1 Introduction

Reflection on religion in the context of education touches upon many aspects of the relationship between faith and learning, faith, and personal growth, of ways of becoming Christians, religious socialization, communication of faith experience and shaping of religious knowledge, as well as of learning religion in the public space of schools. The dialectic tension in the relationship between substance and function, faith content and its role in education, formation, development and maturing of persons and communities, is being articulated in a specific way in each of the aforementioned aspects. The semantics of the individual terms always holds historic and contextual connotations. Ecclesial-theological normativity and lived practice of religious formation dialectically connect in hermeneutics as an attempt to understand and interpret practice on the background of the changes articulated in the relationship between Church and society, proclamation and culture, transmission of faith and interests, needs and experience of subjects of religious socialization, initiation, and formation. In that attempt to understand and interpret, what comes in focus is the interdisciplinary communication between practical theology and religious education and other sciences, in particular humanistic and social.

2 Can Faith Be Learned?

In Christian theology, faith and rational thinking, as well as faith and learning, support and complement each other (FR 5). Faith is born in a person as a fruit of grace, which anticipates and supports the person’s free acceptance and trust in the truth, prompted by the Holy Spirit (DV 5). As an undeserved gift of God’s love, faith cannot be produced or extorted, even with the most efficient learning methods. At the same time, it is weaved into the process of human growth, maturing and learning. In these processes that last throughout the human life, action is required by which a person goes through trials, obstacles, doubts, insecurities, questioning and discovering, advancing towards a deeper knowledge of God, a greater security of faith and a more encompassing love as the basic attitude in life, which stems from faith. Human beings have the capacity for religious learning that needs incentive in order to grow.

Education and formation are required to progress towards mature faith. Faith needs education so it does not stray into fundamentalism, but rather continue to develop in the context of personal and social challenges. Religious education and formation help deepen the insight that connects rational and intuitive knowledge of God, faith, and action, individual and community, faith and culture, Church, and
the world. On the other hand, education cannot exclude a person’s faith. Faith has its place in education because it promotes the growth of the whole person, it encourages the person to realize him/herself in communion with others, and in relation to God as the giver of life and creator of the world. As such, faith offers the ultimate horizon for human learning, because it directs it towards a life that is meaningful. The dialectic relationship between faith as a gift and a free response from human beings, and faith as a process of learning, guards every teacher of faith and leader of religious educational processes from absolutizing and manipulating. Each person has its own biography of faith, which profiles itself not only through help received from others, but also through resistance towards what is given by religious educators and teachers (Filipović 2011, 30–35; Englert 2007, 11–13).

The context I am writing from on religious education is the Catholic Church in Croatia, where the dominant perspective in theology is that of the institutional Church. Observing the practice of Christian formation and education from a perspective of the institutional Church, the focus will firstly be on processes of becoming Christian and continuing education in faith within the frame of pastoral care of Christian communities, and secondly on religious education in public schools.

3 Christian Formation and Education in Processes of Becoming Christians and Continuing Growth in Faith

The need for Christian formation comes out of the process character of discipleship and following Christ. According to the New Testament as the basic document of the Christian faith, faith is understood as a dynamic process, as a path of growth and progress towards maturity, as relationship with God that needs to be nurtured, purified, and deepened (Matt 13:23; 2 Cor 10:15; Phil 1:25; Col 1:10; 2 Pet 3:18; Eph 4:13; 1 Cor 3:2–3). Important phases of faith development and becoming Christian can be recognized in the practice of the historical Jesus and in the evangelization activity of the first Christian communities; from conversion as the elementary decision for Christ, to joining the Church and continuing growth in faith. The three important points of that process are: listening to the proclamation of the Gospel, faith in Jesus as the Son of God and acceptance of his teaching, and finally following Christ through joining the Church (John 4:4–42; Acts 2:37–41).

Since the maturing in faith is a lifelong task, it requires continuing encouragement and formation which accompanies believers throughout their life. Religious and faith education are important, not only for the development of the Christian identity of individual believers, but also for the building up of Christian communities (DCG 56, 142–147). From the beginnings of Christianity until today, we can recognize two main ways of becoming Christian and Christian formation: the model of catechumenate and religious socialization. In contemporary pluralist contexts, besides
these two models, there are diverse forms of religious formation and education that meet and respond to the needs of the people today.

