Mercy Faculty Forum

McAuley Institute for Mercy Education

Salve Regina University

"To seek wisdom and promote universal justice…

To work for a world that is harmonious, just and merciful."

- Salve Regina University Mission Statement

Mercy Faculty Forum
Office of Mission Integration

"The discharge of all these offices of mercy, spiritual and corporal, constitute the business of our lives." -*The Spirit of the Institute*

Overview:
Salve Regina University is a community rooted in the charism of mercy and committed to forming 21st century leaders working to build a more harmonious, just, and merciful world.

The Mercy Faculty Forum is a four-part mission integration series for each cohort of new faculty to engage resources from the Mercy, Catholic tradition and reflect together on your own vocations as teaching-scholars within the landscape of Mercy Higher Education. Through the Mercy Faculty Forum, you are invited to discuss shared readings and consider the ways in which your own research, teaching, service and leadership contribute to and advance Salve's mission.

The Mercy Faculty Forum is facilitated by the Vice President for Mission Integration and welcomes faculty of any religious tradition or no tradition.

Schedule:

Session	**Topic**	**Readings**
One:	Catherine McAuley and the Charism of Mercy	o Mary Angela Bolster, R.S.M. "Catherine McAuley: From the Edges of History to the Center of Meaning," *The MAST Journal* 6, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 1-5. o "Chapter 5: Of the Perfection of Ordinary Actions," *Rule and Constitutions of the Religious Sisters of Mercy* in Mary Sullivan, R.S.M., ed., *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 300-302.

Two:	Mercy Charism and Catholic Identity of Salve	o "Statement on Catholic Identity and Mercy Charism for Conference for Mercy Higher Education (CMHE) Colleges and Universities," Institute Leadership Conference, 1993. o Pope John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (From the Heart of the Church) o "Our Catholic Identity and Mercy Charism," Statement approved by the CMHE Board, 2010. o Mary Hembrow Snyder, Alice Edwards, and Richard McCarthy, "At the Intersection of Catholic and Mercy: There's an Elephant in the Room" *Journal for Catholic Higher Education* 33, no. 1 (2014), 63-74.
Three:	Catholic Social Teaching and the Critical Concerns of Mercy	o Leona Misto, R.S.M., "Mercy Spirituality, The Foundation for Compassionate Service," *Mercy Illuminates* (Salve Regina University, 2008). o "CST 101: Themes from Catholic Social Teaching," USCCB and Catholic Relief Services. o Sisters of Mercy, Critical Concerns
Four:	Vocational Leadership and Mercy Mission at Salve Regina University	o Mary C. Sullivan, R.S.M., Ph.D., "Catherine McAuley and the Characteristics of Mercy Higher Education," *The MAST Journal* 24, no. 2 (2006), 18-26 o Margaret Farley, R.S.M., "Wisdom, Dignity, and Justice: Higher Education as a Work of Mercy," *The MAST Journal* 16, no. 2 (2006) 3-8.

AS A COMMUNITY THAT WELCOMES PEOPLE OF ALL BELIEFS, SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY, *a Catholic institution founded by the* SISTERS OF MERCY, *seeks wisdom and promotes universal justice.*

THE UNIVERSITY THROUGH TEACHING AND RESEARCH *prepares men and women for responsible lives by imparting and expanding knowledge, developing skills, and cultivating enduring values. Through liberal arts and professional programs, students develop their abilities for thinking clearly and creatively, enhance their capacity for sound judgment, and prepare for the challenge of learning throughout their lives.*

In keeping with the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy, and recognizing that all people are stewards of God's creation, the University encourages students to work for a world that is harmonious, just, and merciful.

MISSION of SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY

SESSION 1

The MAST Journal

The Journal of the Mercy Association in Scripture and Theology
VOL. 6, NO. 2 SPRING 1996

Catherine McAuley: Timeless Legacy

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Catherine McAuley: From the Edges of History to the Center of Meaning

Angela Bolster, R.S.M.

Introduction

This presentation examines the realities of marginalization and liminality in the life of Catherine McAuley. Marginalization is all about injustice, be it religious, cultural, emotional, psychological, sexual, or socio-economic. In each of its expressions it involves exclusion. It is consequently a negative concept. Conversely, liminality is a positive concept deriving from the Latin "limen," meaning threshold, cutting-edge, or the experience of being at a frontier. Sandra Schneiders defined it as "the growing-point...which has everything behind it and nothing except possibility in front of it." Diarmuid O Murchu calls liminality "that indefinable, ambiguous space thrust upon a person or group...which is at once...inviting and frightening." This frontier beckoned Catherine McAuley towards new ways of being merciful, of becoming a trail-blazer for those ongoing, countless initiatives later undertaken by our congregation.

Catherine's outlook was Christological in that what concerned her were the things that concerned Christ . . .

In all of this, Catherine's outlook was Christological in that what concerned her were the things that concerned Christ, what we call the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Her call, her impulse of mercy, was a gesture to Christ himself, described by St. Augustine as "lying there in the doorway, hungry, frozen, poor and helpless." Catherine was similarly in tune with St. Bernard of Clairvaux whose twelfth sermon on the Song of Songs extols the grace of loving-kindness or mercy and lists the elements which go into its making, namely, "the needs of the poor, the anxieties of the oppressed, the worries of those who are sad, the sins of wrongdoers, the manifold misfortunes of all classes who endure affliction, even if they are our enemies."

We learn from scripture that "in every age Wisdom passes into holy souls; she makes them friends of God and prophets" (Wisdom 7:27). Catherine was such a friend of God, and she was a prophet of mercy. I also would like to apply to her some beautiful lines form Patrick Kavanagh's poem, *God in Woman* (1951) where he states:

Surely my God is feminine, for Heaven
is the generous impulse, is contented
with feeding praise to the good; and all
of these that I have known
have come from women.

Here Kavanagh implies women's gift to the world; a gift which may be intepreted in terms of woman's great generosity of spirit, her capacity to affirm, to console, to enable, to empathize, to encourage, and so on. Another fitting memorial to women—this time from Mikhail Gorbachev—is equally applicable to Catherine. "Women," said the Russian leader, "prevent the threads of life from being broken. The finest minds have always understood the peace-making role of women." Catherine McAuley was a peace-maker par excellence.

In Ireland this year, advance preparations for commemorating the Great Famine of the 1840's are well in hand. Avril Doyle, Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) has urged honest research, reminding historians that "history with all its pain and complexity, should, not be repressed." All concerned must guard against "being locked into a tired revisionist debate" and that no attempts should be made "to sanitize the Famine."

Sisters of Mercy must also acknowledge, in reviewing the history of Catherine McAuley, that for a period of forty years, she worked within intersecting circles of sociological and religious discrimination, psychological distress and marginalization. Suggesting these challenges are her many changes of residence after Stormanstown House, following her father's death in 1783: Glasnevin (1784-1787), Queen Street (1787-1798), Conway home, 23 East Arran Street (1798-1799), Armstrong household, 34 Mary Street (1799-1803), Coolock House, Callaghan household (1803-1823), 102 Middle Abbey Street (1823-1828), Baggot Street (1828-1841).

From this review, it can be maintained that for the duration of this period, except for the brief interlude with her Conway relatives through whom she became acquainted with many Dublin priests who counseled her, Catherine was in a psychological ghetto insofar as her Catholicism was concerned. At Coolock, her position was not only anomalous, but also painful and awkward. Nevertheless, she moved in social circles of refinement and elegance as the longed-for daughter of the childless William and Catherine Callaghan. William Callaghan was a non-practicing Anglican; his wife, a non-practicing Quaker. After-dinner raillery against Catholics occurred frequently in their home.

In the early 1890's, Ms. K.M. Barry, an Irish-American who came to Ireland to study the social situation there, opted instead to study Catherine. Her vol-

ume, *Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy* was published in 1894. She sympathized with Catherine's position, maintaining that "William Callaghan, safe in his fortress of science and prejudice, parried words with Catherine and, lacking all religious convictions himself...opposed her Catholicism and prohibited all manifestations of Popery in his house." Given Quaker rejection of ministers, creeds, sacraments, religious emblems and systems of theology, it is likely that his wife supported this position. It seems quite probable that from the age of five until she was forty-five, Catherine McAuley knew what it was to be marginalized and to have ongoing experience of the disadvantages which were a consequence of being Irish and Catholic in an age of intolerance.

Paradoxically, Catherine enjoyed deep support from the Callaghans because of a mutual concern for the poor. Coolock was Catherine's Gethsemane where she encountered "the humbled, abandoned, agonizing Christ...This is my Christ...Him will I have and hold; outside of him, nothing." Coolock was also her Manresa. Here was her place of alignment with the God of the oppressed; her close relatedness to Christ, the one she confidently asserted would be responsive to her. "He knows I would rather be cold and hungry than the poor, in Kingstown or elsewhere, should be deprived of any consolation in our power to afford them." At Coolock she was already a Sister of Mercy at heart. With the approval and encouragement of the Callaghans, she was also an educator and social worker whose ears were tuned to the cries of the poor as they yearned for recognition, status and security.

The conversion of Catherine and William Callaghan in 1819 and 1822 respectively, was the "Open, Sesame" for Catherine's great mission of mercy. Given her personal experience of marginalization, she may be regarded as "the woman who stood in the breach," a woman ready to take risks, to carve new paths, to implement her germinating social vision which would provide an alternate solution to contemporary miseries and injustices. What I like to term the "ecumenical legacy" of William Callaghan enabled Catherine to emerge from a long period of reliance on others to one of absolute and extraordinary independence which was firmly rooted in God's providence and in Catherine's own conviction, stated to Sister M. Aloysius Scott on July 28, 1841, "Prayer can do more than all the money in the Bank of Ireland."

Liminality

Modern writers constantly remind us that the call to serve the world in its global embrace is innate to religious life. An integral part of evangelization entails that we look, not inwards or backwards, but outwards, not just to the margins of our society, but to the frontiers of the world. Here we recall Catherine's ambition to go to Nova Scotia. Her unambiguous response to observed need places her in a definitely liminal context. She could be regarded as a "solitary reaper" in those virtually unexplored areas of human need which characterized the Ireland and England of her day. Liminality is all about risk, and may be defined as the product of the creative imagination seeking to respond to pressing contemporary needs, and fueled by a new vision of the future. Negatively, liminality could be seen as akin to marginalization, alienation and exclusion. Positively, it may be perceived as a counter-cultural movement on the frontiers, opening up new horizons and indicating new possibilities. In this context, consider the "possibilities" opened up by Catherine's foundations, none of which was to be a replica of Baggot Street, but was to gear its ministry in response to local needs and circumstances.

We are singularly blessed in the tradition of liminality bequeathed to us by Catherine who, for the greater part of her life lived from one marginal situation to another. We have been enlarging and extending her horizon through our invocation of her charism for well over a century-and-a-half, counting from her profession in 1831.

Catherine addressed life as she saw it and she put herself at the "disposal of God" . . .

It was by placing herself at the cutting edge between the gospel and contemporary cultures and by her practical application of the gospel message that Catherine McAuley became a social reformer of remarkable energy and consistency. Her program of Mercy broke through contemporary barriers of indifference and discrimination to establish a ministry of social care and compassion geared towards the alleviation of need. Hers was the impetus which injected both drive and determination into that special core group which "started with two: Sister Doyle and I."

Catherine addressed life as she saw it and she put herself at the "disposal of God" (Rom. 6:13), as she strove to provide alternative solutions to the accumulated miseries of her day. Catherine does not belong to the group which might be termed "station masters," always checking on the clock. Time was for her "the purchase money of eternity." Instead of watching the clock, she was a prophet discerning the signs of her times. She was, therefore, at once a blessing and a bulwark to the church, as her attention to circumstances literally plummeted her into "boldness in initiatives" as the document *Mutuae Relationes* was to recommend as a blue-print for all religious in our own day. Catherine had a healing, reconciling effect on her times, as she stepped out in a faith-response to the needs of people as she saw them. Her life was, indeed, a constant effort "to act justly, to love tenderly and to

walk humbly with [her] God" (Micah 6:8). One finds a similar parallel in Habakkuk 3:19: "Yahweh, my Lord, is my strength; he will make my feet as light as the doe's, and set my steps in the heights." In all her doings, Catherine triumphed in the power and the presence of the Lord. She was, if I may borrow a delightful phrase from Saint Bernard, "saturated with the dew of Mercy," overflowing with affectionate kindness to all and gifted with many graces. There are several areas which express the liminality of Catherine's charism.

1. Social catalyst

Catherine McAuley placed herself at the "limen" or threshold, the cutting-edge between the gospel and the culture of her day. She proved herself to be transcultural and an agent of change as she discovered the vast reservoir of possibilities and activities implied by the concept of mercy. Her response to the challenges of her times was unequivocal. "The poor need help today, not next week." In all of this, and as an expression of liminality, Catherine endured the occupational hazards of a woman taking up her work within areas which had been traditionally and exclusively male. She resisted both threats and proselytizing.

2. Bravery in the face of penal enactments

Catherine was courageous in her selection of a building site in one of the wealthiest and most exclusive quarters of Dublin. She flaunted an unrevoked penal enactment which prohibited the erection of Catholic buildings on the main thoroughfares of Irish cities and towns. She achieved a breakthrough, succeeding where even Archbishop Daniel Murray had failed in 1823 in his plan to build his new pro-cathedral in Sackville (now O'Connell) Street. His plan had been rejected out of hand, leaving him with no other option but Marlboro Street, which meant distancing his project an entire block backwards. Catherine enjoyed greater success several years later. From her base at 102 Middle Abbey Street, Catherine regularly supervised her developing project on Baggot Street.

3. Creativity

Catherine McAuley was endowed with both creativity and the imagination which liminality evokes. Having already suggested that liminality includes an element of risk, I observe that risk was elemental to everything undertaken by our foundress. One must recall that before there was any structured community at Baggot Street, a specific ministry had developed there. It was precisely to protect and conserve this ministry that Catherine risked the establishment of a religious congregation as an effective response to an accumulation of social needs. "I never intended to establish a religious congregation," she said. "All I wanted was to help the poor, because that seemed to be what God was asking of me."

4. Religious life

Catherine's attitude toward the church of her day was subtle. She did not, at any time, confront this institutional church. Rather, she got it to collaborate with what her charism involved. Hers was not to be a congregation of enclosed religious women. The addition of twelve significant words to the Presentation vow formula, according to which she and her two companions were professed at George's Hill on December 12, 1831, made all the difference. The new vow formula included the phrase, "...subject to such alterations as shall hereafter be approved by the Archbishop." In this way, Catherine McAuley may be said to have cut the umbilical cord which till that time had hindered the mobility of religious sisters. She further emancipated her congregation from the formalism of religious life of the past in that she advocated a more participative form of community life.

5. Endurance of opposition

Catherine evoked hostility as well as admiration. Certain authorities in the church felt threatened by her. For instance, Archbishop Murray "had no idea a congregation was going to spring up of itself like this." Dean Walter Meyler caused her much anguish because of the chaplaincy dispute and his opposition to her receiving the collection from Sunday Mass, which the Archbishop had approved. The Archbishop himself did not utter one word in Catherine's defense during this protracted trial. Canon Matthias Kelly denounced her for going beyond her sphere as a woman and for interfering in matters best left to men. Jealousy underlay the antagonism of these two clerics. Each had a niece in the Congregation of Irish Sisters of Charity and both feared that Catherine's work would overshadow that of Mary Aikenhead. Neither foundress was party to this despicable campaign.

6. Compiler of the Rule

Catherine was what I like to term "significantly liminal," as was Angela Merici three centuries earlier, in being the compiler of her own Rule, those of its chapters which pertain to Mercy life. Angela and Catherine are the only two women in the long annals of the church to be so acclaimed. Both compilations were truly feminine. Today, with our expertise in reframing and re-drafting Rules and Constitutions, this may seem a rather weak boast. In point of fact, however, the compilation of our Rule was an outstanding achievement for a woman in nineteenth-century Ireland. At Rome, the Rule was highly approved for its "truly evangelical doctrine...for the solid piety it inculcated and for the spirit of the most perfect charity manifested" in it. According to the New Catholic Encyclopedia, "Papal approbation, which congregations of men enjoyed for almost three hundred years, was granted (to women) for the first time in 1841, when the Sisters of Mercy were approved as a

Religious Congregation." Although hesitant at first, since she thought that a religious cadre might stifle the dynamism and flexibility of what she envisaged, Catherine eventually drew up the Rule which gave scope and structure to the charism of Mercy.

Her mode of government was unique for her time, since it stressed, among other things, the principle of subsidiarity, sensitivity to the needs of the local church, flexibility and adaptability. In all of this, Catherine McAuley showed an acute awareness and concern for the local church, a century before a theology of the local church was developed in the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium*. Catherine continued to be a liminal figure, enterprising in her undertakings and collegial in the supervision of her expanding network of convents.

7. Evangelical flexibility

Liminality also attaches to Catherine's evangelical flexibility which, in turn—and more particularly in our own times—has led to a tremendous fissiparity of mission and ministry. At this point, we may conveniently ask ourselves: What is today's liminal challenge? Who and where are the boundary dwellers, those at the cutting-edge of our modern society? The answers are to be found in VITA and *Mercy Detroiter*, two publications which are regularly mailed to me from the United States and for which I am deeply grateful. I also express gratitude for the Australian newsletter, *Tracking Mercy*. Through these publications (and I'm now promised many more!) my evaluation of our contemporary mediation of Catherine's charism is constantly enhanced. I therefore take this opportunity to personally convey to all of you my thanks for, and my sincere appreciation of the manner in which you portray, not just Catherine's charism and spirituality, but also her liminality of vision and perspective. I should like to repeat—with regard to my early visits to Sisters of Mercy worldwide in the initial stages of my work on the Cause of our now Venerable Catherine—that without this experience of friendship, kindness, love, hospitality, ministry and dedication to Mercy and to Catherine, I would not have been able to evaluate her as I have done in my readings and in my Positio presented to the Congregation for Causes in 1985. In Catherine's name, as in my own, may I repeat a very sincere "Thank you and God bless you."

8. Liminal educator

Catherine took a radical approach to the injustice inflicted on the poor by depriving them of educational opportunities. Ignorance was a harsh fact of life in the pre-Emancipation Ireland of Catherine's day. The Penal Code of the late seventeenth century placed an absolute veto on education, a veto aimed at eliminating Irish Catholics from advancement in practically every area of life. This was the ignorance which Catherine McAuley addressed, even making "Service of the Ignorant" a special feature of the vow formula. There is, indeed, a wide gulf separating the "uneducated" and the "ignorant." Catherine tackled the latter, thus proving herself to be fearlessly liminal as an educator. She was not afraid of incurring the anger of the establishment by opening schools during a time when education was prohibited. Catherine began her educational work in Baggot Street in 1827, two years before Daniel O'Connell secured Catholic emancipation in 1829.

She launched into second-level education for children of the middle classes whose parents could not meet expenses of other fee-paying schools. She embarked on technical education, first at Middle Abbey Street and subsequently in her House of Mercy by training young girls for employment. She was the only Irish founder to penetrate the proselytising schools of the Kildare Place Society. She was unique in being the only founder to place her schools under the National Board of Education, established by the government in 1831. She believed her pupils would benefit by undergoing the examinations set by the Board. She saw tremendous evangelical possibilities also in these schools.

Catherine pioneered in Ireland the monitorial system for girls, as she was training as well the salarying monitresses in her Baggot Street School long before the Marlboro Street Training School was opened in 1836. This was a fee-paying institution reserved exclusively for boys. By 1877 Catherine's Baggot Street School was acknowledged as Ireland's first Training School for Girls, named *Sedes Sapientiae* (Seat of Wisdom).

A clarification can be made to the term "monitor." One of the many interpretations of monitor/monitress is that of "a senior pupil who assists in school discipline and who supervises." The monitorial system, as adopted by Catherine in her Baggot Street School was one by which, after the fashion of existing Model Schools, certain pupils were selected, given some pedagogical training and then given supervisory work in classrooms. In an interesting letter to Sister M. Anne Doyle in Tullamore on August 20, 1840, Catherine advised, "Try to get a well-qualified monitress from the Model School until your Sisters know the method...She should be paid a small salary, out of what the Board [of Education] allows." This statement is important in the evidence it affords that Catherine was paying salaries to her monitresses for several years before such payments were officially ratified by the Board in 1845.

