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## Catholic School Leadership: An Invitation to Lead, edited by Thomas C. Hunt, Thomas E. Oldenski, SM & Theodore J. Wallace

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in mind. It will be both a useful tool for school administrators and an admirable model for religious communities enabling shared mission in promotion of lay leadership in Catholic schools.

*Jeffrey Gros, FSC, is associate director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC.*

## **CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: AN INVITATION TO LEAD**

THOMAS C. HUNT, THOMAS E. OLDENSKI, S.M., & THEODORE J. WALLACE (EDS.). FALMER PRESS, 2000.

*Reviewed by Angela T. Lydon, SBS*

Preparing leaders for the new generation of Catholic schools is the theme and context of *Catholic School Leadership: An Invitation to Lead*. This work is a timely and important contribution to contemporary conversations on Catholic schools. The authors of the topical essays demonstrate their familiarity with the challenges and opportunities which face those who are called to prepare leaders for Catholic schools. The essays deal with a wide variety of crucial and meaningful issues. These issues include the preparation and training of faith-filled leaders, the knowledge and skills required for communicating and enacting the vision and values of Catholic education, the decisions that must be made when planning curriculum, and the task of developing teachers and staff for Catholic schools.

Throughout the book, the essays chart a path toward thinking about new ways of leading and serving for Catholic school principals. This undertaking is indeed a complex and difficult mandate. The book details what the essayists see as the tasks and the dimensions of knowledge required to move Catholic schools into the future. Hence, the book presents the reader with a kaleidoscope of essays that are intellectually stimulating and grounded in practice. The chapters are grouped around three organizing themes: 1) Educational Foundations and the Future of Catholic Schools; 2) Teacher Preparation and Development; and 3) Issues in Catholic School Leadership.

The essays included in the first theme invite the reader to consider the past, present, and future of Catholic education through the lenses of history, law, philosophy, identity, and personal reflection. These essays reflect the educational and policy foundations which undergird Catholic schools. The reader will encounter a wide variety of voices, scholarship, and positions that present the heritage and culture of Catholic education. The knowledge communicated through the essays will increase readers' understanding and appre-

ciation of the Catholic school tradition. Such an awareness, this reviewer asserts, is foundational if any significant or meaningful changes are to occur in Catholic schools. The second theme focuses on contemporary issues for Catholic schools related to culture and identity. The essays address the formation and preparation of teachers and staff as well as the ongoing challenges that Catholic schools will encounter as the 21st century evolves. The chapters stress the need for Catholic schools to foster the personal and professional growth of faculty and staff in a faith-filled, caring, and supportive environment. The primacy of religion and the development of curricular approaches that recognize and promote Catholic culture, identity, and academics frame the discourse.

Catholic school leadership is the focus of the book's final chapters. The overriding theme of the essays is the call, mission, and ministry of leadership in a Catholic school. Persons called to leadership in a Catholic school are individuals who are, as one author states, committed to both intellectual and moral learning, aware and appreciative of the many forms that leadership takes, guided by the social responsibilities that flow from the Gospel, and sensitive to the fragility of everyone, especially themselves and those with whom they work and teach (p. 215). To be a leader in a Catholic school requires not only knowledge, achievement, and skill, but also the wisdom to lead through and with the power given through belief in Jesus Christ.

The book raises many critical issues confronting Catholic education today and suggests possible ways to address the challenges and opportunities of this new epoch. The critical reader will observe that the scholarship of the essays is uneven and that the vision projected for the new generation of Catholic schools is incomplete. The challenging issues of diversity—racial and ethnic, gender, cultural, social, economic, and exceptionality—and the role of Catholic schools in providing viable and meaningful opportunities for diverse populations of children to participate in the gift of Catholic schools are not adequately addressed in the book. However, this reviewer recommends *Catholic School Leadership: An Invitation to Lead* as a must read for Catholic educators.

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