3.1 Christian Initiation through Catechumenate

At the end of the second century, following the practice of evangelization testified in the New Testament and the Early Church, the institution of catechumenate is developed, as a structured itinerary of becoming Christians. The Christian initiation into faith and life of the community within the frame of catechumenate is understood as a holistic, existential, and communal process of learning and teaching faith, guided by bishops, priests or deacons. Its basic phases are: accepting catechumens interested in Christian faith, first proclamation of the history of salvation and listening to the Word of God, conversion, change and scrutiny of life, catechesis of initiation with a focus on learning the Lord’s prayer and the Creed, and finally joining the Church through celebrating the sacraments of initiation: baptism, confirmation and Eucharist. What follows after is mystagogy as a deeper interpretation of received sacramental signs with the goal of strengthening the person in their Christian life and walking in faith with the community of faithful (Dujarier 1984).

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) with its renewing impulses, encouraged a rediscovery of catechumenate (SC 64–65; AG 14) and contributed to the promotion of Christian adult faith formation, based on catechumenal experiences (EN 44; DCG 90–91). Catechumenate as an initiation and formation process was broadened to include persons who have been baptized, but were not raised in faith, or who have not received all sacraments of Christian initiation (OICA, chapter IV and V). The catechumenal model was an inspiration to the catechetical formation of adult believers in general, and specifically of those who have grown apart from faith, and needed to be reinitiated (CT 44), as well as for the catechesis of children who have been baptized and needed to finish the process of Christian initiation. Since in the countries with Christian tradition most children are still baptized, but do not have serious faith education, a need is perceived for a sort of “post-baptismal catechumenate” for the Christian initiation of children and preadolescents, which also includes children who are not baptized, who are catechumens in the full sense (CT 19). This process requires rediscovery of the first proclamation, practice in Christian life, catechumenal path of purification and enlightenment, connection of liturgy and life, appropriate spiritual accompaniment and joining small groups within a local church community (Morante 2002, 254–255).

Catechumenate for adults obtained new significance in former socialist countries of Europe after the collapse of communist regimes and rule of atheism as the official worldview, in 1989/1990. Since in the times of state repression faith was defamed and considered a private matter, religious education happened in the family and in parish communities, and catechumenate for adults was rare. With the change in the social system many adults, especially in cities, asked to join the Church by baptism, or to
finish the Christian initiation, because they might have been (secretly) baptized as children. In contact with those who have been raised as atheists or just cultural traditional believers, new questions were raised in relation to appropriate forms of evangelization, catechesis, and continuing education in faith in those countries.

Catechumenal models of becoming Christian stand and fall with the meaning of the church community as the basic subject that gives strength to Christian initiation. Church as a place of the coming of the Kingdom of God and place of learning of elementary Christian experiences and life according to the Gospel has a central meaning in shaping of the Christian identity. The Christian community which gathers, listens to the Word of God, celebrates its faith and lives by faith, is an appropriate environment from which and to which the catechumenal itinerary leads (DCG 69–70; 91; 254). What is meant under the term community is for mostly the irreplaceable local Church led by the bishop. Within a community there are various responsibilities that need to be assumed according to the ministries and charisms (DCG 219–232). According to the experience of the ancient catechumenate, lay ministries in the Church held great importance (e.g., sponsorship), but were gradually extinguished as the process of clericalization of Church began to take place. Especially important were the catechists, who interpreted and testified faith to catechumens, not just as “professionals”, but as those baptized and mature in faith, who have been called and sent as representatives of the community to accompany catechumens (Alberich 2002a, 243). Today still, the formation of catechists represents one of the greatest challenges for the Church in every local context.

Often the catechumenal processes in a community happen on the margins of church community life, and are considered secondary activities, done by designated individuals. That is why small communities are important, communities that accompany catechumens before and after catechumenate. Besides the parish community, today there are in different contexts various Catholic institutions, organizations, movements, and basic church communities that practice faith formation. The Church recognizes the importance of those small Christian communities for the adult faith formation, as well as for the development of lay leadership in religious formation (DCG 253; 261–264). In many local churches, there are new ecclesial movements with a distinct catechumenal mission in relation to those not baptized, and Christians on the margins of traditional Church affiliation. Ecclesial movements promote a new image of the Church and a new model of being Christian as someone who isn’t Christian just by tradition, but by their own choice; they mediate the experience of community, discover the ministries of the Church anew and revalorize laity. However, they often lack the capacity to dialog with contemporary society, to be part of the culture, but also to be part of the parish community as a whole (Alberich 2002b, 265).

