

April 19, 2004
Textbook Review by Diocese of Peoria Office of Catechetics
History Texts
Produced/developed by Catholic Schools Textbook Project
Published by Ignatius Press

The following review provides information regarding middle school history texts entitled From Sea to Shining Sea and All Ye Lands. This information is not exhaustive but does offer sufficient material for an adequate overview.

1. The texts are written in an engaging, comprehensible manner that will hold reader interest.
2. Catholic contributions to history and culture are well integrated without political bias or judgment. Material that communicates Catholic identity and its impact on American and Western culture is fair, balanced and does not neglect “secular” fact. The texts do not reflect activist goals.
3. The graphics and artwork are appealing, arranged in a way that is not distracting or confusing. Sidebars are relevant and complement the narrative appropriately.
4. The presentation and development of information is systematic and well-organized. Students can easily identify key concepts when surveying chapter highlights.
5. Evaluation and end-of-chapter assessment support important learning skills such as critical thinking, analysis and the ability to draw conclusions. Many opportunities for student writing activities are provided.
6. The teacher’s manual includes a detailed scope and sequence list at the beginning of each chapter. In addition, chapter goals and an overview of what students should know are also provided.
7. The student and teacher materials are well coordinated.
8. Chronological and geographical linkage is sustained throughout the texts.
9. A list of relevant literary resources for the purpose of expansion activities is provided in the teacher’s manual.
10. Diversity is communicated without distorting content. Treatment of various cultures is fair and unbiased.

Note: In September 2003, testimony presented to the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee indicated two significant education trends reflected in most history texts: lowered sights for general education and increasing content bias and judgment. The Ignatius Press texts avoid both of these deficiencies by supporting appropriate literacy levels with challenging yet comprehensible narrative and by providing accurate presentations of Catholic tradition as manifested in, and supported by, historical fact. Thus, the texts provide a resource not readily available anywhere else in the textbook publishing arena.