

**Le Chéile Founding Values
and
The Reconfiguration of Trusteeship**

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Ph.D. 2012

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Doctor of Philosophy

2012

**MATER DEI INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
A College of Dublin City University**

**LE CHÉILE FOUNDING VALUES
AND
THE RECONFIGURATION OF TRUSTEESHIP**

Úna Collins

M. Ed.

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**Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2012

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Ph.D. is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: JM Hollis

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Date: 2nd August 2012

Acknowledgements

Firstly I thank the Le Chéile congregations, their leaders and school principals. I thank the members of the Le Chéile Working Group with whom I worked for seven years in the development of the new trust. Without their engagement in the discovery of the relationship of founding values with our efforts to establish a new trust, this research would not be in place.

I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr Kevin Williams. His gentle, firm and insightful support and direction have been invaluable.

I am very grateful to Dr Andy McGrady who generously and patiently supervised the early years of this research.

I thank Dr Jacinta Prunty for critiquing and assisting me in the final writing of the thesis, and Dr Ethna Regan for her support. I want to acknowledge the contribution of Dr David Tuohy, the wise guide in the Le Chéile process, whose wisdom and advice weave through many sections of this research.

I thank Sister Gemma Gilroy proof-reader, Brendan Kearney conscientious transcriber of the conversations, and Mary Dineen, professional formatter and friend.

I am deeply grateful to my family, my Holy Faith community, and to faithful friends for constant support and understanding.

The research was funded by a Dublin City Council grant.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father, Maurice Collins. He was an iconic teacher and is my guide in embodying the values of faith and education.

Definitions and Terminology

Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS). The

Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools was established in 1987.

Organised on a Regional level with 10 regions, it now forms the basis of the Council of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (CMCSS) which has been in existence since the 1960's.

Association of Trusts of Catholic Schools (ATCS). Established in 2010 by the

Conference of Religious of Ireland to provide a single voice representing the new Trusts.

Catholic Religious Congregation. An order of men or women who take simple vows

and are approved by the Catholic Church.

Catholic Education An Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). The Trustee Body for the

voluntary secondary schools formerly owned and managed by the Mercy and

Presentation Sisters and three other small congregations.

CES. The all-Ireland body set up by the Irish Bishops Conference and the Conference of Religious of Ireland to promote the Catholic education sector nationally.

Catholic Schools Partnership. Formed by the Irish Episcopal Conference, 28 January 2010, intended to support all of the partners in Irish Education.

Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI). The Conference came about through the amalgamation of two conferences of men and women in 1983. It is an umbrella organization for Catholic Religious Congregations active in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Congregation. The term generally used for Roman Catholic Apostolic Institutes.

Congregational Leader. The woman or man elected by a Religious Congregation to lead the congregation for a fixed time. The Leader has consultors or team members who assist. The terms Superior General, Provincial or Regional Superior are also used.

Congregational schools refers to the schools owned by the twelve Le Chéile Congregations.

DES. Department of Education and Skills, Government of Ireland.

Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). The Trustee Body responsible for the schools formerly under the trusteeship of the Christian Brothers in Ireland.

European Economic Community (EEC). The Common Market, now subsumed in the European Union (EU).

Le Chéile. This is the name of the Catholic Schools Trust at the centre of this study. The name was chosen in 2005 by the Working Party.

Le Chéile Working Group. The Le Chéile Working Group consisted of two members from each of the twelve collaborating congregations. They met for one day each month between 2003-2010. With David Tuohy, the Project Manager and Consultant they developed the Le Chéile Trust. Most of the members of this group had experience of being school principals, managers, education co-ordinators and/or congregational leaders. They worked consistently as a group, and were also responsible for communications with their leaders, their Religious congregations and their schools.

Living Archives. The Le Chéile congregational leaders by re-visiting their founding stories in conversation are living the stories in the context of major decisions regarding their schools. ‘Living archives’ are juxtaposed with the written archival statements or documents of their time.

Nun. Religious women under solemn vows living a cloistered, contemplative life in a convent

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). An international organisation helping governments tackle the economic, social and governance challenges of a globalised economy.

Religious Sisters/Brothers. Members of a Religious Congregation under simple vows in the Catholic Church.

Trusteeship. “The patron/trustee in this sense stands for, or acts on behalf of a body (usually organized) of people who wish their children to be educated within a particular religious, ethical tradition” (National Convention Report, 1994, p. 24).

Voluntary Secondary School. Privately owned and managed schools under the trusteeship of Religious congregations, Boards of Governors or individuals. These schools are also referred to as ‘secondary schools’.

Abstract

The research asks: what is the relationship of distinctive congregational founding values with the reconfiguration values in the new Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust? The twelve religious congregations that collaborated in forming the Le Chéile Trust for their Catholic secondary schools in Ireland, 2003-2010 are engaged in the research process. The genesis of this new collaborative trust for Irish Catholic secondary schools is in the context of declining numbers of religious, and the immediate need to ensure the future of their schools.

The research question is set in the context of an analysis of the genesis of the Irish Catholic voluntary secondary school in view of the challenges facing these schools today. This involves the inclusion of historical, ecclesial and documentary data. The research data are based on analysis of historical documents supplemented by oral history. This is constituted by formal conversations or semi-structured interviews with twelve congregational leaders, twelve school principals and the two new executive lay leaders in the Le Chéile Trust and also the responses of leaders in the other three new major trusts formed before 2010. The living archives of the oral history provide a new interface between the founding values and the current values motivating the decision to develop the Le Chéile Trust.

Keywords: Founding values, history, collaboration, Catholic school, trusteeship.

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY	6
ABSTRACT	10
INTRODUCTION	15
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCING THE LE CHÉILE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS TRUST.....	17
Introduction.....	17
Contemporary Trusteeship.....	18
A Collaborative Process for Trusteeship	21
Research Question	22
Aims and Objectives of the Research	23
Research Literature	24
Thesis Structure	26
Conclusion	28
CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	29
Introduction.....	29
Literature Review.....	29
International research.....	30
Lower end of international research spectrum.....	31
Centre of international research spectrum.....	37
Higher end of international research spectrum.....	41
History.....	43
The Catholic school.....	46
Trusteeship	48
Congregational narratives	50
Outcomes.....	51
Methodology	52
Documentary history.....	53
Oral history.....	54
Co-operative inquiry.....	56
Research Procedure.....	57
Religious Life.....	60
Conclusion	64
CHAPTER THREE - THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL: A CONCEPTUAL ENQUIRY	66
Introduction.....	66
Ecclesial Teaching on the Catholic School.....	67
Pre-conciliar documents.....	70
Second vatican council documents	72
Post-conciliar documents	74
The Catholic School and Catholic Education	80
Distinctiveness of the Catholic school.....	80
Catholic education.....	83
The Catholic school and the ‘common’ school.....	86
Critique	88
Maximal values	89
Power and control.....	91
Catholic school leadership	92

School community and ethos	93
Challenging unjust systems.....	93
Conclusion	94
CHAPTER FOUR - THE LE CHÉILE TRUST: GENERAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	96
Introduction.....	96
The Light of History	97
Church, state and education in the nineteenth-century.....	98
Proselytism.....	99
A roman Catholic middle class.....	100
Revival of the institutional church.....	101
Funding issues and the establishment of Catholic secondary schools.....	102
Church, State and Education 1922-1967	107
Church and State and Education, 1967 – 1998	109
The 1990s.....	111
New Forms of Trusteeship.....	115
The Le Chéile Trust	123
Conclusion	125
CHAPTER FIVE - PARTICULAR HISTORY (1) THREE IRISH CONGREGATIONS.....	127
Introduction.....	127
Historical Context, A Summary.....	127
The beginnings of Christianity and the golden age (fifth-eight centuries).	127
Tudor conquest (1534-1603).....	129
The penal laws.....	131
Catholic mission in the nineteenth century.	133
Three Irish Congregations.....	139
Dominican Sisters.....	139
Conversation with the Dominican Sisters' congregational leader.	145
Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.	147
Conversation with a Dominican school principal.	149
Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.	151
Patrician Brothers.....	152
Conversation with the Patrician Brothers congregational leader.	156
Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.	159
Conversation with a Patrician Brothers school principal.	159
Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.	162
Holy Faith Sisters.....	162
Conversation with the Holy Faith Sisters congregational leader.	170
Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.	173
Conversation with a Holy Faith Sisters school principal.	173
Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.	177
Conclusion	177
CHAPTER SIX - PARTICULAR HISTORY (2) FOUR ENGLISH CONGREGATIONS.....	181
Introduction.....	181
Historical Context: A Summary.....	181
Four English Congregations	186
Society of the Holy Child Jesus (SHCJ).	186
Conversation with the SHCJ congregational leader.	191
Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.	198
Conversation with an SHCJ school principal.	198
Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.	201
Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle.....	202
Conversation with the St Paul the Apostle congregational leader.	203
Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.	208

Conversation with a St Paul the Apostle school principal	209
Validation within the Le Chéile Charter	211
Sisters of the Cross and Passion.....	212
Conversation with the Cross and Passion Sisters congregational leader.....	218
Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.....	220
Conversation with a Cross and Passion school principal.....	221
Validation within the Le Chéile Charter	223
Poor Servants of the Mother of God (SMG)	224
Conversation with an SMG congregational leader.....	226
Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group	229
Conversation with an SMG school principal.....	230
Validation within the Le Chéile Charter	231
Conclusion	232
CHAPTER SEVEN - PARTICULAR HISTORY (3) FIVE FRENCH CONGREGATIONS	234
Introduction.....	234
Historical Context: A Summary.....	234
Five French Congregations	237
De la Salle Brothers.....	237
Conversation with the De la Salle congregational leader.....	240
Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group	244
Conversation with a De la Salle school principal.....	244
Validation within the Le Chéile Charter	247
Religious of Christian Education (RCE).....	248
Conversation with the RCE congregational leader	252
Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group	256
Conversation with an RCE school principal	256
Validation within the Le Chéile Charter	259
Religious of Jesus and Mary (RJM).....	260
Conversation with the RJM congregational leader	263
Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group	265
Conversation with an RJM school principal	266
Validation within the Le Chéile Charter	269
Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ)	269
Conversation with the FCJ congregational leader	273
Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group	277
Conversation with an FCJ school principal	278
Validation within the Le Chéile Charter	280
St Louis Sisters	281
Conversation with the St Louis congregational leader	284
Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group	287
Conversation with a St Louis school principal	288
Validation within the Le Chéile Charter	290
Conclusion	291
CHAPTER EIGHT - OUTCOME: THE CURRENT CONFIGURATION	293
Introduction.....	293
The <i>Why, What and How</i> of the Research.....	294
The Relationship of Reconfiguration and Founding Values.....	296
Research Outcomes.....	297
Unique congregational values	299
Founding values in contemporary schools	300
Le Chéile Trust within the Institutional Church	303
A humbled institutional church	310
The Lay Vocation	312
The voices of the Le Chéile lay leaders	314

The voices of religious and lay leadership in other new trusts.....	319
The voice of a lay school principal.....	320
The voice of the President of Ireland.....	322
Conclusion	322
Research Outcomes.....	324
For the Le Chéile Trust.....	324
For the Le Chéile congregations.....	325
For the church.....	326
CHAPTER NINE - CONCLUSION	328
Introduction.....	328
Research Agenda	329
Conclusion	332
BIBLIOGRAPHY	334
APPENDICES.....	366
APPENDIX A - RESEARCH JOURNAL.....	367
APPENDIX B - COMMUNICATION WITH CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS	378
APPENDIX C - CONVERSATIONS WITH CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS	387
APPENDIX D - COMMUNICATION WITH LE CHÉILE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS	388
APPENDIX E - CONVERSATIONS WITH LE CHÉILE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS	390
APPENDIX F - CONVERSATIONS WITH THE NEW LAY LE CHÉILE LEADERSHIP	391
APPENDIX G - ST JOSEPH OF CLUNY FOUNDING STORY AND VALUES.....	393
APPENDIX H - CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHER TRUSTS	397
APPENDIX J - RESEARCH AND RECONFIGURATION	400

Introduction

The title of this research holds within it the key foci: Irish Catholic Secondary schools, contemporary reconfiguration of trusteeship for these schools, the values that are driving the reconfigurations, and the relationship of these values with inherited and founding values. Terms like *charism*, *founding intention* and *trusteeship* are relatively new in contemporary language, even for religious congregations who have embodied what we now understand the terms to mean. They are certainly new for the new lay leadership which is expected to know the values, receive what is being entrusted, and evolve into a new entity, lay trusts for Catholic schools. The transfer of the heritage of founding values and of charisms is a decision made by religious congregations in a time of diminishing membership numbers and resources. The large religious congregations, Loreto Sisters, Christian Brothers, Mercy and Presentation Sisters established their trusts between 2003 and 2007. Smaller congregations struggled with the process. Twelve of these small religious congregations moved through a reconfiguration and transfer process which differed in essence from the transfers and reconfigurations involved in the larger trusts. In developing what became known as the Le Chéile Trust, each of twelve congregations had its own founding intention and values, each had its own charism and narrative. Each voice was respected in the reconfiguration and transfer.

Being faithful to founding values and facing the challenges inherent in securing the future of the congregational schools developed a new set of challenges. The new trust must recognize the values of the past and their interfacing with the present. It must identify its own boundaries and its own challenges, while being ever challenged by its

role and responsibility in its unique heritage. The new lay trust will have to identify and embody its motivational and operational values within that role and responsibility. The Le Chéile Trust in its new identity has to clarify that identity in respect of its role in leadership but, critically, also for its members and its school communities. New leadership must reconfigure inherited values in the context of a dynamic trust for Catholic secondary schools in contemporary Ireland. This research is about one trust, the inherited values of twelve religious congregations which founded that trust, and transferred it to lay leadership in 2010. The research involved the principal ‘actors’: congregational leaders, their representatives in the Working Group and the school principals in defining both founding and contemporary values and their relationship in an interface with the declared values of the new trust.

Chapter One

Introducing the Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust

Introduction

The Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust, founded in Dublin in 2010, is a union of schools previously owned by twelve religious congregations. The decision to create a common trust for the congregational schools was the result of a seven-year collaborative process. The congregations, Dominican Sisters, Patrician Brothers, Holy Faith Sisters, Sisters of Charity of St Paul, Poor Servants of the Mother of God, Cross and Passion Sisters, Holy Child Sisters, De la Salle Brothers, Faithful Companions of Jesus, Religious of Christian Education, Religious of Jesus and Mary and the St Louis Sisters were founded in different countries and in different centuries, and they have different founding values. Three of the twelve were founded in Ireland the other nine arrived in Ireland between the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries. This thesis sets out to explore the relationship of the congregational founding values with those values which influenced contemporary reconfiguration of trusteeship in creating the Le Chéile Trust. The core question is: do the founding values relate to contemporary values and have they informed the creation of the new trust?

The reasons behind the creation of a collaborative trust for the congregational schools are both pragmatic and principled. There was pressure on congregational leaders from the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI) since the 1980s to think of new ways to ensure the future of their schools. There was also the pressure of falling numbers and ageing members in the religious congregations. In addition to these pressures there was

the constant concern to ensure the future of the founding intention with regard to the schools. Irish Catholic secondary schools, though receiving state funding, are largely in the ownership or trusteeship of religious congregations due to the historical factors addressed in chapter four of this thesis. The inspirational values for founding and the congregations' desire to ensure a future for Catholic schools are contextually explored in chapter three, and the founding narratives of the twelve Le Chéile congregations are provided in chapters five, six, and seven. Options considered by all congregations included amalgamations and transfer of ownership but new forms of trusteeship exercised the minds of congregational leaders and seemed to be the desirable option.

Congregations with a large number of schools and sufficient resources established their own individual trusts. The Loreto Education Trust, the Christian Brothers (Edmund Rice Schools Trust) and the Mercy and Presentation Sisters (Catholic Education an Irish Schools Trust) are examples of such developments. The movement by the twelve small Le Chéile congregations to collaborate in forming a trust was unprecedented and has its own unique seven-year narrative.

Contemporary Trusteeship

With the exception of schools in diocesan ownership, religious congregations were responsible for the future of Irish voluntary Catholic secondary schools. Archbishop J. Michael Miller, Secretary, Congregation for Catholic Education, embedded the Irish Catholic school task in the wider concern of the universal church when he addressed an education conference in Maynooth in 2005. He spoke about Ireland as a source of inspiration, and of vital importance with its more than fifteen hundred years of living the

Catholic faith, for the most part in difficult and challenging circumstances. He specifically identified the importance of the Catholic school in the church's mission:

Without a strong system of authentically Catholic schools, the Church's mission of evangelization in Ireland will be hindered, the preparation of informed lay Catholics will be impeded, and the powerful civilising influence of Christianity on society will be diminished. Catholic schools are an integral part of the organic pastoral work of the Irish Church in the Third Christian Millennium. (Miller, 2006, p. 85)

It is within an understanding of religious congregational responsibility for the Irish Catholic secondary school that a consideration of the meaning of trusteeship is pertinent. The Irish Education Act, 1998, 8.(1) (a) states that the Patron [is] the persons who, stand appointed as trustees [...]of a post-primary school and where there are no such trustees, the owner of that school. The CORI *Handbook for the Leaders of Religious Congregations* (1996), states that "ultimate responsibility for the school rests with the trustee" (p. 7), and clearly links that responsibility with the mission or founding intention of the congregation for the school:

As legal owner, the congregational leadership or its nominee(s) is obliged to hold the school property in "trust" for the purposes (mission) to which the congregation is currently committed – hence the use of the term "trustee".

Trustees have a fiduciary relationship towards other persons (beneficiaries) and are obliged to honour the trust. (CORI Handbook, p. 5)

Trustees, therefore, have two distinct types of responsibility in relation to the schools: those which relate to ensuring that the school in its ethos and otherwise is consistent with the founding intention (i.e. the trust), and those which derive from the legal and financial liabilities associated with ownership (CORI Handbook, p. 6). In an address to the CORI Education Conference, Aidan McGrath *Trusteeship of Catholic Schools: a look down the road ahead* (2010), located trusteeship of Catholic secondary schools within the context of religious life for over fifteen hundred years. The school, McGrath believes, became a more integrated part of the life of many institutes founded for the purpose of providing Catholic education for the poor in Ireland, “education was seen to be the apostolate exercised by these religious, whether they actually taught in the schools or not.” All educational, administrative and practical matters were handled in-house. McGrath locates the focal point in the contemporary reconfigurations of trusteeship in the question about canonical means for assuring the provision of Catholic schools into the future in Ireland. He argues, reflecting Miller’s point above, that the process of reconfiguration is shaped by the fact that Catholic education is integral to the mission of the church. This theory is explored and expanded in chapter three of the thesis. David Tuohy in *Celebrating the Past: Claiming the Future* (2007), provides a succinct and helpful definition of trusteeship: “Trusteeship refers to the ownership and stewardship of property for the mission of education, and also responsibility for the characteristic spirit or ethos of the school” (Tuohy, 2007, p. 280). Sister Antoinette

Keelan, a Le Chéile congregational representative says, “trusteeship simply means moral and legal ownership of, and responsibility for, the schools”. This simple statement actually covers the key elements in the more expansive definitions which preceded it. It is worth noting that from 1980s to 2003 religious and lay colleagues were endeavouring to identify, discuss, understand, internalize and grapple with the legal issues of the term *Trusteeship*. The responsibility for holding the schools in trust within a founding intention is rooted in former centuries.

A Collaborative Process for Trusteeship

In September 2003 members of the twelve religious congregations, named above, gathered in Manresa Centre, Dublin, to face the daunting challenges involved in the planning for the future of their schools. I attended the meeting as a representative of the Holy Faith Sisters. These small congregations knew that they could not afford to establish individual school trusts. They had attended several meetings organized by the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI) and had listened to experts on the legal issues and practical responsibilities regarding trusteeship of the schools. Decision time had arrived. Central to that decision was the question of individual founding charisms, and the heritage and identity of the schools of the congregations. Another consideration was how school communities might respond to the loss of congregational identity. After two days of discussion and reflection a decision had not been made and the underlying questions were not answered. The facilitator suggested that two representatives of each congregation would take time apart to identify which value was essential so that the congregation could move into a collaborative process. When the congregational members

re-grouped and the individual congregational core values were identified there were some moments of silence and awe. The congregational representatives were recognizing what should have been obvious, that all congregational core values are actually rooted in the gospel value of proclaiming and teaching the redemptive love of God, and they identified their individual charisms in that gospel context. In what came to be known by the congregational representatives as the ‘Manresa moment’; a unique collaborative schools trust was conceived in 2003. The representatives left the meeting with the intention of reporting to their congregational leaders and with an agreement to meet again in October. This was the group of people who would continue to represent the congregations in developing the new trust. The group would be known as the Le Chéile Working Group. The group met on the first Friday of each month for seven years and the trust was launched in 2010. The name ‘Le Chéile’ meaning ‘Together’ was chosen in 2004 as the trust began to take its initial shape. As a representative member of one of the congregations I was a member of this group, 2003-2010, and I was both a group member and a researcher from 2006-2010.

Research Question

The group had identified that seminal gospel values were held in common, but individual congregational founding values were not discussed. The congregations began to develop a single collaborative vision, mission, philosophy and policy for their schools, but they did not engage in the individual congregational founding stories nor with the values which inspired the founding of each congregational group of schools. It was quickly realized that without that engagement there could not be an informed ownership

of the founding values. Reflecting on this I posed a research question, asking what is the relationship of distinctive founding values with the reconfiguration values in the trust which was being formed? The legal, educational, economic and systemic challenges involved in developing a new trust were daunting, and were likely to occupy most of the time of the Le Chéile Working Group but the research could complement the practical and legal process. When the research was proposed to the group there was unanimous agreement that this was a worthwhile project with which the members would collaborate.

The research therefore addressed the following question: what is the relationship of distinctive congregational founding values with the reconfiguration values in the new Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust? Within the identification of the relationship the research explored: the values which moved each Le Chéile congregation to collaborate in such a unique decision and process; the congregational values identified in the new trust; the operational and living values in the congregational schools.

Aims and Objectives of the Research

The research set out to: engage the twelve religious congregations in re-visiting their founding stories as they planned for the future of their schools; identify the core founding values through documentary history and oral history in formal conversations with congregational leaders; clarify the relationship of the identified founding values with values influencing congregational decisions with regard to the new trust; engage the school principals in identifying how congregational founding values were lived in the contemporary school and to collaboratively involve the members of the Le Chéile Working Group in validating stages of the research. The research also set out not only to

clarify the relationship of founding and reconfiguration values of each congregation, but also to provide a process through which all twelve congregations would become aware of and know the founding stories and values of the other eleven.

Collaborative congregational trusteeship in Ireland is unique. The Mercy and Presentation congregations launched the CEIST Trust in 2007. At a special meeting in Tallaght in 2004 these two large congregations outlined their plans and their progress in developing the trust and invited other smaller congregations to join. Three congregations accepted this invitation. The Le Chéile Trust began with twelve individual congregations uniquely deciding to form a single trust. Its history and development will be explored in chapter four. The examination of the relationship between founding and contemporary reconfiguration values has not been formally researched by other new trusts in Ireland.

Research Literature

A review of the research literature is located in chapter two. The main bodies of literature are those which relate to the five sections of the research: historical context, the Catholic school, trusteeship, lived narratives of the twelve Le Chéile religious congregations and the research outcomes.

Locating the research focus of trusteeship of Catholic schools and with the intention of embedding this research in a world context led to a study of international research on the Catholic school itself. This study has been interesting and informative. Recent PhD theses in the Catholic University of Australia, the Catholic University of America and the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education (CRDCE) in the University of London, did not provide any immediate or direct parallels to the

proposed research on founding values and collaborative reconfiguring of trusteeship for the Catholic secondary school. Consultative conversations with Aengus Kavanagh in the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Paramatta, Australia, and with Eoin O'Mahony, social researcher with the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, indicate a paucity of research in the area of Catholic secondary school trusteeship. Irish Catholic/Episcopal research in 2008 and 2011 concentrated on issues related to primary school patronage/trusteeship (Catholic Schools' Partnership).

Two theses in Australian studies are marginally related to the subject: Christopher Branson, (2004), examined values in school principals' behavioural responses to an era of change and uncertainty, *An Exploration of the Concept of Values-Led Principalship*. Jan Barnett, (2005), researched religious life and leadership responses in a time of change, in *Between Towns: Religious Life and Leadership during a Time of Critical Change*. Her work, however, is focused on religious life and not on the mission of Catholic schools. There is a wealth of studies on leadership in education but little or nothing on ownership or trusteeship of Catholic schools. Barnett's study examined leadership practices which could facilitate the transition of Catholic religious institutes into the twenty-first century and beyond. Both Branson and Barnett contribute interesting studies but they do not focus on the subject of this research. It was the extensive and informative work titled *International Handbook of Catholic Education: Challenges for School Systems in the 21st Century* (2007), Grace and O'Keefe, (eds.), that contemporary studies of the Catholic school in the international field of research was located and this rich contextual field will be comprehensively explored in chapter two.

Ecclesial teaching on the Catholic school in pre -Vatican II, Vatican II and post-Vatican II documents will be central to this study of the Catholic school as the Le Chéile Trust is founded. An analysis of this theoretical bedrock will be supported and expanded by related literature on the Catholic school, and will include the work of Dermot Lane, Terence McLaughlin, Thomas Groome, John Sullivan, Kevin Williams, Andrew McGrady and David Tuohy.

Contemporary Irish history of the relationship of church and state with regard to education and Catholic schools will be the context for the trusteeship developments.

The history of church and state in each of the three countries within which the twelve collaborating congregations were founded, namely, Ireland, England and France, will be presented as the location for founding narratives and identifying founding congregational values. The narrative of the founding of each of the twelve congregations will be located within the relevant histories and hagiographies, using the documentary and published material available. The research explored a number of biographies of founders and foundresses, congregational and school histories of varying scholarly quality.

Thesis Structure

The research question, aims and desired outcomes have been outlined above. Chapter two will review the literature which contextualized, informed and supported the thesis, and the chosen methodology will be explained.

The research is about a major decision in contemporary Ireland about Catholic secondary schools. Chapter three, therefore, is about the Catholic school. It addresses its

theoretical framework, its distinctiveness and its relationship with Catholic education. Pivotal to the research will be the exploration of the Catholic school in its role within the mission of the church. This will involve a close analysis of ecclesial teaching, supporting literature and critical reviews.

Chapter four engages with the past and contemporary history of trusteeship of the Irish Catholic secondary school and the role of religious congregations in that history. The chapter examines the historical and contemporary contexts of trusteeship. Reference will be made to church-state relationships in the history of Ireland, as that history relates to the founding, ownership and management of Catholic schools. This exploration and synthesis will include the relevant contemporary history of the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI), the development of the trusteeship paradigm in Irish Catholic secondary schools, and the beginning of the Le Chéile Trust.

Chapters five, six and seven are at the heart of the research. They record the formal conversations with congregational leaders and school principals, and through the founding narratives the research identifies both founding and contemporary values and how they relate to each other.

In chapter eight emerging challenges are mapped with the research aims and the thesis will conclude by identifying future research possibilities.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the reason for the research, the research question, the aims and objectives and the structure of the exercise. It has provided an overview of contemporary trusteeship and the origin of Le Chéile, its membership and the collaborative process which developed it. The literature review in the following chapter progresses the contribution of exploring the international research on the Catholic school in this chapter. The research was about the future of the Irish Catholic secondary school which, due to the anomalies in the pattern of Irish history, was the sole responsibility of religious congregations. Their development and their support of this research on how founding values might be embodied in the new trust are recounted in this thesis.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter is a practical guide to the main constituent sections of the thesis, and includes a comprehensive exploration of international research on the subject of the research, Catholic school trusteeship. It includes the literature which informs and supports the research, the methodology which structured and directed the work and a brief exploration of the life of the principal participants in the research, the religious women and men of the Le Chéile congregations.

Literature Review

As outlined in chapter one, this thesis records the research on founding and contemporary values in twelve religious congregations involved in reconfiguring trusteeship for their schools. The research context is the history of the Catholic church in the three countries in which the congregations were founded. The research subject is the founding story and founding values in each of the twelve Le Chéile congregations. The research focus is why these congregations chose schools to exercise their mission, and why they decided on a new form of trusteeship for the future of those schools. The research question probes the relationship between the founding and contemporary values. The literature supporting and enriching the thesis will be reviewed under six headings which reflect the main areas within the thesis: international research, history, the Catholic school, trusteeship, the Le Chéile congregations and the research outcomes.

International research.

A review of international research on the Catholic school is related directly to this research. When initially examining contemporary research on the Irish Catholic school and specifically exploring ownership, patronage or trusteeship of these schools, it was surprising to discover the dearth of research on the subject of Catholic school ownership or trusteeship. Grace and O'Keefe, (eds.) (2007), in *The International Handbook of Catholic Education: Challenges for School Systems in the 21st Century* provide an international overview of the Catholic school and the challenges identified relating to the mission of the Catholic school. This enables me to situate this research within a comprehensive international field. It is also of interest to note that the editors of this substantive work dedicate their work “to the memory of the many thousands of religious sisters, priests and teaching brothers who established the work of Catholic education across the world, faithful to the call of Jesus Christ” (vol. 2, p. xiii). This simple sentence in the dedication of the two volumes is an explicit reference to founding values and to the essence of trusteeship. Each author had been asked to write about the challenges for the Catholic school in their own country and to suggest items for an ‘Agenda for future Research’. Some contributors are able to report the results of empirical studies of Catholic schools in their particular national contexts but most of them report that “no significant body of empirical research existed in their societies” (p. xiii).

Each writer contextualizes the Catholic school in relation to his/her own country and then deals with the challenges facing their schools in contemporary times. In a review of the subject index I did not find any reference to trusteeship, ownership or patronage. The index list under Catholic school includes: Catholic school choice,

leadership, vision, school charters, curriculum innovation, discipline, enrolments, parish, sacramental environment, school life and climate, school and service to charity and justice and school spiritual development. These challenges are relevant to the Irish Catholic school, and would be items for an agenda of trusts, boards of management and school principals. The authors also contextualized their schools in the basic contemporary sociological challenges of consumerism, materialism and loss of faith, and in the political and economic difficulty of funding their schools. Because the authors were also invited to submit areas that they would propose for future research it was of interest for this research to see if there was relevant contemporary research, and to examine if any of the identified areas for future research related to the Irish Catholic school trusteeship focus.

Lower end of international research spectrum.

The first outcome from the exploration of *The International Handbook* was the realization that the spectrum of research ranges from poor to impressive. Addressing the lower end of the research spectrum in the first instance James Mulligan in *Challenges for Catholic Schools in Canada* (2007), while providing an in-depth account of the political, economic and cultural challenges being faced, does not even identify future research topics (Mulligan, 2007, pp. 125-145). The very same challenges are so immediate that Daniel Streck and Aldino Segala in *A New Way of being School in Brazil* (2007, believe that Catholic schools in Brazil have “a deficiency of empirical data about Catholic educational institutions” (Streck and Segala, 2007, p. 176) and Jeffrey Klaiber writing about Peru in *Catholic Schools in Peru: Elites, The Poor, and the Challenge of*

Neoliberalism (2007), claims that there are no studies in regard to the quality of Catholic schools, only general presumptions (Klaiber, 2007, p. 193). The Klaiber statement is relevant to the Irish context because here too there were ‘general presumptions’ about schools being Catholic because they were owned by religious but there was no evidence of how to evaluate or challenge that presumption. Sergio Martinic and Mirentxu Anaya in *The Catholic School in the Context of Inequality: The Case of Chile* (2007), are clear that the Catholic school in their country, has ‘a wide space’ and the state does not limit its development but, they admit, there is little educational research (Martinic and Anaya, 2007, p. 208). The overview of research on Catholic schools in Argentina by Ana Maria Cambours de Donini and Carlos Horacio Torrendell in *Catholic Education, State and Civil Society in Argentina* (2007), is disheartening: “Catholic universities produce most of the research. However, these institutions are mainly oriented to professional formation more than to academic or research work” (Donini and Torendell, 2007, p. 223). This theme will be addressed again under the section on future research. Tertiary institutions, especially Catholic institutions, are offered a rich field for a research agenda on the subject of the Catholic school. They also have a responsibility to lead and encourage such research.

Brendan Carmody in *Catholic Church and State Relations in Zambian Education: A Contemporary Analysis* (2007), is specific in his proposal for future research, a proposal which has a related focus to the Irish developments in trusteeship. He asks how charism and ethos will be maintained as the transition from religious to lay management occurs in their institutions (Carmody, 2007, p. 559). He is reflecting an underlying concern in the development of Catholic school trusts in Ireland. This was a key concern

when the Le Chéile congregations met in 2003, and it remains a central concern for the new leadership of the trusts.

Winston Jumba Akala in *The Challenge of Curriculum in Kenya's Primary and Secondary Education: The Response of the Catholic Church* (2007), claims that there are some research data on issues affecting the Catholic church but not on the schools (Akala, 2007, p. 634) and Ethiopia's Argaw Fantu Chernet in *Catholic Education in Ethiopia: Challenges and Prospects* (2007), states that very little is said or done or researched about the effectiveness of Catholic schools; in spite of the fact that many of these schools are of high education profile by the regional and national standards (Chernet, 2007, p. 659). Chernet is reflecting Klaiber's reflection about the presumption that the schools were Catholic. The theme of Catholic school effectiveness and its relationship to Catholic school distinctiveness will be addressed in chapter three. The neglect of this theme is rooted in religious ownership of schools and in their current transfer of that ownership.

Japan and New Zealand are also on the lower end of the Catholic school research spectrum. Jiro Kozaki in *Catholic Schools in Japan: Context and Contemporary Challenges* (2007), proposes a future research agenda which would address the decrease in the numbers of vowed religious in Catholic schools and evangelization (Kozaki, 2007, p. 782). It is interesting that Japan is proposing to research the subject of this thesis. Kevin Wanden and Lyn Birch in *Catholic Schools in New Zealand* (2007), decry the lack of research and they return to the argument above that this may partly be explained by the lack of tertiary Catholic education and research in New Zealand. They add an optimistic note however about a proposed new research unit currently being explored by the New Zealand Catholic Education Office (Wanden and Birch, 2007, p. 827).

The authors from Northern Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands, Scotland and Germany do not claim any significant research on the Catholic school. Aidan Donaldson in *Catholic Education at the Crossroads: Issues facing Catholic Schools in Northern Ireland* (2007), is adamant that the Catholic education system in Northern Ireland is being undermined and expresses an urgency to promote qualitative, objective and systematic research in the distinctive vision of Catholic education (Donaldson, 2007, p. 245). The distinctiveness of the Catholic school is a critical area and will be addressed in chapter three. The contemporary work of Catholic School Partnership (CSP), of which the researcher is a committee member, relates to Donaldson's proposal. Research on Irish primary Catholic schools was conducted 2010-2011 and one of the outcomes was a request from school principals and boards of management to assist the schools in an articulation of the distinctiveness factor. Subsequently pamphlets with simple questions and answers on the Catholic school were produced and made available to all schools and interested bodies. An evaluation instrument has also been developed by the committee in CSP and pilot schools are currently engaged in this exercise.

James Gallagher in *Catholic Schools in England and Wales* (2007), introduces his paper in the context of history, a history which is directly relevant to the narratives of the English Le Chéile congregations: "In the context of England and Wales, disputes about the role of religious belief in state-sponsored education have a long history. Catholic schools, however, have been a feature of the educational scene for over 150 years". He continues by appreciating the rich legacy or heritage of Catholic schooling, and asks a critical question for this research and for the proposed research agenda: "What research is

called for in order to explore more fully the mission of Catholic schools in today's changed circumstances and the ways in which Catholic schools might best respond to the needs and challenges" (Gallagher, 2007, p. 249). This research aims to address that question with a particular focus on twelve religious congregations exploring more fully the mission of the Catholic school, and responding to the immediate challenge of the school's future in Ireland. Gallagher appreciates the English and Welsh dual school system in the modern multi-faith, multi-cultural society of contemporary Britain but is critical of the fact that in the 2005 Catholic Bishops' Conference detailed study of the Church's mission, schools are little mentioned (Gallagher, 2007, p. 266).

Still at the lower end of the spectrum Maria del Mar Griera in *The Education Battle: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Spanish Education System* (2007), declares that research about Catholic education in Spain is hardly existent (del Mar Griera, 2007, p. 306) and Joaquim Azeudo, Antonio Fonseca and Rodrigo Queiriz e Melo in *Contemporary Political Relationships of Catholic Education: Challenges for Catholic Schools in Portugal* (2007), concentrate on future research possibilities (Azeudo, fonseca & e Melo, 2007, p. 327). Aad de Jong in *Towards Participative Identity: Catholic Education in the Netherlands in search of a New Approach* (2007), provides an interesting exploration of participation and communication with other faiths, especially Christian and Muslim communication but does not report specific research outcomes (de Jong, 2007, pp. 367-384). Interestingly, Jamal Khader, Virginie Habib and Sally Kaissien in *Schooling and Catechesis in the Holy Land: Challenges and Responses* (2007), address the same subject, arguing that research is needed to investigate to what extent Christian and Muslim students in the schools actually grow in understanding each

other (Khader, Habib & Laissien, 2007, p. 706). These two papers from the Netherlands and the Holy Land both contribute to a contemporary integration and faith-inclusion challenge for Irish Catholic schools and the issue will be explored in formal conversations with two Le Chéile school principals.

James C. Conroy and Michael McGrath in *Secularisation and Catholic Education in Scotland* (2007), believe that their research tradition is one that focused on the safe ground of history or the politics of Catholic schooling and “has not addressed the beliefs, values and practices of both teachers and students” (Conroy & McGrath, 2007, p. 402). Having traced a number of historical episodes of pro and anti-Catholic theory and experience they conclude that: “there remains a deep socio-political insecurity in Scotland with respect to both Catholic schooling and Catholicism more generally” (p.398). It would be valid to claim that the Irish socio-political context for the development of trusteeship for Catholic schools is also insecure in both its church and in its schools, and it is within that context that the religious congregations made clear decisions about the future of their schools.

A Maltese qualitative study by Mary Darmanin in *Catholic Schooling and the Changing Role of Women: Perspectives from Malta* (2007) is relevant. It focuses on single-sex girls’ Catholic schools and the changing role of women (Darmanin, 2007, pp. 407-432). This study relates in contemporary time to the value which is reflected in many of the Le Chéile narratives. The Dominican Sisters, the Society of the Holy Child, the Cross and Passion Sisters, the Faithful Companions of Jesus, the Religious of Christian Education, and the Religious of Jesus and Mary were founded to educate girls in a Catholic school so that they could take their place in society and in their church.

There is no evidence of significant research on German Catholic schools. Wolfgang Schonig in *Contemporary Challenges for Catholic Schools in Germany* (2007), is critical of the research system. He claims that there is a great vacuum and widespread ignorance of the historical foundations of Catholic schools in the field of educational science. His wish is that “Catholic schools would let their propagated and unique educational weight be empirically proven” (Schonig, 2007, p. 495). Włodzimierz Wieczorek in *Challenges for Catholic Education in Poland* (2007), proudly rejoices in how Polish Catholic schools have survived a Communist regime and he proposes various topics for future research including: the family, social, cultural , or religious situations that constitute the objective conditions in which children live and study (Wieczorek, 2007, pp. 501-515).

Centre of international research spectrum.

Moving towards the centre of the research spectrum there is a positive note even in the title of the South African submission *A Beacon of Hope: Catholic Schooling in South Africa (and Lesotho)* (2007). Brendan Carmody, Mark Potterton and Nathan Johnstone state that 75% of the Catholic schools are rural or in townships and serve black communities, the rest are suburban serving integrated or black communities. Concern about decline in religious staffing and management is linked by the authors with what they perceive as a decline in ‘social capital’: “the resources of faith and values derived from commitment to a religious tradition”. This concern is reflected both in the ecclesial documents in chapter three and in many of the formal conversations with school principals in chapters five, six and seven. South Africa has published a number of

masters and doctoral studies with a focus on Catholic education, and the South African Catholic Institute of Education is engaged in small-scale research and evaluation. Minimal large scale research has been carried out, and the authors express an urgency for researching the impact of secularization on Catholic schools and how to maintain the identity of Catholic schools when fewer and fewer of the teachers and leaders are Catholic (Carmody, Potterton & Johnstone, 2007, pp. 561-577). If this urgency is effective the research outcome will enrich the system of world-wide Catholic schooling.

Susan Pascoe in *Challenges for Catholic Education in Australia* (2007), and Brian Croke in *Australian Catholic Schools in a Changing Political and Religious Landscape* (2007), provide contrasting reports. Pascoe provides a chronological account of research initiatives and a growing commitment to sourcing international best practice (Pascoe, 2007, p. 804), while Croke challenges the system: "Given the extent, duration, and scope of its effort, it is surprising that Catholic education in Australia has been the subject of so little systematic research and critical analysis but new possibilities are emerging" (Croke, 2007, p. 827). It is valuable to have two separate contributions from one country because both perspectives and experiences enrich the outcome. Pascoe concludes her contribution by stating that there is every reason to be optimistic about the Catholic school in Australia because there is a proactive approach by Catholic sector authorities to read the signs of the times and because the schools contribute to the Australian community and to the robustness of the Catholic tradition (Pascoe, 2007, p. 808). Croke in his introductory words about Australia's Catholic schools records the arrival of one of the Le Chéile congregations, the De la Salle Brothers, to an inner-city parish, Marrickville, in Sydney in the 1930s. Croke believes that Casimir College which the brothers founded

“encapsulates the story of Catholic schooling in modern Australia. The school was supported by the fees of the relatively poor Marrickville parents and by the meagre resources of the brothers” (p. 811). Interesting developments in the trusteeship narrative for the De la Salle Brothers in Australia included the advent of government funding for Catholic schools from the early 1970s and the reorganisation of secondary schooling across the Archdiocese of Sydney. The college now forms part of the community of schools whose management and development is supported by the Archdiocesan Catholic Education Office. In chapter four the thesis will be addressing the history and development of trusteeship which will directly reflect this Australian experience. The difference is that Australia was ahead of the Irish in this regard. Their bishops and Catholic school administration moved quickly and with clear focus. Those with responsibility in Ireland meandered for some years but this research narrates its recovery and destination in chapter four. Croke does not say whether the distinctive De la Salle founding values continued within the new Australian trusteeship and this is the particular focus of this research.

Joseph O’Keefe and Aubrey Scheopner in *No Margin, No Mission: Challenges for Catholic Urban Schools in the USA* (2007), report some breakthrough research on trends in Catholic schools and Catholic education, including studies on the history of Catholic schools, enrolment, closures, achievement and financial stability. They suggest that future research on the Catholic school should include in-depth qualitative case studies and interviews with those who have been involved in new models of urban Catholic schools, concentrating on “how struggling Catholic schools can beat the odds to succeed and thrive” (O’Keefe & Scheopner, 2007, pp. 32-33). Merylann Schuttloffel in

Contemporary Challenges to the Recruitment, Formation and Retention of Catholic School Leadership in the USA (2007), challenges Catholic colleges and universities because research on and for Catholic schools has not been a priority for scholars at these institutes. Such research, it is claimed, would benefit both secondary and tertiary systems (Schuttloffel, 2007, pp. 98-99).

Adriana Aristimuno in *Secularization: Challenges for Catholic Schools in Uruguay* (2007), though acknowledging that research is scarce, proposes a list of possible future research topics. Uruguay has a young Catholic schooling system, (independence was secured less than 200 years ago), and secularization has represented the greatest challenge for the Catholic church in Uruguay. Aristimuno proposes a research question: “*How could Catholic education develop a shared and strategic vision across the different religious congregations [...] which is the content of such a shared strategic vision?*” (Aristimuno, 2007, pp. 159-161). Aristimuno’s proposed question accurately reflects the one half of the research question in this thesis, the sharing of values and vision across the twelve congregations. Angelina Gutierrez in *Catholic Schools in the Philippines: Beacons of Hope in Asia* (2007), proposes a related topic for future research in the Philippines: “*How the charisms of religious congregations who run Catholic schools influence the moral practices of students*” (Gutierrez, 2007, p. 722). Both of these writers are making research proposals which reflect the concerns of those involved in the Le Chéile process in Ireland.

From Thailand Kaetkaew Punnachet and Maria Atchara Supavai in *Challenges for the Schools of the Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres in Thailand: A Case Study Account* (2007), give an account of the contemporary challenges and responses of the Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres who, having spent one hundred years in Thailand were re-focusing on the original mission (Punnachet and Supavai, 2007, p. 747). The Thai case study is thematically close to this particular Irish research because the original and contemporary mission being studied is that of the Sisters of Saint Paul the Apostle, one of the twelve Le Chéile congregations and whose original mission was in Chartres. It is, however, a one-dimensional case study concentrating on one congregation and does not engage with the concept of changing trusteeship.

Higher end of international research spectrum.

There is significant research on Catholic schools in India, Italy and France. Nicholas Tete in *Catholic Education in India: Challenge, Response, and Research* (2007), outlines how the Commission for Education and Culture has taken the initiative to make an All India Survey of Catholic educational institutions from 2003-2005. He reports that the Commission for Education and Culture is working closely with Catholic Religious of India and the Catholic Council of India. He identifies Don Bosco Education Society, the Jesuit Educational Association and the Xavier Board of Higher Education as religious groups that are making a sustained effort to study scientifically the concerns raised in the field of Catholic education in India (Tete, 2007, p. 692). However new trusteeship is not specifically addressed.

Maria Luisa De Natale in *The Catholic School System in Italy: Challenges, Responses and Research* (2007), claims that between 1999 and 2005 there have been seven research reports providing a complete framework of the Catholic school in her country. This research is conducted by the Centro Studi Scuolo Cattolica (CSSC). The second of these reports (2000), says that “the Catholic school [...] has showed itself like a place able to give back the past, to work in the present and to introduce what is completely new in a positive form” (p. 333). Future research will define the identity of the Catholic school in a European and intercultural perspective (de Natale, 2007, pp. 445-447).

In 2002 an informative and seminal report, ‘*Towards a Secularism that Understands Religious Culture*’, by the agnostic philosopher Regis Dubray, was published in France. This report was at the request of the French Ministry of National Education. Hugues Derycke in *Catholic Schooling in France: Understanding Le Guerre Scolaire* (2007), believes that this report brought new light into the understanding of secularism itself. The outcome was the creation of a European Institute of Religious Sciences within the Ministry of National Education in France. The Institute’s purpose is to train teachers to teach religious culture. Further plans include the undertaking by the Catholic Universities to support the Catholic educational system in its own research base (Derycke, 2007, pp. 336-337). This is an example of Catholic tertiary institutions leading and supporting research on the Catholic school.

This review of international research on the Catholic school indicates that there is a need for research especially in the areas of trusteeship, identity and Catholic school self-evaluation. There is a sense that the challenges, and on-going coping with and

meeting those challenges moves the value of engaging in research off the agenda. David Tuohy, in *Celebrating the Past, Claiming the Future: Challenges for Catholic Education in Ireland* (2007), admits that there is no tradition of research on specifically Catholic education in Ireland: “the values dimension of the Catholic school has been taken for granted [...] and has not been the subject of specific analysis in research” (Tuohy, 2007, p. 282). The work of Catholic School Partnership (CSP) researching the Irish Catholic primary school and this research on congregational Irish Catholic secondary schools are new.

History.

John Tosh’s basic theory that the contours of the present are understood in the light of the past is developed in *Why History Matters* (2008). This theory is at the core of the research, examining the relationship of values in past and present religious congregational decisions. The illuminating power of the past was also discussed by Jeremy Rayner, Michael Howlett, Ken Rasmussen and Keith Brownsey in their presentation *Bringing the Past Back In: The Revival of History in Policy Studies* at a Humanities Conference in Fatah in 2008. Their claim that an historical context enables us to understand contemporary decisions supports the historical frame for this thesis.

The congregational founding stories are located within the Catholic Christian mission and the seminal work of Theodore W. Moody and Francis X. Martin (eds.) *The Course of Irish History* (1967), provides a relevant and summary context for the beginnings of that mission in Ireland. George F. Mitchell’s *Prehistoric Ireland* (1967), Tomás Cardinal Ó Fiaich’s *The Beginnings of Christianity* (5th and 6th centuries) (1967),

provide the initial elements for the historical frame in early Christian Ireland. Kathleen Hughes exploring The Golden Age of Early Christian Ireland (7th and 8th centuries) (1967), in Patrick Corish's *The Catholic Community in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (1981), expands the historical frame to include the Tudor and penal times which were the immediate contexts for the Catholic response within the Christian mission tradition, and are directly contextual for the founding of the Dominican Sisters and Patrician Brothers and indirectly in the case of the other ten congregations.

Áine Hyland and Kenneth Milne (eds.) (1992), *Irish historical documents* Volume 1, provide documents for a more in-depth study of history, and chapter three is enriched by selections from these documents. This research was not an in-depth historical study, but relied largely on summary contexts and explanatory historical over-views. Miriam Moffitt's *The Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics 1849-1950* (2010), and Susan M. Parkes *A Guide to Sources for the History of Irish Education 1780-1922* (2010), were valuable resources, and citations from these works enrich the history of the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries in church-state relationships in Irish education. These works also provide an informed insight into historical thinking with regard to denominational faith issues in the development of Irish education.

Mary Daly, *The Condition of the People: 1800-1921*, (1981), and Patrick Clancy's *Education in the Republic of Ireland: The Project of Modernity* (1995), were historical sociological resources. Daly's work provided information which informed the foundation of religious women's congregations and their engagement with the State in providing education for girls. Kevin Williams' *Faith and the Nation* (2005), gives a comprehensive background in the relationship of civilization, religion, culture and schooling in Ireland.

Desmond Keenan's *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (1983), is focused on the founding of the Christian Brothers and the development of their schools in Ireland, and was therefore a resource on what is called 'the Second Reformation' which was also critical in the founding of the Holy Faith Sisters. John Coolahan's *Irish education history and structure* (1981), his *Report on the National Education Convention* (1994), and his Introduction to Hyland and Milne's (eds.), *Irish educational documents* (2002), were strong historical texts for the research. All of the above historical texts contribute to the wider frame which cover a Catholic mission in an Ireland of Reformation, Penal Laws, a 'Second Reformation' and the Irish Catholic Church's recovery in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Irish Constitution, Irish Statute Book and other relevant Government publications were accessed through their websites.

Christopher Bellito's *Church History 101 A Concise Overview* (2008), describes the complicated outcome of the English and European Christian Reformations and provides a useful theory that the story of the Reformation is the story of how the words *Christianity* and *Roman Catholicism* came to be no longer synonymous. This history is the contextual frame for the founding of four English Le Chéile congregations. E.E. Reynolds in *The Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales* (1973), and Alan Schreck's *The Compact History of the Catholic Church* (2009), also contributed to that history. Christopher Bellito's *Church History 101* (2008), and Jose Orlandis' *A short history of the Catholic Church* (1983), provided the summary context for the historical frame for the founding of the five French Le Chéile congregations. History is both the contextual and illuminating frame for this research.

The Catholic school.

The research examined founding values for congregations whose schools were being transferred to a new form of ownership in contemporary time. It explored how school principals experienced those values operating in their Catholic schools. The research also engaged the new lay leadership of the Le Chéile Trust in its responsibility for the schools. The congregational schools are Catholic schools embedded in the mission of the church. The thesis, therefore, addresses the church's teaching on the school, its identity and distinctiveness, the relationship of the school and Catholic education and critiques of the Catholic school.

Second Vatican Council documents which were accessed include: *Lumen Gentium* (1964), *Gravissimum Educandis* (1965), and *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (1965). Papal encyclicals, ecclesial documents from the Congregation for Catholic Education and other relevant church documents which are cited in the thesis include: *Spectata Fides* (1885), *On Christian Education* (1929), *The Catholic School* (1977), *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1982), *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988), *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997), *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, (2005), J. Michael Miller, *The Ecclesial Dimension of Catholic Education* (2006), *Educating Together in Catholic Schools* (2007), and the Irish episcopal document *Vision 08* (Irish Bishops Conference, 2008).

These documents provide a chronological development of Catholic church thinking and official teaching on the theology of the Catholic school. They provided the fundamental theoretical framework within which the new Le Chéile Trust was being

developed. Dermot Lane's *Catholic Education and the School: Some Theological Reflections* (1991), Anne Looney's *The Pilgrim School: From Hedge to Hope* (2003), and Andrew Mc Grady's *The Religious Dimension of Education* (2006), further developed this theoretical dimension.

Terence McLaughlin's *The Distinctiveness of Catholic Education* (1996), and his work *Liberalism Education and Schooling Essays* (2008), with John Sullivan *Catholic Education, Distinctive and Inclusive* (2001), contribute informed and incisive arguments about the distinctive nature of the Catholic school. A strong response enriches the debate in Kevin Williams' *The common school and the Catholic school: a response to the work of T.H. McLaughlin* (2010).

Thomas Groome, *What Makes us Catholic?* (2003), and *Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland* (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010), with Dermot Lane's work referred to above were the sources for an exploration of the relationship between Catholic education and the Catholic school. Groome develops Lane's approach by returning to the earliest forms of Catholic education while the *National Directory* combines both theory and practice in a clear delineation of both school and education and the responsibilities proper to each.

Critiques, some strong and strident, are found in the work of Maire Nic Ghiolla Phádraig's *The Power of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Ireland* (1995), Joseph McCann's *Improving Our Aim* (2003), and Peter McVerry's *I can't always say what you want to hear* (2003). Nic Ghiolla Phádraig locates her critique of power in both the institutional church and in the schools owned by that institution. The literature supporting and complementing this critique are addressed below under trusteeship. Joan Chittister

Reimagining the Catholic School in this New Century (2003), challenges the models of Catholic school leadership, and also challenges the use of power. McVerry believes that the Catholic school does not challenge the injustices of the educational system.

The *Le Chéile Charter* (2009), which is the current statement of mission, philosophy and heritage of the congregational schools, is cited throughout the thesis.

Trusteeship.

The historical literature outlined above is the context for the development of ownership, patronage or trusteeship discussed in chapter four. Dympna Glendenning's *Education and the Law* (1999), contains a valuable legal approach to that history and is cited appropriately. The 1998 *Irish Education Act* is at the core of Glendenning's work but the historical frame and her legal-historical approach informs the exploration of contemporary trusteeship in chapter four. Thomas Kellaghan in *The Interface of Research, Evaluation, and Policy in Irish Educational Policy Process & Substance* (1989), D.G. Mulcahy & Denis O'Sullivan (eds.) and the *Report on Irish Education* (OECD,1991), also engage with the many factors that are integral to the complicated contemporary history of Irish Catholic school trusteeship.

Sean O'Connor in *A Troubled Sky: Reflections on the Irish Educational Scene 1957-1968* (1986), offers a unique perspective on the specific developments between 1957 when the state began to take its own responsibility for education seriously and 1968 when the state became the major funder for the secondary school sector with the introduction of the free education scheme. O'Connor's perspective is unique because he was secretary general in the state's Department of Education during these crucial years

and thus was professionally at the centre of both the political thinking and the bureaucratic decisions involved with these developments. Tom O'Donoghue and Judith Harford in *A Comparative History of Church-state Relations in Irish Education* (2011), provide an objective and scholarly assessment of the relationship between the Catholic church and the state and how this relationship impacted on the trusteeship of the schools.

Nano Brennan in *Christian Education, Contestation and the Catholic School* (1996), is one of the strong religious Catholic voices of the 1990s. She argues that religious should face up to the challenges of school ownership, and challenges both religious and lay to recognize that the responsibility for the future of the schools is both a church and a lay responsibility. Teresa McCormack and Peter Archer's research and publications are critical resources in understanding the initial steps taken to address trusteeship by CORI in the 1980s-1990s. Their work in *Voluntary Secondary Schools* (CORI Publications, 1996), and their seminal Handbook for the leaders of religious congregations: *The trusteeship of Catholic voluntary secondary schools* (CORI Publications, 1996), are the only published work by any Catholic trusteeship body of that period. David Tuohy's *Celebrating the Past: Claiming the Future* (2007), and Aidan McGrath, *Trusteeship of Catholic Schools: a look down the road ahead* (2010), add to the Catholic perspective and are valuable resources. Noel Keating's *Trusteeship and Mission Integrity: Having Faith in Our Schools* (2006), is the only published book on contemporary Irish Catholic school trusteeship. It focuses on the charism and heritage of the Presentation Sisters and addresses the Irish political, economic and social landscape, increased pluralism and indifference towards religion and religious values. In this it complements the research of the Le Chéile congregations. Keating also introduces the

concept of mission integrity and how that integrity can be evaluated. The work of David Tuohy, Aidan McGrath and Noel Keating are valuable resources, as it is within the time of the actual transfer of trusteeship from religious congregations to lay trusts.

Congregational narratives.

There was a dearth of published literature available on the history of the twelve congregations. The research did access a number of internal congregational published and unpublished pamphlets and documents of varying scholarly quality. Máire Kealy's *Dominican Education in Ireland 1820-1930* (2007), is the substantive published resource on the Dominican Sisters. Kealy contributes valuable information not just on her own congregation but on the many threads in the history of both secondary and tertiary Catholic education for girls in Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A systematic hagiography is provided by Margaret Gibbons' *Life of Margaret Aylward* (1928). It includes letters and reports of the founding story of the Holy Faith Sisters, and complements Jacinta Prunty's work, *Lady of Charity, Sister of Faith Margaret Aylward 1810-1889* (1999), a more recent work which is comprehensive in its historical and sociological context and is very helpful in demonstrating how the narrative identifies founding values. Linus Walker, *The Purpose of His Will* (1981), and internal congregational publications support the research of the founding of the Patrician Brothers. *A Love full of Action*, (Holy Child Sisters Congregational DVD, 2008), is informative about the foundress, and *Handing on the Charism: Cornelia Connelly's Vision for Education* (2001), an internal document by Anne Murphy develops that founding story. Eithne Leonard who wrote *Frances Taylor, Mother Magdalen S.M.G.: A Portrait 1832-*

1900 (2005), was also the source for a most interesting book *Irish Homes and Irish Hearts* written by the congregation's foundress, Fanny Taylor, and published in London in 1867. John Scarisbrick's *Selly Park and Beyond* (1997), with internal unpublished documents contributes to the narrative of the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle, and Dom Antoine Marie's *Claudine Thevenet* (1998), introduces the foundress of the Religious of Jesus and Mary. Mary Ann Strain's *Elizabeth Prout, An Extraordinary Life* (1999), and Anne Reynolds' internal congregational document (1998), both provide the hagiography of the foundress and the founding story of the Cross and Passion Sisters. Sister Pauline in an internal St Louis document provides information on the arrival of the sisters in Ireland and the founding of their schools in this country. Brothers John Neary and John Towey in their internal congregational documents contribute to the narrative of John Baptist de la Salle, the founding of his schools and the reason the brothers came to Ireland. When published or unpublished documentary literature was not available or when what was available needed some further support congregational websites were accessed.

Outcomes.

The final chapter of the thesis which presents the outcomes of the research was supported and enriched by the following literature: John Dewey, *How We Think* (1910), Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956* (1973), Avery Dulles' *Models of Church* (2002), Louise Fuller's *New Ireland and the Undoing of the Catholic Legacy: Looking Back to the Future* (2006), Tony Flannery (ed.) *Responding to the Ryan Report* (2009), Ethna Regan's *But Now You Speak at Last, The Rights of the Child after the Shadows of Hiberno-Christendom* (2009), and a recent substantive work on justice in

practice and experience, Ethna Regan *Theology and the Boundary Discourse of Human Rights* (2010).

Four theological works expand on what must be a short consideration of the religious life. In *Finding The Treasure* (2000), and in *Selling All* (2001), Sandra Schneiders reviews the extraordinary changes which have taken place since Vatican II for those who remained in this way of life. Ten of the twelve congregations involved in the Le Chéile Trust are women religious and Schneiders provides a substantive and definitive work for religious sisters. Barbara Fiand in *Refocusing the Vision* (2001), and Timothy Radcliffe's work *Sing A New Song: The Christian Vocation* (1999), examine the challenges within a vision for the future. All three authors write from both their experience in living religious life and giving leadership within their congregations, and with a theological background and authority.

Methodology

Marion Dadds and Susan Hart in *Doing Practitioner Research Differently* (2001), inform the direction for the methodological structure of this research. They support a directional freedom to construct a methodology which serves the research claiming that: “No methodology is, or should, be cast in stone, if we are to accept that professional intention should be informing research processes, not pre-set ideas about methods or techniques” (Dadds & Hart, 2001, pp. 166-169). Therefore the chosen methodology for this research is qualitative using a case-study of historical character undertaken by means of documentary evidence and evidence from oral history. Sharan B. Merriam in *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (1998), advises that

qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. “It is assumed that meaning is embedded in people’s experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the investigator’s own perceptions” (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). This research set out to understand the meanings which congregational leaders, their representatives in the Le Chéile Working Group and their school principals constructed regarding the relationship of founding and contemporary values. The researcher was centrally involved in this understanding by creating the focused questions for the formal conversations or semi-structured interviews, by conducting the interviews and processing the analysis and synthesis. Historiography, exploring contextual history, documentary and hagiography, oral and contemporary history, all merge to facilitate the research purpose.

Documentary history.

John Tosh argues in *Why History Matters* (2008), that time and again, complex policy issues are placed before the public without adequate explanation of how they have come to assume their present shape, and without any hint of the possibilities that are disclosed by the record of the past. “To know the past can illuminate the contours of the present” (Tosh, 2008, p. viii). This theory, that the past illuminates the contours of the present, was discussed at the Humanities Conference in Fatih University, Istanbul, 15-18 July, 2008. Jeremy Rayner, Michael Howlett, Ken Rasmussen and Keith Brownsey in their presentation *Bringing the Past Back In: The Revival of History in Policy Studies* claimed that a renewed interest in historical approaches, metaphors of historical

sequencing, and a growing awareness of historical analysis helps us understand contemporary problems. Following through on this understanding of the importance of history it was hoped that the research would enable the Le Chéile congregations to understand their present challenges and decisions, and would engage contemporary principals of schools in understanding not only the changing status of trusteeship but would also provide an understanding of the underlying values of past and present. It was also hoped that this research would provide the founding and contemporary history for the Le Chéile archives into the future. The documentary history of Ireland, England and France is contextual for the founding narratives and values of the twelve congregations and it also provides a framework for the oral histories in the formal conversations.