The rootedness of catechumenate in the Christian community as its base and bearer, mostly remains an ideal. The practice of church communities shows that Catholics have difficulty with quality of communal life (EG 98–100). The lack of authentic and living community, which testifies and lives out its faith, is one of the reasons for the crisis of credibility in relation to catechumenal models of initiation. If
there are no living communities, newly baptized believers gradually move away from the Church (Alberich 2002a, 246–247). The incapacity of the Church today to truly be a community seems to be as an ecclesiological problem, which has repercussions on evangelization and religious formation.

### 3.2 Religious Socialization

The second form of becoming Christian is weaved into the processes of socialization in faith. The model of catechumenate and model of religious socialization today often intertwine and happen simultaneously within Christian communities. Introduction into Christianity through religious socialization began with the acceptance of Christianity as a legitimate religion in the Roman Empire based on Constantine’s edict in 313, i.e., formal state religion, based on Theodosius’ decree in 380. It was followed also by the baptizing of barbaric nations in Europe at the end of the ancient period and during the medieval period (Elias 1993, 12). With the practice of baptism of newborns, western Christianity gradually began introducing a time separation between sacraments of Christian initiation. First, there was a delay in receiving the sacrament of confirmation because it needed to be done by the bishop, and ninth-century testimonies say that the sacrament of Eucharist was also delayed and separated from baptism. Before receiving those sacraments, at the age of 7 or so, when a child is capable to at least understand the important points of what it is receiving, teaching of elementary knowledge about faith is introduced within the frame of family and parish catechesis (Caspani and Sartor 2008).

Catechetical sermons on Sundays and feast days served as religious education for adult believers. Since literacy was low in the Middle Ages, catechetical instruction relied on visual representation of salvation history scenes depicted in churches and cathedrals, as well as on sacral sculptures and stations of the cross, all commonly called the Paupers’ Bible (lat. Biblia pauperum) (Fleck 2011, 25). There was a visible gap between theological thought which developed in the newly founded universities of that time, which individual persons dealt with, and the popular Christian culture, overwhelmed by folk beliefs, existential questions, fears and hopes of people, which put the focus on the topics of duty, sin, repentance, preparation for death and eschatological realities. There was a need for abstracts of faith and simple handbooks, which were used for catechetical teaching focused on interpreting the basics of Christian faith: Creed, commandments, and good deeds (Gianetto 2002, 64).

Cultural shifts and political movements contributed to the emergence of the Reformation at the beginning of the sixteenth century, which in turn greatly influenced religious education and formation in the Roman Catholic Church. The Reformation established the catechism as the basic handbook for faith education, and its widespread distribution was made possible by the invention of printing press and increase in literacy among the common folk. In the Catholic tradition, catechisms are created as a response to Luther’s and Melanchthon’s catechisms, and most
often are counter-reformational in doctrine. Catechism as a literary form was focused on adopting doctrinally correct formulated faith knowledge, and it defined catechetical formation of children and adults from the middle of the sixteenth century until the middle of the twentieth century. Important parts of the catechism are: Creed, sacraments, commandments, and prayer, while the order of individual parts differs depending on the author. The catechism influences the content and method of the catechetical instruction, which focuses on gaining religious knowledge and prefers the form of questions and answers. Parish catechesis organized after the Council of Trent (1545–1563), was focused on interpreting and learning the truths of faith by heart, while the practice of Christian life was learned through religious socialization. Besides memorizing key elements of Christian doctrine, catechesis included narration of salvation history, and stressing examples of important figures of the biblical faith and Church history as role models one should look up to, be inspired by and imitate (Braido 1991).

The industrial revolution brought about new social and cultural changes, which, together with pedagogical development, put into question the suitability and efficiency of religious education focused on learning of abstract faith knowledge. That model, leaning on the “social catechumenate” and rural culture in which the Church was fitted during the century, had to give place to new ways of evangelization and education in faith in growing worker communities and urban areas (Gianetto 2002, 69). From the end of the nineteenth century until the Second Vatican Council, the Catechetical movement promoted and advocated for a determined step away from the catechism and memorizing of dogmatic definitions, but towards catechesis as a living activity. It became more and more evident that the shift in society required holistic faith formation. Inspired by the kerygmatic theology, the Catechetical movement rediscovered the strength of the Christian proclamation (Jungmann 1953). Catechesis turned from preoccupation with systematic religious knowledge towards the existential meaning of the Christian message. That turn was based on the insight that there is a need for Christian formation which will help believers live the reality of Christian faith by drinking at the fount of their personal encounter with Christ in his Word, despite a lack of support or in spite of societal pressures. Processes of religious education since then have been marked by attempts to adjust to new societal and cultural circumstances in which believers live and grow.

