

Campus Ministry and Academics

It is an honor to have been invited to speak at this unique national gathering of those who serve in Campus Ministry and others interested in the integral mission of Catholic colleges and universities. I say “integral,” since I believe that no single group on campus—administrators, development officers, student development staff, campus ministry, athletics and yes, even faculty—no single group alone can address adequately the integral mission of a Catholic university. This concept of a multi-faceted community with an integral sense of mission makes my topic, the relationship between Academics and Campus Ministry, inescapably complex.

But before beginning my remarks, I should tell you that although I have been deeply involved as a faculty member and administrator in Catholic higher education for nearly thirty years, I have also always been involved, at least in some minor way, in the work of campus ministry—celebrating mass, hearing confessions, helping out on retreats and offering spiritual direction. All the same, I know less about Campus Ministry than I do about academics, though today not even the most knowledgeable academic can comprehend the complex fields of knowledge explored in the modern university.

Secondly, given the time that I have, I will be making a number of generalizations that ordinarily I wouldn't make without considerable documentation. If you press me, I can refer to studies that will support what I am rather baldly stating in the following remarks. But it is the larger picture I am most interested in exploring with you.

Finally, let me tell you how I wish to proceed. I will develop my thoughts in three steps. First, I will sketch a backdrop or a context, one that itself has three components—one historical, one demographical, and one sociological. I think such a context will help us all understand better the nature of the challenges we are facing now. Second, I will describe several of the problem areas and typical deficiencies of both campus ministries and academics. In a nutshell, I am going to argue that campus ministers need to take more seriously the intellectual life of the students with whom they work, just as faculty need to recognize more than they do the importance of the moral and spiritual formation of the students they teach. Third and finally, I will return to my central argument with some additional clarifications. Let me now turn first to the three contexts.

Three Important Contexts

Every age probably has people who say that we live in a time of great change and transition. Well, I say the same thing. The amount of change in

Catholic colleges and universities in the United States over the past one hundred years becomes clearer if only I outline some of those changes. The first point I wish to make, therefore, is historical. Though the first Catholic universities were founded in Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries, in the United States they really came into existence only towards the end of the 19th century. Until Vatican II, nearly all of these institutions saw their mission as preparing Catholics, mostly immigrants, to enter professional lives with their Catholic faith intact.

Many Catholics then perceived the larger culture in largely negative terms—seeing it either as Protestant or secular or materialistic—all of which were true about the culture, but to paraphrase a song made famous some years ago by Peggy Lee, that’s not all there is, or in this case was, to that culture—for that culture produced a legal system that also protected freedom of speech, of assembly, of the press; it also defended religious freedom and continues to work out what it means to separate the Church from the state. These are all very important achievements for which we should be thankful.

Catholic Campus Ministries on secular campuses have typically been called Newman Clubs, after Cardinal John Henry Newman, the greatest English religious thinker of the 19th century. The first of these was founded in 1883 at the University of Wisconsin and then a second in 1893, three years after Newman died, at the University of Pennsylvania, mainly to offer instruction and support to the growing number of Catholic students at these institutions. The U.S. bishops’ 1985 pastoral letter on Catholic campus ministries, *Empowered by the Spirit: Campus Ministry Faces the Future*, states that until 1969 Catholic campus ministries on secular campuses were “characterized by a defensive and even hostile attitude” toward the institutions where they worked (par. 5).

While the pastoral letter says little about the history of Campus Ministry on Catholic campuses, I doubt that they experienced hostility from the rest of the university, or found themselves on the defensive. I would conjecture that until about the 1950s, campus ministry staffs at Catholic institutions were staffed almost exclusively by members of the religious orders which have established over 90% of the Catholic colleges and universities in the U.S., now numbering about 220. I might also mention that before 1960, courses in religion were taught, again almost exclusively, by religious and priests, often not at the highest levels of academic rigor. As many as six to eight required courses in Thomistic philosophy and courses in religion that had an apologetic tone, along with required Sunday mass attendance, male and female sodalities and some retreats directed by the staff—all these structures and activities constituted the religious formation of the Catholic students. A clear Catholic subculture with doctrinal content and required practices characterized most of these institutions.