Oral history.

Oral history methodology has been employed to collect the living narratives and to identify the lived founding values in each of the Le Chéile congregations. The research aimed to hear the story of the individual foundings through the living understanding of congregational leaders as they were making significant decisions which would reflect the ‘founding intention’. I engaged with the twelve leaders in living archival conversations. Robert Perks in *Oral History: Talking about the Past* (1995), supports the value of such engagement: “Oral history is thought-provoking, challenging, exciting to collect, rewarding to use and historically vitally important if we are to have not only a more accurate picture of our past, but also a more rounded view [...]” (Perks, 1992, p. 32). Relevant published and internal documents provide the narratives in one form, the research conversations provide the thought-provoking and rewarding living stories.

Judith Moyer in *Step-by-Step Guide to Oral History* (1999), explains that oral history is the systematic collection of living people's testimony. In collecting oral history, she claims, we have a sense of catching and holding something valuable from the receding tide of the past (Moyer, 1999, p. 2). Paul Ashton in *On the Record: A Practical Guide to Oral History* (1994), believes that oral history is as old as speech. Citing Janet McCalman's *Straggletown: Public and Private Life in Richmond 1900-1965* (1984), he provides an insight which reflects the research experience of gathering the congregational living narratives. Mc Calman's theory is that all history is the history of the present because each generation rewrites history in the context of its own current values and preoccupations. This she believes "serves to make sense of the past and define our evolving sense of identity" (McCalman, 1984, p. 182). McCalman is accurately reflecting what the congregational leaders were doing as they spoke about their congregations' founding, how that narrative was alive in their identification of founding values, and how those values were informing present decisions about trusteeship. The methodology for the oral history included composing the letters of invitation to the leaders of the congregations, securing ethical permission for conducting the conversations, and their use in this research thesis.

The research was an invitation to the congregations to engage with their own histories, their values and their current wisdom. Formal conversation with the rigour of a semi-structured interview was the core research action and respecting the wisdom of the collaborators through active listening is its embedded value. The research rests largely on the methodology of oral history through semi-structured interviews. Jim Gleeson used a similar method in his substantive work, *Curriculum Context: Partnership, Power and*

Praxis in Ireland (2009). In the introduction to his work he explains that while he draws on a wide range of national and international literature he inter-weaves interview data with this literature.

D.J. Clandinin & F.M. Connelly in *Narrative inquiry: experience and story in qualitative research* (2000), reflect the Le Chéile congregations' experience in the research: "We are therefore not only concerned with life as it is experienced in the here and now but also with life as it is experienced on a continuum in people's lives, institutional lives, lives of things" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 19). In 2003 the congregations were making decisions regarding school trusteeship, they were "concerned with life as it is experienced in the here and now". They were also engaged in the continuum of the history of their institutional lives. The research enabled them in that continuum by inviting them to engage in the history and the identification of the relationship of past and contemporary values: "Just as we found our own lives embedded within a larger narrative of social science inquiry, the people, schools and educational landscapes we study undergo day-by-day experiences that are contextualized within a longer-term historical narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.19).

Co-operative inquiry.

The research was enriched by congregational co-operation. John Heron and Peter Reason claim in *The Practice of Co-operative Inquiry: Research 'with' rather than 'on' People* (2006), that co-operative inquiry is a way of working with other people who have similar concerns and interests (Heron & Reason, 2006, p. 144). As a researcher I was a member of the Le Chéile Working Group for three years before the research began.

When the research process was initiated in 2006 it was explained to the congregations that they were being invited to participate, and the desired outcomes of the research were agreed with them. The twelve congregations not only agreed to participate in the research but were enthusiastic about engaging in a study of both the founding and contemporary values which were integral to the decisions being made about trusteeship for the schools.

Research Procedure

Systematic methodological steps included letters of invitation, telephone calls, ethical guidelines and forms for written acceptance. The same procedure was conducted with the school principals. The proposed questions for the formal research conversation which were sent to the congregational leaders included:

- *Talk to me about your founder/foundress... Where do you see their contribution in God's Mission Plan.....*
- *Reflecting on the life of....(foundress/founder), and of the early members of your congregation explain why founding schools was a core mission for them....*
- *What evidence do you have in the written traditions, in your archives, that help you to understand the cultures that influenced the mission of the school foundations....*
- *Which contextual Irish issues and present cultures in our country are influencing your present processing of Trusteeship within Le Chéile...*

- *Talk to me about the needs in Ireland today, and how your congregation responds to that....*
- *Is the le Chéile process responding to those needs?*

Ethical permission was secured in written form. It was clear that the subject being researched was non-contentious, and that no limitations were to be placed on the use of the material in the conversations. The conversations were recorded, transcribed and returned to the leaders for editing and to secure confirmation of their accuracy and relevance.

Founding values were then identified and were submitted to the members of the Le Chéile Working Group. The accompanying questionnaire posed three questions:

- *Does the research account reflect your own living narrative, i.e. the story as it would be told today, of your congregation's founding?*
- *Does the research list of Founding Values include what you believe should be included?*
- *Is there anything you would like to add?*

The next research engagement was with the principals of congregational schools. A similar procedure of letters of information, invitation and ethical commitment was followed by the provision of the identified founding values. The letter stated that the 'voice' of a contemporary congregational principal was significant in the research and the proposed questions included:

- *Which of these values [enclosed list of pertinent congregational founding values] do you experience in the life of this school and why?*
- *What is the evidence of congregational heritage in the school e.g. pictures, booklets, celebrations, rituals.....?*
- *What is the greatest challenge for a Le Chéile Catholic School in Ireland at this time?*

Subsequent to the research conversations the emerging values were mapped with the values created in the Le Chéile Charter. Validity for the research was ensured by triangulation of data from past history, relevant documents and oral history, supplemented by regular Le Chéile Working Group member checks and peer examination. The initial exploration of congregational literature, documents and websites was challenging. The research aimed at using documentary history to reflect and validate oral history which would emerge in the formal conversations. The Le Chéile Working Group members were asked to provide relevant documents. As stated above provision was on a spectrum from published hagiography and congregational histories of some congregations to those who could only provide internal unpublished documents. To supplement and enrich the written narratives congregational websites were also accessed.

Religious Life

Founding values for Le Chéile are rooted in the context already presented, in the ecclesial documents in chapter three and in the heritage stories to be found in chapters five, six and seven. As already stated, decisions about the future of schools engaged the life and vocation of the religious congregations involved. It is pertinent therefore for the research to briefly address that way of life and that choice of vocation in contemporary time.

Perfectae Caritatis (Second Vatican Council, 1965), addressed the adaptation and renewal of religious life. Religious were instructed to commit themselves to a “constant return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original spirit of the institutes and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time” (no. 2). Forty years later, *Starting Afresh from Christ: A Renewed Commitment to Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2002), reminds religious that “It is precisely in the simple day-to-day living that consecrated life progressively matures to become the proclamation of an alternative way of living to that of the world and the dominant culture”. The document claims that the religious style of life suggests “a spiritual therapy for the evils of our time”. Thus it is seen as a blessing and a reason for hope in the very life of the church. (no. 6)

Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2002), focuses specifically on the role of religious women and men, ‘consecrated persons’ in the Catholic school. In the opening article they are challenged to be “recognizable signs of reconciled humanity”. It is interesting that the document continues the theme of the Sacred Congregation’s *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witness to*

Faith (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). The thread of a unified yet distinct role for lay women and men with religious, is pertinent in the context of reconfiguration of trusteeship for Catholic schools, which is the subject of this research. This teaching of the Congregation of Catholic Education is developed further in *Educating Together in Catholic Schools* (2007):

[...] the mission of the Catholic school, lived as a community formed of consecrated persons and lay faithful, assumes a very special meaning and demonstrates a wealth that should be acknowledged and developed...They are required to be witnesses of Jesus Christ and to demonstrate Christian life as bearing light and meaning for everyone. (no. 15)

A constant theme in the educational documents is an affirmation and invitation to religious to continue and/or to return to the mission of the Catholic school. Their charism, to which they were required to return in *Perfectae Caritatis* is, they are told, their gift to the church. The Le Chéile Charter (2009), recognizes this gift:

A Charism involves a particular call to Faith. It is a way of reading and responding to the Christian message. In Religious Congregations it is seen in the choice of ministry and the way the members of the congregation engage in that ministry. The Charism is a gift to the members of the congregation, and it is also a gift to the Church. (p. 9)

In *Selling All* (2001), Sandra Schneiders provides an insightful reflection on the Vatican II direction regarding the founding charism. She claims that what religious understood as ‘the apostolate’ was intrinsic and central to their apostolic form of religious life. She claims that ministry or apostolate was/is “proper to our life and exercised in the name of the church” (p. 396). The thread of charism will be central to the development of the research in chapters five, six and seven. In *Finding The Treasure* (2000), Schneiders provides an insight into the lives of religious, especially women religious in the decades since Vatican II. Post Vatican II women religious she says, made the passage from the middle ages to post-modernity, a journey that took western humanity nearly seven hundred years to accomplish. Such a transitional journey, she believes, is unprecedented in scale, scope, depth and radicality (Schneiders, 2000, p. 100). The contemporary religious is experiencing “corporately as well as personally something akin to what John of the Cross called the Dark Night”, a dangerous and painful purificatory passage from a known and comfortable but somewhat immature spirituality to a radically new experience of God” (Schneiders, 2000, p. 106). She argues that this does not necessarily signal either the end of religious life, nor the necessity to deconstruct it into a radically postmodern experiment in occasionality but it does demand deep reflection on the relationship between religious life and contemporary culture if this life is to be comprehensible to contemporaries or even to religious themselves (p. 118). Schneiders locates the present experience of religious women and men within the gospel experience of homelessness. They are called, she believes, to be citizens of wherever they are in time and space, recognizing only one absolute claim, that of God, and therefore they are strengthened to cross any barrier or frontier of land, resources or people, even the new

frontiers of religious life itself. Barbara Fiand in *Refocusing the Vision* (2001), focuses her theological perspective on post-modern times, “[...] times of great change and uncertainty, times of conflict and doubt, of social as well as ethical confusion” (p. 19). Fiand is reflecting Schneiders in the challenge she puts forward for contemporary religious, “Who our God is, who we are, and how we are related in authenticity are questions that may not remain speculative any longer” (Fiand, 2001, p. 51). Timothy Radcliffe’s work *Sing A New Song: The Christian Vocation* (1999), continues these reflections by presenting an interesting perspective on Vatican II and the concept of ‘vocation’. Addressing criticism of the clericalization of the church he believes that the related paradox is that when the Council proclaimed the new theology of the laity the church became even more clerical. Radcliffe sees this in the context of the transformation of western culture which was happening parallel to the ideological transformation of the new church teachings. The lay and the religious vocations became subsumed in the new global market:

A job is just a response to a demand. And so when the Catholic Church entered the modern world with a bang, when Pope John XXIII threw open the windows, a cold wind blew down all sorts of fragile vocational identities within the Church as well. (Radcliffe, 1999, p. 194)

Responding to his own question, “Who are we religious and what is our vocation in the church?” Radcliffe argues for a response within the human crisis of identity. If we religious can recover a confidence in our vocation, we will reflect something of the

human vocation, and we will touch on what it means to be human (Radcliffe, 1999, p. 196). It is within the ethos and culture of humanity that the Christian vocation and therefore the religious vocation is rooted. Schneiders, Fiand and Radcliffe, themselves religious and theologians contribute pertinent reflections for this research.

Within this chapter it is sufficient to say that religious women and men, and in a more focused way, apostolic religious whose primary ministry is education, have lived the past forty years responding to challenges and changes, within and without, in the life to which they originally committed themselves. Many who left that life are now central to, and exercise leadership in, the excellent lay body of teachers, principals and management personnel currently working in Catholic schools and in the new trusts. The religious of the twelve Le Chéile congregations may identify with Schneiders, Fiand and Radcliffe as they re-visit their founding narratives, re-identify their founding values and relate these values to those which are motivating them in configuring the new trust.

Conclusion

The literature which informs and enriches the thesis and the methodology which structured the research are the two structural pillars for the research and its outcomes. The religious are the principal participants in the process for transferring trusteeship. Before the thesis addresses the living narratives or formal conversations, which forms the central body of the research two essential and immediately contextual subjects will be explored.

The Catholic school in the next chapter is the medium of mission chosen by the religious founders and by the congregations in contemporary time, and trusteeship is the method chosen for securing the future of those schools and will be addressed in chapter four. The research question is asking if the values of the past and present choices for these schools are related.

Chapter Three

The Catholic School: A Conceptual Enquiry

Introduction

There are different types of post-primary school in the Irish education system which allows a measure of choice to parents. The second-level sector comprises voluntary secondary schools, which are generally denominational (for example, Roman Catholic or Protestant), community schools and comprehensive schools that are multi-denominational and vocational schools and community colleges which are not denominationally specific. This research on the trusteeship for Catholic schools is not resting on a presumption or arguing that Catholic voluntary secondary schools are better than community or vocational schools. It considers the Catholic school in its identity and distinctiveness, and explores the reason for its existence within the context of the provision of other school sectors.

This chapter will examine relevant ecclesial teaching about the Catholic school. This will range from pre-Vatican II to contemporary documents, and will consider how these principles are influencing current movements in the area of Catholic school trusteeship. The church documents used in this section were reviewed in chapter two. These documents provide the bedrock of theological and educational theory for the Catholic school community and are significant for the development of new trusteeship. The theoretical section on the Catholic school will be followed by consideration of how Catholic education and the Catholic school interface. The chapter continues by entering

the challenging discourse on the Catholic school and the ‘common’ school. The chapter concludes by addressing relevant and challenging critiques of the Catholic school.

Ecclesial Teaching on the Catholic School

Entering the maze of discerning, reading and responding to the question of ‘what is the Catholic school’ it is necessary in the first instance to consider the authoritative ecclesial documents. These are solemn voices, authoritative teaching and in the context of this research are the theoretical bedrock. Many of the documents were written after the founding of the twelve Le Chéile congregations but all were available for the contemporary re-configuration of trusteeship for the congregations’ schools in the Le Chéile Trust.

J. Michael Miller, Secretary to the Congregation for Catholic Education, in *Challenges Facing Catholic Schools: A View from Rome* (2007), locates the school within the “Petrine ministry of leading, teaching, and pastoring the universal church” (p. 449). The Catholic school finds its mission and life within the mission of the church, and despite the many challenges: “the Holy See regards church schools as irreplaceable instruments in carrying out Christ’s command. Catholic schools are truly a gift to the church, local communities and the world” (Miller, 2007, pp. 449-480).

The theoretical provenance for the Catholic school mission is in the gospel. It is within the gospel context that each ecclesial document is situated, it is in the story of Jesus Christ that the Catholic school will find its first roots and its core mission: “It is Christ that the school must proclaim; it is a personal relationship with God in Christ that it must offer” (McGrady, 2006, p. 186). Donal Dorr in *Mission in Today’s World* (2000),

reflected the same inspiration when exploring the concept of ‘evangelization’ which means ‘bringing good news’. Bringing the good news of God’s love and redemption was the mission of Jesus, therefore the Catholic school must proclaim that good news. Moreover, within the experience of attending such a school the student must experience a system that proclaims the mission of Jesus, and enables the development of faith in and relationship with God in Christ. The word ‘evangelization’ is used twenty four times in the synoptic gospels. Dorr continues his explanation of ‘evangelization’ by citing Jesus, commencing His public ministry, reading from the prophet Isaiah:

Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing’ (Lk 4:18-21). The good news is that God has a plan, an ‘eternal purpose’, which is brought into effect through Jesus (Eph3:11). The divine plan involves allowing us human beings to have access to God through Jesus. (Eph 3:12 quoted in Dorr, 2000, pp. 77-78)

This is the core value, the Good News of God’s plan, and brought into effect by Jesus Christ. To understand that the Catholic school is part of the church’s mission of evangelization is central to understanding the founding congregational stories and the values embedded in them. During the early Le Chéile Working Group meetings, and in informal conversations with its members, there were difficulties with the word ‘evangelization’, and with the concept that the Catholic school was expected to exercise an evangelical role and responsibility. The Working Group was composed of members of religious congregations who through their vows were publicly committed to the mission

of Jesus Christ, and to their founders/foundresses particular charisms. Some members struggled with the word, and all were conscious that the schools, the lay principals and the teachers might not be comfortable with the concept of finding themselves described as evangelisers. As David Tuohy worked with the group the members became more theologically informed and literate, and they realized that they had to work respectfully and patiently with the schools. The embryo trust was being challenged to recognise the common denominator, the mission of Jesus and that mission within the church. David Tuohy's clear theological and educational guidance was informing, forming and transforming religious women and men within the reconfiguration process. They had to recognise that if they were struggling with theological and ecclesial literacy the school communities would also struggle. After six years of discourse the Working Group produced the Le Chéile Charter which cogently and unambiguously states: "The Le Chéile Trust will therefore participate in the same mission of the Church [...] the mission of the Church includes 'evangelisation' and 'discipleship'. The work of 'discipleship' helps participants understand the practical implications of that dignity in their relationships with others and with the world around them" (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, pp. 2-3). This claim is embedded within the ecclesial teaching of the Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988): "The Catholic school finds its true justification in the mission of the Church; it is based on an educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony." (no. 34)

Pre-conciliar documents.

An exploration of ecclesial documents, relevant to schools and to education, begins with Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), and continues through the writings of Pius XI (1922-1939), into conciliar and post-conciliar teaching. The documents provide an insight into institutional educational teaching during the period when a number of the Le Chéile congregations were founded.

Pope Leo XIII in *Spectata Fides* (1885), wrote to affirm the English bishops for the efforts they were making in developing Catholic schools. He describes the sociological context as one in which “the tender age of childhood is threatened on every side by so many and such various dangers” and therefore the Catholic school is required because it is “our greatest and best inheritance”. In the contextual history of the Catholic church in England (chapter six) we see that it was at this time the English church was moving from its underground safety and its European colleges. It is therefore interesting to note that Pope Leo identifies a political and sociological value for the renewal of Catholic schools: “the future condition of the state depends upon the early training of its children” (*Spectate Fides*, no. 4).

The papal claim that the Catholic school provides what is now called ‘social capital’ for society and state will be latent or explicit in later writings. Pope Pius XI in *On Christian Education* (1929), juxtaposes the claim with the problems facing Catholic schools in different countries: “Such insistence is called for in these our times, when, alas, there is so great and deplorable an absence of clear and sound principles, even regarding problems the most fundamental” (no. 3). It is useful to note that Miller made the same claim in his contribution, *Challenges Facing Catholic Schools: A View from*

Rome (Miller, 2007). It might then be argued that from 1929 to 2007, an explicit and formal institutional claim is being made that the Catholic school contributes to the common good, to society. Pius XI concluding this document asked that it would be “loudly proclaimed and well understood and recognized by all” that Catholics in agitating for Catholic schools are “engaged in a religious enterprise demanded by conscience” (*On Christian Education*, 1929, no. 85). A significant note is struck in recognizing the ‘good teacher’, and a clear acknowledgment of the importance of the role of the lay teacher. “Indeed it fills Our soul with consolation [...] to see, side by side with religious men and women engaged in teaching, such a large number of excellent lay teachers” (no. 87-88).

The generative values identified in these early twentieth-century ecclesial documents will be found in varying shades in later proclamations. The language and emphases will change. One does not find phrases like “preparing man for what he must be in order to attain the sublime end”, but if one pursues original themes that message will be found. An assertion that the church “is absolutely superior to the family and civil society” would not rate highly on the value scale in contemporary documents, nor would the summary dismissal of the ‘neutral school’ (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1929, no. 3).

Noel Keating in *Trusteeship and Mission Integrity* (2006), reads the church documents of this period as an indication that the pre-Vatican II church existed in opposition to the modern world as shaped by the Enlightenment. The church was, he believes, inward-looking, protectionist and defensive (p. 33). Vatican II brought a new openness, recognizing that the church had much to contribute to and also much to learn from the world (Keating, 2006, p. 34).

Second vatican council documents.

On January 25, 1959 Pope John XXIII announced the 21st ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church, a Council which would last from 1961 to 1965. It was convened not to deal with heresy or discipline but to renew the church. Respecting the centrality of the major document the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (Second Vatican Council, 1964), and its teaching that the church is the ‘people of God’ and valuing its identification of the service role in offices such as priest and bishop, the focus for this thesis is in the Council’s document on education, *Gravissimum Educationis*. This document locates the education mission of the church within the mandate which it received “from her divine founder to announce the mystery of salvation [...] she has therefore a part to play in the development and extension of education” (no. 4). The inspirational elements of mission and vocation are juxtaposed with the moral imperatives of ‘mandate’ and ‘obligation’. This potentially confrontational discourse, which continues to engage Catholic educators, enters the formal Vatican Council literature. The debate will be addressed again in the final chapter of the thesis. Suffice it to say here that the document is quite explicit in the value the church places on the system of the Catholic school, and its mission for those in need. The sacred Synod affirms once more the right of the church freely to establish and conduct schools of all kinds and grades. The Council earnestly entreats pastors and all the faithful “to spare no sacrifice in helping Catholic schools fulfill 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” (Second Vatican Council, 1965, no. 9). Responsibility for the materially and spiritually poor will

continue to be central in the research thesis, in the founding of religious congregations, and in the reconfiguration of trusteeship.

The themes selected from *Gravissimum Educationis* are similar in content and claim to those of the earlier ecclesial documents. They include: the church's mandate, obligation and rights, the concept of the school as a system and as a community, and particularly the core threads of welfare for the whole life of man in this world as it relates to his heavenly vocation. The basic claims are similar to those of the Pre-Vatican II era, but the shades are lighter, the emphases not as didactic, and the tone more open. Substantively the teaching about the church's rights and control are similar but there is a stronger engagement with the reader through its language. One might even argue that the papal Vatican II initiative is reflected in the spirit of the language used. An image of school as 'community' rather than 'institution' is a new model, one which is still being developed, and which is articulated in the Le Chéile Charter as will be shown later. In the Mission of the Le Chéile Trust the founding congregations had committed themselves to develop the concept of school community, "[and to] develop the schools of the Congregations in the service of their local communities, the State and the Church" (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 3). The challenge of insertion in, and collaborating with, the local parish community is an ongoing agenda. The challenge of experiencing the official church as 'community' is critical. A relatively recent Irish challenge is how the Catholic school welcomes and contributes to the appropriate faith development of children of an alternative faith. This theme emerges in some of the research conversations in later chapters. Each of these values will be recognized in the founding stories and will be identified within the final analysis of values in the reconfiguration of trusteeship.

Post-conciliar documents.

The teaching of *Gravissimum Educationis* is developed in *The Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). The obligation to provide Catholic schools is a feature of the Vatican II document. The why, what and how questions regarding the Catholic school are addressed in this inspirational post Vatican II document. The church and, by extension the school, must proclaim the good news of salvation. Once again there is a clear didactic link between Jesus Christ's mission, the church's responsibility and the Catholic school.

To carry out her saving mission, the Church uses, above all, the means which Jesus Christ has given her [...] She establishes her own schools because she considers them as a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole man, since the school is a centre in which a specific concept of the world, of man, and of history is developed and conveyed. (*The Catholic School*, 1977, no. 8)

This document claims that the school is not just a medium for mission but that in itself it is a witness to the church's mission and its search for truth. Apart from the witness that individual members can give, the church is claiming that through her institutions, in this instance the school, she will also give witness. This is an insightful and explicit teaching reflecting systemic thinking. The whole system as a unit, a whole, and not just in some of its parts, is required to be a witness. The Catholic school is identified then as a sub-system, an institution belonging within the larger system, the institutional church. This permits one to explore what *might* be distinctive in the Catholic

school. The word *might* is discretely chosen. The “privileged means” envisaged in the document of forming “a specific concept of the world, of man, and of history” is a key aspiration. It is located in the mandate of ‘right and responsibility’ of the church, but it is dependent on those who lead and teach in the school, on the location of the school’s mission within the local and universal church mission, and the implied just and appropriate relationships in that location.

A natural progression in the contextual discourse is to consider the document, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). It returns to a theme in the 1929 document which addressed the significance of the role of the lay teacher. Its basic claim is that the role of the lay teacher cannot be reduced to a ‘profession’. “Professionalism is marked by, and raised to, a super-natural Christian vocation. The life of the Catholic teacher must be marked by the exercise of a personal vocation in the Church, and not simply by the exercise of a profession” (no. 37). Each member of the lay school staff, including auxiliary staff, constitutes “an element of great hope for the Church” (no. 81). *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988), also addresses the role of the teacher. From the first moment a student enters a Catholic school “[...] he or she ought to have the impression of entering [an environment] illumined by the light of faith”. Prime responsibility for creating this unique climate “[...] rests with the teachers, as individuals and as a community” (no.25). The new trust is now a lay trust, therefore the mission of the Catholic school trust is the responsibility of its lay governance, lay management, lay in-school leadership and as the 1982 document emphasizes of its teachers. A new paradigm in the mission of the laity with regard to the Catholic school is just emerging in

the Irish context. These aspirations bring to mind Tuohy's realism: "Teachers do not see or talk about their work as an explicit Christian mission" (Tuohy, 2007, p. 279). This, he argues, is part of a culture where lay people in Ireland have not been "nourished on a theological level" (p. 279). This issue will be addressed in the research conversations with school principals and with the new lay leadership of the Le Chéile Trust.

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997), concentrates, in the first instance, on the context of the times. It reflects the challenges of globalization and secularization, identifying the new challenges as a result of "a new socio-political and cultural context. First and foremost, we have a crisis of values, which, in highly developed societies in particular, assumes the form, often exalted by the media, of subjectivism, moral relativism and nihilism" (no. 1). The Congregation believes that the pluralism of contemporary time undermines the efforts to create community, and the document highlights the expanding gap between rich and poor. Within this challenging context, and using didactic language, the document develops the long-standing theme of the mission of the Catholic school within the church's mission. The Catholic school is "a genuine instrument of the church, a place of real and specific pastoral ministry. The Catholic school is at the heart of the church, and this is its distinctive characteristic" (Congregation for Catholic education, 1997, no. 11). The claim, that the Catholic school is "a place of real and specific pastoral ministry" and is 'at the heart of the church' is not the language of normal school usage but the claim that the school is "for the human person and of human persons [...] the human person is the goal of the Catholic school" is a popular statement, and the reader is reminded that the mystery of humanity is clarified within the mystery of Christ (no. 9-10).

A summary of the challenges to Catholic education enumerated in the documents of the pre-Vatican period would include ‘the condition of the world’; Catholic school rights in some countries; the educational purpose; the pursuit of the last end; a systemic perception of the school, Catholic in all its parts, giving witness as a whole; the emerging significance of the role of the lay teacher; and in the three societies into which man is born the church is considered to be absolutely superior. The right of the church to have its own schools and the theory that the Catholic school is an institutional witness within the church is a strong message in pre-Vatican documents.

In the Vatican II and subsequent church documents the specific purpose of the Catholic school is to provide an education reflecting the life and values of Jesus Christ, and is for the human person and of human persons. We are reminded that the very identity of the Catholic school is dependent on church recognition and must therefore take its stand within the organic pastoral work of the church community. The Catholic school itself is a witness as well as a medium, and has evangelical responsibility. Society benefits from such schools, confirming the concept of the Catholic school’s contribution to society and to the state. A new emphasis is placed on the role of parents and the central role of the lay teacher in the Catholic school. The power and control thread has new nuances. This is evidenced in a declaration that rights, responsibilities and relationships of family, church and state have to be understood and negotiated.

In the years of creating the Le Chéile Trust and writing its Charter statement, the members of the Le Chéile Working Group, with the expert guidance of David Tuohy, struggled within themselves, with each other, with school principals and with Le Chéile cluster meetings of boards of management and school staffs on the issue of ‘church’ and

the trust's formal relationship with and within the church. It is pertinent to identify the trust's link with founding experiences and the commitment in both founding and reconfiguration to continue serving within the mission of the church.

Concluding this ecclesial section one notes the cerebral certainty of canon law confirming the power and control theme of the church's teaching. The nature of the legal code is to clarify roles and relationships, consequently it reflects institutional concepts and language. In Canon 801 religious are reminded that their Catholic schools have been established with the consent of the diocesan bishop, and Canon 753 confirms the bishops' authority and responsibility to teach: "They are the "authentic instructors and teachers of the faith" and the faithful "are bound to adhere, with a religious submission of mind, to this authentic *magisterium* of their bishops". Canon 758 reminds all the faithful that bishops "have the right and duty to call on all Christ's faithful to participate in the teaching mission of the church" and members of religious congregations "bear particular witness to the Gospel" (Code of Canon Law, 1983).

Symbiotic threads of mission, power and control weave through church documents and its law. They are related to the aspirational values of the church's mission but were sometimes perceived by the members of the Le Chéile Working Group and by some school principals as institutional, hierarchical and contradictory in delivery. Evidence for this claim will be addressed in chapter four and will also be included within a number of the formal research conversations. Linking with how the primary values of the institutional church find expression in its life and in its relationships with the people of God is a central and dominant theme in this research. J. Michael Miller's *The Ecclesial Dimension of Catholic Education* (2006), argues for selfless and engaged cooperation

between bishops, religious, administrators, teachers, public officials, parents and pupils because all are in the same mission (p. 75). He concludes with a challenge: “All of us – bishops, priests, religious and lay people – have an obligation to ‘tradition’ a truly Catholic education to the next generation” (p. 85). Selfless and engaged cooperation was the aspiration and practice of the Le Chéile congregations during the reconfiguration process. In the contemporary Irish Catholic church the laity, religious, priests and bishops are engaged in planning for the future of Catholic schools at all three levels of education. Catholic School Partnership (CSP) was established in 2009 as an umbrella body for all the partners in Irish Catholic schools.

Development in thought and meaning was nuanced in the language of the *Le Chéile Charter* (2009). The Charter aims to locate the new trust within a specific model of church, and is the product of a six-year reflective process, using language in a very precise manner:

The way in which the Catholic Church thinks of itself has changed dramatically since the Second Vatican Council. The Church no longer defines itself in terms of an institution distinct from everyday society. It acknowledges that God’s work is alive in all human activity [...] in the wealth of culture and in the increasing importance of community. (*Le Chéile Charter*, 2009, p. 2)

The Catholic School and Catholic Education

The boundary at which the Catholic school and Catholic education interface is relevant to the context of the Le Chéile Trust and deserves consideration. The terms are sometimes used interchangeably which can cause confusion. Terence McLaughlin in *The Distinctiveness of Catholic Education* (1996), identifies the need both for the distinctiveness of Catholic education and for its relationship to the Catholic school to be clarified. Three useful headings are suggested: the distinctiveness of the Catholic school, the generic and inclusive meaning of Catholic education, and the relationship between the Catholic school and Catholic education (McLaughlin, 1996, p. 137).

Distinctiveness of the Catholic school.

McLaughlin advises that the ecclesial documents need interpretation and elaboration and he selects three features which would be critical in the identity of a Catholic school and which emerge from the documents: the embodiment of a view about the meaning of human persons and of human life, an aspiration to holistic influence and religious and moral formation (McLaughlin, 1996, pp. 139-145). The author has identified the essential human focus of the Catholic school because the school is about the students in their lives and in their learning. The 'holistic influence' identified by McLaughlin reflects systemic theory that the school is Catholic in all its parts, and the school as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Religious and moral formation will be addressed under Catholic education. McLaughlin insists that the school must be clear about its identity and its distinctiveness: "of the critical questions which are posed to Catholic schools today, perhaps the most fundamental, and the most difficult, concern the

distinctiveness of Catholic schools" (McLaughlin, 1996, p. 200). He advises that questions of the distinctiveness of Catholic schools can, and should be, explored in an abstract or theoretical way by theologians, bishops, philosophers, sociologists and others viewing 'from a distance' but a school is not a seminar concerned with the exploration of abstract or theoretical ideas in a detached and disinterested way it is "engaged in a practical enterprise of great complexity which calls for many forms of practical knowledge and understanding, judgment and wisdom, skill, disposition and commitment on the part of teachers and educational leaders" (McLoughlin, 1996, pp. 200-204). This seems to support the idea that it is within the school community that the mission statement, school plan, policies and procedures are evaluated and developed reflecting a holistic approach to engaging faith with contemporary culture. John Sullivan *Catholic Education Distinctive and Inclusive* (2001), asks: "Do Catholic schools equip their pupils to critique the prevailing culture of society? Or do they simply prepare them to belong to this society and to be ready to perform the same kind of roles as everybody else?" (Sullivan, 2001, p. 12). Sullivan distinguishes between Catholic school evaluative identity questions which focus on who we are, where we have come from, what do we stand for AND why we are here, and questions about inclusiveness which focus our attention on who we are for and how should we operate (p. 6). In very practical language Joseph McCann in *Improving Our Aim* (2003), provides a summary which reflects what both McLaughlin and Sullivan propose: "Schools are organisations, not spontaneous gatherings, nor natural social groupings. Schools are intentional societies, created for specific goals, formed by particular groups and directed with distinctive spirits" (McCann, 2003, p. 158).

Defining and re-defining the characteristics of the Catholic school is a basic agenda for any renewal process in a trust, and for schools in their processes of evaluation and planning. Andrew Mc Grady *The Religious Dimension of Education* (2006), provides a useful schema. The characteristics which he identifies include: a place of integral education of the human person founded on Christ, the ecclesial identity of the Catholic school, the cultural identity of the Catholic school, education as a work of loving care, the Catholic school at the service of society, and the climate of the educating community (McGrady, 2006, pp. 152-177). It is interesting to note that, in different language, these are the characteristics identified in the Le Chéile Charter, (2009). Identifying the Catholic school as a locus for evangelization is a significant and recurring challenge for all involved in the enterprise, and especially in the process for reconfiguring school trusteeship. This challenge will be addressed in more detail in the final chapter.

Anne Looney's *The Pilgrim School: From hedge to hope* (2003), in a creative and inspirational style describes the Catholic school as a construction site of future generations. She challenges religious congregations to be more – not less – engaged in the future, “[...] when that partnership is maintained, the Catholic school is not abandoned to the market, to the ice-like grip of the points system”. It can, she believes: “become a pilgrim school – a symbol of possibility”, because “a pilgrim is a visible witness that some things matter more than others, and gives that witness in a public way” (Looney, 2003, p. 242). In other words Looney is reflecting church teaching that the Catholic school in itself can be a witness to the gospel message of good news, and her challenge to religious congregations to be more – not less – engaged in the future of the Catholic school is echoed in how the Le Chéile congregations responded in their

development of a new trust.

Catholic education.

As outlined above the Catholic school is a system within which Catholic education takes place, but the school is Catholic in all its parts and is an institutional witness to faith within the larger system of church. Catholic education, faith formation and faith development are integral within the systemic process and curriculum of the Catholic school, and are explicitly required of it. Dermot Lane's *Catholic Education and the School: Some Theological Reflections* (1991), Thomas Groome's *What Makes us Catholic* (2003), and *Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland* (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010) provide theoretical support in exploring Catholic education and how it interfaces with and relates to the Catholic school. Lane simply states that Catholic education is a reality that is wider and more extensive than Catholic schooling. Catholic education, he writes, is the lifelong process of growing in maturity of faith in Christ therefore as old as Christianity itself. It is an essential element in the mission of the church in the world and the church was involved in education before schools ever existed. Lane believes that one of the problems we face today in Ireland is that the schools became so important in the education of young people that other equally important agents of Catholic education, such as the family and the parish, tended to let the school carry the overall responsibility (Lane, 1991, p. 1). This simple statement underlies many of the difficulties and challenges for the Catholic school. Parents, parish, society and even the larger system, the institutional church, perceived the school as the sole provider of Catholic education. It lost its specific clear role and identification of

being *one* formal learning, developmental and experiential experience in the formative years of childhood and adolescence.

Groome explores this wider life experience of Catholic education within the Hebrew tradition of valuing scholarship. He provides an interesting historical perspective. The people of the Hebrew tradition, he writes, pursued wisdom and saw the study of the sacred texts as a form of prayer, a means of coming closer to God. Christians followed this route until the twelfth century when formal study of the faith relocated to the emerging universities (Groome, 2003, pp. 163-165). In his substantive work on *What Makes Us Catholic* he addresses Catholic education by trying to re-capture that historical search for wisdom and spirituality by developing a programme which would draw out from the depths of Catholic Christianity. Catholic education he explains, begins with baptism. To be educated in one's own faith is one of the consequences and responsibilities of church membership. To accept the baptismal role of discipleship within the mission of evangelization requires education and deepening of faith. The implications of baptism, according to Lane and Groome point to the responsibilities of parents, parish and institutional church in the life-long process of Catholic education.

This claim is stated clearly and developed unambiguously in a contemporary and rich Irish Catholic church resource, *Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland* (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010). This publication provides clarification about Catholic education, its relationship with the Catholic school and most importantly it clarifies who is ultimately responsible. Catholic education, it claims, is a process contributing to the faith of children, adolescents and adults which can take place within a church context or outside that context (no. 38, p. 57). In *A Vision for Catholic*

Education in Ireland (2008), there is a clear statement of diocesan responsibility for Catholic education and the Catholic school's mission within that responsibility:

"Parishes, schools, religious communities and ecclesial movements draw sustenance from the diocese and are supported by structures and resources put in place by the diocese (no. 136, p. 196). The team, Diocesan Faith Development Services, will have responsibility for "areas of concern such as Catholic schools" while providing structures to support home, parish and schools working in partnership (no. 137, p. 197). While not explicit about the 'concern', there is clarification that Catholic schools do not carry the responsibility of faith development and Catholic education from kindergarten to Leaving Certificate. This is a baptismal responsibility, a home responsibility, a parish responsibility and ultimately a diocesan or church responsibility. The Catholic school provides its own and complementary contribution through its distinctive role. Catholic education and the Catholic school are related, they interface, but they are not interchangeable. Embedded in this theoretical frame the Le Chéile Trust, therefore, has responsibility for Catholic education in its Catholic schools and has responsibility for those schools in their systemic mission. The trust, currently co-trustees of some community schools, has responsibility for Catholic education in these schools. This leads to an exploration of the community or 'common' school.

The Catholic school and the ‘common’ school.

Within the remit of this research and with respect for the depth and width of the philosophical literature and discourse on this subject I intend to merely acknowledge that Le Chéile congregations founded their schools in times and circumstances when there were very limited opportunities for Catholic children to attend a Catholic school. They are reconfiguring their ownership of these schools in times when there are common, public, state or community schools which also serve the children of Ireland. *The Catholic School* (1977), published by the Congregation for Catholic Education is explicit in its support for alternative schooling and for the Catholic school’s place within a spectrum of alternative school provision. This contrasts with Pope Pius XI, *On Christian Education* (1929), when the encyclical firmly dismisses the ‘neutral’ or ‘lay’ school: “For the mere fact that a school gives some religious instruction (often extremely stunted), does not bring it into accord with the rights of the Church and of the Christian family, or make it a fit place for Catholic students” (no. 80). As already noted the church by 1977 was upholding the principle of a plurality of school systems in order to safeguard her objectives in the face of cultural pluralism (no. 13). In other words, the document, *The Catholic School*, states the church encourages the co-existence and, if possible, the cooperation of diverse educational institutions which will allow young people to be formed by value judgments and to be educated to take an active part in the construction of a community and the building of society. The provision of the Catholic school within a diverse provision reflects a society of cultural pluralism. It is important, therefore, to state clearly that the twelve congregations made their decision about reconfiguration of trusteeship in the context of an Ireland which provides education in community and

vocational schools, schools within which Catholic education is also provided. The Catholic church recognizes the value of a plurality of provision, it is the church's responsibility to ensure Catholic education for its people, and the religious congregations, in their 2010 decision about trusteeship, reflect the Catholic church's claim to have the right to have its own schools.

Terence McLaughlin in *Liberalism Education and Schooling Essays* (2008), explores the question of school choice and public education in a liberal democratic society. He argues that the institutional form schooling should take in any society is secondary to the issue of the aims and purposes of education itself in that society. Many other types of consideration are also involved, including, *inter alia*, sociological, cultural, demographic, and practical considerations (McLaughlin, 2008, p. 102). He locates his argument for the separate school by claiming that even greater recognition needs to be given to the demands of diversity in schooling. There is, McLaughlin argues, an egalitarian thrust in the liberal position in the sense that *all* children are seen as having a right to a liberal and liberating education, and separate schools can be seen as a threat to this. Nevertheless, he is strongly supportive of the separate school and argues for its right to function under four headings: ethnicity and cultural membership, parental rights, countering disadvantage, and alternative starting points for autonomy and liberal citizenship (McLaughlin, 2008, pp. 81-89). In *Distinctiveness and the Catholic School, Balanced judgement and the temptations of commonality* (1996), McLaughlin addresses Catholic school identity and claims that despite complexities, ambiguities and questions it is possible to re-state, at least in general terms (a) the claim that the Catholic school exists in order to transmit the Catholic tradition of faith and life and to educate with it and (b)

the claim that Catholic schools on the one hand and ‘common’ schools, on the other, are and should be, based on a somewhat different conception of education and have a somewhat different educational responsibility and character. It may be argued, therefore, that whilst the meaning and interpretation of the claims clearly require much analysis and debate, the claims themselves are, at least in general terms, acceptable (McLaughlin, 1996, pp. 200-202). Continuing the discourse of the Catholic school’s right to exist, engaging with critiques, and developing on-going strategies for identification and evaluation in its operation will be in the remit of the new trusts. The Le Chéile Trust has co-trusteeship responsibility for some community schools. The legal situation is in transition but Le Chéile in its current operation invites the community school trustee representatives and principals to its conferences and meetings. In this the trust is reflecting *The Catholic School* (1977), which encourages the co-existence and cooperation of different types of school which allow young people to be formed by value judgments based on a specific view of the world. The Catholic school does not claim to be better than the community school, it claims to be, in itself, a witness to the Catholic church’s mission. It is distinctive.

Critique

The thesis engages with a critique of the Catholic school under five headings: maximal values, Catholic church power and control of the schools, the school community, school leadership and the school’s responsibility to challenge unjust educational systems.

Maximal values.

Kevin Williams (2010), responding to McLaughlin in *The common and the Catholic school: a response to the work of T.H. McLaughlin* addresses the maximal values that are the explicit remit of the Catholic school and which the school must balance with its responsibility for the provision of a common education necessary for the welfare of its students. Williams identifies problematic areas that he believes McLaughlin has not properly addressed: the values to which the school must bear witness, the content of the curriculum and the issue of context. Context is explored by considering the different cultural contexts within which the Catholic school is present and has already been addressed in the context of the *The Catholic School* (1997), document above. The issue of curriculum must be addressed within a Catholic school identity and the educational needs and rights of its students. The values to which the school must bear witness are critical in the experience of students and in the outcomes of the school. It is interesting that these problematic areas identified by Williams, values, curriculum and context are the areas that must be addressed in understanding the Catholic school as a system in its mission, values, curriculum, policies and practice. The congregational Catholic schools were founded in the context and cultures of their time. Reconfiguration developed within the culture of contemporary time. Serving the poor and what Williams calls “the constituency of the well to do” is not a problem in itself. The gospel relates Christ serving both poor and rich, and making friends with all. Examples of His inclusiveness are found in: the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), the Banquet (Lk 14:12-14), and the call of Levi, (Mk 2:15-17). The congregational conversations provide evidence of inclusiveness within the founding narratives. The key issue in this discourse

is that when choices have to be made the poor become the chosen ones. This critical value is clarified by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace: "To this end, the preferential option for the poor should be reaffirmed in all its force" (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*; 2005, no. 182). This directive is reflected in a recent choice made by the new Le Chéile Trust to apply for trusteeship of a Catholic secondary school in Mulhuddart in north-west Dublin. The chosen area is one of social and economic challenges and also an area in which there is no Catholic secondary school. While recognizing the work of the Christian Brothers and other nineteenth-century religious congregations in providing for the disadvantaged and marginalized, Williams stringently criticizes the religious congregations that provide for the wealthy classes of society: "The socio-economic profile of elitist Catholic schools is arguably a far more potent marker of difference from common schools than their theology or even their pleasant theories about social justice and the re-distribution of other people's money" (Williams, 2010, pp. 24-29). Máire Nic Ghiolla Phádraig in *The Power of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Ireland* (1995), reflects Williams' criticism. She argues that religious congregations that provide elite schools are contributing to the church's reproduction of inequality (p. 605). To respond to these criticisms one can return to the teaching of the church in *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997), which addresses the future of the world and of the church. "The future of the world and of the Church belongs to the younger generation, to those who, born in this century, will reach maturity in the next, the first century of the new millennium" (no. 5). This teaching is concerned with the whole of the younger generation and not just the poor. It continues by reiterating church's obligation of focusing on the poor:

Spurred on by the aim of offering to all, and especially to the poor and marginalized, the opportunity of an education [...] it [the Church] can and must find in the context of the old and new forms of poverty [...] a manifestation of Christ's love for the poor, the humble, the masses seeking for truth. (no. 15).

The 1998 document clearly states that one of the distinguishing features of the Catholic school "is to be a school for all" (no. 7). The church is a church for all, and chooses to constantly identify the needs of the poor and the marginalized. The church calls the wealthy and successful to respond to the poor.

The Le Chéile congregations include the original twelve whose schools are in the national free education scheme and within which there are schools which serve economically well to do families and schools which serve those families that struggle to provide for their children. In 2010 the St Joseph of Cluny congregation, which provides fee-paying schools, joined the new trust, and in 2012 the Ursuline congregation, the first to provide fee-paying Catholic schools for girls in Ireland in 1771, also joined the Le Chéile Trust. The trust in its name 'together' reflects Irish Catholic context and cultures in ensuring schools into the future. The thesis recognizes and respects the discourse about Catholic schools serving poor and rich as contextual, challenging and continuing.

Power and control.

Another critique of church and therefore of its sub-system, the Catholic school, is that of its use of power. A trenchant exploration of the power and control theme is found in the work of Maire Nic Ghiolla Phádraig *The Power of the Catholic Church in the*

Republic of Ireland (1995). Power, she writes, has different aspects, "The exercise of power can take place not alone through coercive physical force but also through ideological control and through control of resources (Nic Ghiolla Phádraig, 1995, p. 593). She believes that the continuing strength of Catholicism is the greatest puzzle facing sociologists examining religion in Ireland. The author believes that the most important resources controlled by the Catholic church in Ireland are the primary and secondary schools. The history of the development of the controlling power of the Irish Catholic church is explored in chapter four, and will also be addressed in chapters five, six, seven and eight. The issue will also be addressed in the final analysis.

Catholic school leadership.

Joan Chittister *Reimagining the Catholic School in this New Century* (2003), continues the critique of power in her addressing the leadership provided in the Catholic school. We are, she claims, confronted with conflicted notions of leadership and she asks "Is it power or is it passion? What kind of leadership is really needed to save the soul of a society" (Chittister, 2003, pp. 21-22). This question is not un-related to the issue of church power and control. In systemic theory the constant challenge is to reflect on how sub-systems carry and operate the values of the major system. A critical and vital question for the new trust is this ideological and operational question "is it power or passion" a question that would be addressed to leadership at every level.

School community and ethos.

Joseph McCann in *Improving our aim: Catholic school ethos today* (2003), is critically blunt when he says that sometimes school mission statements and ethos declarations “are products of the village idiot [...] we shoot first and draw targets later”. It looks, he argues, that we continue to operate regardless of mission and nowhere is this more true than in the case of Catholic school ethos (McCann, 2003, p. 157). It might be argued that a hierarchical culture in the Catholic church and in its sub-system the Catholic school had the potential to create what, in a black humour style, is outlined by McCann above. Mission statements and ethos declarations came from ‘above’, and from ‘out there’, and the presumption was that they would move, without process or intentional inclusion, from the ideological and aspirational sphere into the operational life of the school community. The ideology for the Catholic school was vested in hierarchical structures, and the ‘power and control’ theme, it may be argued, is evident in the shadow side of some of the ecclesial statements regarding the church’s rights, responsibilities and mandates to establish Catholic schools.

Challenging unjust systems.

Peter McVerry’s *I can’t always say what you want to hear* (2003), is clearly critical of the national educational system, the other large system within which the Catholic school exists, and which consequently affects the school by its core ideology, and its consequent policies, procedures and practices. McVerry argues that the school reflects the injustices in our society and does not challenge them. In his experience the Irish “educational system is ruthless; competitors struggle for successes [...] our young

people are taught to put number one first and justice, fairness and inequality have to wait” (p. 233). Principals of Catholic schools are engaged directly in this research, and conversations with them are included in chapters five, six and seven. In each instance there is evidence to provide some balance in countering McVerry’s criticism. They speak about social justice and responsibility being integral to the ethos, curriculum and operation of the schools. McVerry and Chittister, both products of Catholic schools in different continents manage to address the very heart of what the Catholic school claims it is about, the message of Jesus Christ. The gospel message is essentially about leadership lived within the community, and challenging injustice in the larger system.

Conclusion

Within the ‘light’ of ecclesial teaching and supporting literature the Catholic school is placed directly in a gospel tradition. It is mandated and required and has rights and responsibilities. It needs to clarify its distinctiveness while recognizing its relationship with other schools in a pluralist secular society. It needs to be systematically involved in evaluating how its organizational and operational life reflects its theoretical and aspirational heritage and proclamations. It must continue to engage in the dialectical discourse of critique. The context for the Le Chéile Trust is informed by recognizing that the Catholic school exists and is distinctive within a plurality of school provision, and that Catholic education is the responsibility of the local diocese within the church.

However, to remain within the comfortable, if challenging, zone of the gospel, providing the essential mission for the Catholic school, and the affirming teachings of the Congregation for Catholic Education would be to ignore those aspects of the truth in the

shadow side of the Catholic school and, indeed, of the Catholic church. Exploring the shadows within the school itself, recognising that it is a sub-system of the larger system, the church, which too has its shadows, is essential in the context of this research and thesis. Recognising that it also has responsibilities within perceived injustices in the national system of education is imperative. Light is most effective when it is juxtaposed with shadow! Light and shadow and their relationship will be revisited again in the final analysis. While holding the aspirational one can, at the same time, explore the critical perspective, and be open to the elements of truth which reside in both. Both are basic in the context of this research. Some theorists believe that the Catholic school is a rich resource for the church, other view the Catholic school as a powerful institution contributing to the division of classes in society and reflecting injustice. The Catholic church believes that the Catholic school is essential in its mission which is the mission of Jesus Christ: “The Catholic school is at the heart of the Church, and this is its distinctive characteristic” (*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997, no. 11). The twelve Le Chéile congregations were founded within that belief and to ensure that the schools continued into the future they founded the Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust in 2010 by engaging with a new concept of collaborative trusteeship.

Chapter Four

The Le Chéile Trust: General Historical Background

Introduction

The Catholic school is the medium for mission chosen by the Le Chéile congregations, and trusteeship is the system chosen for the legal, financial and moral ownership of their Catholic schools. The religious congregations that founded secondary schools in Ireland in the nineteenth century had a dual interest in the control and management of the schools as they were involved in the academic education of their students and their religious formation. This is the genesis of what is now called Catholic school trusteeship. The historical context of the trusteeship of the Catholic school in Ireland is critical in understanding the decision made by the Le Chéile congregations to ensure the future of their schools by developing a new lay trust.

This chapter aims to explore the relationship between church, state and education in the four periods of Irish history that contributed to contemporary trusteeship. The historical exploration is focused on the Catholic school mission and on the development of ownership and management of Irish Catholic schools. The first period to be addressed is the nineteenth century when Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, and the establishment of Catholic secondary schools by religious congregations is within that context. The second period to be considered, 1922-1967, are the early years of an independent Irish state and addresses that context in the development of trusteeship for Catholic schools. The third period, 1967-1998, spans critical developments in education including the introduction of free education in 1967. This third period also covers the

seminal developments in the subject of this research, new models of trusteeship of schools, and concludes with the education act of 1998. The fourth period, 1998-2010, explores relevant implications of the act, the founding of new school trusts and specifically the founding of the Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust.

The Light of History

In her preface to a definitive work on the 1998 *Education Act*, Glendenning identifies that the new era of legislation is building “upon an inherited informal denominational system which has evolved over the centuries”. While addressing the CORI annual conference in 2005 Glendenning addressed this evolution within a European context. She quoted from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Report on Irish Education (1991), which stated that Ireland’s singular tradition in education could only be understood in the light of history. Kevin Williams broadens and deepens that concept: “throughout the history of civilisation, religion, culture and schooling have been related” (Williams, 2005, p. 9). He links the Jewish, Islamic and Christian traditions in this relatedness and reflects on how the monastic foundations of early Christian Ireland and the cathedral schools of medieval Europe the pursuit of learning and praise of God went together (p. 9). This early Christian interfacing of religion and learning is identified in the modern Irish historical context: “the Irish version of republicanism that was endorsed by the State from its foundation sought formally to integrate the secular and religious spheres of knowledge” (p. 11), and though religion might be accepted or rejected “religious sensibility is a salient feature of Irish culture (Williams, 2005, p. 33). These threads of history, culture, learning and

religion weave together in the founding of Irish Catholic secondary schools by religious congregations in the nineteenth century and are present in the weaving of a new trust in the twenty-first century to ensure their future.

It is within the four historical periods named above that this chapter will address the trusteeship issue with which the Le Chéile congregations engaged between 2003 and 2010. The research which asked the question about the relationship of founding and contemporary values, in developing a new trust for its Catholic schools is contextually in “a country where it has been argued Catholicism has always been the religion of the majority and in which the Church has seen control of education as a way of preserving its influence” (O’ Donoghue and Harford, 2011, p. 315).

Church, state and education in the nineteenth-century.

The historical exploration of the relationships in church, state and education in nineteenth-century Ireland includes a recognition that Ireland was within the United Kingdom (Act of Union, 1800), and the established church was officially the Church of Ireland. The Roman Catholic Church was gradually emerging from the strictures imposed by the eighteenth-century penal system. Religious congregations both indigenous and immigrant founded secondary schools during this century. While recognizing the seminal and formative influence of the founding of the Presentation Sisters, the Christian Brothers and the Mercy Sisters in providing schools for minimal or no fees in practically every town in Ireland, the focus of this thesis is on the Le Chéile congregations. The three indigenous Irish congregations are the Patrician Brothers (1808), the Cabra Dominican Sisters (1819), and the Holy Faith Sisters (1867). Two English congregations came to

Ireland in the nineteenth century, the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, in 1875 and the Cross and Passion Sisters in 1878. The Faithful Companions of Jesus came from France to found their first Irish school in 1845, the St Louis Sisters in 1859, and the De la Salle Brothers in 1881. Two French congregations, the Religious of Jesus and Mary and the Religious of Christian Education, came in the early twentieth century as did two English congregations, the Society of the Holy Child and the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle. Pertinent to all twelve foundations is the historical context of nineteenth-century Ireland.

Proselytism.

O'Donoghue and Harford juxtapose the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' domination of the Catholic Irish by the British state through "Protestant proselytism and a series of Penal Laws aimed at the abrogation of all Irish Catholics' rights to property, religion, and education" with the nineteenth-century revival of the Irish Catholic Church and the increased power of the priest in local leadership (*Comparative History of Church-State Relations in Irish Education* (2011, p. 318). Patrick Clancy in *Education in the Republic of Ireland: The Project of Modernity, Sociological Perspectives* (1995), summarizes a later ideological struggle by describing the British government's nineteenth-century "policy of Anglicisation by operating constraints on the language and culture transmitted in the curriculum" while both religious denominations sought and attained a religiously segregated system (Clancy, 1995, p. 473). Desmond Keenan introduces the concept of a 'second reformation' in *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (1983), describing the early nineteenth-century's growing domination of

evangelicalism with an emphasis on personal, unmediated access to the bible (Keenan, 1983, p. 171). Accusations of proselytism were to become more strident – and with good reason – with the foundation of the Irish Church Missions (ICM) to Roman Catholics in 1847. The heritage of penal oppression and the reality of well-funded evangelical missions formed an ever-present backdrop to discussions around school and education in nineteenth-century Ireland. The ICM provided classes for the poor – spurred on by their desire to enable a personal encounter with Jesus through the scriptures, and this brought them into conflict with the Roman Catholic authorities and generated widespread suspicion of their motives. The ICM was accused of proselytism, an accusation which directly influenced Catholic resistance and Catholic school development.

A roman Catholic middle class.

A sociological perspective on ‘Anglican proselytism’ is provided by Máire Kealy in *Dominican Education in Ireland 1820-1930* (2007). She describes how the strengthening denominational Catholic role and the proselytizing developments were in parallel and confrontational development. Following Catholic Emancipation (1829), and the Famine in Ireland (1840s), Kealy claims that Catholics were becoming more confident in their ability to help themselves, and formed alliances and groups which would put forward the ordinary people’s concerns, as distinct from the concerns of the ascendancy class. The work of Daniel O’Connell, the Young Irelanders, and in later years, Parnell, the Land League, Sinn Féin and the Gaelic League gave the Irish people a sense of their own nationhood, with a cultural identity distinct from the ideas which came from Great Britain (Kealy, pp. 6-7). The success of the 1831 Education Primary School

Scheme provided encouragement to Protestant and eventually Catholic churches to request state funding for their secondary schools already in operation. Conditions for farmers had improved, and with the merchants and traders, a middle class Catholic population could afford to send their children to the new Catholic boarding schools. The female and male religious, owners and managers of the schools, were for the most part financially dependent on the low fees income, and in many cases fees were waived. Were it not for the donations of people who knew and were appreciative of their work, the schools could not have survived (Kealy, p. 61). The role of a reviving, strong institutional Catholic Church was central in the development of Irish Catholic education in the nineteenth century.

Revival of the institutional church.

Mary Daly identifies an interesting tension in the reviving Catholic institutional church. There were by the mid 1850s two ‘generations’ of bishops. The older generation such as Dr Murray of Dublin had been reared in the shadow of the Penal Laws and “was grateful for all concessions and disinclined to adopt an aggressive stance” (Daly, 1981, p. 114). The post-penal law bishops, “notably John Mac Hale of Tuam, the first bishop totally educated in Ireland since the Reformation, were more intransigent – the Catholic counterpart of the new militant Protestants” (Daly, 1981, p.115). This tension found specific expression during the debate on the 1831 primary school legislation. As the Catholic middle class grew the demand for state funding became more vocal, especially from Cardinal Cullen (1803-1878), who “steadily opposed the undenominational system of education” (Kealy, 2007, p. 61). O’Donoghue and Harford speak about the ‘Militant

Catholic Church and Education in Ireland, 1831-1922' referring to the practice of the bishops "lobbying aggressively and demanding forthrightly and publicly that Catholics be given full civil rights within the United Kingdom" (O'Donoghue & Harford, 2011, p. 319). They describe the transformation of nineteenth-century Ireland under the new ultramontane bishops such as Paul Cullen. They recognise that both Protestant and Catholic bishops were alert to the need for secondary education and the training of future civil leaders. Both churches wanted non-state controlled education. Cardinal Cullen's influence regarding the provision of Catholic secondary education will be re-visited when addressing the founding stories in chapters five, six and seven. Kealy believes that the Catholic bishops' main concerns were: restrictions on religious teaching and practices in national schools, the inadequacy of state grants in secondary schools, and inequality with non-Catholics in the provision of university education and teacher-training facilities. They demanded that the "educational grievances which had extended over 300 years be at length redressed" (Kealy, 2007, p. 8).

Funding issues and the establishment of Catholic secondary schools.

In the 1870s religious congregations of women were still awaiting opportunities to further the cause of girls' secondary schooling but the question of funding was crucial. According to Kealy it was necessity that moved the Catholic hierarchy to negotiate with the government because they wanted to keep control of the schools while at the same time getting funding from the state for maintenance, building and staffing. She also argues that it was the land agitation of the 1870s that made the United Kingdom government aware of the importance of the goodwill of the Catholic clergy to keep the

political climate cool. It was in that context that the government moved to put a system in place which would partially finance the secondary schools. In 1871 Cardinal Cullen wrote a pastoral letter to the people of his archdiocese, in which he demanded that the monopoly of public money by schools in which they and he had no confidence should be re-directed ‘and used without religious distinction’ for all the intermediate schools (Kealy, 2007, pp. 60-61).

Keenan (1983), argues that in the founding of schools by the religious teaching congregations there did not seem to be a process of philosophizing about education and he reasons it “may have been that if Catholics did not educate them [children], the Protestants might” (p. 129). In chapter seven there will be a direct reference to this claim in the invitation to the St Louis Sisters to establish a Catholic school in Monaghan. Keenan provides another insight regarding the ‘second class Church citizenship’ of religious in the developments taking place. He argues that the Christian Brothers lacked the rank and prestige of priests, and the women religious, in addition, had the social disadvantage of being female (p. 148). It is pertinent to note that despite their third-class church citizenship it was religious women who founded ten of the Le Chéile congregational secondary schools in Ireland, it was religious women, the Dominican Sisters, who led the nineteenth-century Catholic movement for secondary and tertiary education for girls, and it was religious women, the Ursuline Sisters, who founded the first secondary boarding Catholic girls school in Thurles, Ireland in 1797. The faith, courage and confidence of women are a salient factor in the founding narratives of the twelve congregations and are a pertinent factor in the reconfiguration of trusteeship for Catholic secondary schools in the twenty-first century.

The 1878 *Act to Promote Intermediate Education in Ireland* led to a system of payment by results which lent itself to cramming and excessive inter-school rivalry. On the positive side the Act did foster social and economic mobility, however modestly. Boys and girls who, prior to the passing of the Act, would not have had the opportunity for secondary education, could now aspire to opportunities which were previously closed to them. Fees could continue to be low and the academically-able could finance themselves through the system of prizes and exhibitions. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was one secondary school for girls, the Ursuline College in Thurles (1797), two secondary schools for boys, Carlow College (1806), and Clongowes Wood (1814), but by 1870 there were seventy large Catholic secondary schools. Religious schools were essentially not state or fee-paying schools (run for personal profit or gain). They provided a basic secular and religious education for the poorest children, and, at considerable expense, the Jesuits and Ursulines provided education for the sons and daughters of 'gentlemen'.