Processes of religious learning are questioned in relation to the requirements of a certain developmental age, life experience and varying life situations, and critical life events. Maturing in Christian faith is connected to maturing in humanity. It is evident that faithful must be accompanied in their specific circumstances and phases in life and helped to connect faith and contemporary rational thought. The connection between faith and experience follows wider theological discussions on the principle of correlation (Paul Tillich, Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx and others), which are religious-educationally and didactically transposed and developed in various models, from multi-correlational and abductive to hermeneutically communicative (Filipović and Lehner-Hartmann 2016, 194). Various catechetical textbooks and mate-
Materials published after the Second Vatican Council are focused on questioning and reflecting on life in light of faith. Latin American liberation theology and catechesis turn the focus to the social dimension of the Gospel message (the International Catechetical Week in Medellín in 1968; EG 176–285). Respecting the church experience on other continents raises awareness of the necessity of contextualization and inculturation of catechesis and faith formation. Furthermore, it recognizes their contribution to the integral development of persons (EN 1975).

Catechesis, religious and theological formation of adult faithful has the central place in catechetical theory almost since the 1960s. Adult religious learning includes various kinds of knowledge, according to which various forms and processes of religious education and faith formation are directed. After the Second Vatican Council stressed the importance of the priesthood of all baptized believers, adult faithful became more interested in deepening their faith. Besides theological reasons, that was also prompted by the insight into the necessity of lifelong learning in various fields of life in modern society. Continuing, lifelong adult catechesis is considered today as a basic form of catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church (CT 43), even though its realization in practice remains more of a postulate than a reality. The new awareness of lay faithful as subjects of catechesis in the post-council period contributed to the awareness of catechetical responsibility of the whole Christian community for catechesis. Adult believers feel responsible for the catechetical formation of their children, as well as new adult community members (Fleck 2011, 29).

In the new church and pastoral context there is visible dialectical tension between anthropologically oriented theology and magisterium in catechetical mediation. As a response to the pluriformity of theological thinking, at the beginning of the 1980s there was a need in some circles in the Church for an authoritative definition of Catholic teaching in the form of an adult catechism, which prompted the creation of The Catechism of the Catholic Church in 1992. The Catechism for youth, Youcat, published in 2011, attempts to express faith in a language understandable to youth, encourage discussion on faith and confront today’s way of thinking to the faith of the Church. Today it is obvious that processes of religious education and formation are happening in plural contexts.

### 3.3 Religious Education and Formation in Contemporary Plural Contexts

The question of becoming Christians and continuing growth in faith is incorporated into a wider pastoral plan today and it considers the specificity of each local church context (Derroitte 2000). Because of changed circumstances various ways of Christian initiation and continuing formation are required for specific groups and different categories of believers, their religious needs, and possibilities. That prompted the creation of various evangelizational and catechetical projects more adjusted to the life of people in growing urban areas, as a call to a community of the faithful and en-
counter with the faith tradition of the community, and as a call to an active participation in the life of the Christian community (e.g., Alpha course, Night Fever, adult faith pathways, spiritual exercises in everyday life). Various biographies and situations of faith and life of individuals require differentiated forms of religious formation, as well as cooperation between professional and volunteer catechists, who become involved based on personal responsibilities and gifts. Regarding the content of faith, believers are not asked to obey blindly, but to reflect, be attentive and contextually understand faith. Self-awareness of the faith of the Church meets the subjective understanding of faith of individual believers as carriers of church life and partners in shaping a new faith language (Exeler 1966, 277–282). Knowing and understanding faith is embodied in concrete historical becoming of persons in the community.

Religious socialization in the family, parish, Catholic educational institutions, and organizations is no longer understood as a one-way process of the transmission of faith and internalization by the receiver of Christian values and norms that govern a certain community. Through social processes of individualization and pluralization, the relationship between the individual and the collective has radically changed. The authority of traditional social institutions and relationships i.e., social class, Church, family, neighborhood, was gradually weakened in favor of the autonomy of the individual who sets personal goals and wants to realize him/herself as a unique person. In a plural society, there is a decrease of fixed roles and undisputable norms that need to be internalized. Contemporary theories of socialization stress individualization as the core of socialization. Religious education and formation are also done in dynamic tension between promoting the growth of persons in their uniqueness and their integration into community (Vermeer 2010, 105–107).

