

# Inaugural

Gerard V. Bradley

I would rather follow Pavarotti to the microphone than succeed Ralph McNerny as a lead columnist. Not because I sing better than I write, for I cannot sing at all. (People near me at Mass cover their ears whenever I join in the hymns.) Ralph is the consummate prose stylist. His judgments and opinions about matters Catholic, so elegantly expressed over the years in this space, proceed from a magisterial knowledge of the faith. Besides, Ralph knows everybody, and has so mastered the language of the universal Church that his latest book (as of 4:30 p.m., this date) promises to deliver Latin fluency to any reader before sundown. Or something very much like that.

In complete seriousness, Ralph McNerny has set the standard for a successful presidency. I pray that in the coming few years I might approach it. We in the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars have been beneficiaries of devoted service by a model Catholic scholar, and one great fellow. And please keep me in your prayers.

Catholic higher education is the subject of this, my debut column. The NCCB will discuss at its mid-November meeting the implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. A committee headed by Bishop Leibrecht has circulated a draft "application to the United States" for comment in the meantime. Bishop Leibrecht has asked that the NCCB *not* vote on the Application until one of its 1996 meetings. Any Application approved by the Bishops would be sent to the Congregation for Catholic Education for canonical recognition.

According to Bishop Leibrecht "the matter of canon 812 and its provision of ecclesiastical authorization (a *mandatum*) for Catholic teachers of theology" has been the most difficult question. He reports that the Committee spent "many hours in study and discussion" of the "best means of preserving the value that underlies" the canon — "safeguarding the orthodoxy of church teaching within Catholic colleges and universities." The Committee, Bishop Leibrecht further reports, sought to "balance" this value against the "institutional autonomy and academic freedom" of Catholic colleges and of individual theologians. This "balance" produced the Committee's recommendation of a "non-judicial application of the *mandatum*."

A "balance" which produces a "nonjudicial" application of a juridical requirement (precisely what the Code of Canon Law

(Continued on page 2)

*O Timothee, depositum custodi, devitans profanas vocum novitates et oppositiones falsi nominis scientiae, quam quidam profitentes circa fidem aberraverunt. Gratia vobiscum. 1 ad Timotheum 6*

## Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter

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and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* establish) suggests that the question might well stand in need of further clarification. Several of the speakers at our recent conference in Saint Paul, most notably Rev. Robert Sokolowski and Rev. Peter Ryan, S.J., addressed the issue. Taking the arguments of their papers together, we can see that “academic freedom” attaches to teachers *not* as self-expressing individuals but *as* inquirers within a certain discipline — here, Catholic theology. The nature of that discipline, particularly its subject matter, specifies the appropriate “academic freedom” to inquire and to publish. As the Holy Father said in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, academic freedom is a freedom “according to the methods proper to the specific area.” Since Catholic theology aims to understand revealed truths authoritatively articulated by the Magisterium, the Magisterium is internal to that discipline. The *mandatum* actualizes this internal relation. Claims of “outside interference” with “institutional autonomy” and of lost “academic freedom” either simply miss the point, or proceed from a different understanding of what Catholic theology is about.

Many theologians at Catholic colleges and universities in fact hold an incompatible notion of Catholic theology. One common view implicitly denies that revelation is, or at least includes, effective divine communication of truths of any kind. On this view, revelation simply is God’s offer of an interpersonal relationship which, when accepted by the believer, is “faith.” The experience of being with God is the basic datum which theologians seek to understand. This experience “understood” seeks expression in language. The expression is what we call “doctrine” or “dogma.” Note well: in this view theologians give content to a formless faith; theologians produce (always revisable, non-propositional) “doctrines” and “dogmas.” This common view simply stands *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* on its head.

There is no sensible way to balance the implications of this fallacious view of Catholic theology with the norms of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. And I shall, in the next couple weeks, send copies of all the papers delivered at the Saint Paul meeting to every Bishop in the United States. ☒

## ARTICLES

## To Know the Things That Are On What Is Not Given in the American Catholic Academy

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*“I am sure that the Bible is being secularized, being treated as literature, in many of the academies, I remember that as long ago as the 1930’s an edition of the Bible was offered to the general public under the title, The Bible Designed to Be Read as Living Literature, something like that. Well, I know that it is happening, that many people read the Bible without any notion that it is in some sense the Word of God.”*

— Richard Wilber, 1993.<sup>1</sup>

*“Philosophy is not the reading of books; philosophy is not the contemplation of nature; philosophy is not the phenomenology of personal experience; philosophy is not its history. These are indispensable tools aiding a man to come to know the things that are. But that knowing is precisely knowing and nothing else. We were once given this, not too long ago, in the American Catholic academy. With few honorable exceptions, we are given it no longer.”*

— Frederick Wilhelmsen, 1987.<sup>2</sup>

## I.

**M**odernity was originally argued in the name of reason, of generally autonomous or pure reason. This argument claimed, contrary to Plato and Aquinas, but in conformity with Epicurus, that we could know that the gods did not exist, that they had communicated nothing to us, that we can receive no rewards or punishments from them by our pleadings. In short, we are alone. We create our own morals and our own politics, even our own natures. Our glory is to defy the gods and their commands. The Kingdom of God thus became not a transcendent gift but a political project claiming to absorb all our attention and energy.

What was said to be from the gods was in fact considered to be an impediment to the achievement of wealth and abundance for all. The justification most commonly employed for rejecting the gods was that they were incompetent in the sphere of human compassion and need. But reason as merely an instrument to achieve goals, whatever they were made to be in our own ends, still seemed to justify ends that were not just or right, a distinction that persisted in spite of its being absorbed into a theory of human autonomy. The commandments of the gods were broken in the name of a kind of counter-justice, one that originated not in the gods or nature but in ourselves. In order to achieve these ends that were not just but still were highly desirable, it was not possible to re-fashion reason which stubbornly found contradictions in the very name of autonomous justice. But it was possible to deny that reason could know anything other than its own wants, a proposition itself something of a contradiction to reason. A spiritual power that claimed that it did not know evidently seemed to know something.

For the success of this modern project of complete human autonomy, the first thing that

needed to be cut off was any avenue to the gods, the next was any avenue to reason. We are to be left with what we choose, presupposed to nothing but our own power of choosing. We maintain that the ultimate power to decide what is good and what is evil is now in our hands. Natural laws and unnatural sins are overruled by the autonomous political power bent on refashioning the man given by nature. If we do find evil things, they arise in modernity mainly from those who claim that God has spoken to us or that reason tells us something for certain about ourselves, that there are absolute truths and standards. Behind the great contemporary outcry against "fundamentalism" lies the fear of autonomous reason that something other than itself exists. Socrates' rule that it is better to suffer evil than to do it likewise is specifically overthrown. Given a choice between suffering evil and doing it, we do it, because we are the ones who decide by our actions what is good. Suffering as such has no transcendent meaning, no capacity to witness to a standard higher than human will.

We are told that there is no destiny, no immortality, no providence or at least none that could contradict what we choose. Our nobility does not consist in defying the gods since there are no gods, though we do defy what we are told that the gods have revealed to us. We positively reject them in rejecting their so-called commands. We act out our own wills to prove that the gods are not gods. We have no king but Caesar. Our political history consists in controverting one another after we have deified ourselves, since will is crossed by will. No absolute truth exists to arbitrate between will and will. If the Bible, the word from outside of ourselves, is, as Richard Wilber says it has become, merely "literature", not standard or authority, then it is not the Word of God. We study the Bible for reasons for which the Bible was neither composed nor preserved. If the Bible is literature, it will do us no damage, nor will it give us any authoritative guidance.

## II.

It is widely accepted though rarely acknowledged that, in terms of content analysis, little study of orthodox Roman Catholicism as such is found in Catholic universities, with the exception of what we find in the newer and smaller schools. If we compare the required credits of today with those of fifty years ago, it is clear that we demand practically nothing, two to four courses, usually. Sometimes one has the impression that the content of Roman Catholic studies programs in state or Protestant colleges is more accurate in presenting the essence of Catholicism than in the Catholic colleges. The fact is, in any case, that, numbers-wise, most Catholic university students in the United States and Europe are in state schools. Largely because their tax monies went only to state institutions, the vast majority of middle-class Catholic students have been mostly priced out of the private school market. Few of the student-aid programs in Catholic universities are aimed at Catholic students as such; paradoxically in this area, the “poor” or diversity students have replaced the “Catholic” as the primary beneficiaries of such schools’ private aid package. It seems a further fact, again with a few exceptions, that most Newman Clubs in public universities are, in content, parallel to the situation in the Catholic colleges. The orderly, careful presentation of what exactly the Church holds as an appeal to mind, such as that found in the *Summa* or in the *Catechism*, would come as simply startling to the average student who has never heard it so presented. It is not that such a student is necessarily hostile to this content, but simply that he has never heard it explained or been asked to consider its content and coherence.

Were there, for instance, an objective national examination to ascertain whether students in existing theology and philosophy classes knew the bare minimum contents of what Catholicism teaches about itself — one could use the *Catechism* as a

guide — it would no doubt be discovered that the situation was worse than dismal. Increasingly, students themselves know this situation and lament it. Recently, I asked a very bright young senior at a college that still calls itself Catholic if he thought the students at his college received even the barest minimum of accurate knowledge about Catholicism. He laughed and said, “No, of course not. There is only one course in our school that even professes to be about Roman Catholicism and that is taught by someone who I am sure is a heretic.” Certain colleges, in what appears to many to be a lack of courage, have taken to describing themselves as schools in or from the Roman Catholic tradition. This wording constitutes a not so subtle way of maintaining a minimum amount of honesty about what is actually taught in the classes while at the same time not admitting any objective evaluation of the content of this tradition as actually taught in the school.

Theology, even when it is still called theology, has been replaced in practice and often in name by “religious studies”, which means that one is as likely to have a course in Buddhism as in the Trinity. The object of study is not Catholicism, but all religions. Indeed, multiculturalism, not the universal culture, has become the criterion of theological education. Roman Catholic theology and philosophy, something that can by no means be adequately presented in the one or two required courses in philosophy or “religious studies”, exists within a curriculum in which Islam and Catholicism have more or less equal billing with Marxism and deconstructionism. No one, presumably, would think of studying, say, Saudi Arabia, without studying the Koran, but we often find those who would quite innocently follow a study abroad program in Europe to admire Chartres in its 800th year of existence without an accurate clue about the meaning of the Blessed Mother.

At the academic level furthermore, little agreement is found about what Catholicism is. No authority other than internal is allowed to decide what it is and what it is not. Catholicism is

what is taught to be Catholicism. In academic institutions, hostility is manifested to Catholicism's ability authoritatively to define itself and objectively present this teaching as true and intellectually defensible. That articulating this authority and its grounding was the purpose for which religious institution were established is not recognized in any positive or constitutional sense. In a moment of madness, one almost longs for a return of interdicts and excommunications if only accurately to identify what is in fact Catholic and to be maintained as Catholic. It does not take an overly bright student to be aware that contradictory and incompatible positions are being proposed as Catholic in different classes and in comparison with what he might know coming from the Church itself.

Thus, one does not have to be too perceptive to know that Catholicism cannot really be everything it is taught to be and still maintain its own coherent and consistent authority. With more than a little irony, we can now see in retrospect how and why these instruments of interdict and excommunication arose in the first place — namely, because certain professors and writers denied or obscured what was true. Such formal canonical instruments were established, as was in part episcopal authority itself, to protect the faithful from deviant intellectuals. There may be another way to accomplish this same purpose — John Paul II has in fact managed to go over the heads of the universities with his careful and brilliant analysis of the truths of the faith and the philosophy that supports it. But at the actual university level, nothing seems evident. Ralph McInerney's proposal to establish a university through television is clearly a step in the direction of bypassing or at least counteracting the confusing diversity of what passes as Catholicism in the academies. Perhaps the way to go for the American

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episcopacy is to encourage the establishment of more smaller and coherent colleges and let the present schools go their own ways, which the massive decline in religious vocations seems to portend in any case.

As it is, since little or nothing is done by official Catholic sources to establish whether what is being taught in the area of doctrine and morals in the schools follows official Church teachings, it is assumed at the public level that every thing that is said to be Catholic is in fact

Catholic. Anyone who hints otherwise seems to usurp episcopal prerogative. If the bishop is silent, there can be no problem. It is considered divisive even to intimate that what is being taught is in any way erroneous, no matter what it is. Tenure and academic freedom have come to guarantee in practice that what is taught as Catholic is, by that very fact, what is Catholic in the universities, whatever it is. Those in ecclesial authority who make no inquiries or who do nothing to suggest there is any problem are understood to accept the status quo. Officially silence rules.

Church law, in any case, is so unwieldy and so easily misunderstood in this area that it is practically useless anyhow. No one can blame a bishop for wanting to avoid unpleasant publicity. The practical structure of Catholic organization implies, however, that when bishops or superiors do nothing, this inactivity means, in practice, that any non-officially-sanctioned opinion in the schools or media is by that very fact assumed to be compatible with Catholicism; otherwise it would have been sanctioned. Since it is the bishop's job to care for the faith and nothing is forthcoming, things must be fine. Anyone who suggests otherwise is the one at fault. Criteria of loyalty to the institution or uncharitableness to individuals take the place of objective accounts of the truth or falsity of what is being taught or practiced.

True “Catholicism” as it appears in the schools, thus, comes to have little consistent public content and takes the shape of what is taught or proposed. It mirrors the liberalism of the schools themselves. Indeed, Catholicism is not taught but is “proposed” as if it were a hypothetical problematic searching for some future form. Another graduate of a Catholic college now working overseas told me that the local missionaries there held that the *Catechism* was “trash”. One wonders about the content of their counter-sources, about what it is they are doing or teaching. What would anyone who thought the *Catechism* was “trash” be teaching in its place? We find many indications that Catholicism is taught as if it is something other than what it says of itself — this at a time when what it says of itself at the papal level is extraordinarily persuasive, brilliant, and philosophically grounded.

Individual teachers, no doubt, are still found who will account for the central Catholic tradition, though any new teachers who hold these things are difficult to be hired or, if hired, to acquire tenure. A young professor recently, after reading Avery Dulles’ critical remarks to the Catholic Theological Society, observed that he would like to say many of the same things but if he did, he would never get tenure at his school. Students, on the other hand, are increasingly unhappy with the kind of exclusive radical and politically correct gospel to which they are subjected in many departments, not just theology and philosophy. English and history are often among the worst. That is, students are not buying what is being taught. Just as there is a newer and younger group in the secular order rejecting the liberal enthusiasms of the now aging and out-of-date 60’s and 70’s generations, so younger clergy and seminarians worry the established clerical version of the same outmoded movements in their religious forms.

Still, there is almost no place where the intellectual revolution that is John Paul II is either known or confronted in any systematic fashion. What is striking in fact is the lack of any serious

study of this reality. One hears rumors that at least some bishops, reminded again and again by the Holy Father of their responsibility to teach the truth of the faith at every level, are bothered by the condition of the universities, but nothing serious has thus far appeared other than a few quiet meetings. The Holy Father himself, however, still retains his remarkable charisma of being able to reach over the heads of media and universities into the heart of many young people in our time. The Holy Father has produced one of the most amazing and coherent corpus of teachings in the history of the Church and of human thought. We will, no doubt, be remembered by posterity as an academic generation who were alive when the greatest intellectual experience in Church history took place and many of us did not even notice it, except perhaps to oppose it.

### III.

One might say, I suppose, that local bishops really do not want to know what is being taught in the name of Roman Catholicism in the local colleges. They know it is a can of worms and have too many other problems. Unlike European bishops, our bishops are a distinctly unacademic lot. One can wonder, however, if many of their other problems do not arise because of a long neglect in this area, one that affects even their own ability to understand the faith and their faithful’s ability to practice it. Bishops must know in some degree the extent in which even their most educated laity are intellectually unevangelized in the past quarter century. The rapid rise of evangelism in our country seems to make the same graphic point that the rise of the Pentecostals in Latin America makes.

When a question of orthodoxy comes up in some unavoidable fashion, moreover, what seems to happen, if anything, is that the local ordinary, after being prodded by irate laymen or parents or students, calls up the local university or college

president who, in turn, assures him that all is well and that the rumors are exaggerated, usually by some hapless conservative. The ordinary makes no further objective analysis of his own but goes back to his busy schedule. The school goes on its way under protection of academic freedom comforted that the local ordinary has no official problems with what it is doing. However, one would think, reading the documents of the Church and knowing its stormy history, that the very first person interested in what passes for Roman Catholicism as presented in the colleges, Protestant, Catholic, and state, would be the local bishop. He has a vested interest in seeing that what is described as Catholicism is in fact what is presented as such. The very idea of such organizations called "Catholics For Choice", for instance, seems like nothing so much as a violation of copyright or patent laws. But the name is allowed to stand and its members are not excommunicated, so it appears in the press as a viable Catholic "option".

We know there is some attention to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* by a few bishops, but almost invariably the solution of any problem is left in the hands of those who have the problem. There is evidently discord among the bishops themselves about the extent of the problem and what might be done. Students and parents have, in the Code of Canon Law, a right and an obligation to know whether what is taught in the name of or as a description of Catholicism is accurate or not. There is nothing necessarily wrong or unhealthy, of course, about being exposed to descriptions of Catholicism that are in fact widely off the mark, except when there is nothing else presented by way of contrast or correction. St. Thomas' *Summa*, in fact, insisted on dealing directly with errant positions precisely as a method to teach the true position.

Catholic students who went to public schools at one time regularly had to study the Baltimore Catechism. Bishops required this

study, in fact. That is, when what is presented as Catholicism is seriously deficient or erroneous, the local bishop has some responsibility to provide an alternate program and suggest that Catholic students have an opportunity, indeed an obligation, to know what is the Church's understanding of itself on basic issues. No doubt the most interesting and healthy thing that could happen would be for some brave bishop who has actually learned what is taught in a college in his diocese to insist that Catholic university students, even those who get credit for religion or philosophy courses in the local Catholic college, for the good of their souls, also take a course under his direction, one based on what the Church teaches. With today's media facilities, this is probably feasible. For all the talk about Vatican II restoring the episcopacy, one would have to conclude that in this area of what colleges actually teach in courses about Roman Catholicism, the episcopacy is little in evidence. Implicitly, it seems to accept what is being presented in the colleges as Catholic, no matter whether it agree with the teaching authority of the Church or not.

At the same time, perhaps because of an unacknowledged awareness that students in fact know very little of the rich Catholic intellectual tradition, or know that they cannot find it in the university, we are beginning to hear from various sources proposals to institute, of all things, Catholic academic programs within Catholic colleges, something that at first sight sounds like squaring

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the circle. Even Catholic schools are beginning indirectly to acknowledge that they have not been teaching Catholic things in any adequate fashion. This proposal is designed in part to appeal to wealthy Catholics who have been turned off by the acknowledged poor record of Catholic colleges to identify and foster that for which they were founded. But unfortunately, the proposal generally looks to the

same administrators and faculty, who were responsible for the present condition of Catholic studies in the first place, to implement the new programs. Generally speaking, as I have mentioned, Roman Catholic theology is no longer taught, but in its stead appears something called "Religious Studies" in which a gentleman's acquaintance with everything from Buddhism to Animism, from Luther to the Koran, is taught in a kind of liberal free market of religious ideas, not that there is anything wrong with accurate knowledge of Animism or the Koran. Roman Catholic theology is rarely if ever taught as demonstrably true within the intellectual tradition we inherit from Augustine or Aquinas. It does not appear as something that does deal, by comparison, with whatever truth is found in other religions and philosophies.

#### IV.

In a too little known essay in *Modern Age*, Frederick Wilhelmsen reflected on what he considered the greatest faults of Catholic schools in the last half-century, namely their voluntarily giving up their own most effective scholastic intellectual tradition in favor of "great books". In the meantime, the great books themselves have been undermined by multiculturalism and no longer bear the burden they were supposed to have carried as a replacement for scholastic thought. The current ideologies are nothing so orderly and rationalistic as Marxism or enlightenment liberalism, but rather they doubt the very powers of the intellect itself — the establishment of which, incidentally, was almost the very first issue to which the old scholastic method in the colleges, as Wilhelmsen remarked, addressed itself.

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out just why Catholic colleges went the way they did, down-playing rather than emphasizing their Catholic uniqueness. There are many opinions on this score. In once sense, I think, a the major step was Msgr. John Tracy Ellis' famous article on "American Catholics and the Intellectual Life", back in the early 1960's. That article, paradoxically, was an attack on what was considered to be the mediocrity of the then just rising Catholic colleges, a mediocrity hotly disputed by Wilhelmsen in his essay. The method to decide this presumed mediocrity was something that has since become the main instrument for the secularizing of Catholic colleges, namely, the desire for prestige, defined as the universities define prestige — that is, by articles in prestigious journals, professors from prestigious colleges, books by prestigious presses, membership in prestigious organizations.

One can excuse a certain amount of vanity in academics, I suppose. But it eventually becomes clear that this prestige criterion eventually ends up by changing the structure and purpose of the Catholic university without changing its name or initially its conception of itself. By giving up the scholastic tradition or, better, by not developing it within its own genius, Catholic institutions in practice accepted the terms of the modern project, only to find out too late that this project was somehow opposed to the academic teaching of Catholicism. The cynic might say that we now have great universities but no Catholic university, the latter being something that the modern liberal thought was impossible in any case. Government money, hiring policies, and evaluation criteria have made such universities prefer to be "universities" rather than Catholic universities.

No doubt there is nothing wrong with a desire for excellence. The problem is in the day to day understanding of how this excellence is defined in a Catholic world and in the culture of

modernity. One cannot simply imitate the style and sources of modernity at every level and expect to retain one's own tradition. What we need is a new center of intellectual witness that really does say something else but what can be found in a rather uniform modern university system. That unique tradition has to have its own voice and its own content. A Catholic university will not be ashamed to teach its own tradition as true, will not hesitate to hire and publish those who can articulate this position. For this effort we need the courage of our own convictions; we need in fact something of the intellectual depth and enterprise that John Paul II has demonstrated to us again and again in all of his work. Though this approach will not accord with the prestige of the secular universities, still it will be recognized as itself, as standing for what it professes about its own intellectual tradition.

Today, young Catholic professors who know and love the tradition — they come from surprising places — are often in the diaspora; they cannot be hired or promoted in their natural homes in the Catholic universities. This is not all bad, of course, since, as I mentioned, most Catholic university students are not in Catholic universities. A Catholic student with a spark of inquisitiveness often only needs to find one person, even in some out of the way place, to make a difference. A chance reading of Cicero, after all, changed Augustine's life in some out of the way reach of Empire. The fact is, as I have often suggested, that intellectually Catholicism itself has never been stronger or culturally weaker. Whether existing universities "in the Catholic tradition" will make

much difference in restoring the Catholic intellect remains to be seen. The fact is today that other institutions and media make universities less important particularly when they have nothing unique to present.

Let me close by returning to Wihelmsen's reflections on his own early education before World War II:

The seal of a Jesuit education was eighteen hours of philosophy, the study of which was constituted by a rigorous and systematic education in the scholastic tradition, beginning with logic and usually ending with ethics.... In the still ghetto-dominated Catholicism of the times, the post-immigrant inferiority complex that plagued the Church in America disappeared within the walls of Jesuit schools. We were the best educated men in the nation and we knew it. ... There was little, if any, of that hankering after the Ivy League that often troubled many of our WASP brothers in academia. Not only was our Church right, but we had the reasons to prove it.

In retrospect, such reflections cannot be any longer written off as triumphalism or as some outmoded understanding of an historic culture. Rather they recall what was given up and not developed, tools and methods and principles that we no longer know or teach but which remain valid. Under the inspiration of the work of John Paul II, they are there to be recalled or, more likely, to build anew, beginning in small, unprestigious places the careful intellectual work that our culture so greatly needs. ✠

<sup>1</sup>Jewel Spears Brooker, "A Conversation with Richard Wilber," *Christianity and Literature*, 42 (Summer, 1993), 526.

<sup>2</sup>Frederick D. Wihelmsen, "The Great Books: Enemies of Wisdom," *Modern Age*, 31 (Spring/Fall, 1987), 329. Italics added.



# Recent History of Philosophy in American Seminaries

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## The Current Situation

**T**he recent fourth edition of the *Program for Priestly Formation*, the guide for seminary education from the nations bishops, contained three main directives regarding philosophy: 1) it raised the minimum course requirement from 18 to 24 credits, 2) it specified subjects that needed to be studied, 3) it reemphasized the expectation of a minimum of two years preparation before men enter the major seminary. The guidelines were meant to revitalize philosophy, but many seminaries have shown little inclination to implement them. Why this is so and what should be done about it are the substance of this article.

I do not want to advocate an excessive role for philosophy — the purpose of the seminary is to educate future priests not philosophers. The Pope's encyclical, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, provides an excellent statement of why philosophy is important but does not exaggerate it; of the eighty-two sections in the encyclical only one (#52) is devoted to philosophy. The first part of this article reviews the recent history of seminary philosophy; the second considers how the blame is shared by the teachers, rectors, and bishops.

## Part 1: RECENT HISTORY OF SEMINARY PHILOSOPHY Strengths and Weaknesses before the Council

**I**t would be unfair not to recognize the excellent work and the progress in method achieved before Vatican II, but there were also some glaring weaknesses. It was not without reason that the Council called for a renewal in the teaching of philosophy. Even Ralph McInerney is quick to say (*Thomism in an Age of Renewal* pp. 21 & 27) that most manuals were somnolent and most teachers narrow and dull (he seems confident of this last claim because it can be said of philosophers in any age).

The most common criticism from men who studied prior to Vatican II is that teachers usually had little preparation. Often they were young priests who dutifully took the job with little more preparation than their own seminary training. This made for excessive dependence on a textbook (the second common criticism) that until the late 1940's was a Latin manual (such as the one by Gredt) or its close cousin. The manual made an abstract topic even more abstract and was devoid of historical context.<sup>1</sup>

Primary sources were seldom used; the only reading some seminarians would do of Plato or Augustine was in language study. It was not uncommon for priests to tell me that their philosophy studies were rescued by a chance meeting with an excellent teacher or an illuminating text by the likes of Gilson, Maritain, or DeKoninck.

