

Catholic Education Globally:
Challenges and Opportunities 2

Sean Whittle
Quentin Wodon *Editors*

Leadership Matters in Catholic Education

Part 1: Foundations and Case Studies
for the United Kingdom



 Springer

Catholic Education Globally: Challenges and Opportunities

Volume 2

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Sean Whittle · Quentin Wodon
Editors

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Foreword—Leadership and Comparative Studies in Education: Finding New Directions for Thinking, Research, and Enquiry in a Global Framework

Multiple authors, including myself, have called over the years for expanding international and comparative studies in Catholic Education. This includes the editors of this two-volume book as well as Anthony D’Agostino and Paolo Carozza in an article published in *International Studies in Catholic Education* (see ISCE, vol. 11, 2, October 2019). Among issues to be included, they called for ‘examining how Catholic schools can remain focused on their Catholic mission, while also being radically hospitable to non-Catholics and also conducting international comparative analysis and generating illustrative Case Studies that explore additional questions of interest’. They also argued that more focus was needed on the schools of the Global South and that comparative studies could be a source of learning for both Catholic and Non-Catholic educational systems (p. 149).¹ In many ways, the Global Catholic Education project as well as the annual Global Catholic Education Reports published since 2020 by one of the editors of this two-set volume has been a response to insufficient research on Catholic education in the Global South.

In these two present volumes, Sean Whittle of St. Mary’s University in Twickenham (London’s Catholic University) and Quentin Wodon, currently with the UNESCO Institute for Capacity Building in Africa, continue to take up these challenges. All serious students of the Global Education Mission today, as well as educators from other faiths (or none) and those serving in state-provided education, should welcome this development, as many of the issues that affect Catholic educators are also on the mind of other educators.

Both Sean Whittle and Quentin Wodon are known to be prolific writers of and contributors to the contemporary literature on Educational Leadership and Comparative Studies. Whittle’s publications recently, arising from the many conferences which he has convened in the period 2016 to 2022, have included Case Studies with titles such as *Vatican II and New thinking About Catholic Education* (Ed. 2016); *Researching Catholic Education* (Ed. 2018); *New Thinking, New Scholarship and*

¹ These writers also called for ‘a more outward orientation in Catholic Education and a stronger grounding in the social sciences’, i.e. they were critical of the inward orientation of the field and the narrowness of existing research.

New Research in Catholic Education (2022).² Wodon's publications include a wide range of articles and book chapters on the topic, including in the leading journals in the field such as *International Studies in Catholic Education* and *Journal of Catholic Education* and other journals devoted to faith and international affairs.

The fact that these two writers have agreed to work together to share their evidence and insight on a central issue which needs deeper analysis using case studies is very encouraging. The issue is that of Educational Leadership, how it is to be interpreted and practised and how it should change in present global conditions. For Comparative Studies, what can be learned from international benchmarking approaches such as those used by the World Bank and by the OECD? There is a need for 'big data' and for drawing on a range of social and economic sciences to go beyond the limitations of the current literature produced by Schools of Education alone. The Whittle-Wodon volumes propose an integrated framework whereby the insights of educators are in dialogue with large-scale evidence produced by comparative researchers across the world. In these ways, the challenges mentioned by D'Agostino and Carozza (2019)³ are being answered.

A change of methodology pioneered by Whittle in Volume 1 has enriched and expanded the numbers of teachers and school leaders involved in publishing articles about the different cultures of leadership in our schools. His strategy has been to convene a series of conferences for teachers and school leaders which has encouraged first-time members to present written papers. Priority has been given to practising teachers and leaders to say what forms of leadership (with an emphasis on virtues and values) actually work for them in changed cultural conditions in contemporary schools.⁴ The best of these papers were selected by Whittle and others and published in edited forms by various agencies, including Routledge (London), Springer (Singapore), Peter Lang (Switzerland) and Veritas (Dublin).⁵ From the classrooms of today we hear the voices of Sean Whittle, Richard Wilkin, Imogen Senior, Caroline Thomas, Louise McGowan, Sr. Kate Punnachet SPC and Simon Uttley. From these accounts we learn that:

