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Introductory Comments

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RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

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Discussions regarding research and Catholic education are not new, but with the advent of a journal specifically devoted to inquiry and practice in Catholic schools, the conversations have become more focused. Such a conversation occurred in the format of a research presentation at the 1997 NCEA conference in Minneapolis. The papers in this section reflect both previous conversations as well as the NCEA dialogue. Each participant's comments center around the following questions: What previous research has influenced your professional work; and what research in Catholic education still needs to be conducted? For the purpose of this introduction, attention is first centered on the authors' responses to the second question. Focus then shifts to how *Catholic Education* will be responsive to these research issues.

The section opens with an essay by Karen L. Tichy, associate superintendent for research and professional development, Archdiocese of St. Louis. The next contribution is from T. J. Wallace, director of the Center for Catholic Education at the University of Dayton; and the final paper is authored by Elaine M. Schuster, superintendent of schools, Archdiocese of Chicago. These articles are distinct statements, written separately; nonetheless, there is a confluence of thoughts presented. Some areas identified as warranting additional research center around the following questions: How well do we infuse the social teachings of the Church in classroom practice? How is technology being used in Catholic schools? What needs to be done in order to make the schools more technologically adept? What happens to graduates? Where do they go after graduation and what becomes of them as adults? How do Catholic schools address diversity issues? How does moral development occur? How do American Catholic schools compare with Catholic schools in other nations? How do higher education institutions specifically prepare students to teach in Catholic schools? What are the ben-

efits and drawbacks of single-gender schools? What training is needed for 21st century Catholic school leaders?

Clearly, these questions can provide a research agenda for many investigators for years to come. The editors of *Catholic Education* hope to address some of these questions in specific theme focus sections in Volume One (1997-1998). For example, the December issue will feature articles on character development; the March issue will highlight some of the work occurring in Catholic schools outside the United States; and the June issue will focus on technology and its use in Catholic schools.

We hope that the papers in this section will signal the beginning of a rich dialogue and provide readers with the opportunity to reflect on both the theory and practice of Catholic education.

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