9. Defender/Promoter of Justice

Ministry to the sick was a very special and comprehensive ministry for Catherine. She not only sought to promote "the cleanliness, ease and comfort" of the poor, but also to minister to their spiritual needs by reading the Word of God with and for them in a most

gracious and sensitive manner. Take, for instance, her courageous, liminal approach to visitation of Catholic patients in Dublin's Protestant-administered hospitals. These included Sir Patrick Dun's, Mercer's Madame Spencer's, The Coombe, the Hospital for Incurables in Donnybrook. In this area of hospital nursing she was particularly liminal in that she was the only Irish founder to see and appreciate the apostolic possibilities of the Workhouse System.

Irish Sisters of Mercy have come down in history as "the only Irish Congregation to have made its home among the Workhouse poor." As early as 1838 the Cork Sisters, within a year of their coming to the city, were daily visitors at the Workhouse. The system pursued there was based on indoor rather than outdoor relief and served only to assist those who sought temporary relief from indigence. Catherine's approach to poverty, outdoor relief though her ministry of visitation, was far more humane. It was one of the tremendous graces offered to her that on August 13, 1841, shortly before her departure for Birmingham, she had the happiness of securing permission of her Sisters "to attend upon the sick and infirm of their own persuasion in the South Dublin Union." This was the official name of the Dublin Workhouse.

10. Preferential option for the poor

Catherine's foundational enterprise was directly aimed at educating and healing the poor, safeguarding their faith and alleviating their hardships. She perceived, with the intuition of love, that it was not simply money that the poor needed. After all, a superfluous coin could well be the means of dispensing a person, any of us, from an act of genuine love and care. As Catherine herself said, the poor needed, most of all, "the kind word, the gentle, compassionate look and the patient hearing of sorrows." Here we come to liminality in another way. Because of Catherine's preferential option for the poor, in whom she discovered the suffering Christ, and her concern for their integral good, she anticipated in a very real sense the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* of Pope Paul VI. One of the two experts with me on the Historical Commission for the Cause was adamant in maintaining that "...in many important aspects, Catherine has at least as much, and in some case, more meaning for the twentieth century than she had for the mid-nineteenth century."

In all of her educational endeavors, Catherine McAuley was an important instigator of change. Her charism, which was at once original, creative, vibrant and relevant, showed her awareness of her contemporary milieu, as well as her perceptiveness in response. We could say that she pioneered a tremendous pluriformity of involvement, because hers was the type of creativity which liminality involves. The cutting-edge, the frontier always beckoned her towards new ways of being merciful.

11. Spirituality for change

Catherine's spirituality was liminal and a spirituality for change in the sense that she did not withdraw from temporal realities in order to seek God. She found Him in the midst of these realities. "Our hearts," she said, "can always remain in the same place: centered in God, for whom alone we go forward or stay back." There are other equally telling phrases from her letters and her maxims; and even though Catherine may not have heard of William Flete, a 14th century Augustinian mystic, she was certainly on his wavelength. He wrote, "The perfection of contemplation is achieved in works of charity."

I shall not dwell further on Catherine's spirituality, which is something we live with each day and upon which many of us have written. What I have presented on Catherine as a liminal figure is by no means exhaustive. There is still room in this area for worthwhile research which I hope will be undertaken in the not too distant future.

It has been my great pleasure to have shared even this much with you . As Catherine in her life showed "the unique marriage between the everyday and the eternal which marks the Celtic mind," I should like to conclude by praying a special Celtic blessing on you:

May the life you were given by the flowing water
grow stronger each day in you,
until the day when it reaches the fullness of its promise
in the land to which the swallows fly to eternal summer.

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Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy

Mary C. Sullivan, RSM

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CHAPTER 5 : OF THE PERFECTION OF ORDINARY ACTIONS

1st The perfection of the religious soul depends, not so much on doing extraordinary actions, as on doing [extraordinary] extraordinarily well the ordinary actions and exercises of every day. In this particularly consists the difference between the perfect and imperfect in a religious community. The daily duties are the same for all, the manner of performing them distinguishes the one from the other.[17]

2nd The Sisters of this religious [Institute] Congregation shall therefore endeavour to acquit themselves of the ordinary duties of their Institute with all possible care and attention, according to the advice of the Holy Ghost, "The good you ought to do—do it well," *viz.*, Prayer, Examen of conscience, assisting at Mass, Office, spiritual lecture, meals, recreations, and their respective employments. By performing each and every one of those duties well, they shall perfect themselves and their day shall be full of merit and good works.[18]

3rd But in order to perform these ordinary exercises well, with a view to their own perfection, they must have the purest intention of pleasing God. God and God alone must be the principal motive of all their actions—it is this pure intention of pleasing God that renders the good work valuable and meritorious. Without this the most laborious [application] duties of the Institute, the greatest

16 Archbishop Murray inserted "suitable" and deleted "from a Priest or respectable Lady" in the first sentence. In the next sentence he deleted "to any Lady, these" and added "beyond the humble circle of their Parents' home" and "they should be" in the last clause.

17 Catherine changes "in every Religious Community" to "in a religious community" and omits "common, and" before "the same for all". Dr. Murray changed her "extraordinary well" to "extraordinarily well".

18 Catherine deletes "and functions of their Institute" after "ordinary duties", changes "Their daily prayers" to "Prayer", drops "their" before "Examen", "assisting" and "office", omits "meals" and "school duties", and changes "all" to "each". Archbishop Murray substituted "Congregation" for "Institute", inserted "of their Institute", added "meals" to the list of ordinary duties, and inserted "their" before "respective employments".

austerities, the most heroic actions and sacrifices are of [no] little value, being divested of that merit which flows from a pure and upright intention, while on the contrary, actions the most trivial when accompanied by it become valuable and meritorious of Everlasting Life, nothing is lost, every word and action fructifies, the religious soul enriches herself every moment and lays up treasures of glory for an endless eternity.[19]

4th The Sisters should consider purity of intention in all their works, not merely as a simple practice of piety, but as an essential duty of Religion. They shall therefore most studiously watch over themselves and guard against the insinuations of self love, lest they lose the merit of their labors and good works by self complacency, vain glory, or by having in their actions any other motive or end in view, than to please Almighty God. They are never to act from mere inclination, whim or caprice, but all should be performed with regularity and exactness, and be referred with the utmost fervor [be referred] to the Divine Honor and Glory, in union with the most holy actions and Infinite Merits of Jesus Christ. They shall therefore not only make a general offering in the morning to God of the works and actions of [each] the day, but also renew that offering frequently in the day, having always in mind and engraved in their hearts, this important advice of the Apostle, "Whether you eat or whether you drink, or whatever else you do, do all for the Glory of God and in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."[20]

19 In Article 3 Catherine omits "in doing them" after "must" in the first sentence; she omits "principal" and "of pleasing God" in the second sentence and changes "that characterizes the good work, and renders it valuable" to "that renders the good work valuable"; and in the third sentence she shortens "the most laborious functions of the Institute" to "the most laborious application", changes "little value" to "no value" and "and are divested" to "being divested", leaves out "and indifferent in themselves" after "trivial", deletes "virtuous" before "valuable", changes "eternal" to "Everlasting", and changes "work" to "word". Archbishop Murray re-inserted "principal" and "of pleasing God" in the second sentence; in the third sentence he substituted "duties of the Institute" for Catherine's "application", changed her "no value" to "little value", inserted "and" in "pure and upright", and added "when accompanied by it". He also provided the end punctuation of the first two sentences.

20 In article 4, Catherine omits "this" before "purity" and omits "in all their works" after "intention" in the first sentence; in the second sentence she omits "subtle" before "self love", "or" before "vain glory", and "in their actions" after "view"; in the third sentence she omits "much less from passion" after "caprice", changes "their every action" to "all", moves "be referred", deletes "by them solely" after "referred", and deletes "most holy" before "actions"; in the fourth sentence she deletes "not only", "in the morning" and "but also at the commencement of every action in particular purify their motive." Archbishop Murray added "in all their works" in the first sentence, and "in their actions" in the second sentence. In the third sentence he moved Catherine's "be referred", and added "most holy" before "actions". In the fourth sentence, he added "not only" and "in the morning", changed "each day" to "the day", and inserted "but also renew that offering frequently in the day."

5th The means by which the Sisters may preserve this purity of intention and perform well all their actions, are first to keep themselves always in the Presence of God, remembering that He sees them and that on the manner in which they perform these works depends the judgment He will pronounce on them. Secondly, to do each work in particular as if it were the only one they had to do. By this they will avoid all hurry and precipitation in their actions. Thirdly, to do the duty of every day, as if that day were to be the last of their mortal life, ever mindful of this advice of their Heavenly Spouse, "Watch, be always prepared, you know not the day nor the hour in which you may be called upon."[21]

SESSION 2

Mercy and Catholic Higher Education
Institute of the Sisters of Mercy and CMHE Statements

Mercy Identity in Higher Education

STATEMENT ON CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND MERCY CHARISM FOR CONFERENCE FOR MERCY HIGHER EDUCATION (CMHE) COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas recognizes that higher education is integral to the mission of the Church and is an effective expression of our Mercy mission. The ministry expresses our commitment to the pursuit of truth and knowledge and to the furtherance of the social, political, economic, and spiritual well being of the human community. We encourage collaboration among Mercy institutions, regional communities and sisters in ministry.

--Institute Leadership Conference, Statement on Mercy Higher Education, 1993

OUR CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND MERCY CHARISM

A Mercy institution of higher education stands within the lineage of the Catholic intellectual tradition in its pursuit of truth and integration of knowledge for the common good. It participates in the Church's mission under the sponsorship of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas through the ministry of education, giving tangible evidence to its mission through ongoing teaching, scholarship and service. It demonstrates the values of mercy, justice and compassion as communicated through the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy. These common characteristics are uniquely given expression within each campus community.

Graduates of Mercy institutions are informed and shaped intellectually, socially and spiritually through a faith-inspired education. The academic study of the liberal arts and sciences and mastery of the professional disciplines enable Mercy graduates to be responsible leaders in their communities and professions. They appreciate and are informed by a Christian commitment to mercy and justice in the world. The living tradition of a Mercy college or university is sustained by a strong collegial community, with hospitality to new ideas and energies, and through collaboration within the Conference of Mercy Higher Education.

Statement approved by the CMHE Board April 20, 2010,
and by the Canonical Sponsor Council April 26, 2010

Constitutions - excerpts

"As Sisters of Mercy, we sponsor institutions to address our enduring concerns and to witness to Christ's mission. Within these institutions, we together with co-workers and those we serve, endeavor to model mercy and justice and to promote systemic change according to these ideals."

"By collaborating with others in the works of Mercy we continually learn from them how to be more merciful."

"We carry out our mission of mercy guided by prayerful consideration of the needs of our time, Catherine McAuley's preferential love for the poor and her special concern for women, the pastoral priorities of the universal and local church and our talents, resources and limitations."

Sisters of Mercy - Constitutions #5, 6, 7

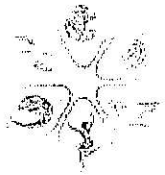
Institute Direction Statement

Animated by the Gospel and Catherine McAuley's passion for the poor, we, the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, are impelled to commit our lives and resources to act in solidarity with

the economically poor of the world, especially women and children;
women seeking fullness of life and equality in church and society;
one another as we embrace our multicultural and international reality.
This commitment will impel us to develop and act from a multicultural and international perspective;
speak with a corporate voice;
work for systemic change;
practice non-violence;
act in harmony and interdependence with all creation; and
call ourselves to continual conversion in our lifestyle and ministries.

adopted at the 1991 Founding Chapter,
revised 2005 Chapter;
affirmed Institute Chapter 2011

Critical Concerns



The Fifth Institute Chapter held in 2011 affirmed an intensified response to the critical concerns of our time including:

Immigration
Non-violence
Racism
Earth
Women

APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION

OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF

JOHN PAUL II

ON CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES

INTRODUCTION

BORN FROM THE HEART of the Church, a Catholic University is located in that course of tradition which may be traced back to the very origin of the University as an institution. It has always been recognized as an incomparable centre of creativity and dissemination of knowledge for the good of humanity. By vocation, the *Universitas magistrorum et scholarium* is dedicated to research, to teaching and to the education of students who freely associate with their teachers in a common love of knowledge(1). With every other University it shares that *gaudium de veritate,* so precious to Saint Augustine, which is that joy of searching for, discovering and communicating truth(2) in every field of knowledge. A Catholic University's privileged task is "to unite existentially by intellectual effort two orders of reality that too frequently tend to be placed in opposition as though they were antithetical: the search for truth, and the certainty of already knowing the fount of truth"(3).2. For many years I myself was deeply enriched by the beneficial experience of university life: the ardent search for truth and its unselfish transmission to youth and to all those learning to think rigorously, so as to act rightly and to serve humanity better.Therefore, I desire to share with everyone my profound respect for Catholic Universities, and to express my great appreciation for the work that is being done in them in the various spheres of knowledge. In a particular way, I wish to manifest my joy at the numerous meetings which the Lord has permitted me to have in the course of my apostolic journeys with the Catholic University communities of various continents. They are for me a lively and promising sign of the fecundity of the Christian mind in the heart of every culture. They give me a well-founded hope for a new flowering of Christian culture in the rich and varied context of our changing times, which certainly face serious challenges but which also bear so much promise under the action of the Spirit of truth and of love.It is also my desire to express my pleasure and gratitude to the very many Catholic scholars engaged in teaching and research in non-Catholic Universities. Their task as academics and scientists, lived out in the light of the Christian faith, is to be considered precious for the good of the Universities in which they teach. Their presence, in fact, is a continuous stimulus to the selfless search for truth and for the wisdom that comes from above.3. Since the beginning of this Pontificate, I have shared these ideas and sentiments with my closest collaborators, the Cardinals, with the Congregation for Catholic Education, and with men and women of culture throughout the world. In fact, the dialogue of the Church with the cultures of our times is that vital area where "the future of the Church and of the world is being played out as we conclude the

twentieth century"(4). There is only one cultre: that of man, by man and for man(5). And thanks to her Catholic Universities and their humanistic and scientific inheritance, the Church, expert in humanity, as my predecessor, Paul VI, expressed it at the United Nations(6), explores the mysteries of humanity and of the world, clarifying them in the light of Revelation.4. It is the honour and responsibility of a Catholic University to consecrate itself without reserve to *the cause of truth.* This is its way of serving at one and the same time both the dignity of man and the good of the Church, which has "an intimate conviction that truth is (its) real ally ... and that knowledge and reason are sure ministers to faith"(7). Without in any way neglecting the acquisition of useful knowledge, a Catholic University is distinguished by its free search for the whole truth about nature, man and God. The present age is in urgent need of this kind of disinterested service, namely of *proclaiming the meaning of truth,* that fundamental value without which freedom, justice and human dignity are extinguished. By means of a kind of universal humanism a Catholic University is completely dedicated to the research of all aspects of truth in their essential connection with the supreme Truth, who is God. It does this without fear but rather with enthusiasm, dedicating itself to every path of knowledge, aware of being preceded by him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life"(8), the *Logos,* whose Spirit of intelligence and love enables the human person with his or her own intelligence to find the ultimate reality of which he is the source and end and who alone is capable of giving fully that Wisdom without which the future of the world would be in danger.5. It is in the context of the impartial search for truth that the relationship between faith and reason is brought to light and meaning. The invitation of Saint Augustine, *"Intellege ut credas; crede ut intellegas"*(9), is relevant to Catholic Universities that are called to explore courageously the riches of Revelation and of nature so that the united endeavour of intelligence and faith will enable people to come to the full measure of their humanity, created in the image and likeness of God, renewed even more marvellously, after sin, in Christ, and called to shine forth in the light of the Spirit.6. Through the encounter which it establishes between the unfathomable richness of the salvific message of the Gospel and the variety and immensity of the fields of knowledge in which that richness is incarnated by it, a Catholic University enables the Church to institute an incomparably fertile dialogue with people of every culture. Man's life is given dignity by culture, and, while he finds his fullness in Christ, there can be no doubt that the Gospel which reaches and renews him in every dimension is also fruitful for the culture in which he lives.7. In the world today, characterized by such rapid developments in science and technology, the tasks of a Catholic University assume an ever greater importance and urgency. Scientific and technological discoveries create an enormous economic and industrial growth, but they also inescapably require the correspondingly necessary *search for meaning* in order to guarantee that the new discoveries be used for the authentic good of individuals and of human society as a whole. If it is the responsibility of every University to search for such meaning, a Catholic University is called in a particular way to respond to this need: its Christian inspiration enables it to include the moral, spiritual and religious dimension in its research, and to evaluate the attainments of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the human person.In this context, Catholic Universities are called to a continuous renewal, both as "Universities" and as "Catholic". For, "What is at stake is the *very meaning of scientific and technological research, of social life and of culture,* but, on an even more profound level, what is at stake is *the very meaning of the human person"*(10). Such renewal requires a clear awareness that, by its Catholic character, a University is made more capable of conducting an *impartial* search for truth, a search that is neither subordinated to nor conditioned by particular interests of any kind.8. Having already dedicated the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* to Ecclesiastical Faculties and Universities(11), I then felt obliged to propose an analogous Document for Catholic Universities as a sort of "magna carta", enriched by the long and fruitful experience of the Church in the realm of Universities and open to the promise of future achievements that will require courageous creativity and rigorous fidelity.9. The present Document is addressed especially to those who conduct Catholic Universities, to the respective academic communities, to all those who have an interest in them,

particularly the Bishops, Religious Congregations and ecclesial *Institutions,* and to the numerous laity who are committed to the great mission of higher education. Its purpose is that "the Christian mind may achieve, as it were, a public, persistent and universal presence in the whole enterprise of advancing higher culture and that the students of these institutions become people outstanding in learning, ready to shoulder society's heavier burdens and to witness the faith to the world"(12).10. In addition to Catholic Universities, I also turn to the many Catholic Institutions of higher education. According to their nature and proper objectives, they share some or all of the characteristics of a University and they offer their own contribution to the Church and to society, whether through research, education or professional training. While this Document specifically concerns Catholic Universities, it is also meant to include all Catholic Institutions of higher education engaged in instilling the Gospel message of Christ in souls and cultures.Therefore, it is with great trust and hope that I invite all Catholic Universities to pursue their irreplaceable task. Their mission appears increasingly necessary for the encounter of the Church with the development of the sciences and with the cultures of our age.Together with all my brother Bishops who share pastoral responsibility with me, I would like to manifest my deep conviction that a Catholic University is without any doubt one of the best instruments that the Church offers to our age which is searching for certainty and wisdom. Having the mission of bringing the Good News to everyone, the Church should never fail to interest herself in this Institution. By research and teaching, Catholic Universities assist the Church in the manner most appropriate to modern times to find cultural treasures both old and new, *"nova et vetera",* according to the words of Jesus(13).11. Finally, I turn to the whole Church, convinced that Catholic Universities are essential to her growth and to the development of Christian culture and human progress. For this reason, the entire ecclesial Community is invited to give its support to Catholic Institutions of higher education and to assist them in their process of development and renewal. It is invited in a special way to guard the rights and freedom of these Institutions in civil society, and to offer them economic aid, especially in those countries where they have more urgent need of it, and to furnish assistance in founding new Catholic Universities wherever this might be necessary.My hope is that these prescriptions, based on the teaching of Vatican Council II and the directives of the Code of Canon Law, will enable Catholic Universities and other Institutes of higher studies to fulfil their indispensable mission in the new advent of grace that is opening up to the new Millennium.

PART I

IDENTITY AND MISSION

A. THE IDENTITY OF A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

1. Nature and Objectives

12. Every Catholic University, *as a university,* is an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching and various services offered to the local, national and international communities(14). It possesses that institutional autonomy necessary to perform its functions effectively and guarantees its members academic freedom, so long as the rights of the individual person and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good(15).

13. Since the objective of a Catholic University is to assure in an institutional manner a Christian presence in the university world confronting the great problems of society and culture(16), every Catholic University, as *Catholic,* must have the following *essential characteristics:*

"1. a Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such;

2. a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;

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

4. an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life"(17).

14. "In the light of these four characteristics, it is evident that besides the teaching, research and services common to all Universities, a Catholic University, by *institutional commitment,* brings to its task the inspiration and light of the *Christian message.* In a Catholic University, therefore, Catholic ideals, attitudes and principles penetrate and inform university activities in accordance with the proper nature and autonomy of these activities. In a word, being both a University and Catholic, it must be both a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge, and an academic institution in which Catholicism is vitally present and operative"(18).

15. A Catholic University, therefore, is a place of research, where scholars *scrutinize reality* with the methods proper to each academic discipline, and so contribute to the treasury of human knowledge. Each individual discipline is studied in a systematic manner; moreover, the various disciplines are brought into dialogue for their mutual enhancement.

In addition to assisting men and women in their continuing quest for the truth, this research provides an effective witness, especially necessary today, to the Church's belief in the intrinsic value of knowledge and research.