By the late sixties, all this began to change, due to the cultural turmoil generated by the Vietnam War, the dramatic thinning of the ranks of religious and priests who left their orders and dioceses in great numbers, the reduction of required courses in philosophy and theology, which were increasingly taught by lay persons with graduate degrees, often doctorates. They replaced courses in Thomistic philosophy and theology mainly with courses in modern philosophies and in theology with courses that now varied greatly in content and methodology. Campus ministries, largely out of necessity, hired more and more lay persons, some with, but many without, solid theological backgrounds. Some observers described the dissolution of the Thomistic synthesis as the collapse of Catholic mission and identity; others hailed the dramatic changes as the long overdue burgeoning of lay leadership and welcomed the diversity in the study of philosophy and theology.

In retrospect, credible cases, I believe, could be made for both assessments. The 1985 bishops' letter gave these dramatic changes a largely positive interpretation claiming that a new and creative period in Catholic campus ministries had been opened up characterized by "healthy new developments" (par. 6), better relationships with the academic community (par. 7), ecumenical and inter-faith developments (par. 8), and "a remarkable diversity of legitimate styles and approaches" to campus ministry (par. 9). I will later try to describe what has happened to campus ministry on Catholic campuses since 1985. On the other hand, a not insignificant number of Catholic colleges and universities established lay boards of trustees which were more skilled in finances and organization than in clarity about the mission of the institutions. Issues of academic freedom and faculty governance flared up and to this day present difficult questions about the relationship between individual and institutional priorities.

A second background fact that needs to be kept in mind is the immense diversity among Catholic colleges and universities. Only a few of the 220 are well-endowed; but a not insignificant number face annually issues of economic solvency. Perhaps a third of them have won some sort of recognition for academic quality in the annual academic sweepstakes run by *US News & World Report*, while many others remain academically undistinguished, at least if judged by large numerical standards of faculty-student ratio, library facilities, endowment and selectivity, that is, the number of students who are rejected.

Some are located in major metropolitan areas and serve many students who are not Catholic; others are in smaller cities and serve predominantly Catholic student populations. Some universities in large cities enroll over 20,000 full-time students, while many others enroll less than 2,000, and some even less than 1,000. Some are largely residential while others enroll mainly commuters,

many of whom are not of the traditional college age. In our largest universities, specialization tends to dominate, and close collaboration between faculty and campus ministry is typically minimal. In smaller schools, such collaboration can be easier to effect. At some schools the charism of the founding order provides a focus, even more than does the institution's Catholicism, while at others, the charism remains largely dormant. At some schools, faculty share a concern for Catholic intellectual life, but at many, what a Catholic intellectual life might be remains for them a mystery. Given this great diversity, it becomes difficult for me to make unqualified generalizations—difficult but not impossible, as you will see in a few minutes.

The third and final background comment is sociological in nature. Up until the end of WWII, it was not at all unusual for young men and women to make life decisions (such as getting married) at the end of high school. In fact, it was not thought odd for young men and women before the early 1960s to decide at age 18 to enter religious life or go to the seminary. I know; I did that and I am not, I hope, odd. But more and more people began to go to college and as a consequence began to delay getting married. The sociologists of the 1950s and 1960s wrote a great deal about “teenagers” and “adolescents,” a stage, according to Notre Dame sociologist Christian Smith, brought about by “changes in mass education, child labor laws, urbanization and suburbanization, mass consumerism, and the media.” What has happened in the last few decades is the creation of a new stage between adolescence and full fledged adulthood; sociologists call it “emerging adulthood.”

Many students now extend their education to include graduate studies, which keeps them in school until their mid and even late twenties. In the year 2000, we find that men delay their first marriage until they are 27 (in 1950 they married at 22) and women till they are 25 (before, they married at 20). Young people, emerging adults, desire to increase their options and postpone commitment. Parents find themselves financially supporting their 20-something children longer than ever before. All these changes add up to the conclusion that “transition to adulthood today is more complex, disjointed, and confusing than it was in past decades.”¹ According to another sociologist, Jeffrey Arnett, the period of “emerging adulthood” is one of intense (1) identity exploration, (2) of instability, (3) a focus on self, (4) a feeling of being in limbo, in transition, in-between, and (5) a sense of greater possibilities, opportunities, and unparalleled hope.”² If a hundred years ago Freud thought that by age seven a

¹ Christian Smith, “Getting a Life: The Challenge of Emerging Adulthood,” in *Books and Culture*, November/December 2007, p. 10).

² Jeffrey Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties* (Oxford University Press, 2004), cited by Smith, *Ibid.*

person's personality was pretty well formed, most psychologists and sociologists today track continuous personality development right through to persons in the twenties.