For students at the Gregorian in Rome, the circumstances made learning very difficult. A Notre Dame professor recalls that his two years of philosophy (1936-38) at the Gregorian in Rome did him little good. Classes were very large with students from many nations. As was the custom, teachers taught in Latin following the notes they had dispensed. The thesis to be proved was stated, objected to, and then proved. Historical context was minimal except that Mr. Kant was often "thus refuted." A fifteen minute oral exam in Latin (the sole mark for the course) completed the year. It is

sobering to recall that for many future bishops this was their only experience of philosophy.

On the other hand, in light of the decline of philosophy after the Council, the years before can appear as a golden age. To its credit, it was a time of systematically ordered courses, Thomism provided some consistency, and two years of study was typical. Even philosophy at the Gregorian could be an educational experience once the language barrier was overcome. More frequently perhaps, students living in international houses gained a facility with Latin and were able to take advantage of some excellent teachers such as Fathers Arnou, Morandini, and Munos (later Cardinal Munos).

Changes were already coming in philosophy before the council. The switch to English, which made the material more accessible, came to philosophy long before it did to theology. Among others, the Jesuits at St. Louis had a group of exceptional teachers and a number of high quality textbooks came out of the classroom work by Fathers Renard, Wade, Davitt, Henle, and O'Brien.

### Immediately after the Council

**T**he Vatican Council set out to do some pruning in the Lord's vineyard; afterwards debate raged around a hundred different vines: some were for cutting it down, others for spreading more manure. The end of the Council coincided with a social revolution as well, and in part philosophy programs fell victim to this period of sharp criticism when good distinctions were often trampled. Father Joseph Donceel in a 1966 article in *America*<sup>2</sup> describes the effect of this revolution on philosophy in Catholic colleges: the rejection of Thomism, the emphasis on historical consciousness, and the espousal of radical pluralism. Donceel praises the new sense of history, but counsels the retention of a systematic approach and recommends the new transcendental Thomism.

The Vatican II document on the renewal of seminaries, *Optatam totius*, gave general principles and asked bishops of each nation to implement this

renewal with specific guidelines. Principles for the renewal of philosophy were, among others: a more effective coordination of philosophy and theology, a reliance on the philosophical patrimony which is forever valid, an attention to modern philosophical studies, and a teaching method that shows how philosophy bears on the real problems of life (#15). To comply, the American Bishops published the *Program for Priestly Formation* (PPF) in 1971.

Part of the preparation for the PPF took place at the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) meeting in April of 1969 (the NCEA seminary department organizes the only national meeting of American seminaries). At the meeting, recommendations for the PPF were being voted on. The number of people present was unusually large, swelled, at least in part, by the presence of many vocation directors. There was a suggestion (a sensible one, I think) to allow college seminar-ians to major in something other than philosophy. This was approved. Then 18 credits in philosophy was suggested as the minimum requirement and after some discussion was accepted (a mistake, I believe). As expected the PPF set the requirement at 18 credits, but in practice the minimum became the maximum from which exceptions were freely made.

The short section on philosophy in this first edition of the PPF gave little guidance as to what constituted a good program; hence, in the years to come all sorts of courses were accepted as fulfilling the requirement. The PPF devalued the Church's philosophical tradition with a few guarded comments and otherwise by ignoring it. In short the PPF did nothing to stem a general decline in seminary philosophy. Even the Dominicans, long noted for their philosophical expertise, reduced their requirements to one year.

On the positive side, the 1971 PPF had a worthwhile appendix on the coordination of philosophy and theology. It included a helpful discussion of the value of philosophy in itself, its value to theology, and the proper integration of the two. It is regrettable that this appendix

received little attention. Its weakest section is on how to evaluate a philosophy program. The appendix also raises the question of how much time should be given to philosophy in the curriculum but avoids an answer.

Two new factors created special problems. The declining number of seminarians caused a loss of programs designed for them. When seminaries were no longer able to sustain their own programs, regular undergraduate programs (both Catholic and secular) were used to provide philosophy courses. In some cases rectors were able to negotiate for specific courses to be offered, but in other cases seminary philosophy requirements were met from the regular course list. Courses designed to catch the interest of undergrads are usually not helpful to seminarians. Thus some programs lost their orientation to theological studies.

The other new factor was the rapid rise in the average age of men coming to seminary; it caused many seminaries to shorten their philosophy program. Currently, the average age of a man entering the major seminary is 26. Candidates usually have a college degree and job experience but lack experience in the spiritual life and the academic prerequisite in philosophy and theology. Many seminaries have responded by developing special "pre-theology" programs, which are generally well suited to the new need. But most of these seminaries, under pressure to prepare men quickly, have abbreviated the program from two years to one. Typically, if a man comes to seminary with a college degree, he is expected to fulfill all the spiritual, philosophical, and theological prerequisites in one year — a Herculean task.

### Redressing the Balance

**I**n the 1970's and 80's momentum to redress the balance gradually built. In January of 1972 came the letter "On the Study of Philosophy in Seminaries" from Cardinal Garrone (Congregation for Catholic Education). The letter is candid in expressing former shortcomings and clear in addressing contemporary challenges. It is, I think, the most

detailed and insightful analysis among the recent documents. Speaking of the necessity of philosophy for future priests the letter says in part: A complete adherence by man to divine revelation cannot be conceived as an act of blind faith . . . . The act of faith presupposes of its nature "the reasons for believing," the "motives of credibility," which are in great measure philosophical: the knowledge of God; the concept of creation; providence; discernment of the true revealed religion; knowledge of man himself as a free and responsible person. It could be said that every word of the New Testament formally presupposes these fundamental philosophical ideas.<sup>3</sup>

In November 1977 Catholic University hosted a conference on the role of philosophy in priestly formation expressly to stem the decline and further the renewal called for by Vatican II. Father Ronald Lawler edited the proceedings, which included papers by Dr. Jude Dougherty, Father Francis Klauder S.D.B., Father William Wallace O.P., Father John Wipple, Father Frederick Jelly O.P., and Father Thomas Russman O.F.M.Cap..

In the early 1980's at the request of the Vatican, a visitation was made of each seminary under the direction of Bishop Marshall. The need to improve philosophy programs figured prominently in many individual reports and in the general letters from Cardinal Baum to major seminaries (Oct. 1986) and to college seminaries (Sept. 1988).

In 1981, the American Catholic Philosophical Association (ACPA) approved a standing committee on seminary education. This committee conducted surveys, hosted papers at annual meetings, collected books for seminaries overseas, and promoted new textbooks. The committee chose Father Stephen Minkiel of Gannon University as its first chairman; members of the executive committee were Father Francis Lescoe, Father Ronald Lawler O.F.M. Cap., Dr. Marc Greisbach, and Father Kevin Horrigan.

In 1988, the same ACPA committee in conjunction with other interested groups orga-

nized a well attended conference in Boston on the broad theme "Excellence in Seminary Education." The published papers included Bishop Marshall's first public report on the seminary visitations, as well as papers by Cardinal Law, Dr. Jude Dougherty, Bishop Wuerl, Father Robert Sokolowski, Father Leonard Kennedy C.S.B., Dr. John Haas, Father Lorenzo Albacete, and Father John McDermott, S.J.

Finally, in October 1990 the synod in Rome considered the formation of priests. The most frequent intervention appropriately spoke of the need for a solid spiritual life. The Pope's follow up encyclical, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, emphasized the spiritual nature of the priesthood, the need for human formation, and the spiritual life of the priest. The Pope did not speak at length about philosophy but unequivocally states its importance and stresses the need for sufficient philosophical preparation before major seminary. Then in a surprise move the Pope asks the Congregation for Catholic Education to study the approaches to initial formation. The editors of PPF delayed the fourth edition to take the papal letter into account.

## PART 2: SHARING THE BLAME

**T**he fourth edition of the PPF was published in November 1992 with the new guidelines: 24 credits, specific courses, and a two year program. Three years later the revitalization of philosophy that seemed at hand has not happened. Why the tepid response from many seminaries who run pre-theology programs? The blame, I think, is shared by the three parties involved: philosophy professors, seminary rectors and deans, and bishops.

### The Failure of Philosophy Professors

**L**et me speak first about what I know best, *mea culpa*, the failings of philosophy professors. I have three criticisms. First, although philosophy's role has been questioned since Vatican II, we

have still failed to give a convincing answer. Our description of how philosophy is useful to theology has been largely unconvincing generalities; we need a more specific description that will convince our students and colleagues. Second, we need to refit the content to the purpose. Men in seminary have a limited time for philosophy, so we must find what will be most useful and illuminating to them. Not just the program, but individual courses need to be designed with the seminarian in mind. The manuals were a remarkable effort to digest the material; we must do some analogous work without destroying the integral nature of philosophy or its connection to life. The dearth of new textbooks is evidence that not enough of this has been done. We must not teach as though the seminarians were doctoral students in philosophy with the time and interest for all the details. Which is to say that since we learned philosophy as doctoral students, we cannot take ourselves as examples.

This honing of content will be a matter of collective and individual efforts. Both the NCEA Seminary Department and the Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation should consider providing a forum for refining core material. Most of us have little knowledge of what or how our confreres are teaching. We would benefit from a little "sharing" such that each of us gains a broader idea of what is useful for our seminarians.

Third, we have paid too little attention to method. This may seem too bland a point since it can be said of many educational programs. But is it said of our medical or "top gun" schools? When I think of the planning given to educating fighter pilots, doctors, or astronauts, I am ashamed that the princes of this world are better prepared than the apostles of the next. Teaching methods have improved: the manual style is no longer used, primary sources are studied, and programs begin with historical studies. Still philosophy, because of its abstract nature, is a particular challenge to teach, and few philosophers have given enough thought to teaching method.

### The Hesitancy of Rectors and Deans

**W**hy have many rectors and deans been slow to respond to the new PPF philosophy program? There are three reasons.

First, they are indifferent towards philosophy because their own experience was poor, and they have concluded that philosophy is not really important. This indifference is reinforced by contemporary errors such as "philosophy is irrelevant to theology" or that "any philosophy will do". The first error encourages one to reduce philosophy, while the second encourages one to accept any course as equally serviceable, e.g., sociology instead of philosophy.

Second, rectors and deans deal directly with students who resist anything that prolongs seminary. There is a competitive market for seminarians, and rectors realize that if they have a two year pre-theology program when others have one year programs, some students will choose to go elsewhere.

Third, rectors deal with bishops (or vocation directors) who often want their man to finish philosophy in one year.

### The Temptation for Bishops

**A**s a body, the American Bishops support the importance of philosophy in seminary training. I hesitate to criticize the bishops, not because they can't take it, but because they take so much of it. Yet, the last reason mentioned regarding rectors points to the problem: bishops make too many exceptions to the two year rule when it comes to their seminarians. With the great need for priests in parishes, bishops are wary of anything that discourages candidates or prolongs seminary.

Also, for bishops who must send men some distance to seminary there is the understandable desire to shorten their time away from the diocese. Finally, there is the added expense of supporting a seminarian for another year. (Expense is an even

more important factor when the seminarian is assuming the expense or debt for his education.)

### In Conclusion: It's Inevitable

**T**he focus of this article is philosophy but the focus of the seminary is priesthood. Philosophy is important here insofar as it helps prepare for priesthood. Presently many of our programs are anemic, and the response to the PPF's new prescription has been reluctant.

The solution is for philosophy professors to explain in convincing detail how philosophy serves the priest, tailor the program to the intellectual needs of the seminarian, and develop a method that shows philosophy's connection to real life. In this way doubters will be convinced of philosophy's importance.

Furthermore, rectors and deans who doubt philosophy's importance should ask whether their own experience or ideology has given them a jaundiced view of philosophy. Rectors work extremely hard for their men; none that I know would willingly deprive the men of any help. Perhaps a rereading of the relevant passages of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* would be an intellectual examen. Bishops should likewise examine their attitude towards philosophy and be judicious in making exceptions to the two year guideline.

To philosophize is inevitable; we all take basic positions on the world, man, and God. It is better to do this consciously rather than unconsciously, and better to do it well than poorly. ✠

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The manuals had a long shelf life; only four different sets were used at Seton Hall's seminary during the first 100 years of its life.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Donceel, "Philosophy in the Catholic University," *America* (September 24, 1966): 330-331. A sequel by Father Donceel, "Thomism: How Much to Keep," was published by *America*, (April 22, 1967): 580-582.

<sup>3</sup> There was a statement responding to this letter by the Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation and in the January-March issue of the *Cara Seminary Report*, a survey on philosophy in seminaries.

# “Implementing” the *Catechism*

By  
Msgr. Michael J. Wrenn  
and  
Kenneth D. Whitehead

## I.

**W**hen the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was issued in 1992, the document described itself as “an organic synthesis of the essential and fundamental contents of the Catholic doctrine, as regards both faith and morals, in the light of the Second Vatican Council and the whole of the Church’s tradition” (CCC #11). This would seem to be a pretty clear statement of what the *Catechism* is and what it contains, and the document would surely seem to be what anyone professionally involved in Catholic theology or religious education would normally have been thought to welcome warmly as an essential and fundamental sourcebook for their fields.

But the times are not normal, and the evidence continues to mount that some Catholic theologians and religious education leaders, far from welcoming the *Catechism*, have instead been rather openly striving to downgrade the importance of the document and to limit its role and use. They seem to have been especially anxious to ensure that, where the work does happen to be used, *they*, the experts, will be the ones to dictate how it will be used (this must not be considered as difficult or as far-fetched as it might at first sound, when we consider some of the positions in the Church’s educational structure that are occupied by many of these very same malcontents and revisionists).

These people appear very uncomfortable with

the idea that the book can just be purchased and used by, well, anybody; and that it can be consulted at any time to provide an authoritative statement of what the Church teaches on any given point. How can the religious education establishment maintain its effective monopoly on religious education in such a situation? It has thus become very important in certain quarters that the *Catechism* not be seen as authoritative or, indeed, as anything very special at all.

As one catechetical expert wrote in a publication intended for, and primarily read by DREs, catechists, and those in what is increasingly today being called parish “ministry,” the *Catechism* is merely “a point of departure.” This expert, who is a professor of religious education at the university level, confidently assures her readers throughout the Church’s religious education system that “the *Catechism* is primarily a reference book.”<sup>10</sup>

The author of a column in a series syndicated for use in parish bulletins adopts roughly the same view, and appears to reflect the current consensus of the catechetical and theological establishments when he writes that the *Catechism* is “not a static end result. Since by its very nature the CCC is a reference work, it is not intended, e.g., for use in parochial schools, in its present form...The CCC is rather meant to encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms”—here the pope’s *Fidei Depositum* promulgating the *Catechism* is actually quoted, but in a way which implies that the writing of new local catechisms is intended to be the *only* use of this volume. Since the whole project of a universal catechism started, in fact, it has been standard operating procedure for certain theologians and religious educators to quote the pope and other high Church officials, with a great show of loyalty, on the current need for local catechisms, especially those “inculturated” in a particular region or country; in the meantime, the suggestion always is, the present *Catechism* by itself will simply not do.

“Future catechisms will capture the rich experience of their own Church as it continues to dialogue with a pluralistic society,” the parish

bulletin writer just quoted informs his readers who are no doubt to be found in hundreds of parishes around the country. "Theologians, biblicists, historians, linguists, catechists, etc., will be asked to pool their talents for the good of the community." Apparently, the pains already taken by the pope and the hierarchy over nearly seven years to produce and issue an accurate and comprehensive summary of Catholic teaching for all the faithful do not add up to what is needed, in the opinion of these observers, and so now all the experts are going to have to be called in. This writer for parish bulletins is quite explicit about this: the good of the community "will...demand their *improving* certain areas in the CCC" (emphasis added). "What is most needed," according to this parish bulletin writer, is "the courage to change..."<sup>1</sup>

Evidently this fairly uniform message has gone out about as widely as it has been within the power of the theological and catechetical establishments to disseminate it: the new *Catechism* is really not all that important; if the Catholic bishops of the world have not labored entirely in vain on this project, they have apparently labored to little real valid or durable purpose; it all has to be reworked — such is the message.

It is a pretty consistent one too. For example, one of today's typical catechetical workshop "facilitators" told a conference in the midwest consisting of DREs, youth ministers, school teachers and principals, priests, and religious that "the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is only one resource and was not written for everyone...It is not even the full expression of our faith, either," she said. This particular "facilitator," who has a doctor's degree in catechetics from the Catholic University of America, and is currently a faculty member at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, said that she didn't "think catechetical materials would change much...because there is nothing new in the *Catechism*..."

Not only is this same message being fairly widely disseminated; it also represents a message that tends to get received—at least some of the time. At the particular workshop in the midwest

just mentioned, one of the participants was quoted as saying: "It helped me to see where the *Catechism* fits into Church and society. *It's not the answer*, it's a tool to help with faith" (emphasis added).<sup>2</sup>

It also seems to be a tool which many specialists in the craft of catechetics seem strangely reluctant to use. Sometimes it is eye-opening to read a popular press account of a catechetical conference such as the one we have just quoted; a reporter writing down exactly what is being said, perhaps without realizing the larger significance of it, can highlight points that would perhaps otherwise be obscured by the in-group jargon which the new catechists normally employ to describe what they are doing. In the case of this particular catechetical conference in the midwest, it seems quite evident from the press report on it that the participants clearly got the message that the new *Catechism* contains nothing new, is far from being our only catechetical resource, and, in any case, is not even a full expression of our faith.

Furthermore, the significance of what appears here to be a systematic downgrading, belittling, and undermining of the *Catechism* by this facilitator extends beyond the bounds of a particular catechetical conference which happened to take place in the summer of 1994. For the facilitator of the conference in question, it seems, is also one of the more prominent new catechetical professionals; it turns out that she has presented numerous day-long conferences to diocesan and pastoral leaders throughout the midwest, and thus her decidedly negative message about the *Catechism* has gotten out to more than just one small audience. We learn all this from the foreword to a book she has written about the *Catechism*.

Yes: she is the principal author of one of the first of the commentaries on the *Catechism* to appear in English. She is Jane E. Regan, author of a book entitled *Exploring the Catechism*.<sup>3</sup> This book, written with several collaborators, is specifically aimed at introducing religious educators, youth ministers, and such, to the *Catechism*; it is intended to be part of the "implementation" of the document. If we want to know what a lot of

people are learning about the *Catechism*, including especially many of those who themselves have responsibilities of various kinds and at various levels in religious education, we need only look more closely at Jane E. Regan's *Exploring the Catechism*.

## II.

**T**he book *Exploring the Catechism* treats in greater detail some of the same themes and principles that stand behind its author's catechetical workshop assertions that the new *Catechism* is only one catechetical resource, that it was not written for everyone, that there is nothing new in it, and that it is not a full expression of our faith anyway. That someone holding such views on the *Catechism* should nevertheless be thought a suitable person to be preparing a book about it might at first seem unusual; but her motives do become clearer as her particular approach to the *Catechism* is more clearly spelled out. "Each chapter is written with pastoral ministers in mind," the author explains, "supporting them as they *critically read* the *Catechism*" (emphasis added).

This is how Church teachings are now to be received at all levels, apparently: "critically."

Religion teachers in the classroom are now apparently supposed to be mini-practitioners of the new theology and of the historical-critical method—this is yet one more way in which their role and function precisely as *teachers* of the faith has been misunderstood and misapplied by the new catechesis.

Jesus is never depicted in the gospels, by the way, as proposing his teachings for further discussion and possible criticism. No: Jesus customarily threw out, that is, *proclaimed*, his teachings to be accepted, assimilated, and acted

upon. Whatever else the phrase might mean, "to teach as Jesus did," the name of a pastoral letter of the U.S. bishops of a few years back, it cannot possibly mean to propose the truths he revealed for "critical examination." To make this clear is only another way of saying that Jesus taught "with authority" (Lk 4:32). The Church too has traditionally proclaimed the teachings of Jesus in the same manner, "with authority," inviting and accepting the same response of faith and action. That, indeed, was what the kerygmatic movement in catechesis was all about as well.

What has really changed today is that some people now decline to accept Christ's teachings as they are authoritatively proclaimed by the Church—including now, in the new *Catechism*. The virus of theological dissent has penetrated so deeply into the Catholic consciousness today that many people now appear honestly to believe—mistakenly, of course—that Christ's teachings must necessarily now be subjected to "critical analysis" rather than being received and made the basis of one's life.

Unfortunately, many of these same people are to be found in the ranks of religious educators with formal responsibilities for teaching the faith to others. It is no wonder that some of them fail as badly at their task as the modern statistics show; for they have long since been trained up to con-

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**What has really changed today is that some people now decline to accept Christ's teachings as they are authoritatively proclaimed by the Church—including now, in the new *Catechism*.**

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sider the Church's teachings as so much raw material to be processed further by *them*. They are now to be the final arbiters and judges of what the faith is. In Martin Luther's day this was called "private judgment"; among modern new theologians and new catechists, it is often styled "mature faith" or "adult faith." This is the approach that characterizes *Exploring the Catechism* throughout.

The principal author of this book tells us that "each person approaches the reading of the

*Catechism of the Catholic Church* from his or her own perspective...As theologian, I ask a number of questions...What theological perspective is reflected there?...What does the text mean for me?" (emphasis added).

Or again: "What is the connection between a catechism and *my* ecclesiology, *my* sense of the nature of the Church?" This is surely private judgment with a vengeance. Dr. Regan does sometimes pose real questions such as: What is the nature of the Church? or: What is the role of the magisterium of the Church? It is just that she does not seem to see the *Catechism* as in any way providing the answers to any such questions. Indeed she explicitly rejects the idea that the book could provide "the answers to our questions." She claims at the same time to reject going to the other extreme as well, that is, she does not include herself among those deploring and denying the very idea of having any catechism at all; in her description, these people scorn a catechism as laying down a "party line." She is not of that same view: the Church may issue a catechism if that is what the Church wishes to do; it is just that no Ph.D. from the Catholic University of America, apparently, needs to be bound by what Church does.

In fact, at one point Dr. Regan betrays only too tellingly her real sympathies with one of the two "extremes" in the Church which she speaks about. She does so when she characterizes the *Catechism* as something that really might bring it about "that the life-giving spirit of inquiry within a pluralistic Church will be silenced."

"The life-giving spirit of inquiry within a pluralistic Church": that is exactly what the lady said. This sort of formulation might be considered practically blasphemous (if anybody paid any heed to blasphemy any longer): as if it were any "spirit of inquiry within the pluralistic Church," and not Christ and his *real* Spirit, who "give life" within the Church! Old Voltaire and his friends surely did not labor in vain; a couple of centuries later, their disciples are apparently to be found in the ranks of the Church's trained and working theologians!

Dr. Jane Regan's book on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* includes several introductory chapters on the background of catechesis, catechisms, and the new *Catechism*. These contain standard material and are competently enough done, for the most part; there is no need to dwell on them. What is somewhat interesting from our point of view is how the author often cannot avoid displaying her own theological orientation and bias even when she is treating purely factual material—as when, for example, she comments that while a catechism is concerned with "uniformity," a directory allows for the possibility of "unity with diversity" (probably because a catechism explains doctrines so plainly that it is no longer always easy to explain them *away*; but it is always easy, on the other hand, to "interpret" the general "guidance" which a directory gives, that is, it is always possible to decide not to be guided by the guidance provided).

Her same general approach is evident when Dr. Regan criticizes medieval society for trying "to present the Christian mystery as distinct propositions suitable for memorization"; or as being "entangled in lists and propositions unconnected with lived faith—as it happens, of course, the "lived faith" of medieval society raised up artistic monuments to faith that have never been equaled either before or since; anyway, the present age is surely not in any position to be criticizing the "lived faith" of anybody; certainly the present era can hardly pretend to give lessons in Christianity to almost any other era at all, considering how little Christianity is generally respected today, or how little it is apparently able to affect today's decadent society in any real way.

The first part of *Exploring the Catechism* sets the work in context, and was written by Dr. Regan herself. In the second part of the book, she includes four other authors, who help provide the commentary on the four pillars of the *Catechism* itself, the Profession of Faith, the Sacraments, the Commandments, and Christian Prayer. Dr. Regan herself wrote the commentary on the Sacraments, entitled the "Celebration of the Christian

Mystery,” as well as providing an Overview of the whole. In the latter, she explains that the aim of the commentary is “to probe,” to undertake a discriminating reading of the *Catechism*. She and her colleagues hope to present “theological concepts or understandings that are presumed in the texts but not always clearly explicated.”

Thus, “theology” is what is presumed to be at the heart of this modern compendium of the Church’s faith. Instead of accepting gratefully the gift which the teaching Church has presented to the faithful of our era and on into the future, Dr. Regan sees the primary task of herself and her collaborators as entering “into the multifaceted dialogue that exists between the text of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the thoughts of contemporary theological discourse, between the theological presentation”—she apparently means the *Catechism*’s presentation of the Church’s faith—“and their own *experience* as people of faith” (emphasis added). Once again, as so often proves to be the case in a certain type of theological or catechetical literature today, the “experience” of people is considered to be on a par with what has been revealed and handed down in the Church.

One possible explanation for this seemingly “naturalistic” approach comes from Dr. Regan’s own commentary on the Sacraments included in the book. In discussing grace, she gives fairly short shrift to what the *Catechism* itself says about it in comparison to what Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner is quoted as saying about it; the latter is quoted as saying that grace “is the comprehensive radical opening up of the person’s total consciousness in the direction of the immediacy of God, an opening up that is brought about by God’s own self-communication.”<sup>4</sup> Where this leads, in Dr. Regan’s view, is to the conclusion that “grace can be experienced.”

While an attempt is made to express this in the “nuanced” terms that modern theology claims to favor—after all, the truth or lack of it of this kind of statement does depend upon what one *means* by it—the fact nevertheless remains that, in a commentary on a catechism, or authoritative

statement of the Church’s faith, there is at least one fairly serious problem about pursuing a line of thought such as the one Dr. Regan is pursuing. The problem is that, as it happens, the *Catechism* teaches the contrary very plainly:

Since it belongs to the supernatural order, *grace escapes our experience* and cannot be known except by faith. We cannot therefore rely on our feelings or our works to conclude that we are justified and saved...” (CCC #2005; emphasis in the original).

