

Press Statement: CCRS Twenty-Five Years On:

Forming today's Catholics is a pressing issue for the Church. A new report *CCRS Twenty-Five Years On: One Size Fits All?* takes up this question and shows that one of the main vehicles over the last 25 years called the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) has made a huge impact on peoples' personal, spiritual and professional lives. More than 20,000 adults across England and Wales have taken the course since 2000 in order to further their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, many of whom work in our Catholic schools and parishes. While the research affirms the role and contribution of the CCRS to adult formation and celebrates all that has been achieved, it also raises timely and important questions to be considered.

Research findings come from course participants as well as from interviews with bishops, diocesan education directors, head teachers and those who provide CCRS in their local area. The report gives hard evidence of the continuing need for adult theological literacy and the vast majority of participants greatly value the course and would recommend it to others. The research also identifies concerns about the type of curriculum that is needed and how best to enable adult learning with clear theological purpose and practical relevance for today. The report makes a number of recommendations for church authorities to consider but looks ahead with confidence to the next 25 years.

Dr Ros Stuart-Buttle, Director of the Centre for Christian Education at Liverpool Hope University, who led the research project says, "It was a privilege to undertake this research. I was inspired by the many individual stories of how the CCRS has impacted on peoples' spiritual and professional lives. I was also challenged by the needs, perceptions and expectations that people bring to their experience of faith and stimulated, as a result, to see how lay Catholics today can grow in theological thinking that is relevant to our times."

Fr Des Seddon, Chairman of the Board of Religious Studies of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, affirms the importance of the research report and says, "The recommendations will provide the Board of Studies with a way forward for the next Phase of developments for the CCRS. I would like to express my thanks to all those who were involved in the research."