

## ARTICLES

## CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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*Catholic institutions of higher learning compete mightily for students, faculty, and research dollars with other colleges and universities. Yet, the history and tradition of many Catholic institutions offer a unique faith perspective from which to understand and appreciate the role of the Catholic university as serving the common good. Catholic social teaching is an essential part of the Catholic intellectual tradition and is indispensable for fulfilling the Church's mission through higher education.*

In an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the director of Princeton University's Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Katz (2002) asked whether universities today have a mission beyond the merely functional. Further, Katz asked whether universities in the United States should strive for more than excellence, a quality which, by and large, has come to be identified with research universities that provide leaders for our country's political, military, and economic goals. Katz attempts to answer this probing question by suggesting that universities ought to strive not just for excellence, but also for justice. Katz distinguishes, as is now commonly done in political theory, between procedural and substantial justice. Procedural justice is doing things in a correct way, such as avoiding discrimination in hiring and informing human subjects in research projects. Substantial justice is doing the right sort of things. Academic cultures, Katz believes, are unfortunately better at due process than they are at deciding what is right and just—what they ought to do. In fact, says Katz, academics themselves have a hard time agreeing today on what a university should be.

Rapid change has created part of the difficulty that academics experience when trying to come to agreement on the mission of their colleges and universities. After World War II, the shape of major universities changed dramatically. Historians of higher education point out how the government itself became deeply involved in funding research, especially in science and engineering. Instead of being institutions at which the treasures of thought and culture were passed on to the next generation—a vision of the purpose of

higher education that, admittedly, has never existed in any pure form—the so-called leading universities in the post World War II years accepted externally-funded research, much of it related to the military needs of the Cold War. These institutions also increasingly taught students the skills that promoted economic development for the country while promising personal financial security for them. The recently founded University of Phoenix epitomizes the predominantly economic vision of a university. It is the largest single system of higher education in the United States today. It is a for-profit institution that grants degrees in many fields taught by part-time teachers, usually people who work full-time in industry and the professions. And it does all this at a good profit since it has no permanent campus, no permanent faculty, and no commitment to their students beyond job training (Sullivan, 1997).

Katz's (2002) concerns raise the question of whether a Catholic university can be an educational and formational vehicle dedicated to social justice. Is social justice a broad and deep enough virtue to inform the central functions of a university, assuming that those central functions must include more than professional education and the development of skills for gainful employment? These questions have, in one form or another, been debated for centuries. John Henry Newman made a very fruitful contribution to this debate in the mid-19th century when he offered a vision of a liberal education for well-heeled gentlemen. Newman did not concern himself with getting his gentlemen jobs. Their position in society already assured them of both careers and leisure. With elegant but pre-inclusive language prose, Newman describes liberal education as that form of education

which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. It shows him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to influence them, how to bear with them. (1982, p. 135)

Newman is criticized today for having a bias against professional education and for promoting liberal education as useless, that is, an education not aimed at employment or even preparing for a specific profession. When writing his lectures on liberal education, Newman argued against the Utilitarians who had founded the University of London in 1845. He did not have a bias against professional education; he did, however, oppose professional education without liberal education, or professional education not pursued in a liberal way.

In sharp contrast to Newman's (1982) vision of liberal education for the English or Irish gentleman stands education aimed at subversion and revolution—education as proposed by the Brazilian theorist of education, Paulo Freire. First published in 1968 in Portuguese, and then in 1970 in English, his widely read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* promoted a critical pedagogy that drew freely upon liberation theology. For Freire (1968/1993), the purpose of education, especially among the poor, was to teach them the skills needed for social analysis, that is, skills for the purpose of social transformation. Freire wanted education to help people act as subjects—people who could create a new and just social order. Drawing upon the thought of Freire, Oldenski (1997) provided an ethnographic study of an East St. Louis Catholic alternative high school that, unfortunately, no longer exists. On the basis of interviews with students and teachers at this high school, Oldenski found a harmony between the essential identity of a Catholic school and the common elements of liberation theology and critical pedagogy. However, Oldenski offered no analysis of the Vatican's critical evaluation of liberation theology (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1984, 1986), and how that might affect the understanding of it.