In a Catholic University, research necessarily includes *(a)* the search for an *integration of knowledge, (b)* a *dialogue between faith and reason, (c)* an *ethical concern,* and *(d)* a *theological perspective.*

16. *Integration of knowledge* is a process, one which will always remain incomplete; moreover, the explosion of knowledge in recent decades, together with the rigid compartmentalization of knowledge within individual academic disciplines, makes the task increasingly difficult. But a University, and especially a Catholic University, *"has to be a 'living union' of individual organisms* dedicated to the search for truth ... It is necessary *to work towards a higher synthesis* of knowledge, in which alone lies the possibility of satisfying that thirst for truth which is profoundly

inscribed on the heart of the human person"(19). Aided by the specific contributions of philosophy and theology, university scholars will be engaged in a constant effort to determine the relative place and meaning of each of the various disciplines within the context of a vision of the human person and the world that is enlightened by the Gospel, and therefore by a faith in Christ, the *Logos,* as the centre of creation and of human history.

17. In promoting this integration of knowledge, a specific part of a Catholic University's task is to promote *dialogue between faith and reason,* so that it can be seen more profoundly how faith and reason bear harmonious witness to the unity of all truth. While each academic discipline retains its own integrity and has its own methods, this dialogue demonstrates that "methodical research within every branch of learning, when carried out in a truly scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, can never truly conflict with faith. For the things of the earth and the concerns of faith derive from the same God"(20). A vital interaction of two distinct levels of coming to know the one truth leads to a greater love for truth itself, and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of human life and of the purpose of God's creation.

18. Because knowledge is meant to serve the human person, research in a Catholic University is always carried out with a concern for the *ethical* and *moral implications* both of its methods and of its discoveries. This concern, while it must be present in all research, is particularly important in the areas of science and technology. "It is essential that we be convinced of the priority of the ethical over the technical, of the primacy of the person over things, of the superiority of the spirit over matter. The cause of the human person will only be served if knowledge is joined to conscience. Men and women of science will truly aid humanity only if they preserve 'the sense of the transcendence of the human person over the world and of God over the human person"(21).

19. *Theology* plays a particularly important role in the search for a synthesis of knowledge as well as in the dialogue between faith and reason. It serves all other disciplines in their search for meaning, not only by helping them to investigate how their discoveries will affect individuals and society but also by bringing a perspective and an orientation not contained within their own methodologies. In turn, interaction with these other disciplines and their discoveries enriches theology, offering it a better understanding of the world today, and making theological research more relevant to current needs. Because of its specific importance among the academic disciplines, every Catholic University should have a faculty, or at least a chair, of theology(22).

20. Given the close connection between research and teaching, the research qualities indicated above will have their influence on all teaching. While each discipline is taught systematically and according to its own methods, *interdisciplinary studies,* assisted by a careful and thorough study of philosophy and theology, enable students to acquire an organic vision of reality and to develop a continuing desire for intellectual progress. In the communication of knowledge, emphasis is then placed on how *human reason in its reflection* opens to increasingly broader questions, and how the complete answer to them can only come from above through faith. Furthermore, the *moral*

implications that are present in each discipline are examined as an integral part of the teaching of that discipline so that the entire educative process be directed towards the whole development of the person. Finally, Catholic theology, taught in a manner faithful to Scripture, Tradition, and the Church's Magisterium, provides an awareness of the Gospel principles which will enrich the meaning of human life and give it a new dignity.

Through research and teaching the students are educated in the various disciplines so as to become truly competent in the specific sectors in which they will devote themselves to the service of society and of the Church, but at the same time prepared to give the witness of their faith to the world.

2. The University Community

21. A Catholic University pursues its objectives through its formation of an authentic human community animated by the spirit of Christ. The source of its unity springs from a common dedication to the truth, a common vision of the dignity of the human person and, ultimately, the person and message of Christ which gives the Institution its distinctive character. As a result of this inspiration, the community is animated by a spirit of freedom and charity; it is characterized by mutual respect, sincere dialogue, and protection of the rights of individuals. It assists each of its members to achieve wholeness as human persons; in turn, everyone in the community helps in promoting unity, and each one, according to his or her role and capacity, contributes towards decisions which affect the community, and also towards maintaining and strengthening the distinctive Catholic character of the Institution.

22. *University teachers* should seek to improve their competence and endeavour to set the content, objectives, methods, and results of research in an individual discipline within the framework of a coherent world vision. Christians among the teachers are called to be witnesses and educators of authentic Christian life, which evidences attained integration between faith and life, and between professional competence and Christian wisdom. All teachers are to be inspired by academic ideals and by the principles of an authentically human life.

23. Students are challenged to pursue an education that combines excellence in humanistic and cultural development with specialized professional training. Most especially, they are challenged to continue the search for truth and for meaning throughout their lives, since "the human spirit must be cultivated in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate, to make personal judgments, and to develop a religious, moral, and social sense"(23). This enables them to acquire or, if they have already done so, to deepen a Christian way of life that is authentic. They should realize the responsibility of their professional life, the enthusiasm of being the trained 'leaders' of tomorrow, of being witnesses to Christ in whatever place they may exercise their profession.

24. *Directors* and *administrators* in a Catholic University promote the constant growth of the University and its community through a leadership of service; the dedication and witness of the *non-academic staff* are vital for the identity and life of the University.

25. Many Catholic Universities were founded by Religious Congregations, and continue to depend on their support; those Religious Congregations dedicated to the apostolate of higher education are urged to assist these Institutions in the renewal of their commitment, and to continue to prepare religious men and women who can positively contribute to the mission of a Catholic University.

Lay people have found in university activities a means by which they too could exercise an important apostolic role in the Church and, in most Catholic Universities today, the academic community is largely composed of laity; in increasing numbers, lay men and women are assuming important functions and responsibilities for the direction of these Institutions. These lay Catholics are responding to the Church's call "to be present, as signs of courage and intellectual creativity, in the privileged places of culture, that is, the world of education-school and university"(24). The future of Catholic Universities depends to a great extent on the competent and dedicated service of lay Catholics. The Church sees their developing presence in these institutions both as a sign of hope and as a confirmation of the irreplaceable lay vocation in the Church and in the world, confident that lay people will, in the exercise of their own distinctive role, "illumine and organize these (temporal) affairs in such a way that they always start out, develop, and continue according to Christ's mind, to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer"(25).

26. The university community of many Catholic institutions includes members of other Churches, ecclesial communities and religions, and also those who profess no religious belief. These men and women offer their training and experience in furthering the various academic disciplines or other university tasks.

3. The Catholic University in the Church

27. Every Catholic University, without ceasing to be a University, has a relationship to the Church that is essential to its institutional identity. As such, it participates most directly in the life of the local Church in which it is situated; at the same time, because it is an academic institution and therefore a part of the international community of scholarship and inquiry, each institution participates in and contributes to the life and the mission of the universal Church, assuming consequently a special bond with the Holy See by reason of the service to unity which it is called to render to the whole Church. One consequence of its essential relationship to the Church is that the *institutional* fidelity of the University to the Christian message includes a recognition of and adherence to the teaching authority of the Church in matters of faith and morals. Catholic members of the university community are also called to a personal fidelity to the Church with all that this implies. Non-Catholic members are required to respect the Catholic character of the

University, while the University in turn respects their religious liberty(26).

28. Bishops have a particular responsibility to promote Catholic Universities, and especially to promote and assist in the preservation and strengthening of their Catholic identity, including the protection of their Catholic identity in relation to civil authorities. This will be achieved more effectively if close personal and pastoral relationships exist between University and Church authorities, characterized by mutual trust, close and consistent cooperation and continuing dialogue. Even when they do not enter directly into the internal governance of the University, Bishops "should be seen not as external agents but as participants in the life of the Catholic University"(27).

29. The Church, accepting "the legitimate autonomy of human culture and especially of the sciences", recognizes the academic freedom of scholars in each discipline in accordance with its own principles and proper methods(28), and within the confines of the truth and the common good.

Theology has its legitimate place in the University alongside other disciplines. It has proper principles and methods which define it as a branch of knowledge. Theologians enjoy this same freedom so long as they are faithful to these principles and methods.

Bishops should encourage the creative work of theologians. They serve the Church through research done in a way that respects theological method. They seek to understand better, further develop and more effectively communicate the meaning of Christian Revelation as transmitted in Scripture and Tradition and in the Church's Magisterium. They also investigate the ways in which theology can shed light on specific questions raised by contemporary culture. At the same time, since theology seeks an understanding of revealed truth whose authentic interpretation is entrusted to the Bishops of the Church(29), it is intrinsic to the principles and methods of their research and teaching in their academic discipline that theologians respect the authority of the Bishops, and assent to Catholic doctrine according to the degree of authority with which it is taught(30). Because of their interrelated roles, dialogue between Bishops and theologians is essential; this is especially true today, when the results of research are so quickly and so widely communicated through the media(31).

B. THE MISSION OF SERVICE OF A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

30. The basic mission of a University is a continuous quest for truth through its research, and the preservation and communication of knowledge for the good of society. A Catholic University participates in this mission with its own specific characteristics and purposes.

1. Service to Church and Society

31. Through teaching and research, a Catholic University offers an indispensable contribution to the Church. In fact, it prepares men and women who, inspired by Christian principles and helped to live their Christian vocation in a mature and responsible manner, will be able to assume positions of responsibility in the Church. Moreover, by offering the results of its scientific research, a Catholic University will be able to help the Church respond to the problems and needs of this age.

32. A Catholic University, as any University, is immersed in human society; as an extension of its service to the Church, and always within its proper competence, it is called on to become an ever more effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals as well as for society. Induded among its research activities, therefore, will be a study of *serious contemporary problems* in areas such as 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. University research will seek to discover the roots and causes of the serious problems of our time, paying special attention to their ethical and religious dimensions.

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.

33. A specific priority is the need to examine and evaluate the predominant values and norms of modern society and culture in a Christian perspective, and the responsibility to try to communicate to society those *ethical and religious principles which give full meaning to human life.* In this way a University can contribute further to the development of a true Christian anthropology, founded on the person of Christ, which will bring the dynamism of the creation and redemption to bear on reality and on the correct solution to the problems of life.

34. The Christian spirit of service to others for the *promotion of social justice* is of particular importance for each Catholic University, to be shared by its teachers and developed in its students. The Church is firmly committed to the integral growth of all men and women(32). The Gospel, interpreted in the social teachings of the Church, is an urgent call to promote "the development of those peoples who are striving to escape from hunger, misery, endemic diseases and ignorance; of those who are looking for a wider share in the benefits of civilization and a more active improvement of their human qualities; of those who are aiming purposefully at their complete fulfilment"(33). Every Catholic University feels responsible to contribute concretely to the progress of the society within which it works: for example it will be capable of searching for ways to make university education accessible to all those who are able to benefit from it, especially the poor or members of minority groups who customarily have been deprived of it. A Catholic University also has the responsibility, to the degree that it is able, to help to promote the development of the emerging nations.

35. In its attempts to resolve these complex issues that touch on so many different dimensions of human life and of society, a Catholic University will insist on cooperation among the different academic disciplines, each offering its distinct contribution in the search for solutions; moreover, since the economic and personal resources of a single Institution are limited, cooperation in *common research projects* among Catholic Universities, as well as with other private and governmental institutions, is imperative. In this regard, and also in what pertains to the other fields of the specific activity of a Catholic University, the role played by various national and international associations of Catholic Universities is to be emphasized. Among these associations the mission of *The International Federation of Catholic Universities,* founded by the Holy See(34), is particularly to be remembered. The Holy See anticipates further fruitful collaboration with this Federation.

36. Through programmes of *continuing education* offered to the wider community, by making its scholars available for consulting services, by taking advantage of modern means of communication, and in a variety of other ways, a Catholic University can assist in making the growing body of human knowledge and a developing understanding of the faith available to a wider public, thus expanding university services beyond its own academic community.

37. In its service to society, a Catholic University *will relate especially to the academic, cultural and scientific world* of the region in which it is located. Original forms of dialogue and collaboration are to be encouraged between the Catholic Universities and the other Universities of a nation on behalf of development, of understanding between cultures, and of the defence of nature in accordance with an awareness of the international ecological situation.

Catholic Universities join other private and public Institutions in serving the public interest through higher education and research; they are one among the variety of different types of institution that are necessary for the free expression of cultural diversity, and they are committed to the promotion of solidarity and its meaning in society and in the world. Therefore they have the full right to expect that civil society and public authorities will recognize and defend their institutional autonomy and academic freedom; moreover, they have the right to the financial support that is necessary for their continued existence and development.

2. Pastoral Ministry

38. Pastoral ministry is that activity of the University which offers the members of the university community an opportunity to integrate religious and moral principles with their academic study and non-academic activities, *thus integrating faith with life.* It is part of the mission of the Church within the University, and is also a constitutive element of a Catholic University itself, both in its structure and in its life. A university community concerned with promoting the Institution's Catholic character will be conscious of this pastoral dimension and sensitive to the ways in which it can have an influence on all university activities.

39. As a natural expression of the Catholic identity of the University, the university community *should give a practical demonstration of its faith in its daily activity,* with important moments of reflection and of prayer. Catholic members of this community will be offered opportunities to assimilate Catholic teaching and practice into their lives and will be encouraged to participate in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist as the most perfect act of community worship. When the academic community includes members of other Churches, ecclesial communities or religions, their initiatives for reflection and prayer in accordance with their own beliefs are to be respected.

40. Those involved in pastoral ministry will encourage teachers and students to become more aware of their responsibility towards those who are suffering physically or spiritually. Following the example of Christ, they will be particularly attentive to the poorest and to those who suffer economic, social, cultural or religious injustice. This responsibility begins within the academic community, but it also finds application beyond it.

41. Pastoral ministry is an indispensable means by which Catholic students can, in fulfilment of their baptism, *be prepared for active participation in the life of the Church;* it can assist in developing and nurturing the value of marriage and family life, fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life, stimulating the Christian commitment of the laity and imbuing every activity with the spirit of the Gospel. Close cooperation between pastoral ministry in a Catholic University and the other activities within the local Church, under the guidance or with the approval of the diocesan Bishop, will contribute to their mutual growth(35).

42. Various associations or movements of spiritual and apostolic life, especially those developed specifically for students, can be of great assistance in developing the pastoral aspects of university life.

3. Cultural Dialogue

43. By its very nature, a University develops culture through its research, helps to transmit the local culture to each succeeding generation through its teaching, and assists cultural activities through its educational services. It is open to all human experience and is ready to dialogue with and learn from any culture. A Catholic University shares in this, offering the rich experience of the Church's own culture. In addition, a Catholic University, aware that human culture is open to Revelation and transcendence, is also a primary and privileged place for a *fruitful dialogue between the Gospel and culture.*

44. 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 means by which it can make the faith better understood by the men and women of a particular culture(36). While it is true that the Gospel

cannot be identified with any particular culture and transcends all cultures, it is also true that "the Kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by men and women who are profoundly linked to a culture, and the building up of the Kingdom cannot avoid borrowing the elements of human culture or cultures(37). "A faith that places itself on the margin of what is human, of what is therefore culture, would be a faith unfaithful to the fullness of what the Word of God manifests and reveals, a decapitated faith, worse still, a faith in the process of self-annihilation"(38).

45. 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. 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. To a respect for persons is joined *the preeminent value of the family,* the primary unit of every human culture.

Catholic Universities will seek to discern and evaluate both the aspirations and the contradictions of modern culture, in order to make it more suited to the total development of individuals and peoples. In particular, it is recommended 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 modem culture be studied deeply. Traditional cultures are to be defended in their identity, helping them to receive modern values without sacrificing their own heritage, which is a wealth for the whole of the human family. Universities, situated within the ambience of these cultures, will seek to harmonize local cultures with the positive contributions of modern cultures.

46. An area that particularly interests a Catholic University is the *dialogue between Christian thought and the modern sciences.* This task requires persons particularly well versed in the individual disciplines and who are at the same time adequately prepared theologically, and who are capable of confronting epistemological questions at the level of the relationship between faith and reason. Such dialogue concerns the natural sciences as much as the human sciences which posit new and complex philosophical and ethical problems. The Christian researcher should demonstrate the way in which human intelligence is enriched by the higher truth that comes from the Gospel: "The intelligence is never diminished, rather, it is stimulated and reinforced by that interior fount of deep understanding that is the Word of God, and by the hierarchy of values that results from it... In its unique manner, the Catholic University helps to manifest the superiority of the spirit, that can never, without the risk of losing its very self, be placed at the service of something other than the search for truth"(39).

47. Besides cultural dialogue, a Catholic University, in accordance vith its specific ends, and keeping in mind the various religious-cultural contexts, following the directives promulgated by competent ecclesiastical authority, can offer a contribution to ecumenical dialogue. It does so to further the search for unity among all Christians. In inter-religious dialogue it will assist in discerning the spiritual values that are present in the different religions.

4. Evangelization

48. The primary mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel in such a way that a relationship between faith and life is established in each individual and in the socio-cultural context in which individuals live and act and communicate with one another. Evangelization means "bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new... It is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and, as it were, upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, humanity's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation"(40).

49. By its very nature, each Catholic University makes an important contribution to the Church's work of evangelization. It is a living *institutional* witness to Christ and his message, so vitally important in cultures marked by secularism, or where Christ and his message are still virtually unknown. Moreover, all the basic academic activities of a Catholic University are connected with and in harmony with the evangelizing mission of the Church: research carried out in the light of the Christian message which puts new human discoveries at the service of individuals and society; education offered in a faith-context that forms men and women capable of rational and critical judgment and conscious of the transcendent dignity of the human person; professional training that incorporates ethical values and a sense of service to individuals and to society; the dialogue with culture that makes the faith better understood, and the theological research that translates the faith into contemporary language. "Precisely because it is more and more conscious of its salvific mission in this world, the Church wants to have these centres closely connected with it; it wants to have them present and operative in spreading the authentic message of Christ"(41).

PART II

GENERAL NORMS

Article 1. *The Nature of these General Norms*

§1. These General Norms are based on, and are a further development of, the Code of Canon Law(42) and the complementary Church legislation, without prejudice to the right of the Holy See to intervene should this become necessary. They are valid for all Catholic Universities and other Catholic Institutes of Higher Studies throughout the world.

§2. The General Norms are to be applied concretely at the local and regional levels by Episcopal Conferences and other Assemblies of Catholic Hierarchy(43) in conformity with the Code of Canon Law and complementary Church legislation, taking into account the Statutes of each University or Institute and, as far as possible and appropriate, civil law. After review by the Holy See(44), these

local or regional "Ordinances" will be valid for all Catholic Universities and other Catholic Institutes of Higher Studies in the region, except for Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties. These latter Institutions, including Ecclesiastical Faculties which are part of a Catholic University, are governed by the norms of the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana(45).*

§3. A University established or approved by the Holy See, by an Episcopal Conference or another Assembly of Catholic Hierarchy, or by a diocesan Bishop is to incorporate these General Norms and their local and regional applications into its governing documents, and conform its existing Statutes both to the General Norms and to their applications, and submit them for approval to the competent ecclesiastical Authority. It is contemplated that other Catholic Universities, that is, those not established or approved in any of the above ways, with the agreement of the local ecclesiastical Authority, will make their own the General Norms and their local and regional applications, internalizing them into their governing documents, and, as far as possible, will conform their existing Statutes both to these General Norms and to their applications.

Article 2. *The Nature of a Catholic University*

§1. A Catholic University, like every university, is a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge. It is dedicated to research, to teaching, and to various kinds of service in accordance with its cultural mission.

§2. A Catholic University, as Catholic, informs and carries out its research, teaching, and all other activities with Catholic ideals, principles and attitudes. It is linked with the Church either by a formal, constitutive and statutory bond or by reason of an institutional commitment made by those responsible for it.

§3. Every Catholic University is to make known its Catholic identity, either in a mission statement or in some other appropriate public document, unless authorized otherwise by the competent ecclesiastical Authority. The University, particularly through its structure and its regulations, is to provide means which will guarantee the expression and the preservation of this identity in a manner consistent with §2.

§4. Catholic teaching and discipline are to influence all university activities, while the freedom of conscience of each person is to be fully respected(46). Any official action or commitment of the University is to be in accord with its Catholic identity.

§5. A Catholic University possesses the autonomy necessary to develop its distinctive identity and pursue its proper mission. Freedom in research and teaching is recognized and respected according to the principles and methods of each individual discipline, so long as the rights of the individual and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good(47).

Article 3. *The Establishment of a Catholic University*

§1. A Catholic University may be established or approved by the Holy See, by an Episcopal Conference or another Assembly of Catholic Hierarchy, or by a diocesan Bishop.

