

2002

# Proceedings of the Center of Catholic Studies Religious Horizons and the Vocation of the University

Center of Catholic Studies, Seton Hall University

Patrick H. Bryne  
*Boston College*

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Summer 2002

# Proceedings of the Center of Catholic Studies Religious Horizons and the Vocation of the University

Center of Catholic Studies

Patrick H. Bryne  
*Boston College*

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*Proceedings of the  
Center for Catholic Studies*

RELIGIOUS HORIZONS  
AND THE VOCATION OF THE  
UNIVERSITY

*Summer Seminar 2002*



*South Orange, New Jersey*

*D*edicated to the memory of the many faculty who have gone before us and whose creative efforts opened this window for us to envision ways in which a Seton Hall education can nurture the minds, hearts and spirits of our students.

Particularly, we remember those faculty who died in the year 2002.

Linda J. Cline Love, *Professor of Analytical Chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences*

Robert Dylak, *Adjunct Professor of Communication, College of Arts and Sciences*

Leona Kleinman, *Associate Professor of Nursing, Director of the  
Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Program, College of Nursing*

Stanley P. Kosakowski, *Professor Emeritus of Business, Stillman School of Business*

Gilbert L. Mattos, *Chair of the Department of Asian Studies, College of Arts and Sciences*

Nicholas Menza, *Professor Emeritus of Business, Stillman School of Business*

John Paterson, *Dean Emeritus, Dean Emeritus, School of Graduate Medical Education*

Claude Marie Seyler, *Professor French Language and Literature, College of Arts and Sciences*

Rosario (Russ) Zappulla, *Professor of Neuroscience, School of Graduate Medical Education*



*M*ay they rest in the Lord's loving presence ...

# RELIGIOUS HORIZONS AND THE VOCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY

*Faculty Summer Seminar*  
*Monday-Thursday, June 3-6, 2002*

Facilitator: Patrick H. Byrne, *Professor of Philosophy, Boston College*

- ◆ Do religiously affiliated institutions of higher learning and their faculty members have a special "vocation" in contemporary culture?
- ◆ Does religion and religious faith have any legitimate place in the university of the 21st century?
- ◆ Is a "Catholic university" a "contradiction in terms" as George Bernard Shaw claimed?

This seminar explores these question and ways of understanding religious faith and its relationships to the diverse academic disciplines and to the vocations of research, teaching and mentoring students.

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*Unless otherwise indicated, all participants are from Seton Hall University.*

*Cover art by Susan Leshnoff and Arline Lowe*

# INTRODUCTION

*Monsignor Richard M. Liddy*

During this past year, the Lilly Endowment granted Seton Hall University \$2 million for various projects exploring the theological notion of "vocation" or "calling." One of a number of religiously affiliated universities who received such grants, Seton Hall spent a large part of the year 2002 preparing a proposal for this grant. One piece in that planning was this workshop, "Religious Horizons and the Vocation of the University," which sought to clarify the meaning of the term "vocation," and relate it to the concerns and understandings of faculty members at Seton Hall University. About 30 faculty members participated in the seminar, and some wrote essays for these proceedings.

At the beginning of the seminar the facilitator, Professor Patrick Byrne of the philosophy department of Boston College, asked two questions:

1. Can you recall any early experiences that led to your decision to become a professor?
2. Do you have any sense of your present life of research and teaching as a "call" or a "vocation"?

The answers that the participants gave to these questions, though each very distinct, were truly remarkable. Each person's answer touched upon deep human drives: the drive to discover, to get things straight, to contribute to others, to love and to be loved. Some located these drives in concrete personal narratives. All, in one way or another, touched upon "the mystery" of how it is that each one of us, and all of us together, are now researching and teaching here at Seton Hall University.