In relationship to the formation of one's identity as a Catholic in the United States, Bill Portier of the University of Dayton has argued that more important than Vatican II, the turmoil of the Vietnam era and the powerful influence our liberal democratic and consumerist culture has exerted over the past five decades—more important than all these is the dissolution of the Catholic subculture. While the loss of those thick Catholic neighborhoods of belief and practice is not all bad (after all, there was much racism, sexism and nationalism among Catholic enclaves of the 1950s), it does mean that in the absence of the religiously rich subculture, most Catholics today are deeply influenced not by their Catholicism, but by the larger culture which in many ways is indifferent if not hostile to that Catholicism.³ Gender roles have been morphing during this time also, with many more women entering college and moving on to professional positions, though still meeting with some continued resistance from the corporate world and from within the Church as well.

Now if Portier and the sociologists are really on to something, and I think they are, the implications for campus ministry, indeed for an entire Catholic university staff, are obvious: longer periods of education, of searching and mentoring, greater efforts at finding one's calling and a greater need to teach practices of discernment and how to make a commitment—indeed, the challenge of creating of a Catholic culture that draws on the great Christian tradition and embodies the advances of Vatican II (e.g., religious freedom, ecumenism, lay leadership, the renewal of liturgical life without weakening core beliefs and distinctive religious practices).

I have sketched in broad strokes three background considerations for our topic of Campus Ministry and Academics: the great historical changes in Catholic higher education since the late 19th century, the especially dramatic changes since the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, and finally the sociological changes that have extended the time it takes to grow up and that have made the passing on of our faith tradition more difficult. It is time now to turn to some more specific considerations of the relationship between campus ministry and academics.

³ William Portier, "Here Come the Evangelical Catholics," in *Communio* Vol. 31 (No. 1, Spring, 2004), pp. 35-66.

Two Different Worlds?

First, let me say something about academics. The word has several quite different meanings. If someone says, “The question is academic,” they usually mean that it is irrelevant and unimportant. But when I use the word today, I am presuming that we are referring mainly to what professors do: teach, research and service—and all these activities, done well, are hardly irrelevant or unimportant. All faculty teach, some do research and publish, and many do various forms of service, especially on university committees.

What is the present state of academics? If you recall, a few minutes ago, I referred to the great diversity among Catholic colleges and universities. That diversity is even greater among public universities. Perhaps that is why there are such widely varying evaluations of the academy. Nevertheless, I believe that the following generalizations hold for most academics at both secular and Catholic universities: faculty push students to question their assumptions, to take seriously points of view that they have not been exposed to before, raise critical questions about the benefits of religious belief, sometimes even suggesting that believers tend to remain immature and that science will eventually answer questions that religion has claimed to be forever mysterious. Not a few professors emphasize material and professional success but rarely refer to moral and religious considerations.⁴

At the same time, to be fair, I think it must be admitted that some traditional assumptions do need to be questioned and it can be helpful to be exposed to a wide variety of viewpoints. Moreover, some forms of religious belief demonize others and some scientific discoveries (e.g., the world is round and goes around the sun, and was not created in six days) have corrected some erroneous religious beliefs. Good academics help students to think critically, to evaluate assertions and to construct more thoughtful arguments than were possible earlier in their lives. Nor are all faculty at secular campuses opposed to religious faith. Thus, though some faculty members at Catholic universities may do little to help students believe maturely and are skeptical about the value of “service learning,” faculty at some secular campuses teach students the great Christian classics and, as a result, help those students, with the support of a good Catholic campus ministry staff, grow in their faith. Thus, the present state of academics is not easy to describe.

Life for students on campus, especially for residential students, certainly involves still other challenges, such as how to handle a great deal of free time, nearly all of it unsupervised by parents (though too many parents seem to have given up on that role some time before their sons and daughters enter college).

⁴ The bishops’ 1985 pastoral letter mentions similar threats to students’ faith in paragraph 45.

Some of our campuses allow an easier use of drugs, especially alcohol, and opportunities for sexual activities not as easily accessible when still in high school. On some campuses, students are pretty much left alone by supervisors, assuming, mistakenly I believe, they are now mature enough to make good decisions on all these matters.