Kealy identifies the influence of Protestant women educators in promoting secondary and tertiary education for girls in Ireland. Four women were determined to provide secondary education for a broader population of girls than those whose families could afford a place for their daughters in boarding schools: Anne Jellicoe (1823-80), was from a Church of Ireland background. The family of Anna Maria Haslam (1829-1922), was Quaker, those of Margaret Byers (1832-1912), and Isabella M.S. Todd (1826-96), were Presbyterian. These leaders of the Irish campaign for the social and educational advancement of women were influenced, in some measure, by their sister-campaigners in England.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the genesis of trusteeship is in the fact that the religious congregations that founded secondary schools in Ireland in the nineteenth-century had a dual interest in the control and management of schools, as they were responsible for the academic education of their students and their religious formation. Glendenning argues that because these schools were established without state aid or intervention they retained, until very recently considerable autonomy in their internal affairs, and a high degree of discretion in the matter of appointment and retention of teachers once they were appropriately qualified: “the emergence of legislative control of education in this context was inevitably slow, narrow in scope and chiefly concerned with funding (Glendenning, 1999, p. 23).

Teaching as an occupation also changed status in nineteenth-century Ireland. In 1870, while 41% of all teachers were trained, only 33% of Catholic teachers were trained. Daly maintains that the church’s opposition to multi-denominational training colleges was responsible for this situation (Daly, 1981, p. 116). The Christian Brothers and some other congregations trained their own teachers within their own network of schools. The British Commissioners gave way in the 1880s, and each religious group was permitted to run its own training colleges at government expense (Daly, 1981, p. 117).

Nineteenth-century Ireland, despite the loss of its political independence in the first year of the century followed by failed rebellions and a devastating famine, produced Catholic Emancipation, the development of a ‘militant’ Roman Catholic church, the emergence of a strong Catholic middle class, a renewed cultural identity and pride and an education system which met the requirements of both Catholic and Church of Ireland bishops. Sean O’Connor in *A Troubled Sky: Reflections on the Irish Educational Scene*

1957-1968 (1986), provides a summary of the Catholic secondary school as it developed. His perspective is interesting, coming from what he calls “A view of education from near the Minister’s seat” (O’Connor, 1986, p. ix). He had held various senior posts in the Department of Education and was an adviser to a number of ministers. He observes that unlike the primary system the secondary school system was not planned. He accepts the historical theory that after the Flight of the Earls in 1607 the only substantial symbol of the nation’s refusal to accept total defeat was the refusal to embrace the religion of the conquerors. Therefore a formal state-funded and state-controlled system of education was resisted. By the beginning of the nineteenth-century O’Connor writes that “the virulent harassment of the Catholic faith had eased and its ministers were no longer persecuted”, and he agrees with Glendenning, Tuohy and Fennell in stating that the church authorities encouraged the establishment by religious congregations of schools providing secondary education at minimum cost to parents (O’Connor, 1986, pp. 6-7). Tuohy concludes what he calls this *Foundation* time (19th century – 1922), as the period which influences reactions to Catholic education. He believes that the church and its institutional control is the perception that has lasted and is influencing contemporary national consciousness (Tuohy, 2007, p. 272). It is also true to claim as Williams does, citing Colm Lennon, that there was a historically significant depth in Irish Christianity, a “seamlessness of the sacred and secular spheres” (Lennon, *Sixteenth Century Ireland: The Incomplete Conquest* 1994, p. 133, in Williams, 2005, p. 36). It is within the context of an inheritance of both deep religious values and the renewed power of an institutional church that new trusts for Catholic schools are being developed.

Church, State and Education 1922-1967

Ireland became a Free State in 1922 following the failure of the Home Rule Bill in 1912, and the belated success of the ideology of the 1916 Rebellion and the War of Independence, 1919-1921. The traditional peasant society with its customs and superstitions had given way to a more literate and sophisticated people who strongly resembled their English contemporaries though in many respects with a particular Irish twist. Williams claims that from its foundation in 1922, the new Irish State's provision of education promoted the Christian, specifically Catholic, identity of its young citizens (Williams, 2005, p. 11). O'Donoghue and Harford confirm that John Marcus O'Sullivan, Minister for Education throughout most of the 1920s, gave expression to the prevailing view when, in 1926, he spoke out against state control of schools because, he claimed, such schools promoted 'secularization' and thus would not meet the desire of the vast majority of the Irish population to educate their children in a Catholic atmosphere (O'Donoghue & Harford, 2011, p. 327). The Department of Education left the management of the nation's secondary schools to the church bodies, which appointed school principals, teachers, and managers. The state was not involved with founding secondary schools or financing their buildings. There was no public demand or campaign for change during the first four decades following independence, "no significant voice, regardless of the government in power, ever argued that alternative educational structures might be appropriate" (O'Donoghue & Harford, 2011, p. 326). On the contrary, the authors continue, Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Education in the 1950s, was so confident that the prevailing situation was to the satisfaction of all that "he publicly proclaimed his role to be more akin to that of an oilman technician than a policy

innovator" (quoted in O'Donoghue & Harford, 2011, pp. 326-327). O'Connor is clear that the Catholic church exercised the decisive influence in the system. Parents were leaving the control to the church and did not seek a voice, teachers were not running or managing the schools "their main concern was improvement of their inadequate remuneration and the Minister had publicly rejected the State's responsibility" (O'Connor, 1986, p. 12). Clancy supports this view of the institutionalisation of the church's control of schools in the early years of the new Irish State. He argues that successive ministers of education adopted the view that the state's role was a subsidiary one: "The acceptance of this principle of subsidiarity is reflected in the structure of education in the Republic of Ireland where the degree of control exercised by the religious personnel is almost without parallel" (Clancy, 1995, p. 474). This period is described as that of 'The Triumphalist Catholic Church and Education in Ireland' (O'Donoghue & Harford, 2011, p. 323), and Tuohy describes it as a period of *Consolidation*, recognising that the paternalistic structures remained firmly in place until the 1960s when a new understanding of religion and new demands about the role of education would emerge (Tuohy, 2007, p. 274). The 'Triumphalist' church and the Catholic secondary schools founded by religious in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would not have considered any other form of ownership of their schools. It was as if their history of survival, resistance and revival seemed to entitle them to the position of power and control in regard to the schools as of right. Reflections on ownership and trusteeship were not on the agenda in this era.

Church and State and Education, 1967 – 1998

In 1959 the then Taoiseach, Sean Lemass, announced that the government was going to finance an increase in facilities for second-level education, and in 1964 the state, for the first time, provided building grants to the secondary school authorities for school expansion. What O'Donoghue and Harford call 'The Liberalization of the Catholic Church and Education' was a period of radical change. This was a paradigm of radical change which began in the 1960s, a decade noted for upheavals in church and society across Europe. The state's interest in education broadened (particularly to include economic considerations), its financial contribution to education increased, and it became committed to planning. The first major state-sponsored research project in Ireland was the *Investment in education* survey in 1965 which placed education squarely in the forefront of policy making. The report of this team was published in 1966, and laid the foundations for major changes in secondary education in the following decades. Ireland's children, entitled to free secondary education from 1967, would also need school building extensions and new schools. The religious congregations met the needs, the majority of them entering the free education scheme, building and extending their schools and meeting the major curriculum and methodological changes involved in student populations which were culturally and educationally significantly different to those who had paid even minimal fees for secondary schooling. The state, now bound by new legislation, and supported by finance from the World Bank, had initiated comprehensive schools in the late 1960s, followed by community schools in the 1970s. Both initiatives would have seminal implications for the church's control, and for its involvement in

school management, but both initiatives also received church engagement and support albeit through consultation. John Coolahan locates this era as part of the significant changes of attitude which were affecting Irish society itself, "Economists (after the 1958 Government White Paper on Economic Expansion) were now emphasizing education as an economic investment rather than taking the traditional view of education as a consumer service" (Coolahan, 1981, p. 131). Small voluntary schools amalgamated, small secondary and vocational schools cooperated, community and comprehensive schools were established and the Catholic bishops with religious congregations took an active role in the changes. The government was moving from a passive stance to an active one, indeed to a more controlling position with regard to the provision of second level education. Governance and management of secondary schools in the 'voluntary' sector, however, were still controlled by religious. In the context of introducing community schools, Coolahan quotes the then Minister for Education, Patrick Hillery:

[the] vast majority or perhaps all of the pupils will be Catholics and having regard to the rights of parents, who in relation to the fundamental principles of education are represented by the Church, and in view of the Church's teaching authority, I have had consultation, which is proceeding, with the Catholic hierarchy on the management of these schools. In this regard I would add that a proposal for the provision of a comprehensive school of this kind for Protestants, if related to a suitable region, would be welcomed by me. (Coolahan, 1981, p. 249)

These words indicate a shift in the church-state relationship. The state was being pro-active in providing secondary schooling although still consulting with the church about management of these schools. Another interesting factor in the Minister's statement is the apparent acceptance, by the state, of the church's representative role for parents. What exactly the Minister had in mind is not clear. The rights and responsibilities of parents as enshrined in the Irish Constitution, Article 42 (a), "the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children" (Government of Ireland, 1937). These rights were subsequently enshrined in the Education Act, 1998, Section 6 (e), "to promote the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice having regard to the rights of patrons and the effective and efficient use of resources" (Irish Statute Book, 1998). It is of note that the words "consultation which is proceeding with the Catholic hierarchy on the management of these schools" spoken by a Minister in 1963 are currently continuing in the re-writing of Deeds of Trust for Community Schools and were the focus on the agenda for National Community School Trusteeship (NTCS) meetings in 2009, 2010, and 2011. The threefold relationship of state, church and new trusts is ongoing.

The 1990s.

Despite the introduction of secondary school boards of management in the 1980s and the appointment of lay principals in many religious voluntary secondary schools, denominational governance of these schools did not change. Glendenning claims that until the 1990s there was scant formulation of a consensus on a native educational

philosophy, there was limited devolution of responsibilities in education to local authority bodies and no recasting of the structures which upheld the system of education (Glendenning, 1999, p. 41). The singularly most significant event in the modern development of the Irish educational system was the National Education Convention, which took place in Dublin Castle from 11 to 21 October 1993. This event “an unprecedented, democratic event in the history of Irish education” (Coolahan, 1994, p. 1) included, for the first time, educational, parental, statutory and religious representative bodies. Forty-two organizations engaged with the national Department of Education to explore and discuss key issues of policy in Irish education. The Convention was one of the last stages before the White Paper on Education (1995), which, in turn, would lead to the Education Act of 1998. The process, as described by Coolahan, was one of questioning, analyzing and clarifying the different perspectives and traditions, consistently seeking that which was of common interest to the different groups and which would be best for the future of Irish education:

[...] there was wholehearted engagement with this important public forum [...] there was a remarkable gestation of ideas, articulation of ideas, refining of ideas, analyzing of ideas, challenging of ideas [...] IDEAS WERE ON THE MOVE. Instead of rigidity of set viewpoints there was fluidity in the exchanges and the interrelationships, which were occurring. (Coolahan, 1994, p. 1)

Coolahan's claim, capitalized by the author, that "ideas were on the move" succinctly describes the educational ethos of the time. Submissions were made in written and oral forms. A maturing Ireland and its government, through its Department of Education, were moving purposefully towards the Education Act of 1998. Tuohy identifies a legal and systemic irony. The Act would enshrine the right of the patron of the school to define "the characteristic spirit" and to appoint boards of management to run the schools according to that spirit. This critical legal assurance is contemporaneous with the diminishment of religious personnel and resources, and the secularisation of Irish culture which would raise questions about the state's dependence on church patronage for its schools (Tuohy, 2007, pp. 269-310).

Glendenning believes that the 1998 Act is a singular landmark in Irish life as it formalizes, for the first time in the history of the state, a national consensus in education distilled over a nine-year period of intense public debate, negotiation and compromise (Glendenning, 1999, p. 163). The consensus took nine years, and it is worth reiterating that powerful institutions had engaged in the process preceding the new act in 1998. In 1991 the *OECD Reviews of National Education Policies: Ireland* criticized the centralized structure of Ireland's system of education which it found to be exceptional among OECD countries, and identified the main constraints as:

- (a) the power of the teacher unions;
- (b) the power of the Vocational Education Committees (VEC) and
- (c) the power of the Catholic Church

It is strongly arguable, however, that the chief constraint on change in Irish education is the Irish Constitution itself, quoted above, as it enshrined the state's function in education as subsidiary, hence the approach to educational change must necessarily advance along the path of consultation, negotiation and agreement between the key agencies in education (Glendenning, 1999, p. 166). One could argue that what Glendenning perceives as a constraint is also an advantage. Due process can both inform and transform. The 1993 National Convention on Education is an example of fruitful consultation, negotiation and agreement. Another example was the response of all denominations to the 1995 White Paper regulating school governance followed by the 1997 Bill. The denominational objections to what was perceived as "statism in education or the advance of secularism" led to the changes now enshrined in the 1998 Act: "in legislating for a complex system, which, for the most part, has not previously been subject to legislation, the Act seeks to respect the traditions and diversity of the school system while incorporating such contemporary concepts as partnership, transparency and accountability" (Glendenning, 1999, p. 173). One of the most significant guarantees in the Act is that which defines and guarantees the characteristic spirit of the school: "The characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school" (s15(2)(b) Irish Education Act 1998). Glendenning explains that "in common parlance, the characteristic spirit of the school is frequently referred to as the ethos of the school (1999, p. 174). Section 8 of the Act provides the link to an exploration of what is now legally trusteeship of schools. 'Characteristic spirit' or founding and traditional values, and the responsibility for them

are located in the remit of the trustee or patron. Tuohy speaks about this period (the 1960s to the present) as a time of *Integration* with dramatic changes in the 1960s, growth in an anti-ideology movement in the 1970s, a new social welfare paradigm in the 1990s and an ambivalent shift from an institutional model of church to a post-Vatican model of community (Tuohy, 2007, pp. 275-277). This is the context within which contemporary trusteeship, and new initiatives, including Le Chéile, developed. It is the context for the research question asking whether the values in the founding of the schools are related to the values in the founding of a new trust. It was an unspoken but latent question in the process of new trusteeship which developed in the 1980s and 1990s.

New Forms of Trusteeship

Addressing recent developments in the relationships of church, state and education, from 1960 – 2010, this research sought to identify genetic stages in the development of contemporary trusteeship. A trajectory of one religious congregation's trusteeship story provides a sense of the challenges, critical decisions and outcomes, from the 1960s to contemporary times.

In the 1960s the Holy Faith Sisters owned, managed, and had sisters on the staffs of twelve secondary schools, twenty-six primary schools, and were co-trustees of two community schools. By 1986 the congregation had trusteeship responsibility for ten secondary schools, twenty-four primary schools, and two community schools. In 2002 a report to the Holy Faith General Leadership Team accounted for six secondary schools, one primary school, and three community schools. Between the 1960s and 2002 twenty-five of the primary schools had been transferred to the patrons of all Irish Catholic

primary schools, the local bishops, and one primary school still remained within both episcopal and Holy Faith trusteeship. The history of seven of the secondary schools is varied. Four were closed because of falling numbers and resources, and because there were Catholic secondary schools in the immediate areas which would provide for the students. One was changed into the only all-girls community school and the Holy Faith Sisters are co-trustees, and one had been transferred to the local vocational committee trusteeship. A small but thriving rural Holy Faith secondary school was transferred to the patronage of the local bishop. The five remaining secondary schools were vibrant Catholic schools and securing trusteeship for their future was critical. The report to the Holy Faith general leadership team outlined the movements taking place in the reconfiguration of trusteeship and recommended that the remaining schools would be entrusted to the new trust. On 5 February 2010, five Holy Faith secondary schools and two community schools became part of the Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust. (Internal Holy Faith Report, 2010).

From 1960 – 2010, the trajectory included closures, amalgamations, transfers and a reconfiguration of trusteeship. This trajectory would be reflected in the stories of all teaching religious congregations in Ireland during the same years. They were difficult and challenging times for religious women and men because the issue was not just about their profession as educators but was integral to their religious lives. There was a belief in the core mission of the schools and a determination that the schools would continue. There was, however, no clear vision for the eventual outcome.

The values at either end of the historical span were addressed in the national press. In the editorial of the *Irish Independent*, 11 October 1967, we read:

[...] our secondary schools have largely grown from the decision of men and women, banded together by a religious ideal, to offer instruction to the young. A concrete illustration of this part of our history is seen this month in the celebration of the centenary of the Holy Faith Sisters. Their work is not just a promise but a performance.

Forty years later the editorial of the same newspaper addresses the same subject:

A chapter of Irish education, centuries long, will soon close with the handing over to trusts of schools. It is sad to see the end of an era, the orders' great work for Irish education will not be forgotten. And their own preparation for the new era has ensured that its prospects are good. (*Irish Independent*, 12 November 2007)

"Their own preparation for the new era" was consciously or unconsciously motivated by the values inherent in the official church documents and in the founding of each of the Le Chéile congregations. The purpose of this research is to examine whether the values energizing and motivating the founding and reconfiguration were complementary.

The 1980s was the decade of the appointment of the first boards of management in voluntary secondary schools (owned by religious congregations), and the appointment of the first lay principals in these schools. In 1988 Joseph Dargan, S.J., Secretary General of the Conference of Major Religious Superiors (CMRS), engaged fourteen religious to visit the dioceses and religious congregational leaders responsible for Catholic secondary schools throughout Ireland. I was one of this group and with Brother Michael Heffernan, I visited the dioceses of Cloyne and Cashel. In October 2009 I sent Brother Michael a set of focused questions related to developments in Irish Catholic secondary schools from 1973 – 2009. He was a member of the CMRS Education Working Party in the 1980s, and is a former teacher, principal, manager and trustee of Christian Brothers' schools in Ireland. In a question focusing on his role as co-author of an internal and unpublished report submitted to the bishops and CMRS in 1985 I asked him what had motivated the report. His response included the following: "*The main motivation was an acceptance by the leaders of the congregations of these trends i.e. an ageing overworked religious body of women and men, running [...] schools*". The second question focused on the 1988 visits to the dioceses and asked, "*What outcomes did you experience in this process?*" The response was: "*There was a heightening of consciousness, but more urgent concerns relegated action to later dates*" (Personal communication, 11 October 2009).

Nano Brennan in *Christian Education, Contestation and the Catholic School*, (1996), clearly presented the challenge for more immediate movement on the part of the religious congregations:

Catholics, in association with all who share the ethical orientation of the Gospel, must get involved in the hard work of analysis, policy development, implementation in the relation to the following questions: *Education for what purpose? For whom? Whose responsibility?* (CORI Conference Papers, 1996, p. 16)

In 1996 the questions posed by Brennan weighed heavily on the religious congregations involved in planning for the future. They seemed solely the responsibility for religious congregations. They are questions which are now the responsibility of the wider church, through the new lay trusts.

Teresa McCormack and Peter Archer, with Nano Brennan, in the CORI Education Office in the 1990s, provided direct and challenging leadership and resources in the years leading up to the publication of a Guide for Trusteeship in 1996. The Guide *A Handbook for the Leaders of Religious Congregations: The Trusteeship of Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools* (CORI Publications, 1996), stated the concern in a factual introduction:

There are about 50 religious congregations involved in the provision of second level schooling in the Republic of Ireland. Between them they are trustees of over 360 voluntary schools, attended by nearly 50% of the second level going population [...] the present situation cannot be maintained indefinitely. (p. vii)

The Handbook reminded religious congregations that up to the 1970s, “everybody in key positions in the school subscribed to a shared value system on which the founding intention of the school was based” (p. x). This Handbook became the definitive and substantive guide for CORI meetings during the following years. Exploration was the theory, topic and process for religious congregations in the years 1996 - 2010. CORI was active at the macro level. Conferences and meetings, 2001-2002, included key speakers on civil law, canon law, insurance and investments. Larger congregations continued to develop their own trusts, and smaller congregations gathered together in a virtual wilderness. Sister Bríd Roe of the Dominican Sisters gathered these smaller congregations into a new group called *Smaller Congregations Interested in Sharing Ideas around the Future of Trusteeship*, (SCISIFT). As a Holy Faith congregational representative I attended the meetings. The initial SCISIFT meetings were exploratory and confusing but they provided initial learning about the implications of shared trusteeship. The experience of *trust* was growing within the concept of *trusteeship*. Concern for the future of the Irish Catholic secondary school was expressed in attitudes and behaviour during these meetings, and in the fact that so many were consistent in attending difficult and enervating meetings. Founding values had not been identified and present values were presumed. The concept of a ‘Catholic school’ rather than a congregational school was being explored, parallel with information about legal, canonical, business and financial implications.

There was another challenge facing the congregational members who were attending CORI and SCISIFT meetings, and who eventually became members of the Le Chéile Working Group. Each was representing an individual congregation, its leadership, its members and its schools. The representative was not a decision maker. They were being informed and formed in a new paradigm of theology and of school mission, and had the extra responsibility of communicating with their congregational and school communities. This would prove to be one of the most difficult aspects of the process. Congregational leadership and membership served a variety of missions other than that of the school, and resources of personnel and finance were severely strained. The school communities were dealing with many urgent challenges other than that of understanding the new theology of the mission of the laity, of school mission and of evangelisation. The religious who were involved in the process of developing the new trusts were speaking what was virtually a new language, and their experiences were located in a new paradigm. The members of the Le Chéile Working Group returned each month for seven years to the developing paradigm and to continue in the new language. They were being informed and changed in a paradigm that included a new understanding of charism, heritage, canon law, and the legal implications of the 1998 Education Act regarding patronage and trusteeship. Some congregational leaders and members were still in the pre-2003 paradigm about secondary schools, and were busily living their congregational mission through other social and pastoral ministries. Some did not consider the future of congregational schools a mission priority in contemporary times. Meetings of the Working Group were consistent and systematic, but meetings with congregational members and leaders were few and highly concentrated.

Workshops and information sessions continued. The Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS) was addressing the issue of managing schools in a future without religious. The theme of the AMCSS annual conference, May 2003, was *A New Scenario* hosting a significant workshop, *Europe and the Catholic School*, directed by Noel Traynor, then working in the European Union, and now Bishop of Down and Connor. This meeting was a watershed. Previously, the AMCSS seemed to focus on issues related to the practical or secular aspects of managing the schools, presuming that Catholic values were in place. In 2003 it addressed the Catholic school identity. The Joint Managerial Body (JMB) represents the boards of management of 383 voluntary secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland. The Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS) represents the Catholic schools under the umbrella of JMB. Catholic Schools in this sector comprise 94% of total secondary schools, and non-Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools 6%. In the overall context the Catholic voluntary secondary schools account for 49% of all secondary schools in the country (Mac Donnell, Administrative Officer JMB, personal communication and email, 31 March, 2010).

Irish national newspaper headlines also focused the minds of religious on the issue of the future of Catholic secondary schools: “Dwindling numbers of religious personnel in Ireland means that Catholic schools.... are in danger of losing their unique ethos” (Kelly, 2004), “Future of Catholic schools is hanging in the balance” (O’Brien, 2004), and “Bishops need to be radical to save Catholic schools” (Quinn, 2005).

Between 1996 and 2010 trusteeship was the top item of the CORI agenda. As already stated, the larger religious congregations moved first and established their trusts. The smaller congregations were thus challenged to either join a larger trust or to link with each other. Twelve congregations collaborated to form a single lay trust.

The Le Chéile Trust

The twelve congregations named in chapter one collaborated to form the Le Chéile Trust. Another congregation, the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny, joined the trust in 2009. The Le Chéile Schools Trust is responsible for forty-eight secondary, five primary, and seven community schools. Twenty-eight of the schools are in Dublin. Other locations include the counties of Louth, Kildare, Wicklow, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Tipperary, Galway, Mayo, Sligo and Monaghan. The trust was conceived in 2003, although its birth and naming would follow at a later date, in 2010. Its genesis and initial development have been recorded in chapter one.

Data in regard to the development of the new trust (2003 – 2010), are available in the research journal, (Appendix A), the Le Chéile Charter (Appendix K) and on the Le Chéile website. The Working Group included two members from each of the twelve founding congregations. This group met with David Tuohy, the group's consultant and project manager, on the first Friday of each month, 2003 – 2010, and engaged in pre and post-meeting work between sessions. The agenda included legal issues (church and state), business and financial issues, and, critically, the values base and how that would be expressed and become operational. The group worked with solicitors, economists, and

insurance personnel. It drafted Green and White papers on mission and philosophical statements. The outcome of this process is evidenced in a statement of mission in 2009:

The Le Chéile Schools Trust takes its heritage from the work of the founding congregations. Their commitment to education reflects their participation in the mission of the Church. In setting up Le Chéile, the Congregations want to ensure that their schools will continue in that same mission. This is the mission they entrust to Le Chéile. The Le Chéile Trust will therefore participate in the same mission of the Church. It values its links with the local and universal Church, as well as the heritage from the congregations. It pays particular attention to the philosophy of education announced from time to time by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education and the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference.

(Le Chéile Charter, p. 2)

As a participant 2003-2006, and as a participant and researcher 2006-2010, I observed that all decisions were made within a collaborative and consensual process. Different views and difficult issues were resolved collaboratively. The values of trust, a listening stance, conversation and collaboration, were key values in the founding of this trust. The constituencies in the process included twelve congregational leaders, members of the congregations, school boards of management, school principals and staffs, parents, Teachers' Unions, AMCSS, CORI Education Office, and the Strategic Task Group on Education (STGE), a joint task group with the bishops. The process involved research, reading, school meetings, congregational gatherings, regional clusters, and annual

meetings. Consensus building was the decision making process over the seven years of the development of Le Chéile and not majority rule by voting. There was never an inter-congregational disagreement. There were lengthy, and sometimes difficult, discernment and discussion sessions about the embryo trust's formal relationship with CORI and with the Episcopal Commission. Because the Le Chéile Trust was collaborative in its formation and in its policies and procedures, the members of the Working Group struggled with formal relationships that seemed to model a hierarchical structure. Collaboration and a community model of trusteeship seemed to be contradictory to the institutional model of church which was still being experienced. This issue will be developed more fully in the final chapter of the thesis.

Conclusion

John Tosh supporting the importance of exploring history, argues that to think in terms of sequence or process is to think historically. Every situation, which requires our understanding in the present, is the outcome of trends and events in the past. The historian's interest in the past is not that it discloses the present but it enables us to track a sequence of events, of developments which account for the present (Tosh, 2008, pp. 42-46). "Without historical perspective we may fail to notice continuities which persist, even in our world of headlong change" (Tosh, 2008, p.141). This research aimed to provide an historical perspective which would identify the continuities in the story of the Irish Catholic secondary school and in the formation by twelve religious congregations of the Le Chéile Trust. This chapter on Irish Catholic school trusteeship is rooted in history, the seminal history of Ireland in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. History does

not excuse or defend, it provides light for understanding the present, and light for decisions which will affect the future.

The following three chapters are the central core of the research. They address the continuity of history in the founding stories of the twelve religious congregations, engage their leaders and members in identifying their founding values and relate these values with the values which are integral to the reconfiguration of ownership of their schools in the Le Chéile Trust.

Chapter Five

Particular History (1) Three Irish Congregations

Introduction

Chapter four examined contemporary trusteeship of Irish Catholic secondary schools through the lens of nineteenth-twentieth-century Irish history. It considered the interfacing of church and state in modern Irish history and the related power struggles in the history of Catholic school ownership. This chapter, chapter five, focuses on the founding story and values of three Irish Le Chéile congregations, the Dominican Sisters, the Patrician Brothers and the Holy Faith Sisters. The wider history of the relationship of mission and learning in Ireland, however, is also the context for the founding of Catholic schools in Ireland by nine congregations whose founding narratives are located in either England or France. The Irish history context for all twelve congregations and their schools is in this chapter, chapter five, and will be an historical thread in chapters six and seven.

Historical Context, A Summary

The beginnings of Christianity and the golden age (fifth-eight centuries).

The work of G.F. Mitchell's *Prehistoric Ireland* (1967), Tomás Cardinal Ó Fiaich writing about *The Beginnings of Christianity* (5th and 6th centuries) (1967), and Kathleen Hughes exploring *The Golden Age of Early Christian Ireland* (7th and 8th centuries) (1967), provide an informed and summary context for the beginnings of

Christian religious mission in Ireland. Ó Fiaich (1967), explores the history of the original Christian mission. The story, he explains, begins with St Patrick because he is the author of the earliest documents known to have been written in Ireland. Patrick's missionary work of preaching and baptizing - despite some pagan resistance – was both peaceful and successful. Ireland was the only country in western Europe whose conversion produced no martyrs" (Ó Fiach, 1967, pp. 62-63). Kathleen Hughes develops the story of the original Patrician mission by providing a pen-picture of the early monasteries and of their schools founded in the middle ages. Young clerics were given a Latin education and Irish scholars made rapid progress. There were also schools for poets and lawyers. One of the most exciting historical facts of the seventh century is that these quite separate worlds, the church Latin schools situated in the monasteries, and the Irish schools for poetic and legal studies, began to borrow ideas and techniques from each other. The Irish were beginning to value the fact that their learning "could be used in the service of God" (Hughes, 1967, pp. 76-81). Hughes continues with the development of the new Irish mission by recounting the critical contact between Ireland and mainland Europe. Books written in Spain were arriving in Ireland in the seventh century (p. 83). Pagan traditions were integrated and found expression in the art of writing, "the Irish built up libraries on the continent and wrote works of scholarship" (Hughes, 1967, p. 90). The Irish historical threads of mission, learning, schools and connection with Europe were being woven in these centuries. These are the threads which are also woven in each of the Le Chéile congregational founding stories.

Ireland survived the Viking wars of the ninth and tenth centuries to be described as a country “of renaissance and progress” in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Ó Cuiv, 1967, p. 107). Two of the founders can be connected to this early over-view of Irish history. Daniel Delaney, founder of the Patrician Brothers (1808), claimed Patrick’s fifth century Irish mission and name for his new congregation. While both church and learning were thriving in twelfth-thirteenth century Ireland, Dominic, founder of the Dominican family, was confronting heresy in France. His friars came to Ireland in the thirteenth century. It was these men, with Augustinian and Franciscan ‘friars beggars’ as they were called who, through their preaching and administration of the sacraments, would keep religion alive during the period of the Tudor reformation.

Tudor conquest (1534-1603).

Direct state involvement in both religion and education dates from the Tudor era in the sixteenth century, and it became a major factor in the religious tensions and conflicts of the following centuries. Susan Parkes (2010), *A Guide to Sources for the History of Irish Education 1780-1922*, provides a useful summary of the implications of the English religious and political involvement. Provision of education, she states was the legal privilege of the Established Anglican Church of Ireland.

In 1537, as part of the legislation which introduced the Henrician Reformation, the Act for the English order, habit and language (28 Henry VIII, c. 15) was passed which established a system of parochial schools to teach the English language and the reformed Protestant faith. (Parkes, 2010, p. 14)

For the first time, the Irish people were to experience education promoted by government. Parish schools, diocesan schools, and a university, were the chosen instruments to make the Irish people ‘English’ and ‘Protestant’. The actual words of the act indicate the beginning of a culture of mandate, power and control which suggest the seminal tensions for religion, politics and education for future English-Irish relationships:

And further be it enacted by authority aforesaid that every archbishop, bishop, suffragan and every other having authority and power [...] endeavour himself to learn the English tongue and language, and use English order and fashions [...] shall endeavour himself to move, indoctrinate and teach all other being under his order [...] to accomplish and perform the same [...] and also shall keep or cause to be kept within the place, territory, or parish where he shall have pre-eminence, rule, benefice or promotion, a school for to learn English. (Hyland and Milne, 1987, pp. 38-39)

In an Act for the erection of free schools in 1570 the interfacing of religion, politics and education is addressed with more force and in more detail:

[...] that there shall be from henceforth free schools within every diocese of this realm of Ireland, and that the school-master shall be an Englishman, or of the English birth of this realm; and the lord archbishop of Armagh, the lord archbishop of Dublin, the lord bishop of Meath, and the lord bishop of Kildare, and their several successors for ever, shall have the nomination, institution, and appointment of the school-masters within their several dioceses from time to time for ever. (Hyland & Milne, p. 39)

For successive Tudor monarchs the emphasis was on teaching the English language and the role of the Established Reformed Church in spreading English culture and the reformed Protestant religion. It is interesting to note that the university which Elizabeth I established in Dublin in 1592, Trinity College, was “intended to be not only a centre of higher learning but also a pillar of the established church”(McCoy, 1967, p. 184). The Cromwellian invasion and consequent devastation (1649-1679), were to follow prior to the era of the penal laws.

The penal laws (1691-1778).

Tudor legislation was followed by the Penal law period, 1695-1782. The laws were introduced gradually and were of three kinds. One set aimed at the links in mission and learning which had been established between Ireland and the mainland of Europe. The Catholic hierarchy and regular clergy were outlawed. Secular clergy, if they registered with the government could remain. The second set of penal laws aimed to

prevent Catholics from holding official and government positions and from entering certain professions by the imposition of a test oath abjuring the authority of the papacy and other Catholic doctrines. The third set of laws aimed to deprive Catholics of the right to hold property. Critically, the penal laws attempted to outlaw the Catholic education system. The Act to prevent the further growth of popery (1704), gave power to justices of the peace to pursue any person whom they suspected of sending his child abroad to pursue a Catholic education (Parkes, 2010, p. 19). However Irish Catholics continued to travel secretly to Irish colleges in Europe, and Daniel Delaney, founder of the Patrician Brothers, is an example of how this penal law could be circumvented. In her work, *The Age of the Penal Laws* (1967), Maureen Wall claims that despite the laws, most of the cities and towns outside Ulster had their Catholic chapels, and new ones were being erected from early in the century. Only the place of worship of the established church could legally be dignified by the name ‘church’, and “all the old churches and monasteries and cathedrals, which had escaped destruction at various times since the reformation, and indeed all the original church temporalities, were the property of the established church. Many of the Dublin chapels were at first merely converted stables and storehouses” (p. 224). The Dominican Sisters were in Galway during the Tudor, Cromwellian and penal times providing a Catholic school for girls. Daniel Delaney, founder of the Patrician Brothers was born in penal times, 1747. Margaret Aylward, foundress of the Holy Faith Sisters was born in 1810 when the movement for Catholic emancipation was beginning. The ability of the Roman Catholic population to maintain their faith through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries led to the political demand for full emancipation in the nineteenth century.

Catholic mission in the nineteenth century.

The history of the nineteenth-century, already explored in chapter four to contextualise trusteeship of schools, is the century of post-penal laws, Catholic emancipation in 1829, famine in the 1840s and a resurgent Catholic church in the second half of the century. Daly charts the social and occupational changes in the nineteenth century claiming that a growing sophistication of life brought a new and wider range of occupations (Daly, 1981, p. 101). As already outlined with regard to church, state and education in chapter four this century witnessed the beginning of the Irish Catholic middle class and this factor is a central contextual feature in the congregational founding stories. Political awareness partnered increased literacy. There was a massive expansion in local newspapers many of which were founded in the post-famine years, and Irish emigrants were writing letters home. Daly summarizes the outcome of the social and economic changes taking place by focusing on the need for “a developing education system [which] was essential to the more advanced economy of post-famine Ireland” (Daly, 1981, p. 111).

The early nineteenth century also saw a new development in evangelicalism which has been briefly referred to in chapter four. This movement with its emphasis on bible reading had a related missionary zeal which increased existing religious tensions. It was the era of strident proselytising activity which was motivated and funded by its founding movement in England. Keenan writes about an amorphous movement in Ireland inspired by similar movements in England the aims of which were to convert non-Protestants to ‘Christianity’ and to convert Protestants to a more ‘evangelical’ life. For

these aims it relied chiefly on the distribution of the bible. The movement spanned many countries and was usually called the biblical or evangelical movement (Keenan, 1983, p. 171). In an address to the Kildare Place Society in 1820, Daniel O' Connell, in a wonderful piece of oratory laced with acerbic humour, focuses on the issue of Catholic children being given the bible without notes, i.e., as a 'school book':

[...] my only object is a strict adherence to the avowed principles of this society, as I find them in your reports, nay, in your very charter, and still more in the hope which you have so long held out to the poor of Ireland. That hope, I must say, you have miserably disappointed. The principle itself is one, which I think every one who loves this unfortunate country should hail with joy [...] 'to afford the same facilities for education, to all classes of professing Christians, without any attempt to interfere with the peculiar religious opinions of any.' This is a noble principle for Ireland! a blessed principle! which every honest man should rejoice to see avowed by every member of the community - and acted upon [...] I am very sure that it must have been the intention of the gentlemen who framed these laws, to carry this principle into effect. I cannot suspect, and will not accuse them of duplicity so base and plain and manifest, as to avow this principle and then deliberately supersede it, and disappoint the hope that it held out. I am therefore willing to admit, that the practice has been the result of a mere mistake [...] Allow me now to revert to the question whether making it a preliminary to give the Bible without note or comment, does not affect the principle? I say it does: - as long as you insist on its being a school-book, you do not afford equal facilities to

Catholics. (Hyland & Milne, 1992, p. 88)

This oratorical piece by one of Ireland's first Catholic lawyers indicates some interesting developments in nineteenth- century Ireland which are directly contextual for the founding of the Le Chéile congregations. The year was 1820, when the penal laws preventing Catholic education were still on the statute books. O'Connell was addressing the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland founded in 1811, a society of the Established Church of England. He speaks with confidence and principle as he informs the members that he has consulted with the parish priests in Dublin so that his address is informed and authentic and the parish priests have resolved that 'The Scriptures, with or without comment, are not fit to be used as schoolbook' (Hyland & Milne, 1983, p. 88-89). In the address one senses power, clarity, and, in particular, a new ownership of rights and responsibility in Catholic church authority in Ireland. Doctrinal clarity and confidence in its expression, indeed a veritable 'credo' of Catholic belief is evident. O'Connell pleads with his audience to consider the divisive nature of proselytism. He refers to the bible societies which had been formed, and, while respecting their right to pursue their beliefs, claims that proselytism begets reaction on both sides and will lead to a loss of "[...] that feeling which alone can raise Ireland from the state of an insulted and degraded province: there will be then no emancipation for our country [...] Bigotry acting and re-acting will go on" (Hyland & Milne, 1983, p. 90).

Moffitt details the efforts of the largest and most organized mission to convert the Roman Catholics of Ireland to 'biblical Protestantism' (p. 1). It is clear she states that Protestant missions to the Catholics of Ireland, although ostensibly religious movements, encompassed unvoiced political objectives:

The religious enthusiasm which engulfed Britain and Ireland in the early nineteenth century, manifest in the rise of the evangelical party within the established Church, inspired in many committed Christians a God-sent obligation to disseminate the scriptures to those in ignorance and error. This increased anti-Catholic sentiments, and political ideologies of the early nineteenth-century so that ultimately there was little, if any distinction between the obligation to bring the scriptural truth to the Roman Catholic population and the desire to eradicate Romanism through the conversion of its adherents, thereby neutralizing the Roman threat to Protestant Britain. (Moffitt, 2010, p. 12)

The success of Daniel O'Connell's emancipation campaign aroused intense disquiet among segments of the Protestant population and galvanized the connection between the promotion of evangelical religion and defenders of Protestant rights and privilege. In the early decades of the century, the campaign to convert Roman Catholics became one with the preservation of Protestant interests, "while concessions to Catholics were considered the fruits of a Jesuitical plot to overthrow the Protestant presence, not only in Ireland but throughout the empire" (Moffitt, 2010, pp. 12-13). This was the period called the 'Second Reformation' but Moffitt claims it is a misleading term because the mission to eliminate Catholicism in Ireland, seen as essential for the maintenance of Protestant power, had continued without pause from Tudor times (p. 13).

Catholic activists realized that the most effective answer to Protestant missionary activity was to provide food and free schooling. St Vincent de Paul societies were formed for this purpose and according to Moffitt the most formidable activist and opponent of the ICM was Margaret Aylward who devoted the last forty years of her life to exposing the extent of Protestant missionary activities and thwarting their progress (Moffitt, 2010, p. 115). Margaret Aylward was the foundress of one of the Le Chéile Irish congregations, the Holy Faith Sisters. Moffitt in a very balanced reflection says it would be unfair to charge the ICM “with the creation of a Roman Catholic dominated state”, because such a state was caused “by the acquisition of power by Catholics in the wake of generations of subservience and insult, with the ICM being merely one of many examples of institutions and organisations offering such offence, albeit one of the most recent and most public” (Moffitt, 2010, p. 276).

Parkes links the bardic and monastic schools of the Middle Ages to the state-supported system of the twenty first century because education has been such an important part of Irish society and culture. She explains why researchers must go to church or religious congregational annals, archives and relevant documents for founding history. The education initiatives of 1831 and 1878 explored in chapter four, were administered by central government offices and so are well documented. The other major providers of education – voluntary schools and the churches – documented their work in parish and diocesan records, in the archives of schools and the annals of the teaching religious orders (Parkes, 2010, p. 11). This chapter, chapter five, with chapters six and seven of this thesis, do precisely that. To research the founding history and identify founding and contemporary values the chapters contain the living archives of formal

conversations with congregational leaders and school principals, and are supported by extracts from annals and relevant documentary history.

Each of the three Irish congregations situate their founding narrative in a particularly fraught period of Irish history and connect with earlier periods of the history of Christianity in Ireland: the Dominican Sisters of Cabra (1819), claim direct and unbroken links to the Cromwellian period; Daniel Delaney's Brotherhood (1808), to St Patrick as patron, and the Holy Faith Sisters (1867), to the era of nineteenth-century proselytizing and post-famine poverty. The outcomes were the foundation of religious congregations whose members would commit their lives to values with historical origins, the gospel mission, defending the Catholic faith and providing schools for the poor. Each congregational founder called in a particular time and in a particular place responded by developing a family of religious members each of which has its own distinctive story, therefore its own founding narrative and distinctive founding values. The research aimed to link contextual history, congregational narratives and founding congregational values with the desire of the congregations to ensure that their distinctive heritages would continue in their schools in the future.

The three Irish Le Chéile religious congregations founded in nineteenth-century Ireland are contextualised in the context of the Irish mission history from the time of St. Patrick. The Le Chéile congregations founded in England and France, came on mission to Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and their original English and French roots and values were then embedded in an Irish historical context.

Three Irish Congregations

Mitchell's historical reflection "the past has made us what we are, and we must all at some time have asked: where and what do I come from, what does it mean [...]" (Mitchell, 1967, p. 30), is at the heart of researching the three Irish Le Chéile congregations, the Dominican Sisters, the Patrician Brothers and the Holy Faith Sisters. Each of the three congregations was invited to participate in this research and to re-visit their founding stories and to re- identify their founding values within that simple question: "Where and what do I come from, what does it mean?" The 'what does it mean' was linked directly to the question which required the congregations to re-visit their contemporary decision to collaborate in a new paradigm of ownership for their schools, the new trust.

Dominican Sisters.

This congregation has a varied and interesting founding. Dominic, their founding father was born in twelfth-century Spain and founded his first convent of nuns in France in the thirteenth century. Máire Kealy in *Dominican Education in Ireland 1820-1930* (2007), situates her work by claiming Dominic de Guzmán, the founder of the Order of Preachers, as the 'father, a truly inspiring figure' recognised by all men and women of the Dominican family today (Kealy, 2007, p. 2). Dominic founded the first monastery of nuns in Prouille, southern France in 1206, to educate girls as part of his mission in combating the Albigensian heresy. The search for truth, and educating women to combat heresy are central values in the founding story in southern France in the early thirteenth century. Kealy believes that there were Dominican women religious in Ireland in the

period 1224 – 1644 and there is written confirmation of their presence after that date.

Dominican women would have experienced and contributed to the development of faith and learning, especially of girls, during Tudor, Cromwellian and penal times.

The Cabra Dominicans' story, or the story of the Irish Dominican Sisters "is the story of the survival of an institution in which successive generations of women dedicated their lives to follow the call of the Gospel [...] in the ministry of teaching" (Kealy, 2007, p. 191). That story of survival included Cromwell's 'visitation', forced exile, subsequent re-founding and penal persecution. The Dominican women survived and then came to Dublin. The story of the Dublin foundation begins when the Dominican Sisters moved to Channel Row in 1717, to Clontarf in 1808, and to Cabra in 1819. Dominican women rightfully claim that they have survived. Cullen Owens identifies another 'survival' for the Dominican women. In her work *A Social History of Women in Ireland* (2005), Rosemary Cullen Owens points out that when Archbishop Cullen tried to force the Galway Dominicans under the authority of the Bishop of Galway in 1851, they stood firm, appealed to Pope Pius IX, and remained under the authority of the Dominican order (p. 63). The issue of episcopal control of new religious congregations will be a thread which appears again in the stories of other congregations. Five Dominican nuns, most of them elderly, moved from Clontarf to Cabra in 1819. The Dominican Sisters are explicit in claiming that the present Dominican Sisters (Cabra Congregation), and their gospel mission through educational service in schools and colleges, "are directly or indirectly off-shoots of that original foundation, Galway 1644" (Kealy, 2007, p. 5), and, as already claimed by Kealy, Dominic is their father.

In the Cabra foundation Sister Columba Maher, the prioress, had four companions one of whom was a novice. They had few resources when they began their first school, a primary school for the poor:

This was new and unexplored educational territory for women of an Anglo-Irish background but who were now poor themselves, few in number, ageing, and with an uncertain future before them. (Kealy, 2007, p. 191)

With regard to this development Kealy claims, "Thus it could be said that the Dominicans came to the education of the poor [...] by accident rather than by design." She contrasts this with the new Irish religious congregations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who specifically, but not exclusively, addressed the educational needs of the poor (p. 46). This statement is of interest for the Le Chéile Trust. The Dominican Sisters did not set out to meet the needs of the poor. In their genesis, in Prouille and later in Galway, they were themselves upper-class educated women who provided schools for girls of similar background. But when they were in situations where the poor needed their ministry they founded schools for the poor. The Anglo-Irish family background of the sisters is germane to the culture of the education that they prescribed and provided. Their culture, their very thinking, would have been formed within this background, and would be further developed by their membership of the Dominican congregation:

Their thinking was formed by their personal family histories, by their membership of a medieval enclosed religious order whose thrust was towards contemplation [...]. They guarded their lives of enclosure with an emphasis on contemplation allied to a life of action. (Kealy, 2007, p. 55)

The story of the Dominican Sisters in Ireland continues by considering their search for opportunity to further the cause of girls' secondary schooling in the Ireland of the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries. The education of girls is an important value in the transfer of Dominican heritage and charism to the Le Chéile Trust. Providing this education in the Ireland of the nineteenth century without state-funding for Catholic education was a challenge. In historical context (see chapter four) it was evident that funding for secondary education was crucial. "Were it not for the donations of people who knew and were appreciative of their work, the schools could not have survived" (Kealy, 2007, p. 60). It was at the request of the local bishops that new Dominican foundations were opened. Foundations in the nineteenth century included Sion Hill, Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire) and Belfast. They were autonomous convents which held to the Dominican traditions. Kealy believes that Catholic secondary education for girls was of prime importance for both Daniel Murray and Paul Cullen, (Archbishops of Dublin 1823-1878), but interestingly she adds that neither bishop intended that secondary education would prepare young women for higher education (p. 65). In a balanced and reflective analysis she writes: "the Victorian image of the ideal woman [...] was not expected to compete with men intellectually and therefore education for women demanded only that they should have the accomplishments necessary for their role in

society (pp. 64-65). The curriculum for girls' schools, favoured by the bishops, is reflected in the advertisements published in *The Irish Catholic Directory* of 1873 and includes phrases such as, 'all elements of an English education [...] all the accomplishments necessary to complete the education of a Young Lady'. Having cited this statement Kealy adds a very interesting point when she observes that neither religion nor religious instruction is mentioned explicitly in any of the school communications because, she believes, a convent education was inherently a religious education (Kealy, 2007, pp. 66-67). This claim is central to the discourse on the Catholic school and Catholic education which was addressed in chapter four. The presumption that schools founded by religious congregations provided Catholic education seemed to imply that there was no need to publish it.

Two intentional values and the emergence of strands that might be termed 'unintentional' values need to be noted in the literary and documentary data in the Dominican founding story. Dominic's intentional values of faith and truth, gospel values, are at the heart of the founding, and the provision of schools to deliver the gospel message is complementary to that core. Other values are also important, resistance to the bishops' control and use of power, and the value of educating girls in fee-paying boarding secondary schools. The Dominican Sisters did provide primary schools for the poor, where there was need, but their focused mission was on secondary education for the emerging middle and upper class girls who, formerly, would have been sent to England or France for their Catholic education.

From the thirteenth-century foundation in Prouille, southern France, Dominic's charism searching for truth and the operational value of founding schools spread through Galway (1224), Dublin (1717), to Cabra (1819), and to the amalgamation of independent Dominican convents in 1928 and 1970. Kealy guides us in identifying the values which for centuries have inspired and animated Dominican educators. Their values begin with the Spanish-born Dominic, whose travels in France brought him into contact with heresy, and whose foundation in southern France in 1206 was inspired by the necessity for teachers and preachers who were knowledgeable and able to engage in reasonable argument. Their founding is rooted in the search for truth, and *Veritas* is their motto. "There was an emphasis on serious and constant study and contemplation of the Word of God in scripture as a preparation for preaching and teaching" (Kealy, 2007, p. 1).

Documentary evidence for the Dominican Sisters provides a narrative from which can be deduced a rich tradition in faith, truth, preaching and teaching. The documentary data will be deepened by exploring oral history embedded in a formal conversation with the congregational leader, Dominican representatives in the Le Chéile Working Group and with a Dominican school principal. "Within the general purpose of the Dominican Order the special mission of the Congregation of Dominican Sisters [...] is the proclamation of the Word of God through living our religious consecration and through education" (Kealy, 2007, p. 1).

Conversation with the Dominican Sisters' congregational leader.

The founding story of the Dominican Sisters was researched in a formal conversation with Sister Helen O'Dwyer, Irish congregational leader of the Dominican Sisters, in the Regional House, Navan Road, Dublin, on 4 April 2007. Sister Helen had received the research invitation, the proposed focused questions on founding narrative and values, and had given written permission to engage herself, her sisters in the Working Group and a Dominican school principal in the research.

Researcher (R): Talk to me about the beginning of your congregation.

Sister Helen (SH): Well we have a little bit of difficulty there because Dominic was our founder, the founder of the Dominicans, and we are celebrating 800 years, this year. It is a big year for us. We are the Dominican congregation, Cabra, so that is an Irish congregation. It went back to Galway, we were founded in Galway and that was in 1644. Education was always core for us, in a way, and there were six lay people who wanted to bring the tradition of Dominic and they got together and they became Dominicans. They went to the Dominican Friars and asked could they become involved. We were founded in Galway and that was in 1644, then from Galway we came to Cabra from which our congregation now takes its name. Columba Maher was the great person there and Mary Bellew. Truth is a core value for us Dominicans, and no matter where the Dominicans are today that is their motto, Veritas, so we have kept it on. [education] was very much linked with the truth value.

R: And you are the Order of Preachers?

SH: Yes, we have that actually after our names. So preaching and teaching are central core values. We have a Dominican spirituality, and that would come from the link with the Friars.

With regard to the Cabra school's foundation which educated middle and upper class girls, but also met the needs of the poor when that need was present, Sister Helen O'Dwyer added:

Again very small, again boarders. They were educated women providing formal education for girls. They also founded a primary school for the local poor, a tiny country school. They took from the rich to give to the poor, a Robin Hood approach.

The values emerging through Sister Helen O Dwyer's conversation are reflected in the documentary evidence and include preaching and teaching the Word of God, educating middle and upper class girls and the poor when required, and a contemplative stance within active ministry.

Asked how the founder might respond to a radio interviewer's question about founding values, Sister Helen replied:

Educating the whole person, the development of Faith, the ability to think through and not accept anything at face value. We have a very strong theological training. We might not be devotional but good clear thinking...good reflective thinking, the search for truth. That is our particular charism.

When asked about the developing Le Chéile Trust, and why she, Sister Helen, would be confident that founding values were motivating the process she replied:

The Dominican tradition must continue. We do want to hand it on to the people of Ireland. We want to make sure that our core values are handed on ... that the heritage is handled well.

These words provides clear evidence of a congregational leader making a direct connection between founding and reconfiguration values.

When asked about her experience of the reconfiguration process she identified an emerging Le Chéile value:

I think collaboration is the beauty of Le Chéile of the very heritage that we are talking about. I think that something even richer will come out of it. When we were weak, it did come together. It forced us to come together and see how much we have in common too. It has been a struggle, but a worthwhile one, and I think that it certainly will bear fruit. And we will leave it in the hands of God. That is where the different congregations bring their own charism, and no one charism has the whole truth and it is that kind of richness that certainly I would be looking for in Le Chéile.

The conversation with Sister Helen O' Dwyer was achieving the research purpose as it engaged the congregation in its own founding story, and in identifying its founding values in the context of the reconfiguration of trusteeship. The second outcome within this interview is that the research provided information for all twelve congregations. A critical learning for a new schools trust is that the Dominican Sisters, in their founding, and currently in the Le Chéile Trust, are pioneers in Irish Catholic education for girls.

Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.

Having accessed supporting literature and appropriate documents for the founding stories it became evident that there was a distinct inequality in what was available. Some congregations had published hagiographies and narratives, all had internal publications and many had congregational websites. To address this inequality formal time with the Le Chéile Working Group was negotiated at the meeting on 7 December 2007. An

update on the research was given to the members, values beginning to emerge were identified, and the researcher reminded the group that the congregations had identified core gospel values in the founding of the congregational schools, but that the research was identifying individual congregational values and questioning whether these individual values were continuing in the reconfiguration process. The members were asked to provide any piece of their congregational story that they would wish to include, any internal publication, and any relevant quotation from their constitutions that related to their mission in Catholic schooling. One of the French congregations, the Faithful Companions of Jesus, spoke about the lack of Irish archives. It became evident that this would be true of both French and English congregations and it confirmed the research decision to concentrate on the oral history of the congregational members and on any congregational documents which were available locally. Each congregation's founding is recounted not only through its founding documents, but through the oral history of members today, remembering and reflecting on the original values, and the evidence of these values in the narrative of the contemporary life of the congregation.

Subsequent to conversations with the congregational leaders the Working Group members were provided with a copy of the emerging data. As outlined in chapter one on methodology, the members were asked whether what was emerging in the research reflected their living narratives that is the story as they would tell it today. The members were also asked to add anything which they believed was missing in the narrative.

The founding narrative of the Dominican Sisters, and the researcher's synthesis of their founding values, was given to Sisters Éilis Ní Mhongáin and Marie Cunningham in the Le Chéile Working Group. They forwarded the research, with the questionnaire, to

Sister Máire Kealy. She responded affirmatively (21 October 2009) to questions (i) and (ii) and to the question, “Is there anything you would like to add?” she wrote:

1. The official date for our official recognition as Dominican women in Ireland is 1644.
2. Education of the poor; yes... once we took the step to open a ‘poor school’ in Cabra in 1820, poor schools followed... You might like to mention a Dominican presence is still kept in Ballyfermot.
3. Dominicans have been involved in teacher training from the end of the nineteenth century. (Máire Kealy, personal communication, 2009)

Conversation with a Dominican school principal.

The formal conversations with school principals provide contemporary and validating data. Each principal received a letter including the relevant congregational founding values and three questions which focused on how the founding values were lived in the contemporary school and whether the congregational heritage was remembered and celebrated. The principal was also asked to identify the challenges for the new Le Chéile Trust.

On the 18 January 2010 I visited St. Dominic’s Secondary School, Ballyfermot, and met with the school principal, Mary Daly. Mary’s responses to the first focused question included the following:

Mary Daly (MD): In our school we are looking at educating the young girls of Ballyfermot which is a disadvantaged area. We are one of two schools in the country, who were awarded the Yellow Flag for a school of social inclusion. We include every young girl, no matter what her background is, and we are not talking about just international students or travellers or students with disabilities. We go the extra mile or two to be inclusive and to put in place programmes that can include students of different backgrounds and different abilities. I think that is the one thing that we live out, day to day, I've been here since 1977, so I could nearly write a book about it, and since 2000 I have been lucky to have been appointed principal and it was one of my goals to ensure that each young girl who comes into our school reaches her full potential.

Researcher (R): A Dominican value, educating girls?

*MD: Educating the whole person and I think always mindful of the context of the school where these young girls come from. Their parents would not have had the experience of secondary education. So we have to encourage and play that role, *in loco parentis*, encouraging the girls to come to school. We had a Whole School Evaluation in 2007 and they [inspectors] said it [our school] had a futuristic vision in accommodating the needs of all the young girls, monitoring their progress, and not alone monitoring their progress academically, but also monitoring their personal social development. The Dominican motto of truth and respect and acknowledging and understanding each other, as we do in the school I think, we do, I believe we live it out. Our assemblies have reflections, we had it last week with all our year groups. We have a reflection at the beginning of term, and the beginning of New Year, bringing in that little bit of Scripture and of faith, which I personally feel is very, very important.*

Responding to the second question Mary Daly spoke about how the school not only celebrates the Dominican Saint Catherine of Siena, a model for the girls, but how they try to embody in practice what they teach the girls about faith and the search for truth. This is how she and staff respond to contemporary challenges. She used the same theme in responding to the question about the challenge of being a Catholic school in the

Le Chéile Trust: *You can read the book and have all the theory but it is living it out in our teaching and in our learning [...] we have Catholic Schools' Week coming up and I think it is a very good idea, and we involve the students in taking responsibility for it.*

This conversation reflects the transfer of the original charism of Dominic and the early Dominican women. The Anglo-Irish upper social class women who met the educational needs of the poor when required would recognize the Dominican charism in the contemporary Dominican school Ballyfermot, Dublin. The school is an example of meeting the needs of the area and of the time, a Dominican value which is now part of the heritage of the Le Chéile Trust.

Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.

The Dominican Sisters' Heritage Statement in the Le Chéile Charter confirms the identification of the founding values. Dominic de Guzmán founded a convent of women in Prouille in 1206 to pursue truth in a preaching and teaching ministry. The Irish Dominican Sisters, recognising the lack of opportunity for that mission in Ireland founded schools from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. Their congregational leader's oral account reflects documentary data, and the school principal in Ballyfermot leads a school community which is motivated by the founding values. The Charter states that Dominic's vision "was to bring the Word and Works of God into a dynamic engagement with the prevailing culture of the day [...]. The motto *Veritas* (Truth) epitomizes the aim of Dominican schools and colleges – the pursuit of Truth in all its forms" (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 11).

Patrician Brothers.

The founding story of the Patrician Brothers lies deep within the context of Irish history and of the Franco-Irish Catholic educational relationship. Documentary data supporting the narrative includes Patrick Corish's *The Catholic Community in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (1981), Linus Walker's *The Purpose of His Will* (1981), and internal congregational publications.

In the bicentenary history *By the Narrow Gate* (Patrician General Secretariat, 2008), the Brothers claim St Patrick as their patron as their founder, Daniel Delaney, had done in 1808. Patrick is situated in a “world [that] was dying” and Barbarians were ravaging the Roman Provinces. Their patron, St Patrick, came on mission to a troubled world. This troubled world is a constant and dark theme in both contemporary history and in the research conversations. An Irish bishop, in the clerical lineage and mission of Patrick, is the founder of the Patrician Brothers. Daniel Delaney was born in Laois in 1747 and died in Tullow in 1814. Born “in the darkest period of Irish history” (Bicentenary internal document, p. 6), he attended a local hedge school and his early education was supplemented by private tuition provided by his aunt and the local parish priest. Delaney’s secondary education in France, and subsequent study and training for priesthood also in France, reflect the Catholic educational link between continental Europe and the island of Ireland. It also suggests that Daniel’s family could afford a European education. In the troubled Ireland the situation in Carlow is described in an internal document:

Carlow is one of the more beautiful and fertile counties of Ireland. Rich in agricultural produce, it attracted the attention of native clans and invaders alike. In the eighteenth century it was possibly the most landlord-dominated county in Ireland. The land system had given rise to almost country-wide disorder including secret societies. (Bicentenary internal document, p. 13)

Like the patron, St Patrick, it is clear that Daniel Delaney began his mission in a troubled Ireland. His education received in the ‘Irish House’ in Paris would have prepared him for a different life and culture than that of the Ireland to which he returned. Having taken up the position of assistant priest in Tullow, Co. Carlow, Daniel was tempted to return to France “seeing it [Ireland] as a country abandoned by God and tyrannized over by man” (Walker, 1981, p. 6). His mother persuaded him to remain in Ireland. Raising morale, and improving the behaviour and lives of the people through faith development and education, became his mission. Walker provides an interesting anecdote in the founding story, an evangelizing moment involving children and song. Walking home one evening, feeling tired and dispirited, Delaney came upon a group of children playing and singing. The children sang the *Ave Maris Stella* as they played. They repeated just one verse, half in Latin, half in English. A vesper hymn in the play of impoverished Irish children became the seed for an important mission. Daniel invited the children to the parish chapel to learn hymns. They came and their choirs developed. Parents and other adults followed, and within the year Daniel was providing religious instruction to both singers and non-singers (Walker, 1981, p. 11).

From within the initial group of adults instructors were engaged. Formation in spirituality was central to Delaney's mission. In training and forming the women and men whom he had selected he concentrated on enabling them to develop a deep love of God. He wanted more than good teachers. The progression of the mission was clear and systematic. He was ordained bishop in 1788, and began the Christian Doctrine Confraternity in the same year. Women instructors, who were selected and trained, became the first Brigidine Sisters, founded by Daniel Delaney in 1807. The Patrician Brothers were founded when, on the morning of 2 February 1808, Bishop Delaney invited four men to join with him in his chapel at Tullow. James Mc Mahon, a strolling scholar and hedge schoolmaster living far from home, and local labourers, Ambrose Dawson, Richard Fitzpatrick and Maurice Cummins, were the first Patrician Brothers. The founding Patricians lived in a ramshackle structure, previously the parish chapel and schoolhouse. Mc Mahon continued to teach, and the other founding brothers laboured. There are references to Sunday school, evening classes and a fee-paying school in the available internal documents.