Freire's (1968/1993) approach to education poses some sharp challenges to educational institutions in the United States. Most defenders of traditional models of liberal education in our country, even of models more inclusive of professional education than Newman's, would find Freire's approach highly politicized. Even if in the United States universities rarely are criticized for being too conservative, most people would perceive Freire's approach as way too liberal, even subversive. If universities were viewed not just as liberal but also as downright subversive, it is likely that they would be directly opposed by the government.

Now, admittedly, education at all levels in the United States emphasized early on the importance of education for democracy, so that citizens might participate intelligently in civic life. Education for democracy was needed for all citizens, not just the elite. In just the past 30 years, the universities of the United States have moved from mass to universal access. And unlike both the poor people Freire wanted to educate for changing society and the elite gentlemen Newman formed, most of the students in Catholic higher education in the United States are no longer drawn from the ranks of immigrants or the poor, but from the middle and upper class. Nonetheless, contrasting Newman and Freire helps us to think about Catholic education and social justice.

What is the relationship between Catholic education and social justice? Can it be identified with fairness, with what has been termed procedural justice, that is, doing things correctly? Lest one think procedural justice an

unworthy goal, remember that at least one form of procedural justice, the Golden Rule, can be quite demanding. Let us suppose here that our understanding of social justice should include more than procedural justice. What form of substantial justice then should it include? Or to use the title of a recent book by Catholic philosopher MacIntyre (1988), whose justice should we be promoting? It is sometimes difficult to come to a consensus on procedural justice. Moreover, the boundary between substantial and procedural justice is not always clear. Is the requirement to respect and protect the dignity of persons both procedural and substantial? If so, can we clearly disentangle these two types of justice in the requirement to respect others? Should faculty at Catholic universities be advocating social justice as a part, or perhaps even as an essential characteristic, of the education they offer?

These complex questions cannot be treated adequately in one article. But at least the following can be attempted. First, I will review the debate that the Jesuits have been having since the mid-70s about the relationship between faith and justice, and then review how the Marianists have handled the same debate. Then I will enumerate some of the key elements of Catholic social teaching, the general term for social justice. Now, even if we are able to identify elements of social justice and make at least some tentative defense of their importance for Catholic higher education, various obstacles stand in the way, not least of which is the credibility of the Church's teaching on social justice, and the receptivity of current academic culture, not to mention the larger culture of our society, to these teachings. Therefore, identifying obstacles to the promotion of social justice will be important. Finally, I will offer a sketch of what a Catholic university that takes social justice seriously might look like.

## THE JESUITS AND THE MARIANISTS

At their 1975 international meeting, known among Jesuits as their 32nd General Congregation, the delegates affirmed as the over-riding purpose of their order that "the service of faith" must also include "the promotion of justice" (Society of Jesus, 1975, §6). This claim applied not only to those Jesuits who worked directly with the poor in what they called their social apostolates, but also to all the members of the order, including those who taught in high schools and universities. Reflecting some 25 years later on this decisive turn in the direction of the order, the current superior general of the order, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, recalled how in Beirut, where at the time he was a professor, "we were well aware that our medical school, staffed by very holy Jesuits, was producing, at least at that time, some of the most corrupt citizens in the city, but this was taken for granted" (2000, p. 6). Already in 1973, the then Superior General Fr. Arrupe had declared that the educational objective of the Jesuits is to "form men for others" (as cited in Kolvenbach, 2000,

p. 7). He was convinced that if individuals did not live in a way that issued in justice for others, then their faith was a farce. In a convocation address given at the University of Santa Clara in 1982, Fr. Ignacio Ellacuría, one of the six Jesuits murdered in El Salvador in 1989, applied this priority of faith leading to justice to the work of Catholic higher education:

A Christian university must take into account the Gospel preference for the poor. This does not mean that only the poor study at the university; it does not mean that the university should abdicate its mission of academic excellence—excellence which is needed in order to solve complex social issues of our time. It does mean that the university should be present intellectually where it is needed: to provide science for those who have no science; to provide skills for those without skills; to be a voice for those without voices; to give intellectual support for those who do not possess the academic qualifications to make their rights legitimate. (1982, p. 12)

