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Touching the Hearts of Students: Characteristics of a Lasallian School, by George Van Grieken, FSC

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involved in the school must articulate Gospel values in word and deed “and fully commit themselves to use every teachable occasion to instruct, model, encourage, and praise” (p. 11). Baptism calls us to evangelize by living our faith, that is, to internalize and witness Christian character. Faithfulness to the process is non-negotiable in a Catholic school as is the partnership of parents and teachers to provide purposeful, systematic, age-appropriate experiences of soul formation in the home and at school.

Cronin’s framework provides focus and direction for character development in the Catholic school. Consequently, the scope of the book is limited to school-age children and the author views a “consistent, interrelated, and progressive effort beginning in the primary grades” (p. 23) as an absolute necessity and a responsibility of the Catholic school. I agree with Cronin that “a child’s early years are the crucial time for parents through love and example to establish the elements of conscience, some basic empathetic responses to others, some acceptance of rules and limits, and the potential for a positive self-appraisal as a worthy person” (p. 21), but I submit that the first three years of life are crucial to that process. Formative parenting support must begin at or before the birth of a child and the Catholic school, as an educational mainstay of the Church, is called to be an agent of that formation.

Cronin makes a significant contribution to the educational mission of the Church. This book offers direction for all persons involved in soul formation, education, child-rearing, and parish life. The more closely we approximate a “seamless experience” (p. 29) of character formation for persons at all ages and stages of life, the more faithfully we respond to our Baptismal call to further the kingdom of God on earth.

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TOUCHING THE HEARTS OF STUDENTS: CHARACTERISTICS OF A LASALLIAN SCHOOL

GEORGE VAN GRIEKEN, FSC. DE LA SALLE INSTITUTE, 1999.

Reviewed by Jeffrey Gros, FSC

As the age of the laity emerges, providing vision and formation for Catholic schools formerly staffed by religious remains a challenge and an opportunity. Religious communities are developing training programs, lit-

erature, and inservice processes for empowering lay educators in their mission as Catholic educators, drawing on the tradition of the sponsoring community.

This volume is an important contribution to that literature. While this book emerges out of the tradition of a particular community, as the subtitle notes, the fact that it deals with the Catholic patron of all teachers, John Baptist de La Salle, and that it is designed in a practical, concrete way, gives it a more universal usefulness than just a resource for schools in the tradition of the de La Salle Christian Brothers. The book includes five chapters, a useful annotated bibliography, and three appendices.

The first chapter situates Catholic education today, as religious communities are in the process of moving into shared mission with lay colleagues and of providing support for the emerging lay leadership in the schools. Developing this vision is enhanced by grounding that vision in the particular narrative which gave rise to it. The second chapter traces the life and times of de La Salle. The third chapter elaborates the educational vision that has emerged in the Church from the vision and practice of this tradition.

Much of modern Catholic education is grounded in the 18th- and 19th-century movements focused in the heritage of de La Salle. The most well known of those contributions are the simultaneous method and the vernacular language. The chapter that will be most useful for administrators envisioning programs and processes for board and faculty development is the fifth, which focuses on the vision and practice for today. After laying out 10 operative commitments for an educational spirituality emerging from the spirit of faith and zeal, the author provides a detailed reflective process for enhancing the internalization of these commitments. In each section the text delineates consequences for students, teachers, teaching activity, and the teacher-student relationship. With these brief expository segments are included appropriate quotations and follow-up questions. While the quotations here are from de La Salle and Christian Brothers literature, they can as easily be substituted by parallel material from the Church or other communities for use in other contexts. The tradition represented here could have been conceptualized with a more universal audience in view. The more sectarian focus on "Lasallian" schools does not diminish the quality of the volume as a resource for wider use, but it does exhibit its significance for all Catholic schools as they embody the values inherited from this patron of all their teachers. The charisms of the saints and of religious communities are gifts for the universal Church.

This volume demonstrates how what has been developed by one leader for a particular movement in the Church becomes a resource for all of us as we move into an era of lay leadership, grounded in the faith of the Church and zeal for the Gospel. This is a book written by a teacher for teachers. It is well researched, but more importantly it is well written with a lay audience

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.

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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-

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