Catechesis and faith education is today increasingly understood as intergenerational communication and learning of faith (Amherdt 2017). Formative processes in a community happen in interpersonal sharing of religious knowledge and experience, in an atmosphere of trust and respect, to recognize the meaning of faith in one’s own life context. Older and younger members in the community enrich each other with their perspectives and experiences. The model of Family catechesis (span. Catequesis familiar), developed in Chile in the 1960s, and brought to some European church contexts (Filipović 2011, 129–133), and the model of Shared Christian practice, which moves from experience towards faith and from faith again towards experience (Groome 2011, 299–338), are examples of didactic concretization of the forementioned ideas.

Processes of religious education and faith formation today happen through formal and informal channels, and life circumstances become a place of religious learning. In the process of Christian initiation and faith education, essential importance further on is placed on family as the “house Church” where one becomes Christian in the midst of everyday experiences. Family needs support in order to accompany its members on the path of maturity in faith, especially in those dimensions which cannot be delegated, i.e., answers to children’s religious questions, and building the re-
relationship with God and image of God in connection to relationships in the family (Scharer 2000, 115–136; Filipović and Lehner-Hartmann 2016).

Besides the Christian community and family, which continue to hold the most important role in religious education and formation, there are other agents, such as Christian organizations, Catholic educational institutions (kindergartens, schools, universities), Catholic media, etc. The new media of social communication give new possibilities of religious education and faith formation. Their development, which in former socialist countries went hand in hand with the development of freedom of religious expression, opened many doors and opportunities to gain deeper religious knowledge and more incentive for spiritual life. Pilgrimages and organized Christian gatherings and meetings for youth and adults also hold within themselves elements of faith formation. However, religious education in public schools within the frame of school education, holds a special place.

4 Religious Education in School

School, as a social institution, promotes intellectual, cultural, ethical, and social development of students in answering the challenges of the new media, shifts in the labor market and questioning its own contribution to the communal life in growingly plural and multicultural societies. Religious education in schools has since the 1970s been profiled as a subject that is, with its goals and methods, adjusted to modern schools. Religious content is no longer a subject of school teaching due to its objective truth, but rather because of the understanding of European culture, which is permeated with Christian heritage, and because of the meaning of religion for the individual and society (Synodenbeschluß: Der Religionsunterricht in der Schule [1974]; 1998). After the collapse of opposing ideologies of the West and the East, interest in religion is questioned in relation to its contribution to the interpretation of the human experience and the shaping of a personal value system.

Religion and religious world view in religious education is put to the test of critical rationality. Care for transmission of Christian values, which was for a long time, due to the role of Christianity in the development of the school system in Europe, the dominant goal of religious education in schools, is broadened to include a holistic care of human maturing, with a focus on the meaning of spirituality and religiosity in the lives of the people. Even in the model of confessional religious education, the content of Christian revelation is expanded to the broadest horizon of research of religion, and the role of religion is questioned in confrontation with the greatest challenges of the times and context. This is didactically shaped by connecting theological and anthropological goals and contents (didactics of correlation), by putting emphasis on the contribution of religion in finding the meaning of life and providing the motif of hope (Roebben 2011).

Religious education as a school subject contributes to the gaining of specific hermeneutical and critically reflexive skills that students need to develop a personal
and social identity. To achieve this, religious education today, more than focusing on doctrinal aspects of religious traditions, focuses on personal narratives of believers, with which children and youth can identify. Through the encounter and critical confrontation with those narratives, students are invited to think about the way in which believers experience and live their faith, and to discover that each path of faith is a personal construction. Doing so, they will also question their own way of life and oppose stereotypes. The broader religious tradition is not just a subject being taught, but a means of interpretation, questioning and nurturing personal faith or worldview in encounter with others (Jackson 2002; Cush and Robinson 2014, 6–7). Faith or personal worldview develops through encounters and confrontations with the faith of the Church, with the faith of other people from history and the present, and with one’s own spiritual and religious practice, gained knowledge and experiences.

A discussion on the requirements of the truth in various religions contributes to the development of critically reflexive skills as well. That requires readiness of the students to rationally question faith and values to become autonomous persons. Educational confrontation with diversity in religious education (especially in non-confessional models of religious education, but also in confessional) invites students to think critically about their own and others’ religious, cultural and ethics traditions and backgrounds. If capacity for rational thought and decision making is to be promoted, religious standpoints need to be confronted also with secular counterarguments. Through that, religious education also shows its educational role in developing basic values of a democratic society, such as equality, freedom of speech, tolerance, and nondiscrimination, which secure social cohesion necessary for the flourishing of diversity (Vermeer 2010, 108–115).