Pat O' Neill in *County Carlow Schools, 1824*, provides an historically rich pen picture of the first Monastery School in Tullow:

James Connor, Paul B. Opened in 1806; held every day throughout the year except Sundays, Holydays, month at Christmas and Easter, Fair Days, and a week in August. Roman Catholic; appointed in June 1823. Superior of the Monastery Age 28; not competent to teach. Income £ 30 [...] School-house [...] ..a thatched house built of stone and mud: cost about £10 built by the Brothers. Monastery

established in 1807 by Rt. Rev. Dr. Delany, then Roman Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. A religious community, it consists of 8 men whose chief duty is to instruct the poor, and who spend a considerable portion of Sunday in giving religious instruction to the children of the Parish in the Chapel [...] No Testament used here. No attempts to proselytise. The Catholic Doctrine and Discipline explained to such as require it. (O'Neill, 2007, p. 77)

This simple mission focus is clearly expressed in the documentary history of the founding of the Patrician Brothers. Remembering that three of the original four founding brothers were labourers, we read an interesting historical note that the “Superior of the Monastery, Age 28 was not competent to teach”. Not until 1885 did the Brothers make application to the Rome for formal approval of their congregation, and in 1893 Pope Leo XIII issued a decree of final confirmation, highly commending the good work hitherto accomplished by the Brothers.

Although founded by a bishop the early Brothers experienced challenging episcopal relationships after Delaney’s death. In 1819 Bishop Doyle (an Augustinian) became bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, and on his first visit to the Brothers’ monastery he made no comments on the past, and no allusion to the future, “stating only that all building projects were in abeyance, and that to distinguish them from clergy the Brothers were to wear black cravats” (Patrician Bicentenary History, p. 14). Once again, the thread of clerical power and control is woven into a religious congregational story. Despite difficulties the Brothers opened a boarding school in Clarinbridge in 1823, and a school in Castlecomer in 1828. Other foundations followed in Galway, Fethard and

Mallow, each mission reflecting Daniel Delaney's founding intention. The contemporary Constitution of the Brothers verifies the continuity of values from the founding to their present mission:

Daniel Delany recognised in his time that Christian education was at the core of any attack on the many social and spiritual evils of the time. And so this work became the keystone of the brothers' efforts to combat ignorance and injustice. We are aware that it will continue to play an important part in overcoming injustice, prejudice and powerlessness. We recognize the work of Christian education as the original, common and constant expression of our Patrician mission. (Constitutions 6.6 and 6.7 Patrician Brothers)

Meeting the social and parish needs of the time and Christian education are the identified founding values and the Brothers were formed spiritually and professionally to live those values.

Conversation with the Patrician Brothers congregational leader.

A formal conversation with Brother Cormac Commins (representing congregational leadership) was held in Dublin on the 29 January 2007. Brother Cormac had received the focused questions and he had provided congregational data to assist the research.

Researcher (R): Talk to me about the beginning of the Patrician Secondary Schools in Ireland.

Brother Cormac (BC): We were founded in 1808 which was the time of the after-effects of the Penal Laws which had a serious effect on educational matters and education generally. There were literally no schools and our beloved founder saw education as a way of remedying some of the problems.

R: Penal Laws?

BC: Yes, post-Penal Laws that is correct. Daniel Delaney saw education as a way of counteracting the difficult problems that resulted because of Penal Laws, so that was education and either Secondary or Primary was incidental, in a way, but as it happened our second foundation, which was in Mountrath, (the first foundation was in Tullow), was a Secondary School. The Patricians were founded in Tullow, Co Carlow 1808. Bishop Daniel Delaney was the founder and he was Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin at that time.

R: And he was responding to the problems of his time?

BC: Absolutely, particularly to what he saw. It was post-Penal Laws time or even in the middle of it, when he was growing up in Mountrath and he had to go to France to be educated to the priesthood. So when he returned, he was absolutely appalled at what he saw and he saw education as one solution to the problems, as he saw them, all the difficulties –drunkenness, faction fighting, all of that was what he saw when he came to Tullow. Turmoil was the order of the day at that particular time. He felt himself that he failed to get adults to respond to his teaching, his preaching and everything else, so he felt he would concentrate his efforts on the young people and that was the origin of it and that is how we find ourselves in education today.

R: Did he have any experience in education?

BC: No, except that he began what I would call Sunday classes in the local church for the young people. In order to do that he enrolled the assistance of some lay people, lay women and lay men, and the lay women became the Brigidines.

R: You are a pre-famine foundation?

BC:

We had a very big involvement during famine times in Galway. Some of our Brothers had moved to Galway. They developed an organisation called the Breakfast Institute in Galway, a system of feeding poor people. It was founded by Brother Paul O'Connor who walked from Tullow to Galway with a shilling in his pocket.

The conversation then addressed the values in the reconfiguration of trusteeship and why the Patrician Brothers would move into this lay trust.

BC:

We believe that what we had in place for almost 200 years was good and worthwhile and we want to ensure that that continues into the future, even though there may not be a Brother Cormac or Brother anybody else around. This is the new Church. This is the religious life of the future. That is my view of Le Chéile, to ensure that what has happened in the past and what were good things in the past will continue into the future. I still think it will be a Patrician School, it will be a Catholic School and I have spoken to parents in different places and I have spoken to staff and that is what we say, and I hope, please God, that the ethos which we try to inculcate or pass on, has been passed on and will continue, way into the future. That is what I am about in Le Chéile.

This conversation, the oral narrative of the Patrician Brothers, reflects the values which were identified through engagement with documentary data. Brother Cormac Commins' enthusiastic response to the question about moving into Le Chéile reflected his work and commitment as a regular member of the Working Group. It also reflected a whole-hearted faith in the continuity of Patrician values and in his confidence in what he called 'the new church'.

Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.

The story of the Patrician Brothers and the synthesis of their founding values was given to Brother Cormac in the Le Chéile Working Group. When he received the founding story and values he consulted Brother Linus Walker, the congregational archivist. A written response was received on 9 September 2009. To the questions about the ‘lived narrative’ and values there was a positive response, and to the question, ‘Is there anything you would like to add?’ they requested that the following sentence from their revised constitutions would be added: “We recognize the work of Christian education as the original, common and constant expression of our Patrician Mission” (Patrician Brothers Constitutions 6.7).

The founding values of the Patrician Brothers include the choice of the Catholic school as a strategy in addressing both faith and social order, as well as the value of humble beginnings and humble work, a deep spiritual formation, and courage to continue in faith. The Brothers also provided schools and faith formation in a parish setting, and worked manually to sustain their monasteries.

Conversation with a Patrician Brothers school principal.

Contemporary validation for the Patrician research is provided in the transcript of a conversation with Michael Stacey, principal of Patrician College, in Finglas, Dublin on 21 January 2010. Michael had received the identified Patrician values and the related questions as to whether these values were lived in the school, and how they could be identified. He was also asked to identify the greatest challenge for a Le Chéile school today.

Michael Stacey introduced the conversation by speaking about how he, himself, was interviewed and secured the post of teacher, and later as principal in the Patrician school in Finglas:

Michael Stacey (MS): So I had the interview, met Brother Cormac, was offered a job, accepted the job, and I have to say that I have never been happier. There is a family element in the environment in which teachers work here, it is phenomenal. The Brothers are, I suppose, warmth personified. The way they looked after young teachers, especially culchies like myself, because they were all culchies generally, the level of attention that they paid to the mentoring of new teachers, and the work of new teachers, and the concerns that they had for them was exemplary, to be honest.

Researcher (R): I heard you saying, 'I love the kids'.

MS: But the guys that I have, they have changed over the years, but they are still the same vulnerable kids that we had back in the seventies.

R: And life has changed.

MS: [...] over the years the society has changed dramatically and the structural problems of society have changed dramatically, and we are still left dealing with the guys who are seriously disadvantaged. We are looking at the guys who have social [difficulties]. We are looking at family breakdown. We are looking at a society and an educational society which makes vulnerable children even more disadvantaged and we believe here that we have that opportunity to make a difference. [...] We were enrolling children with under seven reading age and the educational system was not supporting them. We considered this to be a major disadvantage for those children. They had been very badly treated relative to the whole educational system, and I went to the board of management having one request, and the request was, they had to support me. Their response was – "Right, ok, we will give you our full support". We had the Brothers' and the board supporting our care for these kids.

Responding to the question about evidence in remembering Daniel Delaney and the Patrician mission Michael said:

MS:

Well, I would not go so far as to say that we celebrate it overtly, but what we do is that we are true [to the Patrician spirit] through the way we live and the way we work. The spirit of Daniel Delaney is brought forward. But we do it in the way we live, and every time we have assemblies, we bring forward the message of Daniel Delaney. We have recently brought forward the new mission that is in Ghana, and the boys support the new mission that they (Patrician Brothers) have been asked to set up in Ghana.

Michael Stacey's response to the question about contemporary challenges for the Le Chéile school was similar to his other responses and was rooted in the Patrician founding values:

MS:

Well the biggest challenge that I can see for our school is to try and maintain the Patrician ethos within our own school, having due regard to the Le Chéile trusteeship, and the big thing there is the Catholic ethos and the way we actually do that is how we treat our children. This relates to the whole element of respect, the whole element of how you treat your students and how the teachers are treated. What we have got to try and do is to make sure that the Christian message is so important. That message is about showing respect [...]. The children that we have, they are coming to school with all their diverse talents and characteristics and what we have got to make sure of is that when they leave school, that their characteristic is a Christian one. We hope that they will have learned to treat people with respect, and that when they see hurt being done that they can actually step in and be strong enough to say 'that's wrong'.

This principal's responses had one basic theme, founding and contemporary values are simply stated and are embodied in this Patrician school. The students are valued and respected, and this is how the Catholic and Patrician values are experienced.

Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.

The Patrician Brothers' Heritage Statement in the Le Chéile Charter reflects both the congregational leader's identification of the founding values and those which motivate a contemporary Patrician school principal:

In creative fidelity to our founder we seek to address through education some of the pressing needs of young people in Ireland today. In our commitment to continue in the ministry of education we find our primary inspiration in the life and in the teaching of Jesus Christ. (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 14)

Holy Faith Sisters.

Margaret Aylward, foundress of the Holy Faith Sisters, was born in Waterford at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Her story, like Daniel Delaney's, is rooted in the Irish historical context explored above. She was born in 1810 into a wealthy merchant Catholic family. These were post-penal times and Catholics could only be wealthy in non-professional sectors, such as the merchant sphere. Her mother's brother was John Murphy, one of the first Christian Brothers, also founded in Waterford. Visitors to the Aylward home included Edmund Rice, Daniel O'Connell, and Thomas Francis Meagher, a Young Irishman. She was educated by the Ursuline Sisters and her brothers were educated by the Jesuits in England.

Margaret, believing she had a religious vocation, entered first with the Ursuline Sisters, and having left them entered the Irish Sisters of Charity. This venture was also a failure. Difficulties in physical health motivated her to travel to Dublin to stay with her brother in Clontarf. She came to post-famine Dublin and the poverty and destitution of the city became the focus and context for Margaret Aylward's vocation.

In 1851 she founded the first women's branch of the Ladies of Charity of St Vincent de Paul in Dublin. Edward McCabe, later archbishop of Dublin, supported her in this charitable initiative. Visiting the 'sick poor' was to inspire her later works and was her initial experience of the extent and energy of the Protestant proselytizing missionary societies in the city slums. She was deeply upset to discover the Dublin poor were being fed and supported on condition that they changed their faith. For the rest of her life she was to be identified as a leader in opposition to proselytism. The missionary zeal of the evangelical associations has been outlined. Jacinta Prunty, *Lady of Charity, Sister of Faith Margaret Aylward 1810-1889* (1999), provides clear accounts of Aylward's determination regarding the proselytizing activities. In the first published report of the Aylward's Ladies' Association there is an account of the proselytizing schools and the report of 1859 contains 'blacklists' of Protestant charities accused of proselytism. "For the rest of her life Margaret was regarded as an authority, if not the authority, on this subject" (Prunty, 1999, p. 40). Aylward's leadership role in opposing proselytism has been addressed above in the Irish historical context.

When one considers that Catholic Emancipation was enshrined in the Act of 1829, following the *Law Relief Acts* of 1778, 1791 and 1793, and completed in the Act of 1860 which lifted the prohibition on funding Catholic charities, the women who, with Margaret Aylward, resisted the proselytizing activities were doing so within living memory of those Acts. The organic growth of the Holy Faith Sisters, beginning with visiting the ‘sick poor’, expanding to caring for orphans through an innovative foster home system, to Catholic schools, primary and secondary, was energized and rooted in a resistance to any danger to the Catholic faith. Within five months of her release from prison in 1861 (for contempt of court for not releasing information about a Catholic orphan), she founded her first Catholic school of St Brigid. In the fifth Report of St Brigid’s Orphanage Margaret Aylward is quoted: “Upon this one thing, the education of the poor, depends the future of Ireland and the future of society” (St. Brigid’s Orphanage Reports, 1861, p. 12).

The boarding-out orphanage had placed children in homes in the counties of Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow. Margaret and her lady companions made regular visits to these families, and provided them with financial support. It became evident that the families and the mission of faith, needed schools. St. Brigid was chosen as patroness for the orphanage and for the first primary schools. Margaret Gibbons *The Life of Margaret Aylward* (1928), quoting from an internal document (1900), on the life of Fr. John Gowan (spiritual director and co-founder) claims that it was he who chose St Brigid as the patroness:

[....] the immediate reason being that during his missionary sojourn in other countries he saw and heard the poor victims of the famine derided and jeered at and called contemptuously ‘Irish Biddies’, so he vowed he would make the name of Brigid a name of honour to the world, hence the title ‘St. Brigid’s Orphanage’. (Gibbons, 1928, p. 132)

One of the values that is identified in reading available literature and documents is outdoor relief for the poor and the family. Gibbons claims that Margaret Aylward was the pioneer of outdoor relief by subsidizing the poor in rearing their children at home (Gibbons, 1928, p. 201). She was active in her opposition to the institutional care model for children who were orphaned or in trouble. St Brigid’s boarding-out orphanage had been founded on the principle that no institution could substitute for family care. Similarly the schools were strongly opposed to the separation of child from parent in correctional institutions (Prunty, p. 104). When she founded Catholic schools as a strategy in her mission for the preservation of the faith, she stressed to the early members that parents were the primary educators.

Another Holy Faith value, which the research identifies, is respect for the dignity of each person. In training her lay companions she repeatedly elaborated her understanding of the role and dignity of each person:

The ‘pecuniary relief’ afforded by the ladies was only secondary to the gift of ‘their counsel, their care’, the principal end of their ministry to cherish Christ in their neighbour, each of whom shares in ‘the dignity of children of God’. Fostering self-respect and confidence among the poor in themselves, and in an all-provident and loving God, was therefore fundamental to the ladies’ mission.

(Ladies of Charity Fourth Report, 1855, p. 3)

The next value, a critical value in contemporary times, is that of the lay vocation. Margaret Aylward founded a lay group, she intended it to remain a lay group, and she formed and directed it as a lay group. When St Brigid’s Orphanage Association was founded in the winter of 1856, Margaret set up a ‘House of Rest’ where those ladies who were free to do so, might live in prayer and recollection when not engaged in the active services of their Association:

The Congregation of the Holy Faith finds its direct origins in the Ladies’ Association of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul (metropolitan branch, parish of St. Mary’s Dublin). This is acknowledged repeatedly in official communications, in correspondence and in contemporary published materials including the annual reports of St. Brigid’s Orphanage and Schools of the Holy Faith. (Prunty, 2007)

Margaret Aylward had found that religious life was not suitable for her. Prunty emphasizes that Aylward's work of protecting and nurturing the faith among the most vulnerable was primary, and founded a religious congregation only when her lay group dispersed. The Ladies of Charity included the wives, daughters and sisters of solicitors, doctors and other professional Catholic men. Her 'House of Rest' for these ladies was 41, Eccles Street, and Prunty notes an interesting connection: "From the Dominican convent in Eccles Street, a number of young 'lady boarders' feature among Margaret's earlier volunteers." Margaret Aylward, was regarded publicly, up to her death, as a lay woman. Despite taking simple vows for three years with the first group of sisters on 15 August 1867, and taking the religious name of Sister M. Agatha, her lay status was presumed. There is no reason to believe she wore the habit of the congregation, and no evidence that she took issue with being misrepresented, publicly, as a lay-woman (Prunty, 2007).

Faith was the core value in everything Aylward did. In founding schools the principal distinguishing feature was the place afforded to religious instruction, so that "these schools will always be Schools of Faith, a Faith that is living and operative" (Twenty-Seventh Annual Report, 1884). Holy Faith fee-paying secondary schools were to follow within this broad, yet focused, mission for preserving the faith. Explicit mention is made of fee-paying schools in the request for congregational status made by Margaret Aylward to Cardinal Cullen in 1866: "If it please God we shall not confine our efforts to the teaching of the poor, but found schools for higher classes [...] our chief care being the poor, and our principal object the defence of the Faith" (Prunty, 2008).

Within a few years it was announced that fee-paying schools would be opened at the request of ‘parents in good circumstances’ who sought the benefits of Catholic education for their children (Prunty, 1999, p. 115). Glasnevin boarding school opened in 1873 for ‘respectable girls’ and was warmly welcomed ‘for the farmers’ daughters, the parents of whom dread sending their children to a regular young ladies’ school it so turns their heads’ (Prunty, 2008). This interesting nineteenth-century critique of ‘young ladies’ schools’ will receive further analysis in a final synthesis of founding and contemporary values of the twelve congregations.

Prunty outlines the motivational values which moved Margaret Aylward from her ‘lay foundation’ to the establishment of a congregation of religious sisters. While she was in prison most of her lay companions returned to their own homes. She wanted her work for the faith and the Catholic school network to continue, and she had received letters from women interested in joining her. Cardinal Cullen “kindly told me to write the application to Rome”. Prunty’s research offers interesting evidence of how Margaret Aylward, could, on the one hand, receive the Cardinal’s friendship, support, patronage and advice, yet, on the other hand, “prudently but strongly resist his desire that the new congregation would be for his own diocese” (Prunty, 1999, p. 122). This resistance to episcopal control is reflected in the Dominican and Patrician narratives, and will be considered in more detail later in the thesis.

Dramatically, and evidenced in the newspapers of the time, Cardinal Cullen made a public declaration of support by visiting Margaret Aylward in prison, driving there in a horse drawn carriage. Prunty humorously informs us that news about Margaret’s six month imprisonment was closely followed on both sides of the Irish Sea, and “was to

continue to provide the media with drama and debate throughout the [...] sentence” (Prunty, 1999, p. 91). During her imprisonment, Margaret directed arrangements for the fourth annual meeting of St Brigid’s Orphanage leading to a provocative display of clerical support with Archbishop Cullen in the chair, flanked by the bishops of Kerry and Dromore. These proceedings were also reported in the press:

Dr. Cullen, the Titular Archbishop whom nothing daunts – Dr. Cullen, the great embroiderer of damaged escutcheons – Dr. Cullen, the athletic Catholic white-washer, in confident conviction of Protestant gullibility, to call down the sympathy of the world for the poor prisoner Margaret Aylward [...]. (*London Times*, February, 1861, in Prunty, 1999, p. 95)

The Dublin *Morning News*, however, defended Margaret Aylward, seeing the *London Times* reporting as an attack on the rights of Catholics.

The charism of this woman, committed to the poor, to their faith and to their education is now, through the Holy Faith Sisters, located in the heritage of the Le Chéile Trust. Her values of respecting the dignity of each person, her identification of the importance of the family and the regard in which she held the lay vocation are integral to that heritage. The Sisters of the Holy Faith who receive this charism at their profession have decided to work with eleven other congregations to ensure that the heritage of this charism will continue into the future. Faith is the central value. A congregation which was founded to defend the faith, especially the faith of the poor, developed into a congregation which would work to preserve the faith, and then into a congregation which

would educate and found schools which would develop the faith of its students. The research is not arguing that all the values in each congregation will be found in the new trust or that they should be. The research question focused on founding and reconfiguration values is aiming to engage the congregations in re-visiting their founding narratives, re-identifying the founding values and identifying the relationship of these values with those values which are influencing decisions about new trusteeship of their schools.

Conversation with the Holy Faith Sisters congregational leader.

With this aim in mind I held a formal conversation with the Holy Faith general leader, Sister Margo Delaney on 9 January 2007. The conversation commenced with:

Researcher (R): *What comes immediately to mind when you think of Margaret Aylward and the mission of the Catholic school:*

Sister Margo (SM): *The energy for me around the founding of the schools began with Margaret Aylward's identification of the needs of the poorest children in Dublin. She saw that their dignity was more important than anything else and when people argued with her about giving them education as well as food and clothes she made a strong defence and said "These young people are amenable to discipline, they learn easily and they are worthy of this dignity." So to me the whole thing is the dignity of the human being and it was not sufficient just to talk about that in a vacuum, she saw it as essentially tied in with their understanding of God and in those days their understanding of God was about the Catechism. So the Holy Faith schools were very strong on the aspect of faith, but it was not just faith on its own she saw them in a very difficult human situation, she clothed them, she fed them, and she taught them. If she could uplift the dignity and give the skills of life to an individual poor Catholic child, she felt she was creating a better society. Not only that but she felt the schools had to be Irish schools. There are places where she is very critical of the English school, as it were, passing on English culture, so she wanted to*

produce Catholic Irish girls who would be contributing to the good of an Irish society. That is how I see it.

R: *In the primary schools?*

SM: *Yes, in the primary schools. Then when she moved on - it was a while before she moved on to the secondary schools - my understanding of this is perhaps limited but it is that Cardinal Cullen said to her there is a need for working class and middle class families to have their girls educated as well on the same model as she and the sisters were doing in the primary schools. Again it was about dignity, about faith, about enabling them to have a dignified and a good lifestyle for themselves. Also she had this idea that people in the secondary schools could pay and so their money would subsidise the poor schools. She believed she would get hardworking young women, vocations, from the country who would come and run the poor schools for her. That was there as well, all this was part of the jigsaw, as I understand it.*

The conversation continued.... about Margaret Aylward's love for the poor, and her respect for the dignity of each poor child and adult.

SM: *She defended the dignity of the poor. People said to her: "These poor children should be in a reformatory because they are not amenable to discipline or to education." She said, "We cannot say that". I think that came from her direct experience of walking in and out of the tenements and she said, "We are going to bring our schools to the doors of the innkeepers and to the hovels of the city of Dublin". They were not her exact words but that was the sense of it, she really wanted to be there for the poorest people because she saw education as a way of lifting them out of their poverty. The secondary schools would have been the same, to give the students a life of dignity, to make constructive citizens and so to cultivate a society with trustworthy upstanding citizens (I think they were her words).*

Moving the conversation to the Le Chéile Trust and why the Holy Faith congregation is moving into the trust, Sister Margo Delaney was invited to speak about her concerns and her hopes:

SM: *I think the bishops are ultimately going to be responsible for ensuring that Catholic education continues and that is their responsibility not ours as religious, and the term will be 'Catholic Schools'. The Holy Faith heritage will only last so long. Being realistic, I think we can do the best we can but a time will come when whoever writes us up will not know really know us [...] I think we are beating our heads against a stone wall to say that this is going to go on to perpetuity. It won't, but so long as the Catholic faith is held, I am not concerned.*

R: *Then Holy Faith has invested faith and heritage [...] Is that what you are saying?*

SM: *Yes, but we are investing it now while we have the resources and the ability to do so. We entrust it then to a group and we say. "We give this to you and now it is over to you," and I cannot see how any Le Chéile group can hold twelve charisms or twelve ethoses together, they can't. It is going to pan out into one ethos of Catholic faith. The nutrients will be put in by the different charisms.*

R: *What gives you hope in the Le Chéile process?*

SM: *The hope – really three things. First of all there is a clear emphasis on holding on to the Catholic tradition from the charisms of the various member groups at the moment. There is the work of collaboration, which I think is really reflecting the energy that is in the world today. The third thing is a vehicle for us as Holy Faith to remain faithful to our heritage of having Catholic schools. Now, we could do it on our own but I think that this is much more creative and in keeping with the time's way of doing it. I also think it will serve a longer time span because if we do it on our own, ultimately, the time span has to be shorter.*

The values being identified by the general leader of the Holy Faith Sisters are complementary to those identified in literary and documentary reading. The identified values include a passionate and courageous commitment to the preservation of, and education in, the Catholic faith, an active compassion and respect for the poor, emphasis on the dignity of each person, the central role of family, and a clear recognition of the lay vocation in the church's mission. This vibrant idea of a distinctively lay foundation for a

congregation of religious women in nineteenth-century Ireland will be addressed again in an analysis of the final outcomes. Sister Margo Delaney did not seem to believe that the charism would continue to live in and influence the Le Chéile Trust over the longer term. The Dominican and Patrician leaders were more confident but all three were expressing confidence in the new trust's ability to hold the essential gospel values in the schools. It is an interesting contrast with regard to specific founding values and an interesting point of agreement about 'faith' simply stated by Sister Margo Delaney: "*So long as the Catholic faith is held I am not concerned*".

Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.

The story of the Holy Faith Sisters and the synthesis of their founding values, were given to Sister Antoinette Keelan with the accompanying mini-questionnaire. Her written response, 13 September 2009, validates the research identification of Holy Faith values. To the two questions on the accuracy of the founding story and its inherent values she replied in the affirmative and added, "New insights are well supported".

Conversation with a Holy Faith Sisters school principal.

The research aim for the conversations with school principals was to engage the contemporary congregational school in relation to founding values. All congregational principals, their boards of management and staffs were involved in the reconfiguration process through cluster meetings and engagement in the developments of mission and philosophy for the Charter. They were aware and informed about what was happening.

A formal research conversation with Deirdre Gogarty, principal of Holy Faith Secondary School, Clontarf, took place on 19 January 2010 in Clontarf school. Deirdre had received, in advance, the synopsis of identified Holy Faith values and the first focused question related to that:

Researcher(R): [...] of the values listed, which of these do you experience in the life of this Holy Faith secondary school and why do you say you do?

Deirdre Gogarty (DG): Well, I did read through them, and I have given a little bit of thought to them and I think they are all there. But I think that they come in at different phases in the year. I suppose as principal and with school life there are ups and downs. You mentioned coming in this morning the appeal to aid Haiti – that obviously is the act of compassion, helping the poor, so you could say that some things were even put off the agenda this week, in order to facilitate that. So I think that being able to engage in an active and compassionate way, and while a lot of staff had thought about it, it was nice that two students actually came up with the idea. The students were able to give me a bit of direction in terms of where the aid was going. So I think that active compassion, the love of the poor and the willingness to act, I think that is very strong within Margaret Aylward's values. The hands-on approach to Christianity.

R: And it is strong?

DG: It is. It is. And Vincent de Paul as well, I know the Holy Faith Sisters would have strong connections with the St Vincent de Paul Society, as Margaret Aylward founded the first Dublin Branch

R: That was the beginning of it.

DG: I think that is something we have held on to very strongly. We work throughout the year being aware of the Society, but we also have our Christmas hamper appeal. We also have a member of the staff here who is very involved in the organisation of the financial end in his own community of the Vincent de Paul and that feeds back into what we do in school. We are committed to the preservation of education in the Catholic faith. With the

coming of Le Chéile we did have to take stock and re-evaluate. While we can say words and put up pictures it really comes down to – are we willing to put the pounds, shillings and pence into it? We renovated the Prayer Room which has become a marvelous resource for the school. We have all our class Masses there now. We are coming up to Catholic Schools Week, [...] and we are using the Prayer Room for this. Every single year group will have a Retreat this year, and the school pays 70% of the cost. We have taken that decision. I think that is a practical application of what we believe.

R: *How do you find the girls responding?*

DG: *Excellently. And I suppose, coming up to the 1st of February, St Brigid's Day we celebrate the patroness of Holy Faith.*

Recognising that the principal had moved into answering the second question, she was asked if the school celebrated Margaret Aylward.

DG: *We do. The eleventh of October. We mark that with a prayer service. We use the DVD on the founding story with the 6th Years. I actually did it with them. It was fascinating, because she was quite a radical woman in her way. And they appreciate that. I think they were all a bit taken aback that she was actually in prison. Now they might not have appreciated the whole nuance of it. The symbol of light, the fact that she was in prison, now that kind of touched the students.*

R: *The school is consciously aware of that heritage, and being faithful to it?*

DG: *I think we are, yes. I suppose for a lot of people in moving to trusteeship some took it on more on board, reflecting on what that ethos was. But I think, the one good thing about it, when we are doing School Development Planning, and if we are devising a policy on something, we always start with our Mission Statement. And everything is grounded in it, so no matter what we are doing, for example having a staff day looking at our code of discipline, we go back to the Mission Statement.*

The conversation then moved into the third question, the challenge for the Catholic school in the Le Chéile Trust.

DG:

I think the whole notion of Catholic education is very important. And I suppose it is unfortunate, or maybe fortunate, because you know any problem can always be an opportunity, just the current situation that we are in with various Reports of abuse coming out and still to come out, some people using this as an opportunity to question the whole role of Catholic education. People don't always separate patronage of Primary and Secondary, we hear a lot about the role of Bishops and we need to take the opportunity to define exactly what is a Catholic school, and that essentially, Le Chéile is a lay trust which promotes the values of Catholic education. And it is an education that is wanted by people, you know what I mean. And while it is Catholic education it is recognising those of faith and none, those of different faiths, but it is in the Catholic ethos. We have always had that ourselves here where we have had people of different faiths coming saying, you know, they are taken aback when we say we have a Mass at this time of the year and at that time of the year, in celebrations, and they say, "Oh, that is a lot", and I can say "Well, look at the name of the school—Holy Faith". Maybe Le Chéile, of all the Trusts, should just take the opportunity and be pro-active in that sense, to take the Catholic school agenda, rather than be apologising or making excuses or trying to water down the notion. So you have to just say, well we are this, a Catholic school, this is what we are. So I suppose, that in one sense is a difficulty, is a challenge.

The conversation with the Holy Faith school principal clearly reflects the values identified both in the documentary material and in Sister Margo Delaney's conversation. The most interesting statement was when Deirdre Gogarty strongly challenged Le Chéile with the hope which Sister Margo had articulated: "*Well, we are this, a Catholic school, this is what we are*". This point will be addressed again in the final chapter.

Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.

The research into the Holy Faith Sisters' founding and reconfiguration values maps contextual history, literary and documentary data and two formal conversations. Validation is also supported by the Holy Faith member of the Working Group and by the heritage statement in the Le Chéile Charter:

Margaret's firm conviction of the dignity and potential of each child, her concern for the preservation and development of their Faith, her respect for the primary role of the family, her commitment to children and families living in poverty and her collaborative role with the laity, are the values that the Holy Faith Schools seek to express through their ethos today. It is from within this framework that the Holy Faith Sisters work with other congregations of Apostolic Religious to ensure the future of Catholic Schools through the Le Chéile Trust. (p. 13).

Conclusion

The research actions for chapter five included reading contextual history and relevant documents for each of the three Irish congregations. The selection of readings was discussed informally with members of the Le Chéile Working Group. Formal conversations with congregational leaders were validated with both the leaders and the Working Group members. Conversations with school principals, similar to those with congregational leaders, addressed and balanced founding and contemporary values. The congregational Heritage Statements in the Le Chéile Charter are placed in each research map. The research purpose is to engage the congregations in re-visiting their founding

narratives and identifying their founding values to discover if those values relate to the values motivating the new Le Chéile Trust. This has been done for the three Irish congregations, values are being identified, validated, discussed and owned.

Sister Helen O'Dwyer, Dominican Sisters' congregational leader, having identified her congregation's founding values as truth, faith, teaching and preaching, educating girls and the poor when needed, confirmed that she confidently moves into the new trust: "*We want to make sure that [these core values] are handed on.*" She believes that the Dominican Sisters bring their unique charism to Le Chéile and identifies the Le Chéile value of collaboration which has served the seven years in building the new trust. Mary Daly, a Dominican school principal confirms that the founding values are being lived in Dominican College, Ballyfermot. She believes that the values are embodied in how she and the staff live and work, involving the students in their [the students'] responsibility in living the values.

Brother Cormac Commins identified the provision of Catholic schools for those in need as the Patrician Brothers' core value, schools which contribute to the life and faith development of young people. With regard to the new trust he believes the founding values are in the reconfiguration but in a new paradigm: "*This [lay leadership] is a new Church, this is the Religious life of the future. I still think it will be a Patrician School, it will be a Catholic school*". Michael Stacey, principal of Patrician College, Finglas, reflects this claim: "*The challenge is to maintain the Patrician ethos, the Catholic ethos in how we treat our children.*"

Sister Margo Delaney, Holy Faith congregational leader, identified the founding values as respecting the dignity of the poor, supporting them in their family life and providing faith development within Catholic schools for them. She was significantly more cautious than either Sister Helen O'Dwyer or Brother Cormac Commins about the founding values continuing into the future: "*The Holy Faith heritage will only last so long – I think we are beating our heads against a stone wall to say that this will go on – so long as the Catholic Faith is held I am not concerned.*" She acknowledged the role of founding values in moving into the trust: "*We, Holy Faith, are being faithful to our heritage.*" Deirdre Gogarty, a Holy Faith principal reflected the conversations with the Dominican and Patrician principals. She also claims that the founding values are lived in the contemporary school, making a very strong statement about being a Catholic school and the responsibility which the Le Chéile Trust has in that regard.

The three founding values which these Irish congregations have in common are meeting the needs of the time; in the case of founding times it was meeting the needs of the economically and socially deprived and developing Catholic schools which would meet those needs and provide social leverage and faith education. Each of the three congregations also offers its own unique values or characteristics. The Dominican Sisters bring their commitment to the intellectual rigour of seeking and proclaiming the truth, the Patrician Brothers offer a record of meeting contemporary needs and valuing schools in that mission, and the Holy Faith Sisters bring Margaret Aylward's love for the poor and her determination to provide schools that would be 'schools of faith'. She also believed in the lay vocation.

Parallel to the readings, conversations and research learning, 2006-2010, the congregational leaders, principals, Working Group members and this researcher were actively involved in discerning and developing all the legal and business implications of the trust. The process was leading to a structure that would support and serve the values identified in this chapter.

Daniel Delaney began the Patrician mission in 1808, Columba Maher developed the Irish Dominican Sisters in 1819, and Margaret Aylward who began her lay mission in the 1850s was born two years after the founding of the Patrician Brothers and nine years before the founding of the Dominican Sisters. The three founders were motivated by the gospel mission, were meeting what they perceived were the needs of the Ireland of their time and each of them identified the Catholic school as the medium within which to be on mission. Within decades of each other, and in an Ireland where the majority Catholic population suffered political, religious and economic discrimination these three religious congregations were founded. Characteristics of the three founders which are not overtly articulated in the readings or in the conversations but which are implied, and which the researcher wishes to record, are compassion, initiative, courage and the ability to include others in their vision and mission. These characteristics, grounded in deep faith, may be the very characteristics needed in the leadership of the new trust. Overt and implied values of Le Chéile congregations founded in England will be addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter Six

Particular History (2) Four English Congregations

Introduction

The context for this chapter will, as in chapter five, draw from the informative context which history provides, in this instance, English history. A summary of the relevant history of the Catholic church in England and, in more detail, the founding of four English Le Chéile congregations - the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, the Sisters of Charity of St. Paul the Apostle, the Sisters of the Cross and Passion and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus enables the identification of values in founding and in contemporary decisions being made by these congregations.

Historical Context: A Summary

The founding stories in this section are located in the history of the English Catholic church from the post-Reformation period to the nineteenth century Relief Acts. In a few succinct words Christopher Bellitto's *Church History 101 A Concise Overview* (2008), describes the complicated outcome of the European Christian Reformation: "The story of the Reformation is the story of how the words *Christianity* and *Roman Catholicism* came to be no longer synonymous" (Bellitto, p. 79). Luther, who came from a monastic and university culture, did not set out to start a revolution. His aim was much needed reform. However, he was excommunicated in 1521, and his movement and its protesting followers continued to develop an alternative church. John Calvin's major

branch, Reformed Protestantism, developed in Geneva, and the English Reformation had its own unique development (Bellito, p. 84).

Political considerations and religious zeal led to the English penal enactments which are contextual for the congregational foundings. E.E. Reynolds in *The Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales* (1973), conveniently groups the post-penal English Catholics (17th and 18th centuries), under four headings: "the gentry, urban Catholics, scattered Catholics, and vagrant Catholics" (Reynolds, 1973, p. 252). This grouping provides the initial context for the religious congregations. Some great houses of the old Catholic gentry became centres of resistance to the state-established Church of England. Other Catholics managed to gather in towns for Mass, and these urban Catholics provided shelter for their priests. Yet others relied on itinerant priests, and 'vagrant Catholics' was a recognized category. Reynolds situates the role of the priest, and some contact with him, as critical in the strength of attachment to the 'old religion'. Even within the context of an ongoing and vigorous priest-hunt many were able to evade capture for years. Some indication of the length of such ministries is found in the records of three who were eventually captured and hanged in 1679. St. John Wall worked in Worcestershire for twenty-three years, St. John Kemble for fifty-four years in Herefordshire, and St. David Lewis for thirty years in South Wales (Reynolds, p. 256).

Each penal wave decreased the numbers of the Roman Catholic population in England. Parallel to the decrease in numbers was the depth of resistance and the survival of faith in the surviving Catholic community. The Gunpowder Plot (1605), and the trial of Fr. Henry Garnet, head of the Jesuit Mission, bequeathed three interesting legacies to

the English historical narrative: increased hostility to Catholics, penal servitude, and the perception of Jesuit casuistry.

During the seventeenth century a number of English monasteries and convents were established abroad, and the English college in Rome was renewed. Despite the required Oath of Allegiance, Rome appointed vicars apostolic during the reign of James II. This mode of Catholic governance lasted from 1685 until the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in 1850. The vicars could rarely meet and Reynolds provides an account of how they conducted both internal correspondence and communication with Rome. The code words used by the vicars are interesting. The pope was ‘Mr. Abraham’, Rome was called ‘Hilton’, and Queen Anne was ‘Mrs. Hobbs’. With a touch of gravitas the vicars named Mass ‘high prayers’ and the sacrament of penance was ‘at duty’ (Reynolds, p. 300).

Prior to the Relief Acts of 1778, 1791, and 1829, English Catholics were virtually powerless in their own land, and there were no Catholic representatives in either House of Parliament. A few Catholic schools operated in hiding. Reynolds is both serious and ironic in relating the genesis of the first Relief Act, “[...] the sudden change came about not as part of a sentiment for toleration but through the exigencies of the political and military situation” (Reynolds, p. 311). The English Government was fighting the American War of Independence, and was on the verge of war with France and Spain. It needed to enlist Scottish Highlanders most of whom were Catholics who would not take the Oath of Allegiance. With the Relief Acts Catholics could become property owners, build churches and schools and eventually they could enter parliament. Exiled monks and nuns returned, and Irish Catholics leaving a famine-stricken homeland colonised the

reviving English church. Reynolds claims that Irish Catholicism helped to break down some of the austerity of English Catholicism because the Irish immigrants brought “warmth and a more open enthusiasm especially through their devotion to Our Lady” (Reynolds, p. 327).

The nineteenth century saw rapid progress in the building of schools and churches, the founding of religious congregations, and the conversion of a number of key intellectuals to Roman Catholicism. With a few wealthy beneficiaries it was the money of poor Catholics that built the churches and schools. The research identifies this fact in the histories of the Le Chéile English foundations: the Society of the Holy Child Jesus (1846), Sisters of Charity of St Paul Apostle (1847), the Sisters of the Cross and Passion (1851), and the Poor Servants of the Mother of God (1869).

A small group of Cambridge University alumni provided an intellectual impetus to the revival of Roman Catholicism in England. The group included an Anglican clergyman, George Spencer, who while visiting Rome, met Dominic Barberi, an Italian Passionist priest, who would be influential in the founding of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion. Spencer, while in Rome, advised Nicholas Wiseman, an erudite young rector of the English college, to return to an English church which, he believed, lacked intellectual distinction, and needed minds which could meet those of the Protestant apologists (Reynolds, p. 330). In 1850 Wiseman became the first English cardinal in three centuries. He arrived in England to a ‘storm of vilification’. Lord John Russell the prime minister led the storm. He had the “influential and inflammatory support of *The Times*, and, in due course, the pope and Wiseman were burned in effigy” (Reynolds, p. 336). In Protestant England the appointment of Wiseman was strongly denounced as yet another Roman

Catholic encroachment on the rights of the Established Church and the civil authority. The Oxford Movement in the mid nineteenth century also provided intellectual momentum. Its aim was to revive elements of Catholic theology and ritual within the Church of England. Many of those involved later converted to the Roman Catholic Church, including the principal intellectual leader John Henry Newman in 1845.

In the nineteenth-century English Catholic church leadership was shared by Nicholas Wiseman and Henry Manning. The latter was appointed Cardinal in 1865. Their remit was to oversee a resolute policy of bringing order into the reviving church, and especially the provision of adequate schooling for the poor, many of whom were immigrant Irish. Reynolds sees Manning's work as "a long struggle to secure that every Catholic child should be brought up in a Catholic school". Manning had once wryly remarked that he had "given up working for the people of England, to work for the Irish occupation of England" (Reynolds, pp. 346-349).

Contextual elements from this short overview of English Catholic church history include a dogged commitment to the 'old religion', resistance in time of persecution, and the influence of political events in the demise and in the revival of the Catholic church. Irish 'colonisation' of the reviving English Catholic church, the role of education in the revival, and a perceived need for intellectual weight in the reviving church were also key elements. Alongside these developments was the post-Reformation suspicion of and opposition to Rome. The suffering and diminishment caused by the Penal Acts and the revival in the years after the Relief Acts run parallel to the history of Irish people during the same period. A salient difference is that in Ireland religious persecution and deprivation were experienced resulting from English rule, while in England they were

perceived as part of keeping Rome out of English life and politics. It is also worth noting that when the English political leader and the English *Times* newspaper were vilifying Cardinal Wiseman's return to England, the same newspaper in the same year, was equally condemnatory and offensive about Cardinal Cullen's support for Margaret Aylward, foundress of the Holy Faith Sisters in Dublin (Prunty, 1999, p. 91). With this contextual history in mind the research moves into the histories of four Le Chéile congregations founded in England in the nineteenth century and moving to Ireland to found Catholic schools in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Four English Congregations

Society of the Holy Child Jesus (SHCJ).

The research now moves into the story of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus (SHCJ) and begins to identify its founding values. English Catholic church history provides the context for the story of an American woman who founded an educational religious congregation in nineteenth-century England. Irish Catholic church history is the background to the congregation's move to provide schools in Ireland in the twentieth century.

Cornelia Peacock was born in 1809 to a prosperous Philadelphia family. Orphaned at thirteen, she was educated at home and at the age of twenty-two she married Pierce Connelly, a newly ordained Episcopalian priest. They had five children, and lived in Mississippi where Pierce was the local pastor. Cornelia experienced early tragedy in the deaths of two of her infant children. A second challenge faced her in 1835 when her

husband announced, from the pulpit of his church, that he was converting to Roman Catholicism. Cornelia followed his change of religion, and the family moved to live in Rome. Later they returned to the United States where Pierce worked in a Catholic college and proceeded to seek ordination to the Catholic priesthood. Cornelia's third major challenge was to agree to a bill of separation, and with her children she went into a convent. Pierce was ordained a Catholic priest in 1845. In *A Love full of Action*, (Congregational DVD, 2008), Cornelia tells the sisters that the congregation was "founded on a breaking heart". She and the children lived with the Sacred Heart Sisters for a short while. She describes her feelings about the break-up of her marriage: "my soul has almost dwelt in hell" (DVD). In *Handing on the Charism: Cornelia Connally's Vision for Education*, (2001), Anne Murphy develops the founding story. In 1846 Cornelia, with her two youngest children and three companions, moved to England and settled in Derby. She faced the next major challenge of her life, the founding of the Society of the Holy Child. The beginning was small and there were many deprivations, but a spirit of joy and peace prevailed; Cornelia was able to inspire in her sisters something of her own serenity in adversity. At the request of prominent English Catholics, Cornelia formally requested Pope Gregory XVI's permission to found a congregation whose main work would be the education of girls. Soon they were managing and teaching in schools for the poor and needy, and holding day, night, and Sunday classes to accommodate young factory workers. Murphy claims that Cornelia being both a religious, and a business woman in touch with the contemporary world, would work both for and against the initial work of the new congregation. Subsequently, Pierce left the priesthood to return to his previous life, and claimed marital and parental rights. Cornelia

did not return to married life and Pierce succeeded in getting custody of their children. She was subjected to unwelcome publicity and notoriety, and her greatest suffering was being separated from her children.

Between 1846 and 1879 Cornelia and her sisters made foundations in Derby, Sussex, and in London. Very effective Catholic schools for girls were founded, and Murphy quotes Thomas William Marshall, an education inspector and an admirer of Cornelia's work, as assessing the schools as not just successful but also as 'happy schools'.

An interesting thread in this foundation story is that as Cornelia Connelly was beginning her new congregation in 1846, Frances Taylor was going to the Crimea and would return to Dickensian London to found the Poor Servants of the Mother of God in 1847, and Elizabeth Prout was in Manchester about to found the Cross and Passion Sisters in 1851. All three women were concerned about the needs of the time, poverty, education and faith. In the founding, and in the development of the SHCJ mission, one is struck by courage, commitment to education, and systematic development of excellent Catholic schools for girls.

Cornelia's maternal role and experience leads Murphy to explore a theological proposition about the name of the new congregation, Society of the Holy Child Jesus:

Theologically she was drawn, not to the infancy of the Holy Child or the 'baby Jesus' but what is known as 'boyhood Christology' [...] of the years when Jesus grew in 'age and wisdom and grace' (Lk 2:52). She was amazed that God incarnate could have allowed himself to grow through all steps of human development and maturation just like us. (Murphy, 1996, p. 23)

Cornelia was committed to providing intellectual, educated women in the field of Catholic education, and a clear philosophy, with systematic training of teachers, were central in the founding of the new congregation.

The Society of the Holy Child came to Ireland nearly a century after the original foundation. Murphy in an internal SHCJ document provides the context. At least one hundred Irish born sisters had been sent to the United States and to the congregation's mission in Africa, but the congregation did not come to live in Ireland until 1936. "The SHCJ came to Ireland in October 1936, to Stamullen, Co Meath. The Society was let into Ireland on the understanding that we would not open a school. I understand that the Society had been vocation-questing in Ireland since 1930, so essentially the hope was that girls who would join would go to Africa as 'missionary' sisters" (Carmel Murtagh, personal communication, 26 October 2008). Murphy believes that the foundress was not asked to make an Irish foundation and did not even have an opportunity to visit Ireland. There may have been, she continues, a remote preparation for an Irish foundation in the number of Irish sisters who "became rooted in the spirit of the Society from its very beginnings". Educated Irish women, who had to earn their own living, "were often attracted to the teaching profession and trained at St Leonard's or the pupil-teacher centre in Preston" (Murphy, 1998, pp. 47-49). In 1935 Mother Amadeus and her general council decided that the congregation should take steps to found a house in Ireland. Their purpose was to obtain missionary vocations for Nigeria. In coming to Ireland Mother Amadeus expressed her concern that the sisters would be sensitive to the need 'to see things from the Irish point of view':

Above all we must not appear as foreigners, but as a Society which claims to be cosmopolitan [...] Now or never, for the success of the work [...] I shall impress MMC with the importance of doing all she can to help the Irish postulants [...] instead of commenting on their brogues. (Murphy, 2001)

John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin (1940-1972), figures prominently in the story of the society's eventual foundation in Killiney, Co. Dublin. Correspondence between the superior general and the provincial indicate that "His Grace was very anxious to have an SHCJ school in his diocese". This was an interesting change of episcopal heart from that which the sisters had experienced in 1936 when they received permission for a 'vocations questing' house "on condition that there must be no school".

"The SHCJ were first invited to open a school in Killiney at the request of Archbishop McQuaid. The school was founded to offer an alternative form of education for families who were sending their daughters to England to be educated." (Carmel Murtagh, personal communication, 26 October 2009). On 1 January 1947 Mass was celebrated in Killiney by Archbishop McQuaid who then entertained the sisters to breakfast at his home.

There was some local criticism of the sisters and the proposed new school [...] referred to as "*rich snobbish nuns whose main interest is the education of the rich.*" Even the parish priest is reported to have said good humouredly "*the richest order of nuns in the church [...] and the Society comprised of Oxford dons!*". For some reason he [the archbishop] favoured the English influence: "*If I may judge by the open delight of non-Catholics at the arrival of the 'English Ladies' you are going to do well.*" (Daly and Mooney, 1998, pp. 104-105)

The SHCJ website provides a concluding reflection on its cover page using the five role titles for the Venerable Cornelia Connelly, "Woman, Wife, Mother, Foundress and Educator". Cornelia Connelly, in each of these roles, passes on a unique heritage to the Le Chéile Trust.

Conversation with the SHCJ congregational leader.

Sister Carmel Murtagh, a congregational leader, is a member of the European Provincial Team of the Society of The Holy Child. She travelled from London to Dublin for the monthly meetings of the Le Chéile Working Group, and the formal conversation was held during the lunch hour of one of these meetings in Avila Conference Centre, Dublin, on 9 November 2007. Sister Carmel's 'lived narrative' is at the heart of the SHCJ story and the identification of its founding values.

Sister Carmel was invited to talk about her foundress, the beginning of the congregation, and the values which influenced that founding. The formal conversation reflects and repeats sections of the narrative located in the congregational documents.

Sister Carmel (SC): Our foundress was an American woman, a woman who was married with five children, an Episcopalian. Her husband decided that he wanted to become a priest, and wanted to join the Jesuits. They had to separate. Some of her children stayed with her, others were in boarding school. Her husband, Pierce, did not pursue his priestly vocation with the Jesuits, and sued for conjugal rights.

Cornelia had started to spend time with the Sacred Heart Sisters, with a view to joining that congregation but it did not feel right for her. She was asked if she would found a congregation in England. She moved to London with two of her children. They were with her until her husband took them away from her.

Researcher (R): This is a most unusual founding story...

SC: All of that is very much a part of her story, and for us, it is important. She was a mother with five children of her own, and with a lot of tragedy with regard to motherhood. Her motherhood was to become a key in her vision for education. She founded the congregation in England, for the exercise of the Spiritual Works of Mercy. And the need that was seen at that time was education. She started off with a community in Derby. There were large numbers of post-famine Irish in Derby at that time. She worked in Sunday and night schools. She wanted to offer literacy opportunities to girls as well as religious education.

This ties in with the whole historical context at that time, when the hierarchy in the Catholic Church had just been re-established and there was a hope for Catholic education within the country to produce an educated middle class. And so she would have had a vision of education across all sectors. In the poorer areas, a lot of her sisters went out to parish schools to educate. There were also schools set up to provide an education within a boarding setting, and they provided income for the support of the sisters as well. I don't think they would have been secondary schools at that time. They would have been schools that had girls of all ages. So she would not have primarily set out to establish secondary schools. She had a very keen interest in teacher training and wanted to

open up teacher training colleges, and shape her educators. So she had ups and downs in that whole story, but the Congregation was able to establish some training colleges as well.

R: *What would you say were the key values for Cornelia Connolly in establishing her schools and in training teachers?*

SC: *Dignity of the person. Incarnation is at the heart of our Congregation, and that is what inspired, and continues to inspire us in education: the person fully alive. That is the core, and the other things that would flow from that are the spirit of trust, openness, broad-mindedness and joy were a very important part of things for her. She believed that schools had to be happy places. She was broad-minded and believed in a broad education as well. She encouraged her students in the arts and in the whole spirit of enquiry. She encouraged students to have enquiring minds in Science and Geology.*

R: *And the early vocations, those who joined her, were they English women?*

SC: *English and some Irish. It has got to be said that the Irish who joined her, were mainly the landed gentry. And there would have been Irish in the boarding schools as well*

R: *Talk to me about the congregation coming to Ireland.*

SC: *We have very limited education involvement in Ireland. We have two schools, one that is a fee-paying secondary school, and the other that is a community school. We are still committed to that vision of education, that offers opportunities to students, that values the person, wants to develop a spirit of enquiry and we believe that the philosophy of education that is our heritage, still has something to offer. Le Chéile offers a way into the future that would cherish our heritage. So we see Le Chéile as a vehicle which can give the schools scope to be themselves and will safeguard them, within that tradition, but not strangle them.*

R: *You have come to the Le Chéile Working Group recently. How are you finding that experience, with respect to your founding values?*

SC: *I have found it a very good experience, very, very collaborative here. People are looking, it seems to me, for that which is common and which they want to take forward, without imposing. They want*

to truly pass on values that can take forward what is there for all of us, and what is there for each of us.

R: *Do you have any concerns about Le Chéile?*

SC: *Within its vision, no. Within the articulation of its vision, I suppose there is still a question of communication, language, how we can speak in a way that does not alienate the people that we want to involve. Another very practical concern for us is to see where the community school will fit within this structure, because we are sole trustees of the community school, we are the only congregation in the country in that position. And we are Catholic Trustees of a school that is multi-denominational, and we would love to see Le Chéile be Catholic trustees of a multi-denominational school. There is a move towards using the term 'a Le Chéile School', as opposed to a Catholic School. As a result it could include all that we would want.*

R: *Can it include both?*

SC: *Yes, it can include both. I am totally at ease with the idea of a Catholic vision of education for trustees of community schools, but not with calling a community school a Catholic school. It would go against the Charter of the community school.*

I asked what gave Sister Carmel hope in the trusteeship process:

SC: *In the Le Chéile process in particular, I think the collaboration in this group. I hear a lovely struggling, to communicate Catholic values for our time, in a way that is - , that may have meaning for people. I say meaning rather than appeal, because I think they are quite different things. I don't think that there is an animosity to the values of Catholic education, but I think there is a lot of animosity out there to a notion of 'Catholicity' in its institutional sense, and I think the real thing that is happening in here is the struggle to try and bridge the gap.*

R: *Is there anything that you would have liked to say that I have not given you an opportunity to say?*

SC: *There is just one thing. One of our schools may not come into this trust, because they[parents and staff] may choose to go to an independent trust, and I think this possibly relates even to the last question you were asking me. That school would have no problem with Catholicity, but has a problem with Le Chéile, and the school*

that has a problem with Catholicity [a Community School] is trying to find a place for itself in Le Chéile.

R: *Very interesting. May I use that on the record?*

SC: *You may.*

R: *Thank you.*

This conversation is significant. It highlights two interesting challenges in the development of the trust. Firstly, and common to other conversations there is a critique of the institutional church. This theme occurs regularly both in the formal conversations with leaders and principals but also within the process for the Working Group and will be addressed in more detail in the synthesis and analysis chapter. The second issue raised in Sister Carmel Murtagh's conversation was specifically an SHCJ challenge. The congregation was the trustee for both its voluntary fee-paying school in Killiney, a school founded at the request of the Archbishop of Dublin to meet the Catholic education needs of middle to upper class Catholic families. This fact is in the founding intention of the school. The sisters were also the single trustee for the Holy Child Community School in Sallynoggin. The Le Chéile Working Group representing the twelve congregations and working together for seven years were, in the first instance, addressing the needs of trusteeship for their Catholic voluntary schools, but were aware that some of the Le Chéile congregations also had trusteeship responsibility for community schools. They were struggling with how to develop a trust for Catholic schools which would include trusteeship for multi-denominational community schools. The Working Group, with the informed and skilful guidance of David Tuohy, eventually developed an inclusive statement which clearly stated that the trust is a Catholic schools trust but is also inclusive

of the vision and philosophy of the community schools for which religious congregations held historical and contemporary legal and moral responsibility:

In Community Schools, the Catholic Patrons promote a philosophy of education that is inspired by the Catholic vision of the person, while fully respecting the multi-denominational charter of the school. The Patron brings the Catholic vision to the dialogue on schooling, and seeks to integrate the values that might attach to a Catholic school in a way that is appropriate to the specific charter of the school and to the community. The Patron has a special care to promote the spiritual welfare of all students within the school, and will seek to ensure that Catholic students have access to an appropriate faith formation programme. (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 4)

Other trusts had also included the community schools into the new systems being developed. Subsequent to these decisions legal difficulties in the Deeds of Trust for community schools began to emerge. The National Trustee Forum for community schools representing the Episcopal Commission, the Catholic Trusts, the Irish Vocational Education Committee and the DES is currently (2012), re-drafting the Deeds of Trust for community schools to meet the legal implications of a new paradigm of trusteeship.

While making sure that the community schools were included in the Le Chéile Trust, and expressing clearly that their multi-denominational status was secure, the staff and parents of the Holy Child voluntary secondary school were in the process of opting out of trust. The final decision was communicated to the Working Group and was

respected as a decision with which the SHCJ Sisters were in agreement. There was no formal discussion about this decision in the Working Group, but there was supportive empathy for the two sisters who were members of the group. Sister Carmel's words are fascinating: "That school [Holy Child Killiney Secondary School] would have no problem with Catholicity, but has a problem with Le Chéile, and the school [Holy Child Community School, Sallynoggin] that has a problem with Catholicity is trying to find a place for itself in Le Chéile." Further conversation with a SCHCJ member of the Working Group, Sister Mary Lalor, provided this response:

The parents and staff did not want to go with Le Chéile. They knew that [neighbouring schools] the Sacred Heart Sisters were setting up their own trust and that Loreto in Dalkey was in the Loreto trust so I imagine they thought they might lose girls to these schools and wanted to remain 'independent'. We, SHCJ, did want the school to go into the Le Chéile Trust but it would have been difficult to go against the head, staff and parents at that time. (Personal communication, 27 May, 2012).

The seven-year process in developing the trust engaged with a number of difficulties for all twelve congregations but also within each congregational system. The congregational representatives working in the process had to systematically and regularly engage with their leaders, their congregational colleagues and, most importantly, with school principals, staffs, parents' associations and boards of management. There were numerous challenges raised by each of these constituencies and the SHCJ met a

significant challenge with their school in Killiney. It was their responsibility and their decision to agree with the school principal, staff and parents and allow the school to be an 'independent' SHCJ school.

Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.

The story of the Holy Child Sisters and synthesis of their founding values were given to Sisters Mary Lalor and Carmel Murtagh in the Le Chéile Working Group. Sister Carmel forwarded the story and synthesis to the congregational archivist in England, and then mailed the archivist's notes and her own responses to me on the 2 October 2009.

Conversation with an SHCJ school principal.

The formal research conversation was held in the Holy Child Community School, Sallynoggin on 9 March 2009 with Eileen Morris, the school principal. Eileen had received the identified Holy Child founding values, and the proposed research questions.

Researcher (R): We are both conscious that this is a multi-denominational community school and is, in fact, the only community school I will be visiting for the research. It is also unique in being a congregational school with a single trustee, the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

Eileen Morris (EM): Yes, that is right, and I have to say that the values of the Holy Child ethos are firmly entrenched in the Holy Child community school. And this is evident in our interactions with the students every single day of the week in terms of the respect and the way in which students are treated with the greatest possible dignity and care. I think that emerges from Cornelia Connelly's philosophy, you know that the children have to be treated with the utmost sweetness, I think was her word.

R: Interesting, I had not come across that.

EM:

With sweetness and kindness. And I try to live that because I think that if children are treated with the utmost kindness they respond and they grow and they develop respect. I think the way they are treated with respect, they mirror back to the person who treats them in that way.

We have a school of 300 children, and we have some adult students as well. We have 16 Special Needs students in one unit, and we have adult students who come in to do the Leaving Certificate Applied. But what our community school does it addresses the needs of the age. It is in the heart of the community here in Sallynoggin, and we do our best to respond to those needs. We have done this down through the years, with the introduction of the Leaving Certificate Applied for the adults, where people who would have left school at the age of 14, indeed no matter what age they left, they get a second chance to come back to education.

R:

Very good...

EM:

And their dignity is built up, and their sense of worth is nourished in this school. And then we have introduced a Special Needs Unit, it is just a school with a difference.

R:

Cornelia would be proud of you. From crèche to classes for adults?

EM:

We had a seventy-year-old doing the Leaving Certificate Applied.

Eileen then elaborated further on the comprehensive curriculum and the excellent pastoral care system in the school, and continued:

EM:

So there is a huge support network around these children. We have breakfast clubs and lunch clubs and break-time clubs and all of that to try and keep them in school. And two thirds of the population of the school play sport.

Commenting on the evidence that Cornelia Connolly's educational values were alive in the school, Eileen was asked if the school remembers her and the congregation in any special way.

EM:

Well, last year for her anniversary, we had a fun day. And we are actually hoping to do the same thing again this year, and we called it Cornelia Connolly Day and we had a table quiz for the whole school. And we had a beautiful ceremony in the morning. Sister Madeline joined us and we had a lovely prayer. We have a great contact with the Sisters, you see. Sister Madeline works in the adult education centre, and comes down to visit. And Sister Mary is on the board of management, and the children know them. I am big into Cornelia Connolly and the Holy Child Sisters, because I just admire the whole philosophy so much, and the dignity, and the respect, and the caring, you know. And Cornelia Connolly was a mother as well, you know.

The conversation addressed the unique position of being principal in a community school moving into a Catholic trust.

EM:

Well, we recognize the challenges, but our chairperson summed it up beautifully at the ceremony when we were linking with Le Chéile. He said, "We will grow to love Le Chéile". The values are the same.

R:

And Le Chéile will grow to value seeing things from a different perspective, not changing its values, but understanding others.

EM:

Yes, by embracing, perhaps. It is a challenge for the community school and for Le Chéile.

