CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Jesuit Ideal of a Teacher: 
A Complex and Developing Tradition

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Although Jesuits have been working in the classroom for several centuries, their founder, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, did not set out to be an educator. Before his wounding at Pamplona, Ignatius had been a soldier by profession, and, after his conversion at Loyola, he chose the life of a pilgrim and a penitent. Indeed, even after the founding of the Society of Jesus, neither Ignatius nor his first companions thought that their corporate work would include long hours at the teacher’s desk. Their aim was to serve their Church as a group of free-lance apostles, placed at the disposition of the Holy See, ready for any task assigned to it. Sanctification of their neighbor, rather than his intellectual improvement, was to be the goal of their apostolate. Jesuit educational work was undertaken only when Jesuits found themselves drawn into it through their answer to an urgent apostolic call.1 Ignatius had been asked to found a college at Messina and he felt compelled to do so. But as haphazard as that initial commitment to education might appear, once Ignatius had made it, it turned into a decisive option. In the final years of his own life, Ignatius opened thirty-five colleges; and, as each school was founded, he followed every step in the process with personal interest. He wanted detailed information about the administrative structure of the school and the program of studies to be followed
in it; and no decision of consequence was to be made about these matters without his knowledge and consent. There can be no doubt then that the Jesuit interest in education and the Jesuit willingness to commit the best resources of their order to that work goes back to their order's founder, Ignatius of Loyola.

Jesuit Schools in the “Old Society”

That interest never flagged. Successive Superior Generals continued Ignatius' support for the Jesuit apostolate of education; and, as the order grew, the institutional base of that apostolate expanded. By 1599, the year in which Claudio Aquaviva ended decades of discussion by approving the definitive Ratio Studiorum, the uniform program of studies to be followed in every Jesuit school, there were 245 schools. By the first decade of the eighteenth century, the number of Jesuit colleges added up to 612, and by the middle of that century their number had reached 669, without counting another 176 seminaries under Jesuit direction. Unfortunately, however, success can have its price, and a quarter of a century later, there were no Jesuit schools at all. For, in 1773, under the pressure of the Bourbon monarchies, Clement XIV suppressed the Society of the Jesus and the history of education in what Jesuits would later call the “Old Society” came to its close.

The schools of that “Old Society” were in a class by themselves, not only because of their large number, unified control, and identical curriculum but also because of their strategic location over the broad expanse of Europe, Asia, and the Americas. In almost every land to which the Jesuits had come they seemed to have opened schools. There were Jesuit colleges and universities in Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, the Low Countries, the German and Austrian lands, and Poland. Even in turbulent seventeenth-century Ireland the Jesuit college at Kilkenny had managed to stay in operation for a while; and in the Spanish Netherlands, Robert Persons had opened the Jesuit college at Saint Omer, to which for more than two centuries young English Catholics came across the channel for their education. The Apostle of the Indies, Saint Francis Xavier, had opened a college at Goa, and other Jesuit apostles had done the same in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Peru
and, across the Pacific, in the Philippines. Even in our own Maryland, breaking the law, of course, John Carroll, the founder of the American hierarchy, and his cousin Charles, the signer of the Declaration of Independence, had attended a small Jesuit school at Bohemia Manor before they were sent abroad together to continue their education at Saint Omer.

Jesuit history tells us that in the centuries between the foundation of their order and its suppression, the priests and scholastics of the “Old Society” had been able to keep in operation, through their tightly woven network of colleges and universities, an influential, effective, uniform, highly organized, international system of Catholic education. In its heyday, the Jesuit system had no equal. In Europe, Asia, and the American colonies of Spain and Portugal, thousands of students of many nationalities were able to receive their secondary and higher education completely free of charge in colleges and universities fully endowed by benefactors of the Society. For many a poor boy in Europe and the Americas, the Jesuit college in his town had become his gateway to opportunity.

This did not mean, of course, that everybody was a friend of the Jesuit schools. Influenced as they were by Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises* and by the theology of Saint Thomas, which Ignatius had ordered Jesuits to make their own, Jesuit educators took an optimistic view of human nature and of its possibilities. It followed then that, as teachers, preachers, and confessors, Jesuits showed themselves staunch defenders of the freedom of the will. Like Ignatius, who had received a humanistic education at Paris, Jesuits were partisans of Renaissance literary humanism. Following the Paris model, which Ignatius had prescribed for their own education, the Jesuits made the pagan authors of Greece and Rome, judiciously expurgated, the core of the graded sequence of courses in grammar, poetry, and rhetoric that prepared their students for the subsequent study of science and philosophy. In advising their students or in guiding the penitents who came to them for counsel, Jesuits had been taught to respect the liberty of the individual conscience. In consequence, the Jesuit style of teaching, preaching, and counselling, as we know from our reading of Pascal’s *Provincial Letters*, was of the sort which was bound to
scandalize the morally rigid Jansenists of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe; and unfortunately for the Jesuits, the Jansenists were both numerous and influential.\textsuperscript{12}

The Jesuits made other enemies as well. The curriculum of the Jesuit colleges and universities, the theology taught in them, and the internal administration of each school were completely in the hands of an international religious order subject only to the Holy See. The Gallican theologians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and their allies in the legal bureaucracies of the European monarchies felt that the educational independence which the Jesuit schools enjoyed was an intolerable challenge to the firm control that officials of the crown, the courts, and the institutions of the national church should have over education in a well-run state. Exceptions of that sort, they felt, were dangerous.\textsuperscript{13}

In the age of the Enlightenment, when deism and skepticism began to spread among the upper classes of Europe, the classes from which the advisers of its kings and queens were drawn, a new complaint was made about Jesuit education. Exception was now being taken to the supernatural viewpoint of Jesuit teachers and administrators. Jesuits taught in their schools as part of their Apostolic service to the Church, and, as a result, the aim of their teaching was to prepare their students to live a life of faith and of Christian service to their neighbor. For the Enlightenment philosophes, however, that was not the scientific type of education that the modern world required. Modern education should be guided by what the philosophes conceived to be the philosophical worldview of Locke and Newton. This meant that education should be completely secular in outlook and that its aim should be to prepare an enlightened, free-thinking citizen for the service of his state. The national state then and not an international religious order should have control of the education given by the state to its future citizens.\textsuperscript{14}

The Jansenists, the Gallicans, and the Enlightenment intellectuals and bureaucrats had no great love for one another, but they were united in their hatred of Jesuit education. In the third quarter of the eighteenth century, then, they cemented their alliance and their orchestrated campaign for the suppression of the Society of Jesus got under way. When that campaign succeeded, as
it did in 1773 with the suppression of the Society of Jesus, the
system of Jesuit schools went out of existence.

Jesuit Schools in the “New Society”

Jesuit schools appeared again with the restoration of the
Society in the early nineteenth century; but neither in number nor
in quality could these nineteenth-century schools rival the Jesuit
schools of former days. Trained Jesuit teachers were in short
supply, as their order struggled to re-establish itself, in a Church
whose religious and educational institutions had suffered greatly
in the turmoil caused by the French Revolution. Nineteenth-
century civil governments were often hostile to the Church, and
even when their leaders were willing to tolerate other Catholic
institutions, their toleration did not extend to the Society of Jesus.
All through the century, a series of expulsions and the forced
closings of their schools hampered the Jesuits’ work in education.
Russia, France, Italy, Spain and Prussia, on various occasions,
drove out the Jesuits; and so, in continental Europe, anything like
sustained development in Jesuit education became impossible.
Progress could be made, however, in the English-speaking lands.
For although the Catholic minority found prejudice enough
against its faith in the British Empire and America, Catholic
schools there were allowed to go about their work in peace.
Exiled European Jesuits were able to cross the ocean and join their
American colleagues in laying the foundations for the system of
Jesuit schools and colleges which we find today in the United
States.

While making needed adaptations to their time, the
nineteenth-century Jesuits tried to retain, as best they could, the
basic curriculum of Aquaviva’s *Ratio Studiorum*. The result was
that, although it may surprise us now, the program of studies in
Jesuit schools and the curriculum prescribed for the continental
lycées still had much in common. The Jesuit school was the collège,
a European institution whose range of classes ran from the
grammar grades to what would be the sophomore year of an
American four-year college. In his Jesuit *collège* or in its secular
equivalent, the state *lycée*, a student could follow the same set of
courses in grammar, classical and vernacular literature; and in either one of them, the student would be given the same solid grounding in mathematics. The reason for the similarity is obvious enough. The Enlightenment intellectuals to whom the state system of education looked for inspiration had never complained about the Jesuit program of humanistic studies. After all, Corneille, Molière, Buffon, Fontenelle, and many another distinguished man of letters had been formed by it. Even Voltaire and Diderot, for all their dislike of the Jesuits, gave credit to their Jesuit education for their own love of literature. Not without reason. For in the great days of the Collège-Louis-le-Grand, from which both of them had graduated, a single professor of rhetoric, the famous Father Porée, had seen nineteen of his former students become members of the French Academy. The philosophes may have talked a good deal about science, but they were not really scientists themselves. They were men of letters and they had no desire to see eighteenth-century science take the place of literature in their scheme of education.

The crucial distinction between the Jesuit collège and the secular lycée would not be found in their programs of literature, mathematics, and science. The crucial distinction between the two types of school would emerge rather in the nature of the philosophy taught in them and in the different approach which the collège and the lycée took to Christian revelation. The Jesuit collège and the state lycée both intended to be first-class schools, in the classical tradition, from which their graduates would emerge well-prepared for higher studies in the university or for a commercial or professional career. The reason for which Catholic parents chose the collège in preference to the lycée was the vision of man, the world, and God communicated to its students by the collège. That Christian vision of reality, which a corps of teachers, united in their belief, could communicate to their students in the atmosphere of a Jesuit school community, was the worldview which Catholic parents hoped that their sons would make their own.

In the politically divided France of the nineteenth century there was a difference as well in the approach to history taken by the Jesuit collège and the anti-clerical lycée. In the state lycée, for example, students were supposed to learn from Professor Jules
Michelet’s *Histoire de France* that the Revolution and the secular state were two of France’s greatest blessings. In the Jesuit collège, on the other hand, the sons of Royalist parents would be assured by Father Jean-Nicholas Loriquet’s *Histoire de France* that nothing good could come from either of them. Father Loriquet, we may remark in passing, was a figure of no small importance in nineteenth-century Jesuit education. The plan of studies which he had devised for the Jesuit school at Saint Acheul became the model which other French Jesuit schools would follow, and which Jesuits trained in France would carry with them to America. Father Nicolas Point, known later for his paintings of the Northwest Indians, made it the norm for the teaching at the Jesuit college at Grand Coteau, Louisiana, when he was Rector there; and William Stack Murphy, an Irish-born member of the French province, brought it with him in 1846 when the French Jesuits came up from Kentucky to establish themselves at Fordham. Later in his career, in his terms as Vice-Provincial of Missouri, Father Murphy endeavored to impose the Loriquet plan of education on the reluctant Flemish Jesuits of the American mid-West.

In order to survive in the nineteenth century, Jesuit schools were forced, for the first time, to charge tuition. That change in policy, together with their classical curriculum, made European Jesuit schools educational institutions for the Catholic middle and upper classes. The Old World’s class distinctions were still quite rigid and upward mobility was rare. In America, on the other hand, the land of immigration and of commercial expansion, society was fluid; and for the bright boy from an immigrant family or his friends from the same parish the Jesuit high school in his town and later on the Jesuit college could be his road to economic and social advancement. Tuition was kept low, and Jesuits, together with the sizeable corps of lay colleagues who now taught alongside of them, had taken it as their mission to prepare the sons of Catholic immigrants to make their way up the economic ladder and adapt themselves to the ways of American society without losing their inherited religious identity. In the atmosphere of a Jesuit school, the religious and moral worldview which these young Catholics brought with them from their homes and parishes would be supported. They would learn to
understand for themselves the evidence which supported it, and to live their lives under its direction in a reasonable and responsible way. Young men from working and lower-middle-class families would be made familiar with the literature of Greece and Rome, their classical heritage from Europe, and would become familiar as well with the English literature of their new home. Immigrants' sons would be shown how to analyze a problem and give their solution to it in clear and cultivated English. Reasons would be brought forward in support of the moral code which, up to now, these young men took only on faith. At the end of their Jesuit schooling, they would emerge as decent, believing, educated Americans. Then they could make their way in their own career and give moral leadership to the society in which they lived.

Jesuits in the nineteenth century and in the earlier years of the twentieth had reason to believe that dedication to the work of teaching in a Jesuit high school or college was a worthwhile lifetime commitment. Jesuits and laymen alike, they were working as a team in the communal enterprise of a Jesuit school, and they were giving the type of education which, in its essential thrust at least, was still in the tradition of Aquaviva's *Ratio Studiorum.* That was why, they could still believe, they were able to form in their students the same type of mind which their own Jesuit education had formed in them. For from its beginning, the aim of Jesuit education had been the systematic development of a cultivated Catholic mind: a mind whose range was broad enough to embrace the realm of human knowledge as an articulated whole, yet sufficiently familiar with the diverse branches of knowledge to unify the multitude of disciplines without confusing them. That ideal of perspective, discipline of mind and imagination, analytic skill, and ability to see things as a whole was the integrative habit of mind which a community of broadly educated teachers, working in the light of their common faith, could develop in their students. Their Jesuit ideal of teaching, in other words, came fairly close to the ideal of education, which Cardinal Newman had proposed in *The Idea of a University.* In the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth, that ideal could still recommend itself rather readily as a goal capable of realization. "*Age quod agis*" ("Keep on doing what you are
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doing”) had been an adage of Saint Ignatius, and in the nineteenth century, Ignatius’ adage could still be applied to Jesuit education.

Jesuit Colleges and Universities Today

Jesuit schools, however, can no longer operate today as they operated from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. They have ceased to be part of an international network of colleges and universities under unified and autonomous control. Furthermore, the expansion of human knowledge in the natural and social sciences, history, and religious studies, has made the integration of knowledge at which the traditional Jesuit curriculum was aimed a controverted goal. European humanistic education, built around classical and vernacular literature, mathematics, science, and philosophy, is no longer acknowledged as generally as it used to be as the acceptable way to prepare a student for a professional career. Indeed, whether cultivation of the mind or the acquisition of marketable skills should be the aim of a college education is now a matter for dispute. Research universities promote the ideal of specialized inquiry, and the influence of their research ideal on undergraduate education is readily observable. Generalist teachers, whose ideal of education is the integration of knowledge through an interdisciplinary style of teaching, may find themselves at a disadvantage in colleges whose basic unit of instruction has become the individual department. For departments are often at war with one another today to secure a place for their own specialty in the undergraduate curriculum. State and professional agencies as well have their own demands to make on that curriculum, and as a result, anything like the academic independence, which Jesuit schools enjoyed in that respect from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries has become impossible.

American colleges and universities are also asked today to promote a broad diversity in the educational background of their professors, and once Jesuit colleges and universities had opted for their present legal status as secular institutions, they could no longer be operated on the confessional basis on which Jesuit schools had been conducted for the previous four centuries. One
consequence of this change of legal status in our colleges and universities might be that the common bond, which used to form a school’s corps of teachers into a Jesuit educational community may cease to be a distinguishing mark of Jesuit education. For that earlier bond of unity among the teachers in a Jesuit school was an interpersonal one. It came from the faculty’s shared worldview, the similarity of its intellectual formation, and its shared understanding of the nature and goal of a Jesuit education.30

Another casualty of the shift of Jesuit schools to secular status might also be the bond of religious service, which in former times linked the corps of teachers in a Jesuit institution to the larger Catholic community around them. Conscious attachment to the larger Catholic community often helped the faculty of a Jesuit school to appreciate the religious and social value of their work. That sense of religious service was certainly present in the Jesuits who taught in the schools of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and it could be found as well in the teachers, Jesuit and lay, who taught in the Jesuit schools of nineteenth-century Europe and America.31 The vision of their work as a religious vocation gave these teachers firm support for the high esteem in which they held their own profession. Their work in the classroom, as they saw it then, was their share in the mission entrusted to their Jesuit school to educate men, and later women, who would be able to promote the teachers’ own religious and social values.32 When teaching can be looked upon as a vocation of that sort, the teacher’s devotion of his life to it can well appear to be a gift of self worth the making.

It would not be true to say that the traditional bond which linked the Jesuit college or university to the religious community about it must now be severed. Nevertheless, Jesuit colleges and universities must operate today within the stringent legal limits required of them by their civil status as secular institutions. Furthermore, in our own time the Catholic Church has come to look on members of other religious orders in a more ecumenical light as diverse religious groups have learned to interact with one another in a less embattled way. In these changed circumstances the character of the religious service which a school in the Jesuit tradition should render now stands in need of clarification and
perhaps of redefinition. But clarification and redefinition can be a lengthy process and, unfortunately, while it is going on, a good deal of ambiguity can ensue over what that bond, in practice, would mean today. Ambiguity or perhaps communal disagreement about the nature of a school’s religious service can easily weaken the strength of the commitment which individual teachers are willing to make to it. Should that ambiguity persist, then, as indeed it may, one of the strongest motives which moved teachers of high quality to make great personal sacrifices in the interest of Jesuit education may cease to operate.

Some Characteristics of Ignatius’ Educational Ideal

A good deal of reflection more systematic and sustained in character than we have seen to date will be called for if the Jesuit ideal of the teacher is to retain its viability today. Consideration of the ideal’s content might suggest lines along which some of that reflection might proceed.

Ignatius’ ideal of education was the fruit of his own prayer and experience, and of the subsequent reflection which he had made on both. It is set down explicitly in the Fourth Part of his Jesuit Constitutions, and we can see it work implicitly in the instructions which Ignatius gave for the staffing of the Roman College, the flagship school of his educational system. Many years later, as the result of further prayer, experience, and reflection by a good number of topflight early Jesuits, the Jesuit ideal of education was definitively formulated in Claudio Aquaviva’s Ratio Studiorum. For Ignatius and the early Jesuits, the aim of their educational work was service to God and to their fellow men, and they wanted it to be, like the rest of their apostolic work, distinguished service. Distinguished service in education, however, would call for the formation of a group of capable teachers who could work for God’s greater glory in a first class system of schools. Personally humble though Ignatius was in the sight of God, Ignatius, as an apostle, was never humble in the scope of his ambition. His aim was not simply to do good but to achieve the greater good, and that meant that the aim of his Jesuit schools was
to provide the sort of education which its contemporary critics would call elitist.