The Council of Trent, to which reference is made in this paragraph of the *Catechism*, teaches that “no one can know with a certitude of faith which cannot be subject to error that he has obtained God’s grace.”<sup>5</sup>

So which is it: can grace be experienced, or not? The *Catechism*, basing its teaching on a dogmatic decision of a general council of the Catholic Church says no. A single modern theologian is quoted as saying yes. So which is it? Somewhere along the line, the idea that certain solemn teachings of popes and councils are irreformable seems not to count too much any longer among certain theologians and their disciples. Actually, the Rahner view is, again, typically “nuanced.” Dr. Regan cites another quotation from Karl Rahner which seems to indicate that what the Jesuit theologian thought could be experienced were really “moments of self-transcendence,” in Dr. Regan’s words. It is not clear whether this is the same thing as grace in Rahner’s view. Still, how are catechists and pastoral ministers supposed to sort out this sort of thing? What is the point of a commentary that simply makes everything more complicated and, at the same time, seems to deny doctrines of the faith clearly stated by the *Catechism*?

It is not our intention here to enter into a debate about any part of the theology of Karl Rahner, certainly not on subject matter that is so obscure and imprecise, to put it mildly. The point we are concerned with here is that a commentator on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* thinks that it is her task to “correct” the *Catechism* using the opinions of a modern theologian as the pretext and

authority to do this. The average reader of her commentary, presumably one of our new catechists or modern pastoral ministers, is unlikely to end up with very much respect for a *Catechism* treated in such a cavalier manner.

Again, Dr. Regan appears to deny—although the denial is couched in yet another involved and “nuanced” statement—that the sacraments of the Church “give grace”—as those instructed via the old *Baltimore Catechism* once learned. The new *Catechism* similarly very plainly says that, “celebrated worthily in faith, the sacraments confer the grace that they signify” (CCC #1127); emphasis added); and that “the sacraments are efficacious signs of grace...by which divine life is dispensed to us” (CCC #1131; emphasis added again).

In order to avoid possibly misrepresenting what Dr. Regan appears to be trying to say on this subject, it is worth quoting a paragraph in her own words concerning how the *Catechism* presents what she calls the “theological concept” of the term “grace”:

The *Catechism* seems to go back and forth between a quantitative notion of grace and the sense of grace that supports a renewed understanding of sacraments: grace as divine life that is always and everywhere present. To speak of the sacraments as conferring or dispensing grace can promote a less helpful perspective on the meaning of grace and potentially foster a magical understanding of sacraments. Missing from this notion of grace is the reality argued for in the *Catechism*: God is always initiating and inviting us to relationship; before we act, God is present.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, the *Catechism* has, once again, erred grievously; and, above all, we must imperatively guard against any “magical understandings” of the sacraments! However, it is not really the case that the idea of God as “always initiating and inviting us to relationship” is “missing” from the way the *Catechism* presents grace. More than that, it is extremely unlikely that either the bishop-authors who composed this *Catechism*, or the Commission of cardinals and bishops who passed on it, are ignorant of the thought of Karl Rahner.

If, nevertheless, they decided not to include some of his views on grace in the Church’s official modern account of her own faith, it would not be the first time that the Church has declined to take up the thought of one of her theologians; some of the greatest saints and doctors of the Church have been passed over in this manner when it comes to composing catechisms.

In this situation, it ill befits theologians who are themselves supposed to be “sent out” by the Church to be second-guessing the magisterium and adding in things which, in their opinion, should have been included. It would seem to be particularly inappropriate to do this when what is added in appears to contradict what the *Catechism* says. In the nature of the case, this can only confuse the potential end-users of this commentary.

### III.

The commentary section on the Creed in Dr. Jane E. Regan’s *Exploring the Catechism* was written by one Michael P. Horan of the Department of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California. Like Dr. Regan, Dr. Horan holds a Ph.D. in religious education from the Catholic University of America; it certainly cannot be said that CUA’s School of Religious Studies has had no impact on the current religious education scene in the United States.

Dr. Horan is a careful writer, and at first it appears that we really are going to get a genuine commentary on how the *Catechism* presents the Profession of Faith. He begins by correctly pointing out that the *Catechism*’s presentation of revelation is based squarely on that of Vatican II’s Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*. He calls this the “invitation-response” view of revelation; it draws heavily on the contemporary return to original scriptural and patristic sources—*ressourcement*—which preceded, accompanied, and has followed Vatican II. This

approach links sacred Scripture inseparably with sacred Tradition. Unlike most other commentators, Dr. Horan actually praises the *Catechism's* use of the historical-critical method and believes that both "the Jesus of history" and "the Christ of faith" are basically presented in its pages.

However, ominous early signs nevertheless appear in Dr. Horan's text indicating that we still have to do here with yet another card-carrying member of the current theological establishment. Among these signs are included the author's reference to "the importance of human experience" and his down-putting observation that Vatican I's Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, *Dei Filius*, displayed an understanding of revelation as "propositional" (why the human mind's natural tendency to organize and express knowledge and thought in "propositions" is not understood or admitted to be an integral part of "human experience" is rather difficult for some of us to fathom).

Dr. Horan traces back to the Enlightenment the modern view that the human being (which Christ became) is first of all "an individual in freedom"; this is the reason, in his view, why theological work today must begin with the humanity of Jesus and work up "from below"—as if it were the Enlightenment and modern democracy, currently failing so badly to meet real human needs, which must necessarily govern the expression of a revealed faith handed down from a very different historical era. However that may be, Dr. Horan is critical of the *Catechism* for beginning with a "Christology from above." The following paragraph taken from the *Catechism* illustrates what he calls a "high-descending Christology":

The Word became flesh to make us "*partakers of the divine nature*": "For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God." "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God." "The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods."

In this single paragraph, the *Catechism* quotes Scripture, St. Irenaeus, St. Athanasius, and St. Thomas Aquinas to make its point. Dr. Michael Horan nevertheless believes that starting with Christ's humanity instead would have been a more "creative use of theology." He evidently shares the same position articulated by Dr. Jane Regan when she averred that pastoral ministers should "critically read" the *Catechism*. For his part, Dr. Horan believes that "catechetical leaders might well *review* the theology that shapes this document, as well as the Christology that would complement this work" (emphasis added)—in other words, again, "catechetical leaders"—the professionals, the experts—are to have the last word, not the Church, not only about what is actually taught in the classroom, but about what the faith is in its essence. Presumably, again, the hierarchy can issue all the catechisms its pleases containing the "official" teachings; it will then be for the "catechetical leaders" to "review" these teachings.

One of the things Dr. Michael P. Horan himself appears to have decided about Christology is that "more information on the historical Jesus would help catechetical leaders who need to refer to a compendium of faith as Catholic minds currently analyze and articulate that faith"—by all means, "as Catholic minds currently analyze and articulate" things! He himself singles out only two of many possible areas in which he believes modern scholarship has provided the wherewithal "to complement the approach and content of Christology found in the *Catechism*." They are: the Jewishness of Jesus and his commitment to the reign of God.

Actually, it is not clear who would wish to argue about the importance of either of these two themes. Least of all does the *Catechism* dispute them. Nor does it seem that modern scholarship has any monopoly on them. What we soon discover, though, is that Dr. Horan brings the first one up mostly in order to stigmatize "the sin of anti-Semitism among Christians" (which the *Catechism* naturally also condemns; see *inter alia* Paragraphs #537 and #839). But it is hardly as if

anti-Semitism were the main problem faced by Christians today, fifty years after the defeat and death of Adolf Hitler; the Holocaust that challenges us today is that of the unborn being legally slaughtered by the millions around the world. However, the moral problems to which Dr. Horan seems most attuned are more likely to be the same politically correct ones which today's secular liberals stress.

Similarly, his mention of the preference of Jesus for the poor as shown in the gospels serves principally as the platform from which he can then recommend such aberrations as "liberation theology, feminist theology, and black theology" which, whatever else they may have accomplished, have surely done very little if anything for the real poor—or for women, or for blacks, for that matter. On the contrary, they have surely done a great deal of harm.

In any case, the *Catechism* pointedly inculcates such things as active love for the poor (CCC ##2443, ##2462-2463), the moral responsibility of wealthy nations (CCC ##2439-2440), poverty as an evangelical counsel (CCC #915 and #944), and poverty of heart in imitation of Christ (CCC ##2544-2547). It is the *Catechism*, not today's typical ideologues, that indicates the true Christian path to be followed in approaching the poor and downtrodden; the book is outstanding in setting forth the Church's true social teachings, in fact. Has modern scholarship of the type Dr. Horan invokes really added anything new or unique here? Anything to justify the kind of free-lance "reviewing" of the *Catechism* he advocates?

Dr. Horan certainly thinks so: "Biblical hermeneutics functions not only to enrich theological conversation," he writes, "but has a direct bearing on the pastoral life of the Church." In his view, the *Catechism* definitely requires "supplements and amplifications" on these and no doubt many other points.

It is astonishing what large and far-reaching conclusions some people believe can and must be drawn from what are really the overall rather meager firmly established results of some two centuries

of "biblical hermeneutics" and historical-critical method. Not that the Church opposes these things: on the contrary, she firmly encourages them, and has recently issued a very fine document on biblical exegesis which, while carefully laying out all the advantages of the various approaches to studying the sacred Scriptures—a study which she deems "indispensable"—she nevertheless, at the same time, understands that the principle aim of exegesis "is the deepening of faith...Catholic exegesis does not have the right to become lost, like a stream of water, in the sands of a hypercritical analysis."

As for the historical-critical method, although it is necessary and valid for what it does achieve, it cannot, in the Church's view, "lay claim to enjoying a monopoly...It must be conscious of its limits...When historical-critical exegesis does not go as far as to take into account the final result of the editorial process, but remains absorbed solely in the issues of sources and stratification of texts, it fails to bring the exegetical task to completion" (emphasis in the original).<sup>7</sup>

The bishop-authors of the *Catechism* were neither unaware of the modern study of the Scriptures nor of its most salient results. Most of these, where applicable, have been incorporated into the *Catechism*—as they were incorporated into the Documents of Vatican II upon which the *Catechism* depends so heavily. Where the liberal exegetes appear to go wrong is in imagining that modern scholarship has really established anything that requires that the traditional faith handed down in the Church needs to be *changed* in any important feature. It hasn't happened: the Church's faith has successfully survived what in some cases was a very hostile onslaught carried on by a certain type of modern exegesis.

What is even more surprising, though, is how exaggerated the claims can be today about just what it is that modern Scripture scholarship has accomplished. Today some exegetes believe, and catechists are encouraged to teach, some of the favorite conclusions of modern Scripture scholarship with the same certitude formerly reserved for

dogmatically defined truths.

Yet, in spite of its many and undeniable achievements, modern Scripture scholarship nevertheless remains an inexact and indeed often highly speculative discipline. Some of it can claim no more than the status of “educated guesses”—while they may be educated and even highly refined, they remain, ultimately, guesses.

Modern Scripture scholarship cannot, for example, affirm with any real scientific certainty that the gospels were not written until some 30 to 70 years after the events they recount, although this is almost universally claimed and taught.<sup>8</sup> Nor can it prove that Mark’s was the first gospel, or that there really was a “Q” document—another favorite theory usually taught as established truth.<sup>9</sup> It cannot really prove that John’s is a “late, theological” gospel, or even that the gospels were originally written in the Greek language text of them which we possess.<sup>10</sup>

All these questions continue to be debated among competent scholars, and even those issues on which there is held to be a “consensus” today among modern scholars sometimes turn out to be far from being really established according to any really foolproof scientific methods. There is certainly no justification for teaching these theses to schoolchildren or catechumens as if they somehow today were even supposed to supersede the magisterium’s authoritative statements of the faith.

After all, almost all of the “historical facts” that we possess about Jesus of Nazareth and the origins of Christianity are found in the New Testament itself. Christianity necessarily stands or falls on what is there. And we have therefore been in possession of most of these same “historical facts” since well before the historical-critical method was ever devised. Since this method has been developed, one of the most remarkable things about it is how many different interpretations of the “historical Jesus” it has come up with while studying essentially the same set of “facts.” This has been evident at least since Albert Schweitzer published his book *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* back in the early part of the present century. There was,

for example, Schweitzer’s own view of the Jesus who expected the end to come at any time (some of our new theologians and exegetes are still parroting this view today).

And there have been, before and since, to name only a few of pictures we have been given of the “historical Jesus,” Jesus the dreamy Galilean romantic, Jesus the political revolutionary, Jesus the messianic plotter, Jesus the magician and wonder worker, Jesus the Mediterranean peasant, and, lately, Jesus the marginal Jew.

Dr. Michael P. Horan, referring to the *Catechism’s* Paragraph #522, complains that the *Catechism* treats “the mysteries of Christ’s life, not as they may have been historically, but as they are remembered and celebrated liturgically.” Well? Which one of the above Jesuses would he have the *Catechism* adopt? Merely to suggest that the Church’s faith might possibly be grounded in any of the findings of modern historical-critical scholarship is already to demonstrate the foolishness and futility of such a project.

For the eyes of faith, the consistency and integrity with which the Catholic Church has continued to present the same Jesus that she has always presented—including, most recently, in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*—is a considerably more impressive and persuasive accomplishment than all of the modern achievements of “biblical hermeneutics” put together. (Of course, some of us continue to believe that the Church has had special *help* in achieving this, as in some of the other features of her life and teaching!)

It is a pity that so many of the Church’s own sons and daughters today no longer seem disposed to appreciate the *wonder* of how the Church has continued to guard and transmit the faith that she possesses concerning Christ—even in the face of the terrific pressures to which she has been subjected today, not only by the world of modern science outside the Church, but by her own contemporary theological and catechetical establishments! The idea that catechists, instead of handing on the Church’s faith, are now supposed to take their “content” from the theories of modern

scholars, and pass *this* on to their charges, would be laughable—if it had not already proved to be so tragically harmful to catechesis and to faith in our day.

In the rest of his commentary, Dr. Horan offers essentially the same criticism of the *Catechism's* treatment of the Church as he did for its treatment of Christ; he finds that the document's treatment of the Church is, again, "from above"; moreover, the findings of modern scholarship once again have not been sufficiently taken into account, in his view. Even though he concedes that the *Catechism* follows Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* when dealing with the Church, as it earlier followed *Dei Verbum* when dealing with revelation, he is unhappy because so much stress is laid on "the institutional and universal character of the Church."

For example, he notes that Paragraph #765 of the *Catechism* depicts Jesus as founding his Church on the Twelve, thus "endow[ing] his community with a structure," whereas modern scholarship has supposedly "come to the knowledge that there were a variety of leadership models present" in the early Church.

But the same caution is necessary in dealing with historical scholarship as in dealing with biblical scholarship. The alleged "variety of leadership models" in the early Church often seems to be based on pretty slender evidence, sometimes on purely "negative" evidence (e.g., on the fact that no "monarchical bishop" is mentioned in certain texts). But we have very few texts of any kind regarding the detailed structure of the early Church; the "model" of bishops, presbyters, and deacons which emerged is not incompatible with the structure with which Christ surely did endow his infant Church. Otherwise we would have to doubt the effective guidance of the Holy Spirit working in the Church. In any case, such evidence as we do possess does not seem to provide the basis of any revision of the authentic tradition of the Church in the matter, and it is this tradition which is ably and accurately reflected in the *Catechism's* treatment.

Meanwhile, it is emphatically *not true* that modern scholarship has established that Jesus *did not* found his Church on the apostles; or that he did not intend that these apostles should be succeeded by successors, i.e., the bishops. *Lumen Gentium* covered all of this same ground in any case, and so it is impossible to invoke Vatican II *against* the *Catechism*. Yet that is essentially what Dr. Horan does when he concludes his commentary on the Profession of Faith by remarking that the *Catechism* "should be used in the context of Vatican II." What other context does he imagine the bishop-writers of the *Catechism* used?

"We might do well to understand that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is not the end of the search to provide catechesis," he writes. "It is a beginning. It is a source to which leaders may turn first, but they may not stop there."

We may be reasonably sure that Dr. Horan's "catechetical leaders," trained as they are by such as he, will see to that.

#### IV.

**T**he two remaining commentaries on the moral life and on prayer in Dr. Jane E. Regan's *Exploring the Catechism* continue along the same freewheeling lines already established by authors Regan and Horan. We need not dwell upon these latter two commentaries at any length. The established pattern continues that the task of these commentators is thought to be to read the *Catechism* "critically," and, where deemed necessary, to provide a view "corrective" of it in accordance with the reigning opinions of the modern theological and catechetical establishments. There is no discernible sense among these authors that perhaps the Catholic Church has in any important sense "spoken" in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (although everything the pope has said in promulgating and promoting it would seem to indicate precisely that).

The commentary on the *Catechism's* treatment

of the moral life, entitled "Life in Christ," is contributed by Fr. Timothy Backous, OSB. Fr. Backous is chaplain of St. John's University in Collegetown and has a doctorate in moral theology from the Alphonsianum in Rome. Like Dr. Regan, Fr. Backous is described as giving catechetical workshops around the country, so we should not underestimate the degree to which his views will be the ones absorbed by catechists being "trained" to "implement" the new *Catechism*.

Fr. Backous begins his contribution to this volume with a rather condescending reference to those who find the current state of the Church's morality to be in "crisis"; he remarks that these are the kind of people by whom the *Catechism* will be "enthusiastically welcomed" (why not by those of his way of thinking? More, why be the one to write commentaries on the *Catechism*, if one honestly does not like it or thinks it is deficient?).

On the level of theory, of course, one of those who finds the current state of the Church's morality to be definitely in "crisis" would seem to be none other than Pope John Paul II himself, who includes in his 1993 encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, among other pointed comments on the same subject, the statement that "within the context of the theological debates which followed the Council, there have developed certain interpretations of Christian morality which are not consistent with 'sound teaching' (II Tim 4:3)."<sup>11</sup>

On the level of practice, of course, one would not really have to go far beyond the current divorce or abortion statistics among Catholics to conclude that here, too, the Church's morality is surely in a very deep crisis situation. Or: it is only necessary to recall the fact that today's Catholic politicians, speaking generally, apparently no longer believe that what they vote for need have any relationship whatsoever to the moral law of God as proclaimed by the Church. Indeed, many of them positively assert that they can and must vote for what the Church has definitively held to be *against* the moral law of God; and meanwhile, Catholic voters, who have surely heard all these issues publicly raised, go right on monotonously

helping return these same Catholic politicians to office. Fr. Backous would surely have a very hard time making any case that the Church's morality is *not* in crisis; but, of course, he does not try.

Very possibly, the current worldwide crisis of morality—one need think only of the agenda of the 1994 population conference in Cairo, for example—was one of the principal reasons why the pope and the hierarchy promoted the project of a universal catechism so vigorously in the first place. Merely to take note of the fact that a moral theology professor who also conducts catechetical workshops apparently *does not* think the Church's morality is in crisis today already provides at least the beginning of an explanation of what is wrong with this particular moral theologian's commentary on the *Catechism's* treatment of the Christian moral life.

Generally speaking, Fr. Backous describes the *Catechism's* treatment of morality accurately; he may even approve of it in certain respects. He properly points out how the *Catechism's* treatment of morality closely follows that of Vatican II and is therefore "positive," emphasizing our vocation to beatitude, our freedom, and the necessity of developing virtues ahead of its treatment of sin (although the *Catechism*, of course, in no wise underestimates the reality, power, seriousness, and evil of sin, either). Fr. Backous further properly notes the emphasis of both Vatican II and the *Catechism* on social morality (but improperly sees this as lessening the importance of morality for the individual person).

Where his treatment most obviously goes wrong is in his basic attitude towards the *Catechism* (and hence, necessarily, towards the Church's magisterium that lies behind it); he appears to share the view of many theologians today that the theological task is to serve as the final, decisive arbiter in religious matters; the theological task, in a word, is to *correct* the *Catechism* where it is seen to have gone wrong or fallen short. Thus, he criticizes the *Catechism* for remaining "act centered" in moral matters, rather than person centered, and, characteristically, he quotes in this

connection one moral theologian who thinks that the Church's responsibility is to provide "consolation" for the divorced and remarried and another moral theologian who thinks that the Church's judgment that certain acts such as blasphemy, perjury, murder, or adultery are intrinsically wrong is "too fixed and that more openness to uncertainty is in order."

In criticizing the *Catechism* for being act-centered, he fails to grasp that, if it did not have this particular focus, it could scarcely draw the distinction—of which he strongly approves—between homosexual persons, who continue to possess human dignity, and homosexual acts, which are always disordered and evil. Similarly, he is precisely wrong, especially in a sex-obsessed society, in downgrading the gravity of sins such as masturbation (here he introduces his own word, "shaded," instead of the usual "nuanced"; the latter word seems to have become the typical Wagnerian *Leitmotiv* in the contemporary theological literature whenever modern theologians want to signal a watering down of the Church's authentic moral teaching as perhaps being too harsh and judgmental!).

Fr. Backous faults the *Catechism* further for not being as open to the modern world as he thinks Vatican II was; apparently he has little noted the modern world's precipitous slide, precisely in the years since Vatican II, into an unprecedented moral decadence which Pope John Paul II has rightly now had to label a "culture of death." Indeed, it would seem that the pope has now consciously added to the Church's list of "intrinsically evil acts" three new ones by the solemn manner in which he has condemned abortion, euthanasia, and the killing of the innocent in his new 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, "the Gospel of Life."

Fr. Backous also sets up an artificial conflict in the *Catechism* between "obedience" versus "responsibility." Certainly "responsibility" is a positive factor which is rightly to be stressed and fostered, whenever possible. But it is in no way *opposed* to obedience. On the contrary, it is our responsibility to be obedient—obedient to the calls

and commands of the living God. We are all strictly called, for example, to the "obedience of faith" (Rom 1:5; 16:26). The *Catechism* notes that this the *source* of our moral life (CCC #2087). Jesus Christ himself "learned obedience through what he suffered" (Heb 5:8). The *Catechism* teaches that "the obedience of Jesus has transformed the curse of death into a blessing" (CCC #1009). What is the *problem* modern theologians always seem to have with obedience? Does it have anything to do with the way *they* have decided to operate?

Deplorably, Fr. Backous quotes here in support of the false dichotomy he has erected between obedience and responsibility two California Jesuits, Fr. William Spohn and Fr. Francis Buckley, both of them contributors to the *Universal Catechism Reader*, the disgraceful screed attacking the draft of the *Catechism* sent out to the bishops for comment in 1989 which a gaggle of American theologians unfortunately felt entitled to issue.<sup>12</sup>

In keeping with his apparent view that the ultimate "magisterium" belongs to theologians by virtue of their learned expertise, Fr. Backous quotes theologians such as these quite indiscriminately; the mere fact that they are theologians apparently entitles them to his respect; certainly he does not read them "critically" in the light of the Church's true magisterium. And so it is no surprise that he ends up citing and recommending such open and persistent public dissenters from authentic Church teaching as Josef Fuchs, Charles Curran, Richard Gula, Richard McCormick, and Bernard Häring. In short, what we have in this commentary is a fundamentally *irresponsible* treatment of Part Three of the *Catechism*—hardly anything the catechist in the classroom needs to be "trained" in, alas!

## V.

**W**e may bring our examination of *Exploring the Catechism* to a conclusion by a very brief look at its final commentary, this one on Part Four of the *Catechism*, which deals with the subject of Prayer. The joint authors of this commentary are Fr. Francis Kelly Nemeck, OMI, and Sr. Maria Theresa Coombs, both of the Lebh Shomea contemplative-eremetical house of prayer in south Texas. Judging by the bibliography that is included, we conclude that these two are the joint authors of a number of books on spirituality and prayer; the same bibliography indicates that they are also indiscriminately into an almost bewildering variety of other writers and topics, some perhaps sound from a Christian point of view, others very decidedly not.

Their ineluctable orientation towards the usual fashionable modern causes and isms quickly becomes evident through their calls for more attention in spirituality circles to such things as psychology, ecology, feminism, and the like. Their view of the *Catechism's* widely praised treatment of prayer is both negative and hostile; as authorities against it, they quote, as often as not, and without the slightest self-consciousness, their own books! In general, they find its Part Four on Prayer to be "a smorgasbord of ideas about prayer, few of which are developed."

It gets worse. They write:

On the whole, unless the readers of the *Catechism* already possess considerable experience in praying, coupled with a reasonably well-developed theological framework in which to appraise the diverse modes and expressions of prayer, they will probably end up more befuddled than catechized by Part Four. Yet, those who do have both sufficient experience in praying and an adequate theological framework will find the *Catechism* woefully deficient. Sad to say, the masses of Catholics of all ages who are yearning for in-depth catechizing in prayer will not find it in this *Catechism*.

What is the conceited would-be modern sophisticate to do when the Church has let down so badly "the masses of Catholics of all ages" in the way that the *Catechism* is held to have done in its treatment of Prayer? Why, compose one's own treatise on the subject. What else? And that is exactly what Fr. Nemeck and Sr. Coombs proceed to do in their commentary. Noting that the *Catechism* "contains no meaningful discussion on Progress in Prayer," they have composed their own; it goes on for pages; it strikes us as a "smorgasbord of ideas about prayer..."

The arrogance exhibited here of thinking themselves able to do what they think the Church signally failed to do in the *Catechism* is surely singular enough. Yet it is surely matched by the very plan and execution of the whole book, whose principal author, Dr. Jane E. Regan, concludes the whole work by announcing breathlessly how:

As a map, the *Catechism* serves as an important reference tool for later maps. Our own journeys of faith—as individuals, as communities of faith, as a universal Church—will push at the *Catechism's* boundaries. Our journeys of faith will go into regions to which this map has no reference. We will re-think and re-explore regions that the writers of the *Catechism* think are settled. As we continue to live out of and reflect upon the theology that underpins and flows from the Second Vatican Council, we must continue to return to the *Catechism* to change it, clarify it, make it more readable, and more usable for the next generation. Eventually...we will have to come up with a new text...

There we have it: the *Catechism* has to be "changed," "clarified," and made more "readable" and "usable"; what is needed is a "new text." Why did the Church even bother?