Academic life can be extremely specialized and abstract. Its connection to history can, at times, seem very tenuous. As Patrick Byrne brings out in his essay, Max Weber saw the academic vocation as a commitment to research, pure and simple. One does one's research as exigently as possible; one contributes to the journals and, hopefully, contributes something to the common fund of knowledge. But all of one's scholarly work will sooner or later be superseded by the work of others. Instead of the Stoic's "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die," the academic's credo can easily become "Research and publish, for tomorrow we die."

Religion sets academic life within a quite different horizon. Instead of considering research and teaching as a totally "this-worldly" process, a religious horizon brings out the deepest meaning of the word that even Weber used: that is, the word "vocation." It highlights the deeply personal dimension of even exigent research, and it sets such research within a transcendent context. In place of Weber's "thin" interpretation of academic life, a religious horizon sets the academic vocation within a much fuller vision of contributing to human relationships within the context of a deep, mysterious "call."

In particular, the Catholic intellectual tradition sets academic life within the mystery of a self-revealing God. Within the network of mutual love that is the inner life of God, there is the overflow of love in creation and in the redemptive life, death and resurrection of Jesus. This self-revelation of God is also – through the Spirit – the revelation of us to ourselves: our great dignity in being loved, forgiven and called by an infinite Lover.

Called to what? Called – all of us – of every religion and of no religion – not only to receive life, but also to give life by laying down our lives for one another as we build up the world.



Exigent research and committed teaching can contribute to such a process. As the poet, Billy Collins, wrote:

Even Irish monks in their cold scriptoria  
jotted along the borders of the Gospels  
brief asides about the pains of copying,  
a bird singing near their window,  
or the sunlight that illuminated their page -  
anonymous men catching a ride into the future  
on a vessel more lasting than themselves.

(Marginalia)

Obviously, not all recognize or acknowledge the One who does the "calling." One person can feel an abiding sense of "destiny" in the research choices she has made, but she might very well be quite diffident about putting any more words on the source of that sense. Another might feel he dare not attribute such high meaning to his seemingly mundane choices. Others would be more willing to be articulate about the source of that calling.

Nevertheless, a very valuable beginning can be made in determining the identity and mission of this University by asking the kinds of questions asked during this seminar: Why did you come here? Was it just for "the job" or because there was "an opening"? Or is there something more involved? Can you put that "something more" into words? Do you have any sense of yourself as called to your present position? What can you say about the source of that calling?

And concomitant to the above questions, there is the question of where are we all going together? What is the vocation or calling of this concrete religiously founded university at the beginning of the third millennium?

These are the questions we began to grapple with during the days of June 2002. The results can be sensed in the following papers. Some answers are quite personal, with personal testimonies. Some take a broader perspective. But all contribute to building a community dedicated to the students who come to us within the context of Seton Hall University.

Finally, I would like to thank all who contributed in so many ways to this seminar and these proceedings: Monsignor Robert Sheeran, University president; Mel Shay, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs, and the administration for supporting the seminar; Father Paul Holmes, vice president for mission and ministry and project director for the Lilly grant; Roseanne Mirabella for coordinating the workshop; Marybeth Ferrigno for arranging the details of the seminar; Shannon Allen and Robina Schepp for overseeing the publication of the proceedings; and Susan Leshnoff and Arline Lowe for designing the cover. In a special way I would like to thank RoseMary and Colin Nadeau for supporting the publication of these proceedings. Each and every person has significantly contributed to Seton Hall University.

# THE VOCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY AND RELIGIOUS HORIZONS

by Patrick H. Byrne

The Lilly Endowment's initiative on the theological exploration of vocation has raised for us all the question of the vocation of the university and its citizens – faculty, administration, staff and students. Vocation was originally an explicitly religious idea. In Roman Catholic circles, vocation has tended to connote a calling to ordained priesthood or to vowed religious life. Among Protestants, vocation has had a wider range of applications, including vocation to work and vocation to marriage and family.<sup>1</sup> Common to all of these meanings is the sense of being personally called by God to a particular way of life.