Pluralization of society and dialogical openness towards other religions also change the goals of religious education. Religious education in schools was, for a long time in schools across Europe, considered a means of religious socialization, introducing individuals into the life of a certain religious community, i.e., Church (education in religion/learning religion). However, in countries with stronger religious pluralization, the focus was, already since the beginning of the 1970s, put on a neutral phenomenological approach and learning about religion. Today, depending on the socio-religious situation and tradition in certain countries of Europe, the most dominant models are those of learning through religion in confessional religious education and learning from religion in confessionally neutral versions of religious education (Kaupp 2019, 577; 582–585). Transformation of religious education in schools follows the transformation of religion in society. In many former communist countries, after the fall of communism, confessional religious education became an important place of religious socialization, which is attended by most students. In the meantime, it became conceptually adjusted to social shifts and requirements of modern schools in a global and plural world (Filipović 2011, 187–214).
5 Mutual Questioning of Religion and Education

Christian education and formation processes as social practice are weaved into historical structures of understanding faith and Church, and their significance in the political and social community. The pyramidal ecclesiology of division of the Church on clerics and laypeople, which is still dominant in many church and theological contexts and practices, even though the Second Vatican Council highlighted an ecclesiology of communion, has direct consequences on the understanding and practice of learning faith. Clericalization of the Church, which puts great power into the hands of the clerics, with all further mechanisms of exclusion and suppression, is an obstacle to a communal and intergenerational communication of faith, to the strengthening and the flourishing of catechetical ministries and charisms, and to the opening of new paths of learning faith in today’s circumstances.

That is also reflected in the capability of theology for dialogue with other sciences. Methodologies of sciences relevant for critical thinking on education are a multifaceted challenge to today’s religious education and practical theology. They point to the fact that a perspective influences the perception of practice and show that there are many interpretations of religion that can conflict with the dominant discourse or dominant ecclesial practice in a certain context (Cush and Robinson 2014, 8–9). That helps to perceive the fact of the social construction of knowledge and to discover the connection between knowledge and power (Michel Foucault). Connected to the theological thinking of the Second Vatican council, those methodologies help recognize the Church’s involvement in the logic of power, which is diametrically opposed to the Gospel values, and uncover the oppressive structures within the educational processes. The deconstruction of power leaves space for questioning of hegemonic and exclusive (colonial, patriarchal and other hierarchically normative) perspectives and their involvement in the structuring of religion in a certain context. The uncovering of mechanisms of dominance that hinder the development of pluralism and communion is necessary to develop awareness of and sensitivity to the basic equality of all faithful. That enables one to read anew the sources and tradition, to read the Bible with the eyes of the oppressed, marginalized, unjustly treated, so that the liberation power of the Biblical message for promotion of justice, nondiscrimination and diversity in the Church and society can come to the fore (Reddie 2006).

Opposing the so-called objective knowledge and the meaning of a certain knowledge for individuals and social communities, is considered overcome in religious education and other education sciences today. Contemporary education theories are distancing themselves from the illuminist separation of theory and practice, substance, and function, and are aspiring towards holistic understanding of knowledge, which ties together education and formation, practice and reflection, knowledge, and wisdom. Critical thinking and discerning which leads to balance, maturity, and wisdom, is inherent to education (Groome 2011, 115–120). In that return to inte-
grality, religion and education come together performing the task of humanizing the individual and society.

Knowledge is constituted in multiple communication processes, which in a context of Christian theology means: in the encounter with the basic documents of faith and tradition of the Church, but also in the encounter with contemporary sciences, cultures and persons, with other religious traditions and spiritualities. The formative processes, not just in school, but in the Christian community, must open spaces and hold tension between tradition and context, between the message and understanding, between universality and particularity, between unity and diversity. The dialectic tension between faith and culture, tradition and contemporary context, content, and function of faith, is reflected also in religious language. Traditionally religious language in religious education in school was more implicit, while in catechesis and continuing faith formation in a Christian community more explicit, relying on Christian sources and tradition. In the cultural horizon of postmodern consciousness, characterized by the abandoning of universal systems of meaning, where truth is not understood metaphysically but rather as an encounter that influences the transformation of a person, interaction is necessary between two languages in all education processes.

Today, the ability of the Church and religious education processes to be plural is especially put to test. It is necessary to conceptually and methodically valorize it and turn it into models of action (Riegel 2016). There is a need for a hermeneutical toolkit that will meet the heterogeneity of participants in educational and formative processes, as well as answer the intersectional interdependence of certain characteristics of their identities.

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