The greater glory, which God would receive through the work of a well-educated disciple, had been the motive which carried Ignatius through his long and difficult years of study at Alcalà and Paris. During these years he had seen with his own eyes the damage done to students by the aimless and disorganized program of studies under which he had studied at Alcalà; and later on he had seen what a well-planned intelligently organized series of courses had been able to do for him and for his first companions at Paris. Since the members of his Society would be called upon to work for God’s greater glory, Ignatius believed that a first-class, coherently organized program of studies, such as he had followed at Paris, would be required to prepare them for their future work. The same sort of education, he also thought, should be given to the lay students who came to the Jesuit colleges. For these students too were intended to emerge from their Jesuit schooling as educated Christians well prepared to give intellectual and moral leadership to the society in which they lived. The lasting good which well-prepared students of that sort would be able to accomplish through their influence upon the world about them justified in Ignatius’ eyes the allocation of his order’s best resources to its schools, even though at times the needs of other Jesuit apostolates might appear to be more pressing. The priority given to educational work in the Society of Jesus was never challenged until quite recently. Now, however, some Jesuits at least believe that the urgent social problems of our time have a greater claim on the resources of their order than its traditional apostolate of education. In that case, since the Society’s resources are not unlimited, the work of education could well be left to others. Firm defenders of Jesuit education can still be found, of course, in the Society of Jesus; but if its priority is to be retained today, education will have to defend its claim against the counterclaims of other and more direct apostolates.

Jesuit education has always made great demands on the resources of their order. Schools run in the Jesuit tradition were expected to be run as well as possible, since for Ignatius the Jesuit commitment to education meant a commitment to do the job of
teaching in a highly professional way. Expert instruction by well-trained Jesuits who had made a name for themselves in their own field was the standard which Ignatius set for the Roman College, since instruction there was meant to be the model which his other schools would follow. Great weight was placed on the selection of Jesuit professors, on the preparation given to them for their future work, and on their willingness to devote their lifetime to it. If Jesuit education were to measure up to the hopes which Ignatius himself had entertained for it, it would have to be an education in which a high degree of competence in its teaching staff would be a mark of its distinctiveness; and by and large, Jesuit schools have tried to meet that standard. In our day, professional competence of that sort may no longer be prized as highly as it used to be. Critical standards are less demanding and the skills which Jesuit professionals cultivated in their students are less esteemed. Education has become much more egalitarian, and teachers who make the Jesuit ideal of education their own may find themselves swimming against the tide.

Jesuit education was never meant to be either a free flowing or a passive affair. It called for a clear sense of direction in its teachers and a focused process of self-development in its students. Jesuits were never believers in the discipline of the rod, and Jesuit teachers were forbidden to lay their hands upon a student. But they were firm believers in disciplined activity in their classrooms. Three centuries after its promulgation, Aquaviva's *Ratio Studiorum* still impresses us by the emphasis which it places on education through self-activity and the measures recommended to foster it. Diverse forms of self-expression, from contests, games, and small group repetitions in the lower grades, to essays, discussions, and debates in the academies or seminars attached to the higher classes, were central elements in the *Ratio's* program of education. The classroom teacher was urged to stimulate personal activity in every student, and in order to do that well, he was encouraged to know each student personally. Knowing them well, he could then guide their intellectual, moral, and religious development by his own personal example. Education, in the ideal of the *Ratio*, was a dynamic process carried on through the personal interaction of students and their professors.
The optimistic view of human nature implied in the Jesuit ideal of education, as we have seen, scandalized the rigid seventeenth-century Jansenists; and its openness to Christian revelation, as we also saw, displeased the rationalist philosophes of the Enlightenment. Pessimism, skepticism, and irreligion have become more radical today, and the consequences of that development for liberal education have manifested themselves in an alarming way. A number of educators have not only proclaimed their loss of faith in God and their lack of belief in a free human nature; they have even questioned the intelligibility of the world encountered in human experience. Mankind should no longer look for meaning in his world, they tell us, since meaning can be no more than a product of his own human making. Once its contingent nature has been recognized, the claim of objective universality, which Eurocentric culture has traditionally made, can no longer be recognized. The inherited culture of Europe and America, and their traditional liberal education, can no longer occupy the place of honor, which even Enlightenment thinkers were willing to give them. They can no longer claim to be grounded on mankind’s universal experience of self and world. Far from being grounded on tested experience, accessible to every mind, Western culture has been exposed for what it is, the product of political power and ethnic prejudice. Power, rather than tested knowledge, is the real source of the meanings, values, and ideals honored in our Western schools.

This radical attack on traditional culture and on liberal education, religious and secular, has been met with consternation in academe. Even educators otherwise quite sympathetic to non-European cultures have been repelled by it, and a heated discussion is now going on over the nature and value of liberal education. One outcome of that discussion could well be a more sympathetic understanding of Jesuit education by academics who, up to now, have shown little interest in it.

The Continuing Value of the Jesuit Ideal

Jesuit educators’ knowledge of history, philosophy, and theology has equipped them well to defend traditional liberal education. In many ways, the present century has been a golden
age of Jesuit scholarship. Jesuit historians, like Hugo Rahner, Joseph de Guibert, William Bangert, James Hennesey, and Gerald Fogarty, have made great contributions to the history of their order and of the Church. Jesuit philosophers and theologians, such as Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner, Bernard Lonergan, and Michael Buckley, have reflected on the pluralism of modern culture and the challenge which it presents to the unification of knowledge under the guidance of philosophy and theology, and through their efforts some possible new approaches have been suggested. Jesuits, therefore, are far from unaware of the problems which the rise of atheism, the growth of historical consciousness, and the explosion of scientific knowledge have created for twentieth-century liberal education. Jesuits have thought about them at some depth, and a defense of liberal education drawing on their work could give support to a number of educational values which are under attack today. Indeed, if the defense of Jesuit liberal education were carried out with any skill, secular educators might become more aware of the contribution which a religiously oriented approach to it can make to their own form of liberal education. For, as Jesuits who know their history could point out, the crisis in liberal education today is the end result of a growing conflict between the earlier religious approach to education and an opposition to it which has grown progressively more radical during the past three centuries. In our own day, opposition to the intellectual presuppositions of the old world view has become so radical that even the foundations of secular liberal education, with its roots in the Enlightenment, have been challenged by it.

Jesuit educators have lived through the whole history of that conflict; and, under fire as they have been, they have been forced to reflect on the reasons for their own stand toward education. As heirs to a living tradition, Jesuit educators know whence they have come, why their opponents have attacked them, where they stand today, and the reason why they stand there. Jesuit education has never been a paper theory; it has always been a network of real schools in which Jesuit educators worked often with great self-sacrifice. If then these Jesuit educators can still feel confident of the value of their work, and if they can make a case for it, that should be good news for today's hard-pressed defenders of liberal
education. And certainly, as far as their traditional worldview is concerned, Jesuits see no reason yet to give up that confidence.

The religious faith and the realistic philosophy of the first Jesuits grounded the worldview of their education. European culture has evolved considerably in the past four centuries and Jesuit philosophy and theology have evolved along with them. Through these changes, however, Jesuit philosophers, theologians, and educators have found no reason yet to give up their Christian faith or to abandon their sturdy confidence in human reason. Even today, they still find their conviction that our world has an intelligent creator to be a reasonable opinion; and they still find good reasons to treat all people as human persons endowed with a free and intelligent human nature. For them, as for the earlier Jesuit educators, God’s created world can still make sense, and mankind’s inquiring mind, purifying its knowledge through a constant process of self-correction, can arrive at some understanding of it. Given their view of mankind and nature, Jesuit educators can defend their belief that objective, discoverable norms govern the process of healthy self-development. Literary self-expression need not be reduced to weaving a tapestry of language over a meaningless universe in the fashionable deconstructionist way. Literature, like morality, can still be judged by intelligible norms of meaning, truth, and value, which authentic self-expression cannot ignore. The ideal teacher of their Jesuit tradition can still be defined as the teacher who can recognize these norms, appreciate their value, and then communicate them to students by the way in which he or she teaches them the arts or the sciences.

As far as these Jesuit educators can see, no compelling argument for atheism has yet been mounted; nor has any philosopher been able to prove to them that agnosticism should be taken as the only intellectual approach to revelation acceptable today. Does not religious belief, then, remain as reasonable an approach to education, they might ask, as the unbelief which the radical opponents of liberal education profess today? Determinists have been arguing their case for centuries, but they have not succeeded yet in silencing the defenders of free will. Is it not still reasonable, then, for a Jesuit educator to assume that his or her students are free and capable of responsible self-development?
What convincing evidence has yet been brought forward, they might also ask, to show that their acceptance of a meaningful world is less reasonable than the radical despair of meaning displayed by the radical opponents of liberal education? They see no reason then to believe that the advances made in science or philosophy have undermined the plausibility of their Jesuit ideal of education. A tradition rooted in religious faith, philosophical realism, and respect for the freedom of the will still deserves a respected place in American education. Indeed, even to educators who do not share the early Jesuits’ religious faith, a very good case for the survival of the Jesuit ideal can be made on the basis of its consequences for liberal education. For the Jesuit ideal of education justifies a number of values which educators, of other faiths or of none, believe to be sound and worth preserving. Among these values are the focus of education on the formation of the total person, the ideal of the integration and distinction of the disciplines, the emphasis on personal influence in teaching and the demands which that emphasis places on the teacher, the belief that the work of teaching is a vocation, and not just a job, and the appreciation of the school as a community of personal influence.

The Jesuit ideal of an integrative whole in knowledge as the goal of liberal education, even if we take it today as an asymptote, preserves education from a number of distortions. Faith in the presence in the world of a creating and redeeming God is a protection against a narrow, this-worldly secularism or a despairing resignation to an unintelligible universe. Conviction that the human person has a divine call to wholeness is a defense against a narrow professionalism in education or the tyranny of a single discipline. Interdisciplinary cooperation is neither a sacrilege nor an imposition. Fidelity to an old and coherent tradition frees the educator from slavery to the present or to the immediate future.

Conclusion

Educators in the tradition of Saint Ignatius today are heirs to a long tradition of humanistic education, open to the God of revelation, confident in the soundness of the human mind, respectful of human freedom, and, despite all the difficulties which the
task involves today, still optimistic about the work of integrating human knowledge. The God to whom Ignatius prayed made the world and gave it meaning. The God who made Ignatius' human mind gave it a drive to find that meaning and return to him by finding it. Even if that Jesuit vision is taken only as a hypothesis or a hope, it is an optimistic vision, and a vision whose consequences for education are fruitful.

Educators in the tradition of Saint Ignatius have good reason to respect themselves and the work they do. They are generous men and women, called to the service of their students, of the community around them, and, consciously or not, of God. The service they are called to give is the work of teaching, done as professionally as they can do it. Teaching in the ideal of Ignatius means stimulating self-activity and conveying through personal influence the intellectual and moral values which have become the teacher's own. In the tradition of Saint Ignatius, there is something sacred about the work of teaching; it is a vocation, and a lofty one at that.

If Ignatius' ideal of the teacher is to survive, the faculties of our Jesuit schools and colleges will have to make a conscious effort today to keep it alive and well. One of the greatest obstacles to their doing that may well be the lack of knowledge of the Jesuit tradition which we often find today in Jesuit schools and colleges, including the history of Jesuit education, of its worldview, or of the intellectual presuppositions which have shaped it. Greater knowledge of that tradition would help the teachers in Jesuit institutions to appreciate the distinctive character of Jesuit education and to understand the value of its preservation. With a better understanding of Ignatius' ideal of a teacher and of the contribution which the schools which share it can make to American education, teachers could gain a better sense of a Jesuit faculty's corporate identity and of the pride which they could take in serving on it. At times, their academic decisions might be wiser and more in harmony with the tradition from which their school has come. If that were to happen, the consequences for Jesuit institutions, and for liberal education in general, I am convinced, would be happy; and the future of Saint Ignatius' ideal of a teacher would be more assured. To make some of that knowledge more available, in summary form, has been the aim of this article.
Notes


17. Padberg, Colleges in Controversy 13; McGucken, The Catholic Way in Education, 76, 82; Scaglione, The Liberal Arts and the Jesuit College System, 158.


22. Padberg, Colleges in Controversy, 30, 186.


29. McCool, Jesuits and Education, 93.


38. Ganss, St. Ignatius’ Idea of a Jesuit University, 41.


42. Ganss, St. Ignatius’ Idea of a Jesuit University, 79.

43. Ganss, St. Ignatius’ Idea of a Jesuit University, 194.

44. McCool, Jesuits and Education, 36.
In my twenties I read quite some Chesterton and Belloc. One of Chesterton’s essays, I recall, was titled “On Pigs as Pets.” I reread it before I got too far into this paper, to be sure I was not going to fool myself—or worse, you.

Why am I bringing this up? The title I was given, I submit, involves an interesting logic. In Chesterton’s title, it is assumed that we are familiar enough with both pigs and pets (if probably from different angles) to find the idea of pigs as pets entertaining; still, below the surface the title implies that we understand pets better than pigs, and so, that the burden of proof is on Mr. Chesterton; he will have to show that pigs, unbeknownst to us, make fine (or at least acceptable) pets. Thus, the logic of the title is predicated on the assumption that we know about pets, and that it is up to the author to show us that there is a lot more to pigs than we know.

“Teaching as Vocation” is the title I was given, and my first job is to caution you: the logic I just described does not apply. Why not? “In my experience”—a much-overrated claim I promise not to repeat—the noun “vocation” is imprecise in the extreme. At the age of six I wanted to be a priest. I quickly learned this meant I “had a vocation”—a fact I did not always wish to remember when I was sixteen. By the time I was in my twenties, Catholics, encouraged by Popes Pius XI and XII, were saying that
lay Catholics had a vocation, too, especially the married. The problem is, of course, that if everybody has a vocation nobody does; and in regard to marriage, many of us eventually realize that it is not so much a vocation as a widespread convention, nowadays competing with divorce; the only vocation I can see in marriage (and I confess I stand in awe of it) is for this particular person to stay married to this other particular person. Finally, being a frequent visitor to Southwest Wisconsin, I know that Southwest Technical College in Fennimore is best known locally as “the Vocational School”—“VoTech” for short. It reminds us that in many walks of ordinary life “having a vocation” simply means knowing one’s trade.

I conclude that the word “vocation” is unlikely to enlighten us on teaching as vital to the Catholic intellectual tradition, which is what I have been asked to clarify. So let us start elsewhere.

Learning and Teaching: Their Origin in the Desert of the Nations

The words “teaching,” “learning,” “imitating,” and “portraying,” along with their cognates occur in the New Testament with striking frequency—not to mention words of related semantic significance, like “witness,” “read,” and “write.” Yet in this regard the New Testament is far outdone by the literature produced by later Judaism. Between the second and twelfth centuries, the substance of the Jewish life of faith gradually came to consist in the development of commentary on the Talmud and of observance of Halakah. Jews lived by the Talmud and an array of laws and rituals celebrating God’s Shekinah—God’s Holy Presence (originally dwelling outside the camp) accompanying his people wherever they were dispersed. Jews memorialized the twists and turns of Jewish history, the blessings and disasters that had befallen the Jews since the Temple was ruined in the year 70 C.E. In this, the rabbinate functioned as a (very flexible) magisterium.

All this is all the more surprising as we notice how rare words like “teaching,” “learning,” “imitating,” and “portraying” are in the older Hebrew Scriptures, especially the Pentateuch, Joshua,
and Judges. It is true, teaching does appear in Deuteronomy and
gets genuine attention in the prophetic literature, early, classical,
and exilic. It occurs with some frequency in the late-exilic and
post-exilic prophets; it comes into its own in early wisdom
literature and in some later Psalms, to become the chief theme
only in the apocryphal wisdom literature, much of it originally
composed in Greek.9 This affinity between the Christian and the
late-Jewish Scriptures invites examination. Just what gave rise to
the Jewish talent for learning, teaching, and professional and
intellectual tradition-building, right down to our own day?

The answer is not far to seek: it was in the Assyrian-
Babylonian exile that Jews first learned how to make a home abroad,10 how to “sing to God in the teeth of the idols,”11 how to
marvel at, and wonder about, the whole wide world, how to think
and pray in universalist terms—i.e., eschatologically. In this way,
Jews came to appreciate learning, and so, teaching. As the Bible
conveys the story, this was an extremely slow process; literacy
never comes fast, neither does faith in the One True God—our
own God indeed, yet by the same token the God of each and
every creature, at the expense of none of them.

Abram was a stay-at-home, “a wandering Aramean,”12 a
nomad on the edge of the desert, until he heard the Living God’s
Word, believed, and became Abraham, the patriarch animated by
faith and the promise of plenty. Six centuries later, it was all of
Israel’s turn to be uprooted from Egypt’s fertile soil at the orders
of Moses, “God’s friend.”13 Again, they heard the Word; in the
desert, they became a true nation—God’s. And not till it was
deracinated once again and lost in “the desert of the nations”14 did
Israel—or what was left of it—become the chosen people in
diaspora, with a matchless Torah—God’s own Living Wisdom,
the Eternal Blueprint for Creation—to guide them in a world wide
desert.15 In this way, so the author of the Letter to the Hebrews
points out (well aware that the Temple was now the dead center
of a heap of ruins), the Jews were slowly preparing us Christians
for “the assurance of things unseen.”16 True believers have no
homeland to fall back on;17 habits of wayfaring keep us on the
way to the City of God; all we do is keep a record—“road
markings”18—to recall the sites where we learned our lessons,
usually by suffering and thus coming to true life. Humanity's forced journey out of Eden will go on till the Heavenly Jerusalem comes down to meet us and takes us in. The Bible is a prophetic travelogue—a guide away from a garden gone to seed forever and toward God, who "has built a city for them." Was it not outside the glorious but ensconced city that Jesus became "the pioneer of faith and its fulfillment"? Prophets are not heard in their birthplaces; witnesses must testify to what others more familiar with the locale have overlooked or failed to hear, and so, find hard to believe. We Christians are essentially God's people in transition, and transients must be quick studies, inquirers both inquisitive and discerning, appreciative guests, hard to discourage, slow to take offense, and ready to relate and participate. Diaspora Jews have grasped this for centuries: squatters remain outsiders, even when treated, to quote Daniel Patrick Moynihan, with "benign neglect"; in fact, they have demonstrated this for close to two millennia and a half, even if their thirst for a homeland never wholly died down, as we know only too well today.