² Whittle was the founding member of the *Network for Researchers in Catholic Education* (NfRCE), and full details of his publications are available from NfRCE. Members of NfRCE include Stephen McKinney from the School of Education, Glasgow, Scotland, John Lydon from the CRDCE at St. Mary's University, Twickenham, London. Other members of the Steering Committee, e.g. John Sullivan from Liverpool Hope University, UK, and Drs. Cora O'Farrell and Patricia Kieran representing Ireland, have contributed to its development. The logo of NfRCE appears on the cover of the recent major publication *New Thinking, New Research and New Scholarship in Catholic Education in the Routledge Research in Education Series* (2022).

³ D'Agostino, T. J., & Carozza, P. G. (2019). Extending the research orientation and agenda for international and comparative studies in Catholic education. *International Studies in Catholic Education*, 11(2), 140–158.

⁴ Writers no longer serving in classrooms still have a role to play in discussions of the various interpretations of educational leadership, see for instance, John Lydon, *Leadership Ideas for the 21st Century: Servant and Christ-Centred Leadership* (Chap. 4).

⁵ Whittle has successfully negotiated contracts with a wide range of quality publishers which witnesses to good interest in Catholic and faith-based education after year of neglect from 'main stream publishing'.

- a. ‘Servant Leadership’ as an ideal is strongly supported by many writers, although the ground-breaking Ph.D. research of Sr. Punnachet SPC and her article in *International Studies in Catholic Education* (Vol 1, 2, October 2009) deserves more discussion than it has received so far.⁶
- b. Learning from historical charisms and from the wisdom of retired teachers and school leaders (those Louise McGowan describes as ‘the Elders’) is still a valuable professional resource for contemporary leadership.
- c. Being truly open in access to those of Other Faiths (and of none) and serving the poor and disadvantaged, i.e. ‘the preferential option for the poor’ must be taken seriously. Also making more organic links with local communities and other schools (both State-provided and faith-provided) in local partnerships is essential. Contemporary market forces in education which create a competitive ‘winner-loser’ culture in schooling must be resisted by professional solidarity and fraternity among school leaders. The values of community help and support the schools in difficulty. They must not be lost by the domination of individualistic metrics for ‘top scores in the tests’ as the only criterion that matters.
- d. Insisting on more ‘Continuing Professional Development’ (CPD) for teachers and school leaders to ensure effective and relevant learning cultures must be a priority internationally.
- e. In these ways **Volume 1** provides new directions for action, for leadership, and for global practice in today’s world.

Volume 2 which focuses on ‘learning poverty in Africa’ calls for more comparative analysis of (Catholic) schools in this continent. It is clear that studying Africa is crucial because in this region of the world population growth is increasing rapidly, with consequent demands on the provision of educational services of all types. Initial research has shown that while the provision of schools is located mainly in poor communities (which is good), there are disturbing gaps in the actual learning achievement of students. Some action must be taken to meet the needs of the ‘learning poor’ in that continent.

Quentin Wodon, when he was working for the World Bank in Washington, took up that challenge when he edited and contributed to a *Special Issue* of *International Studies in Catholic Education* in October 2021, Vo 13, 2 under the title *Catholic and Faith-Based schools in Sub-Saharan Africa*. This led to Case Based accounts with titles such as *Relationships Between Christian Schools and the State: A Comparative Analysis for Five Sub-Saharan African Countries*; *Teacher Satisfaction and Its Determinants: An Analysis Based on Data from Nigeria and Uganda*; and *Building Peace: One School at a Time: A Case Study for Catholic Schools in South Africa*.⁷

⁶ Sr. Kate is Serving Teacher and Head of the English Language Division at St. Joseph’s convent school in Bangkok, Thailand. She completed her thesis at the UCL Institute of Education in 2016.

⁷ Wodon has always argued that much more forensic and detailed analysis must be undertaken into curriculum and teacher-learning strategies in schools. Today’s world requires digital competence and confidence. This will certainly mean that more Classroom Observation Studies must be used in future.

