

Applied Catholic Social Teaching: Preferential option for the poor and Catholic schools

Stephen J. McKinney

To cite this article: Stephen J. McKinney (2023) Applied Catholic Social Teaching: Preferential option for the poor and Catholic schools, International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church, 23:1, 31-47, DOI: [10.1080/1474225X.2023.2175531](https://doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2023.2175531)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2023.2175531>



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 21 Feb 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 783



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Applied Catholic Social Teaching: Preferential option for the poor and Catholic schools

Stephen J. McKinney 

School of Education, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

ABSTRACT

Many of the Catholic schools established in the nineteenth century had an explicit *mission* to the poor. This mission was integral to the aims of Catholic schools, aims that included promoting literacy and numeracy and ensuring the inculcation of the Catholic faith and culture in further generations. By the late twentieth century, *care for the poor* and the *preferential option for the poor* described the mission to the poor in Catholic schools. The term *the preferential option for the poor* originated in Liberation Theology within a very specific sociological and ecclesial context, but the understanding of the term deepened as a key theme in Catholic social teaching. This article examines some key Vatican documents on Catholic education in the Conciliar and post Conciliar period and focuses on the strengths and limitations of the vision and implementation of *the care for the poor or preferential option* for Catholic schools.

KEYWORDS

Catholic schools; preferential option for the poor; Catholic Social Teaching

Introduction

One of the greatest challenges for contemporary Catholic schools in many parts of the world is poverty. In the UK, for example, the effects of poverty impact on progress through school from the early years onwards and are often directly related to lower rates of literacy and numeracy and underachievement in public examinations.¹ There were high levels of poverty and child poverty pre-Covid, which have been exacerbated during the period of the pandemic. The latest figures indicate that that 3.9 million children in the UK were living in poverty in 2020–2021 which equalled 27% of all children (Child Poverty Action Group, 2022).² This will worsen further as a result of the economic crisis and the alarmingly high rates of fuel and food poverty. Somewhat ironically the pandemic served to highlight some of the key aspects of child poverty (food poverty, cultural poverty) and revealed some of the less well known, or hidden, forms of poverty (digital poverty and young carers).³ Poverty has become highly visible in the proliferation of beggars on the streets of the cities and towns and the exponential rise of food banks.⁴ Further, there is a greater awareness of signs of invisible or hidden poverty and the

¹Child Poverty Action Group (2023a) *The Effects of Poverty*. <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/effects-poverty>

²Child Poverty Action Group (2023b) *Facts and Figures*. <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>

³S J McKinney, 'Child poverty and the challenges for Catholic schools in the post-pandemic era', *Catholic schools*, *Journal of Religious Education*, 70, no. 2 (2022): 197–204.

⁴S J McKinney, 'Covid-19: food insecurity, digital exclusion and Catholic schools', *Journal of Religious Education*, 68, no. (2020): 319–330.

widespread scale of poverty is such that the UK is arguably witnessing an irruption of the poor.⁵

The state funded Catholic school systems in the UK have their roots in the nineteenth-century schools founded to care for the poor and to protect Catholic religious identity.⁶ The religious orders and communities had a major role to play in the development of Catholic schools through the nineteenth to twentieth centuries. Often the religious would open a fee-paying school for the more advantaged Catholics and use the income to help support free schooling for the poor. A good example of this was the Ursulines of Jesus, the first religious to arrive in Scotland in the Post-Reformation period. They arrived in Edinburgh in 1834 from France and established a convent and a fee-paying boarding school for middle class young ladies. The fees enabled them to take over some Catholic poor schools and provide free medicine to the poor.⁷

By the late nineteenth century, many Catholic schools has been established in areas of poverty and deprivation and many are still located in these areas and continue this care for the poor. The care for the poor is sometimes articulated as the *option for the poor* and *preferential option for the poor*. This care for the poor is an important thread that runs through the seminal Vatican II document and post-Vatican II documents on school education.

This article examines the care for the poor, or preferential option for the poor, in a selection of the key Vatican documents on education, with a particular focus on school education. The article will begin with a concise overview of the theme of poverty and the Second Vatican Council. This will be followed by a discussion of some aspects of the position of the preferential option for the poor in contemporary Catholic Social Teaching. The examination of the care for the poor in selected Vatican documents begins with *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) and continues through three subsequent documents: *The Catholic School* (1977), *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997), and *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools* (2002). As will be explained, *Gravissimum Educationis* and *The Catholic School* are the cornerstones of the development of the concept of contemporary Catholic education and identify care for the poor as a fundamental principle or characteristic of Catholic schools. *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997) and *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools* (2002) have been selected for study because there is strong focus on the care for the poor. The most recent document, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue* (2022), will also be briefly discussed to demonstrate the problematic nature of some of the cross-referencing in the documents. The article will conclude with some discussion points and a few final remarks.

⁵S J McKinney, 'The visible poor and food poverty', *Pastoral Review*, 17, no. 2 (2021): 37–41.

⁶See Fr. J. Gallagher SDB, 'Catholic Schools in England and Wales: New Challenges', in G Grace & J O'Keefe (eds), *International Handbook of Catholic Education* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 249–268.

⁷S J McKinney, 'The Ursulines of Jesus: The first religious in Post Reformation Scotland', *Pastoral Review*, 15, no. 3 (2019): 58–64.