In this particular regard, Christians have been different from most Jews, ever since the New Testament. Never since the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles were composed have we viewed dispersal among the nations as a curse; we have always (or at least most of the time) considered it a blessing and indeed, a mission.

In light of this, there is no need to explain that in the history of dogma, the sixteenth-century maxim cuius regio illius et religio was a huge setback—one far worse than the establishment drawn up by Constantine in the fourth century and sealed by Justinian in the sixth. Thank heavens, the Roman empire had soft boundaries from the start. Early, and even high medieval Europe, "unquiet souls" and all, was still a well-functioning sounding board. The Desert Fathers were read in the monasteries at the mouth of the Rhône and in the churches further up the valley, the Mediterranean, even if ridden by pirates, was as yet more of a marketplace than a war theater; rulers and bishops had scholarly representatives at the court of the Caliph at Cordoba; Francis of Assisi could visit the Sultan and preach to him. In this fashion, the Christian West learned to associate faith with literacy. Its earliest
schooling had come from Augustine’s *City of God*, of course, with its brilliant counterpoint of Scripture and the classics. In its wake, a fifth-century polymath like Orosius (a native of Braga in what is now Portugal) clearly thought that theology, geography, and world history made perfectly good company between the covers of one huge work, *Historia adversus Paganos*. In ninth-century Lower Saxony, Walafrid Strabo (“the Squinter”), undeterred by terrible eyesight, wrote voluminously on every subject.

There was no “no-man’s” land between sacred and profane writing; religious poetry and the (pagan) courtly love tradition could learn and even borrow from each other—both idioms and melodies. The *Carmina burana* may be irreverent, but they obviously belong to the same cultural world as the Bible, not unlike the indelicate hints at Saint Joseph’s delicate predicament in some medieval Christmas plays. This is the Europe where John Scottus Eriugena wrote his wide-ranging experiment in fundamental theology *Periphyseon*, where Fulbert introduced Aristotle’s logical writings at the School of Chartres as early as the late tenth century, and where Alan of Lille, another polymath—poet, theologian, and preacher all rolled into one—taught first in Paris and then in Montpellier, only to end up an old monk at Cîteaux. In this cloud of witnesses we also have Peter Lombard, “the Master of the Sentences,” who introduced the Latin West to John of Damascus’ *Fount of Wisdom*, and thus, kept the Greek Fathers alive in the West until well into the seventeenth century, when the Benedictine Maurini made a fresh start, along with Richard Simon (1638–1712), the first modern, critical reader of the Scriptures. Andrew of Saint-Victor learned Hebrew and the Talmud from learned Jewish Rabbis in a Paris yeshiva; Hadewijch of Antwerp could treat her women friends to letters of spiritual direction in an elegant vernacular, betraying a deep familiarity with both the catholic tradition and the systemic injustice being done to notable women by men of rank in the Church; in London, Geoffrey Chaucer could lament Petrarch’s recent death, and the most gifted of them all, Dante Alighieri, could base his *Divina Commedia* on both Scripture and classical mythology, obviously regarding the two as fonts of equal illuminative power.
to interpret current morals and politics—both secular and ecclesiastical—on the Italian peninsula. If these people were anything at all, they were Catholics: they recognized food for faithful thought and thoughtful faith wherever it occurred.

Almost a century after Dante, Chaucer was to sum up the idea behind this marriage of faith and literacy by ending an animal fable like this:

But ye that holden this tale a follye,
As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
Taketh the moralite, goode men.
For Seint Poul seith that al that writen is,
To our doctrine it is ywrite, ywis;
Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaff be stille.
Now goode God, if that it be thy wille,
As seith my lord, so make us alle goode men.
And brynge us to his heighe blisse. Amen.

No wonder the cathedral and abbey schools and the universities are the creation of the Middle Ages. No wonder two noble pagans, Plato and Aristotle—the former a contemplative canonized by Plotinus and baptized by Augustine, the latter a metaphysician with an astonishing eye for detail embraced and unfolded by Aquinas—could become their guiding lights.

Let me interrupt myself. In giving these examples of the synthetic forces at work in the Middle Ages, I have no wish to keep alive the nineteenth-century Ultramontanist myth that the Middle Ages were Catholicism at its best. Yet I do wish to show how what lies at the root of what we know as the tradition of Catholic education was a thin, very fragile network of plucky Catholic institutions that fostered Catholic talent steeped in culture and tradition sacred and profane in the broadest sense of the word.

This _habitus_ was firmly rooted in the early Church. In second-century Rome, Justin Martyr treated the classics of his day in the same way. Born a pagan in Nablus on what is now the West Bank, he became a seeker who finally found the “true philosophy” in Ephesus—a key Christian hub from the late first
century onward. Eventually he settled in Rome—a theological tutor, orator, and author. In his first *Apologetics*, he professes with startling clarity how, by virtue of the wisdom Christians have gained from the knowledge of Christ, they have the ability to discern vestiges of the divine Logos, “of whom all humanity has received a share.” Examples are the wisdom of “Socrates and Heraclitus among the Greeks, and others like them,” and among the foreigners “Abraham, Elijah, Ananias, Azarias, Misael, and many others.” In his next *Apologetics* he makes the same point. After appreciatively mentioning “Plato, . . . Stoics, both poets and prose writers,” he ends on a confessional, explicitly Christian-philosophic note, by stating that “the seed and pattern of a reality is given according to a person’s capacity, and that is one thing. But the reality itself is something else: sharing in it and portraying it are bestowed according to his [= the Logos] grace.” What is this “reality”? I propose it is the sense of high, unowed privilege, which encourages Christians to interpret humanity and the world and respond to them in the light of God. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen come to mind. The latter two left rural Cappadocia to go to Athens. Students at the Platonic Academy, they became close (if never quite compatible) friends. Later on Gregory put the theme of their companionship in a nutshell:

This I considered part of training in philosophy:
Not to be seen working hard for a first-rate life,
But to be, rather than be seen to be, God’s friend.

My point must be plain by now: in the Great Tradition of the undivided Church, the love of God, faith, eschatology, catholicity, discerning love of this universe-in-process and this humanity for the sake of the God who makes them so, mobility, hospitality, and the cultivation of learning are sheep of the same wool. 

Dissociation of Sensibility
and Differentiated Consciousness

Let us move on before I lose myself any further. If there is one century that has had a huge impact on learning and
teaching—one I wish to urge you both to admire and to pick a bone with—it is the sixteenth. In my opinion, its first four decades invite comparisons with the forty years that we have just behind us.

A few moments ago, I alluded unfavorably to the sixteenth-century maxim cuius regio illius et religio. In my judgment, the phenomenon of the state church is only one of the many varieties of an interest that became all-powerful in the course of the sixteenth century: a mistaken confidence in definition. Is not the practice of religion within assured political boundaries analogous to reducing Christian doctrine to certified propositions? Late medieval nominalistic scholasticism had conspired with secular humanism to drive its worry about the nature of verbal and nominal reference to the point where precision-by-dint-of-subtle-but-unreal-distinction had prevailed over reasonable understanding; exact truths had become more prominent than Truth. My venerable friend Giuseppe Rambaldi, S.J., at the Gregorian University in Rome, now in his nineties but alive and thinking, puts it as follows: they forgot that we need not verità (truths) but verità vere (true truths). How could late-medieval Christendom expect to dissect its faith in ways that Erasmus and Luther were to find repulsive without eventually cutting itself to bits as well? In doing so, it was beginning to force itself to settle, eventually, for the umbrella-word “Christianity.”46 By the mid-seventeenth century, the question “Which is the true Church?” had become the nightmare of the West.47

The unity of Christians had become an abstract, non-incarnate universal named “Christianity.” “Church” conveyed institutionalized division and a world of religious war, invective, and argument, serving no purpose but to “tire the truth.”48 In this standoff, forces bent on control took over. Forced judgment was set to oust true judgment; authoritative magisterium—whether of the local, puritanical vestry kind or the prelatical, papist variety—put itself on a par with Scripture. No wonder this inaugurated the disintegration of the university, a development already foreseen and dreaded by Jean Gerson (1363-1429).

Before I go any further, let me hasten to assure you that I have no wish to disparage the early sixteenth century’s uncommon fertility: the great European vernaculars (jealous of Italian, as it
were) came into their own, finding themselves capable of prose—I mean, prose not only of the narrative and expository kinds (hitherto dominated by Latin) but of the reflective kind as well. Much of the latter built on medieval ascetical and mystical writings in the vernacular, and on Latin philosophic classics like Seneca and Cicero. Added to this, we must mention the unprecedented early sixteenth-century aptitude for matters of consciousness, self-consciousness, and conscientiousness; in many ways, the word “I” developed a meaning unknown before, with the possible exception of Petrarch, who had died in 1374. “I” came to signify the conscious, self-conscious, self-moving, searching, striving self, what Maurice Blondel was to call le sujet.

What we mean nowadays when we say “authentic” was first experienced in the years between 1490 and 1540. Luther, Calvin, Ignatius Loyola are as unthinkable without it as Henry VIII, Charles V, and Francis I. So are Erasmus’ highly personalized Enchiridion and the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola—the latter neither a thinker nor a writer but a voluminous correspondent, as well as a mystic with a “way with people.” Erasmus and Ignatius were mentors, teachers of how to discern and decide personally.

But there is a cloud to every silver lining. Contemporary historians now consider the late fifteen-twenties a historic turning-point. To them, it looks as if the outburst of creative energy associated with the new humanism, the spurt toward reform of the Church, the rise of the merchant class and the modern sovereign state, the mobility toward the big cities on the part of the new entrepreneurial trading-and-banking class all over Europe, the opportunities for international trade as well as colonial expansion occasioned by the discovery of the earth’s actual rotundity (and the navigational skills and the mappemondes needed to make the most of it) and perhaps more than anything else, the development of the printing press—all these excitements appear to also have struck the movers and the shakers with the prospect of chaos. Control became a watchword; order had to be. In a seminal book with the ominous title Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue, Walter Ong has shown that the period is also marked by a harsh change in educational method: encounter with
persons and things gave way to *analysis* of texts and concepts. In a dazzling passage in a dazzling book, *The Presence of the Word*, Ong writes:

In a world ... taken up with the human or quasihuman ..., impartiality will be the chief form of objectivity. In this world, man's relation even to inanimate nature is imbued with quasihuman relations. Another kind of objectivity does not get involved in human values as such. This objectivity, essential for scientific explanation, becomes possible when one envisions the world as set off from oneself as essentially neuter, uncommitted, and indifferent to the viewer. Study of such a world is felt to be not a response to the world but an operation upon it.

In other words, "objective objectivity" acceded to the throne, but, being still a minor, "method" became its tutor. Everything had to be consistent and fixed in the mind, preferably visually. Cajetan turned Aquinas' thought into a closed system; everything got defined—i.e., locked up in its conceptual "nature"—even humanity itself: our native openness to God and the World began to be overlooked. Philip Melanchthon and his voluble Catholic opponent Melchior Cano assumed that it was imperative to capture Christian orthodoxy in a number of doctrinal exhibits that could be viewed and visited, respectively, in Reformed and Catholic musea full of articles of faith. By writing their respective *loci theologici* they demonstrated it was possible to do just that. Professing one's faith almost became a matter of affixing one's signature to a bill of lading, under oath if necessary.

In this impasse of at least potentially global proportions, the traditional catholic penchant for literacy-*cum*-faith and faith-*cum*-literacy found itself stretched to the point of breaking. This is where Ignatius Loyola came in.

**Jesuit Education at the Dawn of Modernity**

It has been cogently shown that the foundation of Jesuit schools, starting with the college at Messina in 1549 and picking
up at a speed of four or five foundations a year in the next seven years, was not a deliberate, strategic initiative on Ignatius’ part:

What is still surprising . . . is how easily the first Jesuits glided into a decision of this magnitude and how little account they seem to have taken of its manifold impact upon them.  

This is all the more surprising if we recall that before he was thirty-three Ignatius had never gone to school. This implies he had no Latin, the recognized language of instruction in the sixteenth century. He first went to school to learn it in Barcelona, in 1525, when he was thirty-four; he had concluded that if he was serious about his mission to “help people advance spiritually”—ayudar a las almas—education was a must. Still, at a deeper level, education did fit the new world revealed to him at Manresa to a fault. What world? In his Autobiography he says:

Once, out of devotion, he was going to a church which was just over a mile distant from Manresa (I think was called St. Paul), and the road runs close to the river. Thus moving along intent on his devotions, he sat down for a moment with his face towards the river running down below. And as he sat there, the eyes of his understanding began to open. And it was not as if he beheld a vision of some kind, but he saw and understood many things, things spiritual as well as things concerning faith and learning, and this with so great an illumination that all things appeared new to him. And it is impossible to point out the particulars he then understood, although they were many; but he received a great clarity in his understanding, so much so that, it seems to him, in the whole course of his past life right up to his sixty-second year, if he should gather all the helps he has received from God, and everything he has come to understand, even if he should add them all together, he has received not as much as at that one time alone.
The year is 1521. Ignatius, a fine penman but spiritually illiterate, has his first glimpse of what was to become the universe of Jesuit education: “He saw and understood many things, things spiritual as well as things concerning faith and learning, and this with so great an illumination that all things appeared new to him.” Ignatius became a Catholic teacher without benefit of academic literacy; his vision was Catholic; so was his sense of mission. Always a Catholic of the elementary kind, he had inherited integrity of intention and generosity toward the world. To this had been added an all-encompassing, all-suffusing vision of a generous, all-loving, all-enabling God. It guided him to the age-old Catholic meeting-place of faith and literacy: he became a student at the Sorbonne. There he would discover the modus parisiensis: a coherent curriculum, discussion exercises in groups, and the quiet, disciplined theological reasonableness of the devotio moderna, which he had already tasted in Spain.

He arrived in 1528. John Calvin was just finishing up; conceivably, the two just may have met. But a world of difference was to separate the cool assertiveness of Calvin’s Institutes and the generous affect that feeds the no less assertive Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, and their sense of mission.

At the risk of sounding unecumenical, let me suggest a complex of causes for this difference. It would be ludicrous to suggest that the sixteenth-century Reformers had no interest in learning; they did. Luther knew his Bible and his liturgy; Calvin knew his church fathers, his scholastics, and assuredly his Augustine. Yet they did decide, sadly, that (in Melanchthon’s famous phrase) “to know Christ means to know his benefits”; true enough, except they understood this truth restrictively. In this way, soteriology—the doctrine of fallen humanity’s salvation by divine grace in a theologically neutral cosmos—became the centerpiece of the Reformation’s Christian faith. Thus, Nature, this immense theater of tangible reasons to praise God, became an appendix to the Christian faith. Never did the pursuit of Christian humanism cut itself off from humanity’s cosmic matrix in as short-sighted a manner as the Reformation did, alas, under invocation of the Holy Spirit. Luther and Calvin acclaimed the study of the Bible and theology and even renewed it; yet they
insisted that the world, and every form of understanding or managing it, even philosophic contemplation, was theologically irrelevant. This critically impoverished the Christian faith—its flair for theological imagination, its eschatological doxology in liturgical worship, its “mysticism of gladness at the world.”

In his great essay on the Metaphysical Poets, T.S. Eliot has described the “dissociation of sensibility” that gradually transformed the mood of the Christian West in the wake of the extraordinary cultural shifts of the early sixteenth century. Modern humanity came at a price: the cultivation of freedom of initiative, individuality, freedom, literacy, the storage and retrieval of knowledge by means of print (which enabled individual learning and research), and the displacement of traditional authority by free, allegedly purely rational, objective, “scientific” inquiry and discovery caused growing pains in the human area. Christianity suffered from new discordances; unsurprisingly, the polemics between faith and literacy became neuralgic. They still are.

However, it would be a mistake to overlook the liberating aspects of these neuralgic developments: they marvelously stretched the range of potential human learning and human skill, and thus also demonstrated the depth and the breadth of humanity’s capacity for fulfillment. Dissociation of sensibility eventually gave birth to differentiated consciousness—and where would we be without that today? In this sense, through the synthetic humanism of the Jesuit schools, Ignatius ended up affecting catholic intellectuality as much as Ramus did. The catholic tradition in education began to include modern objectivity, by coupling it to the Christian tradition of discerning interest in, and love of, the world; at the same time—and here is a truly novel factor—it began to embrace the cause of socio-political, civic leadership with its gift for modernity and enterprise. With the monarchies still flourishing, often with Jesuit advice (but often without Jesuit consent), the death-knell of the divine right of kings had rung. Jesuits became missionaries, in India, Japan, and the areas we now know as Quebec, New England, New York, Florida, Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay; here, the novelty was that they were also explorers, linguists, and
students of culture, and especially that they wrote home to explain themselves, well aware that their letters were not just going to be filed. They were Catholics: learning and teaching—i.e., receptive and responsive openness to God’s world—was in their blood.76

Catholic Education in America:
Then, Now, and in the Future

In making this point I have quietly taken a giant leap across the Atlantic. In Europe, a merchant breed, self-conscious, conscious of a mission, and set to be educated, had entered the lists. Its mission became international, and eventually global, a development which in the end put this country—yes, these United States—at the center of the globe, along with its “activism, which [gives] great emphasis to science and technology.”77

But if anything has demonstrated the depth of the Catholic instinct in the United States, it is not technology but the startling development of a Catholic school system paralleled nowhere in the world. In my judgment, it is only partly based on the natural immigrant communities’ instinct for self-preservation; after all, Georgetown started in 1798. It is also only partly based on the interesting affinity between American optimism of the apocalyptic kind78 and Catholic humanism of the universalistic kind.79

True, the Catholic identity of our institutions of higher education was too defensive for decades, but in the early ’sixties we did catch up, not in the last place thanks to the G.I. Bill of Rights. Braced by this challenge, American Catholics walked into the educated American mainstream in fifteen years; before World War II, the Catholic lag still looked like a thirty or forty years’ haul. We now know from experience that Catholic identity has been a function of anxious dependence on borderlines; but frankly, we are also witnessing the liability of Catholic identity to uncritical “charismatic” openness.80 Cardinal George’s words “liberal Catholicism is an exhausted project” should give us pause.81 We need to recover both the Catholic mystique of total abandon to God and the Catholic politics of discerning love of the world.82 But we are part of a literate-technological culture addicted to quantification, means, tools, and “info”; we are fairly untutored
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when it comes to quality, ends, understanding, and humane decision-making. Catholic education must cultivate discernment in the midst of a skillful but pretty undiscerning culture.