It should surprise no one that the priority given by the Jesuits to justice at their 1975 international meeting generated a good deal of debate within the order itself. Some of that early debate may be found in a volume of essays by Jesuits, *The Faith that Does Justice: Examining the Christian Sources for Social Change* (Haughey, 1977). Some Jesuits, influenced by their order's tradition of liberal education, believed that the emphasis on justice as a priority inevitably politicized their educational works. By the mid-1980s, when the Vatican issued two statements on liberation theology (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1984, 1986), the first in 1984 being especially critical of what was perceived as Marxist influences shaping that theology, the critics of the emphasis on justice felt supported. In an address given in the year 2000, Kolvenbach described the polarization in the order in this way:

On the one side, the faith dimension was too often presumed and left implicit, as if our identity as Jesuits were enough. Some rushed headlong toward the promotion of justice without much analysis or reflection and with only occasional reference to the justice of the Gospel. They seemed to consign the service of faith to a dying past. Those on the other side clung to a certain style of faith and Church. They gave the impression that God's grace had to do only with the next life, and that divine reconciliation entailed no practical obligation to set things right here on earth. (p. 6)

Twenty years after their 1975 international meeting, the Jesuits met again and this time joined to the emphasis on a "faith that does justice" two other priorities: the relationship between faith and culture, and inter-religious dialogue. The so-called 1995 General Congregation spelled out the relationship among these priorities as follows:

No service of faith without promotion of justice, entry into cultures, openness to other experiences; no promotion of justice without communicating faith, transforming cultures, collaboration with other traditions; no inculturation without communicating faith with others, dialogue with other traditions, commitment to justice; no dialogue without sharing faith with others, evaluating cultures, concern for justice. (Society of Jesus, 1996, §19)

All three of these priorities are complex in themselves and complex in their realization, especially when applied to Catholic educational institutions.

Just as the Jesuits went and continue to go through a process of debate and understanding and experimentation, so too the Marianists have wrestled with what it means to incorporate a vision of social justice into their mission. The order's commitment to social justice became one of the three great debates at the Marianist General Chapter of 1981. The order's constitution, or *Rule of Life*, written by the delegates of the General Chapter of 1981, made several significant statements about the importance of social justice. For example, article 5.19 states:

Following the teachings of the Church we collaborate with movements that work for justice and peace and the integrity of creation, and we are responsive to human needs as they arise, both in our own environment and in other suffering areas of the world. (Society of Mary, 1981)

The *Rule of Life* states further that Marianists are called to "help build a society that is just and fraternal" (Society of Mary, 1981, §27). And more specifically, concerning Catholic education, the Rule affirms that "schools offer us an excellent opportunity and responsibility to work for justice and peace. Our programs should develop a critical sense which prepares students to build a just society and to promote unity and respect among all peoples" (§5.15).

Another major step among the Marianists was taken under the leadership of Bro. Thomas Giardino, S.M., who was the order's assistant for education from 1991 to 2001. With the assistance of an international committee, he developed a document entitled *Characteristics of Marianist Education* (Society of Mary, 1996) that identified the essential characteristics "service, justice and peace." The three Marianist universities in the United States—University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio; St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas; and Chaminade University in Honolulu, Hawaii—made their first attempt in 1999 to spell out, in a document entitled *Characteristics of Marianist Universities*, what it means to dedicate their energies to service, justice, and peace. It is significant that they began with their own institutions, asking what it means for them to be just: "The Marianist university shows its commitment to human dignity, and to a just and peaceful society, first by

establishing for itself just institutional policies and structures" (§20). An obvious example of a challenge of social justice internal to most universities, and certainly to Catholic universities, is the appropriate pay given to part-time instructors, janitors, food service workers, and others. The document makes an even bolder statement:

In Marianist universities, faculty and students are not afraid to undertake social analyses, and in the light of such analyses, propose and undertake initiatives that address actual social and moral problems. (§42)

The document underscores this bold commitment by quoting from the 1990 Vatican document on Catholic higher education, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, which asserts:

If need be, a Catholic university must have the courage to speak uncomfortable truths which do not please public opinion, but which are necessary to safeguard the authentic good of society. (John Paul II, 1990, §32)

