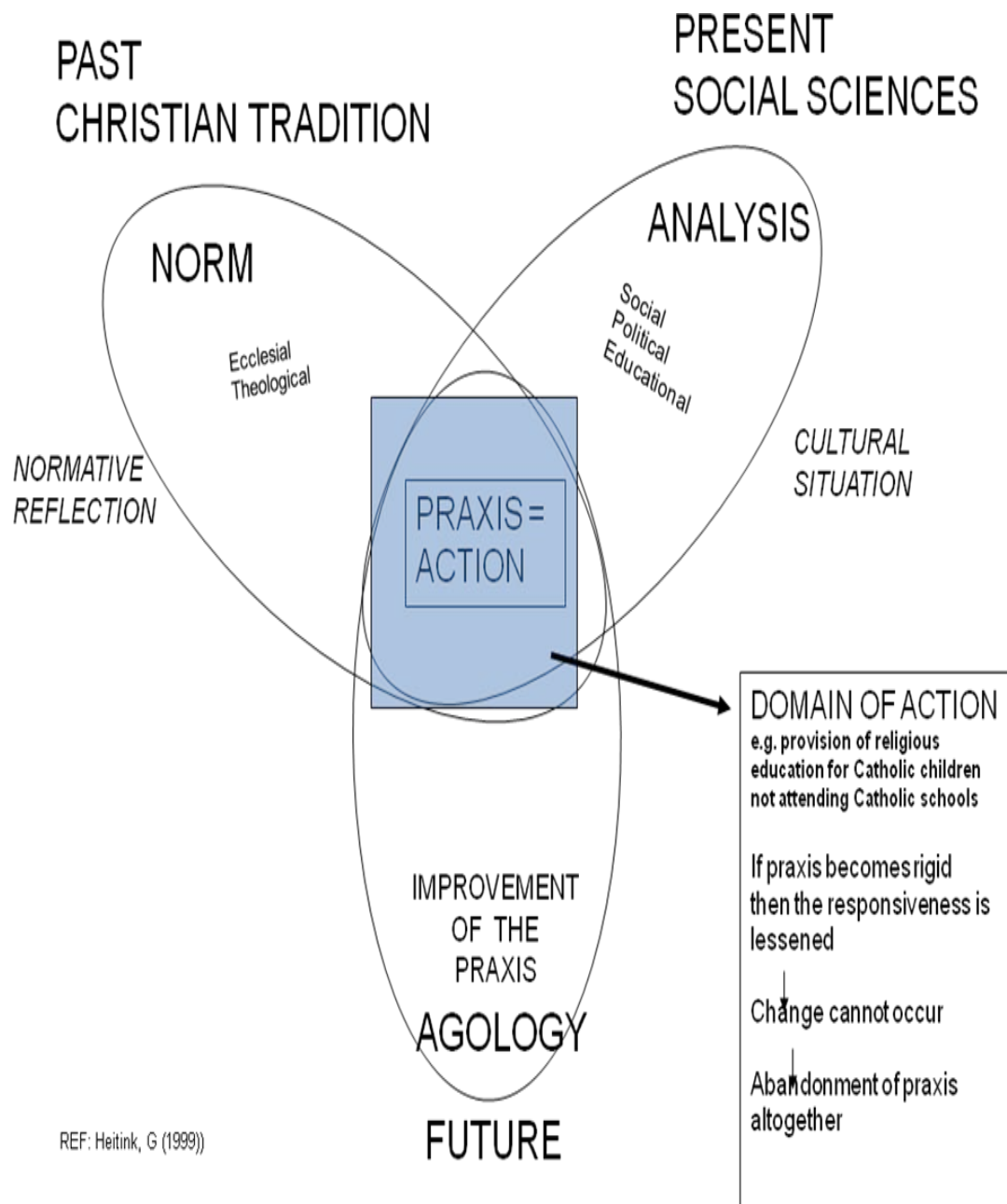
the actions of individuals or groups in society, within and outside the church, who are willing to be inspired in their private and public lives by Christian tradition and who want to focus on the salvation of humankind and the world. (p. 151)

From this research, the provision of religious education for Catholic children not in Catholic schools conforms to this definition of ‘praxis’. The research also indicates that during the past four decades this ‘praxis’ has become rigid and less responsive. The inherent risk being that this ‘praxis’ may be abandoned.