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Colleges and Federal Funding (*Ignatius Press, 1988*).  
This article is a chapter from a book they are jointly writing  
on the reception of the Catechism.

<sup>0</sup> Mary C. Boys, SNJM, "Tradition: Ordered Learning," in *The Catechist's Connection*, May, 1993.

<sup>1</sup> John F. Craghan, "The Catechism and Future Catechetics." Column distributed by Liguori Publications in the Bulletin of the Church of Mary's Nativity, Flushing, New York, February 26, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Laurie Chen, "Speaker: New Catechism Just One Resource for Catechesis," in *The Sunday Visitor* (Diocese of Lafayette, Indiana), June 19, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Jane E. Regan, *Exploring the Catechism*, with Michael P. Horan, Timothy Backous, OSB, Francis Kelly Nemeck, OMI, and Marie Theresa Coombs. The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Karl Rahner, *Meditation on the Sacraments*, New York, Seabury Press, 1974, p. xi.

<sup>5</sup> The General Council of Trent, Sixth Session, Decree on Justification, Chapter IX, in J. Neuner & J. Dupuis, *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, Revised Edition, Christian Classics, Inc., Westminster, MD, 1975, p.526.

<sup>6</sup> Regan, *op. cit.*, Note #4 *supra*, p.113. All further quotations on this commentary are taken from the volume itself; we shall not provide further page references.

<sup>7</sup> See *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, The Pontifical Biblical Commission, Vatican City, 1993 ("Conclusion").

<sup>8</sup> See J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1976.

<sup>9</sup> See William R. Farmer, *The Gospel of Jesus: the Pastoral Relevance of the Synoptic Problem*, Louisville, Kentucky, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.

<sup>10</sup> See Claude Tresmontant, *The Hebrew Christ*, Chicago, Franciscan Herald Press, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter on the Splendor of Truth, *Veritatis Splendor*, August 6, 1993, #29.

<sup>12</sup> See Thomas J. Reese, S.J., Editor, *The Universal Catechism Reader*, Harper Row, San Francisco, 1990.

## FEATURES

## How Are We Going to Return Catholic Colleges to the Fold?

By Msgr. George Kelly

American bishops are having a difficult time answering this question. Their series of meetings on this subject, going back a quarter of a century, have been fruitless, and the November 1995 bishops' meeting is likely to be no exception. Understandably, bishops of one mind with John Paul II must be sick and tired of hearing the question, let alone spending more time trying to find the right answer. College presidents, too, are impatient with their failure to gain magisterial approval of their autonomy from bishops, especially since they insist that they are still within the fold, if not necessarily within the bishops' court. Critics of the *status quo* post-Vatican II, like the *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars*, are embarrassed at seeming to harass bishops over their failure to insist on the Roman norms for American

Catholic higher education. Lay groups such as *Women for Faith and Family*, *Catholics United for the Faith*, and the newly created *Cardinal Newman Society*, are scandalized by what has happened to the faith of their children in autonomous Catholic colleges.

In a situation where the issues are Church-shaking for Catholics, and where no one seems to be happy, it may sound pesky to ask the bishops to go back to the drawing boards for a different solution other than acquiescence to presidents who have no intention of obeying anyone but themselves or their autonomous peers. Many Catholics are already saying it is too late, so that further one-sided dialogue will only erode what is left of truly Catholic intelligence. Considering the patrimony, that is a tragedy bishops should not even contemplate.

## The Buck Stops With Bishops

**T**he basic question is not whether 230 colleges will survive or whether those that do will be excellent. Many will, of course, and many will be excellent as institutions of education. But will they be authentic witnesses of the Church's world view to a culture almost totally secularistic, and possibly anti-Catholic? Will they adequately teach, enrich, or even defend, the faith of those who work and study there?

Up to now the college presidents have made all the demands, the bishops practically side-lining themselves as patient listeners and accommodators. The presidents say, "We are a university first, Catholic second." This dichotomy is false. The context of any truly Catholic university is the world of a Church governed by bishops united with the pope. Its underpinning is institutional acceptance of the Church and its binding teaching, in theory as well as in practice.

The presidents say, however, that to be excellent, to attract and produce excellence, they cannot afford the narrow constriction of accreditation by religious standards or by religious leaders. Apart from this being another false dichotomy, the assertion by itself means that their religious identity does not count as much as their secular reputation, or that they are willing to allow the narrow confines of secularity to limit their Catholic excellence.

In the real world every college is merely the highest level of someone's system of education. It is the system which determines what excellence means within that cosmos, tells presidents what they must do to earn the rewards of operating within its established parameters, and what penalties will be invoked if the rules are disregarded.

The Catholic college lives in two different worlds, one of which denies the very notion of religion as true, or as a body of truth. Secularists are often anti-Catholic, too. Nothing about being Catholic ever precludes secular excellence. One would expect Catholic college presidents to fulfill

all the accrediting requirements necessary to produce graduates skilled in the literary and scientific arts. The difficulty arises only when they dilute or exchange the excellence of their Catholic birth-right for rewards normally bestowed fulsomely on secularists by secularists. To remain fully Catholic, therefore, those presidents must conform to Church norms, and must not be allowed to do otherwise, whether the attraction be government or foundation money, or the political ambitions of accrediting or faculty groups. Oddly, most secular bodies are reluctant to invade obvious and strongly held religious precincts. They are not, however, above tempting the Church's Samsons with their particular Delilahs. "Where your heart is there also will be your treasure" (Mt. 6:21).

The presidents insist, finally, that they must be free. Indeed they are, to choose. Some of them have already chosen to change their legal status from "Catholic" to "Non-Denominational." Numerous others still call themselves "Catholic," but wish instead to be "Ecumenical," redefining that word to mean "non-denominational."

Catholic bishops are also free to choose, to make judgments about the appropriateness of colleges which use the name "Catholic," but whose unity with the faith is tenuous. Bishops are not in charge of educational excellence. But, in conscience they alone must decide which colleges are good witnesses to the Church's faith, or which turn out excellent students as lukewarm or bad Catholics. Bishops, by office, are not juridically linked with mediocrities either, even if they produce excellent Catholics. They must be interested only in the faith witness and/or the faith product of institutions marked by the sign of the Cross of Christ, by a statue of Our Lady, or by A.M.D.G.

Whether comfortable in the role or no, bishops alone are the ones to resolve the present contradictions on Catholic campuses. Listening to presidents is important to their governing, but listening is not governance of the Church. The Second Vatican Council, in a little cited paragraph (*Lumen Gentium*, No. 27), makes this clear: In virtue of this power [from Christ] bishops have

a sacred right and duty before the Lord of legislating for and of passing judgment on their subjects, as well as regulating everything that concerns the good order of divine worship and of the apostolate.

## The End of Dialogue

**T**he time for listening to college presidents is over for two reasons: First, because the kind of young Catholics contemporary bishops bequeath to the hierarchy of the next century requires the correction of serious abuses on putative Catholic campuses immediately; secondly, because dialogue on a Catholic matter, which has a bottom line (i.e., the obedience of faith) which looks endless, tends to make every Church officer, from Pope to believing Catholic parent, irrelevant to the teaching and the practice of that faith.

A stalemate with bishops is what college presidents have achieved. These latter have become masters of the Hegelian dialectic (thesis, antithesis, hypothesis) which renders every agreement they make with bishops merely the first stage again of the next dialogue, perhaps an extended discussion of why the implementation of an earlier pact with bishops did not follow. (This philosophy is also controlling for many theologians, which is why so many do not like doctrinal propositions of any kind, even in a New Catechism.) Back in 1982 one "expert," contracted by the *Catholic University* apparatus, instructed bishops at a Collegeville meeting on what their role in the contemporary Church was. He told them that they were the chief listeners of the diocese. Bishops, there, were further advised that, given

the present circumstances, they preside over three communities within their jurisdiction — that of hierarchy, that of university, and that of "Everyman" — each united to the other, not necessarily around Christ or one of his Episcopal Vicars, but through "acceptable dialectic tension." According to this design, the Church has no fixed nature or demands, and as in a game of chess, the disposable pawn was "Everyman."

Rome did play the listening game — first and before anyone else — from 1968 to 1973, beginning with a survey of university opinion around the world, ending with an International Congress of their elected representatives. By 1973, Cardinal Gabriel Garrone, prefect of the *Congregation of Catholic Education*, invited each Catholic college president (1) to set out in statutes its Catholic character and commitment "without equivocation;" (2) to create instruments of self-regulation in faith, morals, and discipline; and (3) to keep in mind their "relationship with ecclesiastical hierarchy" which must characterize all Catholic institutions. [It was understood then by the International Congress at the time that, while bishops normally did not run any college, they were free to influence and correct its Catholic performance.]

The newly created *National Conference of*

*Catholic Bishops* followed a later but parallel dialogue, first with the *National Catholic Educational Association*, then with a consortium called "the Learned Societies," both of which had close ties within *The Catholic University of America*. Later, its successor, the *Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities* became the chief point of contact between bishops and the Church's academic community. These Consultants were committed to "autonomous Catholic higher education." When one president of the *Fellowship of*

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**The response of the American Catholic academic community from important members of the Catholic University faculty to delegates of the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA) to university presidents — has generally been one of hostility.**

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*Catholic Scholars* wrote for a meeting to an NCCB president, he was told to function through “the Learned Societies.” Later on, another *Fellowship* president, realizing that dialogue there went only in one direction, wrote to Cardinal Laghi, Cardinal Garrone’s successor, once removed, soliciting a Roman review of the American dialogue over *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. He, too, was referred back to the existing American episcopal machinery.

By 1980, work was well underway on the *New Code of Canon Law*. (The reform of Church Law was the first reason given by John XXIII for calling Vatican II.) Americans resisted “the college canons” every inch of the way. Nonetheless, when *The New Code* appeared at last in 1983, Canons 796-821 specified that no school could claim the name “Catholic” without the consent of competent ecclesiastical authority; that those who teach Catholic theology at the college level or above need a mandate (license) from the same authority; that bishops have the obligation to take care that the principles of Catholic doctrine are faithfully observed in those institutions. Those Canons — though the Church’s universal law — were dead letters, from the beginning, in the United States.

Six years later (March 1, 1989) the Holy See, on its own initiative, upped the ante for Catholic college presidents and their faculties by requiring a profession of faith for new teachers “in any university” dealing with faith and morals, and an additional oath of fidelity for anyone assuming any office to be exercised in the name of the Church. The appropriate university personnel were expected to affirm their faith in what the Church teaches as divinely revealed, to accept all that is taught definitively concerning faith and morals, and to adhere to authentic hierarchical teaching, even when it is not proposed definitively. The oath of fidelity additionally calls on them to preserve the deposit of faith and to foster the discipline of the whole Church and Christian obedience to the Church’s shepherds. In one place they are told to shun those who teach contrary to faith.

The response of the American Catholic

academic community from important members of the *Catholic University* faculty to delegates of the *Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA)* to university presidents — has generally been one of hostility. *Notre Dame University’s* president simply said no. Msgr. Frederick McManus, CUA Canon Lawyer, and a leading voice against Roman interventions on many occasions, was even alarmed that pastors might be forced to take these oaths.

Ralph McInerney, president of the *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars*, asked a critical question: “Why in the name of God should a Roman Catholic theologian have trouble declaring himself loyal to the Vicar of Christ on earth? He is ashamed to because here is the tragic truth — to do so would be a lie!” A Dominican theologian phrased the question differently for the members of the *CTSA* at one of its meetings: “It is inconsistent for theologians to maintain, as a lot of them are doing here, that they participate in the *magisterium*, and refuse to take an oath of office.”

A year later, John Paul II went further, still, issuing his own Apostolic Constitution for Catholic Higher Education (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*), which requires hierarchies to establish a system of statutes called “Ordinances” which will bind every college which would wish to call itself “Catholic.” Recognition of Catholic identity comes only from Church authority. Professors in the field of ecclesiastical science are to be licensed (“mandated”), somewhat after the fashion of engineers, doctors, and lawyers in civilized countries. Bishops are to keep an ongoing eye on the quality of the Catholic performance. (No such legislation was necessary in the 1917 *Code of Canon Law*, because college presidents would have assumed similar responsibilities on their own initiative.)

### The Spirit of Rebellion

**B**y now — after thirty years of observation — it is clear that a spirit of rebellion pervades the American Catholic academic establishment. *Notre Dame’s* Richard McBrien is only its most raucous spokesman. Early in 1995,

on behalf of the College of Arts and Letters and in a formal address there, he announced that scientific theologians, like himself, do not speak for faith, nor for Catholic doctrine, nor as a catechist or a preacher, not for the Catholic Church as if he is its echo, but as a critical scientist who, with his peers, will decide without outside help the content of theological knowledge, even for its faith body. In his view, a department of theology “must insure that its large undergraduate student body, most of whom will be Catholic, are given a responsible, critical, ecumenical, sensitive introduction to, and exposition of, their own faith tradition.” But, he does not explain how “scientific theologians” can be trusted to do this faithfully.

The critical empirical ecumenical study of God or of Christ, carried on independently in a theological laboratory somewhere, is one thing. Even McBrien’s assertion that most of *Notre Dame’s* faculties and departments have no interest in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is only alarming. But the patent lack of public reverence and respect of autonomous “Scientific” academics for the only witnesses who can make Catholic Christianity credible, is an ecclesial disorder of major proportions. That the saving truths of Christ are in the hands of a professional group which teaches the Church’s youth, but cannot bring themselves to make a profession of faith simply because the Pope says they must, is itself a scandal. That bishops have allowed this standoff to go on for thirty years is a tragedy for the American Church.

Richard McBrien is not the only theology teacher who thinks that John Paul II has organized a “coup” against the reforms of the Church promised by John XXIII. Speaking for his academic party, he told *Time Consultants* (September 20, 1991): “We can’t go back, we won’t go back. Ours is a struggle between the future and the past . . . . [We have] the determination to defend our right to think, our right to speak, our

right to choose, and our right to live the gospel as it was intended to be lived in freedom.” He would also like bishops to rebel against the Pope, who, after all, is a mere Vicar of Peter. (*National Catholic Reporter*, February 24, 1995.)

It should surprise no one that this is a spirit of rebellion, one that pervades Catholic higher education, and does more damage to the Church’s faith and grace than falls from grace or from rigid scientific argumentation.

Consider, on the other hand, the witness of two other *Notre Dame* professors, who do not have the bishops’ ear.<sup>1</sup>

Historian Marvin O’Connell, writing about “A Catholic University: Whatever That May Mean,” recalls a meeting held at *Notre Dame*, *more than twenty years ago* (italics added), in the office of Hesburgh’s Provost to discuss the latter’s forthcoming homily at a Mass celebrating the opening of that academic year. As the conference came to an end, one of the University’s administrators spoke up: “We must always remember that *Notre Dame* is a Catholic University, whatever that means.” Today, Fr. O’Connell seems to think the phrase does not mean much any more. Priest colleagues continue to assure their audiences that their institutions remain Catholic because liturgies are regularly celebrated there, but O’Connell muses, “How long, I wonder, and how fruitfully, will the Liturgy be celebrated on our Catholic campuses as the understanding of it becomes increasingly blurred and compromised.” The his-

torian has been sobered by his experience in England, where he came upon Anglican Vicars who wouldn’t think of omitting Sunday Liturgy although they were convinced atheists. The priest historian is also upset by the disdain among young Catholics on our Catholic campuses of the great intellectual tradition out of which our liturgy has developed, and by a university chaplain who routinely omits the *Nicene Creed*

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**One of the characteristics of the restraints on academic freedom operative in secular universities is their arbitrariness, their shiftiness and alterability.**

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from Sunday Mass because it is divisive. The mimicry of secular universities by Catholic intellectuals and priests prompts him to remember what was said of the English bishops at the time of the Reformation: "The fortress is betrayed by those who should have defended it."

*Notre Dame* philosopher Ralph McInerny's *The Advantages of the Catholic University* makes a distinction Land O' Lakes presidents never make, between the *Research University* (e.g., Rockefeller Institute in New York) which trains other researchers or future research professors, from the *Teaching University* whose aim it is to send young men and women out into the adult world better informed intellectually, and more committed Catholics than they were on entry. (*Notre Dame* did both in 1940.) The teaching institution is where yeoman education goes on for the majority of faculty and student body: the laboratory or research component, putatively striving for cosmic breakthroughs, may obtain the large grants and the prestige (whether they make breakthroughs or not) comprise only a minuscule part of the 600,000 college enrollment. Excellence in the one is different from what goes on in the other, as is the thinking room each needs or is allowed. Even the freedom to explore the faith, preferably by mental giants who are also pious Catholics, does not grant license to deny or dilute it, certainly not under a Cross or a golden dome. McInerny concludes: "I know of no institution of higher learning where an academic's freedom to teach is not bounded by some restraints." He goes further: "if there is anything that characterizes the contemporary secular university it is the thought police who roam about campus seeking whom they would silence . . . . One of the characteristics of the restraints on academic freedom operative in secular universities is their arbitrariness, their shiftiness and alterability."

What is the advantage of the Catholic univer-

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**Far more scandal in the strict sense occurs under Catholic auspices by institutionalized false teaching and by the studied inculcation of skepticism about magisterium.**

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sity? Says McInerny: "The Catholic Church has become the great champion of reason in a time when, on all sides, reason is downgraded, or dismissed, or both." (He might have added "in favor of statistics.") And he concludes: "A university is chiefly concerned with the mind and the imagination. If the faith has no influence on what goes on in the classrooms and laboratories, studios and stages of the university, the university is NOT Catholic."

Confrontation of ideas and experience such as these — between what might fairly be described as the Roman vs. Anti-Roman parties — has never taken place, publicly or privately, under the auspices of the American bishops. In hindsight, that might have been done with profit by 1972 after the *International Congress of Catholic Universities* in Rome. First rate study of what was going on doctrinally and morally in Catholic higher education, certainly a canonical responsibility of hierarchy, might have been undertaken then. A reminder to American bishops by Apostolic Delegate Jean Jadot at their November 1975 meeting specified that, if they could not do this personally, they should appoint an "Episcopal Vicar for Doctrine." This Vatican note, it was said later, was read without enthusiasm by Jadot and created none in the body of bishops. By 1976 Rome was asking one University president to raise with the *NCCB* president appropriate questions about the standing ecclesiastic policy in the United States towards Catholic colleges. Nothing came of that, either.

Even the *NCCB* Committee that began to study the implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* began its in 1993 work by begging the question it was asked to resolve. It suggested that the basic relationship of bishops and colleges "should remain informal and dialogic in nature" and one "of communion, not control." This is a flawed Catholic statement. In matters of vital importance to the Church, bishops are not on the same dialectic-

tic level with college presidents. While they do not aspire to run the internal affairs of colleges, nor should they, bishops are the guardians of whatever external controls Church law demands of anyone administering a college, or a hospital, or a reformatory, or any institution with the Catholic name on it. Bishops are legislators for, and make judgments about, the accreditation and performance of all Catholic institutions. To abandon or compromise this role is to institutionalize and legitimize "pick and choose Catholicism," a juridical situation hardly consonant with Catholicity.

Where is the Holy See in the present confused situation? One can never be sure what goes on behind the scenes, of course. But the sterner demands of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* are not mentioned in the public forum anymore. Pio Cardinal Laghi, the present Prefect of Rome's *Congregation for Catholic Education*, regularly attends American graduations, where the local college may be in disfavor with a local bishop, where the institution, shortly before, has declared itself no longer Catholic but "non-denominational," and yet speaks Catholic truisms, never of specific ordinances. He also calls a university "a model" of faithfulness to its Catholic identity, when more than a few of its theology professors could not, in any upright situation, merit the "mandate" required by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

Bishops are rightly agitated over the harm done to the Church by the public sins of their priests, religious, and prominent laity, and they move diligently to repair, as best they can, the dire consequences therefrom to Catholic faith and its way of life. Far more scandal in the strict sense occurs under Catholic auspices by institutionalized false teaching and by the studied inculcation of skepticism about *magisterium*. Martin Luther did more damage by his teaching than by his lifestyle. Why did bishops not react more forthrightly to *The Notre Dame Study of Catholic Life Since Vatican II* (Harper and Row 1987) which concluded: "Vatican II's engendered sense of lay ownership by the Church is reflected in the growing reliance by core Catholics on their own conscience instead of

Church teaching in deciding what is moral and what is best for the Church." Why do bishops sit by silently, as they did in 1990, when the *Catholic Theological Society of America* rejected the very notion of oaths of fidelity (1) because they are exacted out of "a sheer sense of duty, enforced obedience, of a perception of some other form of unfreedom;" and (2) because John Paul II is out of touch with the "common center" of the Church and "with the movement of life in the [Catholic] family."

In 1995 Cardinal John O'Connor addressed a group of religious and made a timely Catholic observation: "To fail to correct where correction is necessary is to fail religious who need correction, who deserve correction, who would profit by correction." One would have to dig deeply into his memory to recall a bishop who ever corrected publicly a college president, a right and a role publicly acknowledged as belonging to bishops by the *International Federation of Catholic Universities* in 1973. Who is going to correct the body of Jesuits, meeting in Rome under the Pope's nose, when it found a new form of obedience in their private right of discernment to oppose Church authority. (*Origins*, April 11, 1995: Jesuits are more responsible for the pastor/professor dichotomy than Theodore Hesburgh.) In the Catholic world view, good is to be rewarded, and evil punished. On Catholic campuses — when the issue is authentic Catholic teaching — the ones punished, if only by abuse or isolation, sometimes by denial of tenure or promotion, are Catholic apologists.

The issue anymore is not simply the ill-will of autonomous academics toward Church authority and its catechesis of the faithful. Due to electronic media, popular opinion, often manipulated by pressure groups, has become a driving force on decision-making by officers of government, bishops not excluded. Freewheeling academics, compatible with media masters, set the tone of every Catholic debate, making responding bishops (or pope) look like reactionaries. These academics appear especially persuasive, if they have approved

Catholic status on a college campus, or can claim membership on an Episcopal or Papal Committee, or can name bishops who support or indulge them. The teaching of magisterium is reduced, thereby, to one man's opinion or one man's theology, take your choice. Institutional cooperation with that sort of pluralism creates the impression that professorial opinions, even if contrary to *magisterium*, are tolerable choices for good Catholics, thus vitiating the very idea of a final teaching authority in the Church. As of the moment, bishops have lost many of these contests, and a large measure of Catholic public opinion on chastity, on marriage, on the priesthood, on the sacraments, even on the divinity of Christ, in His Real Presence in the Church or in the Eucharist. It is not that deficient Catholics never existed before in the Church, but they now claim legitimacy. Because their revised Catholicity is found in approved Catholic infrastructures, perhaps in their own or neighboring parishes. Corrections belatedly given after many years of revised, but illicit, Catholic practice are often looked upon as efforts to save ecclesial face, not really intended to reverse the trend of the Vatican II Catholic course at all.

It ill behooves bishops, therefore, in one situation, to appear, fully conscious of their judgmental responsibility, to intervene on the side of morality; and in another having to do with doctrine, appear as beggars with their hands out seeking scraps of dubious obeisance from the tables of academics, in places where the Church's doctrinal patrimony is being dissipated by doubt and denial in the ranks.

As long as Catholic college presidents, religious superiors, and the canonical theological establishments are permitted to claim Catholicity as their identity, and simultaneously to assert autonomy from obedience to Church norms, the authentic Catholic witness to the secular American culture will be compromised, and the faith and moral life of young Catholics will eventually erode.

As long as Catholic college presidents effectively make it appear that bishops are incidental, if

not irrelevant, to what they do on campus or what their faculties communicate outside the alleged Catholic Halls of Ivy, they relativize the role of all pastors.

### Catholic Higher Education in Microcosm

**W**e must begin to think small. About colleges, about bishops.

According to the *Catholic Directory* there are about 230 Catholic institutions of higher learning in the United States. Approximately 150 of them are small colleges with student enrollments between 1,000 and 2,500. (Another 40 have 2,500 or more, 20 with 5,000 plus, only 15 with more than 10,000, three quarters of whom are 18-22 year olds.)

Let us take one of those small colleges — “St. Hildegarde of Bingen” is as good a name as any, but a real school — whose president calls the theology department there “excellent,” and whose press and other clippings report that the campus houses pro-choice, as well as pro-life advocacy groups because “the *Catholic Bishops Conference* prescribes no clear positions for Catholic colleges or universities on these delicate matters.” The institution has a homosexual network with regular workshops for that particular cause, a faculty member who publicly opposes John Paul II's strictures on moral relativists (“people that don't really exist”), another who thinks Sophia — “a feminine God” — is worthy of honor, a third who thinks the passion of Jesus' sexuality must be explored as fully as we have the passion of his suffering. (“Of course, the conventional view of Augustine and Thomas would not have allowed Jesus' either or masturbation.”) Of course, too, self-pleasuring is fine.

When complaints came from parents, the president referred them back to the professor. When the complaints went to the bishop, he referred them back to the president, who claimed membership on a *NCCB* Committee which meets

twice a year to discuss issues affecting Catholic higher education.

One is entitled to speculate what would happen in a secular college, if a group of old-time Jesuits, openly and without equivocation, took over the presidency and key teaching offices, where they proceeded to teach that Jesus is the Son of God, Catholicity his one, true Church, abortion an "unspeakable crime" and homosexuality "a disordered state."

At the 1990 Synod of Bishops, Bernard Cardinal Gantin, Prefect of the *Congregation of Bishops*, called the Bishop Ordinary a "*de iure* Vicar of Christ in his Diocese," a member of the universal college of bishops, independent of his membership in a National Conference. But once university presidents sought refuge from local bishops (after 1967) in NCCB's Washington bureaucracy, thereby nationalizing Catholic higher education, little college presidents followed suit, leaving the diocesan bishop almost irrelevant to what happens on campuses within his jurisdiction, irrelevant to his personal responsibility for the faith of his young.