§2. With the consent of the diocesan Bishop, a Catholic University may also be established by a Religious Institute or other public juridical person.

§3. A Catholic University may also be established by other ecclesiastical or lay persons; such a University may refer to itself as a Catholic University only with the consent of the competent ecclesiastical Authority, in accordance with the conditions upon which both parties shall agree(48).

§4. In the cases of §§ 1 and 2, the Statutes must be approved by the competent ecclesiastical Authority.

Article 4. *The University Community*

§1. The responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic identity of the University rests primarily with the University itself. While this responsibility is entrusted principally to university authorities (including, when the positions exist, the Chancellor and/or a Board of Trustees or equivalent body), it is shared in varying degrees by all members of the university community, and therefore calls for the recruitment of adequate university personnel, especially teachers and administrators, who are both willing and able to promote that identity. The identity of a Catholic University is essentially linked to the quality of its teachers and to respect for Catholic doctrine. It is the responsibility of the competent Authority to watch over these two fundamental needs in accordance with what is indicated in Canon Law(49).

§2. All teachers and all administrators, at the time of their appointment, are to be informed about the Catholic identity of the Institution and its implications, and about their responsibility to promote, or at least to respect, that identity.

§3. In ways appropriate to the different academic disciplines, all Catholic teachers are to be faithful to, and all other teachers are to respect, Catholic doctrine and morals in their research and teaching. In particular, Catholic theologians, aware that they fulfil a mandate received from the Church, are to be faithful to the Magisterium of the Church as the authentic interpreter of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition(50).

§4. Those university teachers and administrators who belong to other Churches, ecclesial communities, or religions, as well as those who profess no religious belief, and also all students, are to recognize and respect the distinctive Catholic identity of the University. In order not to endanger the Catholic identity of the University or Institute of Higher Studies, the number of non-

Catholic teachers should not be allowed to constitute a majority within the Institution, which is and must remain Catholic.

§5. The education of students is to combine academic and professional development with formation in moral and religious principles and the social teachings of the Church; the programme of studies for each of the various professions is to include an appropriate ethical formation in that profession. Courses in Catholic doctrine are to be made available to all students(51).

Article 5. *The Catholic University within the Church*

§1. Every Catholic University is to maintain communion with the universal Church and the Holy See; it is to be in close communion with the local Church and in particular with the diocesan Bishops of the region or nation in which it is located. In ways consistent with its nature as a University, a Catholic University will contribute to the Church's work of evangelization.

§2. Each Bishop has a responsibility to promote the welfare of the Catholic Universities in his diocese and has the right and duty to watch over the preservation and strengthening of their Catholic character. If problems should arise conceming this Catholic character, the local Bishop is to take the initiatives necessary to resolve the matter, working with the competent university authorities in accordance with established procedures(52) and, if necessary, with the help of the Holy See.

§3. Periodically, each Catholic University, to which Artide 3, 1 and 2 refers, is to communicate relevant information about the University and its activities to the competent ecclesiastical Authority. Other Catholic Universities are to communicate this information to the Bishop of the diocese in which the principal seat of the Institution is located.

Article 6. *Pastoral Ministry*

§1. A Catholic University is to promote the pastoral care of all members of the university community, and to be especially attentive to the spiritual development of those who are Catholics. Priority is to be given to those means which will facilitate the integration of human and professional education with religious values in the light of Catholic doctrine, in order to unite intellectual learning with the religious dimension of life.

§2. A sufficient number of qualified people-priests, religious, and lay persons-are to be appointed to provide pastoral ministry for the university community, carried on in harmony and cooperation with the pastoral activities of the local Church under the guidance or with the approval of the diocesan Bishop. All members of the university community are to be invited to assist the work of pastoral ministry, and to collaborate in its activities.

Article 7. *Cooperation*

§1. In order better to confront the complex problems facing modern society, and in order to strengthen the Catholic identity of the Institutions, regional, national and international cooperation is to be promoted in research, teaching, and other university activities among all Catholic Universities, induding Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties(53). Such cooperation is also to be promoted between Catholic Universities and other Universities, and with other research and educational Institutions, both private and governmental.

§2. Catholic Universities will, when possible and in accord with Catholic principles and doctrine, cooperate with government programmes and the programmes of other national and international Organizations on behalf of justice, development and progress.

TRANSITIONAL NORMS

Art. 8. The present Constitution will come into effect on the first day to the academic year 1991.

Art. 9. The application of the Constitution is committed to the Congregation for Catholic Education, which has the duty to promulgate the necessary directives that will serve towards that end.

Art. 10. It will be the competence of the Congregation for Catholic Education, when with the passage of time circumstances require it, to propose changes to be made in the present Constitution in order that it may be adapted continuously to the needs of Catholic Universities.

Art. 11. Any particular laws or customs presently in effect that are contrary to this Constitution are abolished. Also, any privileges granted up to this day by the Holy See whether to physical or moral persons that are contrary to this present Constitution are abolished.

CONCLUSION

The mission that the Church, with great hope, entrusts to Catholic Universities holds a cultural and religious meaning of vital importance because it concerns the very future of humanity. The renewal requested of Catholic Universities will make them better able to respond to the task of bringing the message of Christ to man, to society, to the various cultures: "Every human reality, both individual and social has been liberated by Christ: persons, as well as the activities of men and women, of which culture is the highest and incarnate expression. The salvific action of the Church on cultures is achieved, first of all, by means of persons, families and educators... Jesus Christ, our Saviour, offers his light and his hope to all those who promote the sciences, the arts, letters and the numerous fields developed by modem culture. Therefore, all the sons and daughters of the Church should become aware of their mission and discover how the strength of the Gospel can penetrate and regenerate the mentalities and dominant values that inspire individual cultures, as well as the opinions and mental attitudes that are derived from it"(54).

It is with fervent hope that I address this Document to all the men and women engaged in various ways in the significant mission of Catholic higher education.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, my encouragement and my trust go with you in your weighty daily task that becomes ever more important, more urgent and necessary on behalf of Evangelization for the future of culture and of all cultures. The Church and the world have great need of your witness and of your capable, free, and responsible contribution.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 15 August, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven, in the year 1990, the twelfth of the Pontificate.

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1 Cf. The letter of Pope Alexander IV to the University of Paris, 14 April 1255, Introduction: *Bullarium Diplomatum*..., vol. III, Turin 1858, p. 602.2 SAINT AUGUSTINE, *Confes.* X, xxiii, 33: "In fact, the blessed life consists in *the joy that comes from the truth,* since this joy comes from You who are Truth, God my light, salvation of my face, my God". PL 32, 793-794. Cf. SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS, *De Malo,* IX, 1: "It is actually natural to man to strive for knowledge of the truth".3 JOHN PAUL II, Discourse to the "Institut Catholique de Paris", 1 June 1980: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II,* Vol. III/1 (1980), p. 1581.4 JOHN PAUL II, Discourse to the Cardinals, 10 November 1979: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II,* Vol. II/2 (1979), p. 1096; cf. Discourse to UNESCO, Paris, 2 June 1980: AAS 72 (1980), pp. 735-752.5 Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Discourse to the University of Coimbra, 15 May 1982: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II,* Vol. V/2 (1982), p. 1692.6 PAUL VI, Allocution to Representatives of States, 4 October 1965: *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI,* Vol. III (1965), p. 508.7 JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN, *The Idea of a University,* London, Longmans, Green and Company, 1931, p. XI.8 *Jn* 14:6.9 Cf. SAINT AUGUSTINE, Serm. 43, 9: PL 38, 258. Cf. also SAINT ANSELM, *Proslogion,* chap. I: PL 158, 227.10 Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Allocution to the International Congress on Catholic Universities, 25 April 1989, n. 3: AAS 18 (1989), p. 1218.11 JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution Sapientia Christiana concerning the Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties, 15 April 1979: AAS 71 (1979), pp. 469-521.12 VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration on Catholic Education *Gravissimum Educationis,* n. 10: AAS 58 (1966), p. 737.13 *Mt* 13:52.14 Cf. *The Magna Carta of the European Universities,* Bologna, Italy, 18 September 1988, "Fundamental Principles".15 Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes,* n. 59: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1080; Declaration on Catholic Education *Gravissimum Educationis,* n. 10: AAS 58 (1966), p. 737. "Institutional autonomy" means that the governance of an academic institution is and remains internal to the institution; "academic freedom" is the guarantee given to those involved in teaching and research that, within their specific specialized branch of knowledge, and according to the methods proper to that specific area, they may search for the truth wherever analysis and evidence leads them, and may teach and publish the results of this search, keeping in mind the cited criteria, that is, safeguarding the rights of the individual and of society within the confines of the truth and the common good.16 There is a two-fold notion of *culture* used in this document: the *humanistic* and the *socio-historical.* "The word 'culture' in its general sense indicates all those factors by which man refines and unfolds his manifold spiritual and bodily qualities. It means his effort to bring the world itself under his control by his knowledge and his labor. It includes the fact that by improving customs and institutions he renders social life more human both within the family and in the civic community. Finally, it is a feature of culture that throughout the course of time man expresses, communicates, and conserves in his works great spiritual experiences and desires, so that these may be of advantage to the progress of many, even of the whole human family.

Hence it follows that human culture necessarily has a historical and social aspect and that the word 'culture' often takes on a sociological and ethnological sense". VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes,* n. 53: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1075.17 *L'Université Catholique dans le monde moderne. Document final du* 2ème *Congrès des Délégués des Universités Catholiques,* Rome, 20-29 November 1972, § 1.18 *Ibid.*19 JOHN PAUL II, Allocution to the International Congress on Catholic Universities, 25 Aprii 1989, n. 4: *AAS* 81 (1989), p. 1219. Cf. also VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*Gaudium et Spes,* n. 61: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 1081-1082. Cardinal Newman observes that a University "professes to assign to each study which it receives, its proper place and its just boundaries; to define the rights, to establish the mutual relations and to effect the intercommunion of one and all". (Op. cit., p. 457).20 VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes,* n. 36: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1054. To a group of scientists I pointed out that "while reason and faith surely represent two distinct orders of knowledge, each autonomous with regard to its own methods, the two must finally converge in the discovery of a single whole reality which has its origin in God". (JOHN PAUL II, *Address at the Meeting on Galileo, 9* May 1983, n. 3: AAS 75 [1983], p. 690).21 JOHN PAUL II, Address at UNESCO, 2 June 1980, n. 22: AAS 72 (1980), p. 750. The last part of the quotation uses words directed to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 10 November 1979: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II,* Vol. II/2 (1979), p. 1109.22 Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration on Catholic Education *Gravissimum Educationis,* n. 10: *AAS* 58 (1966), p. 737.23 VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes,* n. 59: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1080. Cardinal Newman describes the ideal to be sought in this way: "A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation and wisdom". *(Op. cit.,* pp. 101-102).24 JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici,* 30 December 1988, n. 44: AAS 81 (1989), p. 479.25 VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium,* n. 31: *AAS* 57 (1965), pp. 37-38. Cf. Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem,* passim: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 837ff. Cf. also *Gaudium et Spes,* n. 43: *AAS* 58 (1966), pp. 1061-1064.26 Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration on Religious Liberty *Dignitatis Humanae,* n. 2: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 930-931.27 JOHN PAUL II, Address to Leaders of Catholic Higher Education, Xavier University of Louisiana, U.S.A., 12 September 1987, n. 4: AAS 80 (1988), p. 764.28 VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes,* n. 59: *AAS* 58 (1966), p. 1080.29 Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum,* nn. 8-10: *AAS* 58 (1966), pp. 820-822.30 Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium,* n. 25: *AAS* 57 (1965), pp. 29-31.31 Cf. "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian" of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of 24 May 1990.32 Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter Sollicitudo Rei Socialis,nn. 27-34: *AAS* 80 (1988), pp. 547-560.33 PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio,* n. 1: AAS 59(1967), p. 257.34 "Therefore, in that there has been a pleasing multiplication of centres of higher learning, it has become apparent that it would be opportune for the faculty and the alumni to unite in common association which, working in reciprocal understanding and close collaboration, and based upon the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, as father and universal doctor, they might more efficaciously spread and extend the light of Christ". (Plus XII, Apostolic Letter *Catholicas Studiorum Universitates,* with which The International Federation of Catholic Universities was established: AAS 42 [1950], p. 386).35 The Code of Canon Law indicates the general responsibility of the Bishop toward university students: "The diocesan bishop is to have serious pastoral concern for students by erecting a parish for them or by assigning priests for this purpose on a stable basis; he is also to provide for Catholic university centers at universities, even non-Catholic ones, to give assistance, especially spiritual to young people". *(CIC,* can. 813).36 "Living in various circumstances during the course of time, the Church, too, has used in her preaching the discoveries of different cultures to spread and explain the message of Christ to all nations, to probe it and more deeply

understand it, and to give it better expression in liturgical celebrations and in the life of the diversified community of the faithful". (VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes,* n. 58: *AAS* 58 [1966], p. 1079).37 PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi,* n. 20: *AAS* 68 (1976), p. 18. Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastotal Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes,* n. 58: *AAS* 58 (1966), p. 1079.38 JOHN PAUL II, Address to Intellectuals, to Students and to University Personnel at Medellín, Colombia, 5 July 1986, n. 3: AAS 79 (1987), p. 99. Cf. also VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes,* n. 58: *AAS* 58 (1966), p. 1079.39 PAUL VI, to the Delegates of The International Federation of Catholic Universities, 27 November 1972: *AAS* 64 (1972), p. 770.40 PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi,* nn. 18ff.: *AAS* 68 (1976), pp. 17-18.41 PAUL VI, Address to Presidents and Rectors of the Universities of the Society of Jesus, 6 August 1975, n. 2: AAS 67 (1975), p. 533. Speaking to the participants of the International Congress on Catholic Universities, 25 April 1989, I added (n. 5): "Within a Catholic University the evangelical mission of the Church and the mission of research and teaching become *interrelated* and *coordinated":* Cf. *AAS* 81 (1989), p. 1220.42 Cf. in particular the Chapter of the Code: "Catholic Universities and other Institutes of Higher Studies" *(CIC*, cann. 807-814).43 Episcopal Conferences were established in the Latin Rite. Other Rites have other Assemblies of Catholic Hierarchy.44 Cf. *CIC,* Can. 455, § 2.45 Cf. *Sapientia Christiana: AAS* 71 (1979), pp. 469-521. Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties are those that have the right to confer academic degress by the authority of the Holy See.46 Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration on Religious Liberty *Dignitatis Humanae,* n. 2: *AAS* 58 (1966), pp. 930-931.47 Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes,* nn. 57 and 59: *AAS* 58 (1966), pp. 1077-1080; *Gravissimum Educationis,* n. 10: *AAS* 58 (1966), p. 737.48 Both the establishment of such a university and the conditions by which it may refer to itself as a Catholic University are to be in accordance with the prescriptions issued by the Holy See, Episcopal Conference or other Assembly of Catholic Hierarchy.49 Canon 810 of CIC, specifies the responsibility of the competent Authorities in this area: § 1 "It is the responsibility of the authority who is competent in accord with the statutes to provide for the appointment of teachers to Catholic universities who, besides their scientific and pedagogical suitability, are also outstanding in their integrity of doctrine and probity of life; when those requisite qualities are lacking they are to be removed from their positions in accord with the procedure set forth in the statutes. § 2 The conference of bishops and the diocesan bishops concerned have the duty and right of being vigilant that in these universities the principles of Catholic doctrine are faithfully observed". Cf. also Article 5, 2 ahead in these "Norms".50 VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium,* n. 25: *AAS* 57 (1965), p. 29; *Dei Verbum,* nn. 8-10: *AAS* 58 (1966), pp. 820-822; Cf. *CIC,* can. 812: "It is necessary that those who teach theological disciplines in any institute of higher studies have a mandate from the competent ecclesiastical authority".51 Cf. *CIC,* can 811 § 2.52 For Universities to which Article 3 §§ 1 and 2 refer, these procedures are to be established in the university statutes approved by the competent ecclesiastical Authority; for other Catholic Universities, they are to be determined by Episcopal Conferences or other Assemblies of Catholic Hierarchy.53 Cf. *CIC,* can. 820. Cf. also *Sapientia Christiana*, Norms of Application, Article 49: *AAS* 71 (1979), p. 512.54 JOHN PAUL II, to the Pontifical Council for Culture, 13 January 1989, n. 2: *AAS* 81 (1989), pp. 857-858.

At the Intersection of Catholic and Mercy: There's an Elephant in the Room

Mary Hembrow Snyder, Ph.D., Alice Edwards, Ph.D., and Richard W. McCarthy, Ph.D.

Abstract

This article addresses apparent impasses between "Mercy" and "Catholic" identities in our colleges and universities. Each of the contributors represents a unique voice arising from her or his role and experience within the university community. All are grappling with the tension generated by the university's efforts to discover, communicate, and embody what it means to be both Catholic and Mercy at this uncertain juncture in the post-Vatican II Church in the United States.

Mary Hembrow Snyder, *Voice One*

And the elephant's name is "impasse."

Anyone familiar with the profound meaning of this term, as offered by Constance Fitzgerald, will recognize that, in our day, we are involved in a plethora of impasses, "relational, ecclesial, societal, political, ethical, scientific, economic, environmental and cultural."[1] In an earlier explication of the meaning of the term, Fitzgerald wrote, "By impasse I mean that there is no way out of, no way around, no rational escape from what imprisons one, no possibilities in the situation...every logical solution remains unsatisfying, at the very least...and the most dangerous

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[1] Constance Fitzgerald, OCD, "From Impasse to Prophetic Hope: Crisis of Memory," in *The Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 64, ed. Jonathan Y. Tan (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 21.

temptation is to give up, to quit, to surrender to cynicism and despair."[2] Moreover, Fitzgerald states that the inability to trust anyone or anything, accompanied by a pervasive sense of powerlessness, is an additional hallmark of impasse, no matter the specific type being experienced.

At the intersection of Catholic and Mercy, I suggest that our current impasse is both relational and ecclesial. It is particularly agonizing for those whose historically conscious worldview differs significantly from the classical worldview seemingly upheld by many members of the magisterium. At the same time, such differences are surely shared among university and college presidents, members of our boards of trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, alums, and students. If one is a Catholic theologian, however, or member of a department of religious studies, this difference, unfortunately, makes the impasse more neuralgic. As John C. Haughey, SJ, has observed:

> The tension that sometimes exists between the magisterium and the academic community of theologians has much less to do with faith, and much more to do with cultural conflicts, than I think has been appreciated by both sides. The lay academic community is rarely peopled by professionals who have matriculated in a classical culture. And the hierarchy is rarely peopled by professionals who have been formed in a modern academic culture...most members of the hierarchy have not done their studies in secular university, and most often their degrees are in canon law or in theology of a more classical character. The lay theologians in their schools have seldom been trained where and how their bishops have been. Both populations are, of course, on the same search for meaning...while being besieged by the same mass culture.[3]

Haughey suggests a further insight: "They have the same extremes to avoid and the same center to inhabit,"[4] and getting to that center will require incredible patience, openness, and understanding, all guided by the central principle of *love*, "love of one another, love of the truth, love of the church, and love of Christ."[5] Nonetheless, as Terrence Tilley, former president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, has

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[2] Constance Fitzgerald, OCD, "Impasse and Dark Night," in *Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development*, ed. Joann Wolski Conn (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 288.

[3] John C. Haughey, SJ, *Where Is Knowing Going: The Horizons of the Knowing Subject* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 146-147.

[4] Ibid., 147.

[5] Ibid.

remarked, impasses can become stalemates.[6] This assuredly happens when mutually respectful dialogue is aborted for a solution forced upon a theologian without due process. Here the love that Haughey suggested above is trumped by what many theologians regard as an anti-evangelical use of power by the bishops and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). Moreover, how many bishops, university authorities, and theologians have, in all honesty, engaged in "close, personal and pastoral relationships...characterized by mutual trust, close and consistent cooperation and continuing dialogue...in the spirit of *communio*...fostered by mutual listening...collaboration...and solidarity"?[7]

In both cases, failure truly to see "the other," with the humility and compassion of Christ, more often gives way to avoidance, fear, stereotyping, and distrust. All of us stalled at the intersection of Catholic and Mercy are called, *in imitatio Christi*, to embrace the other, with all the risk, uncertainty, and potential hope this entails. And how may we characterize "the other"? "She [he] is the one who is different from us, the one who complicates our identity, the one who prevents us from completing our tasks. The other is the one who, by definition makes us uncomfortable, who alters our life like the man who 'fell among robbers' in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37)."[8] Will we continue to pass by "the other" we seem to have become in one another's eyes? Rather, aren't we obligated by virtue of our commitment to the *basileia tou theou*, and as the people of God, to confront the challenges we face *together*, for the good of the whole Church? Candidly speaking, however, can we do this without committing or recommitting ourselves to the practice of contemplative prayer, to what may be for all of us "the prayer of no experience"? As Constance Fitzgerald describes it,

> ...this prayer, expressive of a prophetic hope, is an important contemplative bridge to a new future, to the transformation or evolution of consciousness, and through these *prayers of no experience*, the human person is being changed radically. Reaching beyond the horizon of present expectations and imagination, willing to go beyond the boundaries of their lives/selves to make an

[6] Terrence Tilley, "Three Impasses in Christology," in *The Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society*, 64.

