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Editors' Introduction

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Editor's Introduction

The articles included in this September 2015 issue of the *Journal of Catholic Education* reflect a diversity of topics related to Catholic education at the K-12 and higher education levels. Several of the articles look at historical events, documents, or policy initiatives that continue to have lasting impacts on the everyday operation of Catholic elementary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities. Other articles examine curricular approaches used in elementary, high school, and college classrooms. This blend of historical and contemporary investigations will, we hope, provide readers with a unique perspective on Catholic schooling—past, present, and future.

The issue begins with Carrie J. Schroeder's article, "The USCCB Curriculum Framework: Origins, Questions, and A Call for Research," which examines in detail the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) document *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*, promulgated in 2007. Schroeder's investigation of the Framework uses interview data and thorough document review to identify and answer questions pertinent to teaching Religious Studies within the guidelines set forth in the USCCB document.

Next, Richard Ognibene's article, "Catholic and Public School Commonalities: A Historical Perspective," highlights similarities in pedagogical approaches between Catholic and public schools beginning in the 1940s, when Catholic educators began participating in "life adjustment education," a public school reform movement. Ognibene traces similar participation in school reform through the ensuing years, presenting two case studies from the 1970s and ending with Catholic schools' adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Through Ognibene's article, readers will develop an understanding of one important aspect of the historical trajectory of Catholic schools.

The third article in this issue, "Love, Charity, and Pope Leo XIII: A Leadership Paradigm for Catholic Education," written by Henry J. Davis, examines Pope Leo XIII's writings on labor, focusing on how Pope Leo's vision of love and charity can help leaders in Catholic education understand and make decisions regarding treatment of staff members. According to Davis's close reading of Pope Leo's writings, love and charity are intertwined virtues that should be held as paramount in determining labor policies and practices.

Turning to contemporary issues in Catholic education, the article by Scott Jarvie and Kevin Burke presents a case study focusing on teaching “difficult knowledge,” such as the traumatic elements present in Cormack McCarthy’s novel, *The Road*, in Catholic secondary school English classes. Jarvie and Burke’s case study posits the process of grappling with difficult topics in literature as a way for students to better understand themselves and their relationships within their communities. This practice-focused article presents valuable suggestions for pedagogical approaches and assessment of students’ learning and growth through assignments that challenge them to address such issues.

In their article “School Science Capacity: A Study of Four Urban Catholic Grade Schools,” Lara Smetana and Elizabeth Coleman build on theory of school capacity to develop a model applied as the theoretical framework for four case studies that highlight the contribution of school-level leadership and organizational elements that support or limit school science improvement initiatives. Smetana and Coleman’s analysis of interview and focus group data focuses on the perspectives of principals and teachers within each case and concludes with practical implications for school science capacity building through the utilization of already-present assets within Catholic schools.

Glenn James, Elda Martinez, and Sherry Herbers present an analysis of Jesus’s teaching methods in their article “What Can Jesus Teach us about Student Engagement?” The focus in this article is on applying Jesus’s strategies for engaging learners through storytelling and analogies, which the authors posit as essential strategies for student engagement in the higher education classroom. In their analysis of episodes depicting Jesus as teacher within the four Gospels, they highlight a number of elements of narrative that are important to initiating and maintaining engagement and make recommendations for instructors in higher education to adopt similar strategies.

The final article in the main section of this issue, “Educating for Social Justice: Drawing from Catholic Social Teaching,” by James Valadez and Philip Mirci, employs a unique qualitative methodology called duoethnography to define socially just teaching and to make recommendations for practice that attends to the characteristics of social justice in education that they identify. Duoethnography is an in-depth process of conversation and analysis among two researchers; as this article demonstrates, it is a method that can lead to fruitful insights on topics that might otherwise be difficult to unpack due to their scope or nature.

In addition to these excellent main articles, the issues also contains a focus section investigating the Cristo Rey school model. This focus section, guest edited by Ursula Aldana of the University of San Francisco, presents empirical and critical research focused on Cristo Rey schools across the country. In addition to Aldana's introduction to the section, which provides context for the Cristo Rey Network, the focus section contains four articles: "The Jesuit Social Justice Dialectic and The Cristo Rey Corporate Work Study Program," by Sajit U. Kabadi, which presents a critical assessment of the corporate work study program characteristic of Cristo Rey schools, highlighting the dialectical tension represented in the program within Jesuit-sponsored Cristo Rey high schools. The next article, "Does Jesus want us to be Poor?" Student Perspectives of the Religious Program at a Cristo Rey Network School," by Ursula Aldana, presents findings from an ethnographic study at one Cristo Rey high school. The article focuses on how the Cristo Rey model—specifically the corporate work-study program—influences students' experiences of religious education, identifying a reluctance on the part of the school to encourage students to discuss their lived experiences and make connections to their religious education. In their article, "Parent Engagement at a Cristo Rey School: Building Home-School Partnerships in a Multicultural Immigrant Community," Thomas Crea, Andrew Reynolds, and Elizabeth Degnan report on their study of parent engagement at Cristo Rey Boston. The mixed-methods study combined a quantitative survey with focus groups to craft a picture of how parents understood their roles in the school community and to make recommendations for the school to improve practice around parent involvement and building home-school partnerships among multicultural families. The final article in the focus section, written by Jesse Jovel and Brandi O. Lucas, examines the transition of one school from a traditional Catholic high school to a Cristo Rey school. The article uses data from interviews conducted with three long-time teachers at the school to understand the roles teachers play in supporting such transitions. Together, the articles in this focus section shed new light on the Cristo Rey model and raise important questions about the contours of the model going forward.

Echoing the diversity of the articles, this issue contains reviews of six new books, ranging in topic from historical studies to philosophical inquiries to practice-focused volumes on innovative pedagogies for contemporary schooling.

Finally, a reminder that beginning with the spring 2016 issue of the Journal, we will include a new section called "Education in Practice." This section will feature articles written by practitioners in Catholic schools and focused

on effective and innovative practices in Catholic education. The articles in the Education in Practice section will complement the research articles in each issue. We will welcome article proposals for the inaugural Education in Practice section through October 15, 2015. Please visit the Journal website to see the full Call for Proposals.

We sincerely hope that the articles in this issue will be interesting and helpful to readers working in Catholic education at all levels. As always, we are eager to receive your feedback! Please let us know what you think of this issue via email (catholicedjournal@lmu.edu) or Twitter (@Catholicedjournal). We look forward to hearing your thoughts!

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Editors