It is not possible to understand how Marianists approach social justice apart from an emphasis on communities and institutions. For Marianists, community life itself has been understood as an essential part of apostolic work. The Marianist *Rule of Life* states: "The community itself is a primary instrument to fulfill our mission. We know that the quality of our life has greater impact than our words" (Society of Mary, 1981, §67). The recently established Province of the United States, a merger of four previous provinces, emphasized the community dimension of social justice by citing two statements of the General Chapter of 2001: "Family spirit and the ability to create community and bonds of solidarity where we are has been and continues to be one of our strengths" (Society of Mary, General Chapter, 2001, §24c). And again, "faith engenders community and community demands that new relationships be lived among people founded in love, justice and equity" (§24d). Instead of talking about forming a "man for others" as the Jesuits have often done, Marianists typically speak rather of a "community of faith for others."

Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, the founder of the Marianists, did his best over his long life (1761-1850) to build communities to transform European society which had become ever more aggressively secular since the French revolution of 1789. Douglas (1986) wrote that "the most profound decisions about justice are not made by individuals as such, but by individuals thinking within and on behalf of institutions" (p. 24). While people today do not commonly think of communities as institutions, they nonetheless realize that communities can exert a more powerful force for change than an isolated individual.

Universities founded by religious orders should have distinctive missions. The Marianists dedicate themselves to forming communities of faith, to education, and to solidarity with the poor. This mission of the Marianist community is drawn from the recently approved mission statement of the Marianist province of the United States. The entire mission statement reads:

Empowered by the Holy Spirit and inspired by the dynamism of Blessed Chaminade's charism, we—brothers and priests—vowed religious in the Marianist Family, live in community as equals. Through lives of prayer and Gospel service, we dedicate ourselves to the following of Jesus Christ, Son of God become Son of Mary.

Wherever we are sent, we invite others to share in Mary's Mission of making Christ present in every age and culture by forming persons and communities of apostolic faith that advance justice and reconciliation. Committed to education, we minister especially with youth and in solidarity with the poor. (Society of Mary, 2005)

To the extent that such a mission permeates the educational institutions they have founded, the possibility of bringing about justice is greater.

## CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

It is now necessary to place social justice in the larger context of Catholic social teaching. Since the end of the 19th century, beginning with the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* published in 1891 by Leo XIII (1878-1903), successive popes have continued to write about the application of the Gospel to the social order. Initially, these teachings were a response to the effects of industrialization in Europe. The Church also opposed various forms of socialism, which forms themselves were a response to poverty. Socialists viewed Catholicism then to be a major obstacle to social change and reform. No doubt, some of the official teachings of the Church in the 19th century did oppose change. The Church struggled then, as it still does in some ways now, with how to relate authoritative teaching with democracy and discipleship with freedom of conscience.

But as the body of the Church's social teachings developed since the late 19th century, it has set forth several fundamental positions: first, that the Church has something to say to the wider world about what is just and fair; second, that people of good will, not just Catholics, could benefit from these teachings; and third, that morality encompasses not just personal matters, but social matters as well, including matters such as fair wages, working conditions, rights of workers, and more recently, rights of women, protection of the environment, and medical ethics.

Of course, the Church did pay attention to such matters long before the end of the 19th century. For example, Basil the Great, a fourth century bishop, not only wrote about issues of social morality, but also built and maintained a wide array of social service entities, including hospitals and orphanages. Basil wrote long before the Enlightenment and the separation of church and state. It was easier for him at that time to translate the religious vision of Christianity into a network of social institutions. However, by the time Leo XIII wrote, some 15 centuries later, an ever-growing autonomous civic and secular culture worked to marginalize the Church. In writing his 1891 encyclical, Pope Leo was reclaiming a role of influence in the larger society for teachings that, while rooted in the faith of Catholics, nonetheless appealed, he hoped, mainly to peoples' common sense and reason.

The development over the last century of the social teachings of the Catholic Church is both instructive and fascinating. Whitmore (2005) described the gradual change from a hierarchical to a relatively egalitarian ordering of social teaching, and from an emphasis on natural law to an emphasis, especially with John Paul II, on personalism.