Most of our students suffer from a disappointing degree of religious illiteracy, even those who have graduated from Catholic primary and secondary schools. I regularly hear complaints about such illiteracy from faculty, and not just from those who teach theology. One of the most sobering chapters in Christian Smith's extensive study of the religious lives of American Teenagers, *Soul Searching*, is devoted to Catholic teenagers—their reported illiteracy is stunning; they turn out to be more inarticulate than almost all the teenagers surveyed from other religious groups. Mormons and most Evangelicals teens turn out to be the most articulate.⁵

It seems to me that the bigger and better endowed the university, the more it tries to achieve high academic ratings. The more it aspires to be recognized by secular institutions as academically excellent, then the more likely will there be little collaboration between the academic side of the house and campus ministry. On the other hand, the smaller the institution and the more the faculty is oriented to the service of the students, the more likely it is that faculty and campus ministry collaborate. An exception to this difference between big and small institutions can be found when faculty at a highly ranked Catholic university have a strong sense of the mission and embrace the basic principles of Catholic intellectual life—then they are more likely to see the necessary relationship between academic and religious formation.⁶

At the same time, on a number of Catholic campuses (some big but more often on smaller campuses), there are movements that actually make the collaboration between campus ministry and faculty easier. Sharon Parks, a one time professor of education at Harvard, speaking at a national conference on "Callings" at the Jesuit University of Santa Clara in March of 2007, describes what she believes is a major shift from a century old German model of the

⁵ Christian Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford, 2005); see chapter six, "On Catholic Teens," pp. 193-217.

⁶ Richard B. Hays, a scripture scholar at Duke University, tells how difficult it was for some of his colleagues in the Divinity School to support as one of their goals in teaching divinity students "a commitment to living a life ordered toward holiness, justice, peace and reconciliation." His colleagues did not disapprove of such goals, but doubted it should be part of their job description: "As one of our theologians put it, the committee's list of goals mixed together intellectual aims with moral and religious ones in a way that he found problematic; better to stick to purely intellectual goals and leave the moral and religious elements out of it" ("The Palpable Word as Ground of *Koinonia*," in *Christianity and the Soul of the University*, eds. Douglas V. Henry and Michael D. Beaty, (Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, MI, 2006) p. 21. Hays did say that after considerable discussion, the faculty approved the goal.

research university with its emphasis on objectivity, division into departments and disciplines and hierarchical administration to a dramatic redefining of boundaries that now, at the dawn of the 21st century, emphasize the importance of double majors, “interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary studies.” She points to “the blurring of town-and-gown boundaries, catalyzed by ‘service learning,’” which she says is now “morphing into ‘community-based learning.’”⁷ She notes, on the other hand, that too many faculty still look down upon “service learning” as soft and fear that promoting it could weaken their standing in the eyes of their colleagues. And though she decries the growing consumerism in American culture and on many of the nation’s campuses, she nonetheless presents a very hopeful picture of the academy at the beginning of the 21st century. She speaks of it as nothing less than a “revolution.” While I think she overstates the amount of change taking place on our campuses, I have seen an increasing number of these developments.

If my generalization about faculty holds—namely, that faculty tend to underestimate the importance of the moral and religious development of their students—another generalization should be made about campus ministers—namely that they tend to underestimate the importance of the intellectual development of students. With few exceptions, I have found that campus ministers concentrate on activities such as service, events such as retreats, immersion trips, and religious services such as liturgy. These activities have proved quite effective in engaging student and forming communities of friendship and service.

But only a few campus ministers, it seems to me, see the importance of sponsoring lecture series or have found ways to involve the faculty in the mission of campus ministry—such as inviting them to dinners with students, provide faculty opportunities to speak about their own life as people of faith, or in general promote the intellectual life.⁸ The 1985 Bishops’ pastoral letter states that “it is vital that campus ministry creates a climate in which theological learning is respected,” and that such a climate is best supported by campus ministers who “are perceived as being serious about continuing their own theological education” (par. 54). It is not that I think campus ministers are anti-

⁷ Sharon Daloz Parks, “Callings: Fostering Vocation Through Community-Based Learning,” in *Explore: An Examination of Catholic Identity and Ignatian Character in Jesuit Higher Education*, Santa Clara University, Vol. 11, No. 1, Fall 2007, pp. 6-7.