The theme of poverty and the Second Vatican Council

Gustavo Gutiérrez explains that John XXIII proposed three major themes for the Second Vatican Council.⁸ First, that the Church should have an openness to the modern world. Second, that the Council should have a focus on unity among Christians. Third, that the Church should understand itself as the Church of the poor. Gutiérrez observes that the first theme probably received most attention in discussions and the documentation that was produced. The other two themes were still prominent and continued to grow in importance for the contemporary Catholic Church in the post-Conciliar era.⁹

According to Hastings, the references to poverty in the Council can be classified in four ways.¹⁰ The first way is the example of Jesus himself in his own life of poverty, and the believers following the poor and humble Christ (*Lumen Gentium* (LG) 41). Second, the Church and her ministers have a mission to serve the poor. The third way is the practice of poverty as a virtue (LG 42), and the last way is the concrete existence of poverty in the world today. The council wanted to emphasise the authenticity of being a 'Church of the poor'. Hastings argues that this is an 'authenticity which is not automatic but depends upon the actual will and behaviour of the Church's members'. Jesus was poor for our sake and in preaching 'the Gospel to the poor' provides the example for the Church and the mission for the Church. With the insights of a later age, the four ways of Hastings can be augmented, and this article will add a fifth and sixth way (other ways could also be added). The fifth way references key figures and poverty in the Scriptures, other than Jesus. This refers to Mary, described in *Lumen Gentium* as 'poor and humble' and one who made the 'offering of the poor' in the Temple (LG 55, 57). It also refers to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus and the need to care for neighbour, unlike the rich man (*Gaudium et Spes* (GS) 27). The sixth way is the sharing of goods in common within the Church itself and an equitable distribution of goods among all people (LG 13; 23; 36). The Council recognises the economic injustice between nations 'on the road to progress' and wealthier nations (GS 9).

Catholic Social Teaching and the preferential option for the poor

The preferential option for the poor can manifestly be understood to be a fundamental principle of contemporary Catholic Social Teaching in the post-Conciliar period. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* is an obvious source for the key themes of Catholic Social Teaching and, therefore, could be presumed to be a useful starting point for a discussion and development of the preferential option for the poor.¹¹ However, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* does not contain a chapter or section on poverty. Poverty is included in a short sub-section in chapter four: 'The universal destination of Goods and preferential option for the poor', and there are references to the poor and poverty scattered throughout the *Compendium*. This limited treatment of poverty is a surprising anomaly. Gregg argues that this was an

⁸G Gutiérrez, 'The Church and the Poor: A Latin American Perspective', in G Alberigo, J-P Jossua, & JA Komonchak, J.A. (eds), *The Reception of Vatican II* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 171–193 (175).

⁹D Carroll, 'The Option for the Poor', *The Furrow* 33, no. 11 (1982): 667–679.

¹⁰A Hastings, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of the Second Vatican Council*, Volume Two (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969).

¹¹*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004).

opportunity to provide a clear clarification and explanation of the preferential option for the poor, given the heated debates around this topic in the latter part of the twentieth century.¹²

The *Compendium* was published in 2004, during the papacy of John Paul II, and is a collection of teaching on Catholic Social issues that is primarily drawn from papal encyclicals, addresses, messages, and letters. These date from Pope Leo XIII to the date of publication of the *Compendium*.¹³ It also includes teachings and information from other sources such as the Councils, Vatican documents, and the Catechism. The reader is advised to be aware of the different levels of authority of these sources in the *Compendium*, though these sources are used freely without any explanation of their authority.¹⁴ The *Compendium* is confined to a specific temporal end point and the *Compendium* acknowledges this but proposes that this is not restrictive (86):

The Church's social doctrine is presented as a "work site" where the work is always in progress, where perennial truth penetrates and permeates new circumstances, indicating paths of justice and peace. Faith does not presume to confine changeable social and political realities within a closed framework.

In section 9 of the Introduction, there was concern that updating will be required:

However, it must not be forgotten that the passing of time and the changing of social circumstances will require a constant updating of the reflections on the various issues raised here, in order to interpret the new signs of the times.

It is clear that if the *Compendium* were to be revised in the context of the papacy of Pope Francis there would be a much greater emphasis on poverty, the poor, and the *preferential option for the poor*. This can be discerned in many of his speeches and sermons and 'the inclusion of the poor in society' was an important theme in *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), as was 'Global Inequality' in *Laudato Si'* (2015).¹⁵ There would also be greater emphasis on the teachings of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict on poverty and the poor in a revised *Compendium*.

Given that the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* does not attribute sufficient importance to the preferential option for the poor, it is appropriate to adopt the framework of the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching that are outlined by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). These seven themes are: Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Option for the Poor and Vulnerable; The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers; Solidarity; Care for God's Creation (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2023).¹⁶ Option for the Poor and Vulnerable is highlighted as one of the seven themes.

¹²S Gregg, 'A Lost Opportunity: The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church – A Review Essay', *Journal of Markets and Morality* 9, no. 2 (2006): 261–276. Gregg is referring to the use of the term preferential option of the poor by Liberation Theologians and the condemnation of the use of Marxism in some of these theologies.

¹³C M Murphy, 'Charity, Not Justice as Constitutive of the Church's Mission', *Theological Studies*, 68, no. 2 (2007): 274–286.

¹⁴*Compendium* #8; Gregg, 'A Lost Opportunity', 263.

¹⁵C A Pedrioli, 'Pope Francis, Poverty, and the Third Persona', *The Journal of Gender, Race & Justice* (2018): 367–393.

¹⁶United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2023), *Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching*. <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching> Accessed: 20 January 2023.

The next sections will focus on the care for the poor in Catholic schools in four Vatican documents on education that can be arguably considered to be seminal in the discussion of poverty and Catholic schools. The most recent document will also be discussed.