A few years ago, Byron (1998) wrote a very helpful short article entitled "Ten Building Blocks of Catholic Social Teaching." According to Byron, that article evoked a more positive response than anything he had ever written, and he has been publishing such pieces for well over 30 years. Byron's building blocks include the dignity of each and every human being, regardless of race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, economic status, or national origin; the respect for human life; the right to form associations and participate in working for the common good; and the principles of stewardship (we are managers or caretakers, not owners of creation) and subsidiarity, which underscores the proper limits of government. Some authors have argued that the starting point of Catholic social teaching within a culture like that of the United States that so emphasizes individualism should always be the common good.

Unfortunately, many of these important social teachings are not well known. Some people have referred to them as Catholicism's best kept secret. The idea of the common good, along with the affirmation of the dignity and sacredness of every human life, forms the bedrock of Catholic social teaching. Hollenbach (2002) recently wrote that a major concept in the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' 1986 pastoral letter on the economy, the common good, was "nearly incomprehensible" (p. xiii) to the majority of the people to whom the letter was addressed, namely political and business leaders. More needs to be done to make sure that key concepts of Catholic social teaching are better understood. The two major political parties in the United States, the Republicans and the Democrats, tend to choose only some of the

social teachings and ignore others when they construct their political platforms and design program initiatives. The Democrats, for example, oppose the death penalty and support universal health care. The Republicans oppose abortion and support individual initiatives. On some Catholic campuses, it is easier to find groups strongly opposed to the death penalty than to abortion. Such selectivity does not reflect the integrity of Catholic social teaching. Catholic social teaching calls for more pro-life Democrats and more social justice Republicans.

Moreover, it is not enough to learn the integrated and holistic character of Catholic social teachings. There is also the Catholic social tradition, which is peopled by a wonderful and diverse group of individuals, including St. Basil, Francis, Chaminade, Mother Cabrini, Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero, and John Paul II, all of whom demonstrated practical wisdom concerning concrete ways to apply social teachings. It is not enough, then, just to know the building blocks of social teachings; we must also develop the habits that will help us see more clearly, judge more accurately, and act more justly. To practice social justice requires maturity, indeed, an asceticism that purifies our motives. McCabe (1991) asked

Who, after all, wants a comrade in the struggle who is an arrogant, loud-mouthed, aggressive bully? The kind of person who jumps on the revolutionary bandwagon in order to work off his or her bad temper or envy or unresolved conflict with parents does not make a good and reliable comrade. Whatever happened to all those "revolutionary" students of 1968? (p. 195)

Those who enact the social justice agenda need to be people centered and disciplined, ultimately, peacemakers.

How does social justice fit into Catholic social teaching? And for that matter, what does the adjective, social, add to the concept of justice? Generally speaking, justice can be understood as giving a person his or her due. Justice requires fairness. The adjective social introduces the application of justice to more than one person, typically whole groups and even societies. Social justice is not limited with what individuals might do by themselves, but also with persons as they are affected, helped or hindered, by institutions. Sometime in the 1970s we began to use the phrase "institutional racism" to emphasize that even if individuals were not personally racists, the institutions that affect them may well be.

Social justice, then, draws upon several key concepts of Catholic social teaching, such as the common good and the dignity of the person. More than this, as part of the biblical tradition, Catholicism's commitment to social justice has to do with bringing about the kingdom of God, and doing so humbly, that is, never assuming that our vision of the just society is exactly what God

wants. Social injustice might also be described as social sin, the cumulative effect of individuals' sins that create societal conditions that violate justice. While the Greeks thought of justice as an ethical virtue practiced by individuals, many political philosophers today, following John Rawls, understand justice as the first virtue of social institutions. In other words, justice is intrinsically social.