This conversation with the principal of an Irish multi-denominational community school who is inspired by the charism and values of a religious congregation founded in nineteenth-century England is one of the unique outcomes of this research. The congregation in its foundation provided Catholic schools for the poor and evening classes for factory workers in 1846. In reconfiguring trusteeship in Ireland 2003-2010 the SCHCJ community school which is open to the needs of the area and provides adult education welcomes the Le Chéile Trust, but the SHCJ school which is fee-paying does not. The congregation included diversity in its founding and in its reconfiguration.

Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.

The research has now presented an appropriate historical context, relevant documentary material, the congregational leader's conversation, evidence of engagement with the Le Chéile Working Group and the principal's conversation. Validation is supported by the Heritage Statement in the Le Chéile Charter:

The Society of the Holy Child Jesus is a small international congregation founded in England in 1846 by Cornelia Connelly, founder of the Society and mother of five children who developed an educational system based on trust and reverence for the dignity of every human being. [...] Since 1846, educators inspired by the Holy Child philosophy of education have helped students *to grow strong in faith and lead fully human lives*, have promoted academic excellence, and have sought to instill social responsibility. (Le Chéile Charter, p. 21)

Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle.

This congregation, like the Dominican Sisters, has original founding threads outside the place now claimed by the sisters. The historical context for the story is reflected both in the outline of Irish Catholic history in chapter five, in English Catholic church history in this chapter, and in French history in chapter seven. The narrative is supported by one internal document and by the published work of John Scarisbrick, *Selly Park and Beyond* (1997). In this present context the research will focus on the story of the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle in England and their founding of Catholic secondary schools in Ireland.

Genevieve Dupuis was born in Paris on 28 January 1813. In the congregational internal document there is a glimpse of French Catholic church history in the post-French Revolution period. The Dupuis home sheltered fugitive priests and Genevieve and her siblings received both religious and academic education from these priests. "It is to them I owe my vocation", Genevieve used to say later. On 6 April 1834 she joined the Sisters of St. Paul at Chartres, the mother house of a worldwide congregation devoted to education, nursing and social work (Internal document, unnamed author, p. 6). The congregation of the Sisters of St Paul of Chartres was a typical example of the many new French religious congregations emerging in the seventeenth century. It is clear that the Chartres sisters saw themselves primarily as servants of their diocese. The bishop was the congregational general leader and the sisters' director was his clerical nominee. The sisters provided schooling for poor children, and survived exile or worked underground during the French Revolution.

On 15 August 1846, Fr. Tandy, parish priest of Banbury, Oxfordshire, England, appealed to Pere Sureau, Vicar General of the Chartres Diocese and Father Superior to the Sisters of St. Paul, to send some sisters to assist in his parish. In support of this request Bishop Wiseman also wrote to the Bishop of Chartres. Genevieve was sent to Banbury, England. She was to be known as Mother Dupuis, and took charge of Father Tandy's school (Internal document, p. 8). In 1864 the new English congregation received official approval. Selly Park in Birmingham became the mother-house. Somewhere in the deeper roots of this story is the desire of Mother Dupuis and of the Chartres congregation to maintain normal links with the French mother-house. Father Tandy urged Bishop Ullathorne, (the last of the vicars apostolic), to establish the mother-house in England under the English Vicar's authority. The bishop responded by a decision that the community at Banbury, and its growing number of branch houses, would be directly under his jurisdiction (Archdiocese of Birmingham Archives). Despite protests from Chartres a new congregation was founded in England (Scarisbrick, 1997, p. 12). The umbilical link connecting the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle to their mother-house in Chartres was officially cut. Once again religious were experiencing the effects of ecclesial control and power.

Conversation with the St Paul the Apostle congregational leader.

The congregational leader's conversation about the history of the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle took place in the sisters' Dublin convent in Greenhills, 17 April 2007. This is the only research conversation which engaged two members representing congregational leadership. One member, Sister Phyllis Brady, a senior sister

and former archivist, was also a founding member of the Le Chéile process. She brought rich experience in the field of Catholic education in Ireland, England and Africa to the process of new trusteeship. Sister Kathleen Neenan, a member of the Le Chéile Working Group and a member of the congregation's leadership team, lives in England and visited Ireland for the Le Chéile meetings. Sister Phyllis, though seemingly limited by age and illness, was the 'powerful' member in the group. She was the embodiment of the lived history. Sister Kathleen explained why she wanted Sister Phyllis to be involved in the conversation:

Sister Kathleen (SK): I would just like to say that Phyllis was the archivist for a number of years, residing at the Mother House in Birmingham while maintaining links with the schools in Ireland, particularly with Greenhills. She is a past pupil of Kilfinnane which was the first school we had in Ireland so she has very strong personal as well as historical and research and archival links, so I think she has quite a lot of very valuable information.

Sister Phyllis (SPh): We go back to the Sisters of St Paul of Chartres in France, because our foundress in England was a Sister of that congregation. We are 300 years old, set up in 1645 in the Boise area, which at that time was ravaged by plague and war. This was about the same time as Vincent de Paul started his mission in Paris.

Responding to a question about the French founder:

SPh: Pere Chauveau, a Parish priest. He looked around and asked for help. He looked for help from Vincent de Paul. He asked him to send some of his sisters, but Vincent de Paul wrote back and said "Grow your own vocations". So Pere Chauveau looked around and found a young aristocratic lady and a few companions. He gave them a little house where they cared for and taught children.

Researcher (R): So, teaching was there from the beginning.

SPh: Yes, teaching the children and visiting the sick.

SK: *And they visited the sick in their homes. That was one of the things they did.*

SPh: *It was not nursing the sick as such. Visiting them and doing what they could to comfort them.*

SK: *The faith was weak too.*

A few comments about the French founding led to the following:

SPh: *You see they were wiped out by the French Revolution.*

R.: *All your sisters were wiped out?*

SPh: *They went into hiding. But they re-congregated and that is how the name "Charity" is in our title. Napoleon re-instated the religious orders. He gave them the title 'Charity'.*

R.: *Napoleon?*

SPh: *Yes, that is in all religious congregations that were founded or re-founded in Napoleon's time. That is why we are called the Sisters of Charity.*

SK: *The Bishop gave them 'Paul' because that was his name.*

The conversation moved out of the French narrative:

SPh: *Post-Revolution ... the congregation spread all over the world especially to the French colonies.*

SK: *They came to England after the Famine in 1847.*

SPh: *A priest called Canon Tandy had a parish in Banbury in the 1840's. This was post-Industrial Revolution time and the city was very poor. The Catholic Church was just recovering, the hierarchy was restored in 1850. Father Tandy was like Pere Chauveau. He saw the poor children hungry and sick. He heard about our congregation in Chartres, and he went there to ask for sisters.*

- SK:* *Bishop Ullathorne was the Bishop of Birmingham, and he approved.*
- SPh:* *And Father Tandy gave them his presbytery because they were very poor, and they came in lay clothes because England was still very anti-Catholic.*
- SK:* *The mission was exactly the same. Genevieve Dupuis came from Paris. Her English was very poor, but yet she came.*
- SPh:* *There was a great rapport with the French sisters. Mother foundress went back every two years.*
- SK:* *And I suppose the point was that they went into places where there was a primary school because of the link to the parish. Mother foundress also started night school for those who were working.*

I probed the centrality of the faith value:

- R:* *It wasn't just to educate the poor?*
- SPh:* *No, oh no. It was also to counteract proselytising.*
- R:* *The founding then was focused on poverty – children – faith?*
- SK:* *And visiting the children in their homes if they did not turn up for school.*

The conversation then addressed the arrival of the congregation in Ireland and why the sisters came to Limerick...

- SK:* *They came in 1903 the year that Mother foundress died. The Bishop of Limerick, Bishop Dwyer knew about the work of the sisters in parishes in England. He invited them. They came in 1903, the year the foundress died. We had many Irish sisters.*
- SPh:* *The Bishop said there was a primary school in Kilfinane, and the sisters came. They lived in an old house down in the end of the town until they got the convent built. In 1903 the parish priest*

got his committee around him and they collected the money to build the convent.

R.: *When did you move into the secondary school?*

SPh.: *1926.*

SK: *Kilfinane was a very remote place as it is to this day, and the girls from the area did not have any place to go for any further education. The secondary school began in the cellar of the convent. Some of the girls came as boarders, they stayed in the convent as well, or in houses in the town. And that is how it began.*

R.: *And do you still have that closeness to the parish?*

SPh.: *Yes, in England more so than here. We were parish sisters really. I always say that. We lived like part of a parish. The parish was our family. We went to weddings and we did the altar and we went to funerals.*

SK: *"Love the children" was the motto of our Mother foundress.*

Sisters Phyllis and Kathleen were asked if they were confident that the Le Chéile reconfiguration included their founding values.

SK: *We see the value and the importance of continuing Catholic education. We realise that somehow we cannot be directly involved ourselves because of diminishing numbers, but we feel that it is very worthwhile to give parents the choice of a Catholic school. Unless we have direct input, we have no means of ensuring that Catholic education will continue and I suppose that would be our main reason for wanting to be involved in something like Le Chéile. We believe that the congregations that have smaller numbers of schools would be best represented in Le Chéile, that our voice would be heard more clearly, that we would not feel that there would be unilateral decisions, that the collaborative element which has grown, would be very important to us.*

SPh: *We had our little ‘didn’t know where we were going’, before the Manresa experience. It was like the Holy Spirit, definitely, it was like that.*

SK: *Yes, I think it is collaboration for a really good purpose, and there is no element of competition.*

R: *Have you any concern about Le Chéile?*

SK: *It may be because we are so pre-occupied at the present time with the actual development of the structures, that we might not be engaging with the individual charisms. Maybe we are relying too much on the school being able to carry that itself. But I do think that setting up the trust, it is a major commitment, so maybe the actual structures part is taking over a little bit from the spirit. The vision can’t be neglected.*

SPh: *We thank you because it made us stop to think about it*

Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.

The founding information of the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle includes a strong faith rooted in experiences of fleeing from persecution, providing parish schools for the poor and home visitation. These sisters followed a pattern similar to other English religious foundations of the time. Sponsored by a parish priest, approved and adopted by the local bishop, they proceeded to serve the needs identified by the official church.

The story of the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle and a synthesis of their founding values were given to Sister Kathleen Neenan in the Le Chéile Working Group. She consulted with Sister Phyllis and forwarded her response on 22 September 2009. She responded affirmatively to the two questions regarding the validity of the narrative and the founding values. To the third question, ‘Is there anything you would like to add?’ she wrote, “Compassion isn’t a word that we use much in our congregational ‘language’ but it

seems very apt now". Compassion for the poor and commitment to education are woven into the charism of the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle, and are in the heritage which they bring to the Le Chéile Trust.

Conversation with a St Paul the Apostle school principal.

On 10 March 2010 a formal conversation was held with Majella Deasy, principal of St. Paul's Secondary School in Greenhills, Dublin.

Researcher (R): Which of the founding values do you experience in the life of the school?

Majella Deasy (MD): I would see all of those values in the school, but to different degrees. And in relation to faith I can clearly recognize that in the Sisters who are present in the schools. We have three sisters who are retired, they are here every day, and I think that that still lives through them very much, in our ethos. It is certainly something that we try to maintain. We have a very active religious education department, and we have a lot of prayer in the school. It is customary to begin our assemblies with prayer, to begin our staff meetings with a prayer and to celebrate occasions, such as the feast of St. Paul on the 25th of January.

Last year was the year of St. Paul, so we had a very big celebration of that, a Mass for the whole school, and a lot of preparation, a lot of thought and a lot of planning went into that. We did our very best to encourage the girls to get involved, and to appreciate. Now I try, at our kind of public occasions, where possible, to bring St. Paul into anything that I am doing. There is a strong awareness of St. Paul. I would usually begin my meetings with the new first years by looking at the school crest, the symbolism of the crest and get them to think about that. But the challenge is really that we can't assume that the children are brought up in any faith. Some are, but many may not be.

A question on the social justice component in the religious education programme elicited the following response:

MD: *The school is structured in such a way that it reflects care. There is a very good pastoral care system in the school. We have children with severe learning needs, children with physical disabilities, and we have adapted the school in every way to meet the needs of those children. We have children from very deprived communities. We structure the school on the basis that we have to try and meet the needs of every student.*

Asked if she considered the founding value of love for the poor was alive in the school:

MD: *I think it is.*

The conversation then progressed to the question about the challenges facing a Le Chéile school at this time.

MD: *Well, there are huge challenges in the whole of the Catholic Church it is very difficult at the present time, and I suppose we have to be careful not to fall into the habit of apologizing for being a Catholic school. Most of us teachers have benefited hugely from having attended Catholic schools. I feel very strongly that the values that the girls take from this school will sustain them in the difficulties that they encounter in their personal lives. They will encounter personal difficulties, no matter what academic achievement they have.*

Asked if she, as principal, felt supported by Le Chéile:

MD:

Oh, very much so. I do, very much so, yes, I think it is great. Given that the community [of sisters] here, probably like most communities, is an aging community, and the numbers are falling, and I love having the sense of community, the sense of belonging, the sense of history. I think it is very enriching to meet with others, with different traditions, but similar as well. There is so much that unites us there.

Linking Genevieve Dupuis' mission of concern for the poor, providing Catholic schools for education in faith, and reflecting on the example of St Paul 'the Great Teacher', this formal conversation with the principal of St Paul's secondary school provides evidence that the founding values are alive. Sister Phyllis explained that the founding value of parish insertion was not embodied in the Irish experience.

It is interesting that Majella Deasy's enthusiasm for the Le Chéile reconfiguration process is reflected in the congregational conversation with Sisters Kathleen and Phyllis. The principal's reflective words are now placed in the research map with the historical context, the formal conversation with the congregational leader, and the engagement of the Working Group members.

Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.

The Heritage Statement for the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle claims St Paul, *the Great Teacher*, as patron, and identifies the values claimed in the congregational and the principal's conversations. The values include faith, the sacredness of all persons made in the image of God, and that all are entitled to an opportunity to develop fully as persons (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 18). From Chartres in the

seventeenth century through Bermingham in the nineteenth century to Kilfinane in early twentieth century the charism of these sisters is gifted to the Le Chéile Catholic Schools' Trust in Ireland in the twenty-first century.

Sisters of the Cross and Passion.

The story of Elizabeth Prout and the founding of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion is reflected in the experience of Genevieve Dupuis, and with the other founding stories in the reconfiguration of the Le Chéile Trust. The Cross and Passion Sisters' story is informed by an internal congregational publication, the congregational website, and supporting information from Mary Ann Strain's *Elizabeth Prout, An Extraordinary Life* (1999).

Elizabeth Prout was born in Shrewsbury England on 2 September 1820 and was baptized in the Church of England on September 17. Her father Edward Prout, a cooper by trade, was a non-practising Roman Catholic while her mother Anne was a devout Anglican. When the brewery, in which her father worked, closed in 1831 the family lived in Stone, and Strain speculates that they "likely relocated more than once as Edward Prout looked for available work" (Strain, 1999, p. 3). Elizabeth was born into an England of active anti-Roman Catholicism. It was also an England of incremental Roman Catholic revival. Catholic Relief Acts were being passed and French immigrant priests and religious were moving to England. The conversion of intellectuals such as Wiseman, Spencer and Newman, contributed intellectual depth and respectability to the Roman Catholic revival. The Irish post-famine invasion would add two more significant elements to the founding context with the arrival of numbers of impoverished families and committed devotional Catholics.

Elizabeth Prout's story and the founding of the Cross and Passion Sisters are integrally linked to the story of an Italian priest, Dominic Barberi. Born and reared in Italy, he became a Passionist priest and led the Passionist mission to England. He established the first English Passionist community at Aston Hall, two miles from Stone, in 1842. He accepted charge of Aston Parish and rented a room in Stone's Crown Inn where he celebrated Mass on Sundays.

As he and his companion walked from Aston Hall to the Inn, they were insulted and stoned by gangs of drunks [...]. This happened every time, but Dominic and his companion continued to brave the attacks of their persecutors. (Reynolds, 1998, p. 4)

Courtesy of Reynolds' internal document we know that Dominic Barberi received John Henry Newman into the Catholic Church in 1845. The sisters believe that Barberi also received their foundress, Elizabeth, into the Catholic Church in 1846 (Reynolds, 1998, p. 5). The story of Elizabeth's conversion to Roman Catholicism is not detailed in the available documents but the impact of her conversion is very clear: "Her parents [...] were outraged and so angered by their daughter's 'betrayal' that they disowned her and sent her out of their house" (Reynolds, 1998, p. 6). Strain locates the conversion within the narrative of Blessed Dominic Barberi's mission in England:

God saw to Elizabeth's formation as a Passionist from her first encounter with Blessed Dominic Barberi, C.P. The Passionists arrived in England from Belgium and were entrusted with the care of Catholics in Stone. On Sunday afternoons Barberi [...] lectured in a rented room in the local pub, The Crown Inn. People, some curious, some looking for entertainment, went to the lectures. (Strain, p. 2)

Strain acknowledges that it is not known why Elizabeth, who was an Anglican, went to these lectures, but claims that meeting Barberi changed the course of her life. She had a brief sojourn with the Sisters of the Infant Jesus, but on being diagnosed with a tubercular condition returned to her home where her parents welcomed her back. Once again she made the choice of the Catholic faith, and on the advice of another Passionist priest, Father Gaudentius, went to Manchester where she secured a teaching post in the parish of St. Chad. Alone, and in a city teeming with famine-afflicted Irish immigrants she, with some other young women and under Fr. Gaudentius' direction, began to work in Stocks Street, Manchester. However, Elizabeth's early companions gradually lost heart and left the group. Of the six women who were professed as religious sisters with Elizabeth only one persevered, Mother Mary Paul Taylor, a convert from Methodism (Reynolds, p. 16). The new mission continued and in 1852 the congregation was formally launched:

[...] the worst possible time for such a venture. Sectarian troubles in and around Manchester [...] Catholic churches were devastated and desecrated. Elizabeth and six companions received a religious dress in St. Chad's Church. The dress was their own clothes, dyed black: they were too poor to afford anything new. A religious community was born. (Reynolds, 1998, p. 18)

Elizabeth decided that without education there was no future for Manchester's poor: "they needed education to exercise their political voice, and to learn that God loved them" (Reynolds, p. 20).

The identification of education as a means of social and religious empowerment has an interesting development in the recognition of education's role in developing a 'political voice'. Father Ignatius Spencer, the English gentry convert and great-grand-uncle of the late Diana, Princess of Wales, was appointed guardian of the struggling new congregation. The new guardian had a similar experience to Elizabeth as he too had been disowned by his family when he became a Roman Catholic. Reynolds notes that this Passionist leader provided gentle and supportive guardianship (p. 62). Just ten years after Elizabeth's death (1864), the Passionist Fathers allowed the name of the congregation to be changed to 'Sisters of the Cross and Passion', and gave the sisters permission to wear the Passionist emblem. The Congregation of the Cross and Passion Sisters received Rome's approbation of the Rule in 1887.

On the occasion of the 1998 pilgrimage to Elizabeth's shrine, Father Nicholas Postlethwaite, Passionist Provincial, said:

It is my view that Mother Mary Joseph (Elizabeth) built on Blessed Dominic's Passionist vision, but developed it beyond anything he had ever envisaged. I think her own insights as a woman, her ability to analyse English society and her daily experience of living directly with the poor, meant that she journeyed to new lands of Passionist vision, theology and spirit [...] We are honouring Mother Mary Joseph today as a woman of totally unique spiritual revolutionary vision.
(Reynolds, 1998, p. 29)

A headline in the *Daily Telegraph* 27 June 2008 declared, *Nun Elizabeth Prout could become saint*, with the subheading “A nun who helped educate women in the slums of Manchester is being put forward to become a saint”. The article includes a statement by Fr Barry McAllister, a Liverpool priest who had been involved in preparing the cause of Sister Elizabeth Prout, and who describes her as “a great forerunner of women’s rights and of women having a role in society”.

The sisters came to Ireland in 1878, to Kilcullen, Co. Kildare. The congregation’s website provides an interesting piece of history:

In 1868 Cardinal Cullen appointed Fr. Langan to Kilcullen to assist the aging Fr. Murtagh, whom he succeeded as PP. in 1872. He ministered in Kilcullen for 35 years [...] In 1874 the Sisters of the Holy Faith established a Community in Liffeybank. However, their tenancy was precarious. The landlord, it would appear, felt that Kilcullen at that time needed a doctor more than teachers and accordingly the Sisters of the Holy Faith departed in 1877 to make way for the new occupant – a Doctor Barker. Canon Langan, however, was determined. He invited the Sisters of the Cross & Passion and succeeded in obtaining for them a suitable house – donated by one Thomas Quinn who later gave enough land for a new Convent and a loan of money for building. By September 1878 the house was ready..the Sisters were conducted in procession by the enthusiastic Parish Priest [...] Work started immediately in the National School [...] making visitations to the poor. The Sisters also opened a private boarding school for girls in their temporary convent, the original number of pupils being threee. (Cross and Passions Sisters)

A different version of the same founding story is provided by Rose Gaughen, a contemporary of Margaret Aylward and is cited in Prunty's account of the Holy Faith Sisters in Kilcullen. It is described as "the short-lived Kilcullen schools, June 1873, undertaken in a truly pioneering spirit". The departure of the Holy Faith Sisters from Kilcullen was due to their Protestant landlord refusing to renew the lease, while the owner of local land refused to sell to the Holy Faith Sisters because his daughter was a postulant with the Cross and Passion Sisters "who were very anxious to make a

foundation in Ireland", and the land was to be a dowry for his daughter (Prunty, 1999, pp. 114-115).

Two religious congregations, the Holy Faith Sisters and the Cross and Passion Sisters, with different accounts of the Kilcullen founding, are now collaborating together in the foundation of the Le Chéile Trust ensuring the future of their Catholic secondary schools in Ireland.

Conversation with the Cross and Passion Sisters congregational leader.

Collaborating in researching the founding values of the Cross and Passion Sisters Sister Máire Ní Shúilleabháin represented congregational leadership. A formal conversation was conducted on Monday, 19 November 2007. Sister Máire was a member of the Le Chéile Working Group as well the representative of congregational leadership.

Researcher (R): Reflecting on the life of your founder, or is it a foundress?

Sister Maire (SM): A foundress, her name is Elizabeth Prout. She was an English woman and a convert. She was converted by the Passionist Fathers in the Northampton area. She first of all joined an order called the Holy Trinity and she left that order and moved to Manchester. We were founded in 1852, but prior to that she was involved with Passionist Fathers in parishes. There were huge numbers of uneducated young people coming over to England from post-famine Ireland, and she became very aware of how inadequate they were to cope with the difficulties of life. She set about gathering companions around her who would teach them. She also set about setting up hostels for them when she saw that they had nowhere to stay, so that they were safe. She founded a little congregation of women, and realised from the beginning that without education people could not fend for themselves. They set up primary schools to begin with. They taught them sewing and the skills that they would need to be independent. We were founded in Manchester and it was mainly in the Lancashire and Yorkshire areas that our congregation began.

When asked about the early schools Sister Máire Ni Shuilleabhair developed the story:

SM: Mostly in primary schools to begin with, latterly secondary schools and we had one or two of those large grammar schools. They also visited people in their homes. The primary school and visitation of families was so important in the parish. Now, as you are aware, you, Holy Faith Sisters, were in Kilcullen before us. We came to Kilcullen and taught in the primary school to begin with. Kilcullen was the first [Cross and Passion] Irish school, in 1878. And then what happened, as happened with other congregations, it became a boarding school as well. Obviously in a country town there was no other form of education.

R: What would you identify as your core congregational value?

SM: Education, because the foundress recognised that in order for people to live independent lives they had to have education. In her time in England there was no education for Catholics.

As we moved to contemporary developments in Le Chéile, Sister Maire Ni Shuilleabhair was asked to connect Le Chéile values with those of the founding of her congregation.

SM: I would say two things. First of all on a practical level we are responsible for the schools. We actually own the schools. In the present climate in Ireland, the Catholic Church has very little to be proud of because it has operated in a manner which is not as Christian as it should be. I think we have a responsibility, and I suppose twenty years from now I would like people to look back and say we did the decent thing. We tried to move that from our ownership to something else that can be carried on. That is number one.

Number two, we stayed with it [trusteeship] because we saw value in it. The mistake that we made as religious, was that we went to places and stayed. We built kingdoms and then tried to maintain them, rather than allow other people take them over. And I think that we have been a little bit arrogant – I don't mean we as individuals, but we religious have been a bit arrogant. This was to

the detriment of some of the wonderful teachers in our schools. The nuns' school, it was called. Some of the teachers in our schools have been as committed, and far more committed than even some of the sisters. And I think that we have not recognised that, nor have we allowed them to move into management.

R: *Do you have any concern about the new trust?*

SM: *I do think it is good for us to spend time now in order that it starts off well. Then I wonder about the future and how long it may last. I wonder will there be people willing to carry on the values. But I think that is not our concern. I think that if we set it up well, in such a way that others can continue. I suppose that I would like them to look back and say that the congregations in Le Cheile did what they thought was the best thing, they put the energy in and this is able to go ahead thanks to their efforts, even if they were laboured.*

Sister Máire, as can be seen in the conversation transcript, is cautious about confidence in the future. It is interesting that she reflects Sister Margo Delaney's belief that the heritage of the congregations will not continue into the future (chapter four p. 44). She is also very clear in her critique of the institutional church and of some of the power issues in its past.

Validation with the Le Cheile Working Group.

The story of the Cross and Passion Sisters and the researcher's synthesis of their founding values were given to Sister Máire Ní Shúilleabháin in the Le Cheile Working Group. She was affirmative in her responses regarding the story and values but was uneasy with how disjointed her own responses appeared in transcript form. Two further conversations were conducted and Sister Máire's subsequent amendments were inserted into the text.

Conversation with a Cross and Passion school principal.

It is important to remember that school principals and members of their boards of management were engaged in the reconfiguration process and in the development of the Le Chéile Charter. Having agreed to participate in the conversation, and having waived anonymity, each principal received the synopsis of founding values which were being identified in the research. On 1 February 2010 the researcher met with Gerry Wrigley, principal of the Cross and Passion, Maryfield College, Dublin.

The conversation opened with the answer to a direct question about the founding values:

Gerry Wrigley (GW): I think the first one would be the fact that Elizabeth Prout's vocational calling was the area of female education and an acknowledgement of what women could contribute and were entitled to be allowed to contribute to society. And I think that is always something that we have had in the school. The idea of women's worth in society and the role we can play with twelve year-olds coming into the school and then leaving as eighteen year-old women playing a full part in society.

The second thing then would be Elizabeth Prout's decision to work with the poor in Manchester. Now, in a kind of an odd way, the Cross and Passion schools that were founded in Ireland, did not really cater for the children of the poor, so there was a slight, I would not say contradiction, or may be a movement on, from where the congregation had started. However, where the school had the option of going into the Free Education scheme or not, the Sisters opted to go into the free education scheme, when quite conceivably in the 1960's it could have remained a fee-paying school. I would say that that probably was prompted within the congregation by memories of the foundation.

Researcher (R): The original values.

GW:

It would be hard to see how they could have avoided making the choice they did in the light of the history of the congregation. That is the first thing. Sister Bernadine was principal when I started here, and I think an awful lot of what the school is now, is the legacy of Sr. Bernadine. She emphasised issues like justice and concern and care.. She had a heart which warmed the whole school really, and she was a wonderful woman. It was impossible not to pick up this sense within the school of concern and care. I believe that this was very much true to what I would have thought were the founding principles. When I became principal, there were three things that I felt were central to how the school should continue: that it should be non-fee-paying, non-selective and have non-streamed classes. So I inherited that.

With regard to the question about the symbols or rituals for remembering the founding of the congregation, Gerry replied:

GW:

Regularly, the theme for assemblies is Elizabeth Prout. I do it myself. I would take some piece from Elizabeth Prout's life for the assemblies. I suppose this happened as the Le Chéile concept was emerging, it became more and more important. The religious education classes were made more aware of Elizabeth Prout and the founding of the congregation. It would be formalised at assemblies, also at graduations and school Masses.

R:

Now the last question Gerry, what do you consider to be a challenge for the Catholic Le Chéile schools?

GW:

My answer applies to Catholic schools or religious day schools anywhere. I think the struggle is against individualism and commercialism. I think it is the ability to have time and the interest and the energy and commitment to say that there are other things in life, other than individual self-advancement: an alternative view of what is important in life. I think that is where Le Chéile schools should be positioned. We are educating or helping young women to become citizens of the country. But not so that they can enrich themselves or get gratification in all the areas of life they want, but that they can basically look around them and see that there is such a thing as society.

Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.

The Cross and Passion congregational values identified through reading and formal conversations, and which are embedded in contextual history, are simply stated in the Le Chéile Charter:

Elizabeth witnessed dire poverty and identified education as a means for people to escape from poverty, find employment and improve their quality of life. From modest beginnings Elizabeth and her companions established a tradition of education in many countries, which sought to respect the culture and values of those countries, and to respond to the challenges of the times. Today the sisters still endeavour to respond creatively to the new challenges of the age whether in education or other areas of social need. (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 20)

Contextual history, related documentary data, two formal conversations, the engagement of the Working Group member and the congregational Heritage Statement all reflect and confirm the relationship of the original values of Elizabeth Prout and her first members with the values in the reconfiguration process and in the life of one of her schools.

Poor Servants of the Mother of God (SMG)

Frances Taylor, foundress of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, was born in 1832 in Lincolnshire, England. Her personal search for life's meaning led her on an extraordinary journey. Like Elizabeth Prout, the foundress of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion, Frances was baptised in the Church of England. Her father was curate at St Mary Abbots, Kensington, where his father had formerly been curate. Eithne Leonard in *Frances Taylor, Mother Magdalen S.M.G. A Portrait 1832-1900* (2005), provides the following information:

Naturally the Church and parish doings were of first importance to her. Sundays were set aside for Scripture reading and church attendance [...] Her mother's diaries tell of Frances's readiness to accompany her when she visited the sick or the elderly poor. (Leonard, 2005, p. 8)

She began her charitable work among the poor in London's workhouses. A pivotal moment in this story was her decision at the age of twenty-two to volunteer for nursing in the Crimean War. The war was ostensibly, and unbelievably, about the keys for the Church of the Incarnation in Palestine. It was *de facto* a war about the balance of power between European powers (England and France) and Russia, using Turkey as a scapegoat. Florence Nightingale and the Irish Mercy Sisters preceded Frances as volunteer nurses in the Crimea. The Mercy Sisters' caring culture attracted Frances, and she worked closely with them during her stay in the war zone. She was moving gradually away from her own faith tradition. Another influence in her conversion was the faith of young Irish soldiers dying in the Crimea:

She had been more touched than she realised by the faith of the dying (Irish) soldiers. The Mercy Sisters seemed to her to be living the Christian life in a most attractive fashion. They were self-sacrificing, uncomplaining, tireless and yet alive with a quiet joy which lifted the atmosphere in every ward they nursed in. (Leonard, p. 36)

Father Woollett, a Jesuit priest visiting the Crimea, assisted Frances in the process of her conversion to Catholicism. On returning to London she published a best-selling book, *Eastern Hospitals*. The success of her first publication initiated her writing career. “The dearth of Catholic writings [...] motivated her to provide monthly magazines featuring other Catholic writers” (Leonard, p. 46). Cardinal Manning, already identified in the contextual history, was her spiritual director and he guided her into working with London’s unemployed girls, maidservants, factory workers and seamstresses. She identified the provision of schools as the most immediate need for the young poor. Like Daniel Delaney some years earlier in Tullow, Ireland, she linked criminal activities and anti-social behaviour with the lack of educational opportunity. Leonard includes the anecdote that Frances promised bread and treacle to young street boys as an encouragement to attend her school. Once again, education is the chosen strategy and a school was opened at Bayswater in London.

In 1866, Frances decided to travel to Ireland to visit the newly founded Irish congregations. To pay for her trip, and to help the English reading public understand the Irish character and the injustices suffered by the Irish people in their own land, Frances continued writing monthly articles. These popular articles were collected into one volume and in 1867 were published as *From Irish Homes and Irish Hearts*.

Visiting Poland in 1869 proved to be her vocational catalyst. She decided to found her own religious congregation: “thirteen years of discernment, three attempts at entering other congregations, a reluctant foundress indeed” (Leonard, p. 56). The congregation of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God was formally established in Tower Hill, London, on 24 September 1869 two years after Margaret Aylward, another reluctant foundress, had changed from her original lay foundation to establishing a religious congregation within the formal mission of the church in Ireland.

Frances had dedicated her work, *From Irish Homes and Irish Hearts*, “to those who – under strange skies taught me the worth of Irish character, the warmth of Irish hearts and depth of Irish faith”. Her affection for the Irish contributed to her desire to have a convent in Ireland. Initial efforts were not successful. She received an invitation from Father Seymour, parish priest of Carrigtohill Co. Cork, expressing the desire to have “one of your little convents established in this small town or village”. He offered the sisters a site for the convent, promised ‘the grass for a cow’, and in 1875 the sisters arrived. (Leonard, p. 172). The Poor Servants of the Mother of God thus began their educational mission in Ireland.

Conversation with an SMG congregational leader.

On 3 October 2007 I met with Sister Kathleen Coleman, Irish congregational leader of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, and recently elected to the General Leadership Team which is situated in Roehampton, London. The meeting for the research conversation took place in Manor House Convent, Raheny, Dublin. Sister Kathleen had received the letter with proposed and focused questions for this conversation. (Appendix

B). Each conversation with congregational leaders was conducted with deep respect for the lived wisdom of the interviewee, and a consciousness of the *living narrative* in that wisdom. There was also an awareness that each congregational leader was making a major decision with regard to trusteeship within the context of the inherited values in that narrative.

Researcher (R): Talk to me about Frances Taylor, your foundress.

Sister Kathleen (SK): She was first of all an English woman. She was an Anglican. Her father was an Anglican Minister and she happened to be the youngest of the family of eight. When she was quite young, the Dad died and the family moved to London. I think they had property and family money, so all the girls were able to receive a good education. At the time of the Crimean war, she expressed a desire to go to the Crimea with Florence Nightingale, and it was there while she was attending to the soldiers that she met the Sisters of Mercy, particularly the sisters from Kinsale, Co Cork. She was very impressed, first of all by their faith and their devotion to the injured soldiers, so it was due to them and to the faith of the Irish soldiers, that she was converted to Catholicism. Naturally, this was a great source of sadness for her mother, because she was very loyal to the Anglican Church. And one or two of her sisters also became Catholics. The others remained part of the Anglican Church.

R: When did she return to England?

SK: After the war, she returned to London, a time of great poverty. It was the time of Dickens and she noticed the number of homeless children on the streets. They had no shoes and were badly clad. She took pity on them and set up little 'hedge-schools', you could call them, little schools for them, in order to teach them the Catechism, and to give them some kind of a meal. She decided to set up a religious congregation. She travelled to Poland, Belgium and to Ireland, to see what suited her best. She did not want to set up her own congregation at the beginning, but she felt that she had to in the end.

The conversation moved into the founding experience:

SK: The congregation was near Soho Square in London in very difficult circumstances – and in a cramped and tiny house. Her young companions were mostly Irish and not as well educated as her. They saw the need for this work on the streets with children, teaching the Catechism, and that is part of our charism - to teach the Catechism to the poor.

Sister Kathleen then talked about her congregation coming to Ireland, and the values which influenced their moving into secondary schools.

SK: I think we moved into secondary education with a different motive. In 1875, when the congregation was just six years old it was invited to Ireland by Father Seymour, the Parish Priest of Carrigtohill, Co Cork. He invited them to come there and Mother Magdalene herself, Frances Taylor was her secular name, Mother Magdalene came there herself and she saw the necessity again of setting up a little school for poor children. Very early on the sisters began teaching in the school, but I think our initial moving into secondary education was for the purpose of fostering vocations. Then the sisters recognised the ability of bright girls, even though they were poor, they worked to help them to get scholarships, to get into the Civil Service, get into Training Colleges and so on. So I think of necessity that was why it was done, in order to help the intelligent, good, studious girls to receive education.

R: So I am hearing you identify the values of care for the poor, Catholic primary education, a recognition of how poor intelligent girls could benefit with secondary education and the possibility that some of them might have religious vocations. These vocations would then contribute to the development and continuation of the SMG mission. Am I stretching it a bit in that summary?

SK: No, you are not stretching it at all, you have got it just perfectly.

Sister Kathleen was asked to identify the values which influenced the sisters' decision to move into the Le Chéile reconfiguration.

SK:

The one thing I liked from the very beginning was the fact that different congregations were coming together and we were no longer in competition, we were working together as a group of Religious. Our purpose was to ensure Catholic secondary education for those who needed it. That is important and although we are different, we have different charisms, we have different ways of doing things, the aim is the same, of providing good Catholic education. There are twelve congregations working together for the good of Catholic education in Ireland. It is not easy but I think it is a must. From the very beginning of our congregations, education and passing on the faith was important to us and it is still very important.

Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.

The story of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God and the research synthesis of their founding values was given to Sister Catherine Sheehan in the Le Chéile Working Group who forwarded them to Sister Eithne Leonard the congregational historian. Two telephone conversations with Sister Eithne Leonard followed on 18 and 20 October 2009. As the author of the sisters' internal document on Frances Taylor she was very helpful and requested that the research report would include their foundress' concern for employment opportunities for women. Her response to the questions about the veracity of the narrative and the selection of founding values was affirmative. The Poor Servants of the Mother of God bring their unique and courageous heritage to the Le Chéile Trust. Like Daniel Delaney and Margaret Aylward this Anglican convert, Frances Taylor, was a reluctant congregational founder. Like them she was motivated by the needs of her time, the economically poor. Like them she stressed the dignity of each child, and wanted to preserve and develop their faith through the provision of Catholic schools.

Conversation with an SMG school principal.

On the 2 February 2010 in Manor House Secondary School, Raheny, a formal research conversation was conducted with the school principal, Mary O'Neill. She had received all relevant information regarding the research process, had engaged with other principals in the Le Chéile process and had read a copy of the synthesis of values which had been approved by the SMG congregational leader and the members of the congregation in the Le Chéile Working Group.

The conversation addressed the question of which SMG founding values might be identified in Manor House school:

Mary O'Neill (MON) I think all of them. Especially, I think the dignity of each human being. That is always something that struck me about Manor House School, because I remember always being struck by that. You know these sisters were mainly a nursing congregation with their Crimean origins. We are told that even in the Crimea and in any poor situation Frances Taylor would see that environment was worthy of human beings, and that was the phrase they used. That is how I think about the school environment. Care for the poor and needy has always been a value here. On Friday last the Transition Year students, with a teacher, organised a collection for Haiti. They raised 1,700 Euro. It came from them. Each Christmas we organise hampers for the poor. It is a conscious value inculcated here. The teachers too. When it was the 125th anniversary of the congregation, one of the teachers suggested that the teachers would set up a bursary fund for needy students. And the teachers donate money to that every year, and then one of the Sisters has the responsibility for the bursary, and it is done very discreetly, in keeping with the dignity of the person. The children know they can go and ask in confidence.

Responding to the second research question regarding images or celebrations remembering the foundress...

MON: Well, they are told about her in religion class. Now we don't have a Frances Taylor day. It might be something we could look at, I suppose, particularly moving into Le Chéile to try to keep the congregational connections. I suppose we never really needed it.

Researcher (R): Hearing her story - she was such an extraordinary lady. She is a model for girls, her courage and her commitment ----.

MON: Well, that is the main thing. Even last night, after a parents' meeting, one of the parents, herself a past pupil, and her daughter is in sixth year, came to me and said she was sad her connection with SMG and the school was ending. Her words were: "The nuns made us feel we could do anything".

My favourite Frances Taylor quote is - "Serve God Always, But Not Always In The Same Way." I actually have that as a mini Mission Statement. So if you adopt the Frances Taylor maxim, you will develop and change and meet the needs, because the needs are changing all the time.

The conversation moved to contemporary challenges for the Le Chéile school:

MON: Well I suppose it is the society we are living in is almost anti-religious, and of course the sins of the fathers are coming home to roost, so there is a very anti-Catholic environment. And yet I think the parents, the people who are picking schools, they still value the Catholic school, even if they don't practice. They can't even put it into words, if you know what I mean. They talk about the atmosphere in the place. I don't know how much the media reflects people. Because when you meet people, they are positive.

Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.

The triangulation of contextual history, available documentary sources and oral narratives with the congregational leader and the school principal are now mapped with the published SMG Le Chéile Heritage Statement:

From Frances's great devotion to the Incarnation flowed her love of the poor, and this led her to found the congregation. Through the many apostolates of the congregation, including education, the members take part in the one mission of Jesus Christ [...] What characterizes the S.M.G approach to education is a profound respect for the dignity of the individual and a strong work ethic. (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 15)

A compelling love for the poor with a professional background in nursing and writing led an extraordinary Anglican woman to found a congregation of Roman Catholic religious women in London in the nineteenth century. Her values, with a personal experience and regard for the Irish, inspired the fledgling congregation to come to Ireland. The primary values are still living and have been gifted to the new trust. The secondary value, that of fostering vocations, is not.

Conclusion

Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries the English Catholic church, in hiding or in exile, reduced in numbers but holding firmly to the 'old religion', can claim the founding of four of the Le Chéile congregations. The heritage of an Episcopalian convert, a married and separated American mother of five children, two converts from the Church of England, and a French nun, are now woven with the heritage of Daniel Delaney, Columba Maher and Margaret Aylward, in the core values of faith, commitment to the poor, and a strong belief in the effectiveness of the provision of Catholic schools. Each congregation in its founding and values contributes its distinctive charism and ethos to the new Le Chéile Trust.

The Dominican Sisters and the Society of the Holy Child though providing schools for the poor in their initial founding intentionally developed their mission by founding schools to educate the daughters of Catholic middle and upper class families. Both congregations identify that their own members, in the time of founding, came from these classes themselves. These two congregations were systematic about developing their school systems and training their teachers. The Patrician Brothers, Holy Faith Sisters, Poor Servants of the Mother of God, Sisters of St Paul the Apostle and the Cross and Passion Sisters all focused on providing schools for the poor in the first instance, and in later years provided for the middle classes when needed. Common to the three Irish congregations and the four English is the core value of defending and developing the Catholic faith of children through the provision of Catholic schools. The sisters' congregations founded these schools to provide girls with an education that would enable them to take their place as Catholic women in the society of their time. Meeting the identified needs of the time, defending and developing the faith and the provision of Catholic school is common to both the three Irish congregations and the four English. One difference in the founding narratives is that the Irish congregations met needs in Ireland and were not seeking vocations in their founding. The four English congregations had difficulty in seeking formal church approval to found schools in Ireland because the indigenous congregations of post-penal times were meeting the needs of the Irish Catholics. Invitations from parish priests or bishops were necessary to secure their acceptance within the Irish Catholic educational mission. A similar pattern will be evident in the stories of the five French Le Chéile congregations in chapter seven.

Chapter Seven

Particular History (3) Five French Congregations

Introduction

This chapter examines the founding narratives and founding values in five of the Le Chéile congregations: the De la Salle Brothers, the Faithful Companions of Jesus, the Religious of Christian Education, the Religious of Jesus and Mary, and the Sisters of St Louis. The research includes the historical context, documentary material and engages in formal conversations with congregational leaders and school principals. It is supported by formal and informal engagement with the Working Group members and by mapping all data with the Le Chéile Charter.

Historical Context: A Summary

Relevant history of the Catholic Church in France contextually locates the narratives. Alan Schreck's *The Compact History of the Catholic Church* (2009), Christopher Bellito's *Church History 101* (2008), and Jose Orlandis' *A Short History of the Catholic Church* (1983), agree that the seventeenth century was 'a great century' for France and the church. A new period of religious 'splendour' is recorded. New religious congregations were born, such as that founded by St John Baptist de la Salle now a Le Chéile congregation. The French school of spirituality, which reached its peak in this period, was concerned with raising the standard of the diocesan clergy in line with the decrees of the Council of Trent 1545 – 1563 (Orlandis, 1983, p. 106). Despite a positive overview of seventeenth-century French Catholicism, Orlandis identifies that "there were

signs of religious restlessness and of spiritual instability" (p. 106). Bellito situates this restlessness in sixteenth-century developments:

The sixteenth century (Galileo) switch from a geocentric (Earth-centred) to a heliocentric (Sun-centred) model influenced not only science and math, but religion and philosophy as well, since it took the Earth - and Jerusalem, commonly seen as the centre of the Earth on medieval maps - out of the central position. (Bellito, 2008, p. 101)

He qualifies this suggestion by adding that we cannot glibly declare, "This led to that", but with the earth out of its privileged position other long-held beliefs came under scrutiny too: "Authority itself had come under suspicion, challenge, and even assault", and subsequent movements can be summed up with a word: *liberalism* (p. 112). With some intermission this instability lasted until the start of the eighteenth century and opened "the gates of the irreligious avalanche of that century" (Bellito, 2008, p. 108). Distrust of Rome, and state interventionism, were major components of French eighteenth-century Catholic Church history. Louis XIV died in 1715, a year that marks a wave of irreligion sweeping through France. In the decades that followed the *philosophes* imposed themselves on French cultural life. In this pseudo-sect Voltaire performed the role of high priest (Orlandis, 1985, p. 115). Schreck describes the French religious culture of the eighteenth-century as one which was influenced by rationalism, negative criticism of Christianity, and a general attitude of intellectual rebellion. A minority of intellectual

people led the philosophical rebellion but the people at large kept to their religious faith and practice (Schreck, 2009, p. 117).

Schreck identifies the three seminal and contrasting influences of the time:

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who wrote: “Have courage to use your own reason- that is the motto of enlightenment”, Voltaire (1694-1778), who made it fashionable to be a mocker of Christianity and a cynic regarding the Catholic Church, and Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), who insisted on God’s relationship with man through revelation, religious experience and the Judeo-Christian tradition as well as through reason (Shrech, 2009, pp. 91-93).

Many historians believe that France occupied the centre of the world stage at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. This positioning was to be of significant importance for the destinies of Christianity and the church. Ironically on 4 May 1789, just before the outbreak of the French Revolution, King Louis XVI presided at a solemn procession of the Blessed Sacrament and representatives of the three estates devoutly processed with him. All changed within a few weeks and the revolutionary process advanced at breakneck speed, in both the political and religious spheres (Schreck, 2009, p. 118).

On 13 February 1790 a decision was taken to suppress monastic vows, and on 12 July 1790 the Assembly approved the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. A Gallican Church, independent of papal authority developed, and priests were required to swear fidelity to the political constitution. Pope Pius VI excommunicated priests who took the oath and a schism ensued. In 1792 the non-juring priests were deported, and in September of that year many priests were executed. In January 1793 Louis XVI himself

was executed and in the same year Christian holidays, including Sunday, were suppressed. Anti-Catholic actions included turning churches into Temples of Reason and a statue of the Goddess of Reason was set up in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. When the French occupied Rome and Pope Pius VI died in exile (1799), some revolutionaries boasted that the last pope had died (Orlandis, p. 119). In November 1799 Napoleon Bonaparte became first consul of France, and four months later Pope Pius VII was elected pope. A concordat was devised between the papacy and the republic (soon to become an empire) and signed on 15 July 1801. A new episcopacy was created with a process for renewal in Christian life. Seminaries were re-opened but Napoleon was restrictive with regard to religious congregations (Schreck, 2009, p. 120).

Five French Congregations

De la Salle Brothers.

The De la Salle founding story is enriched by knowing the French historical context, having access to internal documents, as well as information provided by the Brothers' website, and especially by the formal conversations with the congregational leader and a De la Salle school principal.

John Baptist de la Salle was born into a prosperous merchant family in Rheims 30 April 1651. He was educated by the Jesuits and at the age of fifteen was solemnly installed as a canon, subsequently completing a doctorate in theology. On the death of his parents he returned to Rheims to care for younger siblings (Neary, 2008, p. 3). In Neary's document De la Salle is portrayed as "aiming to bring the poor effectively into the life of

a restructured church after the Council of Trent". He did not consciously set out to become involved in education but gradually moved into the ministry. In 1679 De la Salle began to assist Adrian Nyel in establishing a school for the poor in Rheims. This was to become his life's work. To be more effective in the new ministry he abandoned his family home, renounced his position as canon, moved in with the teachers, and formed a new community of lay religious teachers (Neary, 2008).

The De la Salle Brothers were the first non-clerical male Roman Catholic religious teaching congregation. His enterprise met opposition from the ecclesiastical authorities who resisted the creation of a new form of religious life. The educational establishment resented his innovative methods and his insistence on receiving children of all social classes. Nevertheless De la Salle and his brothers succeeded in creating a network of schools throughout France. These schools featured instruction in the vernacular, students grouped according to ability and achievement, integration of religious instruction with secular subjects, well-prepared teachers with a sense of vocation and mission, and the involvement of parents. He was a pioneer in programmes for training lay teachers. In 1685 he founded a training college for this purpose in Rheims. John Baptist de la Salle is recognised as one of the founders of modern pedagogy. His educational innovations included the establishment of one of the first institutions in France for the care of delinquents, technical schools and secondary schools for modern languages, arts, sciences, and Sunday courses for young working men.

The De la Salle Brothers came to Ireland in 1880, to an Ireland of land agitation, evictions and agrarian crime. This congregation was known in France as the Brothers of the Christian Schools, they did not use that title in Ireland to avoid being confused with the Irish Christian Brothers. John Towey's internal document commemorating the centenary of the brothers' mission in Ireland provides us with a description of the complicated first step in the Irish mission. Bishop Gillooly of Elphin had identified the need to establish a home for orphaned and neglected children. He had built Summerhill College in Athlone. Brother Joachim O'Callaghan was vocation-questing in Ireland in 1880, and Bishop Gillooly took the opportunity to invite the brothers to take over the College in Summerhill. Difficulties developed with both the government inspector Sir John Lentaigne and with the bishop and the project failed. Despite the failure it provided an opportunity for the brothers to remain in Ireland. Within three months of leaving Summerhill in 1882 they had founded their novitiate at Castletown, County Laois. From this experience the De la Salle schools in Ireland developed.

The founding values of John Baptist de la Salle can be identified in two congregational documents He identified the faith needs of the poor in a post-Council of Trent church, and identified education as the means of addressing this need. A development of the education value is clear in the training and organisation of the schools which he and the first brothers founded. Vocation-questing as a value emerges long after the founder's death. As in the narratives of Frances Taylor and Cornelia Connelly, the De la Salle Brothers also selected Ireland as a source for vocations to meet the needs of foreign missions. Subsequently each congregation founded schools in Ireland.

John Baptist de la Salle was canonized by Pope Leo XIII on 24 May 1900, and was proclaimed patron saint of teachers on 15 May 1950 by Pope Pius XII. His heritage is a precious gift for the Le Chéile Trust.

Conversation with the De la Salle congregational leader.

The story of John Baptist de la Salle in seventeenth and eighteenth-century France, the founding values of this unique group of religious brothers, their international mission of Catholic education, and the Irish foundation of De la Salle schools, were central to the oral history derived from a conversation with Brother Stephen Deignan in the Provincial House in Dublin on 18 January 2007. Initiating the conversation Brother Stephen was invited to speak about the founder, and why the congregation opened schools in Ireland.

Brother Stephen (BS): It is hard to discuss the De la Salle foundations in Ireland outside the context of the founder and the kind of image that people would have of the founder of the Lasallian schools. De la Salle had initially founded schools in France and in order to summarise the reasons I took a quotation from The Rule and I think it summarises it better than my words. "As they became aware by God's grace of the human and spiritual distress of the children of artisans and the poor John Baptist De la Salle devoted himself to forming schoolmasters totally devoted to teaching and Christian education. He brought these teachers together in a community and subsequently founded with them the Brothers of the Christian Schools." That is the context out of which we are coming. The history of the foundations in Ireland from 1884 on, were responses to requests from bishops or parish priests who had heard of the De la Salle Brothers and knew that they were essentially an order dedicated to the poor. Christian schools for the poor was the original mission.

Researcher (R): Did the Irish bishops invite your brothers to Ireland?

BS: *The first foundation in Athlone was an Industrial School founded at the invitation of the Bishop of Elphin. We left afterwards and moved to Castletown, which became our Mother House.*

R: *When did the brothers move to educate the middle class, children of middle class families?*

BS: *All our initial schools were poor schools in towns and villages throughout the country. It is important to realise as well that our second opening in Ireland was a training college and that would have come as a result of knowledge of the training colleges in France. De la Salle himself had opened quite a number of training colleges when he saw how inadequate the teachers were. His main, foundational values included an emphasis on teams of well trained teachers.*

R: *What I am hearing you say is that De la Salle founded a Christian school but it was to be a good Christian school. This seems to be the core value, would that be correct?*

BS: *Absolutely yes, his whole emphasis was salvation. Unfortunately, after his death, salvation was perceived as a purely spiritual value, meaning piety and daily Mass going. Post-Vatican II the experts went back to the charism of the founder, and to De la Salle's insistence that salvation was in terms of the hereafter but, also, it placed greater emphasis on salvation in the here and now. In other words - get them an education, enable them to be good citizens.*

R: *Explain Lasallean Schools*

BS: *There were De la Salle schools and that meant brothers' schools. The whole concept of Lasallean is that teachers of different faiths who teach in our schools, for example in the Far East, would call themselves 'Lasallean'. A few weeks ago one of our brothers was coming home from the Far East by plane. He was sitting beside an Eastern gentleman. They began to talk. The Eastern man asked the brother where he was from and so on. The brother didn't want to say he was a religious so he said he was an Irish man coming back from Singapore where he had been working for a number of years. Then the brother said to this man, "And who are you?" and the man replied "I am a Muslim Minister in the Lasallean tradition."*

R: *So the Lasallean tradition is wide, comprehensive and inclusive.*

BS:

Our general leaders write letters to each province of the brothers at Christmas. Every single one of them since 2000 has some context of association and therefore since the Chapter, every one of those now goes to our principals and goes to our people - the Lasallean tradition.

Brother Stephen was asked if he had any concerns about how the Le Chéile Trust was developing.

BS:

Well, when I was reading that question and thinking about it the first thing I thought about was that I welcomed the whole movement of trusteeship, because we had already moved in the Lasallean movement to include the laity. I feel that Le Chéile was timely for us.

R:

Are you satisfied then that Le Chéile is including original founding values?

BS:

I would say that, a bit like De la Salle in the initial stages, his whole purpose, was to get the schools off the ground and I would say that a lot of our energy in Le Chéile is invested in that at the moment. I think that as we go along we will be challenged if the needs are not being met. And then there is the existence of The Holy Spirit...there will also be a Benjamin in each school.

R:

What gives you hope in Le Chéile?

BS:

My hope is that teachers will feel included in Le Chéile and still be Lasallean. I hope that the new trust will offer an identifiable Catholic school for which people can make a choice.

The oral history embedded in this conversation with Brother Stephen Deignan identifies a clear and unambiguous statement about the De la Salle founding educational values. There was evidence in Brother Stephen Deignan's responses that he had prepared thoroughly for the conversation. This confirmed that the research process is engaging the Le Chéile leaders in revisiting founding stories and identifying related values. Brother

Stephen's conversation provides evidence that the founding and contemporary values are to provide the 'good' Christian school. The training of De la Salle teachers and the provision of quality schools is as important as education in the congregational Christian mission. The transcripts of these conversations are available but the researcher is conscious that the reader is deprived of the dynamic provided by listening to the wisdom of the *living narrative* as exemplified in this conversation. Brother Stephen brought copies of constitutions and chapter statements to the conversation. He expressed an anxiety about the danger of losing those values and that heritage. He demonstrated more anxiety than confidence that the founding values would continue into the future. In this regard he reflects Sister Margo Delaney, congregational leader of the Holy Faith Sisters and Sister Máire O'Sullivan representing congregational leadership of the Cross and Passion Sisters. One could argue from the conversational data that these leaders were confident that Catholic schools will continue and that they are moving into the trust to ensure that, but they are not confident that specific discretionary congregational values will continue. This is an issue which has to be addressed by the new Le Chéile lay leaders. The research does not provide any evidence that the congregational founders and foundresses were founding their own 'kingdoms'. The data collected in available documents and in the formal conversations indicates that it is God's kingdom and the Gospel message that inspires the founding. The fascinating outcomes in the oral history however is that each founding is a human story and a human family is founded. This human family would like to believe that the charism with which its founding was blessed would continue into the future. Out of the desire to make sure that the Irish Catholic secondary school would continue and that the human family stories and charisms would

also continue led to the engagement of the twelve congregations to found the Le Chéile Trust.

Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.

The De la Salle narrative and synthesis of values - with focused questions – was given to Brother Pat Collier, a member of the Working Group. Brother Pat replied by telephone, by conversation in the Working Group, and by email 11 October 2009. Responding affirmatively to the questions about the story and the values, he added:

[This] is an effort to locate and contextualise the founding value of ‘Association’ and which today is a ‘living narrative’ in our mission here in Ireland and across the world. This value of ‘association’ in the De la Salle heritage is at the very core of the founding of the Le Chéile Trust, a collaborative initiative by twelve congregations.

Conversation with a De la Salle school principal

In a formal conversation with Joe Twoomey, principal of Beneavin De la Salle College, Finglas on 9 December 2009, the researcher began by contextualising the conversation in the founding story and values of John Baptist de la Salle, and asked which of these values were being experienced in Beneavin College.

Joe Twoomey (JT): I think all of them are experienced in the school today. The emphasis in our college is on the holistic education of the students. Our senior management team, and all our colleagues work together with that aim, the aim of providing a rounded student at the end of five years in Beneavin. We obviously want to be well prepared for the examinations, but we would not have that as our main objective. We want to have good kids at the end of five years. We want them to have picked up the Lasallean values. When Lasalleans get together we talk about the values being 'caught'.

Researcher (R): Contagious?

JT: Absolutely, and the kids pick them up without knowing it. So we want the kids to be good Christian people at the end of their five years in Beneavin, and we want them also to have a very strong awareness that they are fortunate, because they have been to a Lasallean school. We also want them to realise that they are fortunate because there are so many people in the world who are less fortunate than them. So we educate them and involve them in St Vincent de Paul, Goal, Trocaire and Concern programmes.

We also have fun in this school. We talk a lot, particularly among the staff, about having laughter in our eyes, and very often at staff meetings we introduce something funny to have a laugh. So we do actually have fun in school.

The conversation moved to the question about remembering the founding story in rituals or symbols.

JT: Well we will start with the small things. In our students' journals we have the profile of John Baptist de la Salle, which was written for us by Brother Columba Gallagher. It is very prominent in the front of the journals, and believe it or not, a lot of our students read it. We have lots of iconography that the deputy principal and I have put together during the ten years that we have been managing the school. We have a booklet here with Lasallean prayers in it that we give out at every opportunity to everybody that comes into the school. We got that made for the fortieth anniversary of the opening of the school. I don't know whether you noticed at the front door, we have a tribute to the De la Salle Brothers that we wrote ourselves: "This school is dedicated to the De la Salle

Brothers, who taught in Finglas since 1956 and to all who worked with them in the provision of education, in the manner envisaged by Jean Baptist de la Salle". We also have a wooden statue outside. There are five figures there, a student, a teacher, a brother, a parent and a member of the local community, holding the Signum Fidei, which is on all de la Salle crests. It is the Lasallean value of association, where everybody works together for the benefit of the students. We have a De la Salle day in May. So we are making the kids conscious of the fact that there is a history ----- We tell the students that their modern school is rooted in the past. And we say to them "It is the school of the past that makes the school of today, and the school of the past and the school of today make the school of tomorrow".

The principal talked, at some length, about the lay chaplain whose salary was being provided by the De la Salle Brothers. He praised her excellent work with the religious education and pastoral teams, and how the students related so well with her. The conversation then addressed the Le Chéile Trust and the inherent challenges:

JT: My great sadness is that we are looking at the end of a particular form of trusteeship. I'll personalise it slightly to try to give it some meaning for you. I am thirty-four years in the education field. I am in this school all of that time. Nothing that has changed in education in the last thirty-four years has made me afraid. This change does.

R: That is a strong statement.

JT: Yes and that is from the heart. I think the challenge for all of the trusts, not just the Le Chéile Trust, is to keep the work going that has been done by all the congregations in all the different schools. And I fear that our schools in the future will not have what makes them different. Now I have a great fear that that special quality that applies to the schools, in my experience of the De la Salle schools, but my sisters went to --, one went to a Holy Faith school and one went to a Dominican school, they picked up the same values, but I really am afraid that it is going to be very difficult to keep that going.

This concern, already reflected in the conversation with Brother Stephen Deignan, will be explored again in the final chapter of the thesis.

Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.

The De la Salle inspiration in their Heritage Statement includes the following:

De la Salle's educational vision and mission emerged from the awareness he had of the distress of very large numbers of neglected young people of the time [...] who without education were far removed from earthly or heavenly salvation.

De la Salle saw the school as the ideal context for these wayward young people to gain the skills they would need in order to rise above the hopelessness of their human condition and grow in dignity as children of God. (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 10)

The Lasellean story is found in the French historical context, the relevant documentary material, in formal conversations with the congregational leader and a Lasallean school principal, and is further validated by the Working Group and in the Le Chéile Charter. Lassalean schools usually incorporate the *Signum Fidei* as a mark of their heritage.

Religious of Christian Education (RCE).

In the process of researching the Religious of Christian Education words of Clandinin and Connolly supported the value of conversation as important oral sources: "Field texts are so compelling that we want to stop and let them speak for themselves" (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000, p. 130). The research process for the RCE congregation has been both challenging and rewarding. It was not possible to access either a public hagiography or history of the founding. Juxtaposed with that difficulty are the rich field texts of conversations with Sisters Cara Nagle and Rosemary Magnier. The RCE formal conversation took place in Glasnevin on 15 September 2008. Sister Rosemary is a member of the RCE general leadership team. It is this conversation, accompanied by many informal conversations with Sister Cara Nagle, general leader of the sisters, and Sister Cara's internal congregational document on the coming of the sisters to Ireland, which the research recognises as compelling texts speaking for themselves. They are located within the French history context, two research conversations, engagement with the Working Group and supported by the Le Chéile Charter. Informal conversations with Sister Cara Nagle, who regularly journeyed from France to join the Working Group, contributed to the development of the research. Her interest in and enthusiastic support for an examination of the original values has been a critical factor in the process.