Gravissimum Educationis (1965) and Vatican II

The contemporary documents on Catholic education begin with *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965)¹⁷ and continue through subsequent documents to the most recent, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue* (2022).¹⁸ It is important from the outset to acknowledge the context, authorship and purpose of these documents on Catholic education.¹⁹ This will enable a deeper study and understanding of their significance. This is especially the case for *Gravissimum Educationis*, as the relevance and significance of this document was debated and contested at the time of publication and this continues in recent scholarship.²⁰

It is equally important to study the major themes within the sequence of the documents on Catholic education, rather than adopt a thematic approach that studies themes abstracted from the different documents over a period of fifty-seven years, but disregards the changes in contexts within this time frame. This will help the reader to understand how the idea of the care for the poor in Catholic schools has been developed, and, at times, not been developed, over a period of time. This also means that the ‘uncritical transference’ of statements in early documents to later documents can be tracked and critiqued.²¹

There are a number of twentieth century documents on education prior to *Gravissimum Educationis*. *Divini Illius Magistri*, a papal encyclical by Pope Pius XI (1929) is deemed to be the most important as it was a lengthy and detailed papal encyclical.²² *Gravissimum Educationis* is a short document that was produced as part of the Second Vatican Council. It is a declaration, not a decree, and as such was intended to outline a few fundamental principles of Christian education.²³ The title is *Christian Education*. It was not titled *Catholic Education*, as might have been expected, nor was it titled *The Catholic School*. The title *Christian Education* is an indicator that this document is to be read within the corpus of Vatican II texts and within the spirit of openness of the Council (as will be seen below). The subsequent document, produced by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in 1977, was entitled *The Catholic School* and was focussed on Catholic schools.²⁴

¹⁷Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum Educationis* (28 October 1965).

¹⁸Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions) (2022). *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*.

¹⁹G P Fleming, ‘Catholic Church Documents on Religious Education’, in M. de Souza, M. et al., (eds) *International Handbook of the Religious and Moral Dimensions in Education* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 607–620.

²⁰G Grace, ‘Vatican II and new thinking about Catholic education. Aggiornamento thinking and principles into practice’, in S Whittle (ed.) *Vatican II and new thinking about Catholic education*. (London: Routledge, 2017), 13–22; S Whittle, ‘Speaking up for Gravissimum Educationis’. In S. Whittle (ed) *Vatican II and New Thinking About Catholic Education*. (London: Routledge, 2017), 23–35; and A Sumaryono & S Sugiyono, ‘Implementing Peace Curriculum at Catholic Senior High School in Bali. International Conference on Meaningful Education.’ *KnE Social Sciences* (2019): 91–98.

²¹Fleming, ‘Catholic Church Documents’, 608.

²²Two other notable documents are *Acerbo Nimis* (Pius X, 1905) and *Provido Sane Concilio* (Catechetical Office of the Holy See, 1935).

²³M. Drumm, ‘The Extremely Important Issue of Education’, in D.A. Lane, (ed) *Vatican II in Ireland. Fifty Years On* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), 285–303.

²⁴The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School* (1977).

A number of commentators have identified weaknesses and limitations of *Gravissimum Educationis*. Some point to the limited scope of the document and the areas that receive little attention: there is scant reference to University-level education and nothing specific is said about the nature of Religious Education.²⁵ Carter (1965) claims that while the focus is on formal education, with a special emphasis on school education, the document covers very little new ground.²⁶ Some commentators perceive this as the ‘preservation aspect’ of the document. Alberigo (2006, 580), for example, questions if the document can actually be regarded as an *aggiornamento* document, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, as it was too intent on preserving the status quo.²⁷ Others, such as Bennett (1965), consider the document to be a ‘holding position’ designed to prepare for a fuller development in subsequent thinking and documentation.²⁸ This is expanded on by Velati (2006) who adds that the Second Vatican Council did not want to be silent on education, and that the short account of fundamental principles would provide the stimulus for subsequent documentation.²⁹

However, *Gravissimum Educationis* has more significance than simply being a repetition of previous key ideas or being a holding position. There are aspects of *Gravissimum Educationis* that can be considered to have been new at the time at the time of publication and point to a way ahead. A close reading identifies some clear contrasts with *Divini Illius Magistri*.³⁰ There is a marked difference in tone between these two documents. The tone in *Gravissimum Educationis* is positive and adopts a panegyric style whereas the tone of *Divini Illius Magistri* is more authoritative.³¹ There was a greater awareness of the needs of Catholic children who were not being educated in Catholic schools (section 7) and children in Catholic schools who were not Catholic (section 9) in *Gravissimum Educationis*. Pope Pius XI warns of the moral dangers of the cinema and the radio for inexperienced youth (Section 90), whereas, *Gravissimum Educationis* had a more positive view of technology and the new means of communication (Introduction).

One of the most relevant points that counters the criticisms of the limitations of this concise document is that *Gravissimum Educationis* is part of the documentation that emerged from the Second Vatican Council. Hochschild argues that *Gravissimum Educationis* can be understood with greater clarity and is much more rewarding when read alongside other Vatican documents such as *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et spes*, and *Dignitatis Humanae*.³² *Gravissimum Educationis* was underpinned by an optimistic anthropology and openness to the world that characterised the vision of the Vatican Council.³³ While it is acknowledged that *Gravissimum Educationis* does preserve many of the historical key ideas of Catholic

²⁵C Madero, ‘50 years of the Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum Educationis*: A review of its reception in Latin America’, *International Journal of Christianity & Education* 22, no. 1 (2018): 55–63; L Franchi, ‘Authentic Religious Education: A Question of Language?’, *Religions* 9 (2018): 403–413.

²⁶G E Carter, ‘Education’, in W M Abbott, (ed). *The Documents of Vatican II* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965), 634–636.

²⁷G Alberigo, ‘Transition to a New Age’, in G Alberigo, (ed) *History of Vatican II* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2006), 573–644.

²⁸J C Bennett, ‘A response’ in W M Abbott, (ed). *The Documents of Vatican II* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965), 652–655.

²⁹M Velati, ‘Completing the Conciliar Agenda’, in G. Alberigo, (ed) *History of Vatican II* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2006), 185–274.

³⁰Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Divini Illius Magistri* on Christian Education (31 December 1929).

³¹T van Gestel, F van Iersel & K de Groot, ‘The Function of Speech Acts in a Vatican II Declaration: *Gravissimum Educationis*’. *Journal of Empirical Theology* 33 (2020): 280–304.

³²PE Hochschild, ‘*Gravissimum Educationis*’, in M L Lamb & M Levering (eds), *The Reception of Vatican II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 393–424.

