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## ISSUES IN EDUCATION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN THE DIOCESE OF GALVESTON-HOUSTON

GEORGIA B. KIMMEY, UNIVERSITY PRESS OF AMERICA, 2003.

*Reviewed by Beth A. Burau*

Educators in today's parochial, private, and public schools find themselves reminiscing over the days when children were products of a different culture and environment, parents were more involved in the education of their children, and money was not an object. There was a time these ideals may have been true, but the past was not always perfect. While a study of the past can project ideas of what the world of education can be today, the past does not hold all of the answers. The past is a base, a starting point.

Georgia B. Kimmey recognizes the importance of bridges between the past, present, and future. She states, "tracing the rich history of Catholic education in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston instills an appreciation for the hardships of the early bishops, priests, and sisters, as well as an understanding of the roots of what exists today" (p. 93). The past, as Kimmey illustrates, does provide us with that base from which we have taken root. If we are to prepare ourselves for the future we must study our roots and apply those foundations to the changing ways and times of our nation today. Kimmey's *Issues in Education: The Development of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston* examines Catholic education's past in the diocese and applies that history to the challenges the Diocese of Galveston-Houston and other Catholic dioceses face today.

Catholic education in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston encompasses elementary schools, high schools, colleges, and universities, all of which have a rich history and tradition. In fact, the Catholic schools were established before the parishes. The influx of European immigrants in the early history of the Galveston-Houston area supported this effort by holding the belief that "in order to keep them Catholic in a Protestant country, they would need a strong Catholic education" (p. 3). From this and many other beliefs, began the tradition of Catholic education, both in the schools and within parishes, in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston.

Kimmey explores the resilience and determination of the sisters and religious orders that planted the roots of Catholic education in the Galveston and Houston areas. Delving into the hardships of those dedicated to the establishment and preservation of the Catholic schools, Kimmey brings reality to the romantic ideals often conjured up by those today who study the birth and growth

of Catholic education in our nation. She examines the economic hardships caused by nature due to the geographical location of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston. The natural disasters of hurricanes, which dampened their spirits as well as hurt their pocketbooks, could not fully shut down the schools. At just over 100 pages, Kimmey's work does not skimp on any problem, question, or reason. She thoroughly and concisely recounts the struggles and opposition the schools faced during both World Wars, the influx of population due to immigration, the Great Depression, prejudice toward Catholics and the minority students served by Catholic schools, and the Ku Klux Klan. Her exploration is not just of the past. Kimmey's research includes current hardships faced by the diocese such as the recent "rise in unemployment...due to the fall of the Enron corporation and other companies associated with the giant" (p. 92).

Kimmey does not just examine the school system that exists within the Diocese of Galveston-Houston. She also reviews the parish programs of religious education that are encompassed under the title of Catholic education. In doing so, Kimmey makes her book a friendly, factual, and historical resource for all of those involved in the many facets of Catholic education. The second half of the book thoughtfully examines and outlines the issues that today's educators must face: students with special needs, economic hardships, school vouchers, and multiculturalism and diversity. The book offers insight and ideas about these current concerns. Youth Ministry and CCE (Continuing Christian Education) programs are also addressed, as they provide religious formation and education for students not in attendance at the diocesan Catholic institutions. Kimmey does not exclude adult faith formation in terms of religious education. She points out that it is just as important to continue the education of adults in Catholicism "as the schools are becoming more and more the responsibility of the laity" (p. 98). Educators in the Catholic faith, whether lay Catholic teachers, the religious, or directors of religious education, can use Kimmey's explorations as a reference for what they have and have not tried in their own parishes or schools.

Kimmey states, "the goal of this work is to provide a fair and candid view of the challenges and success stories that have become a part of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston's colorful past" (p. x). Not only is this goal accomplished, but Kimmey also opens for future discussions by noting, "the work is still undone" (p. 98). Catholic education has taken on so many facets within the school and parish programs, that, in order to keep up with the ever-changing times, the goals and needs of Catholic education must and will change. Despite the problems and struggles that Catholic education faces today, Kimmey states, "the Holy Spirit will find a way to use the faithful to accomplish God's work" (p. 98). It is within the hands and minds of Kimmey's readers that God's work within Catholic education will be done.

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