[7] U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, "The Application of *Ex corde Ecclesiae* for the United States," in *Catholic Identity in Our Colleges and Universities* (Washington, DC: 2006), 79.

[8] Jose Sols, "Thinking about Jesus in Secular Europe," in *Jesus of Galilee: Contextual Christology for the 21st Century*, ed. Robert LaSalle-Klein (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 215.

> irrevocable passage into a new place, a new way of "being" in the universe, these prophets of hope stand open to receive the unimaginable future to which God is alluring us, and more: they actually serve as a doorway to it.[9]

Engagement with prayer like this leads to *metanoia*, transformation, what Fitzgerald refers to as "a dispossession of selfhood." She writes, "What this prayer predicts as possibility for what the human person and the human community are to become is far beyond what a coalition of strong-willed, autonomous, right thinking, ethical people can ever achieve on their own. I know that with this formulation I have gone into a dangerous space where language fails me and impasse confronts me."[10] Hence, if our Christology fails to lead us into *communio*, if we refuse to behold the other with merciful eyes, if we run from the discipline required to enter into the prayer of no experience, thus avoiding the cost such dispossession demands, how will we ever transcend the current impasses we face as members of the Body of Christ?

Furthermore, as Catholic institutions rooted in Mercy, don't we empty our mission statements of any authenticity if we fail to pursue the merciful behavior so characteristic of Catherine McAuley?[11] Awash in impasse, we must, nevertheless, begin anew. As M. Shawn Copeland has reminded us, "discipleship costs." Thus, trustees, university and college presidents, upper-level administrators, and so forth, along with their theologians and religious studies faculty, must communicate humbly, honestly, and often with their local bishops. And bishops must respond in kind. As James Hanvey, SJ proposes:

> We need to discover or recover a new relationship between the ecclesial charism of theology and that of the magisterium – local as well as Roman. Above all there is need for a clearer and effective theology of the *sensus fidelium*, which is not just a passive assent to Christian truth but an active wisdom manifest in the faithful praxis of Christian life and witness. Without this the church will never have a mature theology of the laity or realize the full effectiveness of its

[9] Fitzgerald, "From Impasse to Prophetic Hope," 39. She explains the "prayer of no experience": "Very often after years of trying to pray and live faithfully, after receiving precious graces, consolations and insight, persons experience not presence, but *nothing*, silence, in their prayer...they report that there is absolutely nothing discernible going on when they pray and yet they do need prayer; they are faithful to it and actually spend considerable time in silent *there-ness*. But the only experience is *no experience*, the silent place" (36).

[10] Ibid., 38.

[11] Mary C. Sullivan, RSM, Ph.D., "Catherine McAuley and the Characteristics of Mercy Higher Education," Conference for Mercy Higher Education, http://www.mercyhighered.org/identity.html.

> magisterium. Unless the church trusts theology, its mission and its risk, it will fail in its evangelical task. It will cease to have a conceptual command of the cultures in which it lives; it will be inarticulate and incomprehensible before them, lacking sufficient means to address complex issues of the time with insight, reason, humanity, understanding and truth.[12]

Poignantly, let us take one another down from the cross. Let our ecclesial and relational impasses give way to transformation, forgiveness, reconciliation, and renewed hope—at the intersection of Catholic and Mercy.

Alice Edwards, *Voice Two*

Parker Palmer, in his book *The Courage to Teach*, states that "unlike many professions, teaching is always done at the dangerous intersection of personal and public life."[13] Creating a class community, urging our students to connect with material, revealing our own passions—all of these things require teachers to be vulnerable in a particularly public way. Many of us know that this and other dangerous intersections are where the "good stuff" takes place—not in canned lectures, objective tests, or impersonal, rigid requirements, but in engaged conversation, spirited disagreement, and admissions of uncertainty.

There are other dangerous intersections in the university, and the past few years have made it feel that, in particular, Catholic universities abound in them. As an academic administrator trying to help hire, support, and evaluate faculty, I have been asked to define the rather hazy boundaries between personal and public life, between our dual roles as a Catholic and an academic institution, and how these boundaries might affect faculty—and the university—for better or worse. For instance, how do we, as a Mercy school founded with values of intellectual rigor, make space for this rigor when it is applied to firmly held precepts of the Church? How do we evaluate the scholarly or service activities of faculty, listed on their annual merit evaluation forms, when these activities might rub up against Church teachings? How do we express the Mercy value of hospitality to new faculty, whose same-sex partners are denied health care benefits? How does our faculty, responding to our tradition of community engagement, take on public roles in the community when those roles challenge doctrine?

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[12] James Hanvey, SJ, "The Shape of the Church to Come," in *America*, March 18, 2013, http://americamagazine.org/issue/article/shape-church-come.

[13] Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 17.

Perhaps staff benefits, merit evaluation, and tenure portfolios are very workaday examples, but they are how the university's central values are communicated to faculty and administrators, in a way more meaningful than symposia or mission statement bookmarks. These examples are also where it becomes clear whether or not the university has articulated its values to its academic administrators, whether its mission is understood and carried out, defended and passed on, by its members. When a new faculty member asks if it is OK for a student in his class to pursue a certain research topic, because he thinks it might not be appropriate for a class at a Catholic school, or when another keeps silent during a television interview when the topic turns to birth control—despite his expertise in this area of health care—we see that we have not done enough to communicate a clear sense of how our Catholic identity intersects with our fundamental role as a university.

When new faculty members are hired at my institution, they are asked if they feel that they can support the Catholic mission of the university. I have never heard of a candidate saying no. First, of course, the job market is tight, but perhaps another reason is that the question is so amorphous. I feel sure that, if the candidate asked the interviewer, the potential department chair, or their new colleagues, what the question actually meant—what commitment was being called for—few people would generate the same definition. It is not uncommon to hear faculty or administrators say that they prefer to focus on the Mercy part of our identity, implying that somehow they can separate the Mercy from the Catholic. But perhaps they are recognizing the fact that the Mercy values of hospitality, justice, and compassion are seeded deeply in our community, and serve as a way to bridge the distance between our Catholic identity and the diverse traditions, beliefs, and positions that our community members hold.

Even with a nuanced view of the moral and political geography of this moment in Catholic higher education, our goal is a moving target. Our desire to reconcile *Ex corde Ecclesiae*'s vision of the Catholic university with our heritage as a progressive Mercy school will undoubtedly never be neatly resolved, but will challenge us again and again to discern carefully, to communicate well and thoroughly, and to act justly as each situation presents itself in its individual context. When several faculty and administrators sat down last year to draft a statement to help guide the university with regard to the boundaries between academic freedom and commitment to a Catholic mission, we were pointing out that we can no longer take for granted that everyone at our growing

institution shares the same understanding of what these terms mean and how we live them out.[14]

Now more than ever, administrators and faculty leaders must study, reflect on, and openly discuss their Mercy and Catholic identities in order to educate new faculty—who are increasingly not Catholic, not educated in Catholic schools themselves, not privy to the delicate relationships between the Church and the university. We must also be vigilant as we define and protect our boundaries—so that our faculty don't get caught in the intersection.

Richard W. McCarty, *Voice Three*

Mercy colleges and universities are remarkable centers for learning, where faith and reason can flourish. On our campuses the humanities are taken seriously, the sciences are rigorously pursued, service is encouraged, and religious practice is accepted for those who elect to pursue it. Students have access to scholars who take their fields seriously and who contribute scholarship nationally and internationally. To attend a Mercy college or university, then, is to seek out a first-rate academic experience. But in the midst of our academic communities there is a multidirectional intersection of our Catholic and Mercy identities. Many of these crossings are wonderful moments of synthesis—points at which institutional mission and values are shaped by the educational legacy of the Sisters of Mercy, their values, as well as the breadth and depth of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. But not all intersections between Catholic and Mercy are easy crossings. At one of those crossings we face mismatched understandings about *academic freedom*, whether in its exercise and protection or in instances of its infringement. Much of this has to do with how we understand the Catholic identity of a Mercy college or university.

While there are many active discussions about what *Catholic identity* means (both in the churches and in our academic institutions), we can

[14] Our statement—still a work in progress—says: "Mercyhurst University is a Catholic institution of higher learning in the Mercy tradition. It aims to embody the timeless values of the Catholic intellectual tradition and the values of a classic university, including rigorous, constructive scholarship and artistic expression. These values require an authentic presentation of Catholic doctrine in any course whose content addresses it. At the same time, Mercyhurst, as a university affirming the best and highest standards of scholarship and creativity, affirms the academic freedom of its individual faculty in their academic and public scholarship and artistic presentations."

think of that identity in at least two ways. First, by virtue of our founders, Mercy colleges and universities have a Catholic identity that is grounded in the mission and values of the Sisters of Mercy. When we emphasize the Mercy values of dignity, excellence, justice, service, and stewardship, the Catholic identity of our colleges and universities is one that is ordered toward academic freedom and the promotion of dialogue and mutual understanding between divergent voices—even if some of those divergent voices are resident scholars who critique or disagree with official Roman Catholic teaching. Second, by virtue of the Sisters of Mercy belonging to the wider Roman Catholic Church, Mercy colleges and universities have a Catholic identity as sites of Roman Catholic influence and perspectives. To that end, where the emphasis on Catholic identity favors the promotion of Catholic orthodoxy, academic freedom can suffer.

To understand why academic freedom is a growing concern for Catholic campuses, we must first look at the academic structure of the college or university itself. Namely, in any attempt to compete with the best academic centers domestically and abroad, Mercy colleges and universities must attract (and retain) the strongest faculty members available. Reputations of colleges and universities hinge, in part, on the quality of teaching and research being produced by a faculty body. Mercy colleges and universities know this, and thus are recruiting faculty from major research universities (regardless of the faculty member's religious affiliation). Mercy institutions are also finding ways to free faculty to engage in scholarship within their academic disciplines. But, as we are becoming more aware, sometimes lines of research "transgress" Catholic orthodoxy. Recently, scholars (and scholarship) in theology, as well as in religion, ethics, and sexuality, have been targeted by the Doctrine Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for crossing those lines and "confusing the faithful."[15]

Thus, the intersection between *Mercy* (i.e., where the Mercy values promote academic freedom, dialogue, and understanding) and *Catholic* (when this term is used to mean "orthodoxy") may very well be a site of frequent collision in 21st-century academia. The Vatican's recent reapplication of *Ex corde Ecclesiae* has only heightened the concern. What is more, the battlegrounds on which these conflicts take place are some of our most prestigious and well-regarded educational institutions. Since 2010 alone the various showdowns between the USCCB and a litany of

[15] Richard McCarty, "Objects of the Inquisition," *Academe* (January/February 2014): 25-29.

scholars at Catholic colleges and universities have served to highlight the realities—and difficulties—of being a well-regarded educational institution, under the intense scrutiny of "orthodoxy." One need only consider the recent cases of Salzman and Lawler, O'Brien, Tadlock, Farley, and Johnson to understand the growing problem.[16]

At the same time, Mercy colleges and universities need not wait around for crises to hit. I suggest that the call for *communio* between Catholic colleges and universities with Church officials is a good place to start. Indeed, *communio* itself appears to rely on the Mercy values—values that are ordered toward building better relations between people through mutual understanding. As with all healthy (and holy) relationships, it is important for us to establish appropriate boundaries between bodies. The Mercy values do just that. The Mercy values remind us that excellence is required in the classroom and in scholarship. Such excellence requires freedom of inquiry and scholarly discourse, even if that scholarly discourse "transgresses" tradition. Even so, the Mercy values are particular instantiations of a Catholic worldview, and thus our colleges and universities are certainly connected to the larger body of the Church. Thus, we do need to be in respectful dialogue with Church officials. But *dialogue* means that both bodies are respected and allowed to speak from their perspectives. Authoritarian demands from the Church, as well as stiff indifference from scholars, are both exercises of *monologue*—and such cold monologue has nothing to do with the Mercy values that shape our institutions. If we need a reminder as to why this is important, looking to our recent past is helpful.

In particular, it would do us well to remember the American social history out of which Mercy colleges and universities (if not all Catholic colleges and universities) worked so hard to establish their credibility and reputation for excellence. In particular, Catholic colleges and universities had to demonstrate that the terms "college" and "university" *qualified* their "Catholic identity" as much as their Catholic identity set them apart from public and Protestant institutions. Consider, for example, that it was Presidents Grant and Garfield who both referred to Catholic churches and their schools as centers of superstition that did nothing to build up the American nation. In reference to *both* Catholic churches and schools, Grant once said, "If we are to have another contest in the near future of our national existence, I predict that the dividing line will not be Mason and Dixon's, but between patriotism and intelligence on the one side, and superstition, ambition, and ignorance

[16] Ibid.

on the other."[17] Garfield would say that "Catholicism remained 'hostile to every fundamental principle of the United States constitution and of modern civilization.'"[18]

In response to such hostility and prejudice toward Catholic churches and schools, American Catholics (religious and lay) had no choice but to demonstrate that Catholic institutions were not antithetical to freedom. Indeed, any and all that were Catholic had to work through the skepticisms that so many non-Catholic Americans held *about* and *against* a strong "Catholic identity." They faced a monumental task. As a 1927 *New Republic* editorial would put it, "The real conflict is not between a Church and State or between Catholicism and Americanism, but between a culture which is based on absolutism and encourages obedience, uniformity and intellectual subservience, and a culture which encourages curiosity, hypotheses, experimentism, verification by facts and a consciousness of the processes of individual and social life as opposed to conclusions about it."[19]

Unfortunately, the idea that "Catholic identity" is one that breeds absolutism and intellectual subservience is one that we have to address *again*—this time in the context of how Catholic colleges and universities respect academic freedom in their function as centers of higher learning. *But there is hope*. For example, many Catholic colleges and universities came out on the winning end of nineteenth-century anti-Catholic prejudices. The intentional decision by Catholics (religious and lay) to make the best colleges and universities available yielded a plentiful harvest of educational centers that have been sought after by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. These colleges and universities—many of them Mercy institutions—climbed the charts of national school rankings and levels of public respect, producing excellent students and supporting faculty whose scholarship has touched (and shaped) nearly every field.

The existing problem, however, is that the intersection of Mercy and Catholic (where "Catholic" is taken to mean the imposition of "orthodoxy") *now* threatens to reignite the flames of those old fears about a church that "is based on absolutism" and "intellectual subservience." In our time, the fear is that the definition of Catholic identity is tantamount to an inquisition of orthodoxy—and that such an inquisition will

[17] John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 91.
[18] Ibid., 93.
[19] Ibid., 170.

only compromise our academic freedom; something that requires exploration and "experimentism." Indeed, the fact that we can point to a list of scholars (at Catholic colleges and universities) who have been interrogated or whose teaching has been condemned by the Vatican or USCCB provides the *perception* that the "Catholic identity" of our colleges and universities is merely code for narrow orthodoxy. That perception (however much it does not represent the best of the Catholic Church or Catholic colleges and universities) is one that Mercy values should seek to transform. If not, we're in trouble. If for no other reason, the perception of an inquisition of orthodoxy has led some scholars to believe that academic freedom will only be *selectively* protected at our colleges and universities—so long as our work does not excite the anxieties of the hierarchy (whatever those may be, from time to time). Indeed, as Jamie Manson of *Religion Dispatches* recently noted:

> For all the advances on some Catholic campuses, a culture of fear [and silence] still looms heavily.... This silence, whether self-imposed or ecclesiastically-ordered, raises important questions about the future of younger theologians and scholars at Catholic universities. What is the impact on academic integrity when new faculty members fear that they might be denied tenure, or get their university in trouble with a bishop, if they publish ideas or speak to the media about controversial topics?[20]

That's not a perception or reputation we can afford. In the face of such real and perceived realities, the Mercy values can save us. We must allow our Mercy values to shape the Catholic identity of our colleges and universities. Only then will the promotion of academic freedom—alongside respectful dialogue with the Church—finally demonstrate that our colleges and universities are truly places where faith and reason can flourish *together*.

Conclusion

We speak with a profound sense of urgency and believe we represent the voices of many of our peers across the country in Catholic/Mercy institutions and beyond. The impasses we face at the myriad intersections we have attempted to make visible must be both honored

[20] Jamie L. Manson, "As Culture War Rages, What's the Status of LGBT Rights on Catholic Campuses?" *Religion Dispatches*, March 30, 2012, http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/sexandgender/5730/as_culture_war_rages,_what%E2%80%99s_the_status_of_lgbt_rights_on_catholic_campuses.

and engaged. We call upon all committed to the flourishing of our Catholic and Mercy identities to act. Leadership in our institutions must facilitate open and honest dialogue within our respective campus communities about the political, ecclesial, and theological conflicts we are facing. Guidelines and concrete strategies for moving forward, beyond the impasses, must be developed in concert with local ordinaries and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. *The status quo is unacceptable.* We have an obligation to those who have gone before us in Mercy to keep *both* our heritage *and* our Catholic identity robust and credible amid the conflicting worldviews we share—while at the same time we vigorously work to create spaces where intellectual exploration and creative expression can flourish. May the combined wisdom of the magisterium and the intellectual and spiritual depth within our college and university communities prevail—at the intersection of Catholic and Mercy.

Session #3

MERCY SPIRITUALITY, THE FOUNDATION FOR COMPASSIONATE SERVICE

Sister Leona Misto, Ed.D.,
Vice President for Mission Integration and Planning

"If we are humble and sincere, God will finish in us the work He has begun. He never refuses His grace to those who ask it."

Mercy spirituality is the core of my life. In this personal reflection on mercy as the foundation for compassionate service I begin by describing briefly the events that led to my writing this paper. When I was appointed to the newly created position of Vice President for Mission Integration and Planning at Salve Regina University one of the first things I did was to invite faculty to participate in the 8-day national Collegium which is a joint effort by Catholic colleges and universities to recruit and develop faculty who can articulate and enrich the spiritual and intellectual life of their institutions. Two faculty attended and were so enthusiastic about the experience that they suggested we develop our own mini SRU-Collegium to extend the experience to their colleagues and provide an opportunity to share ideas on Catholic social teaching, preserving the University's Catholic identity and its mission.

I thought it was an excellent idea, so we began our work by setting goals and objectives for a 28-hour retreat which would include community building and discussion of selected readings on Catholicism and Catholic social teaching. The faculty requested that we have a session on mercy and mercy spirituality since our University mission centers on mercy. It was also important to the faculty that we build in time for reflection and meditation.

Various faculty led all of the discussions except for the one on mercy which was assigned to me. What follows here, then, is my reflection on mercy spirituality that I share with faculty at the SRU-Collegium.

If we turn to scripture to find examples of mercy, we discover that the perfect model of mercy is God, who is love. Our merciful actions originate in love: love of God and love of others. Mercy, or loving-kindness,

is giving to others as we ourselves have received.

We learn of God's mercy from countless examples throughout scripture. In Genesis, we read that God called Abram to leave his country and kindred and go to the land that he would show him. God made a Covenant with Abram, promising that his descendants would inherit the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates.

For the people of the Hebrew Scriptures, the concept of covenant was a familiar one that covered all sorts of social transactions such as settling disputes, designating alliances and terminating war; however, something new was introduced when Yahweh made His covenant with Abram, Moses and the People of Israel. Yahweh personalized His covenant. The Lord proclaimed to Moses: "He is a God merciful and gracious; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness...forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin."[2]

This covenant initiated by Yahweh is often referred to as the "election" of Israel. The election is an act of love on Yahweh's part and is not based on the merits of Israel. This kind of love is known as *hesed*. From the Greek and Latin translations of hesed come the words 'mercy' and 'loving-kindness.'

Very simply put, the concept of *hesed* can best be expressed as the love that a parent has for a child. This love is unconditional, it is ongoing, and it is forgiving. This is Mercy. Each of us has experienced God's mercy in His love for us. For some that mercy has been almost overwhelming, for others it has blossomed gently but surely. This is also what we observe in the acts of love Yahweh showered on the tribe of Israel, when He delivered them from Egypt. Through Yahweh's actions we begin to understand mercy not only as loving-kindness but as liberation and restoration to wholeness. These are the underpinning values of compassionate service. When we encourage faculty and students to practice mercy, we are asking them to engage in the process of liberating others, extending loving-kindness to them and, in doing so, restoring them to wholeness.