³³DJ Briel, ‘The Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*’, in M L Lamb & M Levering (eds), *Vatican II. Renewal within Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 383–396.

education, the document also demonstrates an openness, in a more ecumenical way, to the world. *Gravissimum Educationis* both preserves and opens up to the world. The vision of *Gravissimum Educationis* is that Christian education is not separate from the world but is integrated in human life. Christian education is *in* the world and *for* the world and this is very much in the spirit of Vatican II.³⁴

More positive views of the importance of *Gravissimum Educationis* help to further illuminate the importance of *Gravissimum Educationis* and its relation to the corpus of Vatican documentation on Catholic education. Whittle states that *Gravissimum Educationis* is a step between the papal encyclical of 1929 and the next stages of the development of the ideas on Catholic education.³⁵ Makosa takes a view that both *Gravissimum Educationis* and the later document *The Catholic School* (1977) can be considered to be the ‘cornerstones of the concept of modern Catholic education’.³⁶ In the Catholic tradition, there is a consistent emphasis on *both . . . and* rather than *either . . . or*. This article proposes that *Gravissimum Educationis* is *both* a stepping stone *and* a cornerstone. It is a stepping stone between the previous discussions on Catholic education and, in particular, the papal encyclical of Pius XI. It is also a cornerstone, with *The Catholic School*, in the development of the concept of Catholic education for the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The care for the poor in *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) is mentioned in section 9:

This Sacred Council of the Church earnestly entreats pastors and all the faithful to spare no sacrifice in helping Catholic schools fulfil their function in a continually more perfect way, and especially in caring for the needs of those who are poor in the goods of this world or who are deprived of the assistance and affection of a family or who are strangers to the gift of faith.

The special care of the Catholic school is for the poor who are identified as those who are materially poor, emotionally poor and poor in the faith. This care for the materially poor resonates strongly with the Vatican Council concern for the poor that is pronounced in the opening sentence of *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World that was addressed to the whole of humanity³⁷

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ (GS 1).

This coherence with one of the three major themes of the Second Vatican Council, as identified by Gutiérrez, helps to position *Gravissimum Educationis* within the vision of the Council.

***The Catholic School* (1977)**

The Catholic School was produced by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in 1977. The aim was to ‘develop the ideas’ of *Gravissimum Educationis* but with a focus on

³⁴Carter, ‘Education’, 635.

³⁵S Whittle, ‘Speaking up for Gravissimum Educationis’, in S. Whittle (ed.), *Vatican II and New Thinking About Catholic Education* (London: Routledge 2017), 23–35.

³⁶P Maqosa, ‘St. John Paul II and Catholic education. A review of his teachings: an essay to inspire Catholic educators internationally’, *International Studies in Catholic Education* 12, no. 2 (2020): 218–235.

³⁷Madero, ‘50 Years of the Declaration’.

Catholic schools rather than the broader theme of Catholic education. The document is addressed to Episcopal Conferences and to all who are responsible for education. As has been stated, this document is viewed by this article as one of the two cornerstones in the development of Catholic education for the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. *The Catholic school* references and reaffirms the final part of section 9 of *Gravissimum Educationis*, though adds a qualification that the service to the poor is ‘first and foremost’:

... because first and foremost the Church offers its educational service to the poor or those who are deprived of family help and affection or those who are far from the faith (*The Catholic School*, # 58).

The discussion of Catholic schools and service to the poor was expanded in *The Catholic school* in two further ways. One of the ways was explicit and the other one was more implicit. The explicit way is within the context of the risks of Catholic schools, in some countries, providing a counter witness because the majority of the pupils are from wealthier families (#58). The perceived counter-witness is deemed to be the result of ‘local laws and economic conditions’. This is illuminated by section 21, which explains that some Catholic schools are restricted to the wealthier classes because the state has not provided some sort of support to Catholic schools. This point is repeated in section 68, though is tempered by section 81, which highlights that the economic position of ‘very many Catholic schools has improved’ and there are advantageous economic settlements for Catholic schools in some national school systems.

Section 65 provides the implicit way:

At great cost and sacrifice our forebears were inspired by the teaching of the Church to establish schools which enriched mankind and responded to the needs of time and place.

This somewhat oblique reference to those who responded to the ‘needs of time and place’ can be assumed to include some of the key figures in the history of Catholic schools who founded schools specifically for the poor – St John Bosco, St Jean Baptiste de La Salle and St Joseph of Calasanz.³⁸

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (1997)

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium was produced by the Congregation for Catholic Education (for Seminaries and Educational Institutions). This document was published in anticipation of the jubilee year of 2000 and to mark the twentieth anniversary of *The Catholic School* (1977). The document was aimed at those who were engaged with Catholic schools and to offer some ‘words of encouragement and hope’ in the face of some of the serious challenges of that era. These included subjectivism, the rise of moral relativism, nihilism and widespread poverty (#1).

There are five main points in this document that focus on poverty and the care for the poor in Catholic schools. First, the identification of widespread poverty and the effects of poverty. Second, the challenges of the inclusion of children from poorer backgrounds in some Catholic schools. Third, the effects of the fragility and break-up of family life.

³⁸These three were used as examples in section 15 of *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997).

Fourth, the historical commitment to educating the poor. Fifth, the continued commitment to the mission for the poor in Catholic schools.

In the first point, the document discusses the widespread poverty and hunger in many parts of the world that makes it difficult for some children to attend a Catholic school (# 7). There is an acknowledgement that the optimistic vision of the development for all has not occurred. Instead, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened and there have been ‘massive migration’ patterns from the ‘underdeveloped countries’ to the ‘highly-developed’ countries (# 1). This is a helpful context for the next three points.