There are reasons to feel encouraged. It was an event of high symbolic significance when Karl Rahner explained, in a prophetic address first heard in the United States in 1979, at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, how the Catholic Church, universal by dint of faith from the start, had in our lifetime become empirically universal. No less symbolically, fifteen years before, it had been an American pen, wielded by one "Xavier Rynne," that had given the world a vibrant account of the Second Vatican Council as it was taking place.

I submit that these two symbolic events raise the issue of the Catholic intellectual tradition with a vengeance. At this moment in Catholic church history, lack of resolution or suspended animation on the part of Catholic intellectuals would be suicidal. So, Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?

I have two views to offer. They come from a heart and mind shaped by thirty-eight years of the best European pre-judgments, but matured and decisively "modernized" by thirty-two years of study in two Catholic American universities, chiefly by teaching.

Let me start with a neuralgic matter that leads up to a point I wish to make. For us Catholic intellectuals, my friend Garry Wills's recent book, Papal Sin, should be a warning signal. Let me explain. One virtue long claimed by Neo-Protestantism and deism is sincerity. It has bequeathed to our culture an abhorrence of formalism, especially of the Byzantine kind. So, when a thoroughly traditional Catholic intellectual like Wills is irritated enough to take exception to the Vatican culture of systemic insincerity (i.e., the cultivation of diplomacy at the expense of truthfulness and competence), he is doing a very American thing, and one we Catholic intellectuals have to learn how to do as confidently—if also more reasonably and accurately. It is not un-Catholic to decry fudging in high ecclesiastical places. It is time to put "Rome" on notice. If the Enlightenment's claim to sincerity was at least partly hypocritical, it is also true that Roman habits of scoffing at sincerity as indelicate are not a case of Christian virtue. The recent
furor about *Dominus Iesus* may help give us pause. Why should Pope John Paul II have to explain a document that he commissioned (but did not sign) to celebrate the Jubilee, yet which, once published, excelled at alienating both Catholics and non-Catholics? The world of American Catholic intellectuals is entitled to making pertinent representations when Roman practices *de facto* jeopardize the credibility of our Catholic faith by their lack of intellectual integrity. But—and here comes the point I wish to make—how serious (and how generous) are we when we in our turn get to tackle the issue of Catholic identity? Are we still afraid of being accused of parochialism, of being called intolerant? Are we open to the suggestion that we’d rather be too tolerant than be thought of as intolerant? Are we reluctant to embrace a frank catholicity that has discerningly made a demanding peace with North American pluralism—not a peace at cut rates, let alone at any price?

Secondly, in our culture, intellectual integrity as a Catholic virtue implies an intellectual creed that reflects the Great Tradition of Christian love of the world. Let me try one:

The human spirit, natively (if largely unthematically) attuned to the living God, is also attuned to the countless “presences” that surround it in the cosmos—presences to which it must keep itself responsive. Inspired by this basic (and, in the last resort, mystical) intuition, the human spirit has the inner resources to handle the knowledge explosion which it has unleashed in recent centuries, especially in the form of natural and social science. It can face the vehemence and even violence it has discovered, both in the universe and in humanity; it can face even the violence humanity has positively inflicted on itself and the cosmos. As for the proliferation of information so characteristic of modernity, if dubious at times, it need not daunt us; it is even possible to welcome it, provided we take it as an invitation to understand its dynamics—that is, the fierce dynamics of human communication in word and gesture. Given that understanding, we can afford to open ourselves to all that is particular, specialized, curious, strange, far-fetched, and even
barbarous, because (if only we persevere) we will discover that the forces of harmony, integration, and coherence run deeper, both in the universe and in ourselves, than the forces of contention, dissipation, and disintegration; that, finally, all this is within our reach because all that exists finds its unity and reconciliation in God, to whom we are more deeply attuned than we are to the universe or even to ourselves and each other, and who, therefore, is capable of enlightening honest seekers in such a way as to keep them from getting lost.\(^9\)

I must conclude. I think of teaching as a profession, loved by all of us who found, perhaps as early as the first grade, that we belonged to the tiny minority of kids who simply loved school. But in the Catholic tradition, learning and teaching are a matter of mission. So, those of us who have continued to love school had better seek to become unashamedly Catholic—discerningly open to everything in God’s world, heart and soul. For openers, I recommend a rereading of *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. Who knows, we may end up feeling teaching is a vocation after all, perhaps even one to holiness.

Notes

2. For clarity’s sake, here is an example of the same logic. If I were to offer you a paper on Napoleon as a lyrical poet, my assumption would be that all of you know what lyrical poetry is, but that Napoleon’s poetic gifts are a well-kept secret. Again, the logic of the title rests on the assumption that we all know about lyricism (an unsafe assumption these days: as more professors talk about poetry, they seem to read less of it). In any case, the charm of the title lies in its promise to teach us that there is more to Napoleon than we think we know.

3. Years ago, Hans-Georg Gadamer told me in a conversation he was convinced that *Erfahrung* was “one of the least clarified sources of authority of our day” (*einer der am mindesten aufgeklärte Begriffe der Gegenwart*). On the subject, see George P. Schnier’s interesting essay “The Appeal to Experience,” in *Theological Studies* 53 (1992): 40–59.

5. Let me put together a rough-and-ready, entirely impressionistic checklist. “To teach”: Matthew 14x [that is, 14 times]; Mark 17x; Luke 16x; John 10x; Acts 16x; Pauline corpus 15x. “Teacher”: Matthew 12x; Mark 12x; Luke 16x; John 8x; Acts 1x; Pauline corpus 7x. “Teaching”: Matthew 4x; Mark 6x; Luke 1x; John 3x; Acts 4x; Pauline corpus 25x. “To learn”: Matthew 3x; Mark 1x; John 2x; Acts 1x; Pauline corpus. “Learner, disciple”: Matthew 71x; Mark 45x; Luke 37x; John 33x; Acts 28x. “Make disciple(s)”: Matthew 3x; Acts 1x. “To remind”; reflexive “to remember, recall”: Matthew 3x; Luke 4x; John 4x; Acts 2x; Pauline corpus 2x. “To imitate, imitator”: Pauline corpus 7x; Hebrews 2x. “To read”: Matthew 7x; Mark 4x; Luke 3x; John 1x; Acts 8x; Pauline corpus 8x; Revelation 1x. “To write” (but excluding “it is written”): Matthew 1x; Mark 3x, referring to Moses; Luke 11x; John 13x; Acts 5x; Pauline corpus 27x; 1 John 13x; 1 + 2 John 5x; Revelation 28x.

6. Š'kinah is related to maššín, which means “tent” and specifically, esp. in Exodus, the Tent of Meeting. The root škn means “inhabit, dwell.” The Greek word for “tent” is skn; coincidentally, the Greek and Hebrew roots have the three consonants s-k-n in common, which makes it attractive to hypothesize that “dwell among us” (John 1:14) is a pun, hinting that the Logos, or divine Wisdom, came to “tent” among us, just as the Š'kinah “tented” with Israel in the desert. This hypothesis is corroborated by a phrase in the Book of Tobit, which was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic (Tobit 13, 11c LVV): “so that his tent may be rebuilt for you with joy,” an obvious reference to the Temple. Is this the reason why Paul’s two chief images of the Christian community are “Temple” and “Body” (cf. also John 2:19), conveying what we call “Community” and “Incarnation”?

7. See Exodus 33:7-8. In the same way, the Jerusalem temple overlooks the Old City of David; see Hebrews 13, 13.

8. As the experience of defeat made God’s closeness to Israel (and hence, God’s Lordship over history) very questionable, God’s transcendent glory began to look more and more like mere impenetrability and remoteness. But rabbinical Judaism resisted the temptation to choose between the two—that is, it refused to let the forbidding riddle of God’s ways push it into a denial of God’s intimate presence. Israel’s faith-tradition prohibits the playing off of God’s transcendence against God’s presence, the glory against the tenderness, the
awe against the intimacy. In insisting that God was now sharing Israel's suffering, the rabbis also pointedly refused to teach that faithfulness to Israel made it incumbent upon God to abandon the divine mercy and crush the powers that be with a decisive show of power. Instead, they patiently taught that the great disaster of God's apparent absence, while a most severe test of faith, was the decisive sign of God's favor in the midst of a world estranged from God. That is, God was the same God as the God who had looked down on Israel in Egypt: God was once again the God of the poor and the downtrodden. Note that a modern Jewish author, Zvi Kolitz, in his short story Yossel Rakover's Appeal to God, shows the same depth of theological insight in his interpretation of the religious meaning of the Holocaust. See F.J. van Beeck, Loving the Torah More than God? (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1989), 13-28.

9. Here is a rough-and-ready count of the LXX, as listed in Hatch and Redpath's concordance. “To teach”: Deuteronomy 9x; Judges 1x; 2 Samuel 2x; Hosea 1x; Isaiah 3x; Jeremiah 7x; Ezzekiel 1x; 1 + 2 Chronicles 5x; Esdr + Nehemiah 7x; Job 14x; Psalms 22x; Proverbs 7x; Ecclesiastes 1x; Song of Solomon 1x; Wisdom 4x; Sirach 7x. “Teacher”: LXX 2x. “Teaching”: Psalms 1x; Proverbs 1x; Sirach 2x; Isaiah 1x. “To learn”: Exodus 1x; Deuteronomy 7x; Isaiah 9x; Jeremiah 4; Psalms 4x; Proverbs 4x; Wisdom 4x; Sirach 5x. “Learner, disciple,” “make disciple(s)” : not in LXX. “To remind”; reflexive “to remember, recall”: Genesis 11x; Exodus 4x; Leviticus 4x; Numbers 3x; Deuteronomy 15x; Isaiah 21x; Jeremiah 11x; Ezekiel 15x; Esdras + Nehemiah 14x; Tobit 10x; Job 8x; Psalms 48x; Sirach 27x; 1 + 2 Maccabees 13x. “To imitate, imitator”: Psalms 1x; Wisdom 2x. “To read”: Heptateuch 5x; 2 Kings 6x; Isaiah 3x; Jeremiah + Baruch 19x; Daniel 6x; Esdr + Nehemiah 13x; Job 1x; Sirach. “To write”: Exodus 9x; Numbers 2x; Deuteronomy 21x; Joshua 7x; Judg 1x; Samuel + Kings 49x; Isaiah 8x; Jeremiah + Baruch 23x; Ezekiel 7x; Daniel 17x; 1-2 Maccabees 39x; Chronicles 29x; Esdras + Nehemiah 44x; Tobit 5x.


12. Deuteronomy 26:5.

13. Exodus 33:11. On this theme, Emmanuel Lévinas writes: “The oneness of [God's] Name means the oneness of the language and the Scriptures and the institutions. It implies the end of naïveté and rootedness. The Church remains faithful to a deep-seated Jewish impulse when it seeks the religious emancipation of humanity by (as Simone Weil
complains) 'imposing the Jewish Scriptures everywhere.' All speech means being uprooted. Every rational institution means being uprooted. The establishment of a genuine society is a form of being uprooted—it marks the end of an existence where 'being at home' is an absolute, where everything comes from inside. Paganism means rootedness, almost in the etymological sense of the term. The arrival of writing/scripture means, not the spirit being subordinated to a letter, but the letter replacing the soil. In the letter, the spirit is free; in the root, it is tied down. It is on the arid soil of the desert, where nothing holds, that the true spirit descended into a text, so as to seek a universal fulfillment." "Simone Weil contre la Bible," in Difficile liberté: Essais sur le judaïsme, 2nd ed. (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), 178–88, quotation at 183.

15. Cf. Proverbs 8, 22–9, 6; Sirach 24, 1–12.
21. Hebrews 11:16b. Incidentally, this is why it is fair to say, especially after over two centuries of historical-critical study of the Bible, that the Scriptures as we have them are the record of the history of their own interpretation.
24. I have tried to argue that Jews and Catholic Christians have a taste for civilization in common, in Loving the Torah More than God?: Towards a Catholic Appreciation of Judaism (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1989, esp. 67–83.
26. I found this broad characterization of the Middle Ages nicely supported by Willemien Otten. See her "The Role of Theology in the Third Millennium: Views from the Perspective of Medieval Christianity," in In Quest of Humanity in a Globalizing World: Dutch Contributions to the Jubilee of the Universities in Rome 2000 (Leende, Netherlands: Damon, 2000), 321–38.
32. Aquinas' *Summa theologicae* (arguably the stroke of genius that ended up cutting the Latin West off from the Greek Fathers) did not displace Lombard's *Sentences* until the sixteenth century, when Sylvester of Ferrara and especially Thomas Vio "Cajetan" turned the *Summa* into a coherent system.
35. By contrast, we moderns classify books: literary, philosophical, theological, spiritual, geographic, historical, and what have you; Dante and Chaucer viewed the written word as such as part of Christian formation.
36. While the instances where the authority of the Christian faith was really contested, therefore, were few and far between, they were nonetheless real. In the case of the extravagant, brilliant thirteenth-century Emperor Frederick II, the claim to have transcended Christianity (which earned him a reputation for atheism, among many other things) may have been mainly a matter of swagger. But there are good reasons to think that the medieval Church had to deal with undercurrents of sophisticated critique, in a variety of quarters. Leaving aside the numerous instances of proletarian, rural anti-clericalism (see Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, rev. ed. [New York: Oxford University Press, 1970], 19–126), there was the philosophical daring at the universities, the creative independence found in literary circles, and the increasing claims to secular authority voiced among the merchant class stimulated free thought not always compatible with Christian orthodoxy. In philosophy, there were tendencies toward Averroism and rationalism, sometimes feebly defended by means of the theory—frequently attributed to Siger of Brabant, Aquinas’ colleague and adversary in Paris—that there exist two
independent realms of truth, reason and faith. A good deal of medieval literature, including some religious literature, owed more to pagan philosophy than to faith. It is also hard to imagine that there was nothing serious behind the aesthetic charm—often merely elegant, sometimes delightfully naughty—with which many medieval and early Renaissance authors proposed not a few pagan ideas which, if seriously entertained, would be quite offensive; for example, the courtly love tradition. Petrarch, Chaucer, and Boccaccio come to mind; even Dante has not escaped suspicion (see E.L. Fortin, Dissidence et philosophie au Moyen Age: Dante et ses antécédents, Cahiers d'études médiévales, 6 [Paris: J. Vrin, 1981]). The advice of the humanist Clelio Calcagnini, “speak with the many, think with the few,” was widely taken long before it was formulated. At least for the record, therefore, it must be noted that real dissent, all the more careful for having to be cautious, was far from unknown in the otherwise very Catholic Middle Ages.

37. The Nun’s Priest’s Tale (3438-46), in The Canterbury Tales; the reference is to Romans 15:6. The priest winds up the fable of Chauntecleer and Pertelote by telling his listeners not to stop at the bare story, its sensus historicus, but to draw the moral lesson from it. Elsewhere, Chaucer, speaking in his own behalf, turns the end of The Parson’s Tale into a little homily to entreat his readers, on the authority of the same Pauline text, to believe in his good intentions and so, to put a favorable construction on his writings, even where they find them morally objectionable (1080-85).

38. Peter Raedts has argued that nineteenth-century Ultramontanist ideology succeeded in reforming the Catholic Church in the image of a medieval culture that never existed. See “De christelijke middeleeuwen als mythe: Ontstaan en gebruik van een constructie uit de negentiende eeuw” (with a summary in English) Tijdschrift voor Theologie 30 (1990): 146-80.


40. From Gk. Neapolis, the Shechem of the patriarchs.

41. Apol. I, 46, 2-4; Goodspeed, 58-59; FC 6, 83-84 (Bettenson, 5). I long wondered why Heraclitus shows up in Justin’s enumeration until I found the substantial florilegium of (alleged) Heraclitus quotations in Hippolytus’ Philosophumena, bk. 9 (Refutatio omnium haeresium [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986], 341-78) The find was occasioned by Hans-Georg Gadamer’s fine essay “Zur Überlieferung Heraklits,” in Der Anfang des Wissens (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1999). Gadamer grants that one fragment in Hippolytus (IX, 11, 348, ll. 56-59), taken as we have it, has to be the fruit of Christian adaptation. Hermann Diels, too, had
come to this conclusion; accordingly, the fragment is absent from *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1951), 139–90). Still, Gadamer argues that this particular fragment is crystallized around a typically Heraclitean philosophical aphorism, for which he submits, by way of hypothesis: “One is justly called father when one has become son of oneself”—meaning that father and son are father and son only by virtue of being relative to each other, so that only by having a son is a father made (note the passive voice) father. In context, Hippolytus is controveting Noetus; he is a heretic, since he appeals to Heraclitus to deny that the Son is truly Son of the Father.

42. *Apol.* II, 13, 3–6; Goodspeed, 88–89. This understanding is reminiscent of the Gregory of Nyssa’s insistence that although we are naturally equipped to see God, the actual vision is a gracious gift; in fact, only the gift awakens us to the awareness of our natural ability. For a good example of this, see the sixth of his *Homilies on the Beatitudes*, in *The Lord’s Prayer: The Beatitudes* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1954), 143–53. *The Cloud of Unknowing* (ch. 34) gives a similar account of this idea: “The nature of this activity is such that its presence makes a soul able to possess it and to experience it. And that ability is not available to any soul apart from it [the activity]. The ability to perform this activity is united with the activity itself, inseparably; hence, whoever experiences this activity is able to perform it, and no one else—so much so that apart from this activity a soul is, as it were, dead, and unable to crave it or desire it. For as much as you will it and desire it, so much you have of it—no more and no less; and yet it is neither will nor desire, but something you-know-not-what, that stirs you to will and desire you-know-not-what.”