Covenant love is also associated with "salvation." We read that, "God so loved the world that God gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life."[3]

In the first letter of St. John we learn that God's love was revealed among us in this way:

> God sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that

> He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is perfected in us. God is love and those who abide in love abide in God and God abides in them.[4]

This loving-kindness is the heart of compassionate service. It is love, it is relationship, it is giving of ourselves for another.

Consider the parable of the Good Samaritan. An eager young lawyer asks Jesus what he must do to gain eternal life. The answer is to: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with your entire mind; and your neighbor as yourself." This is not the answer the young man was expecting and it unsettles him, so he probes further with the question, "Who is my neighbor?"

If you were reading this parable for the first time you might think at the beginning that the answer to "Who is my neighbor?" is, the man lying wounded on the road is my neighbor. However, by the end of the parable we are no longer looking at the man who is wounded but rather at the person who is acting out of human compassion. The lawyer correctly answers that the neighbor, in this instance, is the one who shows mercy. Mercy calls for action. Mercy is compassion in action. The role of compassion is to suffer with those who suffer regardless of what their suffering may be.

At the beginning of this parable we think the lesson is about what we should do. But in the end we realize it is really about who we are called to be. Of course, we must focus on good actions, but every action springs from an interior disposition. The Christian must first ask: What sort of person should I become? In moral theology this is referred to as "character ethics" or the "ethics of being."[5]

Consequently, we may consider merciful actions as those actions which define who we are.

This parable is not primarily a story about how we should treat others: rather it is the story of our redemption by Christ, the fulfillment of the Covenant between Yahweh and His people. Through Christ's death and resurrection He has liberated us and restored us to wholeness. We are called to follow the actions of the Good Samaritan because it is the retelling of the entire Gospel. The parable is not one among many: it serves as the foundational explanation of the commandment to love one another. It identifies mercy as the condition for salvation, the way to gain eternal life.

This parable is the reenactment of God's Divine Mercy. It is precisely what Jesus accomplishes in the Paschal mystery where He takes upon himself our pain, our brokenness and our sin. He forgives us, restores us to new life and rejoices in the fact that we are now able to live out our vocation to bring God to the world.

This is a large part of what our students are grappling with, how to discover and live out their individual vocations. Learning to render compassionate service can be a tremendous opportunity of growth for them because it embodies the qualities of mercy: forgiveness or relief of suffering, the disposition to kindness, and, through action, restoring another to wholeness. It is through practice that one arrives at a fuller understanding of concepts and theories learned. In a similar manner, we discover who we are and who God is by giving ourselves in loving-service to others. "Unless a grain of wheat shall fall upon the ground and die, it remains but a single grain without life."[6] Faculty and students who engage in compassionate service begin to understand the meaning of this truth.

An example of this is a work of compassionate service designed by some faculty and students from the Business Studies department at Salve Regina University. Three of these faculty participated in the SRU-Collegium experience and each went away with the goal of trying to integrate mercy and mission into some component of her discipline.

One faculty member teaches Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS) courses in Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, and Outlook. Students who successfully complete any one or more of the courses become Microsoft Certified. We have in Newport, R.I., several agencies that provide various services to economically deprived persons and so our Microsoft Certified faculty member arranged for Salve students to engage in a community service outreach project by teaching the MOUS courses to persons from the Martin Luther King Community Center. The goal was to train Newport County residents to become proficient in the Microsoft applications needed to successfully enter or re-enter the workforce.

With supervision, the MOUS certified students provided one-on-one mentoring, two hours a week, to ten Newport County residents for fifteen weeks. At the end of this time the residents could take a MOUS examination to become Microsoft certified. As the MOUS training progressed, students from the Marketing Club, advised by another faculty member, decided that they could help with this project by providing a class

on job-interviewing techniques and proper dress for the interview. These students went so far as to raise money to give each successful candidate a $100 gift certificate to the T.J. Maxx store to purchase an appropriate outfit for the interview.

A third group of students involved in another business program learned of this effort from their professor and decided to lend their help by offering to teach a session on how to prepare a resumé. These students made sure that the clients included Microsoft Certified Application Specialist on their resumés. This is the perfect example of a group of people who wanted to express loving-kindness to others and in doing so helped to liberate them and restore them to wholeness.

When the faculty were asked about this project, their response was, "...this is so meaningful and such a neat way to integrate mercy and the mission into what we teach. We love doing this; it's so much fun."

At the first Mercy Symposium held at Salve Regina University in April 2008, the faculty involved in this effort presented a paper on the experience and other projects that they are working on. They are spreading the word that compassionate service can be a component of every academic department.

When we consider mercy in this perspective, we begin to realize that mercy spirituality is distinctive; it is unique. The spirituality of the Sisters of Mercy has always been significantly different from that of every other religious congregation. Catherine McAuley, drawn by God to continue His work of mercy, looked outward at the world around her, saw the great need of people suffering from physical, spiritual, intellectual and emotional pain and responded with her all.

Catherine's Religious Institution centers on the works of mercy. Her legacy and her spirituality reflect this characteristic. First and foremost, but not surprisingly, mercy spirituality focuses on the poor in whom we find Christ. The Sisters of Mercy, in addition to taking vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, take a vow of service to the poor, sick and uneducated. Catherine McAuley had a deep concern for the poor, especially for young, unemployed women who had few skills and usually no place to live. She knew from her own experience of being orphaned at a young age that it was not enough to give handouts to the poor. The poor needed more than that. Her dream was to build a House of Mercy for homeless women with space for a classroom for poor children to receive an education.

In focusing on the poor, Catherine instructed the sisters that, "It is better to relieve a hundred imposters than to suffer one truly deserving person to be sent away empty." [7] There is a story told about how Catherine took great pains to care for an elderly woman who was most ungrateful and actually quite rude to Catherine while she was caring for her. The young sisters questioned Catherine about persisting in this ministry and her response was, "Mercy receives the ungrateful again and again and is never weary of pardoning them." She is also quoted as saying, "It is for God we serve the poor not for thanks."[8]

Another distinction of mercy spirituality is that it introduced a synthesis of contemplation and action[9] that Catherine modeled for the congregation and which is its core of strength. Catherine knew that however well-intentioned or prepared her sisters might be in their apostolic works, they would not succeed without a prayer life rooted in union with God.

Catherine's own spirituality was thoroughly centered in Jesus Christ. As a young girl, her favorite prayer was the Psalter of Jesus which she recited every day. Later in her life, when she was asked about the qualities required to be a "Sister of Mercy" she responded, "...the applicant must have an ardent desire to be united to God and to serve the poor."[10]

Catherine instructed the sisters to consider prayer and service as reciprocal dimensions of spirituality. She said, "Our center is God, the source from whom all our actions should spring." Catherine realized that some of the young sisters found the practice of prayer and service very difficult. In a letter she wrote to Sister Mary de Sales, who was anxious about being sent to a new foundation, she explained in a very gentle, playful way the importance of integrating action and contemplation:

> My Dearest Sister de Sales, I think sometimes our passage through this dear sweet world is something like the Dance called "right and left." You and I have crossed over, changed places - your set is finished- for a time you'll dance no more- but I have to continue. I'll have to curtsie and bow, in Birr – to change corners – going from the one I am in to another, take hands of everyone who does me the honor – and end the figure by coming back to my own place. I'll then have a Sea Saw dance to Liverpool – and a Merry Jig that has a stop in Birmingham- and, I hope a second to Bermondsey – when you, Sister Xavier and I will join hands and dance the Duval Trio back on the same ground. [11]

At first glance, this writing may seem a little frivolous, but it is followed by another paragraph that puts the situation into perspective and explains Catherine's desire that her Sisters integrate contemplation and action. She writes, "We have one solid comfort amidst this little tripping about: our hearts can always be in the same place, centered in God – for whom alone we go forward – or stay back."[12] This letter to Sister de Sales demonstrates the great balance between contemplation and action that Catherine possessed in her own apostolic spirituality and which she encouraged others to seek.

Our challenge today is to help faculty and students in a similar way. Amid all the preparation for teaching classes, committee meetings, advising sessions, sports and other activities, how can we keep our thoughts and hearts always in the same place, centered on our mission to be merciful, which propels us to go forward? In our effort to accomplish this balance we refer again to St. John's letter. "Beloved, since God loved us so much, we ought also to love one another. If we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us."[13]

In the midst of our busy lives of rushing and tripping about we must constantly seek to find the center of our beings and the core of our spirituality. This is both the foundation and the fruit of compassionate service.

The third characteristic of mercy spirituality, which is also a prerequisite of compassionate service, is that it reflects God's loving-kindness. We are told that one of Catherine's favorite scripture passages was Matthew 25: 35-40 concerning the Last Judgment, where we read "... just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." This parable is somewhat like the one of the Good Samaritan in the sense that everyone is surprised by the conclusion. The righteous people never realized that in showing kindness by feeding the hungry, they were feeding the king, and so on. Likewise and unfortunately the others never realized that through their lack of kindness and by not visiting the sick, they were not visiting the Lord. They were all astonished.

A Salve graduate who is living this parable today is Leila de Bruyne. In her first year at Salve, Leila took a course titled "Children: a Global Perspective" which moved her so much that she began searching for an orphanage to visit. Via the Internet, she found a place called By Grace, an orphanage in the outskirts of Nairobi run by an African woman. That

summer, Leila and her sister spent three weeks in Kenya at the orphanage.

Leila was so overwhelmed by the plight of the hundred plus children she encountered that she began raising money to purchase necessities such as running water and electricity for them. With the help of her classmates, she raised over $50,000 in her sophomore year. Then, she and four classmates returned to By Grace for two months, armed and ready to make major improvements.

When she returned to the orphanage for the third summer, she became acutely aware that even with all the improved conditions as a result of their work, the children were not making significant progress in their health. Because of the crowding, the lack of facilities to boil water and the pollution of the city, many of the children were sick on a continuous basis. Added to this, there was a high crime rate in this section of the city, the price of grain was increasingly rising and fresh vegetables were virtually nonexistent. By Grace had no way whatsoever to supplement their source of income or move towards a sustainable future.

When Leila returned to school for her senior year she started a 501-c3 registered charity called Flying Kites. She envisioned an orphanage outside of the city on a parcel of land near a water source where children and staff could grow their own vegetables. Upon graduation, Leila and one other graduate made a yearlong commitment to establishing such an orphanage. They returned to Africa to find a piece of fertile land in the mountains.

It is clear that God was directing them because they became aware of a retired businessman who owned just such a piece of land and he was willing to donate his five acres to Flying Kites. Leila then purchased the adjoining four acres and began the process of obtaining a permit to build a large house. There is now an existing house on one parcel of land and as of this time they have adopted twelve children. Four permanent staff members care for the children and the land.

Leila is overseeing the orphanage and raising money for all that they will need to do to make this a sustainable project. She believes that there has to be a better way in this world to show love to these children and she is committed to building a model of childcare that will be innovative both environmentally and socially. Leila is living out the message: "Whatever you do to the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me."

Through Leila and her compassionate service, these children are experiencing the love of God. They are being restored to wholeness. If you want to learn more about this project the Web site is *flyingkiteskenya.org.*

There are many ways to reflect on charity and loving-kindness; St. Paul does it best when he writes: "Love is patient, love is kind, love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way, it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, endures all things. Love never ends".[14]

This virtue of charity was so important to Catherine McAuley that she devoted an entire chapter to it in the *Holy Rule* of her religious community.

In reflecting on the virtue of mercy, then, we have noted its components of liberation, loving-kindness and restoration. So, too, mercy spirituality has these three components: it focuses on the poor and the broken-hearted in order to find ways to liberate them, it reflects God's loving-kindness and it combines contemplation with action to create a strong base from which to restore others to wholeness. Mercy spirituality is about encountering the love of God. The love of God makes possible the love of self and these together make possible the love of neighbor.

This is how mercy spirituality becomes the foundation of compassionate service. When we reflect on the qualities of liberation, loving-kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and service, we come to a clearer understanding of the purpose of our lives. Those of us who serve in Mercy institutions of higher education have been graced and blessed with a spirituality that binds us as we journey together under the loving care of Divine Mercy in whom we live and move and have our being.

NOTES

[1] Thoughts from the Spiritual Conferences of Mother M. Catherine McAuley (Dublin), 7

[2] Exodus 34:6-7

[3] John 3:16

[4] 1 John 3:9-16

[5] Richard Gula,SS, Reason Informed By Faith (Paulist Press), 7

[6] John 12:24

[7] Thoughts from the Spiritual Conferences of Mother M. Catherine McAuley (Dublin), 46

[8] Ibid, 58

[9] M. Angela Bolster, RSM, Catherine McAuley Venerable for Mercy (Dominican Publications), 104

[10] Mary C. Sullivan, The Correspondence of Catherine McAuley (Four Courts Press), 77

[11] Ibid, 332

[12] Ibid, 333

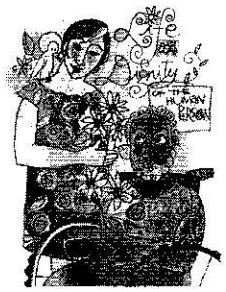
[13] 1 John 4:11-12

[1] 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

CST 101 THEMES FROM

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents. In these brief reflections, we highlight several of the key themes that are at the heart of our Catholic social tradition.

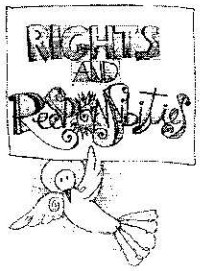


LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. Human life is threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong. Catholic teaching calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.



RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

SOLIDARITY

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Blessed Pope Paul VI taught that "if you want peace, work for justice."[1] The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

[1] Paul VI, For the Celebration of the Day of Peace (Rome: January 1, 1972).

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Sisters of Mercy Hermanas de la Misericordia

Sisters of Mercy
CRITICAL CONCERNS

The Sisters of Mercy were founded out of a deep concern for persons who are poor. Today, that commitment is focused in five "critical concerns" that we address through prayer; attention to personal, communal and institutional choices; education; advocacy with legislators and other government leaders; and corporate engagement.

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR JUSTICE WORK AT:

www.sistersofmercy.org

JOIN IN OUR ADVOCACY EFFORTS AND SIGN UP FOR EMAIL ALERTS ON ANY OR ALL OF THESE CRITICAL CONCERNS.

www.sistersofmercy.org/advocacysignup

Earth

We believe in the need to work toward the sustainability of life and support movements and legislation that secure the fundamental right to water for everyone, and that address climate change. That leads us to examine our own behaviors and policies and to adopt more environmentally sustainable practices. We also advocate against hydrofracking; against mining that impacts indigenous and impoverished communities; for regulations that protect land, air and water; and for national and international agreements that mitigate climate change and ensure support for those most vulnerable to its effects.

Immigration

We reverence the dignity of each person and believe everyone has the right to a decent home, livelihood, education and healthcare. In the United States we work for just and humane immigration laws, a reduction in deportations that tear families apart, and an end to the detention bed quota. We look at the root causes of immigration, including U.S. policies that contribute to the economic and social conditions that push people to flee their countries, and the global impact of migration through our reality as an international community of women religious.

Nonviolence

We work for peace through prayer, education, and personal and communal practices of nonviolence. We support nuclear disarmament, reduction of arms, and the use of dialogue instead of armed conflict. We work to prevent domestic violence and abuse of women and children, stop human trafficking and reduce violence in our communities. That leads us to advocate for commonsense gun violence prevention legislation, an end to the death penalty, an end to the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, and dialogue with Syria and Iran.

Racism

We believe racism is an evil affecting us all. We work to mobilize sisters and associates in recognizing and dismantling institutional racism in order to become an anti-racist multicultural community. We advocate for upholding the voting rights of marginalized Americans and for a fair criminal justice system, and point out racism wherever it exists.

Women

We believe that women's education, health and spirituality need special attention. We continue this mission in our schools, colleges, health-care institutions and spirituality centers. We advocate for equal pay, for services for domestic violence victims, and for the rights of girls and women in especially repressive societies.

Session #4

Catherine McAuley and the Characteristics of Mercy Higher Education

Mary C. Sullivan, R.S.M., Ph.D.

The characteristics of Mercy higher education as Catherine McAuley would have envisioned them in the context of the educational institutions she created and promoted in her day, and as she would, I believe, elaborate and slightly adjust these characteristics in response to the needs and circumstances of today deserve the careful discernment you have begun. Creative fidelity to the values in the Mercy heritage bequeathed to us by God through Catherine McAuley involves both knowing her contextualized philosophy and theology of education, as revealed in her instructions and practice, and interpreting her views in the context of present realities.

Among Catherine's enduring educational values are, I believe, the following:

- The dignity to be accorded each student and educational coworker
- The fundamental necessity of Christian learning and spiritual development
- A special concern, in learning and practice, for those who suffer material poverty
- A persistent effort to diminish all sorts of debilitating ignorance
- The primacy to be always given to mercifulness and spiritual consolation
- The demanding effort to "practice what we teach/preach," i.e., to be ourselves, personally and institutionally, insofar as humanly possible, examples of the Mercy heritage we claim to promote and transmit

Creative fidelity to the values in the Mercy heritage bequeathed to us by God through Catherine McAuley involves both knowing her contextualized philosophy and theology of education, as revealed in her instructions and practice, and interpreting her views in the context of present realities.

In developing these Mercy values, I will be referring to Catherine McAuley's writings, particularly her Rule, her letters, and her "Spirit of the Institute" essay; her own practice as recorded in the early annals and biographical manuscripts about her; and the recent discussion document of the CMHE, "Mercy Higher Education: Culture and Characteristics" (Winter 2004). I will attempt to say in more concrete language what Catherine McAuley would now mean by the abstract words "Mercy mission and values," "Mercy heritage," "the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy," and "the prevailing values of the Mercy charism."

In *The Fire in These Ashes,* Joan Chittister explains the Irish practice of *griosach*: the domestic practice in Ireland of "burying [the] warm coals [of the hearth] in ashes at night in order to preserve the fire for the cold morning to come" (Chittister 36).[1] Irish people have long had this tradition of preserving live coals under beds of ashes at night in order to start the new fire the next morning.

When the House of Mercy on Baggot Street—the original convent of the Sisters of Mercy—was first occupied, it was still in an unfinished state. Catherine herself slept in a dormitory room with seven others, including three children. The Derry Manuscript tells us that

> The sitting room and oratory was the room fronting Herbert St. between the great Hall and the private staircase, and was both plainly and scantily furnished . . . Recreation was held on the great

> corridor [across the front of the house], where during the winter months a fire was lighted.[2]

From this hearth—at the center of the house Catherine built for "the purposes of charity"—flowed warmth for all who entered or lived in the house. But the great fire of the house came not from this hearth, but from Christ. It was the zealous fire that her friend Michael Blake recognized in the heart of Catherine McAuley: "the charity of the Redeemer, whose all consuming fire burn[ed] within her."[3]

Deep inside each Mercy institution today are the live coals of Catherine McAuley's charity, her realization that the Mercy of God both precedes and supports, and is in some way dependent upon our own mercifulness. We are the beneficiaries of God's Mercy as well as the instruments of that Mercy to others. The Mercy of God, extended to us and to all God's people, is thus an extremely fundamental reality for Sisters of Mercy and the institutions they sponsor. Indeed, we recognize that the following of God's own mercifulness is the defining demand placed upon our corporate and personal lives.

I. The original Rule of the Sisters of Mercy, which Catherine herself composed, is preserved in Dublin in a manuscript in her own handwriting. In composing her Rule, Catherine used the Rule of the Presentation Sisters (hereafter: PR) as her point of departure—sometimes copying it verbatim; sometimes altering it by the addition or deletion of words, phrases, sentences and even whole paragraphs; and sometimes writing new chapters. When one compares the two Rules, word for word, one sees Catherine's mind and heart very deliberately engaged. One sees the conscious editorial choices she made about what to include, what to exclude, and what to say to those who would follow her.