This also generated the question of why is there so much violence in African schools (and in many schools worldwide).

This *Special Edition* pointed out that the ‘learning poor’ in Africa is a major challenge both for State-provided and for faith-provided schooling. What was needed was that these schools should learn from each other and ideally work together in partnerships to develop the necessary educational reforms to enable pupils and students to fulfil their talents. This will require major updating of resources and of curriculum and teaching strategies in the schools.⁸

In **Volume 2** of this study, Wodon has built upon this earlier work increasing Case Study accounts to provide an agenda for future research. This includes reports with titles such as ‘*Are most students in Africa learning poor?*’; ‘*School leadership and management in Africa; benchmarking tools from the World Bank*’; ‘*Benchmarking South African Schools with OECD data, Part 1*’, ‘*Teachers and Principals as life long learners*’; ‘*Benchmarking South African Schools with OECD data, Part 2, Careers and job satisfaction*’.⁹

What is proposed here, in these two volumes, is nothing less than a revolution in the conventional approaches with which we have worked in the past on Catholic Education. It is a New Vision for educational research and enquiry in future, and it is certainly a New Paradigm in which to frame our questions. I strongly recommend this two-set volume to all educators for its originality and scholarly quality, and I express the hope that versions of it may be published as Open Access as well as standard print so that vital messages might be disseminated globally.

Twickenham, London, UK

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⁸ This raises the question of how schools in poor countries in Africa will find the finance for acquiring modern resources for learning.

⁹ The representations and the roles of female head teachers need more analysis, see Imogen Senior *The Challenge of Recruiting More Female Headteachers for Catholic Schools* (Chap. 9). This may also apply to State-provided secondary of schools today in a number of cultures, where patriarchy remains dominant.

Preface

It is a real pleasure to be able to present this volume on Leadership in Catholic Education as another tangible fruit arising from the *Network for Researchers in Catholic Education* (NfRCE). Since 2016 I have been able to serve as Organising Secretary of the NfRCE and have found the annual conference to be an important highlight each year. The opportunity to share research, collaborate and engage in our common passion for Catholic Education Studies has helped to nourish and stimulate fresh thinking and new research about Catholic education.

This edited volume is an enduring legacy to the NfRCE conference held in May 2022 at St. Mary's University, Twickenham. It embodies not just high quality studies and research about leadership matters in Catholic education, but also demonstrates what has become one of the key principles of the NfRCE. This is our ability to bring established researchers into dialogue with the emerging academics and researchers cultivating the field of Catholic Education Studies. This volume is no exception, with contributions from leading academics, most notably Profs. John Lydon and Stephen McKinney, as well as host of very capable researcher including Dr. Mary Mihovilović, Prof. Roisin Coll, Dr. Caroline Thomas and Dr. David Fincham. Alongside these academics there are strong contributions from Catholic school leaders who have been able to integrate research while also being serving head teachers, these include Dr. Louise McGowan, Dr. Richard Wilkin, Dr. Simon Uttley and Raymond Friel. Standing firmly alongside all these contributors are the emerging scholars who, through their contributions in this volume, are set to make an important impact. I would like to thank all of these contributors for their dedicated work of converting their very good conference papers into very high quality chapters for this volume. They made the task of editing this volume a pleasurable and straight forward process.

I would also like to convey my thanks to Grace Liyan Ma, and the rest of the team at Springer for all the practical help and support with ensuring this volume is published.

As always my deepest thanks are reserved for my wife, Bernie Whittle. Her constant love and unwavering support have allowed me to eke out the time to bring this volume to completion. It is only through having Bernie's constant love and

support that I have been able to bring this volume and my work for the NfRCE to fruition. Thank you so much for this and for all you do for me.



