

EDITORS' COMMENTS

Have you ever had the experience, after buying a new car, of driving around the city streets and being overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of people who have made the same decision you have and are driving the very same car? Psychologists would no doubt argue that the recent purchase creates a heightened sensitivity to a particular model, and only makes it seem like there are more of this kind of car on the road. But it certainly appears otherwise. For more than a few days, it is easy to feel some affinity and respect for those savvy other drivers, wise enough to have made such a choice.

Perhaps it is because our work with the journal is focused exclusively on Catholic education. Maybe it has something to do with colleagues here and abroad who send in news and research about Catholic educational efforts around the world. It could even be that our own interests and biases in favor of Catholic schools heighten our awareness, but lately, it appears as if there is a general and widespread interest in the renewal and revitalization of K-12 Catholic schools across the US. Is it just us, or is interest in Catholic schools widespread?

In recent months, it has been difficult to pick up a local newspaper, much less a research journal, and not read something about new efforts to help support Catholic schools. Various bishops have written individual pastoral letters to their dioceses, extolling the successes of Catholic schools and calling on all Catholics to help support and promote them. Research has been reporting the steady growth and expansion of the federally funded school choice program in Washington, DC, and school choice initiatives continue to spread across the country. Civic education remains a strength of Catholic schools, making choice legislation hard to resist.

Catholic universities have responded to the 2005 statement from the U.S. bishops on Catholic schools by establishing new programs, committing new resources, and making new alliances, all to help stabilize enrollment, improve business operations, and find new and creative revenue streams to help fund Catholic schools. Smaller gatherings of local leaders, politicians, and bishops are investigating ways to collaborate around the school issue. Groups of dioceses are forming consortia to work together, share ideas and resources, and find ways to advance their common mission. The U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, called Catholic schools a national treasure, and her boss, the President of the United States, said that public schools have much to learn from Catholic schools, and that many of the standards and benchmarks written into the landmark No Child Left Behind legislation were patterned off of Catholic school success.

OK, our sensitivity to Catholic school news is always in a heightened state. Like you, we share a passion for faith-based, educational excellence, and remain fully cognizant of the general success of Catholic schools. Operating the journal keeps us abreast of new developments as they are happening. But right now, it seems like a lot of people have just purchased the same car we have, and it is good to be in such smart company.

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