I would like to focus initially on chapters 1 and 2 of the Rule, "Of the Object of the Institute" and "Of the Schools."[4] As I do so, you will need to mentally translate Catherine's nineteenth-century theological language into twentieth-century terms. Chapter 1, article 1, says:

> The Sisters admitted into this religious congregation besides the principal and general end of all religious orders . . . must also have in view what is peculiarly characteristic of this Institute of the Sisters of Mercy, that is, a most serious application to the Instruction of poor Girls, Visitation of the Sick, and protection of distressed women of good character. (1.1)

There is in our founding a persistent strand of special concern for women and young girls that has never been muted or weakened, even though we recognize, as Catherine did on other occasions, that debilitating ignorance, poverty and distress afflict both sexes. Catherine's keen awareness that women and girls bear particularly acute and central burdens in situations of poverty and suffering is an enduring insight on her part, no doubt derived from her own experience of walking the streets, visiting the sick poor, tending the dying, and answering knocks on the door. It was one of her founding inspirations to perceive in a special way the added depth in the poverty of women and girls and to be moved to relieve it by establishing schools for poor girls and employment training for homeless women.

Here are two key themes in the theology of Catherine McAuley: first, the example of Jesus Christ and the animating effect it should have on the character of one's daily life; and, second, Jesus Christ's own declaration that he is identified with the poor.

Catherine recognized the "arduous" nature of the work of Mercy education. In article 2 of the first chapter, she states what she believed was the most basic and sustaining motivation of those who teach. She writes:

> In undertaking the arduous, but very meritorious duty of instructing the Poor, the Sisters . . . shall animate their zeal and fervor by the example of . . . Jesus Christ, who testified on all occasions a tender love for the Poor and declared that He would consider as done to Himself whatever should be done unto them. (1.2)

Here are two key themes in the theology of Catherine McAuley: first, the example of Jesus Christ and the animating effect it should have on

the character of one's daily life; and, second, Jesus Christ's own declaration that he is identified with the poor, that what is done to or for them is done to or for him.

It is not possible to overstress the decisive force in Catherine McAuley's life of the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:40: "Whatever you do to the least of these my brothers and sisters you do unto me." She deliberately inserts Matthew 25:40 twice in the Rule; and this scriptural passage is the key to interpreting her understanding of the works of mercy, including the work of education: that is, in teaching others we are indeed teaching those with whom Jesus Christ is profoundly identified.

Catherine begins her major statement about Mercy education—her chapter 2, "Of the Schools"—with the following article, taken verbatim from the Presentation Rule:

> The Sisters appointed by the Mother Superior to attend the Schools shall with all zeal, charity and humility, purity of intention and confidence in God undertake the charge and cheerfully submit to every labor and fatigue annexed thereto, mindful of their vocation and of the glorious recompense attached to the faithful discharge of this duty. (2.1)

The Sisters are to pray to God and to Mary, the model of faith and service, *before* they enter school, not *when* they enter; the kind of prayer Catherine advocated could be done only privately.

Here we note five virtues to which Catherine refers over and over in her Rule, letters, and other writings: *zeal, charity, humility, purity of intention,* and *confidence in God.* In her view, it is these attitudes, born of reflection on the example of Jesus Christ, which make it possible to "undertake the charge and cheerfully submit to every labor and fatigue" (2.1) related to the work of Mercy education. Clare Augustine Moore—an associate of Catherine's on Baggot Street—once wrote: "I cannot say that our dear foundress had a talent for education; she doated [sic] on children and invariably spoiled them . . ."[5] I am more inclined to think that what Clare Augustine saw was Catherine's immense love for her students, her zeal for their development, her humility and purity of heart before them, and her absolute confidence in God's ultimate care of them. In a harsh and destitute age, Catherine was never above a little tenderness and doting.

She addresses the content of Mercy education in the next three articles in the chapter "Of the Schools." In each case, she alters the texts in the PR in ways true to her own spirit. Article 2 begins:

> Before the Sisters enter School they shall raise their hearts to God and to the Queen of Heaven, recommending themselves and the children to their care and protection. (2.2)

Catherine's alteration of this sentence as it appears in the PR (2.3) is noteworthy. The Sisters are to pray to God and to Mary, the model of faith and service, *before* they enter school, not *when* they enter; the kind of prayer Catherine advocated could be done only privately, in anticipation of the attitudes and practice to which the example of Jesus Christ calls and with deep remembrance of his presence in those about to be served. She does not say, as did the PR, that the Sisters are to "salute with all reverence interiorly the Guardian Angels of the children" or recommend "themselves, and the dear little ones to [the Angels'] care and protection." Her own kindly Protestant associations, over the whole course of her adult life, would have made her reluctant to be too elaborate about Guardian Angels.

In this paragraph, Catherine uses the verb *inspire*, as in the PR: "They shall endeavour to inspire [their students] with a sincere Devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ, to His Real Presence in the Most Holy Sacrament, [and] to the Immaculate Mother of God . . ." (2.2). In this sentence are three key elements of her faith and catechesis: the Death and Resurrection of Christ; the Eucharist; and the special discipleship of Mary of Nazareth. To these three themes she will devote two entire chapters later in the Rule.

To Mercy educators of the twenty-first century, this paragraph says a number of enduring things: about the primacy of *Christian religious education* in our ministry; about what ought to be the genuinely *inspiring*—that is, the life-sustaining, and life-influ-

encing—character of the religious education we offer our students; and about three *essential theological emphases* in any Mercy institution that hopes to be faithful to the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy: namely, a realization of what the death and resurrection of Jesus means for those we serve and for their brothers and sisters in this world; an appreciation of what the Eucharist can be for them and their friends; and an understanding of what Christian faith and hope really are, as seen in the life of Mary of Nazareth. Catherine McAuley would, of course, rejoice in modern biblical scholarship and modern theology, which reveal the even greater richness of these crucial mysteries.

Article 3 of this chapter on the Schools addresses the teaching of prayer. Here Catherine writes:

> The Sisters shall teach the children to offer their hearts to God when they awake in the morning . . . [and] return thanks for all His favors . . . They shall instruct them how to direct all their thoughts, words, and actions to God's glory, implore His grace to know and love Him, and to fulfill His Commandments, how to examine their conscience, and to honor and respect Parents and Superiors. (2.3)

Catherine's simplicity in her treatment of prayer leads to a number of alterations in the PR text. For example, she does not say: "teach the children to offer themselves up to God from the first use of Reason," as in the PR (1.3). As the adoptive mother of at least nine children before she ever thought of founding a religious Congregation, her understanding of human development was much more subtle, and her theological expressions were always humanly sensible. She simply wishes us to teach others how to pray in light of God's present and future gifts to them. Catherine does not propose teaching students to examine their consciences "every night," as does the PR, but simply *how* to do so—implying that, whether young or old, they will, on their own, discover when such examination is needed.

What is most important about this article on teaching others how to pray is the fact that Catherine includes it in her Rule as one of only three articles on the content of Mercy education, thus giving to *instruction in prayer* a priority that she does not give to other topics.

In Article 4, she writes, in part:

> They shall teach them the method of assisting devoutly at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, how to prepare for Confession, and be ever attentive to dispose them for the Sacrament of Confirmation, and for Holy Communion . . . The Angelus and Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity being said, general instructions shall be given by an appointed Sister for about half an hour, adapted to their state and capacity and rendered practically useful by explanation. (2.4)

Three aspects of this article are significant: first, Catherine asks the Sisters to teach "the method of assisting devoutly at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass," a detail entirely missing from the PR (1.4); she changes the PR reference about disposing the children for their "first Communion" to their recurring need to dispose themselves for "Holy Communion"; and finally she says that the instruction given should be "adapted to their state and capacity and rendered practically useful by explanation" (2.4).

Catherine does not propose teaching students to examine their consciences "every night," as does the PR, but simply *how* to do so—implying that, whether young or old, they will, on their own, discover when such examination is needed.

Catherine concludes her chapter, "Of the Schools," with a final paragraph that is entirely her own composition. She writes:

> The Sisters shall feel convinced that no work of charity can be more productive of good to society, or more conducive to the happiness of the poor than the careful instruction of women, since whatever be the station they are destined to fill, their example and advice will always possess influence, and wherever a religious woman presides, peace and good order are generally to be found. (2.5)

Here, "religious woman" refers, not to a woman with religious vows, but to any woman (and by extension any man) who has been so empowered by "careful," that is, by mature and life-giving, religious instruction that her or his influence is "productive of good to society" and "conducive to the

happiness of the Poor." Where such a person presides "peace and good order are generally to be found." Like other articles in the chapter "Of the Schools," this paragraph is a great challenge to the work of Mercy education. It calls for continual re-imagining of the scope and outreach of this work of mercy.

In Ireland in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, much of the Roman Catholic population generally suffered the illiteracy, deep ignorance, poverty, and demoralization that were the long-lasting, apartheid-like effects of the penal laws against Catholics enacted by England between 1695 and 1720. The Anglo-Irish statesman Edmund Burke (1729–1797) once called the penal laws, "a system of wise and elaborate contrivance, as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."[6] The "relief acts" between 1778 and 1829 repealed the various penal laws, but by then enduring damage had already been done to the Irish Catholic population.

In Carlow, Cork, and Naas, Catherine encouraged the establishment of pension (i.e., tuition) schools for girls whose parents could afford to pay for their daughters' education, poor girls being already well served by the Presentation Sisters in Carlow and Cork.

It was into such a world, with all its neglect of poor children and poor families, that Catherine McAuley deliberately took up the work of instructing poor girls and sheltering and training homeless girls and women—first in Dublin and later in other cities in Ireland and England.

She created a school for poor girls and an employment training shelter for homeless women at Baggot Street. Of the education of the women in the House of Mercy she wrote: they shall "be instructed in the principal mysteries of Religion," and prepared "to approach the Holy Sacraments." She noted further that "Suitable employment shall be sought for and great care taken to place them in situations for which they are adapted," since "Many leave their situations not so much for want of merit as incapacity to fulfill the duties they unwisely engaged in."[7] She also built a commercial laundry where the women could train for employment other than household service.

Catherine urged Mercy poor schools to affiliate with the Board of National Education. Such affiliation required teacher certification, school inspections, and observance of the board's regulations, but it also made the schools eligible for national grants. In her lifetime, the poor schools in Dublin, Limerick, and Tullamore all achieved this affiliation.

In Carlow, Cork, and Naas, Catherine encouraged the establishment of pension (i.e., tuition) schools for girls whose parents could afford to pay for their daughters' education, poor girls being already well served by the Presentation Sisters in Carlow and Cork. The Carlow pension school opened in May 1839, and the Carlow Annals for that year reports: "Although properly speaking the education of the middle class is not a feature of our Institute, yet our venerated Foundress gave her fullest sanction to its being undertaken by this Community."[8] Writing to the superior in Cork in October 1839, Catherine said:

> The pension school in Carlow is making great progress. You must get their regulations—it is quite simple . . . The girls are obliged to acquire a perfect knowledge of the lessons at home—so that to hear the classes is all—one the French class, another Grammar & Geography, [and] so on. They have already commenced at Naas and have 18 pupils—also a poor school.[9]

Some early Sisters of Mercy, notably the superiors in Kinsale, Limerick, New York, San Francisco, and St. Louis, were strenuously opposed to Mercy pension schools, as incompatible with the emphasis on poor students in the Rule. Mary Francis Bridgeman of Kinsale argued this view in the *Guide for the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy*, which she drafted and which was approved by a gathering of *some* Mercy superiors in Limerick in 1864 and published in 1866.

However, the *Customs and Minor Regulations of the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy, in . . . Baggot Street, and its Branch Houses*, published in Dublin in 1869—apparently the long-delayed result of a much earlier meeting planned for superiors in Dublin in the late 1840s—states that:

> Our Venerated Foundress, in naming the Works of Mercy peculiar to the Congregation did not in any way exclude such other good works as circumstances in various places might make desirable . . .
>
> . . . Sisters of Mercy . . . are dedicated to the exercise of the Works of Mercy, and should not, *on principle*, exclude any one of them, unless . . . it practically interferes with those characteristic of the Congregation.[10]

Over time and in various places, as "circumstances" made desirable, evolved not only tuition schools, including our present Mercy colleges and universities, but also schools for boys, infant schools, coeducational schools, and educational programs for adults. In England, the convents in both Birmingham and Bermondsey, London, developed some of these Mercy endeavors very early in their histories, while maintaining their commitment to the instruction of poor girls and women.

II. But how did Catherine McAuley think Mercy education occurs? And what in her view was the overriding purpose of Mercy education? Catherine's response to the first question involves a "method" that requires a lifetime of human effort, as well as God's help. The method is *good example*—that is, a Mercy educator's own evident practice of what she or he teaches.

Throughout her Rule, her letters, and her other writings, Catherine repeatedly urges the necessity of our being an *example* of what we propose to teach. Her most fully developed statement on this topic occurs at the end of her handwritten essay on the "Spirit of the Institute." This essay is her much abbreviated and frequently altered transcription of a treatise in Alonso Rodriguez's work, *The Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection*, first published in Spain in the early seventeenth century.

In her essay, Catherine makes Rodriguez's thoughts and convictions her own, often omitting passages, altering words, and inserting phrases and sentences that are her own composition. In her two paragraphs on the benefit and necessity of giving good example, she says:

> I shall now speak of the most effectual means of rendering ourselves useful to our neighbour . . . The first means which the saints have recommended to render us most useful to others is to give good example and to live in sanctity. Saint Ignatius says . . . "the good example which we give by leading a most holy and Christian life has the greatest power over the minds of others . . . It was for this reason that our Blessed Saviour marked the way to Heaven by His example. "Jesus Christ," says Saint Luke, "began to do and to teach" (Act. 1.1), thus signifying to us that we should do first what we would induce others to do . . . the way to virtue and to piety is shorter by example than by precept. Saint Bernard speaking on this matter says, "Example is very efficacious and a very proper lesson to persuade because it proves that what it teaches is practicable and this is what has most influence on all."
>
> "Our weakness is so great," says Saint Augustine, "that we can hardly be moved to do what is right, except we see others do it . . ."[11]

The challenge these words present to Mercy educators may not have fully dawned upon us. We are to *be* and *do* what we *teach*. If we wish to teach mercifulness, we must speak and act mercifully towards others.

The challenge these words present to Mercy educators may not have fully dawned upon us. We are to *be* and *do* what we *teach*. If we wish to teach mercifulness, we must speak and act mercifully towards others. If we wish to teach forgiveness, we must forgive others and ask for their forgiveness. If we wish to teach that the Eucharist is Christ's life-nourishing, joyous gift to the whole community, the Eucharist must be evidently nourishing and joyous in our own lives and institutions. If we wish to teach others to serve and respect those who are economically poor, we must first serve and respect them ourselves. This is the primary principle and method of Mercy education as Catherine McAuley conceived and practiced it.

In Catherine's view, and in the view of the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament writers, the overriding purpose of every educational endeavor which seeks to be faithful to the revelation of God, is *consolation*; yes, consolation. The primary purpose of all teaching that is born of God, the Supreme Educator, is to console, to comfort. Thus, for Catherine, the purpose of all Mercy education is not primarily to develop students' intellectual skills, or to teach them information and formulas—however necessary and valuable such learning may be in their lives—but to comfort, encourage, and console them in the most thorough and lasting way possible. To assure them that the God of all Consolation has already visited them and uplifted them; that God has embraced and loved them forever; that the Spirit of God is always with them, encouraging, consoling, and helping in whatever grief, affliction, or weakness they may now or one day experience.

The primary purpose of all teaching that is born of God, the Supreme Educator, is to console, to comfort.

Catherine McAuley believed that the deepest ignorance of those we instruct is spiritual: their lack of awareness of the reality of God's Merciful Consolation. Her understanding of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ lay behind her understanding and practice of mercy; it urged her, in her own words, "to instruct and *comfort* the sick and dying poor" (Rule 3.1), to give herself "to the instruction and *consolation* of those who required . . . assistance."[12] She also wished to console and encourage Mercy teachers themselves, so she wrote:

> We ought then have great confidence in God in the discharge of all these offices of mercy, spiritual and corporal—which constitute the business of our lives, and assure ourselves that God will particularly concur with us to render them efficacious as by His infinite mercy we daily experience.[13]

III. In the discussion paper titled "Mercy Higher Education: Culture and Characteristics," prepared as a draft for the Conference in Winter 2004, we read the following:

> While each Mercy institution of higher education has its own mission statement and articulated core values, four characteristics unmistakably define the formative culture of every Mercy campus:
>
> [1] Regard for the dignity of the person
> [2] Academic excellence and life-long learning
> [3] Education of the whole person: body, mind, and spirit
> [4] Through action and education, promotion of compassion and justice towards those with less, especially women and children[14]

The Executive Summary of the paper calls these four characteristics "the first attempt to name those qualities which should be the hallmarks of Mercy higher education," and claims that "Anchored in these four characteristics, the culture of a Mercy college or university endeavors to witness its Catholic identity and to honor its Mercy heritage."[15]

With some modification, I accept these four characteristics. However, in light of the founding views of Catherine McAuley that I have discussed, and allowing for some slight extension of her views in accord with evolving theological, ecumenical, and interfaith understandings as well as present economic and social circumstances, I would like to suggest the addition of three more characteristics, or at least the addition of more explicit language to the four characteristics already listed.

A fifth characteristic of Mercy higher education I would propose is the following:

> [5] Religious learning and spiritual development, through frequent courses in Christian theology and the Scriptures, courses in other religions, Catholic liturgical celebrations, and other religious events

I do not believe that the wording, "education of the whole person: body, mind, and spirit," is adequate to represent this central element in the Mercy heritage coming to us from Catherine McAuley. While Catherine herself would, I believe, have surely embraced the ecumenical and interfaith respect, aspirations, and understandings of the present time, she would not wish such desirable collaboration and co-learning to silence or diminish a courteous emphasis on and provision for explicitly Christian and,

where necessary, Catholic religious education and experience. Such emphasis was the primary, though not the only, characteristic of her practice of the works of mercy, including the work of education.

There is a gracious way for a Mercy college or university both to respect whatever interdenominational and interfaith profile its students, faculty, and staff may have *and* to provide through its curricula and extracurricular programs explicit opportunities for sharing its heritage of Christian-Catholic learnings and practices, including the sacraments. Excellent religion courses—Christian theology courses as well as courses in, for example, Islam, Jewish theology, and philosophy of religion—would seem to be a necessary hallmark of a Mercy institution, as would frequent opportunities for well-celebrated liturgies, paraliturgies, spiritual retreats, and other Christian events and experiences. If one reads the chapter "Of the Schools" in Catherine's Rule with some depth of analysis, one can see that Christian religious education, including instruction in the major Christian mysteries and sacraments, and care to promote experiences of Christian prayer were very important emphases in the educational practices she wished to see in Mercy schools.

A sixth characteristic I would propose for Mercy higher education is an explicit focus on God's Mercy and our call to mercifulness, as, for instance, in the following wording:

[6] Education in and a commitment to mercifulness, as revealed in the Mercy of God made manifest in Jesus Christ

It does not seem possible to me that a college or university that is sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and wishes to consider itself "of Mercy" could so regard itself without aiming to be explicitly attentive to mercifulness in all the myriad ways an institution of higher learning might do so. Mercifulness can be defined as a set of qualities and actions: forgiveness, gentleness, sensitivity, empathy towards distress, charity of mind and heart, sympathy, self-sacrifice for the sake of another's need, loving kindness, humility—all the ways the charity of God expresses itself for our sakes. Catherine McAuley frequently said:

> The Charity of God would not avail us, if His Mercy did not come to our assistance.[16]

and

> The mercy of God comes to our assistance and renders practical His charity in our regard; Mercy not only bestows benefits, but receives and pardons again and again, even the ungrateful; how kind and charitable and merciful, then, ought not Sisters of Mercy to be.[17]

In a Mercy-sponsored institution, this demanding responsibility surely extends to all our coworkers and partners in ministry!

Merciful behavior does not mean that an institution has to lower its academic or grading standards, its dorm rules, or its employee expectations or requirements.

Merciful behavior does not mean that an institution has to lower its academic or grading standards, its dorm rules, or its employee expectations or requirements. Rather, what is involved is the manner of thinking and acting at all levels, the atmosphere of collegial life, the tenor of the campus, the mutual relations, the willingness to listen to and experience the "other side" of situations—the language, the look in the eyes, the presence of compassion. Education in and an explicit commitment to mercifulness will suffuse both the real and the perceived character of the whole place, from the maintenance workers and history professors to the president. Such attention to the Mercy of God and to human mercifulness will even influence, where appropriate, the curricula, the content of courses, and, again where appropriate, their methods and objectives. Such a characteristic of a Mercy college or university will give concrete reality to the vague abstract words we so easily use about ourselves: "Mercy values," "Mercy heritage," "the tradition of Mercy."