43. Basil was resolute, became the father of Eastern monasticism, but equally resolutely took the See of Caesarea. Gregory, forever torn between a desire for contemplation and his sense of duty, ended up resenting Basil’s stratagems on his behalf, which eventually got him to the Patriarchal See of Constantinople. After a few months he panicked and fled.


47. Cf. John Donne, Sonnet xviii:
Show me, dear Christ, thy spouse, so bright and clear.
What, is it she, which on the other shore
Goes richly painted? or which rob'd and tore
Laments and mourns in Germany and here?
Sleeps she a thousand, then peeps up one year?
Is she self truth and errs? now new, now outwore?
Doth she, and did she, and shall she evermore
On one, on seven, or on no hill appear?
Dwells she with us, or like adventuring knights
First travail we to seek and then make love? (ll. 1-10)


49. I am thinking of linguistic pioneers like Aquinas’ slightly older
contemporary Hadewijch of Antwerp (and Jan van Ruusbroec
from Alfred to More and His School (London: Oxford University Press,
1957).

50. Unforgettable in this regard are Leonardo da Vinci, Niccolò
Machiavelli, Francesco Guicciardini, Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros,
Teresa of Avila, Juan of the Cross, Brother Martin Luther and his
splendid Bible, François Rabelais, John Colet, John Lyly, Thomas More
(who wrote a history of Richard III in English, probably in his mid­
30s)—to mention just the more important.

51. See Charles Taylor, Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern
Identity (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), esp. 127–42,
495–521.

52. At this point, I am tempted to drop another raft of names, of
artists this time. Let me just mention one, who incorporates the
subjective mood of the period at its most tortured: Mathias Grünewald,
the painter of the masterpiece known as the Isenheimer Altar (1515;
Colmar, France).

53. His formula is forma agendi cum hominibus eosdemque tractandi
(Constitutiones Societatis Iesu, P. X, 3 [814]).

54. In comparison with Erasmus and Ignatius, famous fourteenth- and
fifteenth-century works on the discernment of spirits such as those by
“Henry of Hessia” (i.e., Heinrich Heinbuche von Langenstein,
1325–1397) and De discretione et examinatione spirituum (in Doctoris
ecclesiasticus Dionysii Cartusiani opera minora, vol. 8 [Opera Omnia, vol. 40
(Tournai: Cartusia S.M. de Pratis, 1911), 261–319] by “Denis the
Carthusian” (i.e., Denys van Leeuwen, alias Denys Ryckel, 1402/3–1471)
are cumbersome and arid.


60. They were also referred to as *theatra*: “viewing places.” In modern English we still say “operating-theater.”

61. Interestingly, the *professio fidei tridentina* (DS 1862–1870) is one of only two sixteenth- and seventeenth-century professions of faith that open with the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed (albeit with the *filioque* addition). Only the (Lutheran) *Book of Concord* (1580) features the three creeds properly so called—the Apostles’, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan, and the Athanasian—before featuring the early (1527–39) Lutheran consensus documents and the *Formula Concordiae* (1577). In all the professions of faith of the various scions of the Reformation, the creeds are marginalized to the point of disappearance. Instead, their truth is now predicated on the “articles” of faith, sometimes with the addition of a phrase like “since they can be proved from Scripture.” It is fair to say, therefore, that the (baptismal, and thus, liturgical) creed was implicitly supplanted by “articles of faith,” even in the Catholic Church, insofar as the catechism (as against the liturgy) became the ordinary tool for religious instruction, and where only the clergy were obliged to attest to their orthodoxy by a formal acceptance of the *professio fidei tridentina*. An example of the effect of this development is the title of John H. Leith’s useful *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader of Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*, 3rd ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982). In this title, “creed” means any profession of Christian faith. The problem is that, as E.J. Bicknell rightly points out, “Articles are primarily ‘tests for teachers.’ They set a limit to official teaching. Creeds are for teachers and learners alike.” See his classic *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England*, 3rd ed. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1955), 19.

63. Alternative expression: aprovechar a las animas.


66. This qualification characterizes not only the definitive edition of the Institutes (1559), but also the very first, written when Calvin was a mere twenty-seven years old, and published in 1536.


68. Here is the full text: “But as for one who is ignorant of the other fundamentals, namely, ‘The Power of Sin,’ ‘The Law,’ and ‘Grace,’ I do not see how I can call him a Christian. For from these things Christ is known, since to know Christ means to know his benefits, and not, as they [i.e., the Scholastics] teach, to reflect upon his natures and the modes of his incarnation. . . . In his letter to the Romans, when he was writing a compendium of Christian doctrine, did Paul philosophize about the mysteries of the Trinity, the mode of incarnation, or active and passive creation? No! But what does he discuss? He takes up the law, sin, grace, fundamentals on which the knowledge of Christ exclusively rests.” See Loci communes von 1521, ed. Hans Engelland, in Melanchthons Werke, vol. 2, ed. Robert Stupperich (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1952), 3-163, quoted at 21-22 (italics added for emphasis).

69. See F.J. van Beeck, God Encountered: A Contemporary Catholic Systematic Theology, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, [1997]), §20, 2. It might be added that Neo-Protestantism was to end up treating the cosmos as morally indifferent as well, Immanuel Kant being the supreme example.

70. It could perhaps be argued that here lies the root of the failure to remain professedly Christian on the part of those North American institutions of higher learning that were started under Protestant auspices.


73. In the sense of wissenschaftlich, “scholarly.”

74. For an eloquent as well as competent autobiographical witness to this, see Guy Consolmagno, Brother Astronomer: Adventures of a Vatican Scientist (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000).

76. A splendid yet by no means uncharacteristic monument to this practice is The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791; the Original French, Latin, and Italian: Texts, with English Translations and Notes, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: Burrows Bros., 1896–1901).


78. The clearest indication to the fact that North American Protestantism has always been different from classical European Protestantism is the inclination to theological gloom of the latter and the moral optimism of the former. Total depravity may have been taught and even professed this side of the Atlantic, but it hardly ever made its mark on the soul.

79. On this theme, see two revealing articles by Thomas E. Wangler: “The Birth of Americanism: ‘Westward the Apocalyptic Candlestick,’ ” Harvard Theological Review 65 (1972): 415–436; and “American Catholic Expansionism: 1886–1894,” Harvard Theological Review 75 (1982): 371–393. Needless to say, “Americanism” was a negative European-Catholic construction put on an America which to established European Catholicism looked implausible as well as heretical; obviously, the many immigrants who were moving here to work for a living thought otherwise. Most puzzlingly to Europeans, Americans claimed that being American was positively compatible with being a Catholic. The reason behind it was that the U.S. were politically allied neither with Europe’s Enlightenment anti-Catholic liberalism nor with modern anti-Christian socialism.


81. See www.commonwealmagazine.org. The soon-to-be Cardinal Francis George gave a homily at Chicago’s Old Saint Patrick’s Church on January 17, 1998. It included the phrase “liberal Catholicism is an exhausted project.” Cardinal George agreed to explain what he meant, which he did at a Commonweal Forum held on Wednesday, October 6, 1999 at Loyola University Chicago. The Forum was subsequently published in Commonweal. In my judgment, it is of high relevance to the present conference.


86. This is a translation of the title of a painting by Paul Gauguin in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts: *D’ou venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?* The present reference means to convey contrast, not affinity, for the painting conveys a sultry atmosphere, and what chiefly contributes to this is the near-oppressive ambiguity of the scene and everything in it. It is impossible to tell the direction of the light, let alone the time of day; the age of the figures is hard to determine; it is even harder to determine what (if anything) they are doing. Most remarkably, the difference between men and women is hard to tell. Indeterminacy reigns supreme. The painting is neither sad nor happy. It makes one wonder, and wonder without much hope for a resolution.

87. One of the more salient being that there is really no such thing as popular art, or even popular culture.


90. See *L’Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, October 4, 2000, 1, 12.

Father van Beeck’s remarkable paper demonstrates from history under what conditions Catholic intellectual life can flourish, and hints at the end to some internal conditions under which it can most certainly not flourish.

Teaching as a vocation was a concept accepted as meaningful by such great Christian thinkers as Paul of Tarsus, Origen of Alexandria, Thomas Aquinas, Ignatius of Loyola, not to mention a great multitude of founders and foundresses of teaching congregations in modern times. Vocation in the Christian context is in the first place the calling to follow Christ in discipleship, a calling that is common to all of us by virtue of our baptism. That this vocation belongs to all the baptized does not diminish its meaning for each of us. Further, within that general shared calling, each of us is called to some specific task related to the coming reign of God. As Paul expresses it in I Corinthians, chapter 12, we are called according to the gifts we are given to be apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, and so forth. That some are called to be apostles does not take away the vocation and dignity of those who are called to be teachers or healers. It is in the complementarity of gifts and tasks that fullness of the presence of the risen Christ in the world is realized. This is a matter of calling, of vocation. That is surely not a problematic claim. It would be extraordinarily unfortunate if the shaping of awareness, alertness, knowledge, and attitudes of the future generations of
young people were not seen as Christian vocation. What, after all, is closer to the building of the church, the work of the redemption, the reaching towards the Reign of God in the world than the passing on of the heritage and the formation of the People of God of the future?

The vocation of teaching in the Christian tradition begins with the rather extraordinary Hebrew way of initiating young people into their tradition. That context of narrative and celebration, of festival and pilgrimage, of blessings and prayers, of customs and patterns of life, of family observances and synagogue gatherings must have shaped Jesus. To be a teacher of tradition, of wisdom, of the good and godly life, was and is a highly esteemed calling, vocation, in the Hebraic tradition. The title of rabbi is one of the ways that the disciples expressed their understanding of Jesus' own vocation and mission. He is presented as the teacher \textit{par excellence}, never as ruler or commander, and never as priest, except in the Letter to the Hebrews, which turns the prior notion of priesthood upside down. His vocation is presented as that of teacher. Even in his death he is above all the teacher. Moreover, the gospels and the early tradition are at pains to tell us much about Jesus' own way of teaching, based on the tradition he inherited but internalized and reflected so that it has become essentially his own. He models in himself what he asks of his disciples: to be like a householder who is able to bring from his storehouse both old and new riches. Jesus' own way of teaching, his adult education project in his public ministry, for such it was, is recognizable today as consciousness raising, liberating, challenging his listeners to trust their own experience, to reflect critically on their own experience. Always the great literature and learning of the Hebrew tradition is in the background, but he cuts to the heart of the issues past the sophistry. This surely is also what he expects of his followers, whose vocation is first discipleship, that is to say, learning from the master teacher, and secondly teaching, that is to say the sharing of the fruits of learning and experience contemplated.

Our rich tradition of teaching as a vocation includes in the second Christian century the wonderful Greek apologists with their critiques and syntheses of wisdom traditions in the pagan and
Hebrew worlds. But our tradition of teaching includes also, from the second century on, a catechetical and theological tradition from Irenaeus to Origen to Augustine. These were great thinkers for whom no aspect of their Christian lives was more important than their vocation of teaching. When they engaged in scholarship it was so as to share the gifts of wisdom and insight, certainly not to gain eminence for themselves as scholars or Fathers of the Church. That was merely a byproduct of their principal aim to clarify the meaning of our faith, hope, and way of life for others. From Irenaeus, who shaped the salvation-history pattern of handing on the faith and theologizing about it, to Clement and Origen, who brought Scripture and philosophy together in a new way of organizing theological thought, to the great catechetical and mystagogical works of the fourth century, and the magnificent syntheses in philosophical and doctrinal theology of Augustine, the focus of the Church has been on the vocation of teaching.

In the medieval era we have not only the great scholastic debates and architectonic constructions, directed to the inner circle of privileged scholars, and becoming by the early fourteenth century quite obscure and effete. We have also the monastic tradition of lectio divina. In addition to the benefits of this tradition for individuals, it produced a great copying and treasuring of manuscripts. This copying, compiling, maintaining, and cherishing of manuscripts was surely all with the intent of sharing and passing on, in other words, as a project of teaching. In this aspect of medieval scholarship and teaching, we should not forget that women, while excluded from the cathedral schools, from the studia generalia, and from the subsequent universities, were very much engaged in the monastic tradition, with its educational combination of prayer, work, and study. We have some extraordinary testimonies about this, for instance from Hildegard of Bingen, who in our times has suddenly been remembered and brought out of relative obscurity among scholars.

Even the great scholastics bear significant testimony to the Christian vocation of teaching. Among other developments, they invented schools where large numbers of people were taught simultaneously in a certain progression of subject matter. When we notice the extent to which the early mendicant friars,
especially Franciscans and Dominicans in the first fervor of their congregations, became involved in the schools, it is clear that they saw this involvement as a matter of Christian vocation. Our greatest, best known, and most quoted scholar of this time, Thomas Aquinas, tells us of his concern with the scholar’s vocation of teaching. In the introduction to his Summa Theologica, we learn that when he arrived in Paris he was distressed and indignant because the scholars there were having so much fun, arguing with one another, that they were ignoring the students. They were throwing the students into the middle of the scholastic argument where they could not possibly get a foothold because they had not heard what the debate had been about before. And that motivated this very great work of Aquinas.

By the time of the Reformation, Ignatius of Loyola found that Paris was still carrying on the tradition of Thomas in that respect. Loyola had found in his studies in Spain that they were still playing the games and not paying attention to the students while Paris was the place where they had a decent curriculum and held their professors to it. In the same way Ignatius and his early followers in their turn recognized teaching as a sublime vocation to which the very best minds and the most competent people could justly devote themselves after discerning what for them might be the magis of their service to Christ and the Church. So much has this been recognized by the Church in modern times that devoting oneself to the education of the young has even at times become part of the formula of vows in which the response to vocation is expressed. Even among the practices and exhortations of the Reformers, Catholics can find inspirational examples of the Christian vocation of teaching. In the Catholic post-Tridentine community the recognition of teaching as a vocation flourished in the emergence of a multitude of vowed congregations of women and of men for whom teaching was the central apostolate of their calling. It became evermore evident that education, not only in the faith but in secular fields, was the key to refinement of conscience and responsibility, the hope of the poor and despised for a more fully human existence, and the means of engaging the privileged in concern and action for the common good. Education was clearly the basic need for a peaceful and just
society and for the cultivation of civility and mutual consideration.

In the contemporary Western industrialized world, however, teaching is not greatly respected. It is common knowledge that our future professors coming out of the graduate schools define themselves by expertise on some topic on which they can publish—in which they can be noted by fellow scholars. It is only a few of the liberal arts four-year colleges that doggedly value and promote the importance of teaching. There are a number of reasons for that. We have all blamed the graduate schools; we have also blamed the Germans for the research university model. But why has it invaded our college corridors so badly? Is it perhaps that even among us who call ourselves Christian, money, power, and prestige are the dominant operational values? Could that be the reason that while the religious congregations were the dominant presence in Catholic colleges and universities, teaching was honored as a worthy way to spend one’s time and energies? And can it be that with the diminished numbers of religious and the greater number of professors trained in the graduate schools of the great state universities, the values connected with the Christian sense of vocation have slipped into more secular ways of thinking?

There is an interesting, additional factor that is troubling us. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, there has been tremendous enthusiasm for social transformation—direct social action. Highly qualified people have fled the classrooms to go into direct social action. In many ways, it was good, since we had not been present in those places. But in the process, we did forget that the best strategy, the best instrumentality for social transformation, is the way we teach younger people. One of the reasons that we forgot that has a lot to do with the last historical part of Father van Beeck’s paper. One of the reasons we forgot the immense intrinsic value of teaching is that the understanding and practice of teaching and schooling had become so restricted.

There is a distinction to be made between teaching as a generic term and education in the full sense of the word. One can teach people to drive a car, to read a map, to operate a machine. Education, however, is the drawing forth of human potential in
a far deeper sense, and Christian education is the drawing forth of the Christian potential that is in the baptized people, the children, the adolescents, the young adults, the mature adults whom we are educating in our colleges and universities. It is also true that education and schooling are not the same thing, that education happens in very many ways, beyond schooling. But at least we ought to be focusing the schools on really educating and not only teaching in some much more restricted sense. This, surely, is integral to the Christian vocation in our times when personal discernment and responsibility needs to be redeemed from mass culture and media domination, when the sense of human community needs to be redeemed from defensive factions and rampant competition for the world’s wealth and power, and when human values need to be redeemed from the idolatry of the dollar sign.

At the conclusion of this response to Father van Beeck’s paper, I offer words of wisdom from four key wisdom figures of our world. The first is Moses Maimonides, who said the following in answer to the question whether converts to Judaism were on the same footing with born and raised Jews: Of course, he said, when people convert to the Jewish tradition, we have to put them on a footing of equality with the rest of us. But they are really never on a footing of equality because those who have been born and raised in the devoutly observant Jewish community feel God like the ground under their feet. That is applicable to Catholic tradition also when it is fully lived, and it indicates what Catholic education has the potential to be.

The second word of wisdom is from philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, who said that the heart of the meaning of the dance is in the dancing of it. And only in some secondary sense, by bridges of imagination and empathy, does one enjoy the dancing of somebody else on the stage in a great ballet, because one can, so to speak, cross on a bridge of empathy from personal experience into the experience of the dancer. This suggests much about Catholic tradition, with its iconography, its literature, its saints, its festivals offering a basis for education and drawing forth from people both their human potential and their Christian potential.

A third word of wisdom is not by, but about the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the Hassidic tradition of Judaism in Eastern
Europe. When he was alive, his way of teaching his disciples was to take them apart into a place in the forest. They would light a fire, they would initiate very slowly the wordless songs of the Hassidim, the meditative, mystical singing, and they would dance, slowly, solemnly, establishing a rhythm, establishing quiet and so on, and in the context of that, they would learn sublime mysteries. Unfortunately, the story says, when the Baal Shem Tov died, at first we went and built the fire and sang and danced. After a while we no longer danced, then again after a while we no longer sang, and presently we no long built the fire, and after that we forgot the place in the forest. I hope that in our schools, in our colleges, we are going to be working on real education and that we are not going to forget these things.