⁸ In preparation for these remarks, I read through eight issues of *Crossroads*, the official publication of the Catholic Campus Ministry Association, beginning with an issue dated December of 2004 and ending with one dated Summer 2007. Some issues were devoted to a single theme: e.g., marketing, evangelizing, reaching out, and crisis management. Occasionally a book was reviewed or reading was recommended. I found only a few isolated statements about the importance of the relationship between the intellectual and religious dimensions of development.

intellectual; rather, they seem to be almost singularly focused on building community, programming and relationships that support students' personal and emotional development. They can all too easily underestimate the extent to which a solid intellectual formation can also be one of the most important ways to strengthen ones religious and moral formation.

A second generalization is this: it is difficult to overestimate the difficulty many faculty have stepping outside the boundaries of the ways in which they have been socialized as academics, that is, as people who must stay within the boundaries of their professional disciplines. There are issues here of promotion and tenure, of decreased status in the eyes of colleagues, lack of faculty models who are held in high esteem by faculty, feelings of being not competent to address moral and religious issues, and lack of commitment to work at the integration of knowledge. I am not suggesting that every, or even most, faculty members should feel free to bring in moral and religious perspectives into their courses (in fact, the phrase "bringing moral and religious perspectives into their courses," should be a dead give-away that they are unable to see that those perspectives are already embedded in their disciplines).

What I am suggesting is that in too many instances, faculty lack the background to see such perspectives within their disciplines—a background that can, however, be developed through additional research and collaboration with other faculty who have such background. Nor am I saying that a course say in political science or English or even biology, taught well, will not communicate some profound ethical and religious insight. Every one of these subjects, when constructed by people who grasp the many different issues they touch upon, will have to deal with religious and ethical issues. Such courses serve a profound need today: they integrate knowledge. If the mission of a Catholic university must be understood "integrally," it must include course content that integrates knowledge as well.

If faculty, due mainly to the way they have been trained to understand their disciplinary work, tend to overlook the moral and religious formation of their students, I have often seen a similar one-sidedness in the ways in which campus ministries perceive their responsibilities. What I am thinking of here is the fact that many campus ministries are strong on issues of social justice, and in general, on most Catholic social teachings, but not as strong on the so-called "life issues" such as abortion (which, however, I consider a major social justice issue) and other issues of sexual morality. Of course, campus ministers are not alone on this; the academy in general, (and I am not excluding most Catholic colleges and universities here), share this bias. In this regard, our campuses seem to be somewhat different from our bishops who every four years on the eve of a presidential election issue moral guidelines for evaluating political candidates.

Even though they try to articulate a consistent life ethic (their most recent effort is, I think, the most successful), they often sound as though abortion, which in their most recent edition of *Faithful Citizenship* state is “intrinsicly evil,” remains the issue. Liberal Catholics tend to criticize certain moral teaching, especially on sexual morality, while conservative Catholics often take issue with the social justice emphasis. Many faculty and campus ministers have trouble articulating in a compelling way a consistent life ethic.⁹

Third and finally, I think most people in Catholic higher education—faculty and campus ministry staffs—struggle with the ways in which the issue of diversity is to be understood. I hesitate to mention this last challenge for the simple reason that it too is quite complex and my time is limited. Most non-religiously affiliated universities have understood the issue as basically celebrating all the cultural and ethnic differences they find on their campuses. They concentrate on issues of mutual respect and hospitality—very good goals in themselves, but still leave off to the side issues of faith and morality. In other words, on secular campuses, multi-cultural programs focus on race, ethnicity and gender, but avoid any discussion of religion.

A recent issue of the *Journal of College and Character* is devoted to religious difference, which the editor of the journal states is “the neglected topic in diversity discussions on campus.”¹⁰ Articles in this issue describe why faculty also avoid such discussions (fear of conflict, of proselytizing, and of crossing the boundaries between Church and state), and how campus ministers for their part turn such discussions away from religion and into education. One campus minister at Wellesley, where they do discuss religion, wrote that the point is to “move from Christian hegemony to a multi-faith community,” which, I think, again moves the discussion, even if about religion, towards education, and away from the deep and difficult questions different religions raise for us.