Figure 10.1

*Catholic Practical Theology: an interpretive framework for CCD practice*



Adapted from: Dingemans (1990) cited in Heitink, G. (1993). *Practical theology; history, theory, action domains* (R. Bruinsma, Trans. English Ed.). Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans. p. 122

## **10.6 Recommendations for Further Research**

The four features of the CCD movement identified as common to all historical periods (10.3) could form the foundation for future research projects: Parish based Volunteers; Adult Education and Formation programs; the Curriculum; and, the Parish.

The strong connection between the Parish and the CCD movement has been a significant theme throughout his research. There scope for research into the nature of Parish in the Australian context. Such research could explore the features of Parish Practice developing an operational definition for an 'Excellent Parish'.

The issues identified (10.4) and the exploration of the recommendations would be another area for research which would specifically inform the understanding of current "praxis".

## **10.7 Concluding Comments**

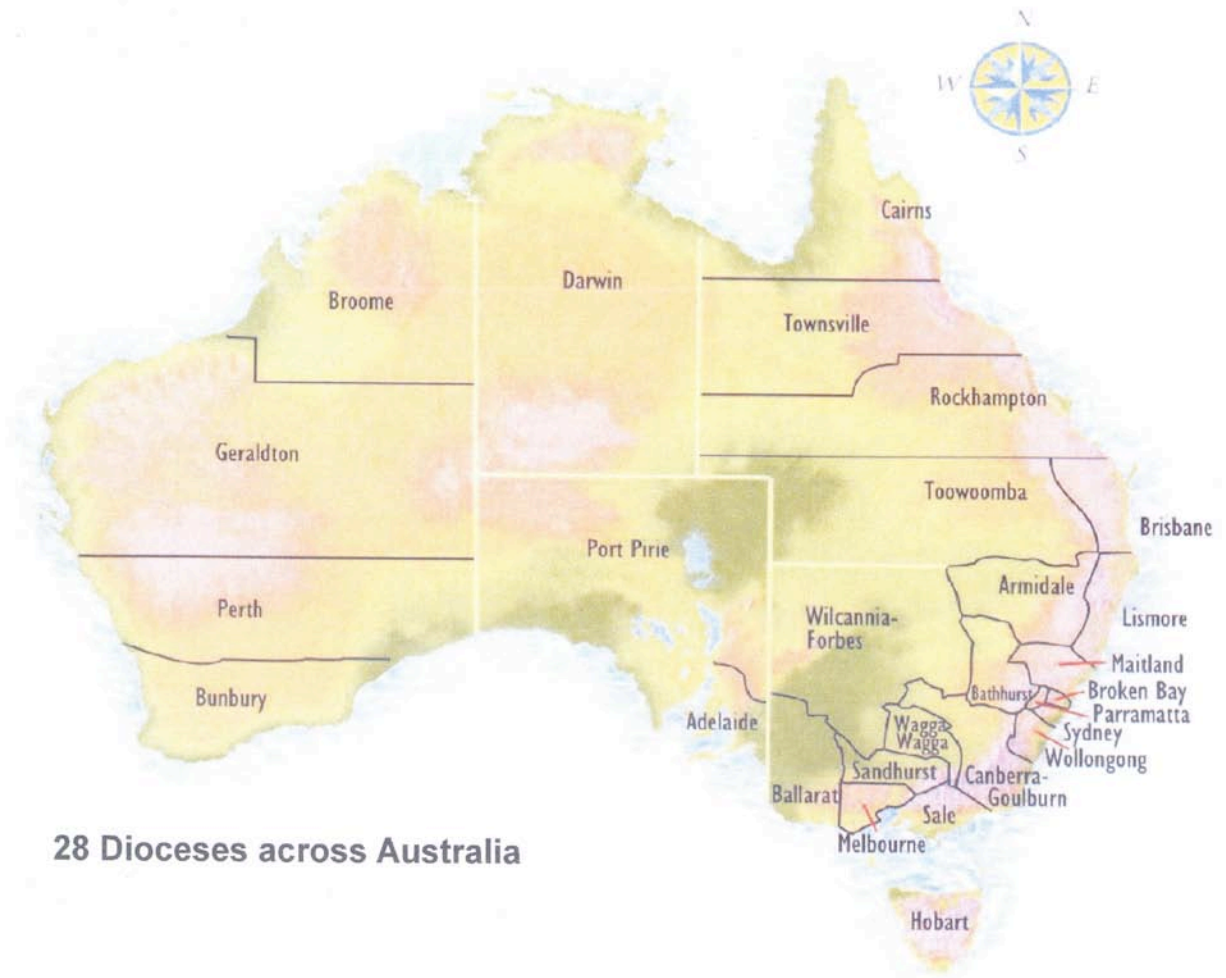
A recent National Catholic Education Commission report (2006) provided an overview and discussion on The Parish-based ministry of education in faith of Catholic children and young people, with a focus on those outside Catholic schools. In 2001, 48.1% of Catholic school age children were not attending Catholic schools (See Appendix D for more detail).

