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Editors' Comments

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EDITORS' COMMENTS

This issue of the journal offers research and thinking that generally considers answers to the question: What kind of family, school, and community are needed to raise a Christian person in the Catholic faith? The common thread of research inquiry within this issue is a focus on the effect that formal educational settings, faculty, curriculum, and student culture have on faith-related learning outcomes as well as other student learning outcomes.

A central insight of the social sciences—that identify that formation is by socialization and inculturation—has become compelling for educational researchers interested in faith formation. No longer is the task of fostering faith the work of the “experts”; all are called to be participants as teachers and learners. A burgeoning recognition that the process of growing in faith extends far beyond the confines of formal religious education has given rise to inquiry regarding approaches to catechesis that draws on the whole life of the Christian community as a source and agent of formation.

The authors of the articles in this issue consider some of the dynamics between school, parish, and family that are critical to an understanding of effective processes for handing on the faith. McDonough studies the techniques that teachers employ to discuss controversial social-moral issues in some Catholic schools. One approach encourages students to engage their parents about these issues after a general discussion has taken place in the classroom. Some observers, however, caution that many families may not have the competencies necessary to contribute productively to the child’s understanding of these complicated issues. Others suggest that the larger dynamic of establishing appropriate and complementary relationships between the school, parish, and family need to be addressed.

Additional articles in this issue consider the impact of Catholic education on a variety of aspects of social and faith development. Callegher addresses in his research the question of the influence that a post-secondary education experience may have on student attitudes about social-cultural issues when those students are graduates of Catholic high schools. Another view by Litton, Martin, Higareda, and Mendoza considers the impact of Catholic education on ethnic minority students in Los Angeles, their parents, and their communities. Mayotte reports on the findings of her research about Catholic elementary and secondary school teachers’ patterns of prayer in school.

The final articles in this issue present highlights from the Catholic Education Collaborative Conference (CHEC) held at Loyola Marymount University (LMU). The conference, a result of a 2007 dialogue on Catholic

schooling hosted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, is the first of six to be held at Catholic colleges and universities throughout the country. The theme of the LMU conference was “Catholic Schools and The Immigrant Church.” Montejano provides a summary of the conference and the CHEC collaborative. Rev. Gregory Boyle and Brother Michael Collins’s presentations at the conference are provided in this focus section.

This issue also includes several reviews of publications that address the topic of prayer. Malcolm McCluskey reviews *In All Things: Everyday Prayers of Jesuit High School Students*, a guide for meditation and prayer in the Ignatian tradition with prayers written by students from Jesuit secondary schools. The final book review is by Craig Horning who suggests that Emilie Griffin’s *Simple Ways to Pray: Spiritual Life in the Catholic Tradition* provides “a glimpse into the treasure box of the Catholic prayer tradition with a focus on accessibility for people in various stages of spiritual development.”

Michael James, Lorraine Ozar, & Joseph M. O’Keefe, S.J., *Co-editors*