## No Easy Way Out

**T**here is no easy way out of the morass in which Catholic bishops and the Pope now find themselves. But only at their level will the Church of the future be salvaged as fully Catholic on magisterial terms. Momentarily, the situation looks hopeless. Still, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is the law, and many Catholic faculty want the law enforced, but find their autonomous presidents claiming episcopal favor. Since college presidents are the persons who shape their institutions, and since recognition of their schools as Catholic is the right of hierarchy alone, the American bishops might at the moment direct their attention to them, because so many faculty have been trained by their predecessors to think that they are above Catholic law. Bishops might tender a *temporary*

*certificate of Catholicity*, if a given president is willing to make a *meaningful* profession of faith and an oath of fidelity. The word "*meaningful*" is important here because hypocrisy is not a vice which the American Church can afford to indulge at this point of crisis with its "knowledge class." In the meantime, each bishop should establish an Office of Episcopal Vicar of Education, whose responsibility it is to study the Catholic college institutions in his diocese. Within a fixed period, the bishop or the vicar should review with the president the steps necessary to meet all the requirements of Catholic law. The time has come to return to the Diocesan Bishop what by Church law is his responsibility alone, viz., the supervision of the doctrinal integrity of institutions within his jurisdiction. Archbishops have special oversight of the failure of their suffragans. Bishops must reward those who make this supreme effort and withhold approvals or declare disapproval of colleges who refuse to cooperate. Whatever is to be found of authentic Catholicity in the 21st century requires such integrity, and courage, today. By then Catholicity will require some kind of a higher education system within the fold.

There is a prayer older priests still use in troubled situations:

Take out of their hearts the spirit of rebellion.  
Teach them to see thy good and gracious purposes working in all the trials thou send upon them.

While this prayer, properly said, draws grace from heaven on aggrieved professors, bishops ought to submit to Rome their plans to implement the norms contained in the *Code of Canon Law*, *The Decree of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. And while Rome studies the American episcopal response college presidents should be apprised to begin exercising their freedom within the context of their duty to the Church, accordingly. ✠

<sup>1</sup> See Theodore Hesburgh's, *The Challenge and Promise of a Catholic University*, Notre Dame Press, 1994.

## Cardinal Wright Award

**W**hen Adlai Stevenson was defeated for the presidency a second time by Dwight Eisenhower, he was asked how he felt. "It only hurts when I laugh," he replied. Of this year's recipient of the Cardinal Wright award it might be said that he only laughs when it hurts. Fortunately for the rest of us, he has been hurting a lot in recent years.

A native of Baghdad on the Hudson, product of the New York seminary system, he is a doctor of theology from the Catholic University of America where, it is his boast, he studied under the redoubtable Charles Curran. (His exegesis of his mentor's family name as a form of the present participle of *currere* has not gained currency). A lesser apprentice might have been recruited into the ranks of dissent. On the contrary, our recipient forged in the smithy of his soul an intellect in tune with the Magisterium. It is at least part of his providential role to undo the

harm done by dissenting theologians of the generation before his own.

Appointed to the faculty of the major seminary at Dunwoodie, he brought order, precision and wit to his classroom. No one who has heard him lecture will ever again be satisfied with the directionless meandering of too many professors. As his fame grew, so did requests to lecture, to give retreats, to give mini-courses for the laity. Work in the chancery and pastoral work complemented his teaching. Nor did he ignore that recognized analogue of the moral life, the game of golf. A fozzled shot is not sin, but character is revealed in the player's subsequent behavior. In his case, virtue has not been missing on the links.

A former president of the fellowship, mandatory raconteur at the annual banquet when he casts a dry eye over the vale of tears, priest, scholar and master of *delectatio morosa*, this year's recipient of the Cardinal Wright Award is

**MONSIGNOR WILLIAM B. SMITH**

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## Response

**F**irst, I want to thank the Fellowship. I thank them for their Catholicity, for their Scholarship, but most of all tonight I thank them for their *Fellowship*.

I had both the opportunity and the privilege to be present and to present a paper at our first convention — the Ramada Airport Inn, Kansas City, Missouri, on April 29, 1978 — 17 years ago. I am sure it is only an accident of the calendar, but 1978 was, as you may recall, the Year of Three Popes. I would quickly add that this Fellowship had no play and no part in the death of two popes nor the election of two popes, especially the present Pope. But, it is for me a happy coincidence that our Fellowship is just about 6 months older — pretty much co-extensive with the pontificate of Pope John Paul II who will have been Pope 17 years on the 16th of next month.

It is my opinion that this Pope has been *very* helpful to this Fellowship, and, in our own limited but consistent way, I say with complete honesty that this Fellowship of Catholic Scholars has tried faithfully to support the teaching and the person of our Holy Father as much or more than any other organization in this country that has the word 'Catholic' in its title. I'm proud of that and grateful for it. Thus, I am grateful to receive the honor of this Fellowship award confirming all the worst that my enemies fear about me, but the best of friends whom I respect.

I have no heavy nor extended message. Certainly, I would not lecture this organization about Catholicism — you would not be here if you were not actively interested in that; nor would I lecture you about scholarship — you would not be a member if you were not qualified in that; I would simply focus a bit on 'Fellowship' — the fellowship of this Fellowship and its importance, at least to me.

First, I have to make a small confession. When

Msgr. George Kelly had some initial meetings and chaired our first organizational and planning meeting in 1977 at Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis — with the enthusiastic support and active presence of Cardinal Carberry (God bless him!) — I thought at that time that the Fellowship would largely be Seminary people with some few University people.

In that, I was quite mistaken. In large part, the Fellowship became largely University people and only modestly some Seminary people. In fact, there are probably some seminaries that by rule forbid vigils and all night adoration except when we are in convention praying only then that perhaps an earthquake or hurricane or something will strike the place where we meet. Thus far, such episodic devotions have not been effective — although a tornado came within 20 miles of our first convention in Kansas City.

Now although we still operate under the dubious patronage of Nicodemus — some people will only talk to us at night and in private — the work, the good work of the Fellowship is better known and better noticed than what one might gather from reading say: the *National Catholic Reporter*, or *Commonweal*, or *Origins*, especially *Origins*.

Let me give an example that is both personal and partial — personal in that it was brought to my attention from an unusual source, and partial since it is limited to the love of my life 'moral theology.'

In Rome, at a Convention sponsored by the Pontifical Council for the Family on the 25th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* (Nov. 24-26, 1993), apart from the talks of Cardinal Lopez-Trujillo and the Holy Father, 4 of the 13 presenters were members of this Fellowship: Profs. May & Anderson, Dr. Hilgers and myself. The same is true of the two Vatican-sponsored International Conferences on Moral Theology (1986 & 1988) at which almost all of the above plus Profs. McInerny and Grisez were also presenters.

In a conversation with two officials of two different Roman Congregations at the 1993 Conference, someone asked about the whereabouts of Fr. Curran, so I mentioned what I thought was his present venue while mumbling that we do have our problems and a number of really loose cannons in moral theology made in USA.

This curial official took me up on that, noting that Europe was flooded with muddled moralists, while the U.S.A. had some of the most reliable moralists available anywhere and specific names were ticked off: Profs. May, Grisez, Boyle; Frs. Lawler & Cessario; the Smith Corporation (my term, not his), i.e., Janet, Russell & myself; and the important debates and contributions that clarify and advance ethical theory, especially re natural law, Profs. McInerny, Hittinger & George. John Finnis had his citizenship accidentally transplanted by this official which I tried to correct and was informed that the most informed contributions supportive of *Veritatis Splendor* were in large part the support of American moralists in print (all of the above!).

Walking back from the Lateran to the place where I was staying in Rome, I thought as well of John Haas & Fr. Kevin McMahon in Phila., John Grabowski at C.U., Frs. John Harvey, Bob Zylla at Mt. St. Mary's, Joyce Little; two reliable institutes: John Paul II in Wash. DC. and Pope John Center in Braintree MA. and a sizeable number of individual professors at Notre Dame, Steubenville & Christendom — who consistently contribute to ethical theory and reasoned standards — that steady flow of contributions in *Crisis* and *First Things* that make sober, thoughtful and unashamedly pro-life contributions to public policy discussion especially on the life issues. And they are all members of this Fellowship.

I don't suggest that this is a complete list; it's not nor is it meant to be. But it is *completely* members of this Fellowship. Again, I don't even suggest that the Fellowship brought this about, but I do think it's helpful that the Fellowship brings these good people and their good work together.

It's not absolutely essential, but it's very, very helpful to know that you are not alone, nor are you working alone, and thus one of the original purposes of the FCS has been and is currently fulfilled — to bring together, if for no other reason than genuine fellowship, men and women who work on their own, stand on and by their own work, but share the deep and common purpose of putting their best scholarly work at the service of the Church.

It's a big plus. And if it is largely unnoticed here, there is at least some acknowledgement else-

where. Perhaps, even Nicodemus smiles, but of course, he would smile at night.

Along that 17 year old time line, all these mentions are personnel, members of this Fellowship. We can also look at the same 17 year period for subject matter and the happy coincidence that the Pontificate of John Paul will soon be 17 years.

John Paul II - Teacher & Mystic. The extensive doctrinal-moral teaching patrimony of this Pope is now quite extensive: John Paul II was a faithful participant in Vatican Council II, and, in my judgment, there is no more faithful expositor of Vatican Council II. I wonder at times how many really grasp the depth and scope of the teaching of John Paul II.

Consider this overview of titles only:

Three encyclicals, one on each member of the Blessed Trinity: *Redemptor hominis* ('79) on Jesus Christ, the center piece and center Person of all his teaching; *Dives in Misericordia* ('80) on God the Father; *Dominum et Vivificantem* ('86) on the Holy Spirit.

An encyclical on the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Redemptoris Mater* ('87) and an Apostolic Exhortation on St. Joseph, *Redemptoris Custos* ('89); an encyclical on two other pivotal saints: *Slavorum Apostoli* ('85).

Four other major encyclicals: on the very mission of the Church, *Redemptoris Missio* ('90); the moral masterpiece on fundamental moral theology, *Veritatis Splendor* ('93); life itself and the life issues, *Evangelium Vitae* ('95), and again this year, ecumenism, *Ut Unum Sint* ('95).

Clearly, the social doctrine of the Church has not been neglected with three full encyclicals: *Laborem Exercens* ('81); *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* ('87) and the magisterial summary of 100 years of Catholic social teaching together with present analysis and indications for the future in *Centessimus Annus* ('91).

Consider as well the rich and detailed follow-up and follow through in the extensive Apostolic Exhortations following the World Synods of Bishops: *Catechesi Tradendae* ('79) on Catechetics; the masterpiece on marriage and family life, *Familiaris Consortio* ('81); the sacrament of Penance, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* ('84); the Christian faithful and faithful apostolate, *Christifideles Laici* ('88); the full plan for priestly life, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* ('92) and

I suspect and expect a full document soon on Religious Life following the Synod on that subject in the Autumn of '94.

Three Apostolic Letters of profound importance, hardly read and rarely mentioned, but critical issues touching the fault lines of contemporary moral confusion and societal chaos: *Salvifici Doloris* ('84) on the Christian understanding of suffering; *Mulieris Dignitatem* ('88) on the dignity and vocation of women; and last year's "Letter To Families" ('94); one, could add as well the Apostolic Exhortation, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* ('90) a document of no small interest to this gathering; indeed, it speaks of and to the subject matter of this convention.

Under the same Pope's approval and direction the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has promulgated instructions and letters in detail on very contemporary problems: Euthanasia ('80); Infant Baptism ('80); Homosexuality ('86); Bio-ethics in *Donum Vitae* ('87); the non-ordination of women ('94) and Divorce-Remarriage & Eucharist ('94).

During this same Pontificate we had the re-codification of the entire universal law of the Church, both the Western Code (1983) and the Eastern Code (1990); together with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992) which is nothing other than the Catechism of Vatican Council II and completes the teaching implementation of the same Vatican Council II.

I found it almost humorous that in the introduction to his best seller, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (1994) the Pope himself would write: "... I kept your questions on my desk. They interested me. I didn't think it would be wise to let them go to waste. So I thought about them and, after some time, during the brief moments when I was free from obligations, I responded to them in writing." (NY: A.A.Knopf, 1994) p. iv.

"When I was free from obligations..." This must be humor. In view of the extensive published patrimony above, the endless administrative and ceremonial duties — just when is this man free from obligations? Yet, he finds the time and the words, and the work — his example gives me reason to reconsider the accuracy of the expression 'the Protestant work ethic.'

I consider it a privilege to be a member of this

Fellowship whose membership accepts, welcomes, appreciates and defends, when necessary, not just bits and pieces of this pontifical patrimony but the whole of it.

Thus, both the people here (membership) and the subject matter (doctrinal-moral patrimony) of John Paul 11 are welcomed and received here. That aspect of this Fellowship is a great personal help to me.

I am sure I am not alone — we do our work

not for prizes, medals or awards; we do what St. Luke records of any faithful servant — *quod debuimus facere fecimus* (Lk.17:10): we do no more than is our duty.

I am grateful for this award; I am grateful for this Fellowship — for me, as for you, we have done no more than is our duty! Thank you.

Msgr. William B. Smith, STD  
St. Joseph's Seminary  
Dunwoodie  
Yonkers, NY. 10704-1852.

## *Believe it or not!*

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### UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON

A JESUIT UNIVERSITY

August 29, 1995

MEMO

TO: Faculty & Staff University of Scranton  
FROM: Task Force on Ignatian Identity & Mission  
RE: University Assembly

Colleagues:

On Friday, September 29 faculty and staff of the University community are invited to a formal University Assembly. The proceedings will begin at 3:30 in the Houlihan-McLean Center; a reception will follow at 4:30 in the Atrium.

Sponsored by the Task Force on Ignatian Identity & Mission, this will be the first occurrence of an annual Assembly at which the University will confer a new award, **The Pedro Arrupe, S.J. Award for Distinguished Contributions to Ignatian Mission and Ministries**. The inaugural recipient for this award will be Dr. Monika Konrad Hellwig, the Landogger Distinguished Professor of Theology at Georgetown University. Following the presentation, Dr. Hellwig will address the Assembly regarding "The Catholic Intellectual Tradition."

In addition to the Arrupe Award, members of our own University community will also be recognized. The CASE Professor of the Year, the Alpha Sigma Nu Teacher of the Year, and others will be introduced.

All members of the University community (faculty, professional and support staff, administrators) are welcome — and encouraged — to attend. Those who wish may accompany those on the platform in academic regalia; robing will be in the Band Room of Houlihan-McLean, and the procession will line up at 3:15. If you do not have your own academic attire, it can be ordered through the Book Store. Please do so *no later than* Friday afternoon, September 8th.

We look forward to your participation.

The Task Force on Ignatian Identity & Mission

## Address of His Eminence Cardinal Pio Laghi, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education,

at the Academic Convocation, 9 May 1995, Saint John's University, Jamaica, New York

### The Catholic University as University and as Catholic

#### Introduction and Greetings

I wish, first of all, in my own name and in that of the Congregation for Catholic Education, to express my gratitude to the President of Saint John's University, Father Donald Harrington, and to the Board of Trustees for the invitation to take part in this Academic Convocation, one of the celebrations marking the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of this University. I greet in a special way His Eminence Cardinal John O'Connor, who honors us with his presence, and His Excellency Bishop Thomas Daily and the other Bishops present, as well as the Faculty of this and other Universities, students and staff in attendance, friends and benefactors of Saint John's. I thank Father Harrington and the Board of Trustees also for the visit they paid to me and my collaborators in the Congregation for Catholic Education this past March as part of the anniversary celebration.

Allow me to congratulate the four honorees at this Convocation:

Mr. John V. Brennan, Mr. John G. Dowd, Sister Mary Paul and Sister Margaret Mary Fitzpatrick. All of you, in varying ways, have ties with Catholic Higher Education and are representative of many of the aspects of Catholic Higher Education which Saint John's University has fostered for a century and a quarter and which it is celebrating during this year.

The Congregation for Catholic Education, over which I preside as cardinal Prefect assists Our Holy Father the Pope in all aspects of the Church's activity in the realm of education throughout the world. Among the responsibilities of the Congregation is that of the Catholic Universities. And it is on this subject, particularly on the two words — University and Catholic — that I wish to address you this evening.

#### Brief Historical Excursus: the Church and the University

Before I approach this subject, I hope that you will allow me a few words of historical background on the theme.

As you know, the Church has had a long-standing relationship with the University as an institution. In various epochs, it has sought to bring Christian thought into the cultural milieu of the times. The early Christian writers were concerned not only with the defense of Christian truth against errors but also with expressing it within the culture in which they lived.

Later on in the West, the Church established schools in connection with the great cathedrals and monasteries; these can be con-

sidered the immediate predecessors of the Universities of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: Bologna, Paris, Oxford, Salamanca. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, there were sixty-four Universities in existence and all of these had been either erected or approved by the authority of the Pope. Thus, for this epoch, all universities had ties with the Church.

Shortly thereafter, for various cultural and political reasons, there began to emerge Universities with lessening, then with no ties to the Church. Yet the Church maintained its commitment to higher education, and especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries realized this commitment in the creation of Catholic Universities, which number today about nine hundred world-wide. It is within this history and within this rich cultural heritage that we should see the Catholic Universities of today.

A new chapter in this history was opened with the Second Vatican Council. In its Declaration *Gravissimum educationis* on the theme of Christian education, the Council spoke of the role of Catholic Institutions of higher study as assuring that "the Christian outlook ... acquire, as it were, a public, stable and universal influence in the whole process of the promotion of higher culture" (N.10). After a very thorough process of study and consultation world-wide, carried on with the Bishops, the universities and the Religious Congregations involved in higher education, a quarter century after the Council, there appeared the Apostolic Constitution of Pope John Paul II on Catholic Universities, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. The first document of its kind to

be dedicated to the Catholic University, this Constitution provides both the vision of the Catholic University and the essential norms to guide its operation.

### The Catholic University as University and as Catholic

It may seem a commonplace to say it, but the fundamental objective of the Catholic University is to be at one and the same time both University and Catholic. Herein lie the criteria with which the Catholic University will be judged.

*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is clear and firm on the point that the Catholic University is a University. It ascribes to it the three objectives which characterize every University and which were enunciated in the *Magna Charta of the European Universities* in 1988. These are research, teaching and the various services offered to the local, national and international communities.

Addressing the Catholic University of America in 1979, Pope John Paul II gave fuller expression to this idea with regard to Catholic Universities. He called for an undiminished dedication to intellectual honesty and academic excellence. He said: "No University can deserve the esteem of the world of learning unless it applies the highest standards of scientific research, constantly updating its methods and working instruments, and unless it excels in seriousness, and therefore in freedom of investigation. Truth and science are not gratuitous conquests but the result of surrender to objectivity and of the exploration of all aspects of nature and man" (*Insegnamenti di*

*Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. II/2, pp. 687-688).

### As Catholic: institutionally Catholic

In addressing the idea of the Catholicity of the University I wish to do so principally in the light of the document, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and specifically with reference to its paragraph N. 13, where there is found the key to understanding our subject. The importance of this passage in the Constitution is that it introduces the concept that the Catholic University is *institutionally* Catholic.

This concept of the institutionally Catholic identity of the University means that the Catholicity of the University is not solely dependent on individuals, be they the founders, the Religious Family which may own or conduct the University, or the Catholic administrators, professors and students who make up the University at any moment. Surely much is owed to the Catholic commitment of these people, but the University's Catholic identity is not dependent alone upon them. The University is Catholic in itself. It is the institution which the University is which commits itself to respect its own Catholic identity. Such a commitment does not diminish the Catholic University as a University; rather it defines the specific way that this University is a university.

The role and the task of the University insofar as it is Catholic are connected with the very function of a university in itself. A University, as was noted earlier, has the institutional functions of research, teaching and service to the wider society. These roles consti-

tute the very being of a university, and in the case of a Catholic University, the Catholic character of the University enters into this institutional and public threefold function.

The vision of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is that the Church calls upon the Catholic University to share in its mission. In so doing the Church entrusts to the Catholic University tasks connected, on the one hand with the role of the university, and on the other tasks which touch the mission of the Church itself.

The presence of the Church in the world of the University takes place, then, in a way which is appropriate to the nature and the finality of the University in its rendering a public service. And the form of this presence of the Church is not a private one but an institutional one because it engages the Catholic University as a University.

In this light, paragraph N. 13 of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* to which I am referring enumerates four essential characteristics of the Catholic University, which are common to all Catholic Universities notwithstanding the juridical differences among them. These characteristics render the university capable of its objective of assuring, in an institutional manner — in a public manner — a Christian presence in the university world, confronting the great problems of society and culture. These it identifies as:

1. "a Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such;
2. a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to

contribute by its own research;

3. fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church;

4. an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life.”

From the perspective embodied in these four characteristics there derives the idea expressed in the next paragraph of the Apostolic Constitution, namely that “it is evident that besides the teaching, research and service common to all Universities, the Catholic University, by *institutional commitment*, brings to its task the inspiration and light of the *Christian message*. In a Catholic University, therefore, Catholic ideals, attitudes and principles penetrate and inform university activities in accordance with the proper nature and autonomy of these activities. In a word, being both a university and Catholic, it must be both a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge, and an academic institution in which Catholicism is vitally present and operative.”

The institutional functions of research, teaching and service, common to every University take on, in the case of the Catholic University, the qualifications set forth in these four characteristics. These four, for their part, are impossible to conceive in a merely individual way, by way of persons only; they require for their realization an institutional dimension.

In this vision of the institutional quality of the Catholic identity of the University and of the

Church’s granting to the Catholic University a share in its own mission, one comes to understand also that ecclesiastical authority cannot be considered external to the University, to its functions and to its purpose. The Constitution, repeating words which the Holy Father spoke in this country, states that the Bishops, even when they do not enter directly into the internal governance of the University “should not be seen as external agents but as participants in the life of the Catholic University” (N. 28). It would be impossible for the University to remain Catholic — as it would be for any other institution in the Church — if it were to lack this relationship with ecclesiastical authority.

Another consequence of the Catholic University’s essential relationship to the Church is that the *institutional fidelity* of the University to the Christian message includes a recognition of and adherence to the teaching authority of the church in matters of faith and morals (cf. N. 27).

#### **The compatibility of “University” and “Catholic”: the oneness of truth**

Immediately it must be said that the institutionally Catholic character of which I am speaking does not offend in any way the university character of the school. This is guaranteed by the fact that the University’s purpose is the impartial search for the truth. Truth is one, and all aspects of the truth have an essential connection with the supreme truth who is God. The truth of Revelation is not in opposition to the truth of reason. Rather it guides and illu-

mines reason and assures that the efforts of human intelligence not go astray, so that what is identified as truth be such and be for humanity’s well-being.

This delicate but, at the same time, fascinating task of the Catholic University in achieving the integration of knowledge derived both from Revelation and from reason is carried on, in the words of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, with the awareness “of being preceded by him who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” the *Logos*, whose Spirit of intelligence and love enables the human person to find the ultimate reality of which he is the source and end and who alone is capable of giving fully that Wisdom without which the future of the world would be in danger” (N. 4).

#### **Catholic Identity and some specific tasks of the University**

It is obvious that the Church, by means of the presence assured for it in the university milieu by the Catholic University, has to respond to questions which emerge with the changes in the culture and in society.

This same perspective of the relationship of the Catholic University to the Church should guide our understanding of the aspects of the University’s mission which are detailed in the Apostolic Constitution. Those, for example, of the integration of the various branches of knowledge, of promoting the dialogue between faith and reason and of acting in accord with the ethical and moral implications of research, teaching and societal service which the University renders (cf. Nn. 16, 17, 18).

The need for the integration of

the various branches of knowledge is keenly felt everywhere today because of the fragmentation of human knowledge which has resulted from modern specialization. While this specialization is especially characteristic of the scientific disciplines, it is registered also in the human sciences. This is a situation which calls for an interdisciplinary approach. This need has been sensed and is being responded to also in Universities other than the Catholic Universities. In the Catholic Universities, however, the integration of knowledge should take place not only on the horizontal level but on the transcendent as well. That is, the Catholic University with the assistance of philosophy and theology is able to get to the roots of problems and to respond to the urgent questions and challenges of the day with an integral vision of the human being and with concern to promote the genuine good of man and society.

In the same way should be seen the dialogue between faith and reason and the attention to the moral implications of research — in its methods as well as its discoveries, of teaching and of service to society. Here too the presence of the disciplines of philosophy and theology contribute a vertical dimension so necessary to find for today's problems solutions which will respect the truth about man and his destiny.

It must be recognized that the challenges of the future will be, at their root, ethical, moral, and religious ones. In this regard it is, and will be an important aspect of the mission of the Catholic University to guarantee the priority of the ethical over the technical, the pri-

macy of the person over things, and the superiority of the spirit over matter. The cause of the human person, the good of humankind, justice among people will only be served if knowledge is joined to conscience (cf. N. 18).

### The University and Evangelization

What I have said here this evening of the institutional relationship of the Catholic University to the Church should lead to a final point, that of the University and evangelization. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* specifies the Catholic University's role in the Church's mission, in accordance with its nature as a University and the three essential functions of a university of which I have been speaking, those of research, teaching and service. The Constitution states:

"All the basic activities of a Catholic University are connected with and in harmony with the evangelizing mission of the Church: research carried out in the light of the Christian message which puts new human discoveries at the service of individuals and society; education offered in a faith context that forms men and women capable of rational and critical judgement and conscious of the transcendent dignity of the human person; professional training that incorporates ethical values and a sense of service to individuals and to society; the dialogue with culture that makes the faith better understood, and the theological research that translates the faith into contemporary language. 'Precisely because it is more and more conscious of its salvific mission in the

world, the Church wants to have these centers closely connected with it; it wants to have them present and operative in spreading the authentic message of Christ," (N. 59).

I am happy to say that this relationship to the Church and engagement in the Church's mission of evangelization is what Saint John's University has proposed for itself and stated for the public community in its Mission Statement. There it professes itself to be a University committed to academic excellence. It enunciates its Catholic identity and its bond with the Church in the context of a pluralistic society and of the welcome presence on campus of persons of different religious convictions. It emblemizes the University's role of service under the banner of its Vincentian tradition, inspired by a figure from Catholic history which is synonymous with compassion and service, St. Vincent de Paul. And like him this University has chosen to serve in a special way the education of the urban population of a great city.

