

**FREEDOM WITHOUT TRUTH,
FAITH WITHOUT REASON,
KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT WISDOM:
CHALLENGES TO A CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHY
OF EDUCATION IN A CHANGING WORLD.**

by

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ABSTRACT:

The initial pencil line drawn on the blank sheet of this study, so to speak, was the Latin tag:

*In necessariis unitas; in dubiis libertas...:
Unity in what is essential; liberty in matters of doubt...*

The rest of the design proceeds from this first determining stroke—including the governing question: What are the unifying *essentials* (and hence non-essentials) of a modern Catholic philosophy of education?

Catholic; philosophy; education: all are emotive concepts (the last, especially so) and therefore prone to eliciting mismatched interpretations. By scrutinizing these three elements singly and conjointly, this study questions the adequacy of meeting inherent demands and problems with little more than *partial or exclusive* means (as the title suggests). The adoption of a more *universal* approach is shown to be necessary for such endeavours to attain a fuller realization of their purported *raison d'être*.

Within this background and context, the first chapter also examines key concepts of this topic *in terms of how the Church itself defines them*. Contrasted, is the tension between calls from the Church to adhere to certain basics as against the lack of a sense of shared purpose prevalent in Church institutions.

The highly topical Rosmini case is used by detractors to discredit the continuity of Catholic Church policy. As the focus of the second chapter, the recent Rosmini development introduces this controversial thinker while also conveniently leading in to the concept of organic change in the Church. The disputed relevance for Catholic education of Aquinas and his key principles is investigated next, with reference to past and present Church teachings. Chapter four traces the lasting effects of the John Dewey legacy, with the new theme that Dewey's thought has made tangible inroads into sectors of Catholic education. The nature of the home education movement—particularly in its Catholic manifestation—is tied in with elements of the foregoing in chapter five.

The conclusion discusses the extent to which reconciliation is possible between the various strands mentioned above, and the resultant educational implications. Throughout, the intervention of Rosmini's thought and an Australian emphasis (where applicable) lend to the originality of this study.

Acknowledgements

With grateful thanks to my Principal Supervisors: Dr Mary Fearnley Sander,
Associate Professor Peter Hobson, and Professor Peter Forrest.

To my family
and, above all, to my wife, Storm:
“When other helpers fail...”

Delimitations and assumptions:

This thesis is an investigation into the philosophical foundations of Catholic education. Necessarily, therefore, references will be made to certain Catholic teachings and theological underpinnings—not by way of an appeal to their authority, but because they form an intrinsic part of the framework within which this work functions.

It is envisaged that this study should be of relevance and potential significance to the Catholic hierarchy, educational policy makers, administrators and practitioners within the Catholic Church, home educators, but also to others with an interest in current Catholic educational debate.

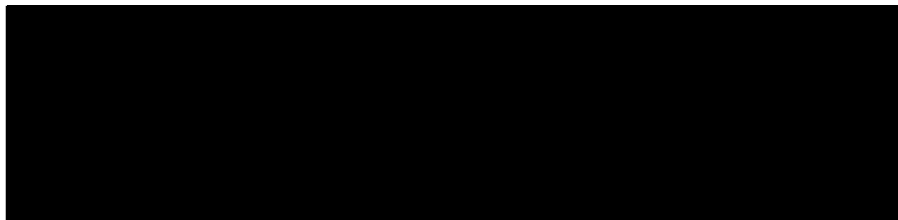
Note: Due to the nature and structure of this study, each chapter will incorporate a review of the literature relevant to its particular themes.

Although non-sexist language has been employed throughout, gender-specific pronouns or illustrations have been retained as they appear in quoted sections.

CERTIFICATION OF CANDIDATE

*I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted
for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other
degree or qualification.*

*I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources
used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.*



(Edmund Ambrose Mackey)

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