

Editor's Word

Catholic identity and social mission are inseparable. Since the Second Vatican Council, the social mission of the Catholic Church has been delineated explicitly, stating that the Church is in this world and serves this world, helping people to understand themselves and renew human society.¹ The Church hopes to create a new political, social and economic order, expressed through peace, justice, and solidarity, based on human dignity and freedom.² Therefore, action on behalf of justice, peace and love is an indispensable aspect of the Catholic Church and the identity of all Christians. Learning and understanding the social thought and values of the Catholic tradition is a crucial element of Catholic faith and moral formation.

The Catholic social thought in general and the Catholic social teachings (CST) in particular call on people to take responsibility for themselves and their neighbors, seeking personal conversion and social transformation. Catholic social teaching allows us to understand the moral order. It encourages us to seek for truth and justice, to follow the spirit of the gospel and to make the world more humanized. It provides principles for reflection, moral guidelines for judgment and practical action directives for the just resolution of the problems involved on the basis of its social analysis.³ Moreover, the main themes and principles of CST, such as upholding human

¹ The Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, no.44.

² Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), nos. 16-19.
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_juspeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html#Social doctrine and formation

³ John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Centesimus Annus*, 1991, no. 5.

dignity, human rights, common good and solidarity, are compatible with many global values, thus, allowing us to work with other people of good-will.

Given that the CST addresses multiple audiences, it uses multiple forms of moral reasoning and justifications. When it appeals to Catholics, the form is explicitly theological or biblical. When it appeals to people of good will, regardless of religious tradition, the form of moral reasoning is philosophical, practical and employing common human experiences. All are based on the fundamental principle of every person has equal human dignity.⁴

The CST documents themselves stress the importance of education repeatedly. Church leaders point out that CST must be present in general catechetical instruction and in specialized gatherings, as well as in schools and universities.⁵ Catholic educational institutions have a special role in providing chances of encounter between the Gospel and the various branches of knowledge. CST is a necessary means for an efficacious Christian education towards love, justice and peace, as well as for a conscious maturation of moral and social duties in the various cultural and professional fields.⁶ In order to convey or communicate the themes and contents of social teachings effectively, various teaching approaches or methods have to be employed.

In Hong Kong, like in many western countries, capitalistic market-oriented ideology, emphasizing materialism and competition, is a mainstream ideology that is different from Catholic social values. In the Catholic Church, many believers are professional middle-class

⁴ Bernard V. Brady, *Essential Catholic Social Thought* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 18-19.

⁵ John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, 60.

⁶ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 532.

Catholics. Some of them may be affected more by mainstream value than the Church's social values. Meanwhile, patriotism and national identity have been promoted in Hong Kong since the handover of sovereignty from British to Chinese government in 1997. Primary and secondary schools, including Catholic schools, are given the duty to implement national education, apart from civic education. Can Catholic social values be integrated into national education and civic education?

In the past, it was commonly agreed that CST is seldom known by the majority of Catholics, not to mention the majority of students in Catholic schools. It is only in recent years that CST has been promoted in a more systematic way in the Diocesan schools, but not so in parishes. Thus, there is a need to promote CST in different settings through various methods.

In the view of the above, it is time to explore and exchange opinions and experiences on teaching Catholic social ethics and civic education in different settings and contexts. In March 2017, a group of scholars gathered at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and discussed this topic. The theme of the conference is "Teaching Catholic Social Ethics and Civic Education." After the conference, the participants revised their articles, based on the discussion in the conference and comments from peer reviews. This issue of the Hong Kong Journal for Catholic Studies is a collection of these articles.

The authors of this issue explore themes like Catholic identity and religious education; approaches in teaching CST, social justice, gender justice and civic education; case studies of teaching social ethics, religious and moral education. The 11 articles are divided into three sections.

The first section **“Catholic Identity and Religious Education”** includes three articles. In the first article, “Catholic Education, Catholic Identity, and Education for Citizenship: A Selective Inquiry Based on Catholic Moral Teaching,” Harold D. Horell discusses how Catholic schools can be grounded in a sense of Catholic identity while also preparing students to be responsible members of society. Drawing insights from two papal encyclicals— Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* and John Paul II’s *Veritatis Splendor*, Horell offers some suggestions for nurturing a sense of socio-moral responsibility or citizenship in Catholic schools today, such as emphasizing universal openness and inclusivity, teaching students to engage in both dialogical and dialectical modes of public discourse, and inviting students to learn the practice of moral discernment.