However, contemporary understandings of the university have made problematic the juxtaposition of "university" with "vocation" in any of its traditional religious connotations. Religious beliefs are thought to cut against the very ideals of scholarly and scientific detachment and objectivity. Can religion and religious faith have any legitimate place in the university of the twenty-first century? Is a "Catholic university" a "contradiction in terms" as George Bernard Shaw claimed? Do religiously affiliated institutions of higher learning and their faculty members have a special vocation in contemporary culture? Since the university's faculty is charged with responsibility for scholarly and scientific objectivity, does it make any sense at all, then, to ask about the theological exploration of the vocation of faculty members? And what, if any, could then be our responsibility in assisting our students in the theological discernment of their callings in life?

These questions have arisen because of the contemporary self-understanding of the mission of the university as province for the unimpeded pursuit of objectivity and truth. That self-understanding received its classic expression in Max Weber's influential essay "Science [*Wissenschaft*] as Vocation."<sup>2</sup> (The German term, *Wissenschaft*, has a wider connotation than the English "science," and so includes both scholarly as well as scientific research.) There Weber articulated the now widely accepted doctrine of the separation of fact and value.<sup>3</sup> The university is committed to the unrestrained pursuit of the truth about the facts through rational methodologies. By way of contrast, values have no rational basis, and there is no legitimate method for pursuing truths about values in the university. They are matters of commitment through arbitrary choice. In Weber's essay, religious values are singled out for particular scorn, as inimical to the true vocation of science and scholarship.

Because Weber's doctrine now enjoys such wide acceptance, the character of his essay itself can be easily overlooked. It is in fact an essay precisely about the *value* of scientific and scholarly research into the truth about facts. It is about why this *value*, to the exclusion of all others, should be the perennial foundation for the vocation of the university faculty. As such, it is an essay alien to scientific and scholarly research as such. "Whether ... science is a valuable 'vocation'" writes Weber, is a value judgment "about which nothing can be said in the classroom."<sup>4</sup>

Mark Schwehn has perceptively noted that Weber self-consciously effected a "transmutation of religious language [of vocation] for distinctly secular purposes."<sup>5</sup> Schwehn's careful analysis shows how this transmutation has led not only to a separation of fact and value, but also to a divorce between spheres within the university – especially between scientific and scholarly research, on the one hand, and efforts devoted to the formation of a community of learning, to teaching, and to the nurturing of student character on the other. The divorce is so complete, notes Schwehn, that it has become a commonplace for university faculty to speak of "our own work" only in relation to the efforts devoted to research and publication.

Never mind the number of classes taught, courses prepared, papers graded, and committees convened. Indeed, the more these activities increase, the more deeply the depressing conviction sets in: "I'M NOT DOING ENOUGH OF MY OWN WORK."

One is tempted to ask, Well then, whose work are you doing?<sup>6</sup>

Schwehn critically analyzes the intellectual and cultural sources of this elevation of research at the expense of teaching, formation, and community. He also carefully explores possible sources for restoration of those devalued

aspects of university life. I am largely in agreement with both his analysis and his emphasis on the need for restoration of those lost aspects. Yet I am concerned that his way of stating the problem and pursuing its solution can tend to preserve Weber's dichotomy. I would suggest, therefore, that Schwehn's laudable approach needs to be supplemented by a rejuvenated understanding of the vocation of university faculty that reintegrates the research mission with the teaching, formation, and community dimensions of higher learning.

In the remainder of this article, I will pursue these issues. I will propose that faculty involvement is indispensable to the profitable theological discernment of vocation by students. I will also propose that faculty involvement in this process of discernment will be beneficial to the extent that faculty members themselves have already engaged in serious reflection upon their own vocations. Finally, I will offer some ideas about how a reintegrated understanding of research, vocation, and religion can be achieved and serve as aids to faculty engaging in reflection upon their own vocations. I will argue that