Overview and Acknowledgments

Marc Roscoe Loustau
LIVED EXPERIENCE
IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Research and Reflections from
Sub-Saharan Africa and North America
THE JOURNAL OF GLOBAL CATHOLICISM is an international, interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal. Its purpose is to foster the understanding of diverse forms of lived Catholicism with attention to their significance for theoretical approaches in anthropology, history, sociology, media studies, psychology, theology, and philosophy.

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*Research and Reflections from Sub-Saharan Africa and North America*

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Marc Roscoe Loustau is Managing Editor of the *Journal of Global Catholicism* and a Catholics & Cultures contributor. As a scholar of religious studies in the context of personal, social, and economic change, his research has focused on Catholicism in Eastern Europe where, after decades of official state atheism, there has been a prominent resurgence of religion in public life. Loustau has taught courses at the College of the Holy Cross on contemporary global Catholicism. He holds a ThD from Harvard Divinity School.
We are pleased to publish a Special Issue collection of articles by professionals and educational researchers specializing in Catholic primary and secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa, with an additional article on US Catholic educational institutions by the Special Issue’s Guest Editor, World Bank economist Quentin Wodon. The contribution by Rev. Dr. Joseph Domfeh-Boateng focuses on the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. Rev. Dr. Antoinette Nneka Opara’s article (co-written with Wodon) draws on a decade of teaching experience in Nigeria. Alexandre Bingo is a Burkinabe priest who served as Diocesan Director of Catholic Education in Burkina Faso. While the articles stand on their own for providing valuable and needed insight into the lived experience of Catholic education outside of North America and Western Europe, they also respond to Pope Francis’ decision to renew the Catholic Church’s commitment to the Global Compact on Education in October 2020.

In the countries where contributors work—Nigeria, Ghana, and Burkina Faso—not only nation-states but societies’ many groups value Catholic schools for providing quality education, and Catholic schools are growing rapidly. With the lived experience of Catholic primary and secondary education as their focus, the contributors reflect on educators’ emerging pedagogical experiments and strategies in light of the sometimes-tense religious diversity that characterizes everyday life in these regions.

In the spirit of the interdisciplinary *Journal of Global Catholicism*, the contributors bridge disciplinary gaps. They are educational professionals, but they also document lived experience in Catholic educational institutions. The articles embrace experience-near accounts of an average day in a local Catholic school, and feature interviews conducted with educators in these institutions. The authors also present diverse survey methods and argue for their utility to both educators and researchers. We are grateful to Quentin Wodon, Lead Economist at the World Bank and a Distinguished Research Affiliate with the College of Business at Loyola University New Orleans, for his hard work to bring this Special Issue to fruition.
This issue also marks the debut of an exciting new platform, Interviews in Global Catholic Studies, which will feature conversations with university leaders developing new pedagogy and research in the field of Global Catholicism. The JGC’s Founding Editor Mathew N. Schmalz originated the feature and conducted the first set of interviews with three innovators in the field: William Cavanaugh, Professor of Catholic Studies and Director of the Center for World Catholicism & International Theology at DePaul University; Paul Murray, Professor of Systematic Theology and Director of the Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University; and Kenneth Parker, Ryan Endowed Chair for Newman Studies, Professor of Catholic Studies and Historical Theology, and Chair of the Department of Catholic Studies at Duquesne University.

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From the cover: Children attend catechism class and a block Rosary on a Wednesday evening at the Holy Spirit mission station in Enugu, Nigeria. Photo by Thomas M. Landy.