**Network for
Researchers
in Catholic
Education**

Twickenham, London, UK

Sean Whittle

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About the Editors

Sean Whittle is Senior Lecturer in Catholic Education at St Mary's University, London, and Member of the *Centre for Catholic Education, Research, and Religious Literacy*. He is also Research Associate working with Professor Gerald Grace (Founding and Former Director of the *Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education*). Alongside these academic roles he works part-time as secondary school RE Teacher at Gumley House FCJ Catholic School in West London. His book, *A Theory of Catholic Education* (Bloomsbury 2014), presents a robust philosophy of Catholic education that draws fruitfully on insights from Karl Rahner. He has edited six books on Catholic Education (*Vatican II and New Thinking About Catholic Education 2016* [Routledge]; *Researching Catholic Education 2018* [Springer]; *Religious Education in Catholic schools in the UK and Ireland 2018* [Peter Lang]; *Irish and British Perspectives on Catholic Education 2021* [Springer], *New Thinking, New Scholarship and New Research in Catholic Education: Responses to the Work of Professor Gerald Grace 2021* [Routledge]). Also in 2021 he jointly edited with Dr Gareth Byrne *Catholic Education: A lifelong journey* [Veritas]. For a number of years he has been collaborating with other academics working in the field of Catholic Education Studies, serving as Secretary for the *Network for Researchers in Catholic Education* (NfRCE). He has also been engaged in a range of research projects (including Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Brunel University on a Religious Literacy project, Researching RSE in Catholic schools in Northern Ireland, and a research project of a Catholic Multi-Academy Trust in Birmingham). Sean serves as Chair of the academic association AULRE. e-mail: sean.whittle@stmarys.ac.uk

Quentin Woden works for an international development agency. Previously, he worked at the World Bank, including as Lead Economist, Lead Poverty Specialist and Manager of the unit on values and development. Before that, he taught with tenure at the University of Namur. He has also taught at Addis Ababa University, American University and Georgetown University. A business engineering graduate, after an assignment in Asia as Laureate of a Prize, he worked in brand management for Procter and Gamble. He then shifted career to join a non-profit working with the

extreme poor. This led him to pursue a career in international development. Quentin holds four PhDs, has over 700 publications and has worked on policy issues across sectors in more than 60 countries. As part of his volunteer work, he has held multiple leadership positions with non-profits. His research has been covered by leading news media globally.

Chapter 1

Leadership Matters in Catholic Education: An Introduction



Sean Whittle 

Abstract This chapter presents an overview of the whole of Part 1 of *Leadership Matters in Catholic Education*. It does this by drawing attention to the numerous ways in which Leadership Matters in Catholic Education appears to involve a more pressing set of issues when compared to other educational contexts. This introduction frames the whole volume within the theology of leadership. This theology fruitfully draws on Christology and the sorts of leadership Jesus exercised. It is explained that there are both positive and challenging dimensions to the typical ways of framing leadership in Catholic schools. One of the key questions facing researchers of Catholic education is how best to draw on the theology of leadership to make sense of and to critique Catholic school leadership matters. This introduction also includes a summary of all the chapters in this volume and a reminder of the importance of reading it as a whole.

Keywords Theology of leadership · Servant leadership · Catholic school leadership

There are numerous ways in which leadership matters in Catholic education. It is well over three decades since the ‘school effectiveness and school improvement’ research agenda put the spotlight firmly on the importance of leadership in all education settings. It was quickly realised that a school leader can have a profound impact on improving educational standards and attainment. Getting educational leadership ‘right’ has become a central priority that is no longer questioned, including by advocates of Catholic education. Finding and supporting visionary and skilled leaders for schools, universities and places of learning has become a central pre-occupation for those responsible for education. The quest for current and future education leaders has grown from a pressing anxiety to become, arguably, the biggest problem facing the education sector across contemporary society, both in the UK and in numerous other countries. For all those who have a stake in education, from the students, their

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parents, teachers, school governing bodies and the wider society to the policy makers, there is now a deeply held conviction that leadership matters profoundly in schools and universities.