The concluding statement of the report, *Vision for the future*, called for an integrated approach to a number of parish-based ministry areas – "renewal of the ministry to Catholic children outside Catholic schools will flow from a renewal of parish life" (NCEC RE Committee, 2006, p. 13).

This thesis has described a ministry that has demonstrated remarkable resilience over a period of more than 120 years. The foundations of parish renewal are already present in the pastoral practices of the CCD movement.

## APPENDIX A

### Map: Catholic Dioceses in Australia



## APPENDIX B

### Ethics – Letter to Participants



**AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY**  
**School of Religious Education**

#### INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

28 August 2006

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** The CCD Movement: A study of the provision of religious education for Catholic children beyond Catholic schools in New South Wales

**PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR:** Dr Graham English

**STUDENT RESEARCHER:** Mrs. Ann Maree Whenman

**NAME OF PROGRAMME IN WHICH ENROLLED:** Doctor of Philosophy

Dear *(Name of Participant)*

Thank you for your interest in this research project.

The purpose of this research is to document the history of the provision of religious education for Catholic children outside Catholic Schools within the Catholic Church in Australia. The specific focus will be a study of the history in the state of New South Wales. The creation and analysis of an historical record of the practice of religious education of Catholic children not attending Catholic schools in NSW will result in the identification of a theoretical framework to define the CCD movement in the Catholic Church in Australia. A framework that will explain the unique situation of the CCD's operation and set its undertakings within the pastoral mission of the church.

**As a participant in the research project you are invited to attend an individual interview with the student researcher, Ann Maree Whenman. An appointment will be made for this interview at a time and location convenient to you. The interview will be approximately 1 hour in duration. Subject to your consent - the interview will be recorded on audiotape.**

The findings of this research, including the data collected from the proposed interview, will be published in the thesis to be submitted for the award Doctor of Philosophy. The data may also be communicated in other publications, seminars and teaching.

Participants are free to refuse consent or withdraw consent at any time during their involvement in the research project without prejudice.

Your invitation for participation in the above research project has been determined from other research data, already collected, through archival documents, where it has become evident that you have played a significant role in the recent history of the CCD movement.

.../2

The historical focus of this project would mean, under normal circumstances, that you would be named in any publications. If you wish to maintain some degree of confidentiality please indicate this on the consent form attached to this letter. The researcher will take as much precaution as possible to honour your expressed wishes, but due to a small sample size of potential interview participants in this research project, such confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

*Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the Principal Supervisor:*

*Dr Graham English, Senior Lecturer,  
on telephone number 029 701 4310  
in the School of Religious Education, ACU,  
Mt St Mary Campus, 25a Barker Road, Strathfield, NSW 2135; or,  
Student Researcher,  
Mrs. Ann Maree Whenman, on telephone number 02 9481 9195,  
at the CCD Offices, PO Box 340, Pennant Hills, NSW 1715*

Feedback of the results and their subsequent reporting can be made available to you on request.

*This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.*

*In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Investigator or Supervisor and Student Researcher has (have) not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Unit.*

NSW/ACT: Chair, HREC  
C/o Research Services  
Australian Catholic University  
Sydney Campus  
Locked Bag 2002  
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135  
Tel: 02 9701 4093  
Fax: 02 9701 4350

*Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.*

If you agree to participate in this project, you should sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and present the other copy to Student Researcher at the time of interview.

Thank you, in anticipation, for your involvement in this research project.

Mrs. Ann Maree Whenman  
Student Researcher

Dr Graham English  
Principal Supervisor



**AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY**  
**School of Religious Education**

**CONSENT FORM**  
*COPY FOR PARTICIPANT*

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** The CCD Movement: A study of the provision of religious education for Catholic children beyond Catholic schools in New South Wales

**PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR:** Dr Graham English

**STUDENT RESEARCHER:** Mrs Ann Maree Whenman

I ..... (*the participant*) have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this audiotaped interview, realising that I can withdraw at any time.

I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers with the following provision (please tick box to indicate your choice):

- ☐ Use of my full name
- ☐ Use of my first name only
- ☐ Use of a pseudonym

Unless I have agreed to be named, I understand confidentiality provided by me will be maintained as far as possible but cannot be guaranteed.