Point two revisits the concerns of *The Catholic School* (1977) about the exclusion of some children from Catholic schools because the families cannot afford to pay the fees. The emphasis in *The Threshold* is also focussed on the lack of state funding for Catholic schools and there is a strong sense of the implications of this for the mission of the Catholic school:

Moreover, such financial strain . . . can also result in the exclusion from Catholic schools of those who cannot afford to pay, leading to a selection according to means which deprives the Catholic school of one of its distinguishing features, which is to be a school for all (# 7).

In section sixteen, it is further noted that Catholic schools are ‘not reserved to Catholics only’.

Point three revisits *Gravissimum Educationis* and the idea that *Catholic* schools have a special concern for those ‘who are deprived of the assistance and affection of a family’. *The Threshold* recognises that families are fragile or broken up and that this was becoming more prevalent in the wealthier nations (# 5). In section 15, the document makes the connection between broken families and the experience of material and spiritual poverty. The Catholic schools offer ‘caring and sensitive’ pastoral care and help to these families (# 5). This leads into points four and five. Point four reconfigures the implicit point in *The Catholic School* (1977) about the origins of many Catholic schools in caring for the poor to become an explicit point (# 15)

It is no novelty to affirm that Catholic schools have their origin in a deep concern for the education of children and young people left to their own devices and deprived of any form of schooling.

Point five is the recommitment to the care for the poor. The Catholic school offers all the opportunity for education, ‘and especially the poor and marginalised’ (# 15). This is now developed as a sharing in the love of Christ for the poor:

. . . the Catholic school . . . can and must find in the context of old and new forms of poverty that original synthesis of ardour and fervent dedication which is a manifestation of Christ’s love for the poor, the humble, the masses seeking for truth.

The concept of the new poor extends beyond material deprivation to include those who have no sense of meaning in life and no values proposed to them. There is a recognition of the contribution of Catholic schools and the ‘invaluable services’ that have been extended ‘to the spiritual and material development of less fortunate peoples’ (# 5).

Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools (2002)

Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools was produced by the Congregation for Catholic Education in 2002. It was mainly addressed to ‘members of Institutes of consecrated life and of societies of apostolic life’. The document aimed to provide some reflections, guidelines and ‘incite some further investigations’ about the presence of consecrated persons in schools, Catholic or otherwise, and their educational mission.

This is the document that is most focussed on poverty and the vision and implementation of the preferential option for the poor in Catholic schools. It is a document that is probably not as well-known as the previous documents, probably because the content is addressed to consecrated persons. Arguably, much of the content is equally applicable to lay teachers in the Catholic school.³⁹ There are six main themes concerned with poverty and the preferential option for the poor. First, the poverty of Jesus. Second, the poverty assumed by consecrated persons. Third, poverty and injustice. Fourth, the poverty of young people. Fifth, the operation of the preferential option for the poor. Sixth, a critique of the failure to operate a preferential option for the poor.

The document highlights the poverty of Jesus in sections six and seven and implicitly in section ten. There are a number of references to the poverty of the consecrated person (# 12, 26, 71). In section twelve there is a suggestion that all are called, in some way, to a form of poverty and in section twenty-six, the poverty of the consecrated person is identified as a poverty that has been freely chosen. Section twenty-eight presents Mary as the model of an authentic Christian life in the world for consecrated persons and the Magnificat as a prophetic reminder of the God ‘who bends down to the least and to the poor to give them life and mercy’.

Poverty and injustice are briefly highlighted in section thirty-four in relation to the ‘south’:

... the unsolved drama of the underdevelopment and poverty that crush entire populations of the south of the world (# 34).

This leads to point four and the poverty of young people which is addressed in sections thirty and seventy-one. Section seventy-one describes the cause of the poverty among the pupils as destitution and the effects are often experienced in:

... the lack of a family and of health, social maladjustment, loss of human dignity, impossibility of access to culture and consequently a deep spiritual poverty.

While this helpfully adds to the understanding of poverty as articulated in *The Threshold*, the most original and challenging ideas are raised under points five and six. In this document, sections sixty-nine to seventy-three are devoted to the poor in Catholic schools. The passage from *Gravissimum Educationis* is reiterated in section seventy, and the qualification ‘first and foremost’ added by The Catholic School is paraphrased as ‘in the first place’. However, the phrase *preferential option for the poor* is the preferred terminology in this document. *The preferential option for the poor* should aim to avoid excluding anyone, including those who may be more fortunate but, critically, the Catholic school should not focus on the more advantaged to the exclusion of the more

³⁹Koweiski in Travis et al.

needy. The document revisits the social and economic constraints on some Catholic schools that means the school caters more for the advantaged.

Having set out these caveats, the document presents some challenges for Catholic schools. Ensuring that the preferential option for the poor is exercised in schools has significant consequences for all:

When the preferential option for the poorest is at the centre of the educational programme, the best resources and most qualified persons are initially placed at the service of the least, without in this way excluding those who have less difficulties and shortages. This is the meaning of evangelical inclusion, so distant from the logic of the world (# 70).

In section seventy-two, the document proposes that the educational activity in the Catholic school should 'be arranged to suit the least'. This means listening to the poorest and arranging the school to suit them.

In the sixth point, the document is critical of Catholic schools that have failed to exercise a preferential option for the poor. The document accepts that sometimes it is difficult to exercise the preferential option in unjust situations, but targets those Catholic schools that have strayed (# 70):

Sometimes, however, it is Catholic educational institutions themselves that have strayed from such a preferential option which characterized the beginnings of the majority of institutes of consecrated life devoted to teaching.

While there is no detail provided about occurrences where Catholic schools have strayed, it is a major indictment of some contemporary models of Catholic schools.

The identity of the Catholic school for a culture of dialogue (2022)

The final document to be examined is the most recent at the time of writing: *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue* was produced by the Congregation for Catholic Education (for educational institutions) in 2022. It is addressed to all those who work in the field of school education and is focussed on the identity of Catholic schools and contemporary challenges. In section three, the document is described as 'This *Instruction*'.