This conviction, that leadership matters, is also shared by advocates of Catholic education. One of the underlying arguments for the various contributions to this volume is that this leadership issue is even more significant and complex in Catholic education settings. This is because Catholic education aspires to offer not just an alternative vision of schooling and education. It is one which is capable of standing alongside other providers. In addition, it aspires to offer something substantially different—fundamentally a richer and more enhanced way of educating children and young people. This is because of the distinctive theologies and philosophies that underpin Catholic education.

As a result of this underpinning, there is a widely held perception that additional demands and concerns are placed on the leaders of Catholic education and, because of this, there are important senses in which leadership matters even more in Catholic education settings. For example, do the leaders of Catholic schools need to be practising or church going Catholic Christians? This sort of issue brings into focus other questions about exactly what is different or distinctive about leading a Catholic school or college. In offering answers to these questions, almost inevitably the nature and purpose of Catholic education will come to the foreground.

Given the wide consensus over the past thirty years about how much leadership matters in education, increasing attention has been paid to leadership studies, in particular in relation to alternative types of leadership. Goleman's (2000) analysis of leadership 'that gets results' involves recognising and drawing on the different types of leadership. These range from coercive, affiliative and democratic to pace setting leadership types. As these ideas have percolated into educational settings, there has been desire to work out which leadership type is the most appropriate to being a school leader. There has been a desire to distil the best framing metaphor for school leadership. Although one popular contender is 'transformational leadership', amongst advocates of Catholic education, there is a stronger preference for 'servant leadership'.

One of the reasons why the latter framing metaphor suits Catholic education is because it resonates well with what might be described as the theology of leadership. In basic terms this is the typical theological reflection on aspects of leadership and being a leader. The theology of leadership tends to be embedded within central theological disciplines such as Christology, Ecclesiology and wider Biblical Studies. For example, it is in teasing out the way in which Jesus worked with and led the disciples, and engaged with the religious and political leaders of his time, that a theology of leadership unfolds. Similarly, in Ecclesiology, one of the most fundamental titles for the pope is the 'servant of the servants of God'. To be the leader is to serve the most. Within the theology of leadership, the emphasis is on selfless service of others, with a focus on including those who are on the margins. Christian theology depicts the leadership of Jesus as fundamentally different to the typical norms of society. Jesus leads through service of others, he engages in an emptying out (kenosis) of divine

authority to be a spiritual messiah (rather than a political leader) who, as a ‘good-shepherd’, achieves his victory through dying on the cross. The numerous paradoxes at play demonstrate that a theology of leadership brings into focus a starkly different understanding to the way in which the typical leader is depicted.¹ The paradoxes at play in the theology of leadership are given an intriguing focus each November, when it is the liturgical theme for a festival day within Catholic liturgical year when it, culminates the final sunday of ordinary time before the start of advent. This feast day is dedicated to ‘Christ the King’ and a central focus in the liturgy of this feast-day is to reflect on how Jesus’ kingship (and thus his leadership) is radically different to the normal depictions of kingly leadership. The message behind this feast day is that Jesus’ leadership is radically different and directly related to sacrificial service of others.

1.1 How Best to Draw on the Theology of Leadership

The difficult task is how best to translate the themes within the theology of leadership into education practice and the specifics of leading a Catholic school or university on a daily basis. Typically the standard approach is to treat these themes as spiritual platitudes or inspiring slogans, which have the potential to motivate or inspire someone to lead a Catholic school. In an attempt to go beyond this more superficial approach, some advocates of Catholic education have sought to filter the theology of leadership around a more specific theological metaphor, such as ‘vocation’ (Lydon, 2011) or ‘mission’ (Grace, 2002). As such the Catholic school leader has a vocation to play the leading role in achieving the mission of Catholic education. This way of aligning leadership with the mission or aim of Catholic education is intuitively appealing, because it links the leader’s role with bringing about the more fundamental aims or purposes of a Catholic school or university.

