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ANNOTATION

Wilcox, John R. with Jennifer Anne Lindholm and Suzanne Dale Wilcox. *Revisoning Mission: The Future of Catholic Higher Education*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform: 2013.

Revisoning Mission: The Future of Catholic Higher Education, by John R. Wilcox (with Jennifer Anne Lindholm and Suzanne Dale Wilcox), offers readers a blueprint for a concrete program of faculty development that can be used at U.S. Catholic colleges and universities. Designed around the theme "Revisoning Mission" (abbreviated as RM), the initiative has two goals: educate new faculty about the mission of a Catholic university, and "develop a Mission Community composed of new hires" who, along with their more senior colleagues, will commit themselves to "preserving and enhancing the Catholic culture and religious heritage of the founding congregation."⁽³⁾ Wilcox, professor emeritus of religious studies and former vice president for mission at Manhattan College, developed the program because he believes that "A Catholic university has a moral obligation to introduce all new faculty members into the culture, spirituality, intellectual life, the religious heritage of the founding congregation, and the aspirations of Catholic higher education."⁽⁶⁾

After offering readers useful advice on preparing for the program—including seeking support from key administrators, creating a team charged with implementing RM, and developing a budget and schedule—in the first section of the book, the author devotes the remainder of the volume to six essays that are the focus for RM. Chapters on: the Catholic culture of the university; spiritual development of students; "Wayfaring at the University"; Catholic Intellectual Life; the founding congregation; and the mission community are expected to serve as a basis for discussion by those participating in RM. Each chapter contains several sets of questions designed to encourage further thought and conversation, as well as suggestions for additional reading.

The chapters are to be read and discussed in sequence. The first topic—the Catholic culture of the university—sets the tone for the remaining sessions. The emphasis in this chapter is not simply to argue the importance of faculty appreciating the Catholic culture of their institution, but to help new hires, Catholic and non-Catholic, understand their place in the university. In addition, Wilcox notes that ". . . the Catholic university has a moral obligation to explain itself as fully as possible,"⁽¹⁴⁾ so that new (and continuing) faculty can grasp the importance of its "transcendent motives" such as hospitality and support for teaching. The next three chapters focus on students, the spiritual journey, and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. Chapter Five, which focuses on the founding religious congregation, offers a format through which new faculty and staff can gain a better understanding of the overlap between religious and laypersons. Diversity at Catholic universities is essential, Wilcox notes, because ". . . a homogeneous Catholic administration, faculty, and student body would be very challenging to recruit, and this strategy would run counter to the realities of American society from which the students come

and to which they will return upon graduation.”(238) The final chapter is focused on the implementation of a mission community on the campuses of Catholic colleges and universities.

Faculty, staff, and administrators involved in promoting the mission of a Catholic college or university, including Lasallian institutions of higher education will find *Revisioning Mission* a valuable resource. Wilcox is not interested in bemoaning the loss of the good old days when Catholic colleges were easily identified by women and men religious dressed in distinctive garb; instead he is positively focused on the ways in which our universities can welcome and support new faculty while maintaining their traditional religious identity.