This document reaffirms the importance of formal education for the Catholic Church (section ten):

Therefore, she [Holy Mother Church] has a role in the progress and development of education. Hence this sacred synod declares certain fundamental principles of Christian education especially in schools". This clarifies that the educational action pursued by the Church through schools cannot be reduced to mere philanthropic work aimed at responding to a social need, but represents an essential part of her identity and mission.

The primary reference to the care for the poor is in section 22 and this merits an extended quote:

A distinctive feature of its ecclesial nature is that it is a school for all, especially the weakest. This is testified to by the "establishment of the majority of Catholic educational institutions [in response] to the needs of the socially and economically disadvantaged. It is no novelty to affirm that Catholic schools have their origin in a deep concern for the education of children and young people left to their own devices and deprived of any form of schooling. In many

parts of the world even today material poverty prevents many youths and children from having access to formal education and adequate human and Christian formation. In other areas new forms of poverty challenge the Catholic school. As in the past, it can come up against situations of incomprehension, mistrust and lack of material resources". This concern has also been expressed through the establishment of vocational schools, which have been a keystone of technical training based on the principles of manual intelligence, as well as through the provision by educational institutions of curricula geared to the skills of persons with disabilities.

On first reading, this appears to be a summation of some of the key points that have been raised in previous documents. One closer reading, it becomes apparent that the majority of section 22 is in fact a lengthy and verbatim quote (in inverted commas) from section 15 of *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997). The use of this quote will be examined in the next section.

Discussion

There is a clear and consistent expression of the responsibility of the Catholic schools to care for the poor, a care that is central to contemporary Catholic Social Teaching. This begins in the Vatican documents on education with *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) through to *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue* (2022). There is recognition that there are different forms of poverty and new forms of poverty have emerged or have been recognised (albeit not always fully explained or developed). This is appropriate because it is consistent with scriptural mandates about care for the poor, the tradition in Catholic schooling, and with one of the major themes of the Second Vatican Council, as articulated by Gutiérrez (1987).

While fully acknowledging the importance and value of this expression of the care for the poor, there are limitations in these Vatican documents. These documents focused on Catholic education are normally addressed to the universal Church or large parts of the Church and, therefore, to a very wide audience. The content is often very general.⁴⁰ This commences with *GE* which, while a very valuable document, can be described as very general.⁴¹ There is often very little scope to acknowledge the variety of the socio-economic contexts of different types of Catholic schools and the nuances of the operation of Catholic schools in local contexts. There are some instances where concrete examples are used, such as the recognition of the work of the religious communities in educating the poor. *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* recognises the role of Ursuline nuns in the fifteenth century and the work of Saint Joseph of Calasanz in Rome, John Baptiste de la Salle in France and Don Bosco (Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, # 15). However, these are very brief recognitions of past achievements that are also very general.

The documents that have been studied in this article do not offer a systematic or developed contemporary philosophy of Catholic education though, in fairness,

⁴⁰T J Tobin, T Kambeitz, D R Hoyt, & P Kelly-Stiles, 'Responses to the Vatican Document: The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium', *Journal of Catholic Education*, 2, no. 2 (1998): 225–234.

⁴¹Velati, 'Completing the Conciliar Agenda', 200.

this was never their purpose. There is an ongoing debate among academics in Catholic education about what would constitute a contemporary philosophy of Catholic education and which thinkers/philosophers/theologians (this philosophy would also have to draw from theology) should be used to help construct this philosophy.⁴² In recent years, Lonergan, Maritain and Rahner have all been advanced as suitable for this endeavour.⁴³

Some key principles of a philosophy of Catholic education can be discerned from a close reading of the Vatican documents on education. For example: the rationale for Catholic education in the Church, the Christological centre of a Catholic school, the inclusive nature of a Catholic school, the relationship between evangelisation, catechesis and religious education, the role of the parents in Catholic education, the importance of the leadership and the role of the Catholic teacher and, of course, the preferential option for the poor. The challenge is that this discernment is accomplished by a process of abstraction by the reader and potentially influenced by the interests and biases of the reader. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the preferential option for the poor would be an integral component of a Philosophy of Catholic education.

There has been criticism that the language used in some of the documents is too complex. Tobin argues that the language of *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* is, at times obtuse and the document is written in a complex literary style.⁴⁴ This is echoed by Travis, who points out that the *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools. Reflections and Guidelines* is a difficult, though rewarding, read.⁴⁵ A connected criticism is directed towards *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools. Reflections and Guidelines*. Readers, according to Green, (2003) may not be familiar with Church teachings and would have difficulty with the depth of the 'vision and theology' that is contained in this document.⁴⁶ This would include some of the aspects of Catholic Social teaching that are emphasised in this document. Green suggested that the essential points are better distilled for discussion in local contexts.⁴⁷ These commentators do raise valid points about the literary style. As regards the depth of the vision and theology, it can be counter-argued that Catholic educators, especially qualified Catholic educators engaged in formal education, who access these documents can be expected to be more religiously (or Catholic) literate, or to strive towards this form of 'literacy'. This would enable them to engage in a more profound and critical way with the content of these documents.

⁴²Part of the difficulty is the scope of philosophy of education *per se* in terms of theory and practice and the deep suspicion of faith schooling in philosophy of education. Faith schooling is conceived as indoctrinatory and counter to liberal education and the rights of the child. This creates serious challenges for Catholic educators (and those of other denominations and faiths) engaging with the wider philosophy of education.

⁴³S Whittle, 'Towards a contemporary philosophy of Catholic education: moving the debate forward', *International Studies in Catholic Education* 6, no. 1 (2014): 46–59; B Carmody, 'Towards a Contemporary Catholic Philosophy of Education', *International Studies in Catholic Education* 3, no. 2 (2011): 106–119; and M D D'Souza, (2018) 'Further Reflections on a Catholic Philosophy of Education' in *International Studies in Catholic Education* 10, no. 1 (2018): 2–14. This is not to be confused with a Catholic philosophy of education.