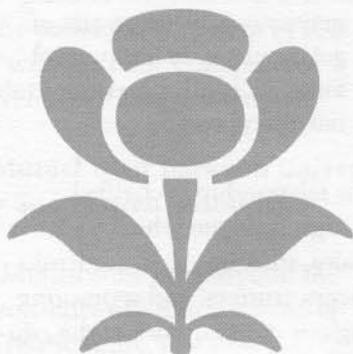
### Conclusion

Concluding, I wish to say that you will not think that I have defined too important a role for the Catholic Universities nor placed on them too great a burden to accept their natural share of the Church's mission when you recall the words of Pope John Paul II in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. He writes:

"The mission that the Church, with great hope, entrusts to the Catholic Universities holds a cultural and religious meaning of importance because it concerns the

very future of humanity. . . . The salvific action of the Church on cultures is achieved, first of all, by means of persons, families, and educators . . . . (The work of those engaged in the significant mission of Catholic higher education) becomes ever more important, more urgent and necessary on behalf of Evangelization for the future of culture and of all cultures. The Church and the world have great need of your witness and of your capable, free, and responsible contribution”

Thank You!



### **MOVING?**

*Tell the Fellowship.  
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(the Post Office does not  
forward 3rd class mail)*

## **Help Needed to Stop Campus Dissent**

**F**or the past several months, a committee of American bishops been preparing ordinances to reform and govern Catholic higher education in this country. The ordinances are intended to implement *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities issued by Pope John Paul II in 1990.

One provision of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* that is under intense scrutiny by the bishops simply repeats what is already required by Canon Law, that any individual who teaches theology at a Catholic institution must obtain a “mandate” from the local bishop, recognizing the individual as competent in the eyes of the Church.

The mandate is essential to preserving Catholic higher education for the following reasons:

1. The mandate ensures the authenticity of Catholic teaching in a particular area of learning and research (Theology) that is central to the identity of a Catholic university and the community which inhabits it.
2. The mandate serves to ensure that teaching in all subject areas is enriched by a theology that is authentically Catholic. According to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the truths revealed through the Church should “penetrate and inform” all university disciplines, which can only benefit from the knowledge

given to man by God.

3. The notions of authority upon which the mandate relies are fundamental to the Church and to the nature of Catholic higher education. The mandate affirms the bishops’ teaching authority with regard to sound doctrine, the Vatican’s authority to determine whether institutions and teachings are truly Catholic, and the authority of Canon Law over all the faithful.

The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) has opposed the mandate as an inappropriate intrusion by the bishops into the realm of academia, and recent reports suggest that the bishops may be inclined not to enforce the mandate. (The bishops’ final draft of the ordinances is expected to be issued in the fall.) To abandon the mandate would be a major step toward rendering *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* impotent in the U.S.

The Cardinal Newman Society for the Preservation of Catholic Higher Education is calling on faithful Catholic educators, administrators, students and alumni to provide public support for the mandate. Supporters can write letters to the editor in Catholic publications, including their diocesan newspapers, or write letters to the local bishop requesting his attention to this issue.

*For copies of Ex Corde Ecclesiae and related materials, write to the Cardinal Newman Society, P.O. Box 75274, Washington, D.C. 20013; donations to cover postage and printing are encouraged.*

# Memorandum

DATE: August 25, 1995

TO: Bishops, Presidents, Learned Societies, Sponsoring Religious Communities

FROM: Bishop John J. Leibrecht

ON: Ex corde Ecclesiae

**T**hanks to all of you who have communicated with the *Ex corde Ecclesiae* Implementation Committee this past year. Your comments and recommendations have been considered by the Committee as it responds to its charge of preparing for the bishops of the United States a proposal which implements the apostolic constitution.

The enclosed paper, "*Ex corde Ecclesiae: An Application to the United States*," is the latest effort of the Committee to place *Ex corde Ecclesiae* within the context of our nation. The Committee requests that bishops and college/university representatives, including trustees and faculty, meet together to discuss the paper. No written reports are asked of dialogue participants, but anyone who would like to write to committee is encouraged to do so (*Ex corde Ecclesiae* Implementation Committee, 3211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20017-1194). Also enclosed are "*Background I*" (history), "*Background II-A*" (comments on draft document), and *Background II-B* (a canonical rationale - canon 812) which might be useful in the discussion.

Dialogues should be completed prior to the November 13, 1995, meeting of the National Confer-

ence of Catholic Bishops where, pending approval by the Administrative Board, time will be available for discussion of the enclosed "*Application*" paper. Dialogues before mid-November, therefore, could be very helpful to the bishops at their annual meeting.

The Committee is not asking bishops of NCCB for approval of the enclosed paper at this November's meeting, but is asking for discussion and guidance for a revision which will then be presented for action and approval at a 1996 NCCB meeting. Prior to that 1996 meeting, bishops will again be asked to with college/university representatives. After a vote by the national assembly of bishops, the document implementing *Ex corde Ecclesiae* in the United States will be sent to the Congregation for Catholic Education for final canonical recognition.

If there is any question about the above procedure or time line, please call Reverend Terrence Toland SJ, Project Director for the *Ex corde Ecclesiae* Implementation Committee (202-541-3017) or myself (417-866-0841). We will be happy to assist.

## Draft for Discussion

*Ex corde Ecclesiae*  
*An Application to the United States*

**C**atholic colleges and universities are participants in both the life of the Church and the higher education enterprise of the United States. As such, they "are called to continuous renewal, both as 'Universities' and as 'Catholic.'" This twofold relationship is described in the 22

May 1994 joint document of the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Pontifical Councils for the Laity and for Culture which states that the Catholic university achieves its purpose when:

... it gives proof of being rigorously serious as a member of the international community of knowledge and expresses its Catholic identity through an explicit link with the Church, at both local and universal levels — an identity which marks concretely the life, the services and the programs of the university community. In this way, by its very existence, the Catholic university achieves its aim of guaranteeing, in institutional form, a Christian presence in the university world . . . .<sup>1</sup>

This relationship is clarified through dialogue which includes faculty, students, staff, academic officers, trustees, and sponsoring religious communities of the educational institutions. The bishop and his collaborators in the local church are integral parties in this dialogue.

The Catholic college or university is related to the entire ecclesial community,<sup>2</sup> to the legal and civil context,<sup>3</sup> and to the higher educational academy.<sup>4</sup> We are directing special attention to the relationship between the institutions and church authorities. *Ex corde Ecclesiae* itself provides a useful framework to address this specific relationship:

Bishops have a particular responsibility to promote Catholic Universities, and especially to promote and assist in the preservation and strengthening of their

Catholic identity, including the protection of their Catholic identity in relation to civil authorities. This will be achieved more effectively if close and pastoral relationships exist between University and Church authorities, characterized by *mutual trust, close and consistent cooperation and continuing dialogue*. Even when they do not enter directly into the integral government of the University, Bishops "should be seen not as external agents but as participants in the life of the Catholic University" (italics added).<sup>5</sup>

Each of these three elements in the pastoral relationship of bishops with Catholic colleges and universities warrants attention.

### **I. Mutual trust between university and church authorities**

**A.** Mutual trust goes beyond the personalities of those involved in the relationship. The trust is grounded in a shared baptismal belief in the implications, secular and religious, which are identified in Scripture concerning the mystery of the Incarnation: God the creator, who works even until now; God the incarnate redeemer, who is the Way and the Truth and the Life; and God the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit whom the Father sends. In the spirit of *communio*, the relationship between college/university and church authorities is based on these shared beliefs and is fostered by mutual listening, collaboration which respects differing responsibilities and gifts, and by a solidarity which mutually recognizes official and statutory limitations, as well as responsibilities.

**B.** From this it follows:

1. that the institution's relationship to the Church, in accord with the principles of *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, should be affirmed by the institution through public acknowledgment of its Catholic identity in official documentation (e.g., in its own mission statement);

2. that the institution, following its own procedures in the hiring and retention of professionally qualified faculty and staff, seeks individuals who are committed to the Catholic tradition or, if the applicants are not Catholic, aware and respectful of that tradition;

3. that, aware of the contributions made by theologians to Church and academy, the local bishop in accord with his ecclesial responsibility, in circumstances where he questions whether or not an individual theologian is presenting authentic Catholic teaching, shall follow procedures of due process (as noted next in #4) and take appropriate action;

4. that *Doctrinal Responsibility Approaches to Promoting Cooperation and Resolving Misunderstandings Between Bishops and Theologians*, approved and published by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 17 June 1989, is adopted as the appropriate procedure to assure due process to both bishop and theologians.

### **II. Close and consistent cooperation between university/college and church authorities**

**A.** Collaborating to integrate faith with life is a necessary part of the "close personal and pastoral relationships"<sup>6</sup> to which colleges/universities and bishops aspire. Many cooperative programs, related to

Gospel outreach, already flourish throughout the country. It is highly desirable that issues concerning social justice and the needs of the poor be identified, studied, and programmed jointly by representatives of both the educational institution and Church authorities.

Allocations of personnel and money to assure the special contributions of campus ministry is required. As a concern of the whole Church, and in view of the presence on campus of persons of other religious traditions, ecumenical and interreligious relationships should be fostered with sensitivity.

**B.** From this it follows:

1. that an institutional plan (which includes, but is not restricted to, campus ministry) be in place to encourage on-campus awareness of ways to be of service to the Church,<sup>7</sup> including contributions to the mission of evangelization,<sup>8</sup> service to the poor, social justice initiatives, and ecumenical and interreligious activities;

2. that provision be made cooperatively for adequately staffed campus ministry programs, including opportunities for the sacraments and other liturgical celebrations.<sup>9</sup>

### **III. Continuing dialogue among college/university representatives and church authorities**

**A.** Dialogues occasioned by *Ex corde Ecclesiae* are graced moments characterized by (a) a manifest openness to a further analysis and local appropriation of Catholic identity, (b) an appreciation of the positive contributions which campus-wide conversations make, and

(c) a conviction that conversation can develop and sustain relationship. A need exists for continued attention and commitment to the far-reaching implications — curricular, staffing, programming — of major themes within *Ex corde Ecclesiae*. These include Catholic identity, *communio*, relating faith and culture, pastoral outreach, the new evangelization, and relationship to the Church.

**B. From this it follows:**

1. that a mutual commitment to regular dialogue, according to local needs and circumstances, be honored by institutions and diocese;

2. that periodically, every Catholic college/university undertake an internal review of the congruence of its course of instruction, its service activity, and its research programs with the ideals and principles expressed in *Ex corde Ecclesiae*;

3. that the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, through an appropriate committee structure, continue its dialogue with the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities.

The bishops of the United States, in offering this application of *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, join in sentiments expressed by Pope John Paul II:

I turn to the whole Church, convinced that Catholic Universities are essential to her growth and to the development of Christian culture and human progress. For this reason, the entire ecclesial community is invited to give its support to Catholic Institutions of higher education and to assist them in

their process of development and renewal . . . .<sup>10</sup>

## Background I: History

### *Ex corde Ecclesiae* Some History

Two questions receive repeated attention in Catholic higher education: (1) What does it mean to be a college or university? and (2) What does it mean for that institution to be Catholic? The 1990 papal document on Catholic universities, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, was part of this inquiry.

The Second Vatican Council, 1963-1965, noted that higher education, secular and Catholic, contributes to the well-being both of society and the community of believers who are citizens of this world and the City of God. The Council's document, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) "affirm the legitimate autonomy of human culture and especially of the sciences," but notes that there are "many links between the message of salvation and human culture" (cf. #57-62). In its *Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum Educationis, #10)*, the Council encourages students "to shoulder society's heavier burdens and to witness the faith to the world."

The importance of Catholic higher education to the Church in the United States has been affirmed in several ways. In 1974, a joint committee of U.S. bishops and Catholic college/university presidents was established to provide a forum for support and the exchange of information. Pope John Paul II spoke of his high regard for Catholic higher education at The Catholic University of

America in October 1979, and against at Xavier University of Louisiana in September 1987. The bishops of the United States issued a pastoral letter, *Higher Education and the Pastoral Mission of the Church* in 1980.

In the introduction of his 1990 Apostolic Constitution on Catholic higher education, Pope John Paul II recalled that the historical origin of the university is traced back to the Church, to the "heart of the Church." Building upon that long-standing relationship between university and Church, the Pope offers his vision of the identity and mission of the Catholic college or university, as Catholic. Developed after consultation with leadership from Catholic higher education, *Ex corde Ecclesiae* and its General Norms are "to be applied concretely at the local and regional levels by episcopal conferences ... taking into account the statutes of each university or institute and, as far as possible and appropriate, civil law." (*Ex corde Ecclesiae*, Part II, Article 1, {2})

In 1991, the president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the United States, Archbishop Pilarczyk, established a committee of seven bishops and eleven consultants, eight of whom were Catholic college and university presidents. The committee's task was to develop a process for implementing *Ex corde Ecclesiae* in the United States.

For information on how these questions have been addressed over the past three decades, for the story of "times of startling changes, significant soul-searching, and extraordinary maturing," see *American Catholic Higher Education: Essential Documents, 1967-1990*, edited

by Alice Gaflin, O.S.U., University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1992. A briefer study was provided by Phillip Gleason, "The American Background of *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, A Historical Perspective," an essay included in *Catholic Universities in Church and Society and Ex corde Ecclesiae*, edited by John P. Langan, S.J., Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 1993.

Those applying the papal document to Catholic higher education in the United States recognize the significant diversity among these institutions in size, history, location and changing constituencies. They recognize, too, that in their relationships to State and Church and Academy, U.S. Catholic colleges and universities are also distinct, if not unique, in the international academic community.

## Background II-A Comments on Draft Document

FROM: Bishop John J. Leibrecht

A few comments may be helpful regarding the draft document, "Ex corde Ecclesiae: An Application to the United States." Each comment below refers to a corresponding numbered statement in the three sections beginning "From this it follows."

### I. Mutual trust between college/university and church authorities

NB: as a response to the application of the purpose and value of

canon 812, these four points should be viewed as a whole.

"From this it follows:"

1. This provision involves more than simply identifying the college or university as Catholic. In identifying the institution as Catholic, some means should be provided for addressing Catholic identity. Some colleges and universities, for instance, have informed our Implementation Committee about mission-effectiveness staff whose continuing responsibility is to promote the Catholic identity of the institution. Such staff persons serve the entire institution which, as a totality, has the responsibility for Catholic identity.

2. Responsibility for Catholic identity is with the institution. Its own internal procedures should effectively promote the Catholic nature of the college or university.

3. This statement addresses Canon 812. My mailing to you of February 10, 1995, included an article from the September 1994 issue of the Newsletter of the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland. Bishop John Jukes, OFM Conv., is one of several who have proposed this view of Canon 812. For the position of our *Ex corde Ecclesiae* Implementation Committee, see the attached "Background II-B A Canonical Rationale: Canon 812."

4. The document, *Doctrinal Responsibilities*, was approved in 1989 for use by those bishops who wanted to use it as a guide. This provision in the draft document for discussion would, in effect, establish that already approved document as the accepted due process procedure.

### II. Close and consistent cooperation between university/college and church authorities

"From this it follows:"

1. The sections cited on "Pastoral Ministry" and "Evangelization" in *Ex corde Ecclesiae* form the reference points for this particular statement.

2. Campus ministry is a pastoral aspect of college and university life, including sacramental and other liturgical celebrations, in which cooperation between the local bishop and the university is especially important.

### III. Continuing dialogue among college/university representatives and church authorities

"From this it follows: "

1. No particular definition is made of the word "regular" in this statement. Its interpretation should be made locally. The statement does, however, call for calendar commitments to on-going dialogues.

2. Some colleges and universities will associate such an internal review with what they normally do at the time of accrediting association reviews. It is possible to have what is called for in this statement at another time than that. "Periodically" is not specified but should be locally decided.

3. Dialogues over the years between the ACCU and bishops have been productive for all concerned. This statement would establish a specific mechanisms for on-going dialogue between the two,

In the name of the Implementation Committee, I thank all of you for your interest and help in taking these next steps and providing the comments and recommendations needed for a next revision. Little by little, the focus will be shifting from the Implementation Committee to individual bishops and college and university representatives in their arch/dioceses. It will also become more focused on the full assembly of bishops in their national meetings. Dialogues between bishops and representatives of Catholic higher education, in the months ahead, will prove especially helpful.

Thank you.

JJL:kas

## Background II-B A Canonical Rationale: Canon 812

**T**he concrete application of the norms of *Ex corde Ecclesiae* in the United States, while in conformity with the Code of Canon Law, complementary Church legislation, and the statutes of each Catholic college or university, will of necessity take into consideration the particular circumstances of Catholic higher education in our country. During the many months of consultation and discussion on the apostolic constitution and its implementation in the United States, the matter of canon 812 and its provision of ecclesiastical authorization (a *mandatum*) for Catholic teachers of theology in institutions of higher education continued to

raise concerns among bishops, educators, theologians, canon and civil lawyers.

The *Ex corde Ecclesiae* Implementation Committee has listened. We have spent many hours in study and discussion looking for the best means of preserving the value that underlies canon 812, namely, safeguarding the orthodoxy of church teaching within Catholic colleges and universities. We believe, however, that canon 812 and the mandate should not be viewed outside the broader context of the central call of *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, that is, to fulfill a Catholic mission and identity. The canon must be seen as integral to the apostolic constitution's concrete affirmation of the Catholic college and university as a bridge between the Gospel and culture.

In this context we believe that the local application of the norms of *Ex corde Ecclesiae* must take into consideration the long history of Catholic higher education in the United States and the uniqueness of the some 230 Catholic colleges and universities in this country. At the same time, such applications must safeguard church teaching for the people of God while guaranteeing institutional autonomy and academic freedom on the one hand, and respect for church authority and loyal assent, on the other. We believe, too, that dialogue between bishops and theologians is indispensable to the guarantee of these values.

To achieve this balance we are convinced that the values inherent in canon 812 are best realized through a non-judicial application of the *mandatum*, that is, through the institution of processes and procedures that can be viewed as

fulfilling the purpose of canon 812 while respecting established standards of Catholic higher education. *The four points contained in section I, B, of the Implementation Committee's draft document for discussion should be viewed as a whole, for the totality of these points constitutes its response to the application of the value and purpose of canon 812.*

### Endnotes

- <sup>0</sup> *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, Introduction, #7.
- <sup>1</sup> "The Church's Presence in the University Culture," *Origins*, 16 June 1994, II, #2.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, Introduction, #11.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Part II, 1, #2.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, #12.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, #28. The citation at the end is from John Paul II, Address to Leaders of Catholic Higher Education, Xavier University of Louisiana, U.S.A., 12 September 1987, n. 4: *AAS* 80 (1988), p. 764.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, #48-49.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, #38 ff.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, #48-49.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Part II, 6, #2.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, #11.



## Report on Three Conferences

Patrick G. D. Riley, Ph.D.

The seemingly inexorable secularizing of Catholic higher education was confronted this summer at three conferences of scholars and administrators, one sponsored by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities and another by Marquette University, while the annual convention of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars constituted the third.

Nor was concern to keep the campuses Catholic confined to traditionalist scholars and administrators. It was also voiced by many who had long been considered at odds with the doctrine and discipline of the Church. Indeed the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities has led resistance to the Holy See's attempt to ensure the Catholicity of Catholic higher education through, signally, the canonical authority of bishops. But the more scholarly presentations were given at the other two meetings.

The journalists Peter and Margaret Steinfelds, and Father J. Bryan Hehir, longtime principal policymaker at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, were featured speakers at the ACCU meeting, held Aug. 5-8, 1995 in St. Paul, Minnesota, on the campus of the co-sponsoring institution, St. Thomas College.

An address to the ACCU conference by Cardinal Pio Laghi, who as prefect of the Holy See's Congregation for Catholic Education

must implement the Holy See's canonically-enshrined policies for keeping campuses Catholic, mixed the diplomatic and the hortatory with the juridical. But he recalled the blunt words John Paul II spoke at Xavier University of New Orleans in 1987:

The Catholic identity of your institutions ... depends upon the explicit profession of Catholicity on the part of the university as an institution, and also upon the personal conviction and sense of mission on the part of its professors and administrators.

At all three conferences, a focus of attention was the Holy See's document promulgating the juridical means of ensuring this Catholicity, namely the Apostolic Constitution *Ex corde Ecclesiae* of 1990.

At Marquette, nonetheless, historian Philip Gleason of Notre Dame did not deal with this document in his concluding address. He confined his "historical perspective on Catholic higher education" to the period ending with the '60s. The talk was entitled "Adventures in Inculturation" despite what Professor Gleason styled his "perverse decision" to halt this study before the word *inculturation* and its cognates were part of the Catholic vocabulary, and before theological education was offered by Catholic colleges and universities of the U.S.

Dr. Gleason observed that the first inculturation of Catholic higher education was in place by the early 1920s, with acceptance of the newly standardized college model. By the late '20s the intensive study of Neoscholastic philosophy had been adopted as a means of incorporating the

uniquely Catholic character of Catholic higher education into the form now common to all American colleges. Philosophy was seen as an integrating principle for Catholic higher education, and a motor for Catholic Action. (Nowadays that term might be found in quotes, but in the '30s it had wide currency and meant leaving the larger society with Catholic ideas. Catholic Action was, if you like, an acculturation oriented toward giving rather than receiving).

Why philosophy? Gleason responded that in its Neoscholastic form it was "an authoritative reconciliation of faith and reason," while theology "simply wasn't in the picture."

The cultural crisis symptomized by the Depression and the rise of totalitarianism confirmed Catholic educators in their conviction that Catholic principles offered answers to the woes of society. But World War II and the concomitant emphasis on democracy, touted as the response *de choix* to totalitarianism, "made Catholics more sensitive to core American values such as freedom, equality, and tolerance for diversity," Gleason noted.

There followed hostile charges that the Catholic Church was radically un-American and divisive. John Courtney Murray's "acculturative" response, according to Gleason, "brought Catholic teaching into line with American expectations, not the other way around."

The controversy that Murray's response triggered among Catholics "was the most obvious symptom of strain in the internal unity of which Catholics had earlier boasted," but another symptom was an enliven-

ing of debate over an earlier claim that theology should displace philosophy “as the intellectual capstone of the college curriculum.” The principle that theology was the queen of sciences was not denied, but theologians had difficulty pressing the point because they could not agree on the theological matter suitable for college instruction.

“A much broader source of strain was the postwar expansion of graduate studies,” Professor Gleason observed, adding that graduate work was “a relative novelty” among Catholic institutions, except of course the Catholic University of America which was meant to be a postgraduate institution. Only in the ’60s did other Catholic universities install doctoral programs in theology.

Gleason saw “serious tension” between, on the one hand, the distinctive Catholic position that the scattered fields of academe “could be ordered into an intelligible unity” and, on the other, the “research ethos of graduate education, which was inherently specialized,” prizing discovery over system.

(Here he approached a point made repeatedly during the Marquette conference, namely that secular universities are the offspring of the Enlightenment. Father Matthew Lamb of Boston College, speaking of “the great intellectual apostolate of Catholic universities in post-Enlightenment cultures,” observed that the Enlightenment, in its encyclopedic approach, tried to systematize knowledge through the alphabet, a methodology so crude as to frustrate the quest for understanding, and *a fortiori* for wisdom.)

As Catholic institutions “moved more decisively into graduate work,” Dr. Gleason continued, “they were increasingly affected by the supposedly value-free research ethos.” Many of the lay faculty, trained in secular graduate schools, “chafed under the regime of strict clerical control that still obtained in Catholic universities,” and wanted the Church to “break out of its ghetto.”

This simmering unrest came to a boil with John Tracy Ellis’s lucubrated observation in 1955 that Catholic intellectual life, insofar as it existed, had left no discernible dent on American culture. The sequel showed that Msgr. Ellis’s expressions of high regard for the Catholic tradition itself would not be echoed by those who rode the wave he set rolling. Thomas F. O’Dea pronounced the Catholic tradition authoritarian and moralistic, while Gustav Weigel’s strictures on the teaching of Scholastic philosophy “contributed significantly to the spectacular reversal of Neoscholasticism’s fortunes that occurred in the 1950s.”

By the mid-’60s, partly as an effect of the reaction against Tridentism that followed the Second Vatican Council, the once-hegemonic Neoscholasticism was merely vestigial.

Here Dr. Gleason, while not mentioning the regenerative powers of the perennial philosophy, proven once again in recent decades, listed some of its strengths in its role “as the key element of the preconciliar inculturation strategy.” But in proceeding to its “serious weaknesses,” he curiously focused outside of it, citing “emotional barriers” and misunderstandings — not errors, it would seem, or dearth

of philosophical training — among secular philosophers. Perhaps the would-be inculturators forgot their own practical principle, *quidquid recipitur*, or lacked the knack of implementing it against culturally-entrenched error and historic anti-Catholic bias.

Gleason recalled that in those same mid-’60s, Catholic groups that had been designed to foster participation in the broader culture were paradoxically and unfairly seen as “ghetto organizations.” Simultaneously, challenges to the *raison d’être* of Catholic universities created what then was known as an identity crisis.

Winding up, Gleason said:

My intention this evening has been to show how that identity crisis itself grew out of the collapse of an earlier inculturation strategy. Since Catholic theologians as a group did not constitute a significant presence in Catholic universities until that inculturation strategy was already in tatters, they were not involved in the story in a directly institutional way.

Hence theologians constitute “a new resource for meeting the task,” he concluded, but “they are more exposed than they were in the past to the assimilative forces of the mainstream academic world that did so much to undermine the previous strategy.”

Father Avery Dulles opened the Marquette conference by taking up where Dr. Gleason was to leave off, in the ’60s. In a talk that contained more prescription than description, and that provoked discussion throughout the conference, he asserted that the specifically Catholic and even theological

character of academic theology had been attenuated in recent decades.

Despite what he called the "success story" of higher education in Catholic theology the conference itself, he said, "would not have been convened unless there were serious problems, widely perceived." Among them he cited the growing number of Protestant teachers and of teachers trained in secular universities or non-Catholic divinity schools, a weakening command of Latin that cuts off students and faculty alike "from much of the Western theological tradition of the past fifteen hundred years," the virtual abandonment of Scholastic method, and a reluctance among theologians to speak of the supernatural lest they lose respect "from colleagues in other departments."