Post-Revolution France (1789), is the context and provides a strong motivation in the RCE story. Education was 'in chaos'. Louis XIV's edict to have schools in each parish had been revoked, teachers were demoralised, and the surviving schools provided only for boys. The narrative of the founder, Father Lafosse, is situated within this period. There were two categories of clergy: constitutional priests who took an oath of allegiance

to the French state, and those who refused and remained loyal to papal authority. The non-juring priests were forced to work underground and, if discovered, were imprisoned. This thread connects with the story of priests in Irish Penal times and English post-Reformation history, and is already woven in the founding stories of the Dominican Sisters, Patrician Brothers and Cross and Passion Sisters. At his ordination Father Lafosse took the oath of allegiance. Later he repented and went on pilgrimage to his bishop in Germany. On his return to Echaufour he witnessed post-revolution poverty and misery. The focus for his renewed mission became education for girls. Father Louis Lafosse, with four lay women, founded the new congregation in 1817. These young women were committed Christians and, like Lafosse, believed in the necessity of passing on the faith through the education of girls. The new group expanded and their schools were highly respected. French anti-clerical laws in 1880 motivated the sisters to move their mission to other countries, to French colonies and they established a school in England in 1898. English Catholic army personnel, whose daughters had been educated by the sisters in France, suggested that they come to Farnborough near the army base in Aldershot. Moving to England, the sisters could be openly religious. In France they were 'underground', and could not own property.

Father Lafosse stressed that the young people were to be educated according to their abilities, and that their talents were to be discovered and fostered. The schools were to create a learning environment, a 'family spirit' in which this could happen (Sisters Cara and Rosemary, personal communication, 12 October 2009). Sister Cara recounted with pride that in 1838 the Minister for Education in France was so impressed with the quality of the schools that he asked the sisters to open a training college for teachers in

Argentan in the Diocese of Orne in Normandy. This piece of the RCE history is found in a French publication *L'Abbe Lafosse, Fondateur de L'Education Chretienne* by Abbe Flament (p. 346) published by the Sisters of Christian Education, a copy of which is held in their French Archives.

RCE founding values include commitment to faith, love and justice, and a dedication to living this commitment through the provision of excellent schools, especially for girls. A key motivation is the idea that life is a journey, with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as guide.

United with Christ and his Father, we are confident that the Spirit is present in the world and in the Church wherever life is stirring [...] We work for the growth of persons and the emergence of communities capable of creating and developing structures of truth, love and justice. (Nagle, 2008, p. 1)

Nagle claims that from the founding of the congregation and the schools the sisters awakened the social conscience of the students making them aware of justice issues and what they could do about them. “Make the world a better place for your being in it” was the direction given to students (Nagle, 2008, p. 2).

Cullen Owens’ work is germane to the narrative of this congregation’s arrival in Ireland. She describes the Ireland of the 1940s as a state in which political forces had limited women’s access to political and economic power. “The 1950s were bleak [a time of] economic and social depression [...] can in retrospect be viewed as a significant turning point for Irish women” (Cullen Owens, 2005, pp. 302-303). In that sociological

and religious context Archbishop McQuaid invited the RCE congregation to provide a school in Dublin in 1953. Our Lady's School, Terenure, a day school opened in 1953, and two years later, Our Lady's School, Rathnew a boarding school opened (Nagle, 2008 p.3). It is interesting that Irishwomen who had received their education in Farnborough Hill, England, wished to have their own daughters educated by the sisters in Ireland in the 1950s and the RCE school in England had been founded in 1898 because English Catholic women who had been educated in France wanted their daughters to receive a similar education.

Nagle locates the original RCE values in the Irish foundation: "From the beginning, the sisters saw the school as the centre of a local community, and they involved parents, teachers, friends, clergy and of course the pupils in the process of education". The 'family spirit' of Father Lafosse was a core value for the schools. Parents' committees were set up and students' councils became a reality long before they were nationally accepted. Faith formation was a central value. Nagle claims that the international character of the RCE congregation was regarded as beneficial in the Irish educational context. Innovations rooted in the French Lafosse tradition, found their way into the Irish school system (Nagle, 2008, p.3).

Conversation with the RCE congregational leader.

A formal research conversation with Sister Rosemary Magnier, a member of the RCE congregational leadership team, was held in Glasnevin on 15 September 2008.

Sister Rosemary (SR): We were founded in 1817 in Normandy in a little town called Echaufour. It was not long after the French Revolution, and education was in chaos at the time, and particularly there was very little education for girls. Our founder was a parish priest called Father Louis Lafosse. He had an interesting background. When he was ordained there were two sorts of priesthood. There was the priesthood that had to take an oath of allegiance to the government, and there was the priesthood that refused. Father Lafosse took the oath, and it was a decision that he regretted deeply. After a while he made a long journey to Germany to meet his bishop. He asked for forgiveness and he retracted the oath. And because of this he was not easily accepted. The experience made him very conscious of the value of truth. So the truth marked his life in a very significant way.

Researcher (R): Truth, a core value?

SR: It was one of our core values, yes. When he went back to his parish in Echaufour he wanted to set up some sort of a structure whereby girls would be educated. He had a wonderful methodology of teaching which was admired greatly. Four women joined him and they ran a school in the parish. Now at that stage it was primary school. And after a while the women decided that they would like to form a religious congregation. Father Lafosse said, "You need to give this time, and you need to reflect on it." After a certain time he agreed and they took vows in 1817. That was when the congregation was formed.

The researcher asked Sister Rosemary to say more about these women involved in the founding...

SR: Well I would say they were local women and we look on them as foundresses with Fr. Lafosse. They would have been from the area, and they would have been extremely zealous and committed, and

he would have trained them, because he wanted his schools to be of a high standard.

R: *So the founding was about Catholic schools, and for girls especially?*

SR: *Yes, and while I think he was very conscious of the Christian aspect, he was also very interested in the other areas of education. He wanted girls to take their place in society. His schools began to spread, and became famous. The local authorities saw his success in the provision of the schools and asked him to found a training college for teachers.*

R: *When did the sisters move from France? How did you get to Ireland?*

SR: *New laws in France forbade the sisters to be formally religious. Some English people had heard of the RCE education in France, some had sent their daughters to be educated by the Sisters in France. This was particularly true of army personnel who were on the move. The army in Aldershot wanted the sisters to be near there, and they found them a place in 1898.*

R: *I wonder, are you the only religious sisters that the army brought in?*

SR: *Well we ended up in Farnborough. We had a secondary school there and we had the primary school nearby. We could be publicly religious in England and underground in France. To the present day we religious cannot own property in France.*

R: *And when did you come to Ireland?*

SR: *In 1953. We had a lot of Irish connections. Most of the sisters who were in England, and even some who were in France, came from Ireland. And so there was always a desire of the sisters to come to Ireland. In 1953 Archbishop John Charles McQuaid invited us to Dublin. We came to Terenure, and founded Our Lady's School, and then in 1955 we opened Rathnew, which was a small boarding school.*

R: *Why would Father Lafosse want these schools?*

SR: *Well, he would say "I was always passionate about education. I wanted these girls to take their role in society". I think he would also have said, "The church in the time I founded the schools, was*

in a turbulent state, and I wanted young people to be proud, and to take their place as Christians." And to day, in Ireland, the church is also in a turbulent place, and I think it is very important that we have young people who are ready to stand up for Christian values, and to pass them on. We don't have numbers, but we have the passion. We want Christian Education to continue. We know we can't do it, and we want to work with others to ensure that it continues. And that is something that we hold dear, and it can be passed on to another generation.

R.: *You are a founding member of Le Chéile process, do you believe that the Le Chéile values reflect and build on your RCE values?*

SR.: *Absolutely. I think that since beginning of the process for Le Chéile, we have been enriched so much by working with other Religious. I think that we can work together it is great. There was a key moment in the founding of Le Chéile, it was the Manresa moment! We worked on our individual congregational values and came back and shared them, and we saw, my goodness, how much we had in common. And I think from that moment we said...let us go forward together. This is exciting. The challenge, I suppose, is we never know, so we just have to move in faith. The challenge is to meet the needs of the church of today. How can we make a difference? How can we allow young people, if they want to, to become a force?*

Moving towards closure in the conversation Sister Rosemary Magnier spoke about the research:

R.: *I feel that this is going to be a document, or a piece of work that will stand for the future, and I think that people in our schools, when we are not there can go back and say, well, these are the people who were in it at the beginning, these are their values and this is what we need to keep looking at and working on .*

This conversation highlights a theme found in previous narratives, the inter-relatedness of France, England and Ireland in religious congregations that are developing a new trust for Catholic schools. The RCE and the Sisters of St Paul the Apostle were founded in France, subsequently established schools in England, and then came to Ireland. The De la Salle Brothers and the FCJ Sisters founded in France, came directly to Ireland, and the SHCJ Sisters founded in England were invited to open a school in Ireland. The European connectedness, and the richness of heritage are significant for the new trust. That significance could have been missed without these narratives. It is now a challenge for the trust to probe the implications of the research and to address the related benefits and challenges.

In the Lafosse founding, emphasis was on the establishment of Catholic schools for girls which would provide a Christian education that would enable them to take their place in society and in the church. Secondly, Lafosse insisted on systematic professional training for the teachers in RCE schools. The first value is reflected in each of the congregational stories of women religious, the second value is reflected in the stories of the Dominican Sisters, De la Salle Brothers and the Society of the Holy Child.

Sister Rosemary Magnier remembers ‘the Manresa Moment’ (chapter one). It is interesting that in the congregational leaders’ conversations those who were at that Manresa meeting refer spontaneously to it as a moment of clarity and of blessing. Confirmation of this research is recorded in Sister Rosemary’s enthusiastic affirmation of the purpose of the research, and of its lasting value for the new trust.

Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.

The RCE transcript and synthesis of founding values were given to Sister Cara Nagle and Sister Rosemary Magnier at a Working Group meeting in January 2009. The response was mailed from their convent in Paris, and they affirmed the research findings.

Conversation with an RCE school principal.

The research conversation with Gráinne Friel, principal of Our Lady's School, Terenure took place on 5 May 2010. The usual and initial conversation included the purpose of the research, the research question and methodology, why her experience and her wisdom was essential within that research and the narrative and synthesis of values – with focused questions - which she had already received. Having confirmed for the record that Gráinne was giving permission for the conversation and was waiving anonymity she then spoke about the founding:

Gráinne Friel (GF): Well, I suppose if you look at what Farther Lafosse valued, I would feel certainly that the value of educating girls to take their place in society and in church is lived in this school. And my way of looking at that, I don't really mind whether the student is an A student or a D student, as long as they are achieving success in what they are actually doing I am satisfied. I always hope that they would get excited about what they are actually doing, and that they are engaged. But I would believe that about 20% of our students are badly served by the education system. It just doesn't meet their needs. I love when they succeed but academic results are not everything.

Researcher (R): You showed me some beautiful works of art as we came along the corridor to the office.

GF: Yes, it is the work of an art teacher in the school. When he retired he gave us a gift of one of them for the house of which he was head.

R: Are the houses named after Saints?

GF: After Irish Saints, yes. Then we got the idea that we would love to get the rest. And we had been left a gift by our chaplain, Father Carey, who passed away a couple of years ago, so we divided that gift to commission the other houses to be done and also to develop our own oratory. Now both of those were a gift of Fr Carey, he was our chaplain for twenty years. I think he probably would be delighted if he was looking down now at what we have got, the art work depicting Saint Lawrence, Saint Patrick, Saint Bridget, Saint Muireann and Saint Columcille.

Answering the question about remembering the founding heritage:

GF: We have some fantastic religious education teachers. They are young, vibrant, energetic, and enthusiastic, and they do fantastic work. They prepare all the ceremonies for the school with the different classes. The fifth years are usually the year group that is asked to take responsibility for the opening Mass at the beginning of the year, the nuns' feast day which is always a big day in our calendar.

R: You mean the sisters?

GF: Yes, the sisters. They have a special feast day on 22 October, and the girls always put something on. It would be like a small concert, with a few readings as well. And also each of the sisters is an "Anam Cara" to a class in the school. They pray for them at exam time. They would write and send them birthday cards whenever it is their birthday. And what is lovely now is that some of the sixth years, on a regular basis have started visiting the elderly sisters.

The conversation moved to the third focused question about challenges facing the

Le Chéile Catholic school:

GF:

There is a danger that the Catholic school may be seen as a school that achieves very good academic results and that that is the reason for parents choosing it. That has to be watched. We do not know if students or their parents are practising Catholics, but I hope to talk to the sixth years before they leave, and ask how they reflect on what the different school ceremonies meant to them. Maybe they will take something away with them. I believe that if we are doing the right thing then it actually means something to them. Now I get the impression that it does, just from observation, but I would like to know a little bit more, the why ----- And it may well be that they will walk out of school and not get that involved in their faith for a couple of years, but I don't think it will leave them, and that is perhaps more important. We tell parents when they come in that it is a Catholic school and that we partake in ceremonies and that it is important and the reasons for it, so that they know. There is another challenge I want to identify. Because there is so much bad news about the Catholic church at the moment, I believe that as long as the institutional church discriminates against half the population, you are going to alienate people, rather than bringing people on board. I definitely feel that if they don't start including women there is a danger that either people are going to walk away and decide on their own level of Christianity or Catholicism or whatever you like to call it, or we are going to become stronger. I think it is a very interesting time, but to a degree, a worrying time.

People won't identify with an institution that is not talking to them in real language. And I know one of the concerns that staff here had and a few other schools had as well was with the language that was used in our Le Chéile Charter. I was quite surprised how strongly they felt about it. And I don't know that it changed. And there were questions as to why it did not change, and I didn't have the answers. I think it alienated a few people. They were asking Le Chéile - why are you using language that we don't use in our everyday, but yet you want us to be part of this?

I remember listening to David Tuohy explaining it at the cluster meetings, and nobody better to explain it, absolutely brilliant -----but if you take a document, as I did, and brought it to the staff, I could not do justice to it they way David did -----And there was uproar from a very mild-mannered staff, and from people who would consider themselves to be very strong Catholics. And they were saying, what is this language? So I thought there was an unfortunate gap created, you know, and I don't know that they have yet a strong association with the idea of Le Chéile. But it is very early days. I think I would need to let it sit for a little.

This conversation with Grainne Friel, an RCE school principal, reflected the founding values of faith and education for girls. The heritage identified by Sister Rosemary Magnier of a ‘family’ ethos in the school and the pursuit of excellence were alive in a contemporary RCE school. Another challenge identified by the principal was the ongoing discernment of the *Why* and *What* of the Catholic school. In unambiguous language and with feeling this principal stated clearly that her Catholic school was challenged by being within a church which discriminated against women, and moving into a trust which used a language which her staff considered exclusive.

Difficulties with official church language in the Le Chéile Charter, experienced by the principal and staff, replicated the experiences of the Working Group members in the early years of the process. Despite the efforts made by the Working Group members at the cluster meetings for the principals and members of boards of management, language was causing difficulties in communicating the message. Grainne Friel was giving a clear example of what a principal experienced when she tried to engage her staff. The language of church and the written word of the Le Chéile Trust are ongoing challenges for both church and school trusts, and will be explored again in the final chapter.

Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.

The RCE Heritage Statement uses unambiguous language on founding and contemporary values lived in a contemporary RCE school. It confirms the identification of founding values in contextual history, documentary data, two conversations and the Working Group validation:

Father Lafosse and the Founding Sisters developed an educational system based on academic excellence and the development of the whole person. They wished to create a happy, joyful atmosphere, where pupils could develop their talents. *Maria Vitae Porta* is the motto of Our Lady's School. This gives the idea that life is a journey, with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as guide. (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 16)

Religious of Jesus and Mary (RJM).

Documentary sources for the founding story and values of this congregation are found in the congregational website and two internal documents. Contemporaneous with other congregations in this chapter the RJM founding is in the context of the history of the French Revolution. Claudine Thévenet was born in Lyon on 30 March 1774, the second of a family of seven children. ‘Glady’, as she was affectionately known, had a strong influence on her brothers and sisters. The French Revolution broke out when she was fifteen. Claudine’s family was devoutly Christian, and at the age of nine she was placed with the Benedictine nuns of St. Peter’s Abbey, Place des Terreaux. Here she received her intellectual and spiritual formation. The city of Lyon was devastated during the Revolution. Claudine’s brothers were among the young male defenders of the city. They were imprisoned and executed. Claudine is reputed to have witnessed their deaths and to have received their final message of “Look, Glady, forgive as we forgive” (RJM internal document, p. 1).

Dom Antoine Marie's *Claudine Thevenet* (1998), provides the story of Claudine in young adulthood. Following the horrific experience of her brothers' death she became active in the care and education of the poor. In 1815, she established a refuge for poor children called 'Providence of the Sacred Heart'. Father Coindre, her spiritual director, suggested that she form a stable organisation with a precise and well-adapted set of rules. He drew up a plan based on the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of St. Ignatius of Loyola. On the feast of Saint Ignatius, July 1816, the 'Pious Union of the Sacred Heart of Jesus' was established and Claudine was elected president. Once again we have a reluctant foundress in the Le Chéile story. She was asked to develop something new. Claudine noted that the daughters of well-to-do families needed religious schooling as well as the daughters of poor families. She opened a boarding school for these girls.

In 1822 Father Coindre was transferred to Monistrol in the diocese of Puy. At his request Claudine, now known as Mother Marie Saint Ignatius, sent sisters to work in Monistrol. The Bishop of Puy approved and established their congregation under the name of 'Congregation of the Sacred Heart'. Before her death Claudine ensured that the new congregation was established as the Congregation of Jesus and Mary with its distinct Jesuit spirituality. It has been noted that the value of forgiveness is in the founding story and therefore in the charism. Love of Jesus and Mary is the constant thread, and at Claudine's beatification on 4 October 1981, Pope John Paul II proclaimed, "She confirms by her example that the greatest success in life is holiness" (Kelly, 2001). In their active ministry "the early sisters believed that among the means of education [...] the school excels all others". The heritage of each school of the congregation embodies a family spirit and the formation of the whole person.

The founding values of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary include a devotion to the Christian education of the young within the privileged environment of the Catholic school:

102: We collaborate with other Congregations and organizations working in common with them by participating in different projects.

95: We value the school as a privileged means of Christian education, and we try to create there an education community that lives and transmits the values of our foundress. (RJM Apostolic Mission Statement, 2007)

Several times the question of opening a Convent of Jesus and Mary in Ireland had been raised, but the French congregational leaders believed that they were not needed in Ireland, their aim being to send nuns to missionary countries. However when an English mother general, Mother St. Clare, was elected in 1903: "she clearly realised the fact that although Ireland might not need the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, the congregation had need of Ireland" (RJM internal document, 1993). In 1912 Dr. Naughton, Bishop of Killala, welcomed the sisters to the shores of Lough Conn. The bishop was a personal friend of a family whose daughters were educated by the sisters in England. Two of the girls entered the Jesus and Mary Convent in England. By 1919 Gortmor Abbey had both boarders and day pupils. In 1940 the Enniscrone school opened, and in 1949 the sisters established the Irish province of the congregation. The Religious of Jesus and Mary bring, through the charism of Saint Claudine, a heritage rich in the gospel value of forgiveness. They bring, too, a clear value for the school as a pastoral medium for

evangelisation. “St. Claudine founded her congregation to prepare young women to take their rightful place in the world” (Personal communication, 21 September 2009).

Conversation with the RJM congregational leader.

On 27 November 2008 a research conversation was held in Glasnevin with Sister Mary Mulrooney, congregational leader of the Religious of Jesus and Mary. The research preliminaries regarding the information letter, the focused questions and ethical permission to use the transcript were addressed.

Sister Mary was asked to talk about the foundress.

Sister Mary (SM): Her name was Claudine Thevenét. She was the daughter of a silk merchant, she grew up around the French Revolution times. She lost her two brothers in the Revolution, Louis and Francois, and out of this terrible scene of actually seeing them be put to death, she was asked by them to forgive the man who had betrayed them. They had a note in their shoe, and they asked her to stoop down to get the note. It read, “Forgive them Gladly, as we forgive”. That is the kernel of our charism. The gift of forgiveness, and it was also built into her work with the poor, the little children who were left after the Revolution. She took charge of the orphans, and she worked as a lay woman for many years in the area around St. Bruno Church in Lyons.

There were three phases in Claudine’s life: her childhood in Rue Royale, then young Claudine in school with the Benedictines. She was fifteen when the Revolution broke out and she stayed at home with her parents. The third phase of her life was after her mother died, Claudine the adult. This was the time of her life when with lay companions and with Fr. Coindre she began her adult life.

Researcher (R): Was Fr. Coindre significant in the founding?

SM:

He was her spiritual director, and at the lay association annual meeting he asked her to found a congregation. It was 31 July the feast of St. Ignatius in 1818. He said "I believe Claudine, you are called to found an order [...] form yourselves together". She begged not to be asked to do this. But she agreed. She started off with looms, her father had been a silk merchant. She taught weaving, educating the poor, giving them an opportunity to take their place in life. And then she ran into difficulty with funds and money and buildings and then she was asked to take in boarders. So she decided to educate the wealthy as well. She was a business woman through and through. She had great business acumen. But the weavers of Lyons became very jealous that her products were achieving more, and she was also educating girls to maybe a very high standard in weaving, and they objected and she had to abandon that work, and went in totally to education.

R:

Was education a core founding value?

SM:

It was really our founding mission, to make Jesus and Mary known and loved in every social milieu. The lay association was called the Association of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The new religious congregation was called the Religious of Jesus and Mary. Education in faith and education for life, with faith as the kernel, this was the founding mission.

R:

When and why did your sisters come to Ireland?

SM:

The Bishop of Killala knew a very influential family called the Macauleys. Dr Macauley had two daughters in our school in Willesden, England. They entered the congregation. That is how the bishop heard of the sisters and he invited them to come to his diocese. We came to Lough Conn in 1812. Then Enniscrone, then Galway and finally Dublin.

R:

Going back to Claudine. Do you believe that she would recognize the founding values in your four schools now?

SM:

The spirit, yes. Yes, because I have worked in all four. It is through our pastoral care, and our holistic education for the children. It is through that we can do what Claudine said to us, "Be mothers to the children, be real, and love the children, above all the weakest, the ones with the most faults, the ones who are vulnerable". We are meeting the social, family and emotional poverty of today. Claudine's values were love of the poor, love of the vulnerable, the overall education of the person so that they may

reach their full potential, spiritually, emotionally and educationally. These are the key values.

Responding to a question about her hope for the new trust...

SM:

My hope is that, as I see the numbers of religious dwindling, I hope that the ethos will be preserved in the future under this new Le Chéile Trust. I hope that our Jesus and Mary ethos will not be submerged, that it won't be watered down.

Sister Mary Mulrooney then talked about the need for the new trust to ensure Catholic boards of management in the future. This concern was related to the changing faith population in the schools, and she expressed concern that her congregational schools would be secure as Catholic schools with Catholic management.

Faith and providing schools for girls are the significant RJM values. Like Margaret Aylward in founding the Holy Faith Sisters, Claudine Thevenét wanted to be in mission with lay associates, but was compelled to found a religious congregation.

Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.

All twelve congregations were represented in the Working Group by former principals, former and present schools' education officers, former and present provincial, regional or general Leaders, but Sister Gerarda Lawlor, RJM, was the only member of the group who was a contemporary school principal. All members of the group contributed to conversations from their spirituality, wisdom, and varied experiences. Sister Gerarda of the Jesus and Mary Sisters also contributed from the experience of the everyday life of the

school. She contributed focused challenges on how a school staff was processing the reconfiguration of new trusteeship in the everyday life of the school.

The story of the RJM and the researcher's synthesis of their founding values, were given to Sister Gerarda. She responded on 21 September 2009. She was affirmative about the questions on story and values, and added "Yes, the research is true to history".

Conversation with an RJM school principal.

On 9 November 2009 a conversation was held with the deputy principal, Sister Louisa Cowley in Our Lady's Grove Jesus and Mary School, Goatstown. Although the appointment had been made with Joyce Kavanagh, the school principal, she was unexpectedly absent from the school, and Louisa was delegated to represent her and to engage in the research conversation.

Clarification of the Le Chéile Charter and the new rights and responsibilities of the trust unexpectedly became the main focus of most of the conversation. Louisa, representing her principal, initiated the conversation by addressing the future of managing a Le Chéile school, a Catholic school in a changing Ireland. Her concerns about the future management and trusteeship of the school mirrored the concerns expressed by her congregational leader. The school has a significant non-Catholic population. The researcher listened to the concerns and then, with Louisa, turned to the relevant pages of the Charter which clearly outlined the rights and responsibilities of the trust regarding the school's Catholic identity and the heritage of the congregation's charism. There followed a significant and lengthy discussion on this issue using the Charter.

Researcher (R): Are you happy with that now?

Sister Louisa (SL): I think so, yes.

R: And your concern is now on record. What you have been clarifying is very important. We, in the Le Cheile Working Group, cannot presume that our principals and staffs have worked through all the implications of the Charter.

SL: Exactly.

R: We, the members of the Working Group, are however, very confident in the new Le Cheile leadership and how they will deal with rights and responsibilities. They will be supporting you now.

SL: That's lovely.

R: Are you alright with that now?

SL: Yes, of course I am, and I am sorry now for that. I was looking for clarity, so I would know. At least I know what to do.

When the researcher considered that Sister Louisa Cowley had received sufficient time and clarification about the trust and the guarantees in the Charter and that she was ready to respond to the first research question, she was asked to talk about the founding values in the contemporary school. She replied that her foundress's value was for a Christian education expressed in loving relationships and the personal and communal task to build a civilisation of love.

SL: Because I think that is part of our charism to care for the students in every way, because one of the things Claudine asked us to be, was mothers to our children. This is November and we have put up a remembrance tree so that our students can pin up the names of their loved ones who have died. Each child comes along and their parents can be remembered, grand-parents, anybody. We even sometimes have a pet dog remembered. The names are on the leaves of the tree, the tree of life.

R: *I am sure you'll remember Claudine, do you have a special day?*

SL: *Yes, we have a service for the day: we have a service for Claudine on the third of February every year. And the children are reminded of it, and they are prepared in the week before that in their religion classes and they know her story. She wanted to educate and prepare young women for life in a Catholic school. That is why I was concerned.*

Louisa concluded by returning to her concern about the future of the school:

SL: *I am just saying that I would like to think that it would be a Catholic school, which would embrace and welcome every religion, but it would be primarily Catholic.*

R: *And can I use those words?*

SL: *Yes, you can.*

This was the only conversation during which the format had to be changed. The research conversation both in the written questions forwarded to the school principals, and in the action of conversation firstly addresses the congregational founding values as lived in the school. Hopes and concerns for Le Chéile are normally addressed at the end of the formal conversation. In conversation with Sister Louisa Cowley two thirds of the time was spent on concerns about the new trust and one third on founding and contemporary values. This experience indicated that the communications and consultation process with principals and schools had not met all the needs and concerns, and that the context within which the school was operating indicated the need for further listening and clarification. A process of on-going clarification will continue to be a challenge for the new trust.

Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.

The founding values identified in both the conversation with the RJM congregational leader and the school deputy principal are succinctly stated in the Le Chéile Charter:

The Religious of Jesus and Mary were founded by Claudine Thevenét in Lyons, France, in 1818. Her aim was to make Jesus and Mary known and loved by means of a truly Christian Education [...] The Jesus and Mary Educational Communities recognise that young people are the hope of tomorrow and a powerful force for renewal in the Church and in the World. (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 17)

Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ).

The founding story of the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) is embedded in the contextual history of the French Catholic Church in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Victoire de Bengy, foundress of the FCJ, was born in 1781 in Chateaubroux, France. Her family was royalist in its loyalties and she enjoyed the accompanying privileges. Victoire lived in the post-Revolution period, so she also experienced the difficulties and dangers of that time including her father's imprisonment.

Katherine O'Flynn in an internal congregational document (2009), recounts the marriage of Victoire to Joseph de Bonault d'Houet in 1804. Throughout her early life Victoire was influenced by the vast social, economic and religious changes that were taking place all around her. Her own upbringing had been privileged but she recognised

the miserable conditions of the poor, and tried to respond. Joseph and Victoire worked as volunteers in a local hospital. As a result of this charitable work Joseph contacted typhoid fever and died. They had been married for just eleven months. Victoire was a young widow when her son was born. The context for the founding of a new congregation of religious women is woven within this sad and simple family history. O'Flynn describes how Victoire tried to balance her maternal responsibilities with her search for God's will in her life. She reflected on the fact that Mary Magdalen was the earliest female companion of Jesus so she adopted the name Marie Madeleine, and henceforth it was how she was known. Her family had provided shelter to the Jesuits and in her discernment she was influenced by Jesuit spirituality. They shared their Constitutions and Spiritual Exercises with her, and when she came to found the new congregation she wanted to use a name and have constitutions similar to those of her Jesuit mentors and friends. Her request was rejected by her Jesuit friends, and this was to be one of Marie Madeleine's most painful experiences.. She was personally and spiritually attached to them but they would not agree with the name she wanted for her congregation - Companions of Jesus. They also maintained that the Rule of St. Ignatius could never be adapted for women.

After years of searching and prayer, Marie Madeleine founded the Society of the Faithful Companions of Jesus in Amiens, 1820. With two young women she began to teach literacy and sewing to some poor children, and to provide instruction in the faith. Three years later, when other companions had joined her, she began an education centre in Chateauroux for children who would otherwise have been working, teasing cotton.

In an introduction to the life of Marie Madeleine, Cardinal Gasquet writes:

God's call, as she then saw it [...] was to establish a new Institute, the members of which should be pledged to serve Our Blessed Lord on the model of the Holy Women [...] The idea naturally suggested the title she should give to the new religious body [...] the Faithful Companions of Jesus. (Stanislaus, 1916, p. xi)

Two specific values in the founding are identified in the internal congregational document: Catholic education of young women, and companionship in mission. Victoire was inspired by the example of the holy women accompanying Jesus in the gospel story, and she was motivated to educate young women to take their place in post-Reformation France. As already noted in the founding of Dominican Sisters, Holy Child Sisters, Religious of Christian Education and the Cross and Passion Sisters the Faithful Companions of Jesus also explicitly address the value of educating young Catholic women to take their place in church and in society.

In response to the researcher's question about the FCJ Irish foundation the English provincial archivist provided the following information:

The FCJ sisters had come to London in 1830, and worked in boarding schools and among the poor in local schools. Dr. Kirwan, Parish Priest of Oughterard, Co. Galway, was invited by his friend Fr. Nerincks to preach at St. Aloysius Church, North London. During his visit in this poor immigrant community Dr. Kirwan was impressed with the work of the sisters. On the advice of his friend he met the

foundress, Marie Madeleine, then in West London, and she agreed to send sisters to Ireland. In Limerick the Sisters of Mercy and the Presentation Sisters were already engaged in the parish schools but Bishop Ryan was anxious for a school for the ‘upper class’. In compliance with his wishes the FCJs opened Laurel Hill school on 26 June 1845. (Personal communication, 29 October 2009).

In their founding and in their coming to establish Catholic schools in Ireland they were educating the daughters of well-to-do families. Daly, in her social history, includes a reference to FCJ education of young Irish women:

The values which they inculcated were those of polite society [...] Sissy O'Brien, a pupil at the FCJ convent in Bruff was taught how to give orders to butlers and footmen and how to reply if addressed by royalty or the Lord Lieutenant. (Daly, 1981, p. 121)

The FCJ archivist believes that this quotation has been taken out of context. She advises: “Parents were told that no discrimination could be made between county, country and town children. Children in the care of the FCJs were educated as gentlewomen by gentlewomen. Curriculum subjects mentioned in this text were prayer, music, sewing, dancing, maths, singing, French” (Personal communication, 29 October 2009).

The FCJ founding values are succinctly expressed in the congregational constitutions:

According to place and circumstance we may engage in whatever work contributes to the salvation of souls [...] we particularly devote ourselves to certain ministries confided to us by our foundress, the education of youth, especially the poor, the work of retreats and missions. Above, all we are Companions of Jesus whose lives must reveal Him to the world.

Two FCJ values are significant in the development of the new trust: companionship, and the education of girls. It has to be remembered too that in their founding Marie Madeleine firstly educated the poor and provided evening classes for young women factory workers. The trust inherits responsibility for providing Catholic schools which serve young people in both disadvantaged and advantaged economic circumstances. All have the same mission and the same heritage.

Conversation with the FCJ congregational leader.

The researcher conducted a formal conversation with Sister Liz Ryan, provincial of the Faithful Companions of Jesus in Glasnevin 28 March 2007.

Researcher (R): Liz you are one of the founding members of the reconfiguration process. You are invited to talk about your founding story in the context of Le Chéile.

Sister Liz (SL): It goes back to the birth of our foundress. Victoire de Begny was born in 1781, just eight years before the French Revolution. Her father, a nobleman, was in prison during her childhood. Her mother was very aware of how poor people were suffering. Her motivation to educate the poor may be influenced by her mother, who wrote to a friend in 1785 "With us poor womenfolk, intellect counts but little and we have scant opportunity for its cultivation". Victoire married a nobleman, and before her child was born she was a widow. There she was, a young widow, inheriting a large estate, wealth and a strict mother-in-law.

R: What moved her to found a congregation?

SL: The Jesuits had been expelled from France, and Victoire gave them hospitality and refuge in one of her country residences. Fr. Varin was to become a life-long friend. He offered daily Mass in her home and shared Jesuit spirituality with her. She wanted to be a Jesuit! She sent her son, Eugene, to a Jesuit school. She thought about becoming a Sacred Heart sister, and of entering the Carmelites. Her discernment with Fr. Varin had ups and downs. After receiving Communion one morning she heard the words "I thirst", and they are our founding words. Some congregations were founded to do X, Y, or Z, but we were founded in response to the words of Jesus, "I thirst".

The conversation then moved to what Victoire, now calling herself Marie

Madeleine, actually chose to do.

SL: She went to the Sacred Heart Sisters and asked for some children to teach, and that is how we came into education. I reckon she was influenced by her mother's belief that girls didn't get the opportunity to learn and develop.

R: And the congregation was founded when?

SL: In 1820 in Amiens. She and a few companions taught poor children to read, write and sew, and instructed them in the faith. We also had adult education from the start. She began a night school for women, married and single, young and old, mothers of families, all anxious to deepen their faith and enjoy restful company. She was responding to a spiritual hunger for meaning and value.

R: *It developed from there?*

SL: *Very quickly. She founded thirty houses in the course of thirty-six years, and closed eight.*

R: *Closed?*

SL: *Yes, Marie Madeleine believed we were women of the church but if a bishop wanted her to do something she didn't want to do she just closed down the foundation and moved on.*

R: *And the congregation's name, Faithful Companions of Jesus?*

SL: *Influenced by the Jesuits, they are the Society of Jesus. Her friend, Fr. Varin totally rejected the name and the Constitutions which were based on the Jesuit Rule. She was tried "like gold in the furnace" by the Jesuits. So instead of Companions of Jesus she added Faithful and our spirituality is Jesuit. Later she would say to the sisters, "It is not in the footsteps of the Jesuits we walk, but in the footsteps of Jesus Christ".*

R: *So your founding value is?*

SL: *Marie Madeleine would say, "We are a small band of women. We will never be numerous, we are utterly devoted to God and to His mission".*

Sister Liz was asked why the FCJ congregation had decided to collaborate in the Le Chéile Trust.

SL: *Because we are very aware of the rich heritage that is ours, we recognize that we have fewer sisters, but Catholic education in Ireland to-day is something that we prize and we don't want to fold up tent and go. We would be very aware that as never before in this country people will have to stand up and be counted, and choose Catholic education.*

Asked if she had any concerns about Le Chéile.

The original spirit for those of us who started the process was about our own vulnerability as Religious congregations and responsibility for the future of a rich heritage. That is the spirit, but maybe we have put more work and time into trying to give a body to that spirit. [...] We live in a post-Christian Ireland, a Celtic-tiger Ireland, all we can do is make the best decisions with the vision we have. Marie Madeleine used to say, "You trust in God [...] it is not our world".

Asked if she would identify a major challenge for Le Chéile schools and the trust:

There is a spiritual poverty, the same as in Marie Madeleine's time. Certainly in our Irish FCJ schools we would not be associated with the economically poor. I believe that there is an Irish poverty today that is far more than material, it is emotional and spiritual.

R: *And your hope for Le Chéile?*

SL: *My experience from the beginning, from the Manresa moment... I knew this would work. It was born that day, it was the most graced experience, so sometimes when I can't see Le Chéile wood for the trees I go back there and I say that was like a founding experience. There was a founding grace there that will be for all the people who will be involved. Just like the founding grace.*

Sister Liz Ryan concluded the conversation by speaking about this research confirming the value of conversations which focus on founding values:

I always find that when I engage within a group or with an individual around the story, not the myth, there is a huge interchange

Once again the researcher notes the distinct difference between reading the documentary accounts of the life of the foundress and listening to the experiential wisdom of a woman who was living the story and the values. The dynamism of the conversation seems to be subdued even diminished in the written word. The vivacity, excitement and conviction which is experienced in receiving the oral history is difficult to include in the transcript. The recordings will be given to the Le Chéile Trust for those who may wish to listen to the oral history of founding and reconfiguring values.

Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.

Anna Houlihan was a very supportive member of the Working Group, and was its only lay member. Anna is a former teacher with the FCJ Sisters in Limerick, and she accompanied the FCJ provincial to the Le Chéile meetings. She was enthusiastic about the research, and her appreciation of the research included: "I like the way that your research use of archival data has enabled you to interact with them [the congregations] as living archives" (Anna Houlihan, personal communication email, 12 March 2008).

The FCJ story and synthesis of their founding values were given to Sister Maria Dunne and Anna Houlihan in the Working Group. The same three questions accompanied the transcript, asking if the research account reflected the reader's *living archive*, if the list of founding values included what the reader believed should be included and if there were anything to add. Sister Maria Dunne responded on 28 September 2009, and the corrections requested by the FCJ English archivist have been identified in the text above.

Conversation with an FCJ school principal.

The researcher was aware that prior to the reconfiguration process school principals had only experienced one model of trusteeship, that of their religious congregation. Between 2007-2009 they met with the Le Chéile Working Group and with David Tuohy at a number of consultative cluster meetings. They had also been engaged electronically through the new Le Chéile website. There had been many Working Group conversations about the unfamiliar ecclesial language which was being used in the initial charter drafts, a language which was regularly challenged by school principals and even by members of the Working Group. The on-going process of consultation and conversations enabled the concepts to be discussed using more accessible terminology. It was with this consciousness that the formal conversation with Frances Threadgold, the first lay principal of FCJ Secondary School, Bunclody, took place on 2 December 2009.

The conversation first addressed the statement of founding values and the focused questions.

Frances Threadgold (FT): Well, I am starting with the companionship with Jesus because that is the absolute central part of our school community. Examples of how that value is lived in the school would be a team approach to everything we do. We have the Meitheal programme and Meitheal leaders of senior students mentoring and protecting the younger students. Our whole-school evaluation report states that the sense of companionship was palpable is a unique spirit in the school. The second founding value, Ignatian spirituality, is lived in trying to see God in all things [...] in our everyday life that means that we believe God is present in our world and active in our lives. At the heart of that in the school is deep humanism which is contemplative in action.

Researcher (R): Is that included in your school mission statement?

FT: Absolutely. And the other thing that we are attached to is Marie Madeleine's phrase "I thirst", and is related to the Ignatian spirituality of call and response.

The conversation moved to the second question, the evidence of heritage in the school.

FT: Her picture is all over the school. There is a Good Fellowship Award, which the students asked would be awarded for companionship. The winner is selected each year from among the sixth years. Transition Year students travel to France to the birthplace of Marie Madeleine. They really love that and speak fondly of the experience. They are intrigued with her life story.

Responding to the question about the greatest challenge for the new trust:

It is holding on to the values and the heritage that I have outlined while still moving forward into a different group. For me the biggest challenge is to establish an identity within that, and I have not, as a principal, come to terms with that. I have a fear we will lose our FCJ identity, and I experience divided loyalties. I am the first lay principal, and I am aware that many of the parents are past pupils and they want continuity with FCJ. What will I hand on to the next principal?

The lived school values reflected Sister Liz Ryan's lived congregational founding values. This FCJ principal expressed concern about loss of congregational heritage in the process of moving into Le Chéile. This unease also expressed by the De la Salle principal, will be one of the important challenges for the new lay trust leadership.

Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.

The Charter Heritage Statement for the FCJ congregation clearly reflects both the congregational values and those being lived in the school. It supports the data from the French historical context, internal congregational documents, two conversations which provided FCJ oral history and the verification of values from the Working Group.

Marie Madeleine d'Houet was inspired to found a Society that would be called *Faithful Companions of Jesus*. The example of Mary and the Holy Women of the gospel who stayed with Jesus throughout His passion, death and resurrection greatly influenced her. To be faithful is one of our core values that we entrust to you.

Marie Madeleine was profoundly affected by the words of Jesus from the Cross "I am thirsty". She believed that these words expressed Jesus' desire to bring God's love to all people. We FCJ sisters desire that this same mission be continued through the work of education in each school community. (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 12)

St Louis Sisters.

The story of the St Louis Sisters is situated in post 1789 French contextual history and is supported by internal documents and the congregational website. The central data is located in the formal conversations with Sister Mary O'Connor, a member of the St Louis congregational leadership team, in Glasnevin on 21 March 2007, and with Mary Morgan a St Louis School principal in Rathmines on 3 February 2010.

The Congregation of the Dames de St Louis was founded by a bishop, Louis Colmar, a priest, Louis Bautain, and a lay woman, Louise Humann. The founding took place in one of the most troubled times in French history. There had been about sixty years of revolution and turmoil in the years after the 1789 revolution. Their shared ideal was to bring French society back to truth and the practice of the Catholic faith. To do this a solid education and formation was needed and they devoted their lives to this mission. Louis Bautain was a student of philosophy in post-revolution Paris, and had been influenced by the free-thinking theories of the time. When he met Louise Humann in 1819 she guided him back to faith and to a lifetime of searching for truth. Sister Pauline in an internal document writes: "He resolved to devote himself henceforward to its [truth and faith] diffusion. He soon found himself at the head of a new educational body" (Pauline, 1959, p. 14). Young students gathered round him and Louise Humann was a mother figure in the group who worked as catechists from 1832-1840 in Strasbourg where Louis Colmar was bishop. The new congregation grew out of this spiritual family, moving to Juilly, Paris in 1840 and the beginning of the St Louis congregation in 1842. The central and founding value was enshrined in the words "Sint Unum – May they be one" which was in Jesus' prayer at the Last Supper (John 17:22). These words are to be seen in each successive re-

writing of the St Louis Sisters' constitutions since 1842.

Louis Bautain, priest, philosopher and academic, set himself the task of healing the deep division that existed between faith and reason, and between theology and the secular learning of his time. He believed that Christian education would meet the needs of the day. Sister Pauline in the 1959 internal congregational document claims that the congregation had, from its origins: "the qualities which any worthy educational body must possess, consciousness of definite ideals, agreement as to methods, belief in tradition combined with the courage to experiment."

In 1859 the St Louis Sisters came to Ireland at the invitation of Dr Mc Nally, Bishop of Clogher who had pleaded with Louis Bautain to make an Irish foundation. Daly recounts that it was during Cardinal Cullen's period of office that the majority of French teaching congregations of women were introduced into Ireland. By the end of the nineteenth century, she continues, sixty-two convent boarding schools had been established only six of which were run by Irish religious congregations. Thus, girls' secondary education in Ireland was dominated by religious whose traditions and educational ethos originated outside Ireland. Although the French religious did provide day schools for the primary education of the poor, the majority of their schools were fee-paying boarding schools, catering for the middle classes. As such, they acquired a status denied to Irish religious congregations, whose primary role was seen as catering for the education of the poor (Daly, 1981, p. 121).

At the beginning of January 1859 the St Louis sisters arrived in Monaghan. They came to the Ireland of post-penal laws and post-famine deprivation. They also came in the year after the Irish Reformatory Schools' Act of 1858. Three sisters, one English, two Irish, all of whom were former students of the St Louis boarding school in Juilly, France, arrived to take care of the first reformatory school established under the Irish Reformatory Act.

The Sisters were charged to place themselves at the Bishop's disposal to staff the new Reformatory [and] any other good which might present itself, always, however, with preference for the work of education in any of its manifold forms.
(Pauline, 1959, p. 83)

The bishop's 'disposal' included a private day-school which was established "to meet an acutely felt need [...] the children of better-class Catholics had formerly been obliged to attend the school kept by the Protestant Misses Warner on the North Road" (Pauline, 1959, p. 120). The bishop's 'disposal' also included unsatisfactory meetings with the founder, Louis Bautain. The vexed question was the canonical status of the congregation. The mother general's instructions were explicit, "Neither the Archbishop of Dublin nor the Bishop of Monaghan has any right to interfere in our affairs" and "Either you must remain independent spiritually and temporally of your congregation and stay in Ireland [...] or you must remain faithful [...] and return to Juilly" (Pauline, p. 149). Louis Bautain advised, "Remain attached to the Motherhouse, at least in spirit [...] let providence have its way" (p. 155). The Sisters of St Louis had to cut their founding

umbilical cord. The Sisters of St Paul had to cut their ties with their French Mother House at the behest of Bishop Ullathorne in England (1864), the Faithful Companions of Jesus had difficulties with the Bishop of Limerick in 1845, the Dominican Sisters had opposed the Bishop of Galway in 1851, and the Holy Faith Sisters had confronted Cardinal Cullen in 1867. Cullen Owens contends that “the newly established non-enclosed orders [...] were particularly vulnerable to Episcopal interference” (Cullen Owens, 2005, p. 63).

Sister Anne Murray, a St Louis member of the Le Chéile Working Group, proudly claims that in the twentieth century the St Louis Sisters re-connected with their French heritage in Juilly and also continued to be an educational congregation providing Catholic schools in the forefront of education in the Irish language and Irish heritage.

Conversation with the St Louis congregational leader.

On the 21 March 2007 a research conversation was held in Glasnevin with Sister Mary O'Connor, who was representing the St Louis congregational leadership. She was also a founding member of the Le Chéile Working Group. Having addressed issues of ethical permission and the context for the research within the Le Chéile process the first focused question was addressed:

Researcher (R): Will you return to the original founding in France to identify the founding values?

Sister Mary (SM): I am delighted you asked me that because our origins go back to 1797. Three people, two women, Louise Humann and Therese Breck, and Bishop Louis Colmar, came together and they made an agreement of unity. They dedicated themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to working for education. They had just experienced the French Revolution and all the persecution of Catholics during that time. There was a price on Bishop Colmar's head. They saw

the necessity for an educated Catholic laity that they were going to be able to renew the faith in France. Louise Humann was a remarkable woman. She worked not only with girls in her own school but she worked in a Seminary because she saw the necessity of renewing the faith there. She was responsible for converting our founder, Louis Bautain. He was a Catholic and reared as a Catholic but had lost his faith. Louise Humann was key to everything he did and taught subsequent to his conversion. Louis Bautain is the founder of the Sisters of St. Louis but he took his motivation from the previous three that I mentioned, Louise Humann, Therese Beck and Bishop Colmar.

R: *And the name St Louis?*

SM: *Very simple. When Louis Bautain with Louise Humann started the religious congregation their house was on the Rue St Louis.*

A very interesting thing that I may as well say now, is that in this group that Louis Bautain and Louise Humann had, there were a number of Jewish converts. So their mission from the start was ecumenical. The Ratisbonnes from the original group went off to found another congregation, the Congregation of Sion, Les Peres de Sion and the Sisters of Sion. We call them our first cousins because we have the same origin. They also trace their origin back to the three that I told you about, Louis Colmar, Louise Humann and Therese Breck.

The conversation then moved back to the Irish foundation.

SM: *Dr. McNally, the Bishop of Clogher, invited the St Louis Sisters. At that time there was a remarkable amount of coming and going between Ireland and France. There was an Irish College in Paris. A number of Irish girls had entered St Louis in France. Two of the three who came were Irish, Sisters Clare O'Sullivan and Clemence McCarthy. The third, Sister Genevieve Beale, was an English convert. I believe that they must have been a sign of hope for the poor people, I really do. In Monaghan, it was very, very poor, and there was a large Protestant Presbyterian community so I think that the Sisters coming would have been seen as a very definite sign that something would be done for the Catholic population.*

R: *How would one of your founding sisters explain the founding values which were motivating them?*

SM: *She would say, "We have to bring our gospel values. We want our schools to be faith schools, where the values of the Gospel, faith, justice, love, reconciliation, openness, where these values are treasured and where they are passed on and that the children, the students who are in our schools, will go out and permeate society with those values."*

The conversation moved to a consideration of Le Chéile and the values in the reconfiguration process:

SM: *I have to say there is an extremely deep bond in the founding Le Chéile group. We became one that day in Manresa and it was a pivotal moment and a deep moment that none of us will ever forget, realising what we had in common and how we could build on it. It was wonderful, and I am very privileged that I was there. Wonderful.*

R: *What are the challenges for Le Chéile schools?*

SM: *Sometimes I think that society is financially rich and spiritually poor. I think we have to bring spiritual values to our schools. They must be faith schools, they must have these gospel values. I admire our teachers who have the courage and the resources to do this, and they deserve every support. There is a 'faith poor'. We have this dreadful rise in suicide and I think that is part of it. Where does it come from? I don't know, and it does affect the materially poor, but it affects the materially rich as well. Unfortunately, it affects everybody.*

R: *Do you believe, that in the reconfiguration process, we are meeting the challenges?*

SM: *That is a very difficult question, because I think that Ireland's culture is constantly changing and we just have to try and keep up with it. What I do find hopeful about Le Chéile is that we have an ethos of openness and inclusivity and I think that when the issues arise, we will deal with them. Our Le Chéile schools will be open to dealing with them.*

R: *How did you experience having to do this conversation for the research?*

SM: *I enjoyed doing it. I am so excited about what you are doing because, I think I might have said this to you earlier, I did not keep a diary of Le Chéile, and I should have. We all should have. But you are bringing us on board and this is going to be our history, and it is a deep spiritual history, and a very strong bonding between us. It was lovely to revisit our own congregational story and to find it is relevant to this new furrow which we are ploughing at the moment.*

The conversation with Sister Mary O'Connor on 21 March 2007 took place within the first few months of the research. Her enthusiasm for the research was confirming the significance of providing oral historical records for the new trust. She said, "Through this research you are now providing the archives for Le Chéile". Through her engagement in the conversation above a fascinating piece of the founding narrative is revealed, the story of the Jewish converts who joined the early St Louis congregation and subsequently founded their own congregation focused on a mission for the Jews.

Validation with the Le Chéile Working Group.

The St. Louis founding story and identified values, with the focused research questions, were given to Sisters Anne Murray and Mary O'Connor. On 7 September 2009 they responded positively to the research questions. Sister Anne, a member of the current St. Louis executive team and a member of the Le Chéile Working Group, provided pertinent information in response to my questions about the St Louis Irish foundation. She spoke about the original French founding, their coming to Monaghan, the severance from their French Mother House enforced by the local Irish bishop, the consequent change to a

monolithic Irish culture, and the eventual reunification with the congregation's French roots and founding culture.

Conversation with a St Louis school principal.

On 3 February 2010, a research conversation with Mary Morgan, principal of St Louis High School, Rathmines was held in the school.

Researcher (R): *Which of the founding St Louis values do you experience in the life of this school?*

Mary Morgan (MM): *Well I would hope that we experience all of the values listed in the letter you sent to me. I think Louis Bautain's guiding value of community is alive in this school. Visitors who come into the school say they can sense that. And the students are currently building a link with a St. Louis school in Kano, Nigeria. At the moment, two teachers from here are going over to visit the school in Kano, and we hope that next September two of the teachers from there will come here. Then, next summer, we will have a student exchange. We are building the relationship among the staff first. So we are talking about community here, and I am just giving those examples of it.*

R: *Community is a core value?*

MM: *We have our mission statement in the student's journal and there is a sentence in it which claims that we should all be happy and secure. When we are dealing with conflict situations and they inevitably arise from time to time, we tend, if we can, to take out the mission statement and say, "Look, if we handle the situation this way, are we living our reality?: So we do try to, we try.*

R: *And the founding words 'Ut sint unum' is that still _____?*

MM: *Absolutely, 'Ut sint unum', is part of the school crest, and is used at all the assemblies. One of the Sisters visits all of the first year classes in September and explains the crest. Our crest is in our Chapel and we have a lovely stained glass window with 'Ut sint unum' included. It is also in the tile floor of the old foyer.*

As Mary had seamlessly moved into answering the question regarding heritage, she was asked if there were anything else she needed to add.

MM: *It is also so important that a number of retired sisters still work voluntarily in the school, this is invaluable for the spirit and heritage. It is very good for the girls to meet the sisters, and some of the parents have spoken to me about this. One parent particular said to me, "One of the reasons I chose the school is because you still have sisters in the school. I want my daughter to meet some of the sisters."*

The conversation addressed the question about challenges for the Catholic school and the Le Chéile Trust:

MM: *I think it is a very important question. Firstly, we are challenged by a diverse student population and a considerable percentage, about 30%, would not be practising Catholics. It is an inclusive school, and it is a Catholic school. I always say to the parents that we are a Catholic school, and I explain our ethos, and I explain to the parents and the students how we include other faiths.*

R: *So your school is multi-denominational in intake, but it is Catholic in its name, vision and commitment.*

MM: *Yes and other faiths are valued, respected and helped to grow in their own faith.*

A lengthy conversation followed on this subject of the Catholic school and how to respect other faiths. Then Mary Morgan was asked if there were any other challenges for a Le Chéile school.

MM: *I think the whole fabric of society, as in separation, divorce, the socio-economic impact and the effect it has on children. I also think the authority of the church is an issue and a challenge. Recent abuse disclosures have had an effect. The religious education teachers tell me this. My other challenge for Le Chéile is that we in the Catholic voluntary schools must have chaplains. We cannot presume that Religious Education teachers will take on that role.*

There is one more important challenge from a principal's perspective. Many of our schools were fortunate to have principals who were members of a Religious congregation. They had training in theology, and their congregational training helped them. Lay principals don't have these advantages, and I believe that they need support and training.

R: *I think that is a very important point and I promise you it will be recorded in this research.*

Validation within the Le Chéile Charter.

The ‘*Ut Sint Unum*’ phrase and the crest of St Louis schools are represented in the Charter Heritage Statement. The values already identified through history, documentary data and in the formal conversations are clearly reflected in the statement:

He (Louis Bautain) set himself the task of healing the deep and supposedly irreconcilable divisions that existed between faith and reason and between theology and the secular learning for this time. Bautain saw Christian education as the great need of his day, as “the beautiful enterprise”. It was his vision of a “world healed, unified and transformed by the saving wisdom of Christianity” that led Louis Bautain to a lifelong search for unity and truth. (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 19)

Between 1684 and 1842 the five French Le Chéile congregations were founded within the context of sociological and faith needs. History, both documentary and oral, provide remarkable stories in the original foundings, in the choice of an educational school mission and in the values which they share with the Irish and English Le Chéile congregations and which they bequeath to the new trust for Catholic secondary schools in Ireland.

Conclusion

All twelve Le Chéile congregations share motivational values of meeting the needs of the time in the mission of Jesus Christ. They address the needs by providing education in Catholic schools, and embedded in the founding is the value of the Catholic school which is carefully and systematically served by well-trained teachers. Vocation-questing in Ireland and a desire to provide secondary education for middle and upper-class Catholics are among the threads reflected in the arrival of both the English and French congregations. Another common thread in the women's congregations is the value of providing Catholic schools for girls so that through such education they can claim their role in society and in the church. The final chapter will consider how the founding values in all twelve congregations are inherited by the new trust. In each of the

living narratives and within the identification of founding and contemporary values, there is triangulation of data.

In this research past and contemporary oral histories have contributed to an understanding of the motivational values in the creation of the Le Chéile Trust. Laws affecting the free and public practice of faith, and the loss of dignity that went with grinding poverty, are motivating forces in ten of the founding stories. Dominic founded the Order of Preachers to combat heresy, and John Baptist de la Salle founded his congregation in the time of post-Council of Trent reform and church renewal. All twelve congregations chose the school as the means of conducting their identified mission.

The research outcomes and the challenges which have emerged during the research process will be analysed and explored in chapter eight.

Chapter Eight

Outcome: The Current Configuration

Introduction

This research set out to explore the relationship of the congregational founding values with those values which influenced contemporary reconfiguration of trusteeship in creating the Le Chéile Trust in 2010. The core question was: have the founding values informed the creation of the new trust? The research engaged the leaders, representative members and school principals within three specific foci: (a) examining whether the founding values were reflected in the new trust; (b) identifying the values which were motivating the decisions to collaborate in a unique trusteeship process; and (c) recognising the values which are operational in the contemporary congregational schools.

The macro context for the research is that of the Catholic church within a world-view, and the micro context is the Catholic church in Ireland. The research is located within a Catholic church context, and consequently within a world-view context. In 1997 the Congregation for Catholic Education outlined the challenging context for Catholic schools as they moved into a new millennium: “a new socio-political and cultural context which assumes the form, often exalted by the media, of subjectivism, moral relativism and nihilism” (Sacred Congregation for Education, 1997, no. 1). Nineteen of the twenty-six authors in Grace & O’Keefe’s *International Handbook on Catholic Education* (2007), explicitly identify the secular society, materialism and consumerism as the primary contextual challenges for the Catholic school. Another contextual challenge frequently identified in the international literature, and also identified in the Irish context, is the

diminishing number of religious personnel in the schools. *Beyond Religious Congregations: Responding to New Challenges in Catholic Education* is the title chosen by Smith and Nuzzi, 2007, for their review of Catholic schools in North America. This challenge of falling numbers is at the core of this research. Diminishing membership numbers and resources in religious congregations required an appropriate reconfiguration of trusteeship for Irish Catholic secondary schools and the values for which they had responsibility.

This chapter will consider the data gathered from the twelve congregations, how distinctive congregational founding values are operational in the new trust and its schools, and the key issues which emerge from the research.

The Why, What and How of the Research

The task of gathering data challenges the researcher to return to the motivation for the research. Dewey argues that the most significant factor in supplying primary material is curiosity: "Curiosity is the only sure guarantee of the acquisition of the primary facts upon which inference must base itself" (Dewey, 1910, pp. 30-31). In chapters three and four the context for Irish Catholic secondary schools and the development of new trusteeship were examined within a contextual framework using relevant ecclesial teaching, theories and literature. The origin and development of the Le Chéile Trust 2003-2010 is also explored in chapter four. Curiosity about the founding values of twelve religious congregations involved in the reconfiguration of the Le Chéile Trust led to the primary facts which are the subject of chapters five and six and seven. The founding stories and related values of Dominic de Guzman (1170-1221), Daniel Delaney (1747-

1814), Margaret Aylward (1810-1889), Frances Taylor (1832-1900), Genevieve Dupuis (1813-1903), Elizabeth Prout (1820-1864), Cornelia Connelly (1809-1879), John Baptist de La Salle (1651-1719), Victoire de Begny (1781-1858), Louis Lafosse (1772-1839), Claudine Thevenet (1774-1837), and Louis Bautain (1796-1867), are the critical data of these central chapters. The twelve congregations facilitated re-visiting and re-identifying values, and examining the relationship of these values with those of the reconfiguration. The decision to begin collaboration was made in 2003 and the research process began in 2006. As the researcher was also a member of the Le Chéile Working Group, the work of both research and trusteeship development interfaced between 2006-2010. The Charter was published in 2009 and the new trust was publicly launched in 2010.

The chosen methodology for the research was a traditional analysis of historical documents and also the gathering of oral evidence. In the first instance information was sent to the twelve congregations with an invitation to collaborate in the research (Appendix B). All twelve congregations responded positively and generously. Semi-structured interviews or conversations with the congregational leaders were conducted (Appendix C). The conversations were transcribed and returned to each leader for editing and confirmation of accuracy. The identified founding values were given to the members of the Le Chéile Working Group for their engagement and validation. The values were then presented within a meta-analysis of data to the school principals for their semi-structured interviews (Appendices D and E). Finally, the data was matched with the Le Chéile Charter (Appendix K). The *lived narratives* of the congregational leaders, the founding values emerging from these narratives, and the relationship of these values to

those of the trusteeship reconfiguration process provide the central data which will now be analysed in the research outcomes.

The Relationship of Reconfiguration and Founding Values

In the heading for this section the word *Reconfiguration* is deliberately placed before *Founding* because, paradoxically, that is the chronology within the research. The Le Chéile process was developing reconfiguration values between 2001-2005, but the research into founding values was processed between 2006-2010. The mission and philosophy of the Le Chéile Trust is the collaborative work of twelve founding congregations through their members who formed the Working Group. With the advice and facilitation of David Tuohy, the group processed current core values as the inspiration for all the legal and business decisions which were being made by the congregations. There was ongoing parallel accountability to congregational leaders and ongoing parallel engagement with the congregational schools. The values now enshrined in the Charter are to be found in the *Mission of the Trust*: “To promote Catholic education as an option within the Irish educational system”, and “To develop the schools of the Congregations in the service of their local communities, the State and the Church” (p. 2). The Charter situates the congregations’ decision: “Their commitment to education reflects their participation in the mission of the Church, in setting up Le Chéile the Congregations want to ensure that their schools will continue in that same mission” (p. 2). The Charter then explicitly addresses the mission of the church, the Le Chéile philosophy of education and the trust as patron of the schools (pp. 2-5). These pages are the outcome of seven years’

processing reconfiguration values. The congregations were working from the outcome of the Manresa experience (2003), where common gospel values were identified.

The special moment of insight labelled the ‘Manresa moment’ dates to September 2003 when representatives of the twelve Le Chéile congregations had realised that they had common and unifying founding values. Recognising that gospel values unified them they began a collaborative trusteeship process. Seven years were spent developing the trust, and the original insight about core values was never questioned. In 2006 curiosity about motivational values and concern that the presumption of common founding values had not been questioned prompted research into the unique stories and the heritages which each congregation was bringing to the trust. The research explored the relationship between the founding values and those on which the Charter for the new trust was being constructed.