My final recommendation is the addition of a seventh characteristic—a much more difficult characteristic than all the rest. An educational institution cannot be faithful to the essential Mercy values and practices coming from Catherine McAuley

without seriously attempting to be faithful to her primary pedagogical principle and method: her belief that "the first means . . . to render us most useful to others" is "to give good example."[18]

Here the proverbial rubber will really hit the road. For example, to aspire to be a culture where there is "regard for the dignity of the person" will make enormous personal and professional demands on each teacher's and administrator's conduct and speech, if this characteristic is to be more than simply boilerplate words in the college or university's mission statement or catalog. And, to be a place of "academic excellence and lifelong learning," it will not be enough to lecture students about this goal; they will need to see in their teachers and the staff, the same ardent and personal pursuit of "academic excellence and lifelong learning."

In a letter to Frances Warde, Catherine once gave the following advice:

> Sister Mary Teresa has delighted me telling of the instructions you give—shew them in your actions as much as you can . . . and your Institution will outdo us all.[19]

Of her own personal efforts to practice what she preached, Catherine once wrote: "she teaches me by her example what genuine meekness and humility are. The adage—'never too old to learn'—is a great comfort to me."[20] If students do not see evidences of the characteristics of a Mercy education in their teachers' example, as well as in their words, such characteristics will be only half affirmed, if at all. The personnel of a true Mercy educational institution will "never be too old" to learn to teach "by example more than by precept . . . and chiefly by example."

So, to the set of characteristics of a Mercy college or university, I would add the following:

[7] The strenuous effort to give good example, by modeling, personally and corporately, all the values it seeks to promote through its educational and other endeavors

It is now morning in the world of Mercy higher education. It is time to brush away the night's ashes and expose more clearly the live coals that have long sustained the life-giving fires of Mercy colleges and universities. These coals are the essential characteristics of a true Mercy education, the specific and enduring educational values of Catherine McAuley embedded in general references to the "Mercy tradition" and the "Mercy heritage." I can only wish you profound fidelity and creativity in this demanding endeavor. May you succeed with God's and Catherine's help and inspiration. Thank you.

Notes

1 Joan Chittister, O.S.B., *The Fire in these Ashes* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1995), 36.
2 Mary C. Sullivan, R.S.M., *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy.* (Dublin and Notre Dame: Four Courts Press and the University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 49.
3 Ibid., 163.
4 McAuley, Catherine. "Rule and Constitutions of the Religious Sisters of Mercy" [her handwritten manuscript approved and signed by Daniel Murray on January 23, 1837], in Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy* pp. 295–328. References to the Rule are cited by chapter and paragraph, separated by a period.
5 "Memoir," in Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley,* 200.
6 Quoted in Giovanni Costigan, *A History of Modern Ireland* (New York: Pegasus, 1969), 91.
7 Rule 4.1, 2, and 3, in Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley,* 299–300.
8 Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley,* 228.
9 Mary C. Sullivan, R.S.M., ed., *The Correspondence of Catherine McAuley, 1818–1841* (Dublin and Washington, D.C.: Four Courts Press and The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 209.
10 Customs 101–102 in *Customs and Minor Regulations of The Religious Called Sisters of Mercy, in the Parent House, Baggot Street, and its Branch Houses* (Dublin: J. M. O'Toole and Son, 1869).
11 Sullivan, ed., *Correspondence,* 463.
12 "Spirit of the Institute," in Sullivan, ed., *Correspondence* , 460.
13 Ibid., 462.
14 "Mercy Higher Education: Culture and Characteristics." Discussion Paper. Winter 2004 Draft. Chicago: Conference for Mercy Higher Education, 2004, p. 2.
15 Ibid., 2.
16 Bermondsey Annals, in Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley,* 117.
17 Limerick Manuscript, in Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley,* 181.
18 "Spirit of the Institute," in Sullivan, ed., *Correspondence,* 463.
19 Sullivan, ed., *Correspondence,* 116.
20 Ibid., 105.

Wisdom, Dignity, and Justice
Higher Education as a Work of Mercy

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My focus in this essay both is on the particularity of a Mercy charism in higher education and also on the way in which this charism belongs to the whole church. Since this is an abridged version of an original paper delivered at a conference on Mercy Higher Education, some of what I say will not be backed by the analysis that I initially tried to provide. Yet my analysis and argument are contained elliptically in my title: "Wisdom, Dignity, and Justice: Higher Education as a Work of Mercy." What I will try to show is the following: (1) Wisdom involves many things, but central to it is a recognition of the dignity of human persons and the value of all creation. (2) Genuine recognition of the dignity of all persons, along with insight into the treasures of the rest of creation, yields imperatives of justice. (3) Justice both calls for and makes possible relationships of compassion or mercy. (4) At its best, higher education aims at wisdom. Along the way, wisdom may be awakened and challenged by the claims of mercy and justice. When wisdom, dignity, justice, and mercy are held together, then higher education can be a work of mercy.

Wisdom

The more skeptical among us might raise our eyebrows at the statement that the central goal of higher education is to grow in wisdom. In a time and society marked by narrow specialization of disciplines, economic pressures, desires not only for survival, but for upward mobility, what even counts as "wisdom"? When trends in higher education seek to accommodate not only new forms of learning but also new challenges to *any* learning that aims at universal theorizing, what might "wisdom" mean? When departments are more and more isolated from one another in colleges and universities, and scholars find it difficult to understand the world through one another's lenses, what kind of "wisdom" might we search for or expect?

I take such questions seriously, but I do not think they undermine a goal of wisdom in higher education. Insofar as the questions reflect extreme forms of deconstruction and distorted desires shaped by multiple culturally hidden forces, they do seem to be conversation stoppers and to render moot any longing for wisdom on which we might base our educational goals. But questions like these may also be a starting point in a search for understanding and wisdom. If, for example, educating in a postmodern world allows us to deconstruct inadequate theoretical idols and illusions of isolated individuality, if it brings us to an appreciation of diversity, engagement with the Other, and humility in the face of the partiality of knowledge, then it may still be education that begins in and aims toward wisdom.

Whatever its ultimate goals, all higher education has importantly to do with the initiation of new generations of persons into a civilization, a culture in which or against which they must find their way. The Greeks educated for virtue and for freedom of intellectual inquiry; the humanists of the Renaissance educated for the reform of society and for individual self-fulfillment; Christians have educated persons in the workings of the world and in the

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relationship of the world to God. None of these educational traditions, nor any combination of them, has ever been divorced from preparing persons to make a living, to enter a career, to advance the skills and services that a society needs.[1] Both theoretically and practically, both individually and communally, higher education has sought to initiate persons into a civilization and a culture through some form of expansion of mind, social analysis, development of skills, experience of relationships, and capacity building for freedom of choice guided by some form of wisdom.

Unlike other strands of Christianity, the Catholic tradition has continued to believe in the basic intelligibility of creation and in the basic capacity of the human mind to understand what is revealed in creation.

The goals of higher education today, insofar as they are adequate, take into account not only relativity in physics, but the culture-bound perspectives of history, literature, psychology and sociology, philosophy and theology. We have learned to value pluralism when it does not mean that "anything goes." We have learned to welcome diversity (or at least we have learned that we ought to welcome it) and to see the possibilities of unity within it. We have learned to value community and the freedom it nurtures. We have experienced the necessity of interdisciplinary study, but also the humility it requires as we realize that everyone knows something that others do not know; and that we will all know more only if we are willing to share our knowledge and our methods.

Real wisdom in every respect comes from learning—through whatever process or with whatever resources—about the interrelationships of all beings and the dignity at the heart of every person. Much of higher education through long centuries of its development has been an attempt to learn just this, but to learn it primarily by studying human achievements—in science, the arts, politics, architecture, the winning of wars and the conquering of territories, the possession of land and the fruits of human labor on the land. Yet as Michael Buckley pointed out in the early 1980s, what was missing from these studies, from this education, was an encounter with human suffering.[2] Learning of human successes without learning of human pain, or learning about conquerors without learning about the exploited and the conquered, learning about the leaders and their ideas without learning about the marginalized and the poor, led and still may lead to the estrangement of an educated elite from the lives of the desperate and from the worldwide phenomenon of human misery.

This has changed (to some extent) in higher education generally since the early '80s, and certainly (again, to some extent) in Catholic higher education. Most colleges and universities at least offer possibilities of community service, urban immersion, and travel that is not only to learn of the glories of human achievement but the need for solidarity between persons in diverse cultures with diverse hopes and needs. Moreover, renewed studies of, for example, the classic content of the humanities, empirical research by social sciences, and humanitarian goals of many of the sciences, open the eyes of students not only to human impoverishment and injustice but to the mystery of the human person—to the dignity, the beauty, and the basic needs of all persons.

Dignity

The Catholic tradition stands out among the multiple traditions of Christianity in that it has sustained a kind of optimism about learning. Unlike other strands of Christianity, it has continued to believe in the basic intelligibility of creation and in the basic capacity of the human mind to understand what is revealed in creation. Although the Catholic tradition, like others, has taken seriously the "human condition" limited by human nature and damaged by human sin, it has never thought that humans are either so limited or so injured and incapacitated that they cannot learn (however partially) about the universe and about humanity itself. Not only the

Bible, but creation itself has been considered a revelatory text.

This learning, the study of this text, is not simple, however. Think of the ways we try to understand the cosmos, the universe, the planet Earth. Think of the academic disciplines we have developed in order to understand the worth of every creature—not only their instrumental worth but their worth in themselves. The motivations for such study may be multiple, but in Catholic education they can include the sort of inquiry that once motivated St. Augustine. Searching for God, Augustine described his questioning of the earth: "What is this God whom I love?" and "Tell me about God, you who are not God." All things on the earth answered him, he said, from the "sea and the deeps and the creeping things with living souls," to the "blowing breezes and the universal air with all its inhabitants," to the "sun, the moon, the stars." "They cried out in a loud voice: 'God made us.'" My question, Augustine said, "was in my contemplation of them, and their answer was in their beauty."[3]

But if study of the world is complex and ongoing, think of the study of ourselves. Discipline after discipline seeks to probe the meaning of the human species and of each human person. The concrete reality of human persons includes multiple elements and dimensions.[4] At least sometimes in our own experience and in our academic explorations, we have glimpsed a core value at the heart of each person, a value that grounds a claim that all of us are ends in ourselves. In this recognition rises the further claim that we are to be treated as ends, not only as means. There are multiple warrants for these claims. One of them is our capacity for free choice. By our freedom, we possess ourselves; our selves and our actions are in an important sense our own. By our freedom, we can determine the meaning of our own lives and, within limits, our destiny.

We are also terminal centers, ends in ourselves, because of what today we call our relationality. We possess ourselves and transcend ourselves not only by our freedom but by our capacities to know and be known, love and be loved. We belong to ourselves yet we belong to others; we are centered both within and without. Each of us is a whole world in herself, yet our world is in what we love.

Freedom and relationality, moreover, do not compete; they are intimately connected. Relationships make freedom of self-determination possible (for without them we cannot grow in freedom); but freedom is ultimately for the sake of choosing relationships—of choosing what and how to love. Herein lies the basis of human dignity and the requirement to grow in wisdom regarding what humans need. Out of wisdom about all the creatures of the world, and especially about human dignity, arise imperatives of human justice.

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Justice

The threads of ideas that I have been trying to identify may now be ready for weaving into a fabric whose background is Catholic and Mercy higher education and whose central design is justice and mercy. Let me come now to the threads of justice.

Justice of course can mean many things. One of the tasks of higher education in initiating persons into civilization and culture is to test the multiple theories of justice that have been proposed through many centuries and in many different cultures. Some of these will prove to have been inadequate, and some of them simply wrong. Some will be more adequate than others.

Examples of theories of justice that cannot be adequate for our society or our church today are theories that accommodate human slavery (a seemingly obvious example), or theories that assume a basic inequality among persons on the basis of race or gender (an example apparently not yet so obvious to everyone).[5] Indeed, we judge such theories to be not only inadequate but wrong. In the past, there were no doubt cultural reasons why such theories were not questioned, but today we (or at least most of us) condemn them as distortions of justice, as theories that actually support and reinforce systemic injustice. When we ask how such views of justice could have held sway for so many centuries and

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in so many cultures, the only answer can be that the dominant culture found reasons to avert its eyes from the dignity of some human individuals and groups, thereby not recognizing them as human, or at least not fully human. And despite long struggles for a better recognition of this dignity, we, too, still fail in practice if not in theory to oppose and remedy attitudes of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and cultural imperialism—attitudes that continue to exist in societies and in the hearts of countless people, including ourselves.

No one expects higher education to be the sole solution to failures in wisdom and justice. It has not been so in the past, nor is it in the present. Indeed, institutions of higher learning are vulnerable like all institutions to the culture blindness that is endemic to any given society. Yet, higher education is surely that realm of society where primary challenges to failures and distortions of thought ought to be taken seriously. It may even be that realm of society where critical challenges can be formulated for the moral failures that abet distortions of thought (moral failures such as greed, complacency, or the desire for power). Higher education functions, after all, not only to initiate persons into a culture that is already made, but thereby to influence the culture for better or for worse.

Wisdom, human dignity, and justice, therefore, remain not only relevant but crucial to the shaping of higher education. Lest this stand as a platitudinous assertion, let me try a quick thought experiment. Suppose we here today were in a position to found a new college or university; and suppose we knew that our own children or some particular individuals close to us would be the first students in this institution of higher education. What would we want to provide for these students, from their first day of matriculation to their last day before graduation? I will speak for myself, readers can test the plausibility and desirability of what I propose.

I would want these students, my children or my friends, to find first of all an institution that is itself marked by justice. I would want a community of learning in which students could trust the competence of teachers, the care and commitment of teachers, and the extraordinary wisdom of at least some teachers. I would want a college or university in which members of the administration and the staff work together for the same goals and are committed to adjudicating disagreements in ways marked by fairness and due process. I would want an institution in which just wages are paid to everyone, so that faculty, administration, and staff can be free and happy to work for more than their monetary wages. I would want an institution where interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary teaching and learning are rewarded, so that junior faculty will not be penalized for it nor will any student who appreciates its value be deprived of it. I would want an institution in which the students experience harmony, though not necessarily always agreement, among faculty and between faculty and administration; where faculty can recognize administrators as their advocates, not their adversaries; and where administrators can trust faculty, even when they are frustrated by them.

Above all, I would want this institution to be just toward its students. It would give them the education they need and deserve. It would respect and even reverence them—in their diversity, their uniqueness, their plurality of gifts and possibilities. It would therefore aim in its policies, its actions, and its ethos, to nurture the capacities in the students for freedom and for relationship. It would not fear, but rather cultivate, students' possibilities for self-determination and for discerning their responsibilities. It would awaken their desires for union, through knowledge and love, with more and more of what can be learned about the vast reaches of the universe, the microscopic smallness of the tiniest of creatures, the diversity of human cultures and occupations, and human persons as embodied spirits. Each student would be able to encounter at least one teacher who might change their lives, not through indoctrination, but inspiration.

The students would not be living in a paradise, isolated from human misery and pain. No matter how just the institution in which they studied, they would have opportunities to learn to accept human

frailty, and to learn about forgiveness and patience. They would learn, and co-learn, about human sufferings that are a part of embodied life—such as natural disasters, illness, limitations great and small. They would be given the tools to recognize that the future of all of creation is in some way dependent on them—whether in terms of Earth's environment, the intrinsic worth of every being, or the survival of the human species. They would have at least encouragement to learn to see the gem of dignity in each human person, no matter how different from themselves, no matter how challenged in abilities, no matter even how wicked. They would begin to understand that some sufferings do not have to be; that some sufferings ought not end in either dominance or death, but in change. They would have possibilities to discern whether and what actions they may and must take to make the world more just, and to make their countries, families, churches, sexual partnerships, and future occupations and professions more just. They would have ample opportunity to discover their own limitations, frailties, and powerlessness; but they would also learn of their own dignity.

These students would also have lives outside of their community of learning. They would, like students everywhere, have to engage in their own education in spite of economic constraints and pressures. They would have to make decisions in terms of their relationships with the ordinary political, social, ecclesiastical spheres of the wider world. They would bring all of their experiences to their learning—with no questions ruled out, no methods dismissed as not worth a try, no voices silenced because of their backgrounds.

And since this institution that I am imagining for my children and my friends would be Catholic and Mercy, it would foster an ethos, and have at least some participants, to witness to students that their freedom is ultimately a capacity to decide for or against what they believe is ultimate; that their capacity for relation stretches even to the infinite; that they may dare to hope in an unlimited future.

I have seen colleges and at least parts of universities where this kind of wisdom and justice is possible and even present. Yes, of course, there are serious obstacles and genuine limitations on what any form of higher education can provide. Not all students are ready to take advantage of the possibilities I describe. And despite their own preferences, there are many students who cannot take the time for a full college experience, who must therefore learn piecemeal and against great odds (though all the while meshing their learning with their everyday experience). Institutions, too, have fiscal limits, the kind of limits that threaten to turn decisions about faculty, programs, and equipment into sheer business matters. I have known colleges, universities, and students with all of these difficulties. No matter what, however, I would want to argue that no institution of higher education can be justified if its structures, its internal relationships, and its provisions for its students are unjust—which is to say, if they are unsuited to the pursuit of wisdom or respect for human dignity.

Mercy, like love, can be helpful or harmful, wise or foolish, inaccurate or true, creative or destructive. Mercy, like love, must therefore have standards, criteria, measures, whereby it is good or wise or true.

Mercy

Mercy both requires justice and makes it possible. How does it require justice? Mercy, like love (of which it is a form), can be helpful or harmful, wise or foolish, inaccurate or true, creative or destructive. Mercy, like love, must therefore have standards, criteria, measures, whereby it is good or wise or true. At the risk of being too brief and hence too blunt, let me simply say that the fundamental norm (measure, standard) for a right and good love, and a right and good mercy, is the concrete reality of the beloved.[6] If this is missed, mercy will miss its mark; it will harm rather than help. As examples: If I love and am "merciful" toward persons as if they are things, or things as if they are persons, I love them both unjustly. If I love and care for my stu-

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dents only as supporters of my reputation or fulfillers of my (or my institution's) ambitions, they will be right to say that I do not really love them but only myself. Or if I do in fact love them for themselves, but I am obtuse when it comes to understanding their genuine needs, I may injure them when I offer them what I have imagined they need or wanted them to need. If education leads anyone to judge persons from a false bias, to interpret situations naively, it will not lead to genuine mercy. This, then, is how mercy requires justice. Or better, the requirement for true mercy is, therefore, the wisdom to understand well—insofar as we can—concrete realities, contexts, relationships, and the claims they make on us in justice.

But mercy also makes justice possible. Mercy enhances the knowledge that is needed for justice, and it motivates actions that respond to the claims of justice. Mercy (or compassion) adds to love an element of stronger affective response and an assumption of more acute access to knowledge of the concrete reality of others. Love is a response to persons as lovable, as valuable; mercy is this same response with the added notion of "suffering with."[7] Precisely because mercy involves beholding the value of others and suffering with them in their need, it opens reality to the beholder; it offers a way of "seeing" that evokes a moral response—to alleviate pain, provide assistance in need, support in wellbeing. Mercy therefore illuminates justice and propels it to action.

To appeal to a Christian theological perspective: It is our belief that the mercy of God is intended to flow not only into and upon us but through us, one to the other. By God's grace, we are to understand one another's and the whole world's need for beauty as well as for bread, for companionship as well as for peace, for mutual respect and mutual strengthening of our loves, our justice, and our hopes. This is why we participate in higher education (whatever our role or position) as co-learners. Do we not grow in wisdom through the mutuality of our efforts—administrators, staff, students, faculty? Do we not gain clarity about the demands of justice through the challenges of one another? Is not this kind of receiving and giving a whole work of mercy whereby we at least try to advance human knowledge and wisdom, affirm freedom and dignity in a cherished universe, make choices about our loves, and strive to mend the world with justice?

Notes

1 See Christopher F. Mooney, *Boundaries Dimly Perceived: Law, Religion, Education, and the Common Good* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), part 3.

2 Michael Buckley, "The University and the Concern for Justice: The Search for a New Humanism," *Thought* 57 (June, 1982): 219–33.

3 Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. Warner (New York: New American Library, 1963), 10.6.

4 I have treated these elements of human reality in a number of other writings, most recently in *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2006), chapter 6.

5 For a remarkable study of the long centuries in which Christians accepted slavery, see John T. Noonan, *A Church Which Can and Cannot Change* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005). For the failure of church and society to recognize the equality of women and man, see Farley, *Just Love*, passim.

6 In the original version of this paper, I provided more extended examples of this. Here I only refer the reader to my *Compassionate Respect: A Feminist Approach to Medical Ethics and Other Questions* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), esp. 3–20. See also *Just Love*, 196–206.

7 See *Compassionate Respect*, 39–43, 72–79.