But he noted:

Students ... in Catholic theology normally and, I think, legitimately expect to hear it presented from the perspective of faith. The bishops and the religious who have established most of the Catholic institutions of higher education, and the benefactors who support these institutions, presumably intend that theology courses be taught from a recognizably Catholic point of view.

Father Dulles spoke of a division among American Catholics into traditionalists "committed to a body of revealed truth and...bound to bear witness to that truth," and on the other hand those for whom "religious truth is fashioned out of one's own experience, which then becomes the supreme criterion." Catholics in the latter group are "more in tune with the prevailing democratic culture and the reigning consumerist mentality," a men-

tality that extends to doctrine and liturgy.

Unlike several other speakers at the conference, Father Dulles did not single out the Enlightenment, far less the Reformation, as the leading religious rival of the Catholic faith in the United States. Rather he argued that most dangerous rival was "a pervasive weakness in American Catholicism since the Second Vatican Council." It consisted in part of reliance on feelings, and had fostered "a new syncretism" of which New Age religion is "an extreme case, but...a glaring example." Many Catholics, including students in our universities, rely primarily on their feelings. And yet, in typical cases, they hesitate to renounce the vision of the Church as a divinely founded and supernatural society. They need to be further instructed in the Catholic tradition in order to find the strength to adhere to Catholic orthodoxy in a climate of secular consumerism. A good academic introduction to Catholic doctrine could be crucial....

Among intellectuals, the division between Catholic traditionalists and the other group, whom Father Dulles did not label, amounted to "a kind of spiritual schism." Here Father Dulles quoted an article in Mrs. Steinfeld's periodical, *Commonweal*, by William Shea, chairman of theology at St. Louis University: "We are witnessing a breakdown of ecclesial life."

He had earlier quoted Dr. Shea, from *Commonweal* also, as calling pluralism of beliefs a blessing, not a curse, and holding that loyalty to the human community should transcend loyalty to the Church. Father Dulles recalled:

Shea speaks of himself as a theologian with a dual loyalty — both to his Catholic tradition and to a culture that has arisen apart from, and even in opposition to, the Church. In the past the Church has continually absorbed and baptized foreign cultures, but it is only recently Shea concedes, that the Church is being asked to adopt overtly alien systems of thought. Does the gospel prohibition against serving two masters forbid a Christian to profess loyalty to secular systems of this kind? After raising several objections to his own dual loyalty, Shea responds by saying that he no longer shares the theology out of which the objections arise.

(Professor Shea's doctrine of double allegiance ran into heavy weather elsewhere in the Marquette conference. Father Terence Tekippe of Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, speaking on "The Contemporary Catholic University as Captive of the Enlightenment," argued "that Shea's ultimate loyalty is to the Enlightenment." This was published in abstracts distributed at the conference, where it was reported that Dr. Shea had brusquely declined Father Tekippe's invitation to his talk.)

Father Dulles deplored "the virtual abandonment of rational argument" between traditionalists on the one hand and, on the other, the group he did not label. Seeming to call down a plague on both houses, and apparently seeing no difference in their behavior, he charged: "Instead of engaging in civil discussion, the two groups resort to slogans and even to personal abuse."

Theology, lacking common

purposes, common standards and, naturally, a common vocabulary, is in "chaos." Noting that in whatever way theology is taught, it must be taught from "the posture of faith," with "the ecclesiastical magisterium" (he mentioned no other kind though he referred to it elsewhere at "the hierarchical magisterium") as "the authoritative living interpreter of the Christian sources." Still, the function of the magisterium is not to settle internal theological disputes "even at the urging of theologians, unless it finds a given theological system to be truly incompatible with Catholic faith."

On the other hand, theologians should not try by themselves to establish the doctrine of the Church. They speak as private persons within the Church. When they are troubled by some pronouncement of the magisterium, they may indeed ask questions and express their difficulties, but they should be on guard against seeming to set themselves up as a kind of opposition party, a parallel magisterium.

This warning could plausibly have been directed at the Avery Dulles of two decades ago, when he advanced the notion of a two-fold magisterium, that of the hierarchy and that of theologians.

Father Dulles concluded with the claim that ecclesial authority may be critical in the struggle to preserve theology within Catholic higher education.

The Holy See and the bishops share with theologians a deep concern for the integrity and transmission of the faith. Because of their lively sponsorship of Catholic higher education, the hierarchical leaders are the natural allies of the

university theologians in the struggle to prevent theology as a sacred discipline from being drowned in the rising tide of secularity.

Father Dulles saved one of his most pungent remarks for a final footnote. He was responding to a manifesto of a group of administrators of Catholic higher education meeting in 1967 at a North Woods lodge called Land O' Lakes, where the signatories declared "true autonomy and academic freedom" for the Catholic university "in the face of authority of every kind, lay or clerical, external to the academic community itself." Father Dulles commented:

If this statement is true, it must be interpreted in the light of the statement of John Paul II that bishops "should not be seen as external agents but as participants in the life of the Catholic university."

The citation is from *Ex corde Ecclesiae*.

Monika Hellwig of Georgetown University referred to *Ex corde Ecclesiae* in noting that the expectations of the Church for higher education are to be found in it and Canon Law, as well as in the traditions of the founders of Catholic institutions. The goal articulated in *Ex corde Ecclesiae* for those institutions, that they will shape civil leaders imbued with Catholic principles, cannot be realized unless faculty and administrators in sufficient numbers share that goal, she maintained.

But this minimum requirement is not being met in prestigious institutions, she continued. One reason: theology professors hired

under equal opportunity legislation are not necessarily Catholic, or not trained in Catholic graduate schools. What Dr. Hellwig described as a once-helpful leavening now threatens, she said, to inundate departments of theology and the institutions themselves. The resulting tension between the expectations of the Church and the expectations of the Enlightenment is creating severe strain within theology departments.

In a wide-ranging talk, "The Catholic Identity of Our Institutions," Father Joseph Komonchak of Catholic University took a swipe at his former president, Father William Byron, and the late president of Georgetown, Father Timothy Healy, for publicly depreciating the role of Catholic doctrine in the university. An intervention from the floor by Dr. Shea frustrated many listeners because he spoke in a near-whisper inaudible to them.

It is no reflection on the quality of the talks at Marquette that many of those in attendance were less struck by their substance than the change of heart they seemed to represent. Not all of the speakers had been conspicuous for championship of Catholic tradition.

No such question arose at the convention of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars the following month at Minneapolis. Readers of this *Newsletter* will receive the proceedings, so I'll merely highlight some points, theoretical and practical, made during the conference.

Father Michael Scanlan, who as president of the Franciscan University of Steubenville achieved a spectacular return both to Catholicity and to viability, asserted that he could not have succeeded with-

out taking the role of "pastor." The turnaround was largely spiritual.

Professor David Schindler of the John Paul II Institute in Washington confirmed Father Scanlan's point from a metaphysical perspective. Since the Catholic university is truly *ex corde Ecclesiae*, its mission is sanctity. Because of the university's specific nature, the sanctity in question concerns the mind. Thus the basic mission of a Catholic university is the sanctification of the mind, or what Dr. Schindler called "the sanctity of the intelligence."

Schindler counterposed this principle to that of Father Theodore Hesburgh, that a Catholic university must be a university first, and only then — and adjectively — Catholic.

Dr. Schindler commented:

This implies that the Catholic university must begin by accepting the terms of rationality — the critical methods, the basic structure and presuppositions — proper to the disciplines as understood in the contemporary mainstream secular universities. ... to accept these terms is already ... to set the Catholic university on the road toward a secularized conception of the mind and a voluntaristic-fideistic-moralistic conception of religion, neither of which is compatible with an authentic Catholicism.

Schindler began with "the safe assumption" that the methods of contemporary academe "are not neutral relative to competing worldviews."

Msgr. Robert Sokolowski, professor of philosophy at Catholic University, argued that liturgical

reform has put ecclesiastic authority at a disadvantage in current controversies about the university and the magisterium. I am not saying that the Church had no right to change the liturgy, nor that the new order of the liturgy is illegitimate in any way, nor even that the Church should not have changed its liturgy. I am saying that the way the academic world looks at Church authority has been influenced by changes in the Church's liturgy.

The point, Msgr. Sokolowski emphasized, was psychological.

Forthcoming decisions concerning the liturgy will be crucial, he asserted, "because if the Church revises its liturgy even more to suit the temper of the times, it will ratify the risky aspects of the choice it made some twenty-five years ago."

He echoed a distinction drawn by Yves Simon between "positive" (empirically oriented) statements and "transcendent" statements. These latter "are not easy to communicate: and "cannot take care of themselves in the marketplace of ideas; they need an authoritative institution to protect them." This distinction, Sokolowski asserted, "shows why the Church cannot be a debating society or an academy but must be the place where the deepest truths about God, the world, and the human condition are authoritatively preserved."

Citing "ample evidence for the danger of secularization," Sokolowski declared:

If this secularizing comes to pass, our current generation will see an enormous alienation of Church resources, the loss to the Church of its institutions of higher education.... This

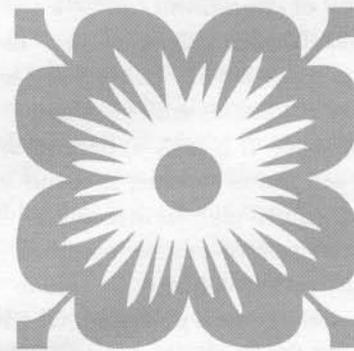
loss...would call to mind the losses suffered by the Church during the Reformation in England and the great secularization in Europe. It would greatly weaken the Church's ability to educate her people and influence contemporary culture.... No persecution will have brought this about; if it does occur, it will have been done freely....

Moreover this alienation...will have taken place right at the moment when the culture to which our institutions were given was entering into spiritual disarray.

Msgr. Sokolowski's final word: "None of us knows how God will judge those who allow this to happen, but history certainly will not be kind to them."

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*The writer, a journalist by trade, has written and broadcast from two dozen countries of Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. He holds a doctorate in political philosophy from the Angelicum, and has taught philosophy at Catholic University, media ethics at Marquette, and professional ethics at Milwaukee Area Technical College.*



## Address at the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Conference September 22, 1995

Dr. Timothy T. O'Donnell

**T**hank you very much Msgr. Kelly. It is a great honor for me to be placed on this panel, along with the other presidents of these outstanding *Catholic* institutions and to be asked in some small way to make a contribution on this topic of the Catholic identity of the university or college, a topic so vital to the future of our Church and nation. How important it is that that adjective "Catholic," which precedes and modifies the noun, be a vibrant and living reality and not a mere label.

When I received my letter from Gerard Bradley concerning this Roundtable, I was informed of certain limitations that were placed upon our participation. First, I have only ten minutes and second I was to speak of only two concrete things which had to be done or avoided in order to make or keep a university Catholic and lastly explain why I believe this to be so. Now, of course, this can be a rather dangerous undertaking. In some ways, it's like being asked to give two reasons why you love your wife. It is risky a) because it can get you in trouble; b) it can force you to give an inaccurate presentation of a rather complex reality and c) you may be able to give only general principles which cry out for concrete application.

Bearing these limitations in mind, I will do what I can.

Dr. Warren Carroll, the founding president of Christendom College, has a favorite maxim, which he mentions to the students at the opening of every academic year. He says the basic reason why Christendom College was established can be communicated in five words. That's about as simple as I can get in this presentation. Those five words are, "Truth exists. The Incarnation happened." Now, of course, there is a lot implied in that, but I would like to take these two thoughts, the existence of truth and the reality of the Incarnation, and draw from them two basic principles, which I think are essential for the maintenance of the Catholic identity.

Point number one: *The truth exists and can be known.* This is true, of course, for any authentic college education, but especially for Catholic education. The *importance* of this affirmation and how we have moved away from it can be seen with particular clarity in C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. In one of the letters that Screwtape addresses to Wormwood, he cautions this neophyte devil concerning the dangers of rational argument and truth.

My Dear Wormwood: I note what you say about guiding your patient's reading and taking care that he sees a good deal of his materialist friend. But are you not being a trifle naive? It sounds as if you suppose that *argument* was the way to keep him out of the Enemy's clutches. That might have been so if he had lived a few centuries earlier. At that time, the humans still

knew pretty well when a thing was proved and when it was not; and if it was proved, they really believed it. They still connected thinking with doing and were prepared to alter their way of life as the result of a chain of reasoning. But what with the weekly press and other such weapons, we have largely altered that. Your man has been accustomed, ever since he was a boy, to having a dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together inside his head. He doesn't think of doctrines as primarily "true" or "false," but as "academic" or "practical," "outworn," or "contemporary," "conventional" or "ruthless." Jargon, not argument, is your best ally in keeping him from the Church. Don't waste time trying to make him think that materialism is *true!* Make him think it is strong or stark or courageous—that is the philosophy of the future. That's the sort of thing he cares about. The trouble about argument is that it moves the whole struggle onto the Enemy's own ground.

A Catholic college exists in its essence to produce the one thing it promises to its students: and that is a *Catholic education*. To that end, we have to ask—"What is the mind for?" "What is its end?"—and as we have just affirmed, it is to know and to love the truth. The grasping and holding of truth and appreciating it in the full breadth of all its dimensions: this is essentially what the life of the mind is all about. We really know something and know it clearly, according to Aristotle, when we *grasp* the reason why that *thing is*, as it is, recognizing that it couldn't be otherwise. Therefore, any true knowledge will

deal with *causes* and *principles of explanation*. Truth exists and can be known. It is the object of the mind. This type of discussion must continually be set before the student and must be the focal point of all classes taught at a Catholic institution.

The second part of Dr. Carroll's original statement, "The Incarnation happened," beckons us to reflect upon the fundamental insight of the Church, communicated so clearly by the Angelic Doctor, that there can be no conflict between Faith and reason. This leads me to my second major consideration and that is the sapiential role which must be played by Theology and secondarily by Philosophy throughout the curriculum. This leads us to focus with even greater intensity upon the adjective "Catholic" which modifies university. I turn to a consideration of this modifier "Catholic" without any apology whatsoever, following the lead of the Church and the great and glorious tradition of Catholic education. I reflect upon it with joy and pride, not only because I myself am a believing and committed Roman Catholic, but because I also believe very deeply that education must be open to the fullness of truth: the whole truth about God, man and creation. For it is true that if education is the basic aim of the mind and assists the intellect in achieving its end in the university, it must be open not only to earthly, natural reality, but also to things which are transcendent and supernatural, guiding it through the study of the last ends and the first causes of things.

From this then we will see that this orientation, which *already* en-

compasses catholicity with a small *c*, *implicitly* points to Catholicism with a capital C. For we firmly believe as Catholic educators that to seek for the deepest and most complete understanding of reality is also to strive with the yearning of the heart for that source of all knowledge and perfection, whose throne lies outside time and dwells above the vast crystal sea. I speak of an eternal wisdom which proceeds from the Father, whom St. John refers to as, "The Logos," in whom the Father expresses all that He is and through whom all things were made, who, together with the Father, spirates eternally that love which is the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, we would maintain that the joy of learning is achieved by coming to know and conform our mind with the mind of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now again, we must emphasize that the role of an adjective as a part of speech is not to overwhelm and obliterate the noun which it modifies.

As we all know, Faith does not replace intellectual rigor! On many a Catholic campus in the quieter days of the Church in the 1950's, a course or two in scholastic thought, a busy chaplain, a rumor of Chesterton and a look at Evelyn Waugh sufficed to make the education Catholic, or so it was supposed. Graduates departed with foundations of sand and a post-conciliar storm swept them away by the millions into a limp and broken apostasy.<sup>1</sup>

In order to avoid this, two particular areas of study must play a major part in any curriculum which will consider itself to be Catholic: orthodox theology and sound philosophy. Since the essen-

tial purpose of any Catholic college or university is to educate under the guiding light of the Faith, this is the only source of an authentic intellectual freedom to which all truly liberal education is ordered. Therefore, divinely revealed truth, which by definition, as St. Thomas tells us, is the highest and most fitting object worthy of study, fulfills its task by ordering and illuminating the study of all the other disciplines found in the curriculum.

Closely associated to the essential task of theology within the Catholic college must also be a strong program which the Church has called the "Perennial Philosophy" as found particularly in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. Only such a strong program, soundly and vibrantly orthodox, under the guidance of the teaching Church, can perfect man's rationality, which begins in wonder and aims at the possession of wisdom and ultimately that supreme wisdom which is found in Jesus Christ alone. These two points are absolutely essential to establishing the type of setting on the campus which would fulfill Pope John Paul II's teaching expressed in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

In this document, our Holy Father states that the following four items are essential characteristics of any Catholic college: 1) A Christian inspiration, not only of individuals, but of the university community as such; 2) a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic Faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge to which it seeks to contribute by its own research; 3) Fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church; 4) an institutional commitment to the service

of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life.

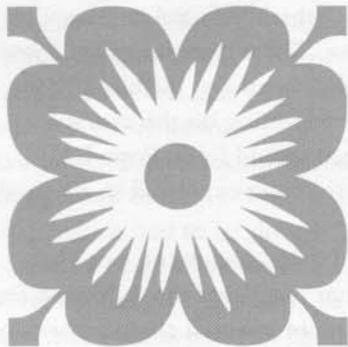
In conclusion, my two practical suggestions as "how to make and keep a Catholic university Catholic" are:

1) Speak always of the truth, that it exists and that the mind can know it—in the university's literature, classes and addresses given to the students.

2) Orthodox theology (not Religious Studies) and sound philosophy, inspired by the Angelic Doctor (as the Church has taught us) must exercise a sapiential role throughout the curriculum.

Thank you.

<sup>1</sup> William H. Marshner, "Why Liberal Arts at Christendom College".



## SETON ACADEMY

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**J**oseph M. Scheidler, Executive Director of the Pro-Life Action League, has been named the recipient of Seton Academy's Exemplar Award. In announcing the award, Dr. William White, president of Seton Academy, cited Mr. Scheidler's dedication to life and to justice.

"Joe Scheidler is a tireless worker, an inspiring leader, and a great example for all Catholics," said White. He exemplifies the virtues of the Catholic layman: engagement in the world, hard work in the cause of justice, and the faithful application of divine and natural law to social problems.

"In an age which looks frequently for salvation through politics, Joe Scheidler doesn't wait for consensus, compromise, or electoral success. His is the route of direct action, saving mothers and babies from the abortionists and leading the cause for what is right without looking around to see how many are following him," White continued.

The Exemplar Award recognizes those whom Seton Academy considers worthy of honor and emulation by its students, as well as by parents and by all men of goodwill. Previous recipients include Congressman Henry Hyde, Professor Charles Rice, Sister Assumpta Long, O.P., Dr. Herbert Ratner, Rev. Charles Fanelli, and Mrs. Eileen Dolehide.

Seton Academy is a Montessori school in Chicago's Western suburbs, founded by Catholic parents to provide a solid foundation in all academic subjects, including Christian doctrine. Seton Academy provides formation in academic, social, moral and spiritual development. Its religious education program follows the 2000-year tradition of Catholic teaching.

"If we have learned one thing after almost thirty years of legalized abortion," said Dr. White, "it is that the fight for right and justice is not going to be quick or easy. It is imperative to form another generation for lives of service to truth and to Him Who is Truth. Joe Scheidler's unfailing resiliency, optimism, and good cheer demonstrate that, even at the darkest hour, our hope has a firm foundation. His perseverance and joyful determination are examples not only for the young but for all of us."

The Exemplar Award will be presented to Mr. Scheidler on Sunday, November 5, at Seton Academy's annual Exemplar Luncheon. For tickets and information, contact Seton Academy at 350 North Westmore Avenue, Villa Park, IL 60181; (708) 279-4101.

## The Jesuit Strategy

As members of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) continue to resist implementation of "Ex Corde Ecclesiae," they appear to be engaged in a *concerted strategy* to proclaim their Catholic and Jesuit identity in public forums sponsored by various "Jesuit Identity" committees if by "repeated assertion" and lip service they would establish that missing reality! But appearances can be deceiving! At least one such "Identity" committee has been charged to resist the extremes of becoming either "too catholic (whatever that means), or anti-Catholic, in spite of their so-called "open discussions." Thus, the Catholic proclamation, of the committees is really a COVER UP for an avowed independence of any juridical relationship between the University and the Church. And in this respect, "Ex Corde" is clearly "too Catholic". Rather, their Credo is proclaimed in that dubiously Catholic document stressing autonomy which came out of the 1967 "Land O' Lakes" Conference. But they would have us believe they are not completely hostile to "Ex Corde" by stressing its *pastoral* elements and feasibility of *internal control*. At the same time, the same old worn-out arguments about the bad conse-

quences of "juridical control" (like loss of state funds or possible suits) are reiterated over and over again. Many of these arguments are debunked as for instance in the excellent article of Kenneth Whitehead in the March 1995 issue of the "The Turnaround".

The AJCU even had a prestigious and expensive Washington D.C. law firm write an extensive legal opinion to reinforce and (apparently) validate its claims. Meanwhile, outstanding constitutional scholars, the likes of William Bentley Ball, have challenged the members of AJCU and their legal hirelings, stressing that Catholic Colleges and Universities can retain strong and authentic Catholic identities under "Ex Corde" by merely exercising their First Amendment prerogatives. But Ball is not eagerly sought out by the "Identity" committees to speak of these issues on Jesuit campuses. Apparently, he has been identified as one of the "extreme elements." We can only conclude that even if the Jesuits were to concede that they have sufficient legal protection in any juridical relationship with the Church, they would refuse to exercise it, so enamored are they of their twin gods of academic freedom and institutional autonomy as proclaimed in their beloved "Land O' Lakes" document. A sad commentary indeed.

The net result of the Jesuit Strategy is that by trying to avoid being "too Catholic" (meaning by it "juridical control!") they fall easily into Anti-Catholicism. "Incident in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdim". Avoidance of one danger exposes one to destruction by the other. Newman illustrated this very well in the 9th Lecture of his *Idea of a University* where he shows why institutions "without an active jurisdiction" ("which no rules can reach") may become rivals to the Church. And we should point out that Newman talks of this direct supervision of the Church in spite of the fact (as he says) "a university is not a convent, it is not a seminary" but rather "it is a place to fit men of the world for the world." Newman, indeed, wrote over a hundred years ago, but, what would Newman say TODAY about the possibility of a university being authentically Catholic WITHOUT a juridical relationship to the Church? Thus the nagging question returns but it has been answered today because that jurisdiction has been spelled out in the new Code of Canon Law, the Church's fundamental legislative document.

Dr. Edward J. Capestany  
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Adrian J. Reimers' article "The Challenge to Catholic Intelligence" (FCS Newsletter July 1995) may leave readers with the impression that Catholic natural scientists have not faced up to the challenge of a secular philosophy promoted by some scientists who do not share their religious beliefs. Unfortunately, Catholic scientists have long struggled with the double burden of maintaining a professional profile in the public forum while being reminded by their secular colleagues of the stigma of the Galileo affair within the Church. Reimers' misrepresentation of the relationship of organic evolution to human evolution paves the way for another round of confrontation between the Church and the scientific community. "The Challenge to Catholic Intelligence" is, indeed, a search for truth, but the methodologies of science, philosophy and theology are radically different. Evaluating scientific truth by coincidence with Catholic dogma or scriptural expressions is certain to alienate professional scientists just as naive philosophizing about human evolution by scientists will alienate philosophers and theologians. A hallmark of genuine scholarship is the ability and effort to integrate truths from many intellectual disciplines. Those of us professionally trained in theology and the natural sciences and actively engaged in research should rise above the temptation to engage in irresponsible criticism of others and defense of our own prerogatives. Theistic evolution, for example, is a relatively recent concept attempting to unite truths from the life sciences and theology. It offers an intellectual reconciliation of truths from

several fields. For those who assume that genuine and comprehensive truths lie only in their domain of professional expertise, it offers an endless world of rancorous controversy. For those with a clear understanding of evolutionary theory, it extends an invitation to explore the path of biological and human development and its religious implications. True scholars live in a wonderful world of ideas and people not in one of "isms" and "ists". Scientific scholars who profess and live a Catholic faith are welcome to discussions including differences of opinion in the public forum on matters of common interest. It is unscholarly to belittle opinions with which one disagrees. Reimers still succumbs to the temptation of misrepresenting evolutionary theory in the presumed interest of defending religious faith.

Lazarus Walter Macior, Ph.D.  
Distinguished Professor of Biology  
The University of Akron (Ohio)  
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Dr. McNerny,

I can boast myself among the "woeful 14 (student members) on these shores and 2 beyond" debuted in the July issue. Surely, the low figures do not in any way reflect younger scholars' attitudes toward the Magisterium. One needs only observe World Youth Day activities to see the youth's love for the Holy Father. So why the "woeful 14"?

A younger scholar can not join a society to which he has never been exposed. I thus make a friendly appeal to Fellowship mem-

bers to mention *en passant* the Fellowship's mission to next-generation scholars, lay and seminarian. The seeds of loyalty to the Magisterium planted among future theologians and scholars now will blossom a civilization of love later and foster adherence to Catholic teaching for the Church in the third millennium.

The professor moreover may find his disciples more enthusiastic about joining an intellectual society devoted to the Magisterium than he supposes. Ponder for a moment Augustine without his Ambrose, Aquinas without his Albertus Magnus, Aristotle without his Socrates, or a Lublin Thomist without Karol Wojtyla. You said elsewhere and I confirm it: "[T]here is a groundswell of orthodoxy among younger scholars" ("The Fellowship in Fieri," *FCS Newsletter*, Dec. 1994, P. 1). The future theologian begs for loyal role models with intellectual substance. What if he had 2,500 of them?

As your successors, let me finally offer this long-term incentive: After the era of widespread dissent becomes a thing of the past (as Grisez treated it in *The Way of the Lord Jesus*) do not forget that someone needs to take up the loyal theologian's cause for canonization as he squared with the culture of death. Time has yet to prove this to be one sure task of the silent yet budding "woeful 14".

