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The origins of this volume lie in a conversation that the two of us had four or five years ago while taking a walk after Vespers at Mt. Saviour Monastery, a Benedictine community in Elmira, New York. It was a beautiful summer evening and we started talking about what was going on at both of our institutions. We both mentioned being formed as students in the Catholic intellectual tradition. We also agreed that this tradition was supposed to be an important part of what our institutions were about, that it should inform our life together, and that we had the responsibility of transmitting and developing that tradition. Then, we scratched our balding heads and asked, "What does it mean?"

We decided that perhaps we would embark on a project together. We have been doing this kind of idea-sharing for about thirty years now. Some of the projects have been successful, some have not been so successful. But we decided that it might be a good idea to undertake a project that would be of service not only to the University of Scranton and Sacred Heart University but could also be of use to other Catholic colleges and universities in the United States. We decided to bring together a collections of essays that would grapple with what we called the Catholic intellectual tradition. We discussed further, that if a first volume had some value, perhaps we would then bring together a gathering of people from Catholic colleges and universities to think through more carefully what it means to engage that tradition in the day-to-day life of our colleagues and universities.

*Examining the Catholic Intellectual Tradition* (Fairfield, CT: Sacred Heart University Press, 2000) brought together a collection of essays by noted Catholic intellectuals and scholars on the...
tradition. It was well received as a valuable preliminary resource to begin an informed conversation about the heritage as well as the lived experiences behind the term “Catholic intellectual tradition.” Soon after, we set about organizing a conference entitled “Examining the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.” This meeting was held at Sacred Heart University from November 10-12, 2000. Contained in this volume are the papers and presentations that served the 160 people gathered at this conference as reference points for our common reflection and discussion as well as several additional essays that we believe will be of interest and use to the readers.

So, this book is the second step along the way. We hope that we will continue this conversation and investigate in even more detail the relationship of the Catholic intellectual tradition to a number of different intellectual pursuits and disciplines in the curriculum and our academic life. As stewards of this tradition, we dare to think creatively and boldly, and we humbly carry this tradition into this new century and well beyond.

A special word of thanks is due to David L. Coppola, executive assistant to the president of Sacred Heart University, and Sidney Gottlieb, professor of English at Sacred Heart University, for their efforts in bringing this work to completion.

Anthony J. Cernera and Oliver J. Morgan