The fourth word of wisdom is from the Dalai Lama. It was relayed to me second hand, and perhaps it is not, therefore, exactly his vocabulary. Someone had asked him, what is the source of knowledge of the truth. And he said that the source is experience—honed, fully enhanced, and grasped experience. But he said, it is also logical deduction if it leads to such experience, and it is also authority if it leads to that kind of logical deduction which in turn leads to such experience.
It is a great privilege for me to be part of this discussion of the vocation of teaching. I am awed and moved by the presentations at this conference that have preceded mine, and in some sense, I feel like the caboose on the train.

Since my preparation for this experience has been a salutary one, I want to thank especially President Cernera for his invitation. I first met Tony when he was with Bread for the World. He has spent the intervening years in higher education, where he has fed thousands of men and women with the intellectual and spiritual bread that so many yearn for today. In a very real sense, his life exemplifies an unswerving commitment to education and to the Catholic intellectual tradition.

The vocation of teaching is, first of all, a mystery. It is a little like falling in love, an attraction for something: in this case, a profession that one cannot fully understand and explain. I yielded to the attraction in the midst of my undergraduate years at Fordham University when I decided to prepare for teaching rather than social work. I would like to say that the decision occurred in a dramatic moment, but I cannot. Instead, I came to teaching through a gradual turning in the direction where my heart, and I dare say, God was leading me. That turning point took place many, many years ago. Since then, I have taught in a variety of settings and situations, which include religious instruction to children and adolescents, homebound instruction for the disabled,
elementary and secondary school education, in-service workshops for teachers here and abroad, English as a second language in Mexico and Thailand, workshops for inmates in Sing Sing prison, and most important, higher education for over thirty years. The teaching profession has provided me with varied experiences, always new and challenging opportunities in which to stretch and to grow.

During my tenure in higher education, the vocation of teaching has been marked by profound changes. Many transformations in education reflect the changes from the modern to a postmodern world. When I first came to the College of New Rochelle in 1961, teaching was primarily a search for the truth, some of which I thought I possessed as a result of my many years of preparation and experience. My primary task was to impart knowledge, help students in their search for truth, and in particular, provide my teacher education students with the intellectual foundation and framework for their teaching careers. Now the experience of the students and the part they play in their own education have assumed greater importance in my teaching. Education for me has become much more student-centered. The focus is on the outcomes of teaching as much as on the content and delivery of instruction. What are the students learning in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes? And, how will the students demonstrate what they have learned? These are questions heard from many sides.

My Ursuline experience in the Catholic faith tradition stressed the education of the whole person, the dignity of each individual, knowledge enlightened by faith, and a social consciousness based on justice and peace. These realizations were and still are fundamental to my teaching practices, and they certainly were reinforced by the Catholic intellectual tradition that I found at the College of New Rochelle in the early 1960s. Today, my students are more diverse in nationality, race, academic preparation, and ethnic backgrounds. And the majority of students, faculty, and administrators are no longer Catholic.

A general acknowledgment of the importance of knowledge enlightened by faith on the part of the college community as a whole is at best elusive. The human landscape of the campus has
undergone a radical change that is especially challenging to the Catholic intellectual tradition. Given these cultural and religious differences, the temptation is to suppress the Catholic intellectual tradition rather than to explore, with faculty and students, the richness of each tradition and to value and appreciate what each brings to the multicultural and ecumenical world in which we find ourselves. My colleagues and I encourage students to get in touch with their own traditions, to share them and learn about their neighbors' background. Through this educational process, they develop a sense of pride, discover commonalities, and gain an appreciation and openness towards others.

When asked to describe a multicultural experience that had prepared her to teach in a multicultural classroom, one of my African-American Hispanic students wrote that before coming to college, the only cultures she was exposed to were African-American and Hispanic. It was then that she wrote, 'and I quote, "I met many people who came from all across the country and even from different countries. At first, I was not open to meeting new people and learning new things. After freshman orientation week, I had already met three people whom I knew nothing about: one person from Michigan, one who was born in Lebanon, and one from Florida. Each person had a personality much like mine. This opened my mind to new people. Being a part of the College of New Rochelle community has opened my eyes and taught me things I never realized existed."

Our teacher education programs in particular emphasize community service. Students in the introductory courses are expected to perform service in an educational setting in or outside of a school. They are asked to reflect on their interactions with, and teaching of, children and adolescents, and to draw from the experiences implications for their future as classroom teachers. These assignments bring a sense of realism to the process of teacher education and enable the students to test their own interest and fitness for the teaching profession.

Moral education is a special topic in two of the education courses I teach. Students research the topic on the Internet, discuss case studies involving moral decision-making and write about the moral education they received at home, school, church, and
community. It is a question that brings to the surface many strong opinions and ideals, that they hold for future generations. In the course of their professional preparation, education students develop and state their personal philosophy of education in terms of the goals of education, the roles of teacher and students, the teaching/learning process, and the learning environment. Some of their ideas are derived from the study of outstanding philosophers of education, but a good number of their ideas evolve from their personal history and practice in the classroom. Now, we might say that multicultural education, community service, moral education, and a personal philosophy of education are not particularly Catholic with a capital C, yet each is consistent with what is most basic to the tradition, especially as it evolved in the Twentieth Century.

The Vatican II Declaration on Christian Education of October 28, 1965, notes the following:

Among the various organs of education, the school is of outstanding importance. In nurturing the intellectual faculties, which is its special mission, it develops a capacity for sound judgment and introduces the students to the cultural heritage bequeathed to them by former generations. It fosters a sense of values and prepares them for professional life. By providing for friendly contact, between pupils of different characters and backgrounds, it encourages mutual understanding. Splendid therefore, and of the highest importance, is the vocation of those who help parents in carrying out their duties and act in the name of the community by undertaking a teaching career. This vocation requires special qualities of mind and heart and most careful preparation and a constant readiness to accept new ideas and to adapt the old.¹

Influenced by the Declaration on Christian Education, events following the Second Vatican Council, and movements in the secular society, many Catholic educators have shifted their thinking about schools as institutions to schools as communities. By creating a sense of community in the classroom and school, we
as teachers can provide a supportive and caring learning environment for students whose lives are often troubled by disruptive home conditions and societal pressures. The Church’s document, *To Teach as Jesus Did*, issued in 1972, identified this community as one in which

one person’s problem is everyone’s problem, and one person’s victory is everyone’s victory. . . . Community is at the heart of Christian education not simply as a concept to be taught but as a reality to be lived. Through education, men must be moved to build community in all areas of life; they can do it best if they have learned the meaning of community by experiencing it. Formed by this experience, they are better able to build community in their families, their places of work, their neighborhoods, their nation, their world.²

Since our global society is becoming more and more diverse in terms of nationality, race and educational background, customs, and religion, there is an ever-growing need to create learning environments that give students a feeling of self-worth and belonging. A caring school environment may be compared to that of a family, where each person is loved, nurtured, and given the freedom to be all that he or she is capable of becoming. The bonds that bind us together in a school community, as elsewhere, are a set of shared ideas and ideals. These are formed over time through relationships among those who make up the school. From time to time, these connections and relationships are ritualized and sanctified in practices rich in meaning and significance. Eventually, as Sergiovani points out, schools become “communities of relationship, of place, of mind and of memory.”³

The vocation of teaching in the twenty-first century invites me to a life-long or a long-term energetic commitment to the human development of each college student, who at times can appear as a stranger, in her cool speech, manner, likes, appearance, and lifestyle. I am summoned to trust her desire and capacity to learn, even when she shows a lack of interest in her studies, absents herself from class, or is late in submitting assignments. My
daily recommitment as a teacher calls for new enthusiasm, energy, and expressions of love for my subject and my students.

A second quality I need in living out the vocation of teaching is reflection on the students’ experience and on my own. In retrospect, the roles and responsibilities of a teacher seemed much clearer and well-defined in the past than they do today. Students’ lives and ours were more stable and predictable. The content of the curriculum changed, but not so rapidly as it does today. Each year, I ask a group of my students who have been out in the field to describe a metaphor for the school they have been visiting. This has proven to be an interesting and rewarding activity for them and it has also prompted me to think of a metaphor for teaching.

My current metaphor for the vocation of teaching is that of a postmodern circus with acrobats only. There are no animals, no safety nets. This high-tech circus from Montreal, Canada, is called the Cirque du Soleil. It made its first appearance in New York City in 1995. The performers are described as incredibly strong, graceful, and nimble. They tumble and fly in the air without nets or trapezes. The most frequently used prop is a thick rope that hangs from a moving track on the ceiling from which an acrobat swings, spins, and ties himself up in knots. The performances are daring and amazing at the same time. The vocation of teaching is somewhat like this, especially in the context of the Catholic intellectual tradition. Many of the familiar characters and acts are gone. The traditional props are removed, uncertainty is in the air. As the producer states in a program note, the Cirque du Soleil highlights our frailties and our anguish in the face of the new millennium.

Two months ago, university professors and administrators from around the world met in Rome, Italy, to explore the theme, “The University for a New Humanism.” In the course of his remarks to the assembly, Pope John Paul II commended university professors for their reaffirmation of the need for a university culture which is genuinely humanistic. He went on to say, “The humanism which we desire advocates a vision of society centered on the human person and his inalienable rights, on the values of peace and justice, on a correct relationship between individuals, society, and the state, and on the logic of solidarity and
subsidiarity. It is a humanism capable of giving a soul to economic progress itself so that it may be directed to the promotion of each individual and of the whole person.”

John Paul’s challenge, I believe, is realistic and feasible. It is one that inspires me to renew my commitment to the vocation of teaching while discerning its potential to strengthen the relationship between knowledge and faith, the human and the divine, in a spirit of courage and hope.

Notes


In his wide-ranging and insightful survey of the Catholic tradition of teaching and learning, Father van Beeck has given us a lot to think about. Although I agree with a good deal of what he has said, I would like to make a few additions to his presentation focused more on faith and reason than on faith and learning. Before doing that, however, it might be well to review what I consider some of the main points in Father van Beeck’s remarkable presentation.

Through the first millennium of undivided Christianity, in the works of a small band of believers, thoroughly at home in the world in which they lived, a Catholic culture, universal in its scope, religious and profane in its content, came into being. The inspiration for that culture was the Christian conviction that the Word of God had manifested himself to human reflection not only as the redeeming source of supernatural grace but also as the exemplary cause of the created natural world. Fallen reason was not considered incapable of recognizing God’s glory in his creation as theologians in the tradition of the Reformation would later claim. The Word of God, by his natural and supernatural influence, was also believed to enlighten the thinking and the believing mind. Christians therefore were able to feel at home with the culture of their world. Creation’s natural intelligibility and the created wisdom of the world’s inhabitants, coming as both
did from God himself, were able to bring into being a culture hospitable to the reflections of an inquiring faith. Furthermore, the tranquil, open, welcoming faith of its first centuries could draw upon the unified culture of a still undivided Church, and, for the early part of the first millennium at least, could draw on the wisdom of a still undivided Empire. Enduring classics on Christian education, inspired by that early comprehensive vision of an as yet undivided world of grace and nature, such as Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, have come down to us from that time.

Unfortunately, as Father van Beeck and I both believe, in a later period of Christian history, due to the influence of medieval nominalism, that earlier all-embracing comprehensive vision of Christian truth (singular) was narrowed in its scope by an emphasis on clear definitions as the norm of truth (truths). When nominalism and Augustinianism came together, as they did in Luther, the Reformation exaltation of faith under grace and the distrust of fallen reason led to a separated world of faith from the world of natural reason. The unified culture of a unified Church was no longer possible, and the educational consequences of the consequent narrowing of Christian faith would make themselves evident in the history of modern Europe.

Once Western Christianity was divided by the Reformation controversial theology became the principal weapon employed in the acrimonious disputes between the divided churches. Clear propositional definition could then establish itself as the criterion of religious peace was finally established by the secular powers of Europe, the temporal princes of the continent replaced the Church as the authority which determined the religious faith of their subjects. The religious norm of Westphalia, *cujus regio ejus religio*, then added exterior social control to propositional definition as the communal guarantee of religious truth. The age of the state church had come. Controlled by the secular governments of Catholic and Protestant Europe the state church was the most powerful influence in religious life during the century and a half between the Treaty of Westphalia and the French Revolution. During the *ancien régime* of the seventeenth and eighteenth century absolute monarchs, the papacy progressively lost its power and influence. European governments rather than the Church
appointed bishops, controlled the universities, and by an increasingly ruthless use of the royal *exsequatur*, made it extremely difficult for external definition of religious truth. The comprehensive universality of *truth*, characteristic of the early centuries of the Church, had been narrowed into propositional definition and into a restrictive multiplicity of confessional state approved *truths*. In the age of the absolute monarchies of the *ancien régime*, first the interior freedom of individual Catholic scholars, and, toward the end of the *ancien régime*, even of the pope and of religious orders, was hemmed in by exterior state control. Under these conditions it was hard for the older Catholic tradition of teaching and learning to survive.

More happily, with the Renaissance and the Reformation came a stress on the subject whose philosophical and religious value would later be recognized. Less happily for religion, Protestant distrust of human reason made the objective world of human experience an alien universe, a world no longer open to the subjective inner light of faith. It was easy for an alien universe like that to transform itself during the seventeenth century into a mechanical world of science and philosophy, a world whose only meaning was the meaning imposed on it by human manipulation. Such, for example, was the world of Francis Bacon. As we recall, the unified culture of the first millennium came from faith’s reflection on the intrinsic intelligibility of God’s created universe, a universe through which God revealed himself. In the early Christian centuries, that universe was understood through the Greek metaphysics of form and finality. The Reformer’s distrust of reason, already nurtured by nominalism, built a wall between reflecting faith and the natural intelligibility of God’s created universe. Post-Cartesian mathematical philosophy then rejected the metaphysics of form and finality on which the Church of the ancient world and the high Middle Ages had built both its theology and its spirituality. For radical empiricism in the tradition of Francis Bacon, as we know, human reason was no longer the discoverer of the world’s intelligibility. Human reason was the creator of that intelligibility.

By the eighteenth century, faith and reason, subject and object could no longer cooperate, as once they had, in forming the
unified vision of the world typical of classical Christian teaching and learning. The unified view of truth of classical Christian wisdom had dissolved into the distance and disconnected truths of religious and scientific knowledge. In the divided secular and religious intellectual world of modern Europe, propositional truth ruled supreme. Confessional religious truth had become propositional statements, whose content was determined all too often by the theologians and lawyers of the absolute monarchies. And, since science was propositional and deductive, scientific truth was propositional as well. The ideal of European rationalism in both its rationalist and empiricist forms was a deductive system, working down from a set of evident propositional first principles or propositionally describable facts. The unifying role of intuition in the older metaphysics, ethics, speculative, and spiritual theology had been forgotten, with consequences whose destructive nature are becoming evident today. In the Church of the first millennium reason was far from being the deductive propositional reason of seventeenth and eighteenth century science and philosophy. It was Aristotelian, Platonic, or Stoic reason, an intuitive reason, broader, more subtle, and much more capable of unifying the full extent of subjective and objective reality than the narrower, highly restrictive reason which we have inherited from seventeenth-century science and philosophy.

Fortunately for the Catholic tradition of teaching and learning, St. Ignatius of Loyola, whose influence on that tradition has been enormous, was able to avoid the narrowness of mind brought about by truth understood as propositional definition. Why was that so? Father van Beeck believes because the fundamental vision of reality—the one which gave determined the horizon of Ignatius’ world view and, by doing so, gave meaning to the objects contained in it—came to him from his mystical experience at Manresa. That original vision, the result of prayer, rather than of the subsequent instruction received at the universities of Spain and Paris, defined his world. The intuitive unity of his primordial vision of reality helps to account for the Ignatius’ extraordinary power of intellectual synthesis. In working out his own design for Jesuit education, Ignatius was able to combine the humanistic pedagogy of the Brothers of the Common
Life and the revived theology of St. Thomas, both of which he encountered in Paris. Both were joined together in the unified educational theory which we find in the Constitutions of his Order. In the educational initiatives inspired by those Constitutions the early Jesuits, directed by their founder, showed the freedom of a small band of scholars thoroughly at home in the richness and variety of the broad world in which they lived. To that Jesuit freedom and to the synthesizing power of Ignatian spirituality we owe the remarkable educational revolution brought about by the Jesuit colleges in Europe and the spirit of innovative flexibility with which Jesuit missionaries responded to the radically different cultures of the Far East.

I must say that, by and large, I am quite impressed by Father van Beeck’s brilliant overview of the Catholic tradition of teaching and learning. Nonetheless, I would like to make some additions to it on my own responsibility in the hope that those additions may prove helpful. I will make them under the following headings.

Faith and Reason

From the early days of her history the Church has been forced to make use of propositional definitions to defend her authentic faith against teaching which she felt obliged to reject as erroneous. Propositional definitions of the Church’s faith are already found in her early condemnations of heresies, such as Gnosticism. They are also found in the Church’s early Baptismal creeds and, at a later date, in her conciliar definitions. In order to be faithful to her mission, the Church, when her faith is challenged, cannot avoid using propositional statements to distinguishing her authentic teaching from erroneous and heretical beliefs. In every period of Christian history, therefore, definitions have been judged necessary. Thus the unitary truth of the Church’s faith and discrete propositional truths formulating its content are by no means mutually exclusive. Faith’s need of reason for its own defense by definitions is undeniable. Nonetheless, propositional definitions, when called for, should be accurate, appropriate, and not overly restrictive. Furthermore, since propositional statements require the use of concepts, who
can deny the legitimate place for discursive reason in the formulation of the unitary Christian faith? Father van Beeck, I am sure, does not. But the point which I take it that he is making is that, although Christian reason makes use of restrictive propositions, Christian reason cannot be exclusively discursive reason, as reason was all too often taken to be in the climate of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century rationalism. Discursive reason alone will not suffice. The use of intuitive reason is also required for an adequate grasp of reality. Aristotle, of course, was perfectly aware of that. For Aristotle, as we recall, concepts depend on the operation of intuitive *nous* for their original formation and for their subsequent application to reality in the judgment.