In Christ,

Dennis T. Purificacion  
University of San Francisco  
Senior

Dear Dr. McNerny:

I enjoy your magazines "Dossier", "Crisis", and "The Fellowship of Catholic Scholars" Newsletter. Do you plan to address, in any of these publications, the hypocrisy of a U.N. Womens Conference in Beijing, China which has been hijacked by radical feminists from the 5% of the world's population of women from the west who desire to impose their moral depravity on the remaining 95%? (Reference the updates on this conference presented by Father M. Harbiger of Human Life International on EWTN.) In particular, I'm interested in your views on what should be the response from the Catholic Church. I believe that the Pope, in his upcoming address to the U.N. should repudiate, in no uncertain terms the attack on religion, family (the demeaning of parents rights in favor of the child's) that was led by the coercive forces of the U.S., Canada, and the European Union, who are ramroding a morally bankrupt agenda through this sham of a conference by black-mailing the third world to march instep to a lifestyle that has already proven to be bankrupt as evidenced by the statistics coming from Scandanavia and Holland, especially the highest suicide rate among young people per capita in the western world. I hope that the Catholic Church, in union with people of faith from all walks of life

and with unbelievers who recognize, through the natural law, the fallacies of Beijing, condemn with the strongest possible voice the unlawful usurpation of parental authority that can only result in anarchy through the destruction of the foundation of world order - the family. It is unfathomable to hear of representatives at the Beijing conference being laughed down from the podium for speaking on behalf of motherhood and the family. We cannot ignore this great sin for to do so would be committing a greater sin of omission. We must get the message out to our representatives at all levels of government that the views espoused by a radical few do not speak for a majority who will not stand idly by and watch the future for their children being stolen from them by allowing for the acceptance of perverse lifestyles as "the norm". And for the many who call themselves catholic, advocating such lifestyles, I would recommend reflecting on Matthew 18:6 - something about mill stones around the neck being a better alternative than leading our young ones astray.

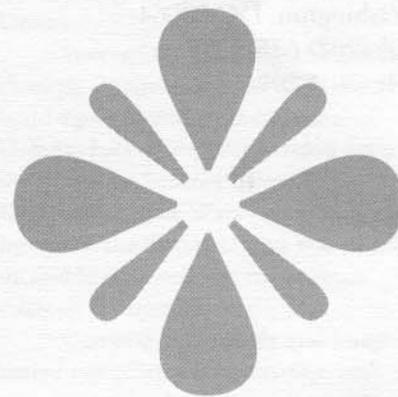
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As members of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars know, for some years we have announced the St. John Fisher Award, given to a courageous bishop, although we have never awarded it, because of a dearth of candidates.

I propose that the time has come to institute the Archbishop Charles Seghers Award, given annually to the bishop who has been most viciously attacked by dissident religious.

The cognoscenti will realize that Archbishop Seghers is the only bishop in American history to have been murdered, and that he was murdered by a former Jesuit. However, I do not think we have to limit the attackers only to Jesuits.

Jim Hitchcock



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*Victory: the Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union*

By Peter Schweizer  
The Atlantic Monthly Press, 284 pages, \$22.00

Reviewed by K. D. Whitehead

Policy is the continuation of war by other means: thus did the Reagan Administration effect a neat reversal of the famous Clausewitz maxim about war being a continuation of policy by other means, according to this very readable account by a Hoover Institution fellow; it explains and documents exactly how the Reagan Administration engineered this startling reversal, and with what spectacular success.

Author Peter Schweizer describes how the Reagan Administration consciously set in motion a series of political, economic, and strategic initiatives, combined with covert assistance to anticommunists in Poland and Afghanistan, which greatly hastened, if they did not actually precipitate, the crumbling of the Iron Curtain, the liberation of the Soviet satellite countries, and the subsequent break-up of the Soviet Union itself.

It is hard to understand why President Reagan has been so often derided as a reckless "cowboy," or even as an outright warmonger, and his Administration so deplored and disliked for its supposed belligerence and truculence, when in fact the Reagan Administration succeeded in reducing its principal recognized enemy precisely by not resorting to war! Although some Reagan Administration policies may well be questioned in retrospect, what cannot easily be questioned is that the major Reagan policy makers always remained carefully, cannily, and prudently within the regular "rules" of Cold War competition, such as they were, even while making no secret of what they thought of Communism and what they wanted to see happen to

it. It was this open attitude of candid opposition to Communism as such, apparently, which bothered and continues to bother, some of the Reagan critics.

One sometimes wonders whether such critics do not actually regret the fall of Communism, if only because it proved them to be so wrong about the whole unfortunate utopian experiment in the East which cost humanity so much over three quarters of a century.

However that may be, this book verifies that Ronald Reagan took office in 1980 with a clear and conscious intention of doing whatever was in the presidential power to prevent Communism's arrogant claim of being "on the side of history" from ever being vindicated. Nor was this just a matter of Reagan's anti-Communist rhetoric, as in his famous 1983 "evil empire" speech — from which he has garnered up to this day so much condemnation from so many supposedly sophisticated commentators.

No: Mr. Reagan actually believed, as he told students in a speech at Notre Dame University as early as May, 1981, that Communism represented "a sad, bizarre chapter in human history, whose last pages are even now being written." This, of course, was nearly a decade before the whole world would learn in 1989 how right Reagan had been.

From the moment he took office, Reagan followed up on his belief in the inherent weakness and decadence of Communism with decisions for concrete action by the U.S., especially in the form of several key National Security Decision Directives aiming to neutralize Soviet power, to weaken the Soviet economy on which the Soviet military machine depended (if not actually to try to bankrupt the Kremlin), and, in general, to exploit areas of Soviet weakness and thereby roll back Soviet power. Moreover, Reagan followed up on these NSDDs by approving concrete policies and operations intended to contribute to the achievement of his overall goals.

Peter Schweizer credits the Reagan Administration with successfully carrying out the following in order to achieve the administration's conscious goal of cutting Soviet power down to size:

° Providing covert intelligence and financial support for the Solidarity movement in Poland (with results which the whole world now knows all about!).

° Supplying financial and military aid to the Afghan Mujahedin, or "holy warriors," who were actually fighting — and ended up defeating — Russian troops in the field.

° Dramatically reducing Soviet hard currency earnings, in part by persuading Saudi Arabia to increase its oil production, thus bringing down the world price of oil, upon the export of which the Soviet Union had become increasingly dependent for its hard currency earnings.

° Organizing and sticking with a tough global campaign — of which more than one of America's European NATO allies felt the sting — to deny Western high technology to the Soviet Union.

° Successfully planning and getting through Congress a major U.S. defense build-up — including the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) derided from the outset by Senator Edward Kennedy as "Star Wars" — which, however, the Soviet Union was simply incapable of matching, either financially or technically.

° Carrying on a steady and imaginative campaign of information and disinformation, both to weaken the Soviet economy, and to spread fear and confusion among the Soviet leadership.

Ronald Reagan generally left the carrying out of these initiatives to subordinates — although he did successfully defend his position in person in Iceland against Mikhael Gorbachev's own able efforts to win at the summit, and in the face of world opinion, what the Soviet Union was losing on all other fronts. The Reagan Administra-

tion ultimately proved to be successful in this, especially owing to the diligent and persistent efforts of such as Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and CIA Director the late William Casey, who emerge as the heroes of this book.

In the opinion of this reviewer, Peter Schweizer has made a very persuasive case for his thesis — that Communism finally did come crashing down, though no doubt of its own inordinate weight and desiccation and age, but nevertheless very much as the Reagan Administration had consciously planned and hoped and worked to bring about by means short of war in the face of the skepticism of most of the experts.

Some reviews of this book have questioned its reliability on the grounds that too many of the super-secret things described in it cannot possibly be known until someone finally gets access to all the still classified files a quarter or a half a century hence; but the author did interview many of the principals, as well as their lieutenants and colleagues, in some depth; and it seems fair to assume that they did have plans and intentions, and that they did know what they were trying to accomplish. It is now a matter of verifiable fact that they were able to carry through with some of the initiatives described in this book. And the end, when it finally came, in 1989, surely was brought about, at least in part, by some of the operations they had set in motion.

The Reagan Administration has certainly been *accused* often enough of trying to counter Communism, after all; so it now ought to be recognized that it just may deserve some *credit* for its spectacular fall. It may indeed have had something to do with bringing Communism down — and without the general nuclear war which the world had dreaded for a whole generation. Even if this was only a qualified victory, it was nevertheless a real one: *exultemus et laetamur in ea* for what it is worth.

This book should be of special interest to Catholic students of the period because it details how often the Reagan Administration's efforts dovetailed with those of Solidarity in Poland and with the Vatican's *Ostpolitik* under Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Agostino Casaroli. The book makes clear, however, that Church officials, from the pope and Cardinal Casaroli on down, always maintained their distance, even while they were also always correct and diplomatic, at the same time that ample communication and exchanges of information on matters of obvious common interest did take place. Both President Reagan and William Casey personally met at length with John Paul II, for example, on different occasions; and the pope was clearly willing to "meet" with them.

Nevertheless, the Church was never a "partner" of the Reagan Administration. Peter Schweizer relates that "the Church insisted from the beginning that it would never play a covert role with the [CIA], nor would it serve as a cover for CIA operations."

The election in 1978 of a Polish pope to the See of Peter has been widely recognized to have set in motion some of the events which culminated in the dramatic outcomes of 1989, when Communism collapsed. This book demonstrates that the Reagan Administration, which took office at the beginning of 1981, was able to set in motion a few "events" of its own — and these demonstrably helped lead to the same ultimate result. Important as the leadership and inspiration of Pope John Paul II was, he certainly did not succeed in bringing down Communism all by himself. And this is one case where Americans can generally applaud the role their government did play.

*K. D. Whitehead, a former career Foreign Service Officer who served in Europe, Asia and Africa, was an assistant secretary of education in the Reagan Administration.*

## How Catholics and the Catholic Church Got Sidelined in the Culture Wars

### *John Cardinal Krol and the Cultural Revolution,*

By E. Michael Jones  
Fidelity Press, 206 Marquette Avenue, South Bend, IN 46617.  
HB \$35.00.

Reviewed by K. D. Whitehead

This is one of the most fascinating books you will read during this season or perhaps during many a season to come. It is presented as primarily a biography of a distinguished American Churchman, and it surely is that. John Cardinal Krol was archbishop of Philadelphia during one of the most turbulent periods in the recent history of the Church. As Philadelphia-native E. Michael Jones documents, he also probably played a greater role in the Second Vatican Council than any other American prelate.

John Krol was neither a speechmaker nor a theological idea man at the Vatican II. Rather, as one of the Council's undersecretaries, he put his formidable administrative talents to work to insure that the Council continued to go on at all, without getting hopelessly bogged down. "John Krol did not come to the Council with a lot of ideas about how the Church should be changed," author Jones remarks. "He came in the *persona* of the classic American bishop, as a man who was there to get things done." And he did.

Reading this book from the point of view of Cardinal Krol's life and career, one comes away admiring him a great deal and being tempted to think that "they don't make them like him anymore." Strictly as biography, the book presents a prominent American prelate dealing with the myriads of

tasks before him in a period of drastic and revolutionary changes, presenting wholly unprecedented challenges with very few sure principles or guideposts to follow in trying to meet those challenges.

But being the biography of a great contemporary Churchman is only one part of what this book is. Indeed, it only chronicles the cardinal's life up to November, 1971, when Cardinal Krol was elected president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and in that respect is like a Jane Austen novel that ends rather than begins with a marriage. Virtually the entire two decades of the 1970s and 1980s, when the cardinal was still one of the most important and visible Churchmen on the American scene, is passed over. Why?

The second part of the book's title provides the key: "The Cultural Revolution." For this book is primarily about the 1960s, when today's cultural revolution (especially the sexual revolution), with which our society is still desperately trying to cope, basically took place. It was also the decade of the Second Vatican Council whose various shock waves are still reverberating within the church.

This book focuses on the experiences of an embattled Cardinal Krol trying to deal from the Church's standpoint with all the many and various challenges which arose within and without the Church during the turbulent years of the 1960s; at the same time it ranges fairly widely in discussing key events taking place in the ongoing cultural revolution in society, about which the author is both well-informed and quite percipient.

In chronicling all this, Dr. Jones had access to what must be an absolutely unique collection of documents: the papers of Cardinal Krol. The Philadelphia prelate was at the center of some of the major cultural and ecclesiastical battles that were going on at the time, notably, the battle against government funded birth control

(which would soon be government-funded abortion), the battle against permissiveness and pornography in the public media; the battle against secular humanist domination of education and the insidious importation of some of its ideas into Catholic education; the battle for the Catholic university and the integrity of Catholic teaching; the battle for "neighborhoods," as well as related battles on the racial front, on which all of the other cultural battles also impacted quite negatively.

Today, for example, we are faced with the massive disaster area of the so-called inner city, from which Christian morality has now been largely eliminated — among other reasons, owing to the efforts of secular liberal ideologues backed by the government in Washington, as well as by the media elites in Hollywood and elsewhere. Not that the rest of our society is all that much better off than the inner city, morally speaking, as a result of the relentless efforts of the same liberal ideologues. These ideologues are nearly everywhere backed by Washington and Hollywood, respectively, attempting to impose morally neutral "solutions" for our various crying moral and social problems — solutions which only succeed in making these problems worse, precisely because they deliberately prescind from the moral law of God.

This is euphemistically called "separation of Church and state," of course; in America today, it has succeeded only in pretty much separating society and the state from the moral order itself.

E. Michael Jones focuses on Philadelphia and Pennsylvania, but the story he tells was replicated many times over in many of our other cities and states during the 1960s. His use of the Krol papers provides an absolutely unique perspective. Almost all of us knew that "the times they [were] a-changing," in the words of the song, but we did not always understand why. This book very plausibly and understandably presents a whole host of "whys."

Cardinal Krol was squarely in the middle of most of the major cultural battles of those years. We need to recall that, prior to the 1960s, government subsidies for birth control, abortion, divorce, illegitimacy, and such, all of which we have today, were simply unimaginable owing to the respect (and fear) in which the Catholic Church was then held. The president of the United States himself instantly and reflexively issued a statement scotching the very first suggestion that such issues could ever be legitimate government concerns (in 1959). The developers of the birth control pill similarly at first feared even to come out with their dubious discovery — which has since proven to be so utterly disastrous for any society — because of the feared opposition of the Catholic Church.

The Legion of Decency was still going strong in those days too, and Hollywood simply did not dare to present the kind of profanity, nudity, obscenity, and other corrupting suggestiveness which are standard fare today. In those days too, neighborhoods were still intact and they still more or less controlled such things as education. Meanwhile, perhaps the strongest single pillar upholding the whole social order was — the Catholic Church.

When we compare how things are today on these fronts, with how things were then, we can see how much ground has been lost by believing and practicing American Christians in the years since the advent of the cultural revolution in the 1960s. And then there was the added problem, which E. Michael Jones also perceptively deals with, that this cultural revolution spilled over into the Catholic Church, herself already in confusion and disarray in the wake of Vatican II.

The sad fact is that most of the battles Cardinal Krol had to fight ended up being lost. As everybody knows, by all standard indicators, the secular liberal ideologues have virtually won the cultural wars in this country,

at least for the moment — and at least until the catastrophic consequences for society of their current “victory” becomes evident to enough people so that a substantial counter-war can again be launched. A Cardinal Krol in Philadelphia could not have been expected to win — certainly not by himself — a cultural war which was raging all over the country, and a war in which most of the strategic and tactical advantages remained in the hands of the other side.

Nevertheless, the steady, spirited, consistent, and sometimes even heroic efforts that this Philadelphia prelate exerted on the basis of solid and abiding Catholic principles very much deserve to be recorded in a volume such as this: at least history will show what was intended and what was effected. Another figure who assumes real heroic proportions in these pages, especially in the fight against government-funded birth control, is the well-known constitutional lawyer, William B. Ball, from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Cardinal Krol and William Ball were being regularly bloodied in combats which most other Catholics, at the time, were scarcely aware were even going on. (Not a few Catholics seem not to have “gotten it” yet.)

One of the other fascinating, although sad, and, indeed, tragic, phenomena which this book chronicles is the degree to which, at the very time when the Catholic Church’s timeless moral witness was most needed to uphold simple morality in a rapidly disintegrating society, the Church’s moral witness instead became greatly weakened and, in some cases, almost invisible, owing to the fact that many Catholics chose precisely this period in which to *join*, in effect, today’s decadent modern culture. It was all part of finally getting a “Catholic” elected president and getting Catholics

accepted as one-hundred percent Americans, just like everybody else. It is a phenomenon which persists today.

Typical of such Catholics going

over to the world, of course, are those Catholic politicians in public life who are “personally opposed to abortion, but . . .” — and also, sadly, the many Catholic voters who continue to help vote such politicians into office . . .

At the very time the secular liberals launched their massive modern offensive on multiple fronts aimed at destroying our society’s traditional morality, particularly in matters pertaining to sex, many among the knowledge class and those in leadership positions within the Church decided the time had come instead for an accommodation to modern secular liberal society. In part this came about because of some of the confusion and misunderstandings which followed Vatican II. In essence, though, it represented a capitulation — a “kneeling before the world,” Jacques Maritain styled it — in the face of a secular liberal offensive which was often quite frankly aimed at nothing else but the Catholic Church.

Henceforth the point became largely conceded that basic morality was no longer to be a question that would even be raised in connection with public figures and our public life. Can we even imagine, for instance, a statement by today’s Catholic bishops against the three-quarters-of-a-billion dollars annually in federal tax money that subsidizes birth control?

The title of this review, “How Catholics and the Catholic Church Got Sidelined in the Culture Wars,” precisely reflects the reality of what happened. Nor will you nod or your attention lag very easily while reading Dr. Jones’ blow-by-blow account of how it all came about: he is quite consciously aware of the larger implications of what he is describing in Philadelphia, and his account makes what really happened to the Church and to Catholics in the 1960s in the United States more clear than probably any other single book that has yet been written. This is a book you do not want to miss if you want to understand what happened — and what we are

still faced with now.

Only today, in fact, are many Catholics and Churchmen finally beginning to get a glimmer of what Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia was often able to see at the time, namely, that the cultural revolution which took place in this country in the 1960s is basically incompatible with any society or morality based on the Ten Commandments and on universal natural principles of right and justice.

If we do not soon somehow bring simple morality back to our society, we may before very long no longer have any real society to bring it back to. The Catholic Church remains perhaps the most important single social institution that has any chance of reviving the practice of Christian morality on a large scale in the United States — if only Catholics will acquire the knowledge and the intestinal fortitude to understand what is required of them, and will finally reject the role on the sidelines to which Catholics and the Church have in effect been confined since the 1960s. E. Michael Jones has done a great service in laying out in this book what really happened and what is really at stake.

*K. D. Whitehead is a former U.S. assistant secretary of education who now works as a Catholic writer and translator.*

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### ***I Am A Happy Theologian***

by Edward Schillebeeckx  
Crossroad, 1994, 103 pages,  
paper \$11.95

Reviewed by  
Leonard A. Kennedy C.S.B.  
Castries, Saint Lucia

**T**his is a favorable presentation of Schillebeeckx, now eighty-one, and his theology, in the form of an interview conducted by Francesco Strazzari. Schillebeeckx gives an account of his life and finally of his theology. He tells of his en-

counters with Vatican authorities dealing with his publications.

One of his leading principles, he tells us, is that God has spoken to us only through deeds, never through words. This means that Jesus did not say what the Gospels say he said. Starting with this principle one is bound to end with false theological conclusions.

Some of the interesting conclusions Schillebeeckx has arrived at are the following:

1. We should not say that there are three Persons in God, since this smacks of tri-theism. God, however, is threefold in some manner.
2. The existence of God can not be proven.
3. The Holy Spirit is the mother of the Church; Mary is not; she is our elder sister.
4. There is no hell. Persons dying in unrepented mortal sin are annihilated.
5. In Purgatory souls are purified, but they are not punished for their sins.
6. "For Christians neither revelation nor faith impose ethical norms, even if these are sometimes inspirations and orientations."
7. "There is no specifically Chris-

tian ethic about homosexuality either. It is a human problem, which must be resolved in a human way. There are no Christian norms as such for judging homosexuality . . . . To appeal to the Bible to condemn homosexuality is unjust . . . . Condemnation and discrimination are certainly not Christian."

8. "It cannot be said that bishops, priests, and deacons were instituted by Christ . . . . I do not see why they cannot change."

9. ". . . Christ did not directly institute the church because he believed that the end of the world was near and did not believe in a long history in time . . . ."

10. "There must be respect for the laws of the church, for canon law, but when it proves that these norms are not accepted by the faithful because they are regarded as inhuman, the laws must be changed."

11. "The exclusion of women from the ministry is a purely cultural question."

12. "It is often said that the life of religious is a superior life. I do not think so."

Two scandals are revealed in these interviews. In his 1979 process with the Vatican it was mentioned that

Schillebeeckx had preached at the marriage of a priest still under his vow of chastity.

The second concerns Karl Rahner. Rahner was asked by the Vatican to prepare a theological investigation of Schillebeeckx without Schillebeeckx's knowledge, in preparation for the 1968 process against Schillebeeckx. Rahner was put under an order of secrecy under penalty of grave sin. Rather than refuse the task Rahner told Schillebeeckx and then lied to the Vatican officials about having done so. He told Schillebeeckx that natural law exempted him from not telling Schillebeeckx. One might swallow this, but could the same argument be used to justify the lie?

Today Holland is in a pitiful state religiously. Schillebeeckx admits this: "Before the Council the Dutch Catholics were closely bound to Rome and the Pope; now everything has been turned upside down. There has been a move from preconiliar papalism to attacks, indifference, silence. It is a sad and abnormal situation."

One wonders how the theologian called in this book "the theologian of the Dutch episcopate" could call himself happy.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

**ALBA HOUSE, 2187 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island, New York 10314-6603**

*Christ is the Answer: The Christ-Centered Teaching of Pope John Paul II*, John Saward. xxviii + 176 pages. \$10.95 paperback. ISBN: 0-8189-0746-0.

*Mary of Galilee, Vol. II: Woman of Israel - Daughter of Zion*, Bertrand Buby, SM. xii + 344 pages. \$17.95 paperback. ISBN: 0-8189-0697-9.

*Philip Neri: The Fire of Joy*, Paul Türks of the Oratory (trans. Daniel Utrecht of the Oratory). xiv + 174 pages. \$12.50 paperback. ISBN: 0-8189-0748-7.

**BAKER BOOK HOUSE COMPANY, P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49616-6287**

*Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: Agreements and Differences*, Norman Geisler and Ralph MacKenzie. 540 pages. \$24.99 paperback. ISBN: 0-8010-3875-8.

**THE CANCER FEDERATION, P.O. Box 1298, Banning, CA 92220**

*The Seven Deadly Sins and Why We Love Them*, John Steinbacher. 71 pages. Paperback.

**CROSSROAD, 370 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017**

*Reconstructing Catholicism: For a New Generation*, Robert Ludwig. x + 241 pages. \$17.95 paperback. ISBN: 0-8245-1462-9.

*Why You Can Disagree and Remain a Faithful Catholic* (New and Revised Edition), Philip S. Kaufman. xvi + 222 pages. \$15.95 paperback. ISBN: 0-8245-1472-6.

**EJ COMPANY, 3649 Lawton/P.O. Box 22612, San Francisco, CA 94122**

*Collected Poems*, Rosemary Regina Challoner Wilkinson. xi + 222 pages. \$10.00 paperback. ISBN: 94-070552.

**IGNATIUS PRESS, 2515 McAllister Street, San Francisco, CA 94118**

*Christianity and Western Civilization: The Proceedings of the Wethersfield Institute*, vol. 7 (Christopher Dawson's Insights: Can a Culture Survive the Loss of Its Religious Roots?). 122 pages. Paperback. ISBN: 0-89870-534-7.

**PETER LANG PUBLISHING, INC.,**  
62 West 45th Street 4th Fl., New  
York, NY 10036

*Authentic Metaphysics in an Age of Unreality*  
(2nd edition), Leo Sweeney, S.J. xii + 435  
pages. \$35.95 paperback. ISBN: 0-8204-  
2278-9.

*Divine Infinity in Greek and Medieval  
Thought*, Leo Sweeney, S.J. xx + 576  
pages. \$52.95 paperback. ISBN: 0-8204-  
1178-7.

*Greek & Medieval Studies in Honor of Leo  
Sweeney, S.J.*, eds. William J. Carroll &  
John Furlong. xxviii + 302 pages. \$45.95  
hardcover. ISBN: 0-8204-1614-X.

**QUEENSHIP PUBLISHING  
COMPANY, P.O. Box 42028,**  
Santa Barbara, CA 93140-2028

*The Gift of the Church: Current questions and  
objections about the Catholic Church and down-  
to-earth answers*, Msgr. Bob Guste. xvi +  
189 pages. Paperback. ISBN: 1-882972-  
01-5.

**SAINT BEDE'S PUBLICATIONS,**  
P.O. Box 545, Petersham, MA  
01366-0545.

*The Suffering of Love: Christ's Descent into the  
Hell of Human Hopelessness*, Regis Martin.  
173 pages. \$14.95 paperback. ISBN: 1-  
879007-14-2.

**T & T CLARK, 59 George Street,**  
Edinburgh Street, Edinburgh, EH2  
2LQ, Scotland

*The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the  
Trinity*, Thomas G. Weinandy, O.F.M.  
Cap. xi = 148 pages. Hardcover. ISBN:  
0-567-09721-8.

**UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE  
PRESS, 440 Forsgate Drive,**  
Cranbury, NJ 08512

*Virtue's Own Feature: Shakespeare and the  
Virtue Ethics Tradition*, David Beauregard,  
O.M.V. 260 pages. \$41.50 hardcover.  
ISBN: 0-87413-578-8.

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHU-  
SETTS PRESS, Box 429, Amherst,**  
MA 01004

*I Am Because We Are: Readings in Black  
Philosophy*, Fred Lee Hord (Mzee Lasana  
Okpara) and Jonathan Scott Lee (eds.). x +  
390 pages. \$17.95 paperback. ISBN: 0-  
87023-965-1.

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