I believe that diversity of religions and religious beliefs should be topics for public conversation on campus. However, I also believe that such conversations need to address not just the “common values” of “hospitality, compassion, service, and peace,” but also criticisms of misinterpretations of religions, careful interpretations of difficult religious texts, and informed ways of dealing with the conflicting truth claims of different religions. One of the recent developments that makes this kind of substantive ecumenical and inter-faith

⁹ The phrase, “consistent life ethic,” comes from the late Cardinal Bernardin who in promoting it hoped to close the gap between liberal and conservative Catholics. It remains a difficult task since while abortion and capital punishment are now condemned, but with different degrees of authority, it is still believed that a war might be considered just under very strict conditions. Some Catholics have mistakenly believed that the consistent life ethic, at least as understood by Bernardin himself, requires that a Catholic oppose all abortions, all wars and all capital punishment. Simple responses to complex issues are rarely helpful.

¹⁰ See the November 2007 issue of the *Journal of College and Character*, Vol 9. No. 2.

conversation challenging is the growing expectation that campus ministers on Catholic campuses will serve (or at least provide support for) the religious development of students who practice forms of Christianity other than Catholicism, and even other religions.

All the same, I can not think of another period in the history of Christianity when a genuine dialogue of religions—including beliefs, sacred texts and truth claims—would be more important than now. I also believe that faculty and campus ministers at Catholic universities should be especially well equipped to foster this conversation, given the fact that Catholics have an intellectual tradition that supports neither fundamentalism nor relativism.

I have pointed out three typical characteristics of academics at Catholic universities (less collaboration with campus ministry at bigger universities and hesitation to go beyond narrow confines of their disciplines) and of Campus ministries (little emphasis on the importance of intellectual work, on what we have come to call the “life issues,” by which I mean abortion, homosexuality and sexual morality). I have also noted that both faculty and campus ministers find the issue of religious diversity difficult to deal with. Again, these are broad generalizations; exceptions can surely be found. I only wish there were more exceptions so that eventually, the multitude of exceptions would constitute a new rule.

Some Recommendations

I should say at the outset in this last part of my remarks, which I have entitled “some recommendations,” that I do believe in a division of labor. I think that the primary functions of the faculty and the campus ministers are not the same; at the same time, I want to argue that they can not afford to be totally separate, much less opposed. The primary purpose of faculty is the intellectual development of the student. Nothing will help faculty to achieve that goal at a Catholic university more than developing a deeper grasp of what Catholic intellectual traditions mean for their disciplines. Familiarity with Catholic approaches to the intellectual life prevents any facile or arbitrary separation of intellectual development from moral development. Faculty who understand and appreciate Catholicism (note, I did not say only Catholic faculty) will not be as hesitant to undertake the education of the “whole person.” In the long run, any faculty member who is able to recognize the relevance of Catholicism to his or her discipline is forced to think harder about more things than a faculty member ignorant of that tradition. As David Chappell, the author of a recent book on the civil rights movement said of Martin Luther King Jr.: King “...had a more accurate view of political realities than his more secular liberal allies because he could draw on biblical wisdom about [sinful] human nature. Religion didn’t just

make civil-rights leaders stronger—it made them smarter.”¹¹ Whatever strengthens Catholic intellectual life on campus will benefit campus ministry.¹²

Second, I recommend that at the beginning of the academic year, Campus ministers visit academic departments simply to explain their work, ask for suggestions, and offer a few ways (e.g., talks, dinners with students) that faculty could support Campus Ministry as faculty. If however campus ministers somehow in the process are understood to be inviting faculty to become part-time campus ministers, faculty will decline the invitation.

Third, both faculty and campus ministers need to work at decreasing the degree of religious illiteracy among students (and among some faculty). This recommendation might seem to be directed only to faculty, but it is not. I believe that embedded in well done Eucharistic liturgies (and I know the intense and sometimes acrimonious discussions that can be provoked by the question of what constitutes a well-done liturgy) and embedded in service projects that include serious reflection are experiences that contain important cognitive content. I find it difficult to imagine a selfish person grasping in any real way the importance of the rights of others, or a person bent upon self-promotion and inflating his or her CV understanding the importance of sacrifice and laying down one’s life for others.

How we actually live affects what we can know and understand. Just as ideas have practical consequences, practices open up people to ideas they would hardly find interesting or plausible were they not to live in certain ways. Ultimately, Christianity is not only about ideas, nor even mainly about behaviors, but about an encounter with the living God in Jesus Christ in and through one another, especially the poor, whom we rarely encounter on our campuses. Such an encounter, grounded in how we live, opens up a rich and deep intellectual life. Liturgy and service surrounded with reflection form the whole person. Such liturgies and service projects can go a good distance in creating in the minds and hearts of those involved a hunger to understand the faith more deeply.

