

**McCarthy, Kenneth, 2012, *The Challenges Related to the issues of faith in mainstream Catholic Primary Schools in the Cork and Ross Diocese: Perspectives of Primary School Principals.***

### **ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION**

In an era of rapid economic, social, cultural and religious transformations, there is a plethora of challenges for leadership in Catholic schools in the Republic of Ireland today. The purpose of the current research is to explore how these transformations impinge on issues of faith in mainstream Catholic primary schools today.

The context of this research is conducted from the perspectives of primary school principals in a sample of schools located in the Diocese of Cork and Ross. Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to generate data and the survey was the preferred method of data collection with the interview used for triangulation purposes. These, together with relevant literature, will address the research problem and offer recommendations for the future.

In summary, it was found that principals are required to carry out an array of duties as well as trying to satisfy a demographically changing society. The Catholic primary school is challenged with enrolments of non-Catholic pupils, parents not being interested in or motivated by the Catholic school's aims and the declining numbers of religious personnel.

In essence, this study concluded that school leaders and management must be helped by the Catholic Church and managerial body to develop policies for the inclusion of those of other faiths and none in the schools so as to preserve the Catholic ethos while also celebrating difference.