Since the social teachings of the Church grow out of a long and sophisticated reflection upon the consequences of fundamental Gospel truths, they tend in our society not to be well known, partially because they are not often taught in our churches, with the recent exception of the considerations Catholic voters should make before voting every 4 years in a presidential election, or even in our schools. Our society seems to be of two minds about religion's public role. Some prefer that religion be only personal, that is, a private matter. Or, if some think that religion should have a public role, then they say that it should be expressed publicly only as a personal opinion, or as an invitation to be charitable, and not as an obligation of justice. Still others have no hesitation making their religion public and expecting it to shape public policy. Some of these people misuse religion to promote public initiatives and policies that do not, in fact, represent that religious tradition, or promote a very selective interpretation of it. If better known, the relatively sophisticated Catholic social teaching could contribute to preventing such distortions of Christianity, and to finding some thoughtful common ground in our pluralistic society where disagreements continue to fester over the role of religion in society.

### CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Still another question, and perhaps the most difficult, remains: how should social justice be a part of a Catholic university education? First, to return to the question raised at the beginning by Katz (2002), what ought a university's mission be? Should universities aim at more than excellence, which for him meant the now typical path followed by major research universities—namely dedication to economic and politically funded priorities, with little attention paid to undergraduate education? Should universities also aim at justice? In trying to respond to this question, I find myself torn between Newman and Freire. There is so much to respect in Newman's idea of a university that I hesitate to presume to differ with it or improve upon it. However, Catholic universities need to find ways to be of assistance to the poor as one of their principal ways of acting in a socially just way. Most of the Catholic universities in this country were founded mainly to educate poor immigrant Catholic populations, preparing them to contribute to society and retain their faith.

Since through Catholic education poor immigrants were enabled to

acquire jobs and professions, the education provided for them could be considered an act of social justice. Yet, to the extent that they educated them only to socialize them, that is, to blend them into the existing social order, to that extent the more demanding dimension of social justice—namely, the transformation of the social order—was absent. Today, our new immigrants are not always Catholics; many of them are simply poor people, many of whom now living in inner cities. To serve the poor who become college students requires considerable amounts of financial aid; it also requires Catholic universities to value doing this work of justice more than its standing in the ubiquitous national ratings which typically measure excellence by the size of the endowment, the average SAT scores of the entering class, the placement of graduates, and the number of students to whom it denies admission. A university that takes seriously its mission to the poor is less likely to score high in these categories. It will take careful and deliberate education of members of university board of trustees and wealthy donors, who sometimes support vigorously the priorities of prestige over embracing the poor.

It sometimes happens that wealthy people identify social justice with socialism, that is, anti-Americanism, and then the university people most responsible for raising money, the people in the development office and the administration of the university, try to de-emphasize if not eliminate social justice emphases. It may also be the case that extensive external funding by the government and private industry puts such strictures on a university that these sources of funding mute any robust moral and social analysis of the practices of the government or private industry. Many scholars have repeatedly criticized the practice of faculty doing research that is classified by the government or labeled proprietary by industry. Such research, it is rightly argued, diametrically opposes a central practice of the academy: the open and public exchange and critique of research.

There is a saying administrators are fond of repeating, "no margin, no mission." Well, if there is no generation of substantial monies, any inclusion of a good number of the poor as students will become impossible. No easy solution exists to this challenge of getting rich "conservatives" to help "liberal" academics educate "deserving" poor people. But some of the most important reasons for meeting such a challenge can surely be found within Catholicism and more specifically, Catholic social teachings.

Second, while agreeing with Freire that students need to be taught social analysis and be prepared not just to fit into society but also to be leaders who help create a more just society, students need not only to transform society, but also to appreciate what people before us have created, written, and achieved. In other words, an essential competency is the understanding and appreciation of the best that has been written (history, philosophy, theology, and languages),

achieved (in the arts and the professions), discovered (in the natural sciences), and developed in the study of the human person and human society (the social sciences). In other words, without a deep grasp of such areas of learning and achievement, graduates may well over-estimate both the wisdom of their prescriptions for what ails society and their ability to reconstruct it justly.