So, these are my three suggestions: opening up academic disciplines, conversations between faculty and campus ministers, and increasing religious literacy. But in preparing this talk, I found that I continue to wonder about still other things. For example, I wonder about the best ways to help more faculty

¹¹ Cited by Hays (cf. note 6), page 26.

¹² One of the very best recent books that makes a compelling and sophisticated case for faculty to take seriously religion in their teaching and research is Mark Edwards’ *Religion on Our Campuses: A Professor’s Guide to Communities, Conflicts, and Promising Conversations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). Though addressed to faculty at secular universities, I think it would also be very useful for faculty led discussions on a Catholic campus.

come to a deeper understanding of Catholic intellectual traditions as they apply to their own disciplines. I wonder how we might get more male students involved in campus ministry activities.¹³ Are there activities and events that campus ministry could offer that would likely attract more men? Is it the case that, as the old saying goes, “women are by nature religious but men only by acquisition”? Or is it a question of status that leaves most women willing to serve, while most men want to run things? Would it make sense to conduct focus groups with young men on campus who have nothing to do with campus ministry activities, asking them what would get them involved?

I wonder whether, if current trends in the diminishment of the numbers of religious continue, the witness that is given by an entirely lay faculty will be less rich and diverse than one that includes religious as well. Do campus ministers and faculty members encourage students to think about religious life and priesthood? Why or why not? I wonder what would happen if full time well-prepared campus ministers were paid equivalently to faculty. I wonder whether more Bible Study groups will learn how to draw upon biblical studies when they share their faith with one another. I wonder why we don't promote traditional devotions like adoration and the rosary with the same enthusiasm that we oppose the unjust war in Iraq and capital punishment? But enough wondering! Let me now draw my reflections to a close.

Conclusion

What I have been saying is this: academics and campus ministers need to work harder to overcome some attitudes and stereotypes that are detrimental to both: especially the notion that sacramental life and spiritual life are somehow separable from intellectual and civic life. Full adult participation in the sacraments requires (or at least benefits from) intellectual maturity as well as emotional sincerity and moral earnestness; knowing something, for example, about the history of the liturgy and of the Church's moral tradition helps prevent mindless relativism and rigid formalism. A devout student's encounter with modern life (economic, political, religious, philosophical, to say nothing of technological) can produce a profound crisis of faith that has to be addressed both intellectually and spiritually.

I believe that the challenge for academics and campus ministers to find ways to collaborate more effectively can be more easily met at Catholic universities than they can at secular institutions. The simple fact that Catholic

¹³ See John Allen's *National Catholic Reporter* column "Lay Ecclesial Ministry and the Feminization of the Church" (dated June 29, 2007). Allen estimates that 80% of lay ecclesial ministers are now women who outnumber diocesan priests. He cites a 2005 study of lay ministry done by the National Pastoral Life Center that found that women ministers "bring sensitivity to lay concerns and to families, as well as to issues related to gender and inclusion."

colleges and universities have departments of philosophy and theology, and more importantly, that Catholicism has such a rich and holistic intellectual tradition (that relates to more than just philosophy and theology)—gives me great hope. Moreover, the simply fact that we have gathered here at this unique convention in order to understand better how to pass on that great religious tradition—also gives me hope.

People are fond of quoting a saying attributed to St. Francis: “Preach the Gospel at all times; use words if necessary.” The saying underscores the need to walk the talk; deeds, indeed, are important. At the same time, I am also fond of 1 Peter 3:15: “Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.”¹⁴ To do that, it is not enough just to go to college and get a good job. We need to also to deepen our faith. And to do that, we need both deeds and words. Nicholas Lash, a British Catholic theologian, once remarked that “care with language” is the “first casualty of original sin.” Good theologians watch their language in the presence of God.¹⁵ So do good campus ministers.

A Catholic university is one of the best institutions to foster good deeds and craft carefully words that enable us to give the accounting we are called to give of our faith in this world. May we all work more closely together to make that integral formation an even greater force in the life of the Church and of society. Thank you again for inviting may, and may the Lord bless you abundantly in your important work.

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¹⁴ Translation is from Richard Hays, *Ibid*, p. 33.

¹⁵ See interview with Nicholas Lash, “Performing Scripture,” in *Christian Century*, December 11, 2007, p. 30. The second comment about theologians being careful about their language is attributed to Gerald O’Collins, S.J.