



# Catholic High Schools: Facing the New Realities

*James L. S. M. Heft*

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## **Catholic High Schools: Facing the New Realities** James L. S. M. Heft

Catholic high schools in the United States have been undergoing three major changes: the shift to primarily lay leadership and teachers; the transition to a more consumerist and pluralist culture; and the increasing diversity of students attending Catholic high schools. James Heft argues that to navigate these changes successfully, leaders of Catholic education need to inform lay teachers more thoroughly, conduct a more profound social analysis of the culture, and address the real needs of students.

After presenting the history of Catholic schools in the United States and describing the major legal decisions that have influenced their evolution, Heft describes the distinctive and compelling mission of a Catholic high school. Two chapters are devoted to leadership, and other chapters to teachers, students, alternative models of high schools, financing, and the key role of parents, who today may be described as "post-deferential" to traditional authorities, including bishops and priests.

Written by an award-winning teacher, scholar, and recognized educational leader in Catholic education, Catholic High Schools should be read by everyone interested in religiously- affiliated educational institutions, particularly Catholic education.

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