The second one is Peta Goldberg’s “Catholic Social Teaching across the Curriculum: Insights from Theory and Practice.” After examining the key and complex elements of Catholic identity in four scholars’ works, Goldberg argues that by incorporating Catholic social teaching, stressing people’s relationship with all other human beings especially those in most need into the wider curriculum, Catholic identity in schools can be articulated beyond the subject of religious education, liturgy and worship. With examples of school authorities in Queensland and Ontario, Goldberg demonstrates that by integrating CST into the wider curriculum, Catholic schools explicitly demonstrate how faith and life, and life and culture are intimately linked. Through the formal curriculum they provide opportunities for students to propose actions and to reflect on the great problems of our time, including the unequal distribution of resources, poverty, injustice and the denial of human rights.

In the third article, “Catholic Religious Education in England and Wales,” John Lydon attempts to explore the centrality of

religious education in the curriculum of all Catholic schools in England and Wales and the Emmaus paradigm, the underlying methodology. Lydon also discusses the important role of teachers as personal witnesses of faith and as exemplars of students, giving hope and inspiration to the young. He also affirms the crucial role of the school to support the personal and professional development of its teacher and staff.

The second section of this issue “**Approaches in Teaching Social Ethics and Civic Education**” contains four articles. Authors of these four articles explore various methods in teaching Catholic social ethics and civic education in tertiary educational settings, such as seminary and university, through education on social encyclicals tradition for seminarians, professional ethics, moral formation on gender justice, and reflection on daily life dilemmas among university students.

In “Dialogue and Discernment: Creative Approaches for Teaching Catholic Social Justice,” Marianne Farina offers a dynamic process for study and analysis of the social encyclicals through a course design of her own in a Catholic seminary college. The course presents the encyclical tradition as a discernment model for addressing social justice concerns, showing the dynamic interaction between the signs of the times from our local contexts and to interpret them in light of the Gospel. It is a process that is investigative, participative, communal and dialogical for all those involved. Farina affirms that such discernment is central to the Church’s social justice mission.

For Stephan Rothlin, Catholic social teaching is the best way for educators to conceptualize the challenge of renewing professional education and ethics in Catholic institutions. In the article “Professional Ethics as Training in Civic Education,” Rothlin argues that CST, with focus on the concern for social justice and fairness as well as the implementation of solidarity and subsidiarity, offers key

elements to prepare students and professors to develop approaches to professional ethics upholding the values of integrity and honesty. He points out that CST which is spiritually and religiously grounded, contributes to civic education beyond the conventional liberal model that is not sufficient to achieve the common good; for common good requires sacrifice and self-discipline, to ensure that everyone's aspirations are respected equally.

Shaji George Kochuthara, in his article “Moral Formation for a Gender-Just Church and Society,” proposes to discuss gender-justice education as an integral dimension of Catholic social teaching. Employing the theological and moral formation for gender-justice at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram (DVK), a Catholic theological institution in Bangalore, India, as a specific example, Kochuthara delineates the features and courses/seminars of this program. Through theoretical input and practical steps, moral formation for a gender-just Church and society is offered.

Apart from the above approaches in Catholic institutions, Vishalache Balakrishnan offers an example of teaching civic education in a secular university. In her article “An Alternative Educational Pedagogy for Civic and Moral Education: Real-Life Moral Dilemma Discussion (Re-LiMDD)”, Balakrishnan explores the use of Re-LiMDD as an educational pedagogy to engage students, teachers and society in civic and social intervention in view of positive societal participation and transformation based on local issues with a global view. Such pedagogy, she argues, provides an opportunity for moral and civic engagement in the true sense, taking into consideration religion, cultural diversity and other complex participatory issues.