The modern university, including some of the larger Catholic universities as well, tends to isolate disciplines and leaves moral questions to only a few disciplines—typically philosophy and theology—which are often the very disciplines which many students would not study were they not required to. In a thoughtful preface to *Living the Catholic Social Teaching: Cases and Commentary*, Hellwig (2005) lists the problems that faculty who want to teach Catholic social teaching face:

First of all, it is essentially an interdisciplinary project, requiring some background knowledge in several distinct academic disciplines; second, the source documents in official church teaching are written in a style quite alien to that to which our students are accustomed; third, the specific positions taken by Catholic social teaching rest on a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of Scripture and tradition than our college students generally possess; in the fourth place, the curricular time given to the religious component in undergraduate studies has shrunk in most Catholic colleges to a skimpy total of six semester hours (two-one semester courses), while graduate programs offer no time at all; and finally, in many cases professors in the germane fields, including theology and Scripture, have themselves only the most superficial knowledge of Catholic social teaching. (p. xi)

These problems pose formidable challenges. One way to meet these problems, but one that is much easier said than done, is to have Catholic social teaching be a part of many disciplines, not just philosophy or theology. Moreover, almost all courses should be taught in such a way that the real moral issues within them are addressed. To teach in this way cannot be adequately done if, to begin with, the “moral optique” is quarantined to departments thought by the rest of the faculty to be esoteric. It can be achieved only by faculty in many disciplines who understand the importance of a “moral optique,” and who are sufficiently competent to draw it out of the very content of their courses in thoughtful and appropriate ways. Moreover, at residential campuses, the three divisions of academics, student development, and campus ministry often work in isolation from each other. Those responsible for education at such campuses forget that how we learn, how we live, and how we worship ought to be deeply connected.

More concretely, how might a variety of disciplines, not just theology, include Catholic social teaching? To provide just a few examples: political

science courses that include the idea of the common good; law courses that distinguish the legal and the moral and include issues of jurisprudence; business schools that have courses on corporate ethics as well as the social and moral consequences of globalization; engineering schools that teach environmental ethics and sustainable design; medical schools that teach not just bio-medical ethics but also the Catholic vision of human flourishing; and science courses that place their findings in the larger context of the historical evolution of science, awareness of its sources of research funding and the populations that funding neglects. Schools of education should draw upon the long and rich traditions, both pedagogical and institutional, of Catholic education and its philosophy. Catholic universities will not be doing their job if such courses are only optional; they need to be part of the required curriculum. Service learning needs to be integrated into a well-thought out curriculum; otherwise, it turns out to be service with little learning. Immersion programs designed to bring about a deeper awareness of the needs and gifts of people in other parts of the world make effective pedagogical sense; too often, however, such programs seem to offer our students only short periods of minimal acquaintance with indigenous peoples, a tourism for the affluent that produces little real long-term benefits for the poor.

The Vatican document on Catholic higher education, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (John Paul II, 1990), offers some profound insights into the mission of a Catholic university today. The document states, for example,

A Catholic university must become more attentive to the cultures of the world today, and to the various cultural traditions existing within the Church in a way that will provide a continuous and profitable dialogue between the Gospel and modern society. Among the criteria that characterize the values of a culture are, above all, the meaning of the human person, his or her liberty, dignity, sense of responsibility, and openness to the transcendent. (§46)

The document recommends that Catholic universities offer courses that provide forms of social analyses that will make faculty and students understand and critique “contradictions of modern culture” (§45). For example, it recommends that

by means of appropriate studies, the impact of modern technology and especially of the mass media on persons, the family, and the institutions and whole of modern culture be studied deeply. (§46)

The document goes on to spell out worthwhile but challenging initiatives that Catholic universities should be taking in promoting ecumenical and interfaith dialogues, and the dialogue with modern science and technology. It

states that Catholic universities should be conducting research on

the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing in the world's resources, and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community at a national and international level. (§32)

This Vatican agenda could overwhelm the best of faculty. Most of our Catholic universities in the United States address some of these issues; none addresses them all. It is still possible for a student to go through a Catholic university and deal intelligently and thoughtfully with very few of them. We have much yet to do.