However, whilst this appears to make sound sense, it ends up being a problematic alignment. This is because there is not a clear consensus over what the mission, or aims, or theory of Catholic education actually is or ought to be. It is possible to distinguish two broad but very different ways of construing the primary aims or mission of Catholic education. The first way is expressed in the papal encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929) and reaffirmed in Vatican II’s declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* (1966), about the primary goal of Catholic education being to support parental rights to be able to bring up their children in accord with their faith and religious belief. This is an overtly confessional or catechetical approach to Catholic education, because it is seeking to support the intention and desire of parents to bring up their children as Catholic Christians. The second way is affirmed in the guidance document *The Catholic School* issued in 1977 (by the Congregation for Catholic

¹ Two archetypal works often are often referred to as way of showing how leadership is typically depicted. These are Machiavelli’s *The Prince* and Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and his promotion of the *Übermensch*.

Education, Rome). This document explains how the Catholic school is primarily for those who are poor and marginalised. It exists as a service, primarily directed at the poor. These different ways of understanding the primary mission of Catholic education filter the theology of leadership in markedly different ways. In the former approach, the leadership is primarily framed in spiritual terms, where the headteacher is the leader of a faith-nurturing community. Attending to the faith development of all students, especially those who are Catholic, is the priority. This makes protecting the place of Religious Education and providing explicit and implicit opportunities for faith development important practical priorities. In contrast, if a Catholic education is framed in terms of primarily being a service to the poor and marginalised, the theology of leadership is filtered in terms of a loving service which seeks to transform (or liberate) the students from the disadvantages of poverty. The service of the poor, through educational opportunities, becomes the key priority over and above any faith and religious development.

There are thus two distinct ways of drawing on the theology of leadership. However, the challenge of determining which is the better approach is a mute-point and comes down to clarifying further the philosophy or theory of Catholic education.²

1.2 The Structure of This Volume

This volume of edited contributions intentionally draws on the range of ways in which the statement ‘Leadership matters in Catholic Education’ can be read and interpreted. In the most generic sense, the various matters, as in the themes and issues which are part-and-parcel of leadership in Catholic education, will be an ongoing focus running through each chapter. As part of this, various challenges facing leadership in Catholic education will be identified and assessed. At the same time, this volume explores the more fundamental ways in which leadership matters in Catholic education. Almost inevitably this will involve applying ideas from leadership studies more generally and assessing how well they can fit into a Catholic school context. For advocates of Catholic education, this priority has added dimensions that go to the heart of debates about the defining characteristics of Catholic education. This volume of edited chapters addresses practical and theoretical questions surrounding why leadership matters in Catholic education. One of the important characteristics of this volume is that the contributors repeatedly draw from the insights and experiences of serving Catholic school leaders, and this allows their voices to be heard and to inform researchers in the field of Catholic Education Studies.

The contributions are grouped into three distinct parts, with the first part exploring central aspects in the theology of Catholic school leadership. Three of the four chapters in this part focus on ‘servant leadership’. This style of leadership over the past

² For a fuller discussion of this, see both Whittle *Towards a Contemporary Philosophy of Catholic Education: Moving the Debate Forward* (2014a) and Whittle, *A Theory of Catholic Education* (2014b).

two decades has become almost a defining characteristic of Catholic school leadership. The origins of ‘servant leadership’ as a distinct type are found in Greenleaf’s writings (1977) which do not make overt reference to theological or religious themes. However, it has become an increasingly popular way to frame leadership in Catholic schools, particularly following the work of Punnachet (2009). In Part One different aspects of ‘servant leadership’ are explored, with one contribution arguing that it is time for Catholic educators to ‘reclaim’ the ideal of servant leadership. Another links it with being ‘Christ-centred’ and a third frames it with Jesus’ words about serving others first, especially if you hold authority. There is a clear resonance with the features in the theology of leadership which puts the emphasis on serving the poor and needy. A Catholic school headteacher is the servant leader, who serves their school community. However, sitting alongside ‘servant leadership’ is other ways of drawing out the theology of leadership, and two chapters offer examples of these.