⁴⁴Tobin *et al.*, 'Responses', 226.

⁴⁵M P Travis, D R Hoyt, T P Green, & J A Koweiski, 'Responses to the Vatican Document: Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools', *Journal of Religious Education* 7, no. 11 (2003): 117–130.

⁴⁶Green in Travis *et al.*, 'Responses', 127.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

The documents frequently cross-reference and, while in some texts this is used to enhance a point (as in the important qualification of the statement in section 9 of *Gravissimum Educationis* in *The Catholic School*), in other texts it simply replicates a point and, at times, this can be problematic. This has been observed in the example of *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue* (2022) which quotes a lengthy passage from *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997). However, the passage from the 1997 document is from a different period of time. This can be illustrated in the reference to ‘new forms of poverty challenge the Catholic school’ in the 1997 document which is replicated in the 2022 document. Some of the new forms of poverty are outlined in the 1997 document (no sense of meaning in life and no values proposed to them), but the new forms of poverty are not outlined in the 2022 document. This is problematic because in 2022, new forms of material poverty and deprivation emerged that did not exist, or exist to the same extent, in 1997.

In the COVID-19 era, forms of material poverty and deprivation became new in the sense that they became more widely known due to the effects of the restrictions and lockdowns of the pandemic. Some of these are highly relevant for Catholic schools (and other schools) and the *preferential option for the poor*. Good examples include the greater awareness of widespread digital poverty (or digital exclusion) and food poverty (or food insecurity). Another example is the issue of young carers (who often come from backgrounds of poverty and deprivation), which became acute in many parts of the world as they struggled with attending to their caring duties and their education. These new forms of poverty are not time-bound to the pandemic and immediate post-pandemic era but existed before the pandemic, were exacerbated during the pandemic, and will continue to be prominent into the foreseeable future. This makes them a concrete focus for the preferential option for the poor in Catholic schools.

It is clear that *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997) and *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools* (2002) are the most valuable documents in this short review in their development of the idea of the care for the poor. *Consecrated Persons* is the most detailed and insightful document on poverty and the *preferential option for the poor* in Catholic schools and the most challenging. It is notable that this document is the most consistent with the six ways in which poverty was referred to in the Second Vatican Council. It has a focus on: the poverty of Jesus; the mission to serve the poor; the free acceptance of poverty; the concrete existence of poverty and references to scripture, other than Jesus (in the Magnificat).

Despite the clear strengths in *Consecrated Persons*, there was still ample scope to draw more directly and extensively from Scripture. The Gospel of Luke could have been used to good effect to illustrate the different aspects of poverty identified in the document.⁴⁸ The poverty of Jesus and the mission to the poor, for example, could have been illustrated from the life of Jesus and his teaching, as presented in Luke’s gospel, in the humble origins of Mary and Jesus and the declaration of his mission to the poor in the synagogue in Luke chapter four. This was also an opportunity to explore the reasons why some Catholic schools educate the more advantaged and why some Catholic schools have

⁴⁸F. Bovon, *Luke 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002); B. Byrne, *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke’s Gospel* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000); J. B. Green, ‘Good News to the Poor: A Lukan Leitmotif’, *Review and Expositor* 111, no. 2 (2014): 173–179.

strayed from the preferential option for the poor. These issues could have been discussed in terms of historical and contemporary contexts.

Final comments

The care for the poor or preferential option for the poor in the Catholic school is clearly and consistently affirmed in the Vatican documents on education. It is, as has been seen, more developed in *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997) and *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools* (2002). These documents on Catholic schools are a certain type of document that address the care or *preferential option for the poor*, and they attempt to synthesise the educational commitment of Catholic schooling, socio-economic circumstances and one of the key themes of Catholic Social Teaching (as outlined by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2023)). There are future opportunities for this synthesis to be renewed and enriched by scripture, Catholic Social Teaching and a well-informed awareness of forms of poverty and forms of new poverty and hidden poverty.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Stephen J McKinney is a professor in the School of Education in the University of Glasgow. His research focusses on Catholic education and social justice, the history of Catholic education and the impact of child poverty on school education. He has a special interest in the relationship between scripture and theology (especially the preferential option for the poor) and Catholic education.

ORCID

Stephen J. McKinney  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8249-6067>

References

- Alberigo, G. Transition to a New Age. In *History of Vatican II*, ed. G. Alberigo, 573–644. Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2006.
- Bennett, J.C. A Response. In *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. W.M. Abbott, 652–55. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965.
- Bovon, F. *Luke 1*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002
- Briel, D.J. The Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*. In *Vatican II. Renewal within Tradition*, ed. M.L. Lamb and M. Levering, 383–96. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Byrne, B. *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke's Gospel*. Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000
- Carmody, B. 'Towards a Contemporary Catholic Philosophy of Education'. *International Studies in Catholic Education* 3, no. 2 (2011): 106–19. doi:[10.1080/19422539.2011.600279](https://doi.org/10.1080/19422539.2011.600279)
- Carroll, D. 'The Option for the Poor'. *The Furrow* 33, no. 11 (1982): 667–79.