A third and last challenge in presenting Catholic social teaching is the credibility of Catholicism in many areas of morality. It has often been observed that the recent sexual abuse crisis has lessened the credibility of the bishops. Even when the subject is not sexual morality or the accountability of bishops, when these same bishops oppose, for example, the death penalty and urge greater support for the poor, Catholics often just tune them out. But it is not just recent criticisms of the U.S. hierarchy that diminishes their credibility. It is sobering to learn, for example, that Pope Gregory I (540-604) owned slaves, that Nicholas V granted the king of Portugal the right to make pagans slaves in 1452, and that even Leo XIII repeated in 1888 the traditional teaching that slavery was a punishment for sin. Noonan's recent book, *A Church That Can and Cannot Change* (2005), is a real eye opener for those who do not know history. The Bible contains many texts that condone slavery, beginning with the 10th commandment (Ex. 20:17), which presumes that men own not just oxen and asses, but also wives, slaves, and slave girls. The leaders of the Church were not the only people on the wrong side of a critically important issue; most people were, including even Voltaire (1694-1778), the great proponent of religious tolerance who criticized the Church also, but benefited personally from the slave trade. And now that most of Western society finally has condemned slavery, we need to be more attentive to many forms of demeaning and exploitative labor that still remain.

As embarrassing as some of these failures of insight and courage have been in the Church's history, we should not focus on them alone. Compared to other institutions, the overall record of the Church on doing and promoting good works and the betterment of society, can be defended. But that same record should give us all pause about having absolute answers to the complex moral issues we face today. A sort of confident humility, if that is not a contradiction, should be characteristic of Catholic universities that seek to address issues of social justice.

## CONCLUSION

In the spring of 2005, Judge Juan Guzman Tapia, a member of the Santiago Court of Appeals, received the University of Dayton's Oscar Romero Award for Leadership in Human Rights. He had courageously led the effort to bring to justice Augusto Pinochet, the dictator of Chile from 1973 to 1990. In his address at the university, he said that, "without truth, we would never have justice." To learn the truth is not easy. It requires discipline, debate, openness, and conversion. McCabe (1991) once remarked that acquiring clarity of vision is a communal effort:

It is a great function of debate and argument to clean each other's glasses, which is why hard thinking has to be a communal affair and why argument, even apart from the courtesies of debate, is itself an act of fraternal charity....If we work hard enough together we can begin to see things as they are. (p. 199)

It would seem that the demands of a university education that seriously sought to understand the truth of our society and the state of the world is exactly what a Catholic university should be making. In the Gospel of John, Jesus at one point says "the truth will make you free" (John 8:32). The truth of which Jesus speaks is not a detached truth, one that can be understood apart from a commitment to live and act upon the truth that is learned. In this sense, truth can be seen as a prerequisite for doing justice. Diagnosis should precede a prescription for a cure.

In the last analysis, we need to begin with where we are. Given the present situation in Catholic colleges and universities in the United States, we find many faculty who are consummate professionals within their disciplines, but not as many who are equally dedicated, as part of their professional discipline, to pursuing the truth for the sake of social justice. We also find that many of our students now resemble those whom Newman wrote about, children of privilege, who may be a little too incurious about the lives of others in the world around them. While discussing the purpose of Catholic education, MacIntyre (2001) fears most today the university's capitulation to market forces and asks:

Do we really want them (our present and future alumni) to become what, on the best evidence that we have, recent graduates of the best research universities have tended to become: narrowly focused professionals, immensely and even obsessively hard working, disturbingly competitive and intent on success as it is measured within their own specialized professional sphere, often genuinely excellent at what they do; who read little worthwhile that is not relevant to their work; who, as the idiom insightfully puts it, "make time," sometimes with difficulty, for their family lives; and whose relaxation tends to consist of short



strenuous bouts of competitive athletic activity and sometimes of therapeutic indulgence in the kind of religion that is well designed not to disrupt their working lives? (p. 15)

If these are the types of graduates we educate, the work of social justice will not get done.

Whatever the present shape of our educational institutions, we should dedicate ourselves more than we do to a critical understanding of our world and to creating a more just society. Kaveny (2004), a professor of law and theology at the University of Notre Dame, recently commented that from personal experience both conservative and liberal undergraduate Catholics have one characteristic in common: they do not think of their faith in intellectual terms. Catholic universities and colleges in the United States need to do a better job of becoming institutions in which faculty and students learn together what it means to have a genuine responsibility for the common good. We would all do well to be hard working, not obsessively but at least persistently, to be thoughtful social critics and committed agents of change, who understand and appreciate the very world we seek to change.

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