**NAME OF PARTICIPANT:** .....  
(block letters)

**SIGNATURE** ..... **DATE** .....

**SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR:**.....

**DATE:**.....

**SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER:** .....

**DATE:**.....



**AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY**  
**School of Religious Education**

CONSENT FORM  
COPY FOR RESEARCHER

TITLE OF PROJECT: The CCD Movement: A study of the provision of religious education for Catholic children beyond Catholic schools in New South Wales

PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Dr Graham English

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Mrs Ann Maree Whenman

I ..... (*the participant*) have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this audiotaped interview, realising that I can withdraw at any time.

I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers with the following provision (please tick box to indicate your choice):

- ☐ Use of my full name
- ☐ Use of my first name only
- ☐ Use of a pseudonym

Unless I have agreed to be named, I understand confidentiality provided by me will be maintained as far as possible but cannot be guaranteed.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: .....  
(block letters)

SIGNATURE ..... DATE .....

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR:.....

DATE:.....

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: .....

DATE:.....

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Sections 30, 32 – Education Reform Act (NSW) 1990**

#### **Education Reform Act 1990**

#### **SECULAR INSTRUCTION**

30. In government schools, the education is to consist of strictly non-sectarian and secular instruction. The words ‘secular instruction’ are to be taken to include general religious education as distinct from dogmatic or polemic theology.

#### **SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

32. (1) In every government school, time is to be allowed for the religious education of children of any religious persuasion, but the total number of hours so allowed in a year is not to exceed, for each child, the number of school weeks in the year.
- (2) The religious education to be given to children of any religious persuasion is to be given by a member of the clergy or other religious teacher of that persuasion authorised by the religious body to which the member of the clergy or other religious teacher belongs.
- (3) The religious education to be given is in every case to be the religious education authorised by the religious body to which the member of the clergy or other religious teacher belongs.
- (4) The times at which religious education is to be given to children of a particular religious persuasion are to be fixed by agreement between the principal of the school and the local member of the clergy or other religious teacher of that persuasion.
- (5) Children attending a religious education class are to be separated from other children at the school while the class is held.
- (6) If the relevant member of the clergy or religious teacher fails to attend the school at the appointed time, the children are to be appropriately cared for at the school during the period set aside for religious education.

#### **OBJECTION TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

33. No child at a government school is to be required to receive any general religious education or special religious education if the parent of the child objects to the child’s receiving that education.



## APPENDIX D

### National Catholic Education Commission Statistics 2001

Diocese	2001 Catholics in Govt. Schools	2001 Catholics in Catholic Schools	2001 Catholics in ONG schools	2001 Catholics Students Total	2001 % Ca Not in Cat School
Adelaide	18,833	25,164	2,864	46,861	
Armidale	5,064	3,780	326	9,170	
Ballarat	9,348	10,407	612	20,367	
Bathurst	6,615	6,862	350	13,827	
Brisbane	49,019	46,639	7,808	103,466	
Broken Bay	17,104	17,649	2,980	37,733	
Broome	970	864	32	1,866	
Bunbury	5,068	4,350	227	9,645	
Cairns	5,492	4,754	311	10,557	
Canberra / Goulburn	13,178	16,567	968	30,713	
Darwin	4,745	2,799	466	8,010	
Geraldton	2,486	1,885	74	4,445	
Hobart	7,499	7,816	753	16,068	
Lismore	10,269	10,295	498	21,062	
Maitland-Newcastle	14,120	13,413	749	28,282	
Melbourne	61,932	99,377	10,278	171,587	
Parramatta	23,752	34,720	2,303	60,775	
Perth	26,083	34,875	3,017	63,975	
Port Pirie	2,827	2,575	53	5,455	
Rockhampton	10,241	7,613	512	18,366	
Sale	8,880	11,255	989	21,124	
Sandhurst	8,001	9,226	355	17,582	
Sydney	32,142	54,729	4,613	91,484	
Toowoomba	5,696	5,273	523	11,492	
Townsville	7,461	5,450	550	13,461	
Wagga Wagga	6,129	6,454	303	12,886	
Wilcannia-Forbes	4,263	2,563	57	6,883	
Wollongong	18,671	16,221	1,078	35,970	
<b>All Diocese</b>	<b>385,755</b>	<b>463,527</b>	<b>43,598</b>	<b>892,880</b>	

From: NCEC RE Committee (2006). *The Parish-based ministry of education in faith of Catholic children and young people, with a focus on those outside Catholic schools*. Braddon, ACT: NCEC. p. 14.

## APPENDIX E

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