Research Outcomes

Analysing the data in chapters five, six and seven a claim can be made that all twelve congregations, through the *lived narratives* of their congregational leaders, have shared the following founding values: the gospel values of faith, love for the most needy of God’s people, and the provision of schools to serve those people. Different words are used to express the same values. Some different emphases distinguish the founders’ responses. The Dominican congregational leader spoke about meeting “the needs of the poor when needed”, and emphasised that their Irish founding story was about providing education for girls. The Patrician congregational leader situated the core values of faith, the needy and education in a parish context because the founder was a bishop. The Holy

Faith leader recognised that the defence of the faith and caring for the poor were values that preceded the provision of schools. The Holy Child leader used the words “Spiritual Works of Mercy”, and the De la Salle leader spoke about “Salvation here and now”. The leader of the Faithful Companions of Jesus noted that her foundress was “devoted to God and to His mission”. The Religious of Jesus and Mary emphasised that the foundress wanted “to make Jesus and Mary loved in every soul”, and the St Louis leader stressed that the founder believed that Christian education was “the beautiful enterprise”. The congregational leaders of the Servants of the Mother of God, the Cross and Passion Sisters and the Sisters of St Paul spoke about their founding in terms of faith and social justice. The Religious of Christian Education stressed that their founder was committed to education for girls in a school that reflected community. The common founding value was meeting the spiritual, social and educational needs of the time as experienced in Ireland, England and France. The common founding motivation was to provide schools which were rooted in the Catholic faith. The values identified in relevant documents and in the conversations with congregational leaders were validated by the members of the Working Group and by referral to the Heritage Statements in the Le Chéile Charter. The core and common values related directly to the simple and direct claim of the Charter: “The Le Chéile Schools Trust takes its heritage from the work of the Founding Congregations. Their commitment to education reflects their participation in the mission of the Church” (Le Chéile Charter, p.2). This research, therefore, claims that there is a direct relationship between the core founding values of each and of all twelve congregations with the core values in the reconfiguration of the new trust.

Unique congregational values.

The data within the semi-structured interviews or conversations also provided information about unique congregational values. The unique contributions are significant in the heritage which is now accessible to all twelve congregations and to the schools in the Le Chéile Trust. Knowing the individual congregational values can enrich the new trust. The Le Chéile schools can claim the Dominicans' inheritance of a passion for truth, *Veritas*, the Patrician and De la Salle commitment to mentoring and partnering their teachers in founding values, the Holy Faith commitment to the lay vocation, the SMG, St Paul and Cross and Passion gift of compassion and the commitment of the SHCJ, RCE, SJM, St. Louis and FCJ founders to educate middle and upper class girls to take their place in society and in the church. The research provides Le Chéile with the knowledge that within the trust's inheritance are founders and foundresses who have been canonised, beatified and hold titles such as *Defender of the Faith*, the *Great Teacher*, and *Patron of Christian Teachers*. This research gave to the Le Chéile schools an access to the spirituality of St Dominic (Dominican Sisters), St Ignatius (Religious of Jesus and Mary and Faithful Companions of Jesus), St Vincent de Paul (Holy Faith Sisters and Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle), and St John of the Cross (Cross and Passion Sisters). They can learn from the intellectual rigour of the Dominican heritage, the simplicity of the Patricians, the respect for the dignity of each person in the Holy Faith heritage, the deep faith of three foundresses who converted to Catholicism (Cornelia Connelly, Frances Taylor and Elizabeth Prout), the insight of two mothers, one divorced and one a widow, who founded religious congregations (Cornelia Connelly and Victoire de Begny), the commitment to local parish and community of Genevieve Dupuis, and Fr Lafosse's

determination to provide girls with an opportunity to take their place in church and in society, the value of collaboration and association valued by John Baptist de la Salle, the value of forgiveness modelled by Claudine Thevenet and the value of ecumenism enshrined in the founding experience of the St Louis sisters.

The Le Chéile Charter does not specifically identify the value of meeting the needs of the time. One may argue that it is presumed, or that it is explicit in the Heritage Statements. One might argue that to be true to these values it should be explicit. It is very clear in both documentary and oral history data that the twelve Le Chéile congregations were meeting the needs of their respective times in founding their schools. It can also be argued that the congregations were meeting the needs of contemporary time by reconfiguring trusteeship to ensure that their Catholic secondary schools would continue. The researcher would also argue that the congregations were meeting another contemporary need by modelling collaboration within the church's mission.

Founding values in contemporary schools.

Chapters five, six and seven have recorded semi-structured interviews or formal conversations with school principals. In each of the twelve congregational schools the principals confirmed that the founding values were lived in the school, and described how that claim could be identified. The principal in a Dominican school reflected the core value of meeting needs when she said, "We are always mindful of the context of the school where these young girls come from". The Patrician school principal embodied the founding values, "We do it in the way we live and work". The Holy Faith school principal spoke confidently, "Well we are this, a Catholic school, that is what we are, that

is the challenge”. The principal of the Servants of the Mother of God school has adopted the foundress’ motto, “Serve God always but not always in the same way”. The De la Salle principal claimed “When we Lasallean principals get together we talk about the values being ‘caught’”. The FCJ principal claimed that the unique companionship value is central in the school, and the RCE principal, reflecting the Lafosse commitment said, “We educate girls in a school which is a community”. The RJM deputy principal and the St Louis principal both claimed that their schools aim to build Christian community through the experience of school itself. It was interesting to listen to the principals of St Paul, Cross and Passion, Holy Child and St Louis schools confirm the founding values by speaking with gratitude and admiration of the religious members who still work in or visit the schools.

The congregational leaders were asked to reflect on and respond to a focused question about the values in the reconfiguration process. This question was deliberately placed after the questions about the founding narrative and values. All twelve leaders spoke confidently about the Le Chéile values, and acknowledged that they had made their decision about schools and finance because they believed in what was developing. They were confident in the relationship of the core founding values with the values emerging in Le Chéile. Once again there were shades of difference in the way their confidence was expressed. The Dominican leader used the word ‘confidence’ and then added “No one charism has the whole truth, that is the beauty of Le Chéile, and the Dominican heritage will go on”. The Patrician leader reflected this confidence, “What we had in place for 200 years will continue [...] this is the new church, this is the religious life of the future”. The SMG and St Paul leaders were calmly confident about the relationship of founding values

continuing, and SHCJ leader said: “I hear a lovely struggling in the Le Chéile process to continue the Catholic values into the future”. The de la Salle leader spoke about how welcome Le Chéile development was because their brothers, through their charism of association, had been preparing for such a development. The FCJ leader believed the values were safe in Le Chéile and added, “We value Catholic education in Ireland. We don’t want to fold our tent and go when Ireland is post-Christian and has a new emotional and spiritual poverty”. The RCE leader spoke about the recognition, during the Manresa experience, of gospel values held in common. The St Louis leader also returned to the Manresa experience with regard to the recognition of core gospel values and added: “[we are] finding it re-lived in the new furrow which we are ploughing”.

Three congregational leaders challenged the new situation. While having confidence that Le Chéile would provide an opportunity for Catholic secondary schools to continue, the Cross and Passion leader balanced her confidence with a strong criticism of the institutional church’s role and added: “In twenty years I would like people to say the religious did the right thing [establishing the trust], we are responsible for these schools. I wonder will there be people to carry on the values?” The RJM leader expressed concerns about other faiths being in positions of power in the schools of the future, and whether the Catholic school would be able to hold its own values. The Holy Faith congregational leader expressed confidence in what Le Chéile was trying to do but believed it was ultimately the bishops’ responsibility to ensure the future of Catholic schools: “It is their responsibility not ours, and the future is that they [schools being entrusted to lay trusts] will all be Catholic schools. Whoever writes it all up eventually will not really know us”.

The core values of faith, education and meeting the needs of the time were in the founding of each and of all twelve Le Chéile congregations, and through the data provided in this research we know that these values are related to the values motivating the Le Chéile trusteeship process, and are in the Charter of the trust. This is the answer to the original research question: what is the relationship of distinctive congregational founding values with the reconfiguration values in the new Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust? An unexpected outcome, a bonus, is that the research also provides information on the unique values of each of the congregations, values which are now in the inheritance of the Le Chéile Trust.

Le Chéile Trust within the Institutional Church

The research provided another interesting outcome, recognition of a dissonance in the relationship between the emerging trust and the institutional church. As the research developed it became imperative to examine data relevant to this relationship. Chapter three has explored the ideals and values in the relevant teaching of the church pre-Vatican II, conciliar, and post-Vatican II. Ecclesial documents were the first contextual and theoretical resource for the research. A summary and analysis of these resources were forwarded to the members of the Le Chéile Working Group. There was minimal response or discourse. In fact, during the seven years of working to develop the trust there were no formal conversations on the church's teaching with regard to the Catholic school in the Le Chéile Trust. David Tuohy as process consultant kept the theological and theoretical values on target but the experience was that religious women and men were creating a Catholic school trust the values of which clearly reflect those in the official church

documents but without engaging formally with them. Participants were considering, agreeing, and reflecting accurately what the documents proclaim but were not making overt connections; they were not linking church theory with trust practice. Though literate and experienced in ecclesial language, the members were not comfortable with it. As the process continued in cluster meetings with school principals and members of boards of management, another outcome emerged. Formal church language was found not to be an appropriate medium for schools personnel. The Working Group learned that it was critical to use language which was familiar and comfortable for themselves and for participating schools. The values were discussed and confirmed by congregational members, principals and members of boards of management but levels of ecclesial language literacy and experience varied. The medium of language is critical in the management of change, and this issue of theological literacy was a factor at every step of the reconfiguration process.

The next and related outcome was at a deeper level of dissonance in relating to and as part of the institutional church. The values in the ecclesial documents, although values which could and would be acknowledged in the Le Chéile Trust and in its Charter, were perceived as the values of an institutional church with which many had difficulties and of which even members of religious congregations were critical. Relational dissonance and unfamiliarity with the church documents did not, however, lead to rejection of Catholic values. The documents, especially Vatican II and post Vatican II documents (chapter three) are affirming and confirming for all involved in developing a trust for the future of Catholic secondary schools. The documents are liberally quoted in academic, theological and Catholic school publications, but it will be a challenge for Le Chéile Trust and other Catholic school trusts to engage the theory with the practice in

schools and to situate the ongoing mission of the school in the church. The Le Chéile Charter expresses this aspirationally when it declares that the trust will participate in the mission of the church. It espouses links with local and universal church and pays particular attention to the philosophy of education announced by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education and by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 2).

It might be argued that difficulties in relating with the institutional church were in the genetic inheritance of the twelve congregations. Six of the congregations were founded by clerical members of the church and six by lay women. A number of the congregational stories provide evidence of historical difficulties with the institutional church. The Dominican Sisters, Patrician Brothers, Holy Faith Sisters, Sisters of St Paul the Apostle, Faithful Companions of Jesus and St Louis Sisters experienced conflict with bishops exercising a power which sought to change the direction of the foundation. The Le Chéile Trust has declared that its mission is within the church's mission but the trust is developing in a contemporary Irish Catholic church which has been damaged, humbled and is itself seeking an identity. Fuller (2006), writing before the tidal wave of revelations concerning the cover-up of abuse of minors by a number of clerics, and the scandal of child abuse in a number of residential institutions run by religious (discussed below) argues that any consideration of Irish identity must take account of the centrality of the influence of Catholicism until the 1950s and its dramatic decline since that time to a point where the role of the institutional church is now marginalized (Fuller, 2006, p. 68). She describes the emergence of a new brand of Catholics who "do not feel bound by the tenets of Catholicism as laid down by official church teaching", and challenges the

church to re-interpret its role in modern Ireland (Fuller, 2006, p. 89). This research has identified the fact that the Le Chéile Trust, A Catholic Schools Trust, has explicitly stated that the schools are part of the mission of the church, but the data from the founding stories, the records of the development of the trust and the majority of the Charter Heritage Statements do not have a specific mention of ‘Church’.

A contemporary experience supports this relational and communication dissonance. In 2005 the CORI Annual General Meeting was informed that ‘an historic meeting’ had taken place in Maynooth 7-8 February. For the first time Irish bishops and religious leaders met together to consider educational matters. The outcome of the meeting was summarised in a subsequent publication: “[A newly created] task group would work in the context of a ‘One Church’ commitment to, and a strategic plan for, the provision and development of Church interests in education” (Woulfe and Cassin, 2007, p. 8). The irony in this ‘historic meeting’ and the creation of this new ‘task group’ is that in 2005 some new lay trusts were already established and Le Chéile was in its initial stage. The Maynooth meeting was representative of the institutional, hierarchical membership of the church and the voices of lay people who were at the same time engaged with religious congregations in the development of new trusteeship for Catholic schools were excluded. Bishops, Vatican visitors (Congregation for Catholic Education) and congregational leaders were invited to participate. Lay leaders were invited as listeners. The voice of one of the significant lay people of the same period supports the identified irony. Paul Meany in his presidential address at the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS) Annual Conference, June 2005 referred to the February Maynooth meeting:

All of us in this room who are current leaders and standard-bearers of that tradition [the Catholic school] have a huge responsibility to ensure that the best of what was provided in the past can continue to be given its rightful place into the future. The congregational leaders and the bishops met in February of this year for the first time ever to consider the future of Catholic education and Catholic schools. The General Secretary and I were invited to the first day of the meeting as reflective listeners. As I reflected, as a lay man, and silent for the first time in my life, it seemed to me that the decline in the interest and attendance of vast swathes of Irish people in the work and activities of the institutional church has been as a result of too great a concentration on the structural and man-made elements of the church, many of these elements to do with power and control saying what cannot and should not be done.

This layman, president of the AMCSS was invited to one day of this 'historic meeting' as a silent 'reflective listener. This was an example of the church's hierarchical, institutional and non-inclusive relational model in operation. Engaging with this difficult relationship will assist the value of locating the trust's mission in its appropriate larger context. In the course of this research reflection David Tuohy, Le Chéile project manager and consultant, was asked about the dilemma. The question asked included the fact that the Le Chéile mission is clearly within the church's mission, but that research on founding and contemporary values were not validating that fact. Tuohy's reply was both insightful and informative:

Do not be surprised that congregational statements make little reference to church. The congregation is set up as a “church” body, with constitutions, etc., approved of by the church. The whole “mindset” of the congregations is that of being part of the church mission [...]. When coming to the charter we could not take the church dimension for granted [it] needs to be made explicit, and needs to be worked on. Certainly, there are problems with it, especially if we try to align the trust in a setting where there is a lot of suspicion of an institutional and clerical church. (Tuohy, personal communication, 23 February 2010)

The church is a society which tends to define itself primarily “in terms of its visible structures, especially the rights and powers of its officers” (Dulles, 2002, p. 27). With wisdom and acuity he moves to explain: “institutionalism is not the same thing as the acceptance of the institutional element in the church”. In this short statement he addresses a key difficulty. The mission of Christ needs stable organizational features:

It could not unite men of many nations into a well-knit community of conviction, commitment, and hope, and could not minister effectively to the needs of mankind, unless it had responsible officers and properly approved procedures.
(Dulles, 2002, p. 27)

The issue of institutionalism is developed by Dulles: “a deformation of the true nature of the church - that has unfortunately affected the church at certain periods of its history, and one that remains in every age a real danger to the institutional church”. The idea he proposes is that the institutional elements can only be justified by their capacity to express or strengthen the church as a community of life, witness, and service, a community that reconciles and unites people in the grace of Christ. This would be a model of church within which one can address contemporary pain and challenges, and is a model within which the Le Chéile schools aspire to be located (Dulles, 2002, p. 39). The Charter defines the mission of the church as one which includes ‘evangelization’ and ‘discipleship’: “the work of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus [...] and helping people to live out their commitment to Jesus and his principles” (Le Chéile Charter, 2009, p. 2). It is worth noting that the Charter immediately presents a description of the church which is more theoretical than what is experienced by its members: “The church no longer defines itself in terms of an institution distinct from everyday society”.

In the conversations with congregational leaders the Patrician leader spoke about what was happening in the Le Chéile reconfiguration as “a new church” and “the religious life of the future”. The Holy Faith leader spoke about Catholic schools being the bishops’ responsibility, which of course it ultimately is. The Cross and Passion leader said “the Catholic church has very little to be proud of”. In my conversations with the school principals, the St Paul principal spoke about “huge challenges in the whole Catholic church, and it is very difficult not to fall into the trap of apologizing for being a Catholic school”. The RCE principal stressed the church’s discrimination against women, and also argued that the language of the Le Chéile Trust’s Charter was difficult when she was

trying to communicate its mission and philosophy to the staff.

Brother Michael Heffernan and Sister Antoinette Keelan, religious leaders and former principals, managers and members of new trusts, were consulted about the relational difficulties with the institutional church. Brother Michael replied: “Church has a much wider context than an institutional model”, and Sister Antoinette was adamant that the institution is the image that comes to mind when the word ‘Church’ is used (Personal communications, 3 March and 12 March 2010).

A humbled institutional church.

The institutional model of church with which there are relational difficulties outlined above is the church which in contemporary Ireland has been humbled and shamed. Religious congregations, too, share in this humbling and shame. The research was conducted during 2006-2010 when child abuse scandals were being revealed and when religious leaders and the institutional church’s management of response compounded the shame. The public shaming of some religious congregations was crystallised in the *Ryan Report* (26 May 2009). The report dealt with accusations of abuse in a number of institutions managed by religious congregations over a period of thirty-five years. Flannery’s *Responding to the Ryan Report* (2009), provides a variety of perspectives. Seán Fagan raises questions about our theology (Fagan, 2009, p. 24), and Brendan Mc Convery in *The Shaping of Irish Religious Life*, criticises the role of the state: “The contribution of Irish religious to the public life of the nation, especially through education has been a noble one. It may be that, precisely because they were good at what they did, the state left them to it and asked no questions” (Mc Convery, 2009, p. 42).

On Monday 30 November 2009, the *Murphy Report* was published. The facts are clear. Some children were sexually abused by a number of Catholic priests in the Dublin diocese over a thirty-year period, and when these facts were reported, the church and some state agencies seemed to conspire to conceal the allegations. There was systemic denial and an apparent lack of concern for the danger to children. The church's public response lacked unity, confidence and clarity. There are two elements that stand out: the fact of, and the awfulness of what was perpetrated on some children by some clerics, and the failure of those in church leadership to respond appropriately. They acted to protect the church and avoid scandal so some bishops not only failed to protect children but exposed others to deep and lasting harm. Ethna Regan in *Theology and the Boundary Discourse of Human Rights* (2010), accuses the church of failing "to live out the personalism that Vatican II had committed it to, both in its moral analysis of the abuse and in its pastoral response to the children involved" (p. 45).

The Le Chéile congregations, like all religious, were stunned by the abuse reports. Regan in *But now You Speak at last, The Rights of the Child after the Shadows of Hiberno-Christendom* (2009), writes about "a lingering shame" which marks our contemporary church and "those of us in ministry of various kinds wear that shame as a bruise on our authenticity, even if personally not guilty of those abuses" (p. 19). She is accurately reflecting another fact. The unrelenting media coverage of child neglect and abuse in both family and state calls for all professional and caring adults to address: "The continued vulnerability of many children in our state and the persistence of child poverty globally" (Regan, 2009, p. 19).

A humbled and renewing Catholic church must address the essential role of the laity in that renewal. The laity through their baptismal membership must be now involved in distinct and recognizable leadership in the church. This research has focused on how religious congregations made a decision to establish a lay trust transferring ownership and responsibility for charism and heritage in the future of their schools. This was their acknowledgment of the need and respect for the lay vocation in the schools' mission within church.

The Lay Vocation

Six of the Le Chéile congregations were founded by lay women, one of whom founded a lay association without any intention of founding a religious congregation. They all subsequently situated their foundations within the institutional church by requesting canonical status for their members and their mission. The other six congregations were founded by clerics (priests and bishops) who then invited lay people to do the work of the mission and to become members of new congregations which were situated within the institutional church. The lay vocation is evidenced in the founding stories and requires to be addressed within this thesis.

The etymology of the word 'laity' is located in the Greek word *laikos* meaning 'of or from the people', and in early Christianity the term connoted 'the chosen people of God'. Jordan Aumann in *Toward a Definition of 'Laity'* (1988), narrates the many attempts made to define the term 'laity' at the synod on the *Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church* (1987). He concludes that most of the statements about the laity in the council documents, and much of the talk about the laity during the synod, concentrated on

what the laity *does* and not what the laity *is*. He argues that what is new in the 1983 code is the term *Christifideles* which may be translated as ‘Christ’s faithful’ or the ‘faithful of Christ’. This concept applies to all the members of the church – clergy, religious and laity – and can, therefore, be used as the genus in the definition of the laity (Aumann, 1988).

The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Second Vatican Council, 1965) states: “The laity derive the right and duty to the apostolate from their union with Christ the head” (no. 3). In inspirational language the role of the lay educator is specifically addressed in *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982): “The Lay Catholic educator is a person who exercises a specific mission within the church by living in faith, a secular vocation in the communitarian structure of the school” (no. 24). The lay Catholic is informed that the church entrusts her/him to bring about “an integration of temporal reality with the gospel, so that the gospel can thus reach into the lives of all men and women” (no. 82).

The work of Antonio Maria Sicari on charism, *Ecclesial Movement: A New Framework for Ancient Charisms* (2002), has informed this research. The question of congregational charism exercised the minds of the religious as they prepared to transfer their ownership of schools. Sicari challenges both religious and the laity on this issue. He argues that it is not so much that the consecrated share their charism with the laity as that both the consecrated and lay people rethink and re-experience the charism (Sicari, 2002, p. 306). The contemporary developments in school trusteeship, indeed the very founding of the congregations in the Le Chéile Trust, reflect generous responses to this invitation. In *Starting Afresh from Christ: A Renewed Commitment to Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2002), religious congregations are

reminded that they came into being by the prompting of the Holy Spirit “giving rise to an admirable variety of charisms”, and then religious are urged to have “the courage of interdependence and inventiveness needed to respond to the signs of the times” (no. 30). The Le Chéile Trust witnesses to such a response, and therefore the research engaged the new lay leaders in formal conversations related to the lay vocation.

The voices of the Le Chéile lay leaders.

Éilis Humphreys, Le Chéile education officer and Paul Meany, chairperson of the Le Chéile board of directors, are significant leaders in contemporary developments in Catholic school trusteeship. When being invited to engage in research conversations, they were asked to address the lay person’s role in the contemporary church. I sent them selected quotations from *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 1V, (nos. 31, 33, 35 and 38) with a focused question. This stated: “The quotations from *Lumen Gentium* uses aspirational language about the role of the laity. In your role in the Le Chéile Trust please name the three most immediate challenges for genuine involvement of the laity in the mission of the church”. The conversation with Éilis Humphreys took place on 28 May 2010. We first addressed the new role which Éilis had undertaken and then focused on the quotations from *Lumen Gentium*. Éilis responded:

Éilis (E):

[...]when I read the quotations that were on the page my immediate reaction was ‘Oh my goodness, what is this’ And on our conversation this morning I realized the language used in those quotations is not a language that I am familiar with, as a lay educator for the last thirty years. I have been very involved in school leadership in various ways, but that language still threw me. That is the first point I make and I suppose through my work in Le Chéile particularly but also in the last few years and my five

years as principal of a Catholic school, I came much more aware of the connection to church, but more I suppose in the practical day-to-day work of a principal you are very aware of the ethos and the tradition of the Catholic school in which you reside, shall we say. But you are not necessarily as aware of the teachings of the church per se. So I feel that one of our immediate challenges then is to make that connection, but the way I would like to see it happening, is not in a hierarchical lecture type mode, I think that would make the principals run a mile. I think it is about starting from where people are at, exploring current practice in schools by teachers, by principal by boards of management, exploring and reflecting on the current practices in the light of the teachings of the church. Not the other way around.

She continued:

So it is written down there to facilitate to draw out, we don't impose we ask questions. We don't have one single answer. And one of the things is we need to help people to have confidence in their own beliefs. I firmly believe that the vast majority of principals, for example, in the Le Chéile schools, and indeed teachers, are coming out of the right frame of mind to be Catholic educators, but I don't believe that they are able to articulate that. I think they need to be helped to talk about it a little bit more, and to be given the confidence to say, 'We are ok. That is right'

The conversation moved to the question of lay membership in the church:

(E):

I think they need a lot of help still to understand that they are part of church because I think a lot of people have rejected the institutional church, but I don't believe for one minute that they have rejected the church. And that is something that I have become more aware of in the last few years, particularly this year in Le Chéile but not just that – in my last few years' work I began to hear principals in particular talking about values, about spirituality, talking about founding intentions of schools, talking that kind of language, talking about bearing witness, talking about giving good example, being role models, all of that kind of language. They do that naturally, but they don't necessarily see that as coming out of church.

Éilis Humphreys, lay leader and education officer of the new trust confirmed the contemporary living of gospel and congregational values, and also the need to address the living of those values as a lay leader within the church.

On 27 May 2010 the same theme emerged in a research conversation with Paul Meany, chairperson of the new Le Chéile Board of Directors. A former president of the AMCSS, Paul is also (2012), on the executive board of the European Committee for Catholic Education. His experience at the Maynooth conference in 2005 has been reported earlier in this chapter.

Paul Meany spoke with enthusiasm about his role in the European committee which represents Catholic schools in twenty-seven countries, from the Ukraine in the east to Ireland in the west. The conversation moved to his experience as president of AMCSS and his contribution to the establishment of Catholic School Partnership (CSP):

Paul Meany (PM): It struck me forcibly that there was need for a single voice for Catholic education in Ireland and I started to articulate that view as president of AMCSS, and so I am very happy that the Catholic School Partnership now exists representing the different facets of Catholic education under the chairmanship of Fr Michael Drumm, and most importantly to me, it has three bishops who are actually present and involved. It is far from that meeting when the congregations and the bishops met in Maynooth in 2005. We have moved now to the point where collaboration and partnership has a real existence. Ironically for me, I am one of the nominees of the bishops.

The conversation moved to the quotations from *Lumen Gentium* and Paul Meany's experience of ecclesial theory and the lay person's practice. He was asked if there was a gap between the two.

(PM):

I have a wonderful group of young teachers. In our staff room they are vibrant and positive. I just go up and listen to the laughter and I feel the energy up in the staff room and they are committed - this is a Marist Brothers school. They are very committed to the whole Marist ethos which would fit very much with the Le Cheile - incidentally the Marists are not involved yet, and maybe they will be some day and that is one of the good things about Le Cheile. It has the capacity to grow and federate into a wider - using your word - tapestry.

Researcher (R):

Collaborate with others?

(PM):

Absolutely. So what I am saying is, here are these young people who are witnesses the way they act with people, the way they are with people, the way some of them would be teaching specifically religion, others would not, but other than teachers of religion they do not see themselves as Catholic teachers. They don't see themselves particularly Catholic even though what they are doing is Catholic. They are not fighting against anything. When you sent me the question I dug out a simple document which is the mission of AMCSS, to promote, represent and support living the ideal of the Catholic school.

I am answering your question in a roundabout kind of way... the Catholic school is some sort of an ideal which is there, and it is almost like the Garden of Eden, and you say, well, that is where you are heading for, but most of the time we are not going to reach there... And the second thing we put in there is inspired by the vision and life of Jesus Christ – I wanted to put that into the Mission Statement. You will notice that there is no mention of the word church or institution and that was purposeful when we were looking at this because again I think that it is easy for young people, be they students or young teachers to be inspired by the vision and life of Jesus Christ, and if you leave away the institution of the church then you are in business. In my view our schools strive, in a spirit of partnership, to develop communities of faith in which the development of the whole person is paramount. And because I was involved very much in the writing of that, I know that the thinking behind it was that if we are going to put down Roman Catholic, the church as an institution, we are going to lose a lot of people.

The recurring theme of concern about the institutional model of church is reflected again in the words of a lay leader who is a representative of that church in the European Association for Catholic Education. In good leadership mode, however, Paul Meany concluded on a positive note:

(PM):

Remember that the Declaration of Human Rights came out of a religious world-view, a world-view of the European Community, set up by Adenauer and Monnet, and they used the word 'community' straight away, it was the European Economic Community (EEC). Le Chéile to me is a community like the European Community.

From the words and wisdom of these two Le Chéile lay leaders it became clear that the new trust is in the hands of people who support the core values identified in the founding stories. The lay leaders are motivated by gospel values but are not familiar with ecclesial language. This confirms the gap between theoretical language and practice. The conversations also confirm that both these Le Chéile lay leaders intend to listen to members and leaders in the schools, and by listening will encourage and enable faith development recognising the values already in place. Paul Meany, chairperson of Le Chéile, values the initial and continuing values of the reconfiguration process, collaboration and community, and he believes that these values will continue as the trust develops.

The voices of religious and lay leadership in other new trusts.

Le Chéile is one of the new Irish trusts that are members of the Association of Catholic School Trusts (ATCS) which was founded by CORI in 2009. The wisdom and experience of three major trusts was engaged within the research process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Sister Eileen Randles of the Loreto Schools' Trust, (26 January 2009), Ned Prendergast, Director of Faith Development, CEIST Trust, (14 December 2009), and Brother John Heneghan, Project Manager of ERST Trust, (30 November 2009). Each was asked two questions:

1. *What do you consider to be the core value which the new Irish Catholic Schools' Trusts have in common?*
2. *What is the greatest challenge for Irish Catholic Schools' Trusts in the future?*

In response to the first question all three respondents identified the continuation of the special ethos of the Catholic school as a core value with a subtext related to congregational charism and heritage:

Sister Eileen Randles: “*The continuation and enhancement of Catholic education in Ireland.*”

Ned Prendergast: “*To preserve the special ethos offered in the Catholic school, a modern translation of all of that.*”

John Heneghan: “*All the new Irish Catholic Schools' trusts are in the broad stream of Catholic education, but each of them offers a distinctive colouring and enrichment to it according to charism of its founding members and the living tradition that has been fostered in its respective schools.*”

To the second question, regarding common challenges facing the trusts, the responses included apathy, funding, sustainability and bridging past and future. The three respondents stressed the difficulty of carrying forward the tradition of Catholic education within a weakened institutional church. Three founding trusteeship leaders identified the relationship of founding and contemporary values reflecting the question which was the focus of this research. They also identified the need for a renewing model of church within which the trusts can operate.

The voice of a lay school principal.

The mission, philosophy and varying heritages in the Le Chéile Trust are carried each day by school principals and their staff. That is where the values are lived and led, and it is within each school that evaluation will be authentic. The twelve original Le Chéile congregations organised school transitions, ritualising the movement of its heritage into the Le Chéile Trust. Rituals were held in individual schools and in congregational groupings of schools. Rituals of transfer are rituals of passage according to Malidoma Patrice Somé in *The Healing Wisdom of Africa* (1999). Somé reminds us that ritual is the way of life of the spiritual person maintaining the delicate balance between body and soul and “is the most ancient way of binding a community together in a close relationship with Spirit” (1999, pp. 141-142). One example of such a ritual was held in Glasnevin Holy Faith convent chapel on 26 September 2009. A formal ritual of trusteeship transfer was organized for the principals and boards of management members of five Holy Faith secondary schools. The presentation of a DVD on the Holy Faith heritage was part of the ritual and each school received a copy. Margaret Lennon, the first

lay principal of the Holy Faith secondary school in Glasnevin, spoke at the conclusion of the ritual:

Margaret Lennon (ML): We are gathered this evening in unison at an occasion of tranquility and prayer. This event is seminal in the history of the Holy Faith Sisters as it symbolizes the end of an era of one hundred and forty eight years of direct involvement in, and commitment to, the countless generations of "the poor and the helpless and the innocent" in the words of Margaret Aylward, foundress of the congregation. The actuality of a new beginning in the Le Chéile Trust is upon us and it is perhaps fitting for those of us in the remaining five schools, to whom the tradition of Margaret Aylward has been entrusted, to reflect briefly upon what that entails and to express our collective gratitude to the Holy Faith Sisters, past and present.

Le Chéile, in its inception over the past number of years, has promoted our schools to consider our origins, examine our current faith practices and map out a direction for the future of our schools. Words have entered our lexicon which were hitherto lived, but remained unspoken, words such as charism, faith, tradition and ethos. We have been galvanised by the understanding that we now are the new representatives of the founding beliefs and subsequent convictions and practices of the congregation. We are aware that an inherent responsibility required of us as boards of management, deputy principals and principals, is that the founding values not only continue to be lived in our schools but are inspired in the Le Chéile Trust as a hallmark of the Holy Faith congregation... we are merely, however, upholders of the continuum of Holy Faith educators.

Margaret Lennon was reflecting the challenge embedded in the words of Pope John Paul II (1988), *Christifideles Laici*, when he addressed re-evangelization. The lay faithful he said: "ought to regard themselves as an active and responsible part of this venture, called as they are to proclaim and to live the gospel" (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, 1988, no. 64).

The voice of the President of Ireland.

When Mary McAleese, the former President of Ireland addressed the launch of the Le Chéile Trust in Dublin on 5 February 2010, she spoke to congregational leaders, members of school boards of management, principals and students from each of the fifty-four schools represented in the new trust. The President's words reflected the founding and reconfiguration values:

The founding congregations have come together in a very positive and proactive way creating new clusters of collaborative endeavour which will ensure that the schools can not only continue into the future, but can do so dynamically and energetically fired by the charisms and rich cultures which each congregation represents but also driven by the synergies that Le Chéile offers.

Conclusion

The expected outcomes outlined in chapter one have been identified and the research question has been answered and analysed in this chapter. There are two unexpected outcomes: the mission of the Le Chéile Trust in the mission of a church itself seeking a new identity, and the recognition and acknowledgment of the importance of the lay vocation in the church's mission and in the working of the new trust. The oral history clarified the founding values of each congregation but also provided a process through which all twelve congregations are made aware of the founding stories and values of the other eleven. This enables the new trust to own all twelve founding stories and values.

The research aims (chapter one) have been met and recorded:

- Founding core values have been identified and validated by the researcher with the co-operation of the congregational leaders and members of the Le Chéile Working Group, and by mapping them with the Le Chéile Heritage Statements in the trust's Charter.
- The research has identified the relationship between founding and contemporary congregational values.
- Catholic secondary school trusteeship as it developed within twelve religious congregations in contemporary Ireland has been chronologically documented.
- The systemic relational challenges for church, state, religious life and the laity within the context of developing a lay trust for Irish Catholic schools have been identified.
- The research provides a collaborative archive for the Le Chéile Trust.

Collaborative congregational trusteeship in Ireland is, itself, unique. This examination of the relationship between founding and contemporary reconfiguration values has not been addressed formally by other new trusts, at least, not to date (2012).

Research Outcomes

For the Le Chéile Trust.

The first significant outcome for the new trust is that there is a clear relationship between the congregations' core founding values and those values outlined in the Le Chéile Charter. The trust has inherited both sets of values and is responsible for them. The new trust also knows the unique value(s) which each congregation brings and which are offered within the trust's heritage.

The second outcome for Le Chéile is the recognition of its position within the mission of the Catholic church. At some level this was known, and it is clearly written into the Charter. The research, however identified dissonance in the relationship and understanding of school and church. The need for a process that encourages a renewed theology and a renewed ecclesiology so that the trust enables the schools to identify themselves as Catholic schools within a Catholic church mission emerged in research conversations.

The third outcome for Le Chéile relates to a recognition of the importance of the lay vocation in the church's mission. The trust is a lay trust, and in its schools, management and direction is now the responsibility of lay members of the Catholic church. They are professional, competent and committed people, but this research has identified a challenge for the church, religious congregations and the laity to truly recognize and embody the significance of the role of the lay vocation in the Catholic school within the church's mission.

The Le Chéile Trust, through this research, knows how its school principals recognized and honoured the embodied founding values in their schools in the year (2009-2010) within which the trust was launched. The trust also knows the challenges which the congregational leaders, the principals and the leaders of other trusts voiced during the research conversations. It is the responsibility of the new Le Chéile leadership team and the boards of directors to address the challenges so that the values can continue to motivate the operation of the schools. Values are never static. Meeting contemporary needs will always require a dynamic and courageous value-centred response. It did in the founding of these individual congregations and schools; it has in the creation of the Le Chéile Trust and it will into the foreseeable future of this initiative.

The Le Chéile Faith Development Officer and the religious education staffs in Le Chéile schools can build on foundational charisms and spiritualities. At the final Working Group Meeting in January 2010 the research outcome was formally presented to the Working Group members and to the new lay leadership of the trust (Journal Appendix A). It was enthusiastically received and the new Le Chéile lay leadership requested that the findings would be published and made available to the Le Chéile schools.

For the Le Chéile congregations.

The research process of identifying founding and reconfiguration values was conducted as the new trust was being developed. The thesis provides each congregation with the founding story and values of each of the other congregations and a synthesis of all. It also provides the genesis and narrative of the reconfiguration process of which each congregation was a participant. In a time of radical change, the research provides evidence of the principals' commitment to both the values of founding and of reconfiguration.

Through this research the congregations also have a clear record of their own commitment to collaboration in mission. Through the reconfiguration process, and clearly recorded in this research, they collaborated in creating a new community, the Le Chéile schools. The trust is one of four new school trusts and there are a number of religious congregations that have not joined any trust. To provide collaboration between the new trusts and these congregations the Association of Catholic Schools Trusts (ACTS) was founded by CORI in 2009. There are research outcomes for this body too.

For the church.

The identity and distinctiveness of Catholic schools and Catholic trusts must be made within a recognition of what it means to say that the Catholic school is located within the mission of the Catholic church. A process for engaging all partners in re-identifying this mission and this relationship is a clear and present challenge. The Catholic School Partnership (CSP) founded by the Irish Episcopal Conference in 2010 has particular rights and responsibilities in this regard. The experience of seven years of collaboration engaging the twelve congregations which founded the Le Chéile Trust makes a substantial contribution in addressing this challenge. The trusts are confident in their new lay leadership and in their principals and staffs. The congregations are confident that the new lay leadership and school principals embody the core values. They are, however, unfamiliar with formal ecclesial language, and uneasy with formal church structures and ways of relating. There is a call for a renewed theology, ecclesiology and language about the role of the laity within a new model of church. There is an identifiable need for the church to address how its institutional element has become, in the perception

and experience of many, an institution in itself. The challenge from congregational leaders, principals, and trust leaders can be summarized in the words of Dulles: that the Catholic Church would renew itself as “a community of life, witness and service that reconciles and unites people” (Dulles, 2002, p. 27).

The seven years’ work of developing the new trust, and the seven hundred years’ heritage of the twelve congregations have now fused together in a new educational community, Le Chéile. This research maintains that it is now the lay trust’s responsibility to be creative and dynamic as it serves the mission of Jesus Christ through its Catholic schools, and meets the needs of each time in the future. Edward Carr believes that ‘modern man’ peers eagerly back into the twilight out of which he has come in the hope that its faint beams will illuminate the obscurity into which he is going. The thesis does just that for and with the Le Chéile congregations and their schools. “Past, present and future are linked together in the endless chain of history” (Carr, 2001, p. 129).

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

Introduction

An imperative for originality in research is cryptically explained by O'Hanlon: "the research undertaken should be one person's specific contribution to the field through their own personal choice of – what, who, when and how to research" (O'Hanlon, 2002, p. 111). This research is original under all four of O'Hanlon's sub-headings. The what, who and when were located in the unique circumstances of the time, mission and personnel of the establishment of the Le Chéile Trust. O'Hanlon doesn't include the 'why', but it is explored in chapter one of the thesis. The 'how', the methodology's originality, is located in the living narratives of chapters five, six and seven. The thesis presents an account of what was happening within twelve religious congregations as major decisions were being made about handing over trusteeship responsibility to a single lay trust. Le Chéile's unique founding, reconfiguration and establishment is in the fact that the twelve congregations made one decision to develop a trust, and worked together for seven years to effect that decision appropriately. The research records the original story and provides its own unique dynamic in the outcomes and in the specific learning. The methodology engaged twelve religious congregations, their representatives in the Working Group, and their principals as the research was developing. No other study has engaged the religious and lay voice at this critical time. It incorporated the past in the present in the creation of the future.

The research involved an over-view of the Catholic school, the ecclesial theories for Catholic schools and historical contexts with the narratives of religious congregations. The participants endorsed the value of the research. Excerpts from some of the conversations with congregational leaders (Appendix C) validate this claim:

(*FCJ Congregational Leader*): “*Thank you for what this research is doing in the church and for education.*” (*SMG Congregational Leader*). “*I didn’t realise that it [the research] was for all of us [the twelve congregations] it is a brilliant idea, inspirational.*” (*St Paul the Apostle Congregational Leader*). “*The research is absolutely our [Le Chéile’s] document for the future*” (*RCE Congregational Leader*). “*Preparing for this conversation made it all alive again.*” (*RJM Congregational Leader*). “*It is our history for the future*” (*St Louis Congregational Leader*). “*I always find that when I engage within a group or with an individual around the story not the myth there is always a huge interchange [...] there is a unity, an energy and a conviction.*”

Research Agenda

According to Tuohy “there is no tradition of research on specifically Catholic education in Ireland” (Tuohy, 2007, p. 282). He attributes this to the fact that the values dimension of the Catholic school has been taken for granted and has not been the subject of specific analysis in research. He identifies three core issues for a future Irish Catholic school research agenda:

- (a) *Identity*: this would examine indicators concerning Catholic school identity, and find ways of measuring these indicators;
- (b) *Charism*: this would map the transition from congregations to the people in the new trust systems; and
- (c) *Impact*: this would provide research about what actually happens in the Catholic school, by documenting people's experience of schooling and engagement with the espoused values (pp. 285-287).

These three core issues are reflected in the outcomes of this research. *Identity* is a central issue for the Le Chéile Trust which has inherited twelve congregational identities. The research data reveals a belief that separate identities and founding values will continue into the future within a new Le Chéile Catholic school identity described in the trust's charter. Future research with second or third generation principals and future congregational leaders might map *Identity* and compare the outcomes with those identified in this research. Tuohy's concept *Impact* would offer a useful research study if conducted through the medium of discourse with the students. '*The Voice of the Students'* is included by Grace and O'Keefe in their overview of challenges for the Catholic school: "A Vatican II educational principle of openness and dialogue does seem to entail openness to the "voice" of students in Catholic schools as they represent both their views about a Catholic education from their personal experiences of it" (Grace & O'Keefe, 2007, p. 6). Research engaging the voices of Catholic school students would be innovative and is worthy of consideration.

Miller, too, from his Sacred Congregation for Education Office, maps a research agenda in *Challenges Facing Catholic Schools: A View from Rome*. Firstly he challenges the church's institutions of higher learning and argues that they should take up "the pressing challenge of fostering serious studies that further the common good of Catholic schooling" (Miller, 2007, p. 477). Within his agenda are two issues which emerged in this research, *The Holy See and Schooling* and *Lay Leadership*. Yet this research provides a different perspective from that of Miller. He argues that "empirical studies on the extent to which Vatican documents published in the last thirty years have been 'received' in various countries would be helpful in judging their effectiveness in communicating magisterial teaching on education and schools" (Miller, 2007, p. 478). This research shows that they have not been 'received'. Research on ecclesial literacy and communication is required. The second issue reflected in both Miller's agenda and in this research is the lay vocation. Miller begins his analysis of lay leadership by asking, "Now that lay men and women make up the vast majority of teachers in Catholic schools, how can their effectiveness be measured?" (p. 480). Perhaps the research question might read: "How can members of a renewing church engage the lay leaders and lay principals in identifying and owning their specific role in the Catholic school?"

A comprehensive and rich research agenda for Irish Catholic schools and for Catholic institutes of higher education and university departments of education is emerging.

Conclusion

The image of a tapestry was regularly in my mind as the research developed. The threads of past and present were woven in the looms of documentary and oral history. Each founder or foundress provides a unique thread in the tapestry. Colours and textures varied as the research explored the lives of these women and men from the thirteenth to the twentieth century. The variety is seen in their places of birth that included the United States of America, Spain, France, England and Ireland. It includes differences of time and place as well as contributions from different faiths: Episcopalian, (Cornelia Connelly), Anglican, (Frances Taylor & Elizabeth Prout), Jewish (companions of Louis Bautain & Louise Humann) and Roman Catholic. The tapestry is further enriched by the human experiences in the life stories. Dominic de Guzman, (Dominican family) who encountered heresy as he journeyed to arrange a royal marriage; Daniel Delaney (Patrician Brothers) who was persuaded by his mother to remain in a troubled Ireland; Margaret Aylward (Holy Faith Sisters) who was imprisoned because of her mission; Cornelia Connelly (Society of the Holy Child Jesus) who was a divorced woman without access to her children; Elizabeth Prout (Cross and Passion Sisters) who was disowned by her family because of her conversion to Roman Catholicism; Frances Taylor (Poor Servants of the Mother of God) who converted to Roman Catholicism when she nursed dying Irish soldiers in the Crimea; Genevieve Dupuis (Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle) who was exiled from her native France by a decision of an English bishop; John Baptist de la Salle (De la Salle Brothers) who left family wealth and professional success to found the first congregation of non-clerical religious brothers; Louis Lafosse (Religious of Christian Education) who betrayed his ordination promise by

taking the French civil oath of allegiance; Louis Bautain (St Louis Sisters) who wavered in his faith and who was assisted to return to it by Louise Humann; Claudine Thevenet (Religious of Jesus and Mary) who witnessed her two brothers being guillotined; and Victoire de Begny (Faithful Companions of Jesus) who was widowed before the birth of her son. These were the women and men who founded religious congregations and Catholic schools to serve the needs of their time. Seven of the twelve were from wealthy families and five from economically comfortable families. All twelve were, themselves, well educated. All were motivated by the gospel values of faith, love for the needy and the potential of Catholic schooling. This research has sought to give expression to the narratives of the collaborating congregations and the manner in which these have shaped the values of the Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust.

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Appendices

- Appendix A Research Journal**
- Appendix B Communicating with Congregational Leaders**
- Appendix C Conversations with Congregational Leaders**
- Appendix D Communicating with School Principals**
- Appendix E Conversations with School Principals**
- Appendix F Conversations with New Lay Leaders in the Le Chéile Trust**
- Appendix G St Joseph of Cluny Congregation Founding Story and Values**
- Appendix H Conversations with Other New Trusts**
- Appendix J Research and Reconfiguration**
- Appendix K Le Chéile Charter**

Appendix A**Research Journal**

The Le Chéile process spans seven years, 2003 – 2010, and the Journal spans the research journey, 2006 – 2010. Journal notes were recorded after each Working Group meeting, (four years with 9/10 meetings per year), and after each formal conversation (with twelve congregational leaders and twelve school principals). For the purpose of this appendix I have made a composite of recorded notes when the content was appropriate.

2006

Le Chéile Working Group Friday 3 March: Returning after eight months absence I am warmly welcomed by the Working Group, and they are very interested in the idea of the research. I am still thinking about the subject area of founding values.... No decision yet.

Working Group 10 April: Today's agenda is absorbed in the newly proposed Association of Trusts, and planning for ongoing consultation with boards, and how each of these items occupies and challenges the group. This leads me to reflect on how sensitive I will have to be when I am introducing action research conversations.

Working Group 2 June: Once again we are 'bogged down' in business. Some good news – the first version of the Le Chéile White Paper will be ready in September... how to proceed with this. David will continue consultative role until Christmas and then we have to decide do we need a Project Manager. It is essential that we keep David. He plays a 'Moses' role. There is a challenge of involving more with parents, and more contact with principals.

Working Group 6 October: I have made my decision... the research has begun, I am now in the group as a researcher with others. Great! We are publishing the White Paper!!!... even colours and designs are being considered... now we must get a web and

consultation can continue electronically and at meetings with school boards etc. It is really happening thank God...

This day also has the challenge of change. Sisters Helen O'Dwyer and Mary O'Connor have been moved to other congregational positions, and are now replaced by Marie Cunningham and Anne Murray. This is the story of my religious life... cycles of loss and gain ...

Working Group 10 November: I am trying to initiate the conversations as I communicate with the members of the different congregations. I have learned that if I come to the Working Group day early in the morning I meet others as they come in for early coffee. I am finding the informal conversations enriching. The formal agenda may be challenging and often difficult, but the informal agenda is to keep the values in the centre of the engagement.

Today, Sister Cara Nagle, said to me 'you, through this research are providing the new archives' ...confirmation in the discernment!

Developing a communication strategy for collaboration on White Paper

Working Group 1 December: It is happening...our Web page is now operational >www. Le Cheile. ie< I feel so grateful to God, to the members of the Working Group and to David. Now that we are in the 'public domain' we must develop a 'Communication Strategy'. I have the temptation to ask "what happened to the simplicity of Jesus Christ?" but I know this work must be done. I wonder is my role to just gently mention the values agenda when that is appropriate.

During the meetings of these last three months I am experiencing the 'freedom' experienced in sharing learning....talking about the stories of the congregations in the informal conversations.... Aiming at time and opportunity... Configurations to advise parents re Web.. invited comments NB "this is a consultation process and nothing is decided yet" Question re how to communicate with other trusts, with AMCSS and with some bishops, Jim Cassin.

2007 – 2008

12 January 07: White Paper sent formally to bishops CORI all congregational leaders of education, JMB, AMCSS, ACCS, CPSMA. Informally to ASTI, TUI, INTO and to Universities. In response to a question “does Rome have any involvement” it was considered that the transfer will need approval but as the Trust would be a Church entity there was unlikely to be a problem. We have to work on it. it will be a case of saying to Canon Lawyers “This is what we want to do how do you advise we do it?”

1 February 2007: Feast of our patroness St Brigid. The Holy Faith values and which I experience as alive and well in the course of reconfiguration... the importance of listening to the other... an active listening as in using the focused question.

Reflecting on conversation with Brother Cormac I have known him for so long and I never knew what motivated his vocation and his perseverance... a new knowing new learning – new time, new knowing and for a specific purpose – Le Chéile. Listening is challenging...

Working Group 12 January, 2 February, 2 March, 30 March: We work on website, insurance, property, prepare for meeting with congregational leaders, draft constitution, solicitor reports, shadow council, shadow forum, and financial issues. Parallel to these issues, and to long tiring days working on them, I continue to engage with each congregation regarding arrangements to meet their leaders, sharing the ecclesial literature findings, and just keeping core values on the agenda.

Interesting conversation with Cormac about our difficulties in using ‘churchy’ language about mission.

Formal conversations with congregational leaders, Holy Faith (Sister Margo), De la Salle (Brother Stephen), Patrician (Brother Cormac), St Louis (Sister Mary O’Connor), and Faithful Companions of Jesus (Sister Liz Ryan) have all taken place January – March 07. Each story is precious. Interesting but difficult conversation with my own congregational leader...must stay in researcher role. I am also learning the value of conversation rather than interview. I am becoming more convinced of the value of ‘living archives’. I am impressed by the amount of preparation the leaders have taken before the conversations, and the generous response regarding time to meet with me.

2 March 07: Meeting of Congregational Leaders. Question of who decides how to support the charism of the group and what will be the involvement of the congregations.. not sure. Discussion about voting or consensus

30 March 07: A few bishops respond to information. Canonical issues and Le Chéile constitutions. Disappointment re lack of responses on website.

Working Group 8 June, 5 October, 9 November, 7 December 2007: Le Chéile now has its solicitor and the agenda notes the salience and importance of this legal advice. We are organising more meetings with boards of management in different locations in the country. I am struck by the difficulty in conveying what is being experienced in the Working Group... a continuous process of conscientising, and how that is to be brought to the meetings with principals and boards... not easy, but must be done.

Working Group 9 November, 7 December 2007: IT IS REALLY HAPPENING! These meetings reflect the fact that Le Chéile is into action because we have reports on Shadow Council Meetings and a draft charter. It is a joy that the values centre is being so strongly addressed...I am so pleased that my research work has supported the work in the group. We struggle with definitions of Catholic school.. and with mission of school in mission of church.... Struggle and struggle but it is worth it... a sound and reliable mission statement will emerge...

Reflecting on meeting with principals (North, South, East and West) a lot of work to be done on vision, Catholic and sense of loss of congregational family

Broke listening stance when working with Group on identity of Catholic school..made a decision to use reading of ecclesial documents...Catholic school is in itself a witness. Big discussion on identity...what is specific about the Catholic school?//a specific mission in the church.....Language and meaning... I have moved through my reading and listening... one can listen when reading...

I ask for formal time with the whole group, gave update on conversations with congregational leaders, the need to engage more with members of the Working Group (conscious of the amount of work on each day's agenda) and informed them that chapter on ecclesial documents was coming electronically...and would they give me some feedback please! I also confirmed that I would be present early on the mornings of our monthly meetings to answer any questions about the research and to listen to suggestions.

Formal conversations with congregational leaders, Dominicans (Sister Helen O'Dwyer), St Paul the Apostle (Sister Phyllis Brady and Sister Kathleen Neenan) Holy Child Sisters (Sister Carmel Murtagh), and Cross and Passion Sisters (Sister Máire Ni Shuilleabhaín), were held during these months. This process is time and energy consuming but so valuable. Each story is alive and energising. Conversation with Helen provided a learning about three elements in the conversation process. The narrative can captivate me so I must remain focussed, secondly I am validating the purpose of the research by recognising how rich it will be for all congregations to know each other's story, and thirdly, I am beginning to identify links in the actual foundings. Sister Kathleen Coleman expressed her appreciation of the research, she believes it is very important for Le Chéile to have this record.

Organising the conversations held their own challenges..today, 9/9/07, I organise a lunch meeting during the Working Group day with Carmel Murtagh. She just comes in from London for the day..so I used the lunch break!

7 December 07: Formal intervention on the research...emailing the literature chapter and being present at 9.30 each morning.

Working Group 11 January, 1 February, 29 February, 9 May 2008

11 January 2008: Conversation with Cormac on difficulties in communication - Catholic Church to staff etc. Charter clusters NSEW All BOM's planning for May plenary.

First Draft Newsletter... another tangible sign of progress! Now we have the core value in front of us..the young people..different schools, and all part of the proposed new trust.

Loss... The Holy Child School in Killiney is withdrawing from the the proposed Trust...Parents, Staff and Board of Management have proposed another way of moving into the future. The Working Group accepts, understands and feels for Mary Lalor.. one of our founding congregations. But their community school is remaining! I have many mixed feelings, and they are reflected in the founding stories.

The charter draft work continues. Headings will include mission, vision, spiritual dimension and faith formation. I can, and we can bear with all the business challenges (property, finance, insurance, canon and civil law) as long as we keep these headings and these issues before us.

I am really happy today...(January 11) a decision has been made to have a section in the charter on Heritage of the Congregations.

Important practical news (29/2) – Feedback from clusters. National moves re CES.

We have received charity status for the trust.. and our second company will be responsible for property and money and called Síol. This is the first time in my life that a decision about property and money excites me!

On 1 February 2008: I make a formal plea to the Working Group for more information on each congregation... unpublished material, a constitution etc. I am conscious that I have an uneven playing field to work with. I remind the members of the group that it was clear mission values which had founded our schools, and the same values are being identified in our current efforts to reconfigure trusteeship. New information includes that there are only two indigenous Irish congregations in the twelve. The other congregations bring a culture and context from either France or England. Lunch time today was full of conversation about founding..and about the experiences of founding members leaving country of origin. One of the most supporting members during these informal times is Anna Houlihan, a lay member who attends all Working Group meetings with the FCJ sisters.

Validation conversations are often at coffee and lunch breaks.

Informal conversations continue during Working Group meetings on the use of the word 'evangelization'. Some members are experiencing difficulties with their staffs, some are struggling – themselves - with the word. Conversation with Stephen...he advises I go back and re-read Pope Paul VI.. will do.

7 March 2008: NB Congregational Leaders meeting

9 March 2008: Amended draft charter...group on vision and mission and reflective questions... this lifts the group

Working Group 6 June, 5 September, 3 October, 7 November 2008: Very generous response to my plea.... Lots of unpublished information coming in... I am so grateful and the group is really engaging with the research....

Each day there is an interesting informal conversation. What I am discovering is that my own energy in hearing the founding stories and reading about them is reflected in talking to members of the Working Group. They engage with energy when I say I have discovered such and such or when I ask for clarification..... the living archives!

It is happening... we are now discussing a transition education office..., and a miracle – the twelve congregations by engaging in one Insurance company(discussed and worked on for months) means that each school is going to be paying less insurance.

Insurance and legal matters seem to hold centre stage, but as soon as the draft charter comes on the agenda there is a different culture of work... a different energy.

6 June 2008: Feedback now positive on charter adjustments made in line with feedback.

I am invited to give feedback on National Trustee Forum (Community Schools)

5 September 2008: Bishops (Jim Cassin) want to meet trust groups on the bishops' vision statement.

3 October 2008: Movement at national level... Catholic Schools Week, Maynooth and CES, and the issue of trusteeship of community schools.

7 November 2008: A formal approach is made by the St Joseph of Cluny Sisters... welcome! They now have to 'walk with us' for a while before they make a decision.

Informal conversation with Mary O'Connor "Una this [Le Cheile process] would not be in writing without your research", and my reply "it is our research"

Formal conversations with the final two congregational leaders, Religious of Christian Education (Sister Rosemary Magnier), and Religious of Jesus and Mary (Sister Mary Mulrooney) were held in September and November. 5/8/08 conscious that Mary Mulrooney is so new to the role of congregational leader.. and it is such a challenging role.

National financial crisis.. will it affect congregational funds?

2009

9 January 2009: Cara in from Paris... good conversation on values as we are addressing heritage statements.

6 February 2009: I give a formal feedback on the opening of Catholic Schools week, and relate that to an update on the research journey... their journey with me.

Working Group meetings are focussed on moving towards final decisions, and I am so engaged in the research that I am leaving most of the 'business' work to the others. Informal and formal conversations, gathering more information, listening to different perspectives....

I notice a distinct difference in how the members are responding to information and conversation on research... compared with how they responded to my sending them a copy of the literature chapter.

6 February 2009: From this date on we are working on advertising, interviewing and appointing the new officers for the trust. There are times when I see the Working Group with David as unique jugglers keeping all the pieces in the air at the same time.... God has to be in there too.

Congregational heritage statements.... one page. Charter launch dates: 6/3/09
Congregational leaders and 13/5/09 Schools

5 February 2009: ‘Launch’ by congregational leaders, Marine Hotel Sutton. What a wonderful day of ritual. Each leader sowing a seed and receivig the charter on behalf of her/his congregation.

6 February 2009: I give report on Catholic School Week launch and role of students. How to launch charter in schools>

24 May 2009: ‘Launch’ by principals and boards of management, Mullingar. Another day of celebration and ritual. The seeds sown in February are watered by principals and board of management members, and each school receives the Le Chéile charter, posters, bookmarks etc. ‘This is the day The Lord has made’, and ‘Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant Oh Lord’ are my prayers.

Informal conversation with Mary and Carmel, Holy Child Sisters, stressing that the death of Cornelia Connelly’s own little boy led her into the name for the congregation and the theology of the Holy Child.

8 June 2009: Having facilitated a group of principals in Mullingar launch of charter... some schools more ready than others

4 September 2009:... a day I will always remember... Eilis Humphrys, the new Education Officer and Sean Goan, Faith Development Officer, address the Working Group meeting. I am so grateful to God, the Working Group and David Tuohy that we have arrived at this date. Our new lay leadership in place and responsible for moving the work forward, the work of the mission of Jesus and of the founding congregational values.

The agenda includes planning the public launch of the trust. I suggest that the young people, the students should be central..... and we worked on that!

Informal conversation with Catherine Sheehan, Poor Servants of the Mother of God asking if I knew that her foundress, Frances Taylor, had visited with my Holy Faith foundress, Margaret Aylward (mid 19th century)...I did not know that, and Catherine promised to forward me the information. She also helped me to connect with her congregational historian.

I am carrying all the stories and have a sense of awe and wonder at their combined stories...this is what the research is about... all the congregations deserve to know the full story.

October – December... how to enable schools own the charter.

11 October 09: Reading the heritages and the Le Cheile charter. I believe that the research question is being answered – the heritages are not just the page which each congregation has in the printed charter but is also alive in the research dynamic which is happening...

Conversations with principals 2009-2010: These visits are really wonderful experiences. I note the welcome and the interest in the research. I enjoy the conversations... not in any instance do I perceive a sense of obligation or resistance.

Notice how principals want me to know about social justice and the R.Ed teams, about concern for the individual students needs and how they love to show the school prayer room.

2010

5 February 2010: The official launch of Le Chéile by President Mary McAleese. This is one of those days when words are not adequate. The students...from schools in each part of the country, and from twelve congregations, were central. What a day, and the values central. Ritual and symbol play their appropriate role in this day.

5 March 2010: Our final Working Group meeting... and mixed feelings of nostalgia, incredulity, gratitude, and a deep, deep sense of work well done.

I requested formal time, and gave the last formal report on this research. I speak to and about the founding values which we had identified... those values which all twelve congregations have in common, and those unique values of heritage from the founding charisms. The response is very positive, and I am invited to convert the research into a school reader friendly book.

As I get busier and busier...feeling swamped in research information I am lifted briefly by conversations with school principals. If confirmation were needed that founding values are alive and operative..it is during these days in 2009. Each is different and all motivated by common values. Le Chéile is still 'new' more accepted in some than in others....all recognising the contemporary challenges for the Catholic school.

Appendix B**Communication with Congregational Leaders**

NOTE: Communication with Congregational Leaders includes:

- (i) A copy of the Protocol
- (ii) A letter to members of the Le Chéile Working Group (January 2007)
- (iii) An initial information letter
- (iv) A letter of invitation with ethical response sheet (March 2006)
- (v) A letter to arrange the meetings for research conversation (December 2006)
- (vi) Questions for conversation with Congregational Leaders included
- (vii) A letter which accompanied the return of each transcript for editing and confirmation of permission.

