

## EDITORS' COMMENTS

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As this journal begins its ninth year of publication, we look forward to what Malcolm Gladwell has called "the tipping point," coming to bear on Catholic education. Gladwell authored the national bestseller in 2000, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company), describing how the force of events can multiply under the leadership of key, strategic personnel who can quickly and forever change and renew even the most entrenched of organizations. The proverbial tipping point is the point of no return, a watershed, after which things will never be the same and where everything can change at once.

Several events prompt our hopeful expectation. Catholic school closings announced in the 2004-2005 academic year have resulted in national attention being paid to the structure, governing, and financing of Catholic schools. The Diocese of Brooklyn and the Archdioceses of Chicago, Detroit, Newark, and St. Louis all have followed through with multiple and widespread school closings. The publicity surrounding this news has renewed interest in school choice initiatives, prompting many state legislatures to consider bills that allow parental choice in selecting where their tax dollars are spent to educate their children. The District of Columbia currently boasts a federally funded school choice initiative, the DC Choice Incentive Act of 2003, which allows hundreds of students to attend the schools of their choice, public or private, with their tuition paid by congressionally appropriated funds. The Alliance for School Choice, an advocacy group based in Phoenix, Arizona, supports the efforts of school reform minded citizens in every state who struggle to respond to the educational needs of children.

At the request of several diocesan bishops, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has assembled a national roundtable of Catholic business leaders to advise the bishops about best practices in the financial management and oversight of church resources. Under the leadership of Geoffrey T. Boisi, a Long Island, New York, businessman, CEO of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, and a trustee at Boston College, the roundtable presents a new opportunity for lay leadership that can assist diocesan administrators in being better stewards of the temporal goods of the church. The business acumen this group brings to the table is impressive. Addressing some pressing issues in health care, portability of benefits, retirement, central purchasing, and investment management can result in millions of dollars of savings for the church. Indeed, if the USCCB could find a way, with the help of the Roundtable, to centralize the purchasing of health insurance for all church employees in the U.S. – priests, teachers, pastoral

ministers, musicians, and staff – the savings would themselves create a tipping point.

The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) welcomed a new president recently, Dr. Karen Ristau, and with her, a new outlook and vision for the organization. The NCEA offers a variety of services to Catholic educators including conferences, publications, workshops, training, and professional development opportunities, as well as serving as a clearinghouse for all major concerns about Catholic education. The journal takes this opportunity to welcome Dr. Ristau and looks forward to the new energy and direction that her leadership will bring.

The church universal, on a grander scale, is in a similar situation regarding the new papacy of Pope Benedict XVI. Times of transition are always times of growth and change. While grateful for the blessings of the past, especially those graces that came to us through the ministry of our chosen leaders, our hearts quicken at this time when new beginnings and a new ministry take shape. With leadership transitions such as these occurring, the Spirit must be working overtime, and a tipping point may be upon us.

For our part, the editors of this journal have been busy doing all we can to solidify the knowledge base in Catholic school leadership and to provide ongoing, current research in the field of Catholic education. We were privileged to work with many of our colleagues in the U.S. and abroad in writing, assembling, and publishing the latest research on Catholic schools. Our work has included *Handbook of Research on Catholic Education* (Hunt, Joseph, & Nuzzi; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001); *Catholic Schools Still Make a Difference* (Hunt, Joseph, & Nuzzi; Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association, 2002); *Handbook of Research on Catholic Higher Education* (Hunt, Joseph, Nuzzi, & Geiger; Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2003); and *Catholic Schools in the United States: An Encyclopedia* (Hunt, Joseph, & Nuzzi; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004). We are hard at work presently organizing collections of articles from this journal on topical themes so that we may soon offer you a collected series of books focused on issues of ongoing concern.

For all these reasons, we sense great change is upon us. The journal will continue to do its part to sustain and strengthen Catholic education in all of its forms. Thank you for your continued loyalty and support. We hope you will journey with us as the tipping point in Catholic education dawns.

*Ronald J. Nuzzi, Thomas C. Hunt, Co-Editors*