The third section features **“Religious, Moral and Civic Education in Hong Kong.”** All four articles are results of empirical

studies in primary or/and secondary schools in Hong Kong. Against the background of transfer of sovereignty and the needs of curriculum reform in Hong Kong, teaching on national identity has become the focus of teaching and school activities. However, the issue of moral and national education has ignited tensions and controversies and a city-wide protest action took place in 2012. How to form citizenship, national identity and global citizenship became an urgent issue faced by many teachers. Meanwhile, more and more educators become aware of the importance of integrating Catholic social teaching into civic and moral education or religious education. They are concerned about how to implement this. In view of this background, the authors of the four articles in this section deal with some of these issues.

In this section, the first two articles are the results of a training-cum-research project on teaching Catholic social ethics in Catholic primary schools initiated by the Centre for Catholic Studies, CUHK. The first one is an evaluative study on the social ethics training programme for the teachers conducted by Lam Tak Shing and his team from the Education University of Hong Kong. In the article “An Evaluation Study of the Teachers’ Receptivity of the Hong Kong Catholic Social Ethics Curriculum and the Training Programme,” the authors highlight some of the major findings. The findings show that participant teachers are positive about the relevance and practicality of the Catholic social ethics training programme and are satisfied with the curriculum support from the project team. However, some have reservations as to whether the outcomes can outweigh the effort made. Some teachers raise some issues of concern, such as time constraints, how to deal with the sensitive national education elements, and the lack of space and know-how to do an integrated approach for the curriculum. Nevertheless, the majority of them agree that the CSE curriculum can fill up the curriculum void left vacant by the shelving of the Moral

and National Education Curriculum Guide. To better implement the curriculum in the present local school context, based on the teachers' feedback, the authors suggest that an interdisciplinary manner and in themes that weave through different subject areas can be employed. School assembly is a good avenue and teachers' team teaching approach can be used.

The second article is "Multiple Identities and Social Values: An Exploratory Study of Teachers in Hong Kong's Catholic Primary Schools." In it, Thomas Tse and Catherine Fung explore the multiple identities (Hongkonger, Chinese, global citizen, and Christian) and their origins, as well as the associated social values of teachers. Based on their analysis, one of the findings is that in practicing identity education, the concept of multiple identities can be added upon the concept of citizenship; and in particular, some religious elements can be incorporated into the teaching of multiple identities, which is a spiritual and a transcendental dimension. And the significance of this religious dimension is not only shared by Christians, as these religious elements exhibit inclusiveness and compatibility. Thus, for the authors, it is advisable to reinforce Catholic social doctrines and discussions on social issues in the school curriculum and related trainings.

Chan Shin Ying explores the impact of intercultural learning on developing intercultural competence among the dominant cultural group in Hong Kong. In her article "Intercultural Education and the Building of Global Citizenship: Developing Intercultural Competence," an intercultural learning program she conducted on a sample of Hong Kong Chinese secondary school students in a Catholic school was delineated. Chan points out that the results of her study demonstrate that the students sampled were not well adjusted to Hong Kong's multicultural nature and in particular to its ethnic minority groups. Although most participants were positive in their

recognition of a need to respect culturally different of others but lacked the motivation to put this into effect. This study revealed prejudicial attitudes, stereotypical assumptions and entrenched ethnocentric attitudes in Hong Kong Chinese society. Therefore, Chan argues that there is an urgent need for schools to develop the ability to respect others across all kinds of diversities.

In the last article, “Ideals and Reality of Religious and Moral Education in Hong Kong Catholic Schools: From the Perspective of Practicing Teachers,” Francis Chan and Vion Ng examine the current situation of Religious and Moral Education (RME) in Catholic schools through studying the opinions of frontline RME teachers towards the ideals of Catholic education and the reality of the implementation of these ideals in their schools. From the findings, Chan and Ng point out that there are notable discrepancies between the ideals and reality of the RME curriculum area of Catholic schools. They argue that some observations such as the lack of qualified RME class teachers and the absence of a mechanism to ensure RME to be promoted properly have been confirmed. At the end, they propose two directions to improve the situation—enhancing the competence of all teachers, with RME teachers in particular, and setting up an appropriate administrative system and mechanism to that all parties concerned are genuinely participating in the process of promoting RME.

How to teach Catholic social ethics and civic education in a more effective way needs us to continue to explore different methods. I hope to see more educators to join us in the coming future.

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