Protocol for Conversations with the Twelve Congregations in Le Chéile

A letter is sent to each Congregational/Provincial Leader requesting the conversation/interview, and giving appropriate information about the Research. This communication includes an Ethical Permission Response page. (February 06)

A Letter is sent to each Congregational Leader proposing dates and times for the conversation - with proposed focus questions. (January 07)

The Conversation takes place at an agreed time and venue. It is recorded.

The Conversation is then transcribed verbatim, and the transcript is returned to the Congregational/Provincial Leader for editing/ omissions or suggestions. Permission is sought to use the material in the Research.

When all twelve conversations, and subsequent process of editing, are complete, a synthesis and analysis of the Conversations is made. This is forwarded to each Congregational Leader..

Once again permission is negotiated.

Letter to Congregational Leaders

**Holy Faith Convent
183 Clontarf Road
Dublin 3**

To Members of the Le Chéile Working Group

12 January 2007

Dear

I enclose a letter for your Congregational Leader regarding a proposed conversation on the Trusteeship Values and Reconfiguration. You will remember that in March 2006 I asked each of the congregations in the Le Chéile process for permission to engage with them in this research. Each congregational leader gave that permission in writing, and I am very grateful to them.

The proposal now is to meet with each leader or someone designated by her/him for a one hour conversation. If you would like to be present for this conversation, and that is acceptable to the leader, you are most welcome.

I would appreciate if you would see to the following:

1. Getting the letter to your Congregational Leader or to whoever represents the leader at this time.
2. Organise a date, time and venue for the meeting.
3. Phone me or email me with suggestions about date, time and venue.

I am enclosing for you a copy of the letter to the Congregational Leader, and a copy of the questions which will be used in the conversation.

I am deeply grateful to you for your co-operation.

Sincerely

Úna Collins chf

Letter to Congregational Leaders

**Holy Faith Convent
183 Clontarf Road
Dublin 3**

To Congregational Leaders of the Le Chéile Group

Dear

The latter years of the 20th century saw a number of developments in the Trusteeship pattern for Catholic Secondary Schools in Ireland. Closures, amalgamations and changing ownership created an uncertainty and, on the positive side, a strong motivation for clearer planning. CORI published 'A handbook for the leaders of religious congregations' in 1996, and some Religious Congregations began new Trusteeship structures for their own schools.

My Holy Faith experience as a member of our General Leadership Team for the past six years with special responsibility for Trusteeship, my membership of SCISIFT, and, in particular, the Le Chéile process, have convinced me that this time of Reconfiguration for Trusteeship of Catholic Secondary Schools in Ireland, is a time of unique challenge and opportunity. The collaboration of twelve Religious Congregations in Le Chéile is, I believe, a significant model for Religious and for Church. I am now proposing to research the response to this challenge, and am inviting the Congregations in Le Chéile to be involved with me in the study.

Proposed Study

Examining how context and culture are influencing values in the present Reconfigurations for Trusteeship of Catholic Secondary Schools in Ireland, and situating the study in the context of the founding vision and values of these schools.

Research Questions

1. *Can the relationship between the influence of context and cultures on the values which are driving the present reconfigurations of Trusteeship for the Religious owned Catholic Secondary Schools in 21st Century Ireland, be critically reflected in, and be informed by the influence of context and cultures on the founding values for these schools in the 19th century?*
2. *How can we continue to engage with the present movements in Catholic School Trusteeship in Ireland, particularly with the Le Chéile movement, so that we can be open to learning, and can reflect on and be clearer about the influence of context and cultures on the values at the heart of the movement, and situate our findings in a conversation with the past, that is, with the founding values and the context and culture of that time, so that the present will be enriched by our conversations, and by the study.*

The Research will be conducted through Mater Dei and DCU.

Úna M. Collins chf,

March 2006.

**Holy Faith Convent
183 Clontarf Road
Dublin 3**

To Religious Leaders of the Le Chéile Congregations re proposed Research/Study

Dear

As the current Le Chéile process for future Trusteeship of our schools is central to my proposed study, (see attached page), I would be grateful if you would give permission for your Congregation, and, in particular, the Le Chéile representatives of your Congregation, to be appropriately involved in the Research..

My data collection methods will include:

- Audio recordings of some meetings, and of members and myself in conversation about the developments in Le Chéile
- Access to early documentation on the founding of the schools
- Audio recordings and/or note taking of some meetings with some School Principals
- Audio recordings and/or note taking of a meeting with you, Leader/s of Congregations

I guarantee that I will observe good ethical conduct throughout. I promise that I will not reveal the name of the Congregation, schools, principals or students at any time, unless you inform me, in writing, that you wish me to do so, or that I seek further permission from you, and receive that in writing. You will, through your Le Chéile representatives be kept fully informed of progress throughout the Research. The Research on your congregation will be available for your scrutiny before it is published. Participants have the right to withdraw at any time.

If you are willing to have your Congregation involved in the Research, I would be grateful if you would sign and return the slip below at your earliest convenience. I enclose two copies of this letter. Please retain one copy for your files.

Yours sincerely,

Úna M. Collins chf
To: Úna M. Collins

I, _____ (name) give my permission for our Congregation to take part in your Research;

Congregational Leader's signature _____

Congregational Leader's name _____

(Stamped addressed envelope included)

**Holy Faith Convent
183 Clontarf Road
Dublin 3**

12 December 2006

Dear

In March 2006 you, kindly, granted me permission to engage with your Congregation in my Ph.D. research on the Le Chéile Reconfiguration of Trusteeship for Catholic Secondary Schools. I would, now, appreciate if we could meet to discuss the Research Question, and, in particular, your Congregation's present involvement in Le Chéile.

I propose that our conversation would focus on the following topics:

- your Congregation's founding values and Mission for secondary schools
- how your founding members were influenced by the context and cultures within which they lived
- your Congregation's present experience of the Le Chéile process for reconfiguring Trusteeship
- the values in today's context and cultures, and how they are influencing your Congregation in its present decisions about Catholic Secondary Schools

The conversation will be audio taped. Subsequently, it will be transcribed, synthesised, and, with some analytical reflection, returned to you. This transcript and analysis will, hopefully, form the focus for a subsequent conversation. Any information received by me will be used in the research only with your explicit permission.

I would appreciate hearing from you regarding a suitable time and venue for our conversation. The approximate time needed is one hour.

Thanking you for your willingness to assist me with this research, which, I believe, will be of benefit for the twelve congregations in the Le Chéile process.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

Sister Una M. Collins

Questions for Conversation with Congregational Leaders Included in Letter**Founding Mission and Values**

- Reflecting on the life of....(Foundress/Founder), and of the early members of your congregation explain why founding secondary schools was a core mission for them....
- Talk to me about your Founder/Foundress... where do you see their contribution in God's Mission Plan.....
- What evidence do you have in the written traditions, in your archives, that help you to understand the cultures that influenced the mission of the school foundations....
- If one of the founding members were being interviewed for the 'Morning Ireland' RTE programme, how, do you think, she/he might describe the cultures and context of the time, and how the founding of the schools was in discourse with/affected by these....

Present Mission and Value

- If you were being interviewed for the 'Morning Ireland' RTE programme how would you connect the founding vision and mission with the present....
- Which contextual Irish issues and present cultures in our country are influencing your present processing of Trusteeship within Le Chéile...
- Do you have any concern that either Le Chéile, or your own Congregation, has not engaged with the reality of some cultures in Ireland...
- Talk to me about the needs in Ireland today, and how your congregation responds to that....
- Is the le Chéile process responding to those needs?
- How did you experience this conversation... has it caused/enabled you to re-enter the values of the past and be more aware of the present.....

Letter to Congregational Leaders accompanying Transcript

**Holy Faith Convent
183 Clontarf Road
Dublin 3**

Dear

Thank you for your generosity in time and information at our recent conversation on the [name of congregation] role in founding and in reconfiguration of Catholic Schools in Ireland. It was most interesting. I am returning the transcript of our conversation. When you have read it will you, please, let me know if I have your permission to use it in the Research?

There are sections marked * where the transcriber was not sure what was being said or how to spell a word. You might like to fill these in. If there are any sections or sentences you would not like me to use please inform me. For your information I am including the protocol for the Conversations.

Thanking you, [name], and with every good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Úna Collins chf

Appendix C**Conversations with Congregational Leaders**

NOTE: The researcher engaged in conversations with each of the original twelve Le Chéile Congregational Leaders. Excerpts from the conversations have provided essential data in chapters five, six and seven. All and full conversations are available on tape and in transcript form. All have been returned to the congregational leaders for editing and confirmation of permission to use.

Appendix D**Communication with Le Chéile School Principals****Researching the Relationship between Founding Values and the Values driving the
Le Chéile Trust**

**Holy Faith Convent
183 Clontarf Road
Clontarf
Dublin 3**

30 October 2009

Principal:

School:

Date:

Dear

I am currently researching the founding of each of the twelve Le Chéile Congregations as they move into the new trust. I am focusing on the founding values, and how they might be recognised in the reconfiguration of trusteeship, and in schools today.

I need your assistance! As a principal in a _____ school I would welcome your voice in the research. Would you be willing to meet with me for approximately thirty minutes at a time and day that suits you?

The following is a synthesis of the founding values of the _____ Congregation:

There are three questions which I would like to ask:

1. *Which of these values do you experience in the life of this school and why?*
2. *What is the evidence of congregational heritage in the school e.g. pictures, booklets, celebrations, rituals.....?*
3. *What is the greatest challenge for a Le Chéile Catholic School in Ireland at this time?*

With your permission, I will record our conversation. Subsequently, I will send you the transcript so that you can edit it prior to its being included in the research. Thanking you, and looking forward to meeting you soon. My email address and my mobile number, are at the bottom of this page.

Yours sincerely,

Úna M. Collins chf

NOTE Between October 30 2009 and April 28 2010 twelve schools, one in each congregation was visited and a research conversation held with the school principal. Each transcript was returned electronically with a request for editing and permission to use.

**Holy Faith Convent
183 Clontarf Road
Dublin 3**

28 April 2010

NOTE: This letter was sent, by ordinary mail, to nine school principals.

Dear

I am very grateful to you for engaging with me in the Le Chéile conversation which is a core section of my research into the founding and present values of the religious congregations in the Le Chéile Trust.

At the end of April I emailed you the transcript of our conversation so that you could edit your contribution. As I told you, before the interview, I am using excerpts from that interview in my research.

As I have not received an electronic reply, I am writing to say that I am now presuming that the transcript was acceptable and that I have your permission to use excerpts in the research.

Wishing you a good rest and holiday,

With every good wish.

Una Collins chf

Appendix E**Conversations with Le Chéile School Principals**

NOTE: The researcher engaged in twelve conversations with school principals. These conversations are included in chapters five, six and seven. All conversations are available on tape and in transcript form. All have been returned to the principals for editing and confirmation of permission to use.

Appendix F**Conversations with the New Lay Le Chéile Leadership**

NOTE: I engaged in conversation with Paul Meany, Chairman of the Siol Le Chéile Board, and with Éilis Humphrys, the Education Officer of Le Chéile. My request was conducted by telephone, and I explained that I wanted to focus on the lay person's role in our contemporary church. To each I sent selected quotations from *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 1V, and a focused question.

These are a few short quotations from the aspirational language of the church. In the current Irish context and the development of the new trusts for Catholic secondary schools, especially with regard to your new role in the Le Chéile Trust, name three of the most immediate challenges for a lay person being involved in the mission of the Catholic church.

Lumen Gentium - Chapter 1V

'Sharers in the priestly, prophetical, and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world. (Article 31)

The lay apostolate, however, is a participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself. Through their baptism and confirmation all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself. (Article 33)

[...] they may zealously participate in the saving work of the Church (Article 33)
[...] the laity can and must perform a work of great value for the evangelization of the world (Article 35)

Each individual layman must stand before the world as a witness to the resurrection and life of the Lord Jesus and a symbol of the living God. (Article 38)

The conversation with Éilis Humphrys, Education Officer Le Chéile Trust – 28 May 2010 and extracts have been included in chapter eight. The tape and transcript of the conversation are available.

A conversation with Paul Meany, Chairperson Siol (Le Chéile Board of Management) took place on 27 May 2010. Extracts from this conversation are included in chapter eight and the tape and transcript are available.

Appendix G**St Joseph of Cluny Founding Story and Values**

NOTE: The St Joseph of Cluny congregation joined the Le Chéile Trust in 2009. Research engagement with the twelve original congregations had been in place 2006 - 2009, therefore this account was not conducted within the research process of conversation but was requested and received electronically.

The thirteenth congregation to join the Le Chéile Catholic Schools' Trust was the St Joseph of Cluny Sisters. Their formal decision was notified to the Le Chéile Working Group in November 2009. In an informal conversation with Sister Maeve Guinan, congregational leader, we agreed that she would reply electronically to focused questions which would be similar to the formal engagement with the original twelve congregations.

Communication and questions forwarded electronically to Maeve Guinan:

1. When, and where, was the St Joseph of Cluny Congregation founded?
2. By whom?
3. What were the founding values driving this founding?
4. When did the sisters come to Ireland and why?
5. What are the values in the Le Chéile Trust which have motivated the St Joseph of Cluny sisters to join the Trust?
6. What are your hopes for the Trust?
7. Have you any concerns about Le Chéile?

Short focused answers will be welcome. Please return the responses to Una Collins.

Thank you for your engagement with the research.

Una

From: Una Collins.
Sent: 15 November 2009 15:12
To: Maeve Guinan
Subject: Re: Information for research

Responses to these Questions

1. *When, and where, was the St Joseph of Cluny Congregation founded?*

France 1807

2. *By whom?*

Blessed Anne Marie Javouhey – Born in Burgundy in 1779 . Grew up in a France in the grip of the French Revolution. Started sheltering priests, teaching catechism to the young people. Entered two other Congregations before founding her own.

3. *What were the founding values driving this founding?*

Her aim was to educate children in the faith and also in secular subjects , care for orphans (many of them products of the French Revolution) and bring education and care of the sick to the peoples of the then developing world. In 1817 the first Clunies went to Reunion in the Indian Ocean, 1819 they went to Senegal in West Africa, 1822 Guadeloupe (French West Indies) 1844 South Sea Islands. At her death in 1851 she had established foundations in all 5 Continents. She believed that indigenous peoples were the best evangelisers of their own people and she had trained young Senegalese men for the priest hood and educated slaves for freedom in French Guyana enabling them to become responsible citizens. This was despite opposition from French Colonists and Church Authorities. (She was excommunicated for a number of years). She worked very closely with Francis Liebermann – founder of the Holy Ghost Fathers (Spiritans) .

4. *When did the sisters come to Ireland and why?*

The sisters came to Ireland at the express request of Fr. Leman C.S.Sp. (founder of Blackrock College) and with the permission of Archbishop Cullen. Three French Sisters arrived in Blanchardstown on the 13th December 1860. They had rented a building that had been vacated by the Holy Ghost Fathers. It was unsuitable for development so Sister Calixte purchased Uplands with a view to establishing a Girls' Boarding School. This school (Mount Sackville) was opened in 1864. It prospered in great part because the subjects offered included Religion, French, German, Italian, Art, Music, Science and Fancy Needlework as well as the usual core subjects. 19 girls entered the Order during the first year. Some of these returned to work in Mount Sackville – others went to English speaking missions in the developing world. So to answer your question – we came to Ireland to provide education for girls (and young boys almost from the beginning) but I suspect (although it was never stated) that we also came for vocations for the missions.

5. *What are the values in the Le Chéile Trust which have motivated the St Joseph of Cluny sisters to join the Trust?*

Its philosophy of Education.

Its stated aspirations for delivering that education.

The history and background of the participating Congregations.

The participative nature of all developments within Le Chéile.

6. *What are your hopes for the Trust?*

That it support boards, principals, staff and parents in upholding and developing ethos of our schools.

That it will continue to support all stakeholders in delivering the type of educational practice that has been the hallmark of a Cluny education, e.g. developing the whole person, helping each one develop their own potential at their own pace, concern to preserve the dignity of all, developing social awareness and an atmosphere that is warm supportive and caring and that seems to be present in the two schools now. We hope Le Chéile might help students a knowledge of and love for the person of Christ. Many

parents want this but are unable to articulate it and need support in expressing it. I am not sure if we were very successful in responding to their desires – since many of them and many of us are inarticulate in these matters.

7. *Have you any concerns about Le Chéile?*

A slight concern that because we are the only fee-paying schools we might be marginalised in terms of support and belonging. Since we have met with the staff this concern would seem to be groundless.

Una thank you for this invitation..

God bless Maeve.

Appendix H**Conversations with other Trusts**

NOTE: Communicating with other trusts includes conversations with Sister Eileen Randles of the Loreto Schools' Trust, (26/1/2009), Ned Prendergast, Director of Faith Development, CEIST Trust, (14/12/2009), and Brother John Heneghan, Project Manager of ERST Trust, (30/11/2009).

Request for an interview/conversation was made by phone, and the following two questions were subsequently emailed to each of the three interviewees:

1. What do you consider to be the CORE VALUE which all of the new Irish Catholic Schools' trusts have in common?

2. What is the greatest challenge for Irish Catholic schools' Trusts in the future?

I explained that I was not recording the conversation. I was recording the responses in writing, and would check for permission to use before the interview ended.

Responses to Question One

- Sister Eileen: The continuation and enhancement of Catholic education in Ireland. The subtext is Loreto heritage in education, loyalty to the people and places where we have been, and where there is a perceived wish to remain, and networking.
- Ned Prendargast: To preserve the special ethos offered in the Cathlic school, a modern translation of all of that, we are working on the modern translation. To offer the choice of Catholic education, that picture of the world we cherish and want to pass on. For

parents safety is a huge part of it, and ironically this is huge in Catholic schools, and transforms into ambition for children. Expecially it is a locus to be gospel better than ever before.

Brother John Heneghan: All the new Irish Catholic Schools' Trusts are in the broad stream of Catholic education, but each of them offers a distinctive colouring and enrichment to it according to the charism fo its founding members and the living tradition that has been fostered in its respectives chools.

All the trusts are concerned with helping people to an understanding of their origin as human beings, the meaning of life, the values and skills to be acquired to enable them to live life to the full as individual and social beings, as followers in the *Way of Jesus* and as having a role to play in the building up of society.

Many of the new Irish Catholic schools' trusts are awakening to another level of core values through a growing undertanding of the cosmos, the relationship of mother earth to it, our place in it, our expression of love for it through seeking to better understand it, care for it and respect it in our immediate environment.

Responses to Question Two

Sister Eileen: Sustainability. Bridging of past and future. Danger of reaching another level of 'comfort' or complacency. The people we have at the moment are steeped in heritage, they are the first generation of trust membership. Another danger is that of multiplicity of services.

Ned Prendargast: An Irish version of apathy, a flaw in the Irish character made manifest in attitudes to what is valuable. We are still post colonial... ‘not really our church’ ‘not really our country’...responsibility belongs to someone else surely.

Second challenge is leadership in an emerging lay church. If clericalism and patriarchy and fear persist all will be lost.
Third challenge is sustainability.

Brother John Heneghan: How to carry forward their tradition of Catholic education and the distinctive ethos of the Trusts' schools in the context of the church at a time when leadership in the church is greatly weakened having lost much of its credibility, and at a time when church affiliation is greatly diminished.

How to fund these predominantly lay trusts when funding from the founding congregations is no longer available due to diminished membership, available funding being required almost in full for maintenance of aged members, or situations where the founding congregation is gone out of existence.

How to offer a relevant educational service in an increasingly multi-culture multi-ethnic Ireland.

Appendix J**Research and Reconfiguration**

The Reconfiguration process began in 2003, the research process in 2006. Both were completed in 2010. The Le Chéile Working Group, which met on the first Friday of each month, had established a working protocol with David Tuohy. Budget structures and projected costs were drafted. Legal implications were being examined. The core values were being drafted in constitutions and a Charter White Paper. Meetings with congregational leaders, boards of management and school principals took place in 2005 and 2006. This was taking place within the larger frame of CORI and the episcopal moves and parallel to the founding of other school trusts.

The following is a summary of developments in both the research and the reconfiguration processes between 2006-2010. I re-entered the reconfiguration process as the research began. Both developments developed threads which were inter-weaving and complementary. I was directly involved in the weaving of both.

2006**Reconfiguration**

6 October 2006: Working on the White paper. Developing the new Le Chéile website to facilitate the school consultation process. We break into small groups to work on the White Paper.

10 November 2006: Report on how the web is working. Small groups working on the values for the White Paper.

1 December 2006: Copies of the White Paper are ready for the schools. Property and finance are constant issues.

Research

6 October 2006: I speak to the Working Group, giving information about the research, inviting them and their congregations to co-research. Explain that I am writing to the Congregational leaders.

During September, October, November and December 2006: I am reading, engaging and drafting. I send a letter of information and invitation to each congregational leader (Appendix B) and receive positive responses.

2007

Reconfiguration

12 January 2007, 2 February 2007, 2 March 2007, 30 March 2007: The Working Group continues to work on the Le Chéile website, legal matters, developing the Shadow Council, the Shadow Forum and constant work on financial implications.

8 June 2007, 5 September 2007, 9 November 2007, 7 December 2007: We meet boards of management and principals in different locations to consult on the White Paper. The usual matters of property, insurance, legal and financial implications are always on the agenda.

Research

9 November 2007: I ask for formal time to speak to the Working Group. I tell them that the chapter on context, especially the ecclesial documents on the Catholic school is in draft form and I am sending it electronically to all members. I would appreciate their responses.

Formal conversations with congregational leaders take place all through 2007. In January I meet with Patrician, Holy Faith and De La Salle leaders. In March I meet the St Louis and FCJ leaders. In April conversations are held with the Dominican and St Paul leaders. A conversation with the SMG leader takes place in October and with the Cross and Passion leader in November.

I have informal conversations with the Working Group members during each monthly meeting.

During 2007 I emailed colleagues in the United States, New Zealand and Canada about Catholic school trusteeship.

2008

Reconfiguration

11 January 2008, 1 February 2008: Business agenda... we continue firming up property, legal and financial issues. The first Newsletter is created.

29 February 2008: We receive Charity status... relief! Our solicitor advises a second company (money and property) called Siol. Canon and Civil law occupy Working Group time.

9 May 2009: Charter draft work, and there will be a section on heritage statements.

6 June 2008, 5 September 2008, 3 October 2008, 7 November 2008: Business issues. A Transition Education Office is established. We now have one insurance for the schools of the twelve congregations. St Joseph of Cluny congregation applies to join Le Chéile.

Research

I continue meeting informally with the Working Group members. Formal conversations with the RCE leader takes place in September and with the RJM leader in November.

I return all transcripts for editing and permission to use in the research. Research reading continues. Validation sessions on the emerging narratives with relevant members of the Working group begin: with Cross and Passion on 2/2/08, with FCJ on 12/3/08, and with SMG on 7/11/08. I send letter of information and invitation to school principals (Appendix D).

2009**Reconfiguration**

9 January 2009, 3 February 2009: Report on first Catholic School Week (I represented Le Chéile Working Group).

We are moving towards final decisions. We prepare for the launch by congregational leaders.

5 February 2009: Launch and Ritual by congregational leaders.

29 May 2009: A similar ritual with boards of management and principals.

4 September 2009: The new Lay Leadership team joins the Working Group and will be with the group until Le Chéile is launched in 2010.

Research

Validation of emerging congregational values continues in the Working Group meetings, with RCE on 8 January 2009, De La Salle on 11 August 2009, with SJM, St Louis, Patricians, Dominicans and Holy Faith in September. Validation with SHCJ in October.

Formal conversations with school principals began: with SHCJ principal in March 2009, with RJM deputy principal in November 2009, and with the De la Salle and FCJ principals in December 2009.

26 April 2009: I interviewed Sister Eileen Randles, on 30 November 2009 Brother John Heneghan, and on 14 December 2009 Ned Prendergast.

15 November 2009: I engaged with Sister Maeve Guinan, congregational leader of the St Joseph of Cluny congregation.

2010

Reconfiguration

The days of January in 2010 were pre-occupied with preparation for the formal launch of the trust on February 5th. The new lay team was responsible but continuing to consult with the Working Group.

Formal launch by President McAleese.

Research

Formal conversations with school principals continued: With the Dominican principal on 18 January 2010, 19 January 2010 Holy Faith, and the Patrician principal on 21 January 2010. Conversations with the Cross and Passion principal on 1 February 2010, SMG 2 February 2010, St Louis principal 3 February 2010, St Paul principal 10 March 2010 and RCE principal on 5 May 2010.

Transcripts were returned to each principal for editing and permission to use in the research.

Conversations with the new leadership of Le Chéile took place on 27 and 28 May 2010.

Le Chéile



CHARTER

Catholic Schools Trust



INTRODUCTION

The Le Chéile Schools Trust is a collaborative trust set up initially by twelve congregations. The Trust will carry out the increasingly complex legal and inspirational role of the Patron previously exercised by the congregations. In setting up the Trust, the congregations wish:

- To affirm their commitment to the future of Catholic Education.
- To provide for the needs of the students and communities in their schools.
- To honour their partnership with the government in the education system.

The Trust is established as a legal entity, under company law. Central to the operation of the trust is its Charter. The Charter outlines the Mission and Vision that the congregations entrust to this new venture. The Charter aims to capture the spirit in which the congregations have come together to plan for the future. It states the hopes and aspirations that the congregations brought to their own work in schools, and that they are confident will be carried into the future. These hopes are translated into the particular circumstances of each school's Mission and Vision Statement, as well as the practical policies that outline its operation.



The Charter is written in three parts:

Part 1 describes the Mission of the Trust. This part aims to capture core elements of the mission of the congregations and pass them on to Le Chéile. The focus is on the link between the Mission of the Church and the Mission of Le Chéile, the philosophy of education that inspires the Trust and the responsibilities inherited by Le Chéile from the congregations.

Part 2 describes the Vision of Education. This Vision is meant as a guide for the Trust in its future work with the schools. The aspirations contained in it will be translated to their own context by each school in a Vision Statement which will also reflect the specific heritage they receive from their founding congregation. The main focus of the Le Chéile Vision Statement is on the spiritual and faith formation hopes of the congregations, which build on the excellence of a general education.

Part 3 describes the Heritage of each of the founding congregations.

THE MISSION OF THE TRUST

*To promote Catholic Education as an option within the Irish education system.
To develop the schools of the Congregations in the service of their local communities,
the state and the Church.*

LINK TO MISSION OF CHURCH

The Le Chéile Schools Trust takes its heritage from the work of the Founding Congregations. Their commitment to education reflects their participation in the mission of the Church. In setting up Le Chéile, the Congregations want to ensure that their schools will continue in that same mission. This is the mission they entrust to Le Chéile.

The Le Chéile Trust will therefore participate in the same mission of the Church. It values its links with the local and universal Church, as well as the heritage from the congregations. It pays particular attention to the philosophy of education announced from time to time by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education and the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The mission of the Church includes "evangelisation" and "discipleship".

Evangelisation is the work of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus, so that people come to realise the riches of God's love. Discipleship is the work of helping people to live out their commitment to Jesus and his principles.



The way in which the Catholic Church thinks of itself has changed dramatically since the Second Vatican Council. The Church no longer defines itself in terms of an institution distinct from everyday society. It acknowledges that God's work is alive in all human activity. We can find God by reading the signs of our times – in the wealth of culture and in the increasing importance of community. We also find an invitation to work with God to make the world a better place and build up the Kingdom.

The Le Chéile Trust is committed to the work of “evangelisation” and “discipleship” in the context of a church that is open to developing a deeper understanding of Jesus and the Gospel in the context of a dialogue with human culture. It is this mission that informs its philosophy of education.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

At the centre of a philosophy of education is the vision of the human person.

A human being has a dignity and a greatness exceeding that of all other creatures – a work of God that has been elevated to the supernatural order as a child of God, and therefore having both a divine origin and an eternal destiny which transcends this physical universe.¹



This vision is what inspires the work of Catholic Education. The work of “evangelisation” proclaims the dignity of the human person. The work of “discipleship” helps participants understand the practical implications of that dignity in their relationships with others and with the world around them.

The Catholic school finds its true justification in the mission of the Church; it is based on an educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony.²

The mission of Le Chéile is to promote this vision of the human person in and through the schools. This is made more explicit in the Vision of Education in Part 2, and in how it is translated in the practical reality of individual schools. The congregations shared a common purpose in education, yet each congregation brought its own charism to the running of the schools. This charism is entrusted to each individual school through the Board of Management and aspects of these charisms are outlined in the Heritage statements in Part 3.

THE ROLE OF THE TRUST AS PATRON

Le Chéile will carry out the legal requirements of the Patron as outlined in various legal instruments. It will have special regard for the development of the spiritual dimension of the school. The way the Patron promotes the spiritual dimension depends on the founding charter of the school. The religious congregations are Patrons in two types of schools –

their own schools, which are Catholic Schools, and also, Community Schools, where the founding charter is multi-denominational.

In Community Schools, the Catholic Patrons promote a philosophy of education that is inspired by the Catholic vision of the person, while fully respecting the multi-denominational charter of the school. The Patron brings the Catholic vision to the dialogue on schooling, and seeks to integrate the values that might attach to a Catholic school in a way that is appropriate to the specific charter of the school and to the community. The Patron has a special care to promote the spiritual welfare of all students within the school, and will seek to ensure that Catholic students have access to an appropriate faith formation programme.



The spiritual dimension of Le Chéile Catholic schools is promoted by seeking:

- To establish the school as a community that witnesses to the Kingdom of God and to Gospel Values. As a community, it reflects God's love for us, and our love for one another. It promotes justice and equality, and has a special concern for the marginalised.
- To be centres of learning and excellence in all aspects of growth, for students, parents, teachers and other staff members. This involves a critical dialogue with culture, where the school aims to be a leader in issues of morals and values, becoming an agent of change for society.
- To focus on Christ as a teacher and a model of human living. The Gospel is a source of reflection on values. The school provides opportunities for all members of the community to deepen their knowledge and relationship with Jesus.
- To develop links with the wider Church Community, especially the local parishes and dioceses. It also encourages a concern about local, national and global issues.

1 Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, #56

2 Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, #34

VISION OF EDUCATION

The Glory of God is humanity fully alive. (St. Irenaeus).

THE SCHOOL

The schools work from a clear vision of education. It is open to and welcomes all who share that vision and wish to benefit from it.

The School Community

- The school values the role of **parents** as their children's first and foremost educators, and seeks to work in partnership with parents. It sets up inclusive structures for the constructive involvement of parents in the school.
- The school appoints **staff** who are qualified, competent, professional and committed to the values of the school and to pursuing excellence in education. It provides for systematic on-going development of staff, particularly in the area of leadership.
- The school values the worth of each **student**. It welcomes and is sensitive to each one, especially students with special educational needs. It is inclusive of students from diverse cultures and backgrounds.



The Curriculum

- The school facilitates and supports the students' search for truth and meaning. It encourages them to strive for excellence in all areas of human growth. It provides a range of learning opportunities so that all students can gain knowledge and develop the skills and competence necessary to participate in and contribute fully, actively and fruitfully to society. It encourages students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and decision-making.
- The school offers a curriculum that has breadth and depth. It is academically rigorous and relevant to the life experiences of the students. It prepares students to understand the many social and cultural factors which shape their values.
- The school develops a pastoral care system that is sensitive to the needs of each student and helps them benefit from their time in school.



THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

Le Chéile Schools have a special commitment to the development of the spiritual dimension of the school and of the lives of its members. It recognises and proclaims that transformative education is essentially a spiritual process. It is the responsibility of all to witness to the spiritual dimension in their respect and care for one another.

The Role of the School

The school:

- Nurtures, promotes and provides for the students' faith development. Students are trained to think, research, reason, reflect and act in the light of Gospel values.
- Recognises the partnership with parents in Faith Development and seeks opportunities to enhance and renew the faith of parents through the education of their children and through their participation in the life of the school.
- Recognises the role of teachers in witnessing to Gospel values and encourages teachers in their own on-going faith development.

The Religious Education Programme

The Religious Education Programme is at the core of spiritual formation. This programme:

- For Christians, is built on and is faithful to the heritage of Scripture, the teachings and living tradition of the Church. It is based on Christ as the meaning and model of human living.
- Fosters the growth of faith at personal and community levels, especially through understanding and participating in prayer and liturgy.
- Provides an intellectual framework for reflecting on life decisions and encourages students to give witness to the integration of faith and life.

CATHOLIC FAITH FORMATION

Those who practise charity in the Church's name will never seek to impose the Church's faith upon others. They realize that a pure and generous love is the best witness to the God in whom we believe and by whom we are driven to love. A Christian knows when it is time to speak of God and when it is better to say nothing and to let love alone speak.³

It is hoped that the values inherent in the culture of the school will be internalised in the values, attitudes and behaviours of all members of the school, and that the culture will continue to be a formative element in a life-long commitment to spiritual growth. As such, the school seeks to help individuals develop a Catholic identity that is characterised by:

- A sense of the sacred and a search for a personal belief in God. This is inspired by knowledge of the person and message of Jesus, and nurtured by a deep personal relationship with Him.
- Appreciating the Eucharist at the heart of the Christian Community. There is an awareness of the sacramental nature of the Church. Catholic liturgies inform a personal prayer life. There is familiarity with Catholic symbols and rituals.
- Knowledge and understanding of the basic teachings of the Catholic Faith. Having some understanding of the history of the Catholic Church and a familiarity with changes in its discipline and practice. Being familiar with the heroes and heroines of the Catholic Church, especially those linked with the Congregations.
- Integrating spiritual and moral values into decisions in daily life.



The work of Faith Formation is through invitation, not coercion. It recognises that individuals are at different places in their personal faith journeys.

- Some students from other faiths and from other Christian denominations will have enrolled in the school. Their different traditions will be respected. They will be **encouraged** to grow in knowledge and appreciation of their own traditions.
- Others students may come to the school with limited ability to engage with the spiritual. The general programme of the school will be considered as a form of **pre-evangelisation**. This promotes a human development that focuses on the emotional and aesthetic, thus enabling the young person to experience God at a deep and spiritual level.
- Other students may come to the school with limited knowledge of the Catholic tradition, or with low levels of familiarity of Catholic liturgy and rituals. In this situation, the school acts in an **evangelisation** role. It helps them develop that knowledge. They are helped reflect on their life experiences in the light of Christian revelation and invited to **discipleship** through a personal faith commitment.
- Still others will come to the school having already made a significant commitment to their faith. They will come from supportive home and parish communities. The school seeks to give special **support** to this group, and to help them explore, in a deeper way, the commitment of discipleship.

In summary, graduates from Le Chéile schools are characterised by :

Intellectual Development. The school builds on the secular academic disciplines which introduce students to a critical appreciation of the world they live in and develop in them skills that enable them to participate fully in that world.



Emotional and Social Development. Students are helped to develop emotionally, with a strong sense of their own worth, leading to self-esteem and respect for others. They develop social skills that allow them play an active and fruitful role in society.

Moral Development. Students are invited to reflect on key moral issues and to examine their responsibility to themselves, to others, to society and to the environment. This reflection takes place within the Christian tradition.

Spiritual Development. To develop a relationship with God means being able to enter into the world of mystery. Students are introduced to this through areas such as nature, art, poetry and music. The spiritual dimension is developed through different experiences of prayer and ritual. Students may come to appreciate God as creator of the universe and they also experience the mysterious oneness and inter-relatedness of creation.

Concern for others. A mark of Christian commitment is a concern for others. The school offers opportunities to develop and practice this concern. It invites students to reflect on the contribution they can make to others particularly in the use they make of their talents and in their choices of career.

Sacramentality. We meet God through signs that have an enduring reality. The school helps students to experience God through a deeper appreciation of and participation in the sacramental life of the Church. This is extended to participation in other rituals, and to an ability to read the signs of times, discerning God at work in the life of each individual.

3 Benedict XVI, 2005,
Deus Caritas Est, para 31(c).

HERITAGE STATEMENTS FROM CONGREGATIONS

THE CHARISM OF THE CONGREGATIONS

A Charism involves a particular call to Faith. It is a way of reading and responding to the Christian message. In Religious Congregations it is seen in the choice of ministry and the way the members of the congregation engage in that ministry. The Charism is a gift to the members of the congregation, and it is also a gift to the Church. The gift is nurtured by the community life and spiritual of the Congregation. Preserving the Charism of the congregation means preserving that gift within the Church.

As well as the Charism of the different Congregations, there is a more fundamental charism at work that every Christian shares – the Charism of Baptism. At Baptism, every Christian has been anointed Priest, Prophet and King, and therefore shares in a special way in the ministry of the Church. These three roles are not associated with special functions in the running of a school. They belong to each person as a Christian – leaders, teachers, parents and students. Part of our spiritual formation is to reflect on what these roles may mean in our living out the gospel message. A key challenge for the future is to develop a vision of how the charism of baptism and the charism associated with the Founding Congregations can be integrated in a future that will be based predominantly on a lay spirituality.

The Le Chéile Trust is a first step in that development. The Trust is an example of collaboration between Congregations. Although each Congregation professes a unique Charism, they share common ground in their understanding of the Gospel values that translate into the Ministry of Education. The Vision Statement of Le Chéile builds on that common ground. The Trust also wishes to respect and promote the unique values associated with individual Congregations. A Heritage Statement from each Congregation is included in the Charter. Part of the commitment of the Trust is to continually reflect on that heritage and, in partnership with Boards of Management, to promote it in the schools.

DE LA SALLE

OUTLINE OF THE CONGREGATION'S HISTORY

The Institute was founded in 1684 by John Baptist De La Salle who saw the need for a group of lay men who would associate and dedicate their lives to the ministry of human and Christian education, especially of the poor. Each Lasallian teacher would cultivate especially a spirit of faith and a spirit of zeal; faith as a way of seeing and realising his or her own identity and of seeing too, beyond the external to the divine dignity of each student as a child of God. A spirit of zeal would motivate the teacher to give of his or her best in the interests of the human and Christian development of the children.



John Baptist De La Salle was proclaimed Patron of Teachers in 1950 and, today, the same mission inspires and motivates thousand of teachers throughout the five continents. The term "Lasallian" comes from the name of our Founder John Baptist De La Salle, a 17th century French priest and is used to embrace all those who work with us and support us in our mission.

De La Salle's educational vision and mission emerged from the awareness he had of the distress of very large numbers of neglected young people of his time, the children of "artisans and the poor", who, without education or supervision, were far removed from earthly or heavenly salvation. The originality of De La Salle is not so much that he was a pioneer of education but that, resolutely and against the odds, he created a stable community of religiously motivated laymen who constructed, throughout France, a network of free schools that would make education available to the poorest. De La Salle saw the school as the ideal context for these wayward young people to gain the skills they would need in order to rise above the hopelessness of their human condition and grow in dignity as children of God.

From the outset, De La Salle came to realise that the school would be successful and stable only to the extent that the teachers were united through a common vision, a shared dedication and a supportive community. "Together and by association", a familiar phrase in the Lasallian Tradition, reflects a collegial approach to decision making with shared responsibility at all levels.

THE LIVED LASALLIAN CHARISM

Four core values mark the Lasallian schools of today: Lasallian schools are Christian communities where people show care and respect for each other. Lasallian schools are concerned with the needs of the disadvantaged and the immigrant at all levels. The Lasallian schools are built around partnership. The Lasallian schools offer an education of excellence and relevance to all the students.

The lived Lasallian charism is achieved through a unique educational practice: practical attention to the young, the quality of our relationships with them, our interest in those most in difficulty, concern for total formation, taking into account all the dimensions of the person as well as the future of the young person. (The Lasallian Charism – Lasallian Studies No. 13)

Our mission is to procure the human and Christian education for the young especially the poor; to announce the Gospel and to discover in the poor the face of Christ; to be attentive to all forms of exclusion where that possibility might exist. Our mission invites us to have our eyes open before the inequalities created by our society and to be creative in our response to new needs.

The Lasallian mission also consists in helping to keep alive the search for solutions to the existential questions of the young we seek to educate; to help them acquire an adequate hierarchy of values that gives meaning to human existence; to promote the development of an interior life, a disinterested love, and a generous commitment. Our mission is to assure that youth integrate within themselves reason and emotion; sentiments and impulses, free will and fragility. (Br Alvaro- *Final Reflections: "New Wine in New Wineskins"*- International Assembly 2006)



DOMINICAN EDUCATIONAL TRADITION

In 1206 the Spaniard, Saint Dominic de Guzman, founded the first community of Dominican women in Prouille, France. In 1224 the Dominican friars came to Ireland. The Cabra Sisters trace their origin to the foundation of the Dominican Nuns in Galway in 1644. Srs. Mary Lynch and Julian Nolan, on their return from exile in Spain during the persecution of the Cromwellian period, re-founded the community in Galway. The

Congregation is just one section of the world wide Dominican Family – a family of priests, brothers, contemplative and active sisters, and laity. The Congregation's mission is education in its widest sense, schools being one aspect of this.

Founded on democratic principles, Dominic's vision was to bring the Word and Works of God into a dynamic engagement with the prevailing culture of the day. The network of Dominican schools and Colleges in Ireland has therefore inherited a rich tradition in education, with each succeeding generation finding new ways of passing on Christian values. This involves the constant effort to synthesise faith and culture so that intellectual development and growth as a Christian go hand in hand. This democratic principle ensures Dominican Education is developed in a spirit of trust and freedom, linked with responsibility, eliciting the co-operation of all, mindful of justice issues, offering a multifaceted curriculum, and opposed to unhealthy competition or academic cramming.

DOMINICAN SCHOOLS IN LE CHÉILE

St.Dominic's Secondary School, Ballyfermot
St.Dominic's College, Cabra
Dominican College, Galway
Dominican College, Griffith Avenue
Dominican College, Muckross Park
Dominican College, Sion Hill
Dominican College, Wicklow
St. Dominic's High School, Sutton
Scoil Chaitríona, Glasnaion

The motto *Veritas* (Truth) epitomises the aim of Dominican schools and colleges – the pursuit of Truth in all its forms. It acknowledges the unique giftedness of each individual and their

journey in discovering the truth about themselves, others, the universe they share, and the Creator of all. Dominican schools and colleges, therefore, strive to be communities centred on Christ, and on Gospel values, where all work together, learn to make informed judgements, pray together, forgive each other.



(Fuller information is available in the document 'In Search of Truth - The Dominican Way in Education'. 'Ag Lorg na Fírinne-Oideachas ar an nós Dolmhniceach')
www.dominicansisters.com

KEY FEAST DAYS

28th January	St. Thomas Aquinas, Patron of Universities and Catholic Schools	24th May	Feast of St. Dominic
29th April	St. Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church and one of the Patronesses of Europe	24th August	St. Rose of Lima
		7th October	Our Lady of the Holy Rosary
		3rd November	St. Martin de Porres
		15th November	St. Albert the Great, Patron of the Natural Sciences

FAITHFUL COMPANIONS OF JESUS

Marie Madeleine d'Houet (1781-1858) was inspired to found a Society that would be called *Faithful Companions of Jesus*. The example of Mary and the Holy Women of the gospel who stayed with Jesus throughout His passion, death and resurrection greatly influenced her. To be **faithful** is one of our core values that we entrust to you.

Marie Madeleine was profoundly affected by the words of Jesus from the cross "I am thirsty". She believed that these words expressed Jesus' desire to bring God's love to all people.

We **FCJ** sisters desire that this same mission be continued through the work of education in each school community.

This we entrust to you.



Marie Madeleine was inspired by the Constitutions and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. To be contemplative in action and to find God in all things are at the heart of this spirituality.

We **FCJ** sisters desire that each school community will follow this inspiration so as to be messengers of hope to our world.

This we entrust to you.

May each **FCJ** school community be faithful to Gospel values
especially *companionship, gentleness, compassion, courage and confidence*
www.fcjsisters.org

Heritage

HOLY FAITH SISTERS

Founding Vision and Charism: Margaret Aylward, a Waterford woman, whose life spanned the nineteenth century, founded the Sisters of the Holy Faith. Her founding vision was born in the context of the poverty and related proselytism of post famine Ireland. Her profound appreciation of the gift of Faith, her active compassion for the poor and her conviction of the role of the family in nurturing the dignity of each child inspired all her undertakings.

As a lay woman with other lay women she developed the fostering out system to provide Catholic foster families for orphan children. She set up schools in poor areas to provide a Catholic education and hope of a better future for children trapped in poverty. Her passionate belief that Faith is a treasure to be developed and nurtured led her to insist: "These schools will always be schools of Faith – a Faith that is living and operative". (Margaret Aylward 1884)

To carry the vision forward, in 1867 Margaret founded a congregation of sisters who shared her vision and her commitment to the Faith and to families in poverty. As time passed, the number of these schools increased and the sisters developed her work by establishing secondary schools for children of the emerging middleclass Catholic families.

Ethos: Margaret's firm conviction of the dignity and potential of each child, her concern for the preservation and development of their Faith, her respect for the primary role of the family, her commitment to children and families living in poverty and her collaborative role with the laity, are the values that the Holy Faith Schools seek to express through their ethos today. It is from within this framework that the Holy Faith Sisters work with other congregations of Apostolic Religious to ensure the future of Catholic Schools through the Le Chéile Trust.

*"Under God it began,
This 'God it has grown"*

Margaret Aylward

HOLY FAITH EMBLEM



The cross at the centre symbolises the centrality of our Faith.

The open ended cross is an invitation to spread the Word of God and to be open to receive.

The cross rests on the waters of life, open to the world and to infinity.



Margaret Aylward's lamp

This light was a ray of hope for Margaret in the darkness of her prison cell.

It symbolises for us the light of Faith.



PATRICIAN BROTHERS



Congregational Statement

The Patrician Brothers were founded in 1808 in Tullow, Co Carlow, by Bishop Daniel Delany, bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. His intention was to address the social evils of his time and raise the living standards of the people through education. In creative fidelity to our Founder we seek to address through education some of the pressing needs of young people in Ireland today. In our commitment to continue in the ministry of education, we find our primary inspiration in the life and in the teaching of Jesus Christ.

We place a high priority on the development of the religious faith of students and we see the integration of life and faith as the ideal to aim towards. In the school communities where we work we seek to develop a view of reality which is firmly based on the values of the Gospel. Accordingly, our policies and practices will reject those values which are counter to the Gospel.

In the spirit of our Founder and in the tradition of our Congregation we show a preference for those who seem to be in greatest need and we discriminate positively in favour of those who are materially poor.

We affirm the need for a continuing attitude and practice of pastoral care throughout the school so that each student may grow in self-worth.

We support a system of education which recognizes a variety of needs among students, one which extends the gifted and encourages the weak. We support a system of education which promotes a balanced development of the individual.

We value highly a close working rapport with the partners who share our commitment to education. Foremost among those partners are our working colleagues in the schools, the parents of the students and the leaders of the local church. We seek to share with our partners our core beliefs and values regarding the true purpose of education so that our collaboration may be authentic and enduring.

POOR SERVANTS OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

The Congregation of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God (S.M.G.) was founded in London on September 24th, 1869 by Frances Margaret (later Mother Magdalen) Taylor, (1832-1900), the youngest child of Henry Taylor, an Anglican clergyman, and his wife, Louisa.



As she grew up, Frances became very aware of the plight of the poor of London and tried to help them in any way she could. Conscious of their lack of educational facilities, she became involved at one stage in organising a 'ragged school' for poor, street children. At the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854, Frances volunteered to nurse in the military hospitals in the Crimea. Various influences and experiences there – notably the heroism of the Sisters of Mercy and the faith of the Irish Catholic soldiers – led to her conversion to Roman Catholicism. From

Frances's great devotion to the Incarnation flowed her love of the poor, and this in turn led her to found the S.M.G. Congregation. Mother Magdalen drew her inspiration from the Constitutions and Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, having from the outset received much spiritual help and guidance from the Society of Jesus.

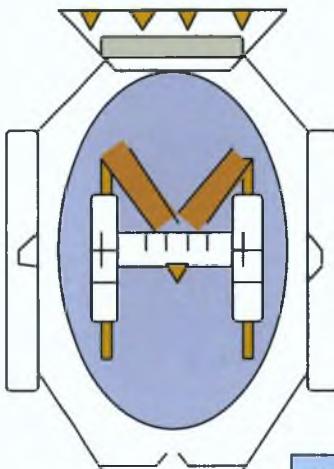
Through the many apostolates of the Congregation, including education, the members take part in the one mission of Jesus Christ. By their lives of prayer, love and service, they share the Good News with their contemporaries in terms which people can understand. What characterises the S.M.G. approach to education is a profound respect for the dignity of the individual and a strong work ethic. Students feel themselves accepted and encouraged and so grow in confidence and maturity. They are encouraged to use their gifts and talents to help those at home and abroad who do not share their material and educational advantages. The Congregation's Founding Day – September 24th – is celebrated annually with a Mass for the Opening of the Academic Year.

In Ireland, the Poor Servants of the Mother of God have been involved in primary education and in second level education in both the voluntary secondary school and community college sectors. The two secondary schools under the patronage of the S.M.G. Congregation are Manor House School, Raheny, Dublin 5, (Phone: 01-8316782) and St. Aloysius' College, Carrigtwohill, Co.Cork. (Phone: 021-4883341) The websites are: www.manorhouseschool.com and www.stalscarrig.com

RELIGIOUS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Religious of Christian Education, a small International Congregation was founded in Normandy, France in 1817 by Father Louis Lafosse and four women. France was troubled after the Revolution and there was a great need for education, especially for girls.

Father Lafosse and the Founding Sisters developed an educational system based on academic excellence and the development of the whole person. They wished to create a happy, joyful atmosphere, where pupils could develop their talents.



Maria Vitae Porta

Maria Vitae Porta is the motto of Our Lady's School. This gives the idea that life is a journey, with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as guide. The Feast of the Presentation, **21st November**, foundation of the Religious of Christian Education, is celebrated each year in the school.

In 1953, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Dublin, Our Lady's School, Templeogue was opened. Following the ideals of Father Lafosse and the early Sisters, the school is a community which stands for Christian values. The Education offered aims at a search for the Truth, the formation of Christian faith and the growth and personal development of each person. Staff, pupils and parents participate in the educational process and the quality of relationships between them is of vital importance. The school reaches out to the wider community.



RELIGIOUS OF JESUS AND MARY

The Religious of Jesus and Mary were founded by Claudine Thevenet in Lyons, France, in 1818. Her aim was to make Jesus and Mary known and loved by means of a truly Christian Education.

Today, the Jesus and Mary Schools foster an integrated education where each individual is valued and respected. We believe, like Claudine, that young people -

- Grow in a sense of personal worth and feel themselves loved by living together in an Educational Community;
- Develop in a more integrated way when surrounded by a family spirit of warmth and security;
- Need to prepare solidly for the world of work so as to enable them to face the future reality with faith and confidence;
- Respond to a methodology which is characterised by love, patience and forgiveness, and to the guidance of teachers who attend individually and progressively to their development, taking into account their particular talents and circumstances in life;
- Need support and guidance, which if given at the opportune time can help forestall errors of judgement and prevent mistaken choices.

The Jesus and Mary Educational Communities recognise that young people are the hope of tomorrow and a powerful force for renewal in the Church and in the World.



ST. CLAUDINE THÉVENET
(MARY ST. IGNATIUS)
FOUNDRESS OF THE CONGREGATION
OF THE RELIGIOUS OF JESUS AND MARY

*"How
Good
God
Is"*

Jesus and Mary Secondary Schools

- Our Lady's Grove, Goatstown Rd., Dublin 14
- Enniscrone, Co. Sligo
- Gortnor Abbey, Crossmolina, Co. Mayo
- Salerno, Threadneedle Rd., Salthill, Galway

Jesus and Mary Primary Schools

- Our Lady's Grove, Goatstown Rd., Dublin 14
- Scoil Íde, Salthill, Galway

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF ST. PAUL, THE APOSTLE

The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Paul, the Apostle, was founded by Genevieve Dupuis in Banbury, England in 1847. The Congregation spread rapidly throughout England with Sisters working in parish schools and visiting the sick in their homes.

In 1903 Sisters were sent to open the first convent in Ireland at Kilfinane Co. Limerick and teach in the parish school. St. Paul's Greenhills, Dublin was opened in 1964.

Genevieve Dupuis had a very simple philosophy of education – “Love is the first principle of success – do your best for the children”. Genevieve’s legacy continues today in our school communities which are permeated by the belief:

- In a loving God, as revealed in Jesus Christ
- That all persons are sacred because each is made in the image of God and therefore deserving of respect
- That all creation is an expression of the goodness and love of God revealed through it
- That all are entitled, in justice, to be given the opportunity to develop fully as persons

Saint Paul, the Great Teacher, is patron of Scoil Pol, Kilfinane and St. Paul's Secondary School, Greenhills. The schools' motto is *Omnibus Omnia* – All things to All, (Cor.9:22) 25 January, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, is a day of special celebration in the schools. .



The school badge refers to the life of Saint Paul.

The Sword signifies his martyrdom.

The Quill shows he was a writer.

The Book represents his Letters.

The Crown reflects his sainthood.

OMNIBUS OMNIA

Contacts:

www.sellypark.org

www.scoilpol.ie

info@stpaulsg.ie

– Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of St. Paul

- Scoil Pol, Kilfinane, Co. Limerick

- St. Paul's Secondary School, Greenhills, Dublin 12.



SISTERS OF SAINT LOUIS

The Institute of the Sisters of St Louis was founded, by Louis Bautain and Mère Thérèse de la Croix, in Juilly, (France) in 1842, to promote the Christian education of the young.

The first St Louis Sisters came to Ireland in 1859 at the request of the Bishop of Clogher.

Louis Bautain was a priest, philosopher and academic, who had been personally affected by the turmoil of the French Revolution and the anti-clericalism of his time. He set himself the task of healing the deep and supposedly irreconcilable divisions that existed between faith and reason and between theology and the secular learning of his time. Bautain saw Christian education as the great need of his day, as "the beautiful enterprise".

It was his vision of a "world healed, unified and transformed by the saving wisdom of Christianity" that led Louis Bautain to a lifelong search for unity and truth. His guiding words were *Ut Sint Unum*, May they all be one. This is part of the crest of every St Louis school worldwide; it shapes the approach to community and partnership in each school, and creates the "family spirit" which is so much part of the tradition of St Louis.

Bautain's "beautiful enterprise" of education is at once worldwide and holistic. It creates a learning environment in which the Catholic/St Louis identity is balanced with openness to the new and the yet unknown. The international St Louis educational network, to which all St Louis schools belong, helps to promote awareness of different perspectives and to experience interconnectedness. It is our hope that this outlook and this network will continue to develop in the Le Chéile Trust.

Further information on the Sisters of St Louis and on the Schools in the St Louis network can be accessed on the St Louis website: www.stlouissisters.org



The future of humanity lies with those strong enough to provide the coming generations with reasons for living and for hope. Vatican II GOS 31



SISTERS OF THE CROSS AND PASSION

The Sisters of the Cross and Passion were founded by Elizabeth Prout in Manchester, England, in 1852, during the time of the Industrial Revolution.

Elizabeth witnessed dire poverty and identified education as a means for people to escape from poverty, find employment and improve their quality of life.

From modest beginnings Elizabeth and her companions established a tradition of education in many countries which sought to respect the culture and values of those countries, and to respond to the challenges of the times. Today the sisters still endeavour to respond creatively to the new challenges of the age whether in education or other areas of social need.

Our school communities aspire to create a positive environment in the belief that through caring relationships students:

- Learn respect for self, others and the natural world
- Develop a love of learning and appreciation of their talents
- Share their gifts and resources in a spirit of compassion for the building of a more just world.
- Learn the meaning of inclusive community which celebrates difference and acknowledges mutual interdependence.

It is our hope that the students will become creative, independent adults who can take their place in society and whose lives reflect gospel values.



SOCIETY OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS

The Society of the Holy Child Jesus is a small international congregation founded in England in 1846 by an American woman, Cornelia Connelly, founder of the Society and mother of five children, developed an educational system based on trust and reverence for the dignity of every human being. She encouraged Holy Child educators to carry this spirit to students of diverse backgrounds as they sought to respond to *the wants of the age*. Schools committed to the tradition of Holy Child education share in the Society's mission *to help others to believe that God lives and acts in them and in our world and to rejoice in God's presence*.

Since 1846, educators inspired by the Holy Child philosophy of education have helped students *to grow strong in faith and lead fully human lives*, have promoted academic excellence, and have sought to instil social responsibility. Holy Child education is a tradition which is rooted in Christian values and is attuned to learning opportunities that enable students to respond to life with joy, commitment and compassion. Students are encouraged to meet diversity and change with confidence in their own gifts and in God.

In Ireland the Holy Child sisters have been involved in second level education in both the community school sector and the voluntary secondary school sector.

Holy Child Community School, a multi denominational school, was founded on a vision of Catholic education which values the worth of each person. The school welcomes students with diverse abilities and talents and in keeping with its Christian ethos, seeks to recognise and develop their varied gifts and to promote in students a sense of self-confidence, tolerance and respect for others.

The congregation will continue to foster the Holy Child tradition of education and to maintain links with the school through the school's membership of the Holy Child European Network of Schools.



SOCIETY of the
HOLY CHILD JESUS

SCHOOLS

SCHOOLS JOINING LE CHÉILE

VOLUNTARY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

De La Salle Brothers

Árdscoil La Salle, Raheny, Dublin 5.
Beneavin De La Salle College, Beneavin Rd,
Dublin 11.
Da La Salle College, Churchtown, Dublin 14.
De La Salle College, Waterford.
De La Salle Secondary School, Dundalk,
Co. Louth.
St Benildus College, St. Benildus,
Uppr Kilmacud Rd. Co. Dublin.
St John's College De La Salle, Ballyfermot,
Dublin 10.
St. Gerald's College, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

Dominican Sisters

Dominican College, 204 Griffith Ave,
Dublin 9.
Dominican College, Wicklow.
Dominican College, Taylor's Hill, Galway.
Muckross Park College, Donnybrook,
Dublin 4.
Saint Dominic's Secondary School,
Ballyfermot, Dublin 10.
Scoil Chairtriona, Bothar Moibhí, Dublin 9.
Sion Hill Dominican College, Blackrock,
Co. Dublin.
St Dominic's College, Cabra, Dublin 7.
St Dominic's High School, Santa Sabina,
Dublin 13.

Faithful Companions of Jesus

Árd Scoil Mhuire FCJ, Bruff, Co. Limerick.
FCJ Secondary School, Bunclody,
Co. Wexford.
Laurel Hill Coláiste FCJ, Limerick.
Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ, Limerick.

Holy Faith Sisters

Holy Faith Secondary School, Clontarf,
Dublin 3.
St David's Secondary Co-Educational School,
Greystones, Co. Wicklow.
St Mary's Secondary School, Glasnevin,
Dublin 11.
St Mary's Secondary School, Killester,
Dublin 5.
St Michael's Secondary School, Finglas,
Dublin 11.

Patrician Brothers

Patrician College, Finglas, Dublin 11.
Patrician Presentation, Fethard, Co. Tipperary
Patrician Secondary School, Newbridge,
Co. Kildare.
St Joseph's College, Galway.

Poor Servants of the Mother of God

St Aloysius College, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork.
Manor House School, Raheny, Dublin 5.

Religious of Christian Education

Our Lady's School, Templeogue, Dublin 6W.

Religious of Jesus and Mary

Jesus & Mary Secondary School, Enniscrone,
Co. Sligo.
Jesus & Mary Secondary School,
Gortnor Abbey, Crossmolina,
Co. Mayo.
Jesus & Mary Secondary School, Salerno,
Salthill, Galway.
Our Lady's Grove, Goatstown, Dublin 14.

Sisters of Charity of St. Paul

Scoil Pól, Kilfinane, Co. Limerick.
St Paul's Secondary School, Greenhills,
Dublin 12.

SCHOOLS

Sisters of St. Louis

St. Louis Secondary School, Monaghan.
St Louis Secondary School, Carrickmacross,
Co. Monaghan.
St Louis Secondary School, Dundalk,
Co. Louth.
St Louis High School, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

Sisters of the Cross and Passion

Cross and Passion College, Kilcullen,
Co. Kildare.
Maryfield College, Glandore Rd. Dublin 9.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL - Sole Trustee

Society of the Holy Child

Holy Child Community School, Sallynoggin,
Co. Dublin.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The Congregations act as trustees for the following primary schools, sometimes in direct partnership with the local bishop as Patron. These schools may also be associated with Le Chéile. The schools include:

Holy Faith Sisters

Mother of Divine Grace, Primary School,
Ballygall, Glasnevin, Dublin 11.

Poor Servants of Mother of God

Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork.

Religious of Jesus and Mary

Our Lady's Grove, Goatstown, Dublin 14.
Scoil Íde, Salthill, Galway.

Sisters of Charity of St. Paul

St. Paul's Senior Primary School, Dublin 12.

Sisters of St. Louis

St. Louis Infant School, Rathmines, Dublin 6.
St. Louis Primary School, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The Congregations also act as partner Trustees in the following community schools. These schools may be attached to Le Chéile. Some of these schools are:

Holy Faith Sisters

St Wolstan's Community School,
Ballymakealy, Clane Road, Celbridge,
Co. Kildare. (with Archdiocese of Dublin and
Kildare VEC)
Tallaght Community School, Balrothery,
Tallaght, Dublin 24 (with Marist Brothers and
County Dublin VEC)

Patrician Brothers

Tullow Community School, Co. Carlow.
(with Brigidine Sisters and Carlow VEC)
Mountrath Community School, Co. Laois.
(with Brigidine Sisters and Laois VEC)

Sisters of St. Louis

Blakestown Community School, Co. Dublin.
(with Servite Fathers, Dublin VEC)
Ramsgrange Community School, Co. Wexford.
(with Co. Wexford VEC)
St. Louis Community School, Kiltimagh,
Co. Mayo. (with Mayo VEC)



Le Chêne

Catholic

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**The motif of the St. Brigid's Cross reminds us of our Celtic Catholic roots and traditions.
The design imagery is inspired by Pictish ornamented stones and patterns from the Book of Kells.**

**Togetherness is symbolised by the different pathways into a central maze, where there
is searching, challenges and new directions.**

**The interlocking keys symbolise that education gives access to and opens up new
knowledge and possibilities.**

The Le Chéile symbol was designed by Helen Roberts.