



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
A U S T R A L I A

Media Release

Monday, 15 January 2023

Colloquium examines future of Catholic education

The future of Catholic education and how teachers can ensure students go on to develop their faith will be among the key focuses for Australian and international researchers at a one-of-a-kind colloquium this week.

The University of Notre Dame Australia is hosting the inaugural Global Researchers Advancing Catholic Education (G.R.A.C.E) Research Colloquium at its Fremantle campus from January 17 – 19.

High-level researchers, educators and directors working in the Catholic system are travelling to Perth from around the world for the three-day event.

Together they will explore the challenges and opportunities for Catholic education under the theme 'Head, Heart and Hands: Together in Faith' – a theme Pope Francis recently highlighted when talking about educators as community builders.

The 90 participants will hear from emerging and established scholars about their research, and will be encouraged to collaborate and reflect with the aim of translating research into practice.

The event will include a mass celebrated by Archbishop of Perth, The Most Reverend Timothy Costelloe, who will also deliver a lecture on formation and service in Catholic education.

Senior Lecturer from Notre Dame's School of Education, Linda Cranley, said the research colloquium would span the broad spectrum of head, heart and hands, delving into topics ranging from policy and curriculum, to the formation of teachers and faith in action.

"In our modern world, strengthening Catholic education requires a creative, integrative response, a platform for thought-leaders, educators, theologians and researchers to gather and engage in new ways," she said.

School of Education Associate Professor Christine Robinson said the event recognised Catholic education as a global topic, with shared challenges and opportunities that are experienced around the world.

"The research colloquium is a world-first event," she said. "Nothing has ever been done like this before looking at real practical faith formation at a global level."

G.R.A.C.E. is a long-term research-based partnership project between the University of Notre Dame Australia, The University of Glasgow, Mary Immaculate College Limerick in Ireland, Boston College in the US, St Mary's University Twickenham in England and the International Office of Catholic Education in Rome.

The partnership brings together researchers and practitioners to facilitate research that will improve the quality and contribution of Catholic education around the world.

A delegation from G.R.A.C.E. met with Pope Francis at the Vatican's Apostolic Palace in 2022, where he encouraged them to find innovative ways of linking research with best practice so teachers could serve the "whole person in a process of integral human development".

For more information, visit grace2024.com

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