- Carter, G.E. Education'. In *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. W.M. Abbott, 634–36. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965.
- Child Poverty Action Group (2023a) *The Effects of Poverty*. <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/effects-poverty>. (accessed January 20, 2023).
- Child Poverty Action Group. 2023b. *Facts and Figures*. <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>. (accessed January 20, 2023).
- Congregation for Catholic Education. *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*. 28 December 1997. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html (accessed January 20, 2023).
- Congregation for Catholic Education. *Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools. Reflections and Guidelines*. 28 October 2002. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20021028_consecrated-persons_en.html (accessed January 20, 2023).
- Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions). *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*. 25 January 2022. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html (accessed January 20, 2023).
- Declaration on Christian Education Gravissimum Educationis*. 28 October 1965. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html (accessed January 20, 2023).
- Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*. 21 November 1964. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (accessed January 20, 2023).
- Drumm, M. The Extremely Important Issue of Education. In *Vatican II in Ireland, Fifty Years On*, ed. D.A. Lane, 285–303. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015.
- D'Souza, M.D. 'Further Reflections on a Catholic Philosophy of Education'. *International Studies in Catholic Education* 10, no. 1 (2018): 2–14. doi:10.1080/19422539.2018.1418942
- Fleming, G.P. 'Catholic Church Documents on Religious Education'. In *International Handbook of the Religious and Moral Dimensions in Education*, ed. M. de Souza, G. Durka, K. Engebretson, R. Jackson and A. McGrady. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 607–20
- Franchi, L. 'Authentic Religious Education: A Question of Language?'. *Religions* 9, no. 12 (2018): 403–13. doi:10.3390/rel9120403
- Francis. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World. 24 November 2013. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (accessed January 20, 2023).
- Francis. Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* on Care for Our Common Home. 24 May 2015. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html (accessed January 20, 2023).
- Gallagher, S.D.B.J. Catholic Schools in England and Wales: New Challenges. In *International Handbook of Catholic Education*, ed. G. Grace and J. O'Keefe, 249–68. Dordrecht: Springer, 2007.
- Grace, G. Vatican II and New Thinking about Catholic Education. Aggiornamento Thinking and Principles into Practice. In *Vatican II and New Thinking about Catholic Education*, ed. S. Whittle, 13–22. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Green, J.B. 'Good News to the Poor: A Lukan Leitmotif'. *Review and Expositor* 111, no. 2 (2014): 173–79. doi:10.1177/0034637314524374
- Gregg, S. 'A Lost Opportunity: The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church – A Review Essay'. *Journal of Markets and Morality* 9, no. 2 (2006): 261–76.
- Gutiérrez, G. The Church and the Poor: A Latin American Perspective. In *The Reception of Vatican II*, ed. G. Alberigo, J.P. Jossua, and J.A. Komonchak, 171–93. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1987.
- Hastings, A. *A Concise Guide to the Documents of the Second Vatican Council*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1969, vol. Two

- Hochschild, P.E. *Gravissimum Educationis*. In *The Reception of Vatican II*, ed. M.L. Lamb and M. Levering, 393–424. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Madero, C. '50 Years of the Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum Educationis*: A Review of Its Reception in Latin America'. *International Journal of Christianity & Education* 22, no. 1 (2018): 55–63. doi:10.1177/2056997117739922
- Maḱosa, P. 'St. John Paul II and Catholic Education. A Review of His Teachings: An Essay to Inspire Catholic Educators Internationally'. *International Studies in Catholic Education* 12, no. 2 (2020): 218–35. doi:10.1080/19422539.2020.1811006
- McKinney, S.J. 'The Ursulines of Jesus: The First Religious in Post- Reformation Scotland'. *Pastoral Review* 15, no. 3 (2019): 58–64.
- McKinney, S.J. 'Covid-19: Food Insecurity, Digital Exclusion and Catholic Schools'. *Journal of Religious Education* 68, no. 3 (2020): 319–30. doi:10.1007/s40839-020-00112-8
- McKinney, S.J. 'The Visible Poor and Food Poverty'. *Pastoral Review* 17, no. 2 (2021): 37–41.
- McKinney, S.J. 'Child Poverty and the Challenges for Catholic Schools in the post-pandemic Era', Catholic Schools'. *Journal of Religious Education* 70, no. 2 (2022): 197–204. doi:10.1007/s40839-022-00170-0
- Murphy, C.M. 'Charity, Not Justice as Constitutive of the Church's Mission'. *Theological Studies* 68, no. 2 (2007): 274–86. doi:10.1177/004056390706800203
- Pastoral Constitution on the Church *Gaudium et spes*. 7 December 1965. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html (accessed January 20, 2023).
- Pedrioli, C.A. 'Pope Francis, Poverty, and the Third Persona'. *The Journal of Gender, Race & Justice* 7, (2018): 367–93.
- Pius XI Encyclical *Letter Divini Illius Magistri on Christian Education*. 31 December 1929. https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121929_divini-illius-magistri.html (accessed January 20, 2023)
- Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004
- Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. *The Catholic School*. 19 March 1977. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html (accessed January 20, 2023).
- Sumaryono, A., and S. Sugiyono. 'Implementing Peace Curriculum at Catholic Senior High School in Bali. International Conference on Meaningful Education'. *KnE Social Sciences* 3, no. 17 (2019): 91–98.
- Tobin, T.J., T. Kambeitz, D.R. Hoyt, and P. Kelly-Stiles. 'Responses to the Vatican Document: The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium'. *Journal of Catholic Education* 2, no. 2 (1998): 225–34. doi:10.15365/joce.0202122013
- Travis, M.P., D.R. Hoyt, T.P. Green, and J.A. Koweiski. 'Responses to the Vatican Document: Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools'. *Journal of Religious Education* 7, no. 1 (2003): 117–30.
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. 'Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching'. 2023. <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching> (Accessed January 20, 2023).
- van Gestel, T., F. van Iersel, and K. de Groot. 'The Function of Speech Acts in a Vatican II Declaration: *Gravissimum Educationis*'. *Journal of Empirical Theology* 33, (2020): 280–304. doi:10.1163/15709256-12341413
- Velati, M. *Completing the Conciliar Agenda*. In *History of Vatican II*, ed. G. Alberigo, 185–274. Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2006.
- Whittle, S. 'Towards a Contemporary Philosophy of Catholic Education: Moving the Debate Forward'. *International Studies in Catholic Education* 6, no. 1 (2014): 46–59. doi:10.1080/19422539.2013.869953
- Whittle, S. *Speaking up for Gravissimum Educationis*. In *Vatican II and New Thinking about Catholic Education*, ed. S. Whittle, 23–35. London: Routledge, 2017.