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## Catholic Education: Distinctive and Inclusive, by John Sullivan

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Church. Readers looking for a factual and non-sacramental view of confession will find this section informative and interesting.

The time period from 1926 to 1945 was marked by another significant change in the devotional habits of Catholics. During this time period, Catholics gradually began to receive Communion on a more frequent basis. McGuinness explains this phenomenon by pointing to the proclamation from Pope Pius X that daily Communion was available to all the faithful in the final section of the book, "Let's Go to the Altar: American Catholics and the Eucharist, 1926-1976." Mass goers receiving Communion continued to rise through the 1960s and 1970s, with the percent of weekly communicants growing from 29% of those attending Mass in 1973 to over 50% in 1976, despite a decrease in Mass attendance. In a readable approach, McGuinness defines practices and trends associated with participation in the Eucharist.

Overall, the content of *Habits of Devotion: Catholic Religious Practice in Twentieth-Century America* is an informative read for the Catholic educator looking for a historical background on the major devotions of the Catholic Church in America during the last century. The authors provide an objective view of an area of Catholicism that could easily be clouded in subjectivity or bias.

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## **CATHOLIC EDUCATION: DISTINCTIVE AND INCLUSIVE**

JOHN SULLIVAN  
 KLUWER ACADEMIC PUBLISHERS, 2001  
 \$159.00, 248 pages

*Reviewed by Susan Richter*

Catholic schools are different from other educational institutions. Catholic education strives to go beyond instruction, inculcating a set of beliefs and doctrines, sharing in discipleship, and promoting the development of Christian persons so that they are able to share in God's life. In the book, *Catholic Education: Distinctive and Inclusive*, Sullivan (2001) argues that Catholic schools can be both distinctive and inclusive:

A strongly motivating factor that underpins the Church's efforts to maintain separate religious schooling is the keen sense that the environment in which learning takes place constitutes an atmosphere that can make all the difference to the outcome one wants. It can facilitate and enhance the formation of Christian persons. (p. xiii)

Catholics believe that being disciples of Jesus Christ culminates with one's participation in the Eucharist. For this participation to be meaningful, one must understand the beliefs and traditions associated with the Church. From that perspective, it is a separate group of believers forming a community to worship according to a prescribed set of practices. One may view this as being exclusive, but the paradox, according to Sullivan, lies in the fact that the Catholic faith focuses on the unending concept of forgiveness and love of God for all. It invites saints and sinners alike to share in that love and faith, and is one that is therefore, inherently inclusive.

Education in the Catholic schools is designed to be different, but at the same time open to all. Sullivan (2001) explains the two polarities at work, challenging Catholics

to bring aspects other than education from their ecclesial and institutional life into harmony with both of the polarities and debates within the wider educational and political community about how to promote the common good in a pluralist society while drawing upon the resources and respecting the traditions of particular groups. (p. 18)

Sullivan begins by interpreting the two polarities, admitting that both the conservative philosophy and the liberal philosophy are partly right and partly wrong. The author believes that it is essential for the health of Catholic education that both ends of this spectrum be clearly studied. Focusing on each of the polarities, the author only concentrates on Catholic schooling in the public sector. Missing are some of the other educational opportunities for Catholics to learn about their faith, namely liturgy, sermons, missions, pilgrimages, and other forms of adult and higher education. Additionally, the roles of the family and parish are not represented in the work.

Drawing on the work of two other scholars, Sullivan relates the opposing viewpoints from *The Ebbing Tide* (Arthur, 1995) and *Catholic Schools and the Common Good* (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993). Sullivan, allowing the reader to understand more clearly the concepts of the central thesis that Catholic schools can be both distinctive and inclusive, analyzes each of the works. The author also uses other studies from the United Kingdom and from the United States as a means to examine the distinctive nature of Catholic schools and discuss the universality of the Church.

Sullivan (2001) comments that many Catholic educators are unaware of the key documents that form the basis for all Catholic education and thus are unaware of the official story that is meant to be the very foundation of Catholic schools. “This disconnection between ‘promulgation’ and ‘reception,’ is itself an illustration of an imbalance between the polarities of distinctiveness and inclusiveness in Catholic education” (p. 19). The author uses the example of Friedrich von Hugel (1852-1925) to show how a person can combine a firm commitment to the Church with a genuine openness to people with different convictions and institutional affiliations. Only God can read and know what is in a person’s heart. Sullivan supports the idea from Von Hugel that “if we are open to the differences between people and ourselves, if we welcome their ‘otherness’ and the particularity they present to us, if we are genuinely inclusive, we will adapt ourselves to their needs” (Von Hugel, 1908, p. 34).

Examining the worldview, Sullivan identifies several elements practiced by Catholics that contribute to the distinctive nature of the faith and readily admits that Catholic educators must be aware that these distinctive beliefs are highly contestable in society. Criticism of both the theory and practice of Catholicism should “prompt Catholic educators to consider carefully the justification and coherence of their claim to a distinctive approach to education” (Sullivan, 2001, p. 125). Illustrating the other end of the spectrum, namely the concept of inclusiveness, Sullivan argues that many aspects of the Catholic faith are inherently inclusive and essential. Using the work of another philosopher, Maurice Blondel, Sullivan explores the idea of a living tradition and how an appreciation of this provides Catholic schools the opportunity to remain distinctive yet inclusive: “An appreciation of living tradition provides several pointers as to how a Catholic school might attempt to promote in its pupils an active receptivity, a critical solidarity and a discerning openness” (p. 171).

Catholic schools have a role to play in promoting the common good in our pluralistic society. Recognizing some of the criticism leveled against Catholic education based on the fact that it promotes separation, Sullivan (2001) states that Catholic schools do not simply look inward but concern themselves with promoting the common good, which in turn supports the notion that Catholic education is indeed inclusive to the point of being “constitutive communities” (p. 193).

Providing an introduction to each chapter allows the reader to see the main points in the chapters. Each chapter ends with a conclusion of the major points outlined and prepares the reader for the subsequent chapters. Sullivan is careful to point out what has been left out of this argument. This book is by no means a comprehensive study on the idea that Catholic education is both

distinctive and inclusive. This work touches on a thesis that is important and relevant to Catholic education, but one that is more useful to those in higher education. The author does challenge the reader to give more attention to the reception of Church teaching, so that principles can be put into practice and Catholic education can be considered both distinctive and inclusive.

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## THE WISDOM OF PRACTICE: ESSAYS ON TEACHING, LEARNING, AND LEARNING TO TEACH

LEE S. SHULMAN  
JOSSEY-BASS, 2004  
\$45.00, 608 pages

*Reviewed by Michael Thomasian*

“An effectively reformed school is a setting that is educative for its teachers”  
(p. 519).

Shulman believes, after 30 years of research, that classroom teaching “is perhaps the most complex, most challenging, and most demanding, subtle, nuanced, and frightening activity that our species has ever invented” (p. 504). In this passionate collection of essays, Shulman asks two vital questions: What makes teaching so difficult? How can teachers learn to manage, cope with, and eventually master those difficulties? The work is at times mind boggling, and yet leaves the reader feeling uplifted.