In the Second Part, the attention shifts away from the more theoretical and theological issues in order to put the focus on a number of key challenges that matter profoundly to leadership in Catholic education. The leaders of Catholic schools and universities face an increasing range of challenges, many of which have been bubbling up for some time and are now generating increasing pressure. Before listing each of these challenges, it is important to draw attention to the context for this volume, namely the changing nature and composition of Catholic schools. Taking Irish and UK Catholic schools as a representative example, it is easy to identify major changes in the attitudes and beliefs of those who now belong to Catholic schools. It would be a very naive assumption about Catholic schools to regard them as filled exclusively (or mostly) with the children of Catholic parents. Put bluntly, this does not reflect the empirically researched reality.³ A related but perhaps equally important part of the contemporary context is that, even in those schools where a majority are Catholic Christian children, it would also be an ill-judged assumption to presume that they adhere to a uniform set of beliefs and practices.

In the Third Part the challenges facing Catholic school leadership in the UK are scrutinised from a more global and international perspective. Through drawing on OCED data, the case is made for Catholic school leadership in the UK to be far more attentive to their responsibility to provide a good education to the students they serve, irrespective of faith. The aim of the Third Part is to share with Catholic schools’ findings related to teachers and school leaders that emerge from research at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The first part of the analysis focuses on teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners. The final chapter considers teachers and school leaders as valued professionals. It is hoped that sharing findings even in a simple descriptive way may provide useful insights for Catholic schools leaders in the UK, and beyond.

It is against this complex context that the challenges facing leaders in Catholic education need to be identified. To begin with, a major challenge facing Catholic

³ The annual Catholic School Census compiled by the Catholic Education Service continues to show a decreasing proportion of Catholic children attending Catholic schools. See the 2022 Data (<https://catholiceducation.org.uk/ces-census>).

school leaders is the often profound shifts in education policy promoted by central governments. There is a notable example of this occurring in England, where the introduction of ‘Multi-Academy Trusts’ means that school funding and support no longer come on a local or regional level. This policy is fundamentally altering relationships between schools and, as a consequence, the nature of school leadership. It is not yet clear, whether or not this will turn out to be benign or tragic for leadership of Catholic schools.

Second, there are a cluster of issues and challenges for Catholic education leaders in relation to staffing and recruitment issues. Beyond the regular challenges of recruiting great teachers, Catholic school leaders have discovered that it is now far more difficult to recruit teachers who are committed, practising Catholic Christians, particularly to serve as leaders within Catholic schools. Moreover, as one contribution to this volume explains, Catholic primary or elementary schools could not function if it was not for significant numbers of non-Catholic teachers working in them. There is an ongoing concern over the future supply of leaders for Catholic education. An intriguing element of this surrounds questions over the ongoing failure to promote more women to be Catholic school leaders.

This volume has the potential to stimulate wide-ranging interest amongst all those who have a stake in leadership matters in Catholic education. This will be of interest both to those who are advocates of Catholic education and those who want to raise reservations about the project of Catholic education. More specifically, this edited volume will address a number of broader issues about leadership matters in Catholic education, including an overview of the importance of ‘servant-leadership’ in understanding and framing Catholic school leadership. Running throughout the volume is an analysis of why leadership in Catholic schools matters to ensuring what typically counts as the success of Catholic education. When taken together, the contributions offers insights into the defining characteristics of leadership in Catholic education, and how this relates to the aims or philosophy of Catholic education.

1.3 Summary of Contributions

In Chap. 2 Raymond Friel presents an detailed but highly accessible explanation of what ‘servant leadership’ ought to involve in a Catholic school setting. Friel critically engages with the leadership theme of ‘servant leadership’ first developed by Greanleaf (1977). He begins by briefly outlining the non-religious origins of this theme. The focus then shifts to contrasting this theme with the way Christian scriptures characterise the leadership of Jesus. Attention is finally given to how ‘servant leadership’ could be interpreted in the light of this scriptural insight and in this way opened up to those who lead Catholic schools.

Building on the analysis of the second chapter, Dr David Fincham explores some of the ramifications of servant leadership. It begins by comparing servant leadership in a secular context with servant leadership in a Christian one. Following on from this, the implications of servant leadership for leaders in Catholic schools today are