Furthermore, as we know, Aristotelian ethics makes use of intuitive reason's intellectual grasp of the singular and its grasp of the broader context of knowledge in making its moral judgments. Reason's restriction to conceptual judgments is a limitation characteristic of modern philosophy, a limitation which modern philosophy inherited from medieval nominalism and whose damaging influence on ethics and philosophy of religion is well known. The older, richer Greek philosophy used by the Christian thinkers in the Church’s early centuries and in the high Middle Ages, was able to make use of Aristotelian intuition in order to control the meaning of its concepts and, through the use of that intuition, the same philosophy could acquire the broader synthetic view of reality required for the proper application of conceptual judgments. Because of that, the older intuitive reason showed an appreciation of analogy in speculative argument which modern philosophy does not possess and manifested a breadth and flexibility in its ethical reasoning which modern philosophy cannot achieve.

It is instructive in this respect to recall that the revival of Catholic speculative theology in the period after Council of Trent and the rebirth of Catholic moral teaching and flowering of the Church’s social philosophy in the twentieth century were associated with the Catholic revival of the epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics of her earlier medieval philosophy. When, therefore, we are asked to discuss the relationship between faith and reason, truth and truths, several important questions must first
be asked. What is the understanding of faith which is governing the discussion? Is it faith in the Catholic or the Reformed understanding of faith? What is the understanding of reason to which the faith under discussion is being opposed? Is that reason the modern discursive, conceptual reason of post-Cartesian philosophy, associated, as post-Cartesian reason all too often has been, with knowledge as a deductive enchainment of discrete objective truths? Or is it the older, richer, more inclusive, intuitive reason known to classical Greece and to the high Middle Ages, a reason open to both subject and object? Unless there is clarity on both those points at the outset, no subsequent discussion will be fruitful. But, if, on the other hand, our understanding of faith and reason is clear and accurate, fideism and rationalism can readily be avoided, and we will not be forced to choose between relativism on one hand and dependence on overly restrictive, uncritically accepted concepts on the other. There will be room for both the unity of truth and the plurality of defined truths in the Catholic tradition of teaching and learning.

The Dominant Role of the State

One of my colleagues at Fordham is accustomed to point out that we should no longer speak of Our Holy Mother, the Church. We are now in the age of our Omnipotent Mother, the State. His comment, I believe, is a remarkably accurate description of the domination by the state of larger areas of human activity which, before the age of absolute monarchies, were still under the control of subordinate civil societies or of the Church. Although the intrusion of the state into these areas of human life did not begin with the Treaty of Westphalia, that treaty, together with the weakening of the papacy and the effective destruction of the Holy Roman Empire which it deliberately brought about, marked the beginning of a new and increasingly secular era in the history of Europe. The Treaty of Westphalia, as we recall, together with its religious norm, *cujus regio ejus religio*, was imposed on a protesting Catholic Church by the secular rulers of Europe. Significantly, the treaty itself was no longer written, as earlier treaties had been, in Latin, the universal language of the Church and undivided
Christendom. It was written in French, the national language of Europe’s dominant secular state. At Westphalia, Europe’s secular monarchies took into their own hands the regulation of Europe’s religious life. In increasing measure, from that time on the civil and canon lawyers of the monarchies, using modern philosophy to frame their legal systems, created, in the interest of those monarchies, a modern ecclesiology, very hostile to the ecclesiology of Vitoria, Bellarmine, and the great scholastic theologians of the post-Tridentine Catholic revival. Under the influence of powerful and ambitious statesmen, like Cardinal Richelieu, the French crown was unrelenting in its efforts to submit the Church, its institutions, and its religious orders to its own rigid control. In this effort, despite the often tense relations between them, the ministers of the crown were given strong theoretical support by the Jansenist and Gallican lawyers and theologians of France, whose hatred of the papacy and of the pope’s supporters among the religious orders was fierce and unremitting.

During the eighteenth century, encouraged by the growth of Enlightenment thought within the Church, the ongoing campaign to make the Church completely subject to the state grew in intensity. Febronian ecclesiology and canon law, which had become dominant in Germany, provided the theoretical justification for the Prince Bishops and the secular rulers of Bavaria and Austria in their own campaign to reduce the Church and its institutions to the status of government departments. Under those conditions it became increasingly difficult for small bands of independent scholars to exercise their Christian apostolate of teaching and learning freely. Father van Beeck and I are both painfully aware of this fact, since this is the period of history in which the papal suppression of the Society of Jesus, to which we both belong, was forced by the pressure of the European monarchies. Absolute European monarchies would no longer tolerate the continuing existence of an international network of schools independent of their control. In the tradition of Catholic teaching and learning the greatest threat to freedom and independent initiative could no longer be claimed to come from the Church. It came instead from an increasingly intrusive and powerful state.
After the French Revolution, in continental Europe, anti-Catholic secular governments did more than attempt to control religion. They endeavored to drive religion from culture and education. Secular universities under rigid state control became the norm in Latin- and German-speaking Europe and, throughout the continent, the influence of governments hostile to the Church over all education notably increased.

In English-speaking countries much greater freedom was given to independent schools, and because of that freedom, particularly in the United States, religiously influenced schools, both Catholic and Protestant, flourished. In a legal and cultural climate strikingly different from the climate of continental Europe, small groups of teachers and scholars were allowed to go about their work without undue interference. The foundations of our system of Catholic education were laid. In the twentieth century, on the other hand, that generous educational freedom was progressively restricted. The increasing involvement of the state in all areas of human life, the dominant role assigned to accrediting agencies, professional associations, and teachers’ unions in determining the content and method of education, together with the power of a court system increasingly hostile to religion over independent schools, has made it more and more difficult for religiously oriented educational institutions to maintain their basic identity. In the recent debate about Ex Corde Ecclesiae, for example, a recurrent objection raised against the practicality of that document was the anticipated refusal of the courts, the professional associations, and the teachers’ unions to permit its implementation in Catholic education. Whatever one’s opinion about Ex Corde Ecclesiae may be, one thing has clearly emerged from the discussions about it. The amount of liberty which our Omnipotent Mother the State and her secular institutions are prepared to concede today to independent bands of teachers in their work of education is very limited. Catholic scholars may be able to appeal to Church authorities with some hope of success. When their appeals are made to secular authorities, governmental and professional, on the other hand, they are much less likely to succeed. This is a reality which Catholic scholars will have to keep in mind. It will tax their ingenuity.
The struggle which Catholic educators waged with the secular states of Europe in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth century was a struggle against a state bureaucracy which endeavored to exclude religious faith from the realm of education in the name of Enlightenment reason. This was the struggle which provoked Maurice Blondel to defend the legitimate place in liberal education in his masterpiece, *L’Action*. Supported by modern philosophy and the nineteenth-century prestige accorded to science, Enlightenment reason was absolutely sure of itself at that time and, even in the realm of philosophy, set itself up as the ruling norm of acceptable religious teaching.

That is why Vatican I was forced to defend the claims of Christian revelation against nineteenth-century reason’s refusal to admit their validity. Today, however, even though the intrusion of the secular state into Catholic education is more pervasive than ever, Enlightenment reason has been largely discredited. The self-evident foundations on whose basis modern philosophy has justified its right to determine the universal norms of knowledge have been undermined by anti-foundational epistemology, and the universal rational grounding claimed for modern Western culture has been denied by the relativism of contemporary postmodern literary and historical theory. John Paul II has observed in *Fides et Ratio* that, unfortunately for Catholic educators, postmodern rejection of Enlightenment reason has not brought our society back to Christian faith. On the contrary, it has supported the popular conviction, more evident in Northern Europe than in America, that the meaning of the world lies beyond the reach of human reason, and that neither human reason nor Christian revelation can possibly provide any credible solutions to life’s most urgent problems. The Catholic tradition of teaching and learning, as we have seen, was born of the endeavor of Christian scholars to find the meaning of God’s created world and of human life through the unified reflection on both by faith and reason. Faith is no longer challenged, as it was in the nineteenth century, by confident rationalist hostility. It is dismissed out of hand, together with reason, by a pervasive indifference to both. In this
changed cultural climate, the challenge to the Christian tradition of faith and reason has become formidable indeed.

**Some Concluding Remarks**

That formidable challenge to our tradition should not lead us to despair of its future. As Father van Beeck has shown, the Catholic tradition of teaching and learning has always been carried on by small bands of teachers and scholars. That was true in the patristic age. It was true in the Middle Ages when the Cathedral School and the University came into being. It was true during the Catholic renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and at the time when Catholic education came back to life again during the nineteenth century. Some of that small band of Catholic pioneers, Ignatius of Loyola and John Henry Newman, for example, made their major contribution on the strategic level of educational strategy. Other pioneers, like Vincent de Paul and John Baptiste de la Salle, did their most creative work on the practical level of tactics by adapting the Catholic education of their time to the specific needs of groups of students which, up to that time, had not been met. Catholic scholars today will have to work hard and creatively on both the more general level of theory and the more concrete level of practical adaptation to changing needs in order to carry on the Catholic tradition of teaching and learning. That is the work which the group of scholars who have met here at Sacred Heart University have been considering at this conference. Small groups of pioneers, as history has shown us, have been able in the past to inspire great movements in Catholic education. Let us hope that our small group may able to be of help in doing something like that.
As we complete this second volume in the series, *Examining the Catholic Intellectual Tradition*, we would like to focus on a theme that has been only partially addressed thus far. The theme is “learning.”

Learning is most often used as a noun, signifying a body of information or some form of content. What did I learn from that lecture, at that conference? What was the learning that emerged from that event in my life? We sometimes speak of another as a person “of real or solid learning.” In this way “learning” is often used synonymously with scholarship, or erudition, or wisdom.

There is much to be learned from the chapters that grace this second volume, for example, and no one who reads the chapters by Frs. Himes or van Beeck would doubt that much learning went into their writing. Their content and style are examples of the kind of integrative learning that underlies the Catholic intellectual tradition at its best; the chapters attest to the value of that “marriage of literacy and faith” about which van Beeck speaks.¹ The holistic and challenging learning that emerges from many of the chapters in this and the first volume allows the attentive reader to experience that “integrative whole in knowledge” alluded to by Fr. McCool in this volume; that is, a dynamic interrelationship of the sacred and profane, of culture and faith.²
This kind of learning implies an appreciation for the treasury and library of authors, secular and religious, who comment on the human situation while maintaining a deep connection to God’s commitment to and love for humanity. Such integrated, holistic learning is a goal of the Catholic intellectual tradition.

However, we would like to focus our reflections here on “learning” used as a verb, signifying a kind of process. Learning may be seen as an active word that suggests the process, energy, and strategies used to assimilate new information and integrate it into a coherent body of knowledge and sense of meaning. How does one learn, as that process is envisioned in the Catholic intellectual tradition? What is distinctive about learning in this tradition? What does it mean to be a learner in this approach?

We would like to focus briefly on the process of learning as we understand it from the perspective of the Catholic intellectual tradition. More precisely, How are new learners and their development nurtured within the Catholic intellectual tradition? What are some implications for undergraduate and graduate education today? We will attempt to reflect on our own experiences of learning within this tradition and, from that experiential reflection, draw out some issues, or themes, or activities that we believe merit consideration.

A Reflection on Experience

We have alluded previously to our common schooling in the Catholic intellectual tradition as undergraduates at Fordham University in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Reflecting back on those days and remembering our graduate studies as well, it is clear that, although the scope and disciplinary context of our studies were different (Tony was a History and Theology double-major; Ollie was an English and Philosophy double-major), there was a kind of “formation” we each encountered that facilitated the learning process. In some ways this formation had formal elements to it; there were clear academic expectations of learners. However, much of what we describe below was also informal; it was part of the intellectual air we breathed and was often transmitted in informal conversations with professors and others who
had the responsibility to pass on an intellectual tradition that was distinctively Catholic.

Our hope is that, in describing our experience at one point in time and at one institution dedicated to transmitting the Catholic intellectual tradition, we will touch on some enduring elements that are common across such institutions. We do not believe that these reflections are simply a ride down memory lane. Rather, we believe that these thoughts may also help to bring to light and underline a topic that is critical for the future of this tradition, namely, How do those who bear the responsibility today nurture the handing on and development of the Catholic intellectual tradition for future generations? Perhaps some reflection on how the authors acquired and nurtured the tradition in our own lives and concrete situations (Tony is a Catholic university administrator; Ollie is a clinical counselor and tenured faculty member at a Catholic university) will yield some learning about how best to pass it on, both to students and to aspiring young scholars and contributors to the tradition.

One note of caution as we proceed: we will be reflecting on our experience of learning within the Catholic intellectual tradition. Clearly, however, not every student in classes with us learned in the same way or learned the same things. The fact that we have both given ourselves to Catholic higher education as professional educators, and are committed to the ongoing development of the Catholic intellectual tradition, is as much a result of temperament and opportunity as it is a testimony to some kind of conscious formation. As van Beeck reminds us all, and we openly confess, we were in that minority of students who "simply loved school." However, this fact itself has some utility in our reflections. We hope to arrive at some suggestions about how to nurture the gift and hard work of learning in the Catholic intellectual tradition for the future. As the reader will see, this means—among other things—assisting those who "simply love school" to become Catholic intellectuals.

Six Common Characteristics

In our personal and shared reflections we have outlined six common characteristics that helped us in assimilating the Catholic
intellectual tradition. We will take some time below to describe these characteristics. From these reflections we will attempt to draw some conclusions about the work of fostering this tradition in the future.

1. Formal learning (e.g., courses, classes, syllabi, instructors, requirements) with exemplary Catholic intellectuals, both clergy and lay

Our experience was similar to many others seeking an education at one of the many U.S. institutions of higher education during the 1960s and 1970s. Students registered for, or were assigned to, specific courses that were constructed to stimulate learning in an orderly fashion. Each course had a syllabus and instructor(s); class sessions were scheduled for specific times; a set of requirements and assignments governed the assessment of each student’s progress. Students had to master the material from introductory courses before being able to benefit from more advanced work. These formal contacts occurred largely in classrooms, or seminar rooms, or in tutorials. There was nothing particularly novel about this.

One element, however, was important as an approach to the Catholic intellectual tradition. It was expected that the student-professor interaction in these formal settings was managed by someone who was an exemplary Catholic intellectual. Care was taken to see that, for the most part, a Catholic professor and scholar, either clergy or lay (or, if non-Catholic, then someone committed to the mission of the institution) was at the center of this educational interaction. At a place such as Fordham at that time, one could assume that at least one or two priests were teaching in most departments; there was also an unspoken assumption (more or less accurate) that the lay faculty were also committed to transmitting a “Catholic” education. In the disciplines we pursued these assumptions were largely true.

Our experience was that, in the context of this formal coursework across a variety of disciplines, faculty regularly made connections between the material being studied and its place within a larger context of intellectual history and religious traditions. This kind of “connected knowing,” and the inherently holistic viewpoint it conveyed, was contagious. One had a sense
of how ideas “hung together.” The approach, woven into lectures and developed in response to students’ questions, taught an integrated vision by example.

Towards the end of our undergraduate careers, we both attended a class in Metaphysics taught by Fr. Gerald McCool, S.J. One day, at about the middle of the semester, a student raised an elementary question about “being,” indicating a sense of bewilderment with the course material. Fr. McCool took a step backward, and then for the next forty minutes spoke without notes about the essence of such a question throughout the history of the West, making connections with a variety of philosophers and pointing out how the question was a fundamental one for theological inquiry as well as philosophy. It was a breathtaking moment. Speaking about it afterwards, we both commented how Fr. McCool’s performance, rooted in such a basic question and given essentially ex tempore, had enlightened us about the material and about the way Catholic intellectuals might approach such ideas.

This is but one example of the value of having exemplars of the Catholic intellectual tradition manage the formal educational process so that it nurtures the kind of learning that is needed.

2. Informal social and intellectual mingling with Catholic intellectuals

Of course, much learning occurs outside the formal classroom setting. Whether the learning continues in discussions, labs, office hours, additional readings, campus events—and now, in e-mail, chatrooms, and “threaded discussions”—the additional learning that comes from informal contact with professors and others can often be significant for conveying the value of an intellectual life and a passion for learning, as well as exemplifying the connections between learning and faith.

For example, many authors and institutions of higher learning are exploring the role of “mentoring” for students’ academic and personal development. As Catholic educators, we might benefit from sustained reflection about the potential role of mentoring within the Catholic intellectual tradition.
Both of us had opportunities to develop such relationships with several Catholic intellectuals during our time at Fordham. Fr. William Richardson, S.J., for example, a world-class scholar in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, would regularly gather for coffee after his class in Phenomenology—at the invitation of a group of students—to engage in lively discussion of that day’s topic. Often the conversation would range more widely, including his own commitment to teaching, scholarship, and an intellectual life as a Catholic and Jesuit. Conversations such as these conveyed a “felt sense” of the Catholic intellectual tradition that has remained with us.

Perhaps experiences such as this one were palpable because of the Jesuit commitment to the cura personalis (care of the person). We think, however, that care for the learner as well as care for what was being learned, are both sides of the coin of successful and dynamic learning that the broader Catholic intellectual tradition seeks to promote. Such a respect for the person and the process of learning provided an environment of healthy competition, challenge, humor, and support along the intellectual journey.

3. Reading and assimilation of representative authors and publications from within the Catholic intellectual tradition and outside of it

Many colleges and universities have struggled with issues around a “core” or “liberal arts” curriculum. As undergraduates, we knew that there were a number of basic courses in writing, English, math, history, social sciences, and physical sciences that were required. This was all part of being a “well-rounded, educated person.” Again, nothing much new here; there was a basic core curriculum that established guidelines for course choices. And, of course, debates around these issues continue today in academe.

What differentiated our collegiate experience was the reality that the liberal arts core at Fordham was expanded to include philosophy and theology as central disciplines. We and our classmates were required to take courses in philosophy and theology, some of it historical, some of it more conceptual. In a Catholic institution this was seen as part of the intellectual
formation of informed lay Catholic leaders. Students, parents, and faculty all understood that this was central to what Fordham and other institutions like it were all about.  

This set of expectations—about familiarity with a wide range of subjects and with the philosophical and theological roots of Catholic faith—was our first introduction into the breadth and depth of the Catholic intellectual tradition and its ongoing dialogue with other traditions and cultures. The history of ideas began to open up for us as we came to understand the questions, literature, and science of other times and places (e.g., sixteenth-century literature and science as well as their relation to philosophical and religious developments).

This “introduction” modeled for us a deeper expectation about the need to stay in touch with the thinking, questions, literature, science, media, theater, art, and history of our own culture, and the need to keep learning from a variety of cultural sources. In these ways we began to understand the need to understand Bach and Beethoven, Plato and Augustine, Bonaventure and Descartes, Ignatius and Benedict, Freud and Winnicott, Rahner and Tillich, Stravinsky and Eliot, Monet and O’Neill, Merton and Heschel, Hippocrates and Einstein, on their own terms and in relation to a developing sense of a human whole.

There were many ways in which such a “human whole” might be formed and integrated. For Ollie, the integrating hub became a theological anthropology, that is, how human beings and their relationship with God are examined within a wealth of cultural sources and are viewed in light of theology and spirituality; for Tony, the integrating point was a sense of history and development, and the relation of social, ecclesial, political action, and the notion of God’s “incarnation” within that history. But always, the integration was a blending of cultural and religious resources, and the effort was to find points of contact between culture and faith, even when the two seemed at odds.

This ongoing dialogue or conversation between culture and faith was seen as central to the Catholic intellectual tradition and we were encouraged to participate actively in the conversation. Today the challenge to participate in this dialogue has received new impetus through the call of John Paul II in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*:
A Catholic university . . . is a primary and privileged place for a fruitful dialogue between the Gospel and culture. . . . Through this dialogue a Catholic university assists the Church, enabling it to come to a better knowledge of diverse cultures, discern their positive and negative aspects, to receive their authentically human contributions and to develop a means by which it can make the faith better understood by the men and women of a particular culture.

A Catholic university must become more attentive to the cultures of the world of today and to the various cultural traditions existing within the church in a way that will promote a continuous and profitable dialogue between the Gospel and modern society.  

4. An environment that inculcates and models the skills and virtues necessary to an intellectual life that is at the same time spiritually rooted

In *To Know As We Are Known*, Parker J. Palmer explores the concept of “wholesight,” a vision of education that unites head, heart, and spirituality. He describes a quest “to find a common focus for my spirit-seeking heart and my knowledge-seeking mind that embraces reality in all its amazing dimensions” (xxiv). This quest is similar to the kind of holistic integrative instinct that is at the center of the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Throughout the book, but especially in a beautiful chapter at the end of the book entitled, “The Spiritual Formation of Teachers” (106-25), he outlines a number of virtues that are essential for, and are the deepening product of, education in wholeness. These are “classic spiritual virtues [that] are epistemological virtues as well” (108). He speaks of “humility” that allows us to “pay attention to the other” (108), that allows the “other” to reveal himself or herself on his or her own terms, that gives us an openness to experience as well as criticism, that creates a space of silent wonder in which we can “withhold the instant answer so the question can really be heard” (108-09). Clearly, deep research as well as spiritual maturity requires this virtue.
He describes the virtue of “reverence without idolatry,” which respects the greater community of truth and its ultimate source and does not overly exalt or give ultimacy to one’s own circle or experience. This virtue allows one to give reverence to the community of nature and humanity as well as to the full majesty of its transcendent source, not just to one conception of that source. Fr. Himes’s essay earlier in the present volume contains a long meditation on this virtue when he discusses God’s inexhaustible mystery.¹⁰

Palmer also speaks of “openness to grace” as a guiding virtue in both intellectual and spiritual development (112-15). This openness creates a space within which new and fresh ideas, bold questions, and a willingness to play with different and imaginative formulations all become part of the learning process. And he describes a “capacity for hospitality and empathy,” which allows us to find ways “to re-search the world by occupying the other’s viewpoint” (116), to study and learn from the inside, to learn that knowing and the research on which it is built is ultimately an act of relationship, of love. These virtues of hospitality and empathy also build toward another essential ingredient of learning and spirituality, namely “reliance on community.” Fr. Himes speaks eloquently of the need for this in his essay.¹¹

In this connection, Palmer also describes the virtue of “obedience to truth.” In fact, woven throughout To Know As We Are Known is this central concept of obedience to truth. Here “obedience” signifies “to listen with a discerning ear and respond faithfully to the personal implications of what one has heard” (89). This demands real dialogue, community, collaboration, and friendship, inviting students and other learners into relationship with a given subject and with each other, not as competitors but as full partners (103-05).

At Fordham we were privileged to experience professors who often—not always and not always perfectly, but often—embodied these virtues. Whether in classrooms or in informal discussions, we were taught to approach our learning in these ways—humbly, reverently, collaboratively, with openness and a welcoming attitude toward new discoveries, and with discerning eyes and ears—and we saw our mentors and professors approach their
subjects in these ways as well. Palmer's words toward the end of his fine chapter might well be said of those educators we encountered:

The original and authentic meaning of the word "professor" is "one who professes a faith." The true professor is not one who controls facts and theories and techniques. The true professor is one who affirms a transcendent center of truth, a center that lies beyond our contriving, that enters history through the lives of those who profess it and brings us into community with each other and the world. If professors are to create a space in which obedience to truth is practiced, we must become "professors" again. 12

5. Encouragement to develop and nurture a prayerful spiritual life, while also engaged in the building of an intellectual life

A number of the Jesuit faculty and administrators who guided our intellectual development were also available for spiritual conversation and direction, and we were encouraged to take advantage of this unique opportunity. Spiritual development here was understood to include a commitment to personal and communal prayer, liturgy, and spiritual reading. Reading the works of the great spiritual writers (e.g., Benedict, Ignatius, Bonaventure) was encouraged, along with the inclusion of more contemporary writers such as Merton and Leclerq.

Spiritual development was seen as an essential element in the formation of a truly Catholic perspective that would suffuse and orient our intellectual development. 13 The two were understood to complement one another in forming that holistic, integrative perspective that was the goal of learning in the Catholic intellectual tradition. In particular, prayer and Eucharist would facilitate and nourish the inclusion of a God-centered perspective into the developing worldview we were establishing. They would allow us to glimpse the inter-connectedness of things with their Source, and to understand the connectedness of persons with their Creator and Redeemer Lord. Palmer describes well this role for prayer, particularly as it accompanies intellectual development:
What do I mean by prayer? I mean the practice of relatedness. On one side, prayer is our capacity to enter into that vast community of life in which self and other, human and non-human, visible and invisible, are intricately intertwined. While my senses discriminate and my mind dissects, my prayer acknowledges and re-creates the unity of life. In prayer, I no longer set myself apart from others and the world, manipulating them to suit my needs. Instead, I reach for relationship, allow myself to feel the tuggings of mutuality and accountability, take my place in community by knowing the transcendent center that connects it all.

On the other side, prayer means opening myself to the fact that as I reach for that connecting center, the center is reaching for me. As I move toward the heart of reality, reality is moving toward my heart. As I recollect the unity of life, life is recollecting me in my original wholeness. In prayer, I not only address the love at the core of all things; I listen as that love addresses me, calling me out of isolation and self-centeredness into community and compassion. In prayer, I begin to realize that I not only know but am known.¹⁴

We have both come to understand how essential this kind of spiritual development is for the full development of the Catholic intellectual tradition. Fr. Himes’s essay speaks eloquently about the need for deep reflection on the faith, hope, and love that both “ground” the Catholic intellectual tradition and uniquely challenge its development today and into the future. If these are the “three basic attitudes” establishing humanity in a right relationship with God, as Himes states, then they are also essential in rooting and orienting the development of the Catholic intellectual tradition. The nourishment of these “attitudes” can only happen in a life rooted in prayer and worship. Prayer at its depth reminds us that our primary commitment is not to a “tradition,” or to a set of propositions, or even to a “holistic worldview” however well imagined, but ultimately to the One who upholds all. It is the ongoing relationship with God in prayer that assists the development of a fully Catholic intellectual tradition, at both
the individual and institutional levels, and that enables one to face
the contemporary challenges that Himes outlines.

6. Encouragement to develop and nurture a lifestyle engaged with the
challenges of the times, and the hope that both learning and prayer
would be brought to bear in reflection on these engagements

Over the last several years, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.,
Superior General of the Society of Jesus, has enunciated several
descriptions of the ideal graduate of Jesuit and Catholic education.
In 1991 he spoke of Catholic and Jesuit education producing
“leaders in service to others in building the Kingdom of God in
the market place of business and ideas, of service, of law and
justice, of economics, theology and all areas of human life . . .
men and women of competence and conscience who generously
give of themselves for others.” More recently, in an address entitled
“The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American
Jesuit Higher Education,” he spoke about the significant contem­
porary challenge that faces the person of learning and prayer:

For four hundred and fifty years, Jesuit education has
sought to educate “the whole person” intellectually and
professionally, psychologically, morally and spiritually.
But in the emerging global reality, with its great
possibilities and deep contradictions, the whole person is
different from the whole person of the Counter­
Reformation, the Industrial Revolution, or the Twentieth
Century. Tomorrow’s “whole person” cannot be whole
without an educated awareness of society and culture with
which to contribute socially, generously, in the real
world. Tomorrow’s whole person must have, in brief, a
well-educated solidarity. We must therefore raise our Jesuit
educational standard to educate the whole person in
solidarity for the real world.16

In regard to educating and forming this person of solidarity,
Fr. Kolvenbach makes the intriguing suggestion that “solidarity is
learned through contact rather than through concepts,” that is,
through practical experience rather than simply through book learning. While conceptual learning is clearly important in the mission of higher education and in the development of the Catholic intellectual tradition, what we as educators are being challenged to explore is the appropriate role of “learning through contact.” There is a focus here on praxis and reflection that is related to the “connected knowing” espoused by Parker Palmer and others. As Fr. Kolvenbach further elaborates:

When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. Personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustice others suffer, is the catalyst for solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry and moral reflection.

The educational and formation experiences we received at Fordham in the late 1960s and early 1970s included the kind of “learning through contact” which Fr. Kolvenbach promotes. We were both encouraged by our mentors, professors, and spiritual directors to become involved in the issues of justice that were endemic to those times. We each engaged in volunteer activities in soup kitchens and a home for the elderly, what would today be called “service-learning” opportunities; we both became involved in offering spiritual retreats for high school and college students during which the challenges of the day were spoken about within the language of faith; and, we both became involved in the anti-war activities of the Vietnam era as a faith response to a uniquely American struggle of conscience at that time. In each instance we were encouraged to bring the resources of the Catholic intellectual tradition and our ongoing intellectual and spiritual development to reflection on these engagements.

One of the most significant “mentors” in this regard for both of us was Fr. Daniel Berrigan, S.J., the noted poet-priest and anti-war activist, who had recently been released from prison and came to live on campus for a time. He was (and is) a person of deep prayer, scholarship, and imagination, and he was strongly engaged in the struggles of those times. We came to see first-hand how these threads of learning and faith, prayer, and action could be
woven together into a life-commitment. We have each tried in our own way to emulate this kind of integrated and engaged commitment.

**Related Suggestions for the Future**

Fr. van Beeck speaks of the Catholic intellectual tradition as both a “cultivator” of basic attitudes (virtues) toward learning, God, humanity and the world, and as an active *habitus* for the marriage of literacy and faith, of learning and spirituality. As the reader can tell, this was the experience of the current authors, who matriculated at one institution where there was a conscious effort to transmit learning and an intellectual tradition that was distinctively Catholic. We have taken some time to reflect on our past experience so as to highlight several characteristics of the process of learning in the Catholic intellectual tradition as we came to know it.

What remains now is to offer some reflections that might tie together these characteristics from the past with a look forward. We acknowledge that many Catholic colleges and universities across the country are working hard to integrate their Catholic identity into the educational mission of the institutions. We acknowledge, too, the challenges and achievements of many institutions in trying to incorporate aspects of the Catholic intellectual tradition into the curriculum for undergraduate and graduate students. Indeed, Michele Dillon’s research published in this volume highlights some of the successes and challenges faced by these institutions, and conveys a sense of optimism about the potential outcome. Finally, we acknowledge the good work of *Collegium*, the variety of Catholic Studies programs, and other efforts to further the growth of Catholic identity and intellectual activity.

Nevertheless, we want to suggest that one critically important way to foster the long-term development of the Catholic intellectual tradition is for Catholic intellectual and ecclesial leaders to be more intentional and proactive in selecting, mentoring, guiding, and supporting promising young Catholic educators and scholars. Our own experience in this regard prompts us to offer some ideas for further reflection. In this way we would like to suggest
something akin to an “action agenda” for the continued nurturing and development of the Catholic intellectual tradition through attention to the development of young Catholic intellectuals. This agenda must not be left to chance: it must become a priority commitment of those dedicated to the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Fr. van Beeck’s essay was intended to address teaching as vital to the Catholic intellectual tradition. He makes the point that teaching is best thought of as a “profession,” more than a “vocation,” and that teaching and learning are a matter of Catholic “mission.” One way, then, to begin our reflections is to ask, How do we cultivate and support the professional development of teachers and scholars in the Catholic intellectual tradition?

In a few paragraphs below we will provide a brief imaginative sketch of how such a process might work. We invite the reader to consider an approach that could be called the Institute for the Development of Catholic Scholars, or IDCS.

Faculty, staff, and others at Catholic colleges and universities often become aware of undergraduate and graduate students who demonstrate an interest and willingness to develop as scholar-educators within their faith tradition. Perhaps a conversation between such a student and a faculty or staff mentor leads to encouragement to pursue further intellectual work and spiritual development. But practically, where and how might the student take a next step? What can the mentor offer?

We suggest that it is in the best interests of the Catholic community to create and support a process of “formation” for such women and men, who may be seen as the next generation of Catholic intellectuals. An Institute could be developed, not as a place or an institution (although elements of it would require a location), but as a process of intellectual formation and spiritual guidance. This process would reflect each of the six common characteristics mentioned above, as well as other elements that the community would decide upon. Scholarships would be provided for students participating in the IDCS.

A director as well as a team of faculty from various disciplines, staff mentors, and others would be selected and trained for the IDCS. Their preparation would occur both in small groups and
with the support of the entire team. Criteria would be developed for admitting students and grouping them into cohort groups according to each student’s interests and ability. The director and university team would facilitate the cohort selection process. Each individual would be assigned a mentor and spiritual advisor and would be encouraged to develop and nurture a prayerful spiritual life, while developing in his or her intellectual life. The mentors and advisors would meet regularly with students individually and as a group. After a year, students would choose their own mentors and advisors.

The IDCS process would be a gradual one where members within a cohort group would challenge each other to live a lifestyle that would inculcate and model the skills and virtues necessary to a Catholic intellectual and spiritually-rooted life. Formal learning with exemplary teachers through rigorous courses of study with specific requirements of representative authors and publications (from within and outside of the tradition) would be effectively organized to create a healthy environment for future Catholic intellectuals to be initiated into the tradition. Informal socializing and intellectual mingling with Catholic intellectuals would also be expected of the mentors and faculty involved with this process. Concurrently, the university community would provide the necessary resources, space, and time that such a process would require.

Every effort would be made to prevent the IDCS from becoming a closed or elitist group. To counteract such tendencies, members would be encouraged to offer their gifts and talents to the service of the larger University community and Church through service-learning. Examples could include: enhancing classroom experiences, sponsoring lectures, supporting social justice activities, facilitating retreats or days of reflection, or leading discussion groups where people would come together to reflect on a theme or activity connected with the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Each semester all of the cohorts and interested members of the University community would meet together for liturgy and a meal. Other rituals and celebrations would evolve naturally as the process became a permanent part of the University’s life and mission. Assessment of the program as well as an individual’s
growth would take place each year. To allow for a normal process of discernment to occur with undergraduate students, an individual would choose to be part of the process on a yearly basis. Students engaged in graduate and doctoral work could be expected to make more substantial time commitments to the process.

After these students are graduated, they would be invited back to be an integral part of ongoing discussions with each other, experts in their fields of interest, as well be a resource and mentors to new students who are interested in pursuing a Catholic intellectual lifestyle. Their names and the names of those from other programs would be gathered and disseminated in a formal way to other institutions seeking to employ such individuals, as well as to institutions committed to furthering the education of these scholars in a critical and supportive environment.

Notes


3. “Distinctive,” as used here, is not meant to suggest “one of a kind,” as though only the Catholic intellectual tradition has such characteristics or does this or that. Rather the term is meant to indicate “a special attention to” or “concern for” certain qualities or characteristics.

4. See the preface to Examining the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, volume 1, ed. Anthony J. Cernera and Oliver J. Morgan (Fairfield, CT: Sacred Heart University Press, 2000), vii-viii.

5. van Beeck, “Teaching as Vocation,” in the present volume, 149.

6. Some representative titles include Sharon Parks, Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith (New York: Jossey-Bass, 2000); L.A. Daloz, Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners (New York: Jossey-Bass, 1999); and “President’s Review Council on Students’ Lifestyles: Report Calls for Stronger Mentoring Community,” The Scranton Record (University of Scranton), 4, available from President’s Office, University of Scranton, Scranton, PA 18510.

7. It is an interesting question for discussion whether this kind of “consensus” about the role of Catholic higher education is shared by any
of the relevant constituencies, i.e., students, parents, or faculty. Michele Dillon’s intriguing chapter in the present volume, “College Educators and the Maintenance of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition,” 39-77, offers some food for thought, although it doesn’t specifically address this important question.


12. Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known*, 113 (emphasis added).

13. The essay by Dillon in the present volume suggests that indicators of religious commitment systematically differentiated faculty views regarding the Catholic tradition and its relation to the institution. It is important to note that, in her research, it is not Catholicism *per se*, but commitment to a religious tradition that is more salient in a positive disposition toward integration of Catholic institutional identity. An intentional focus on one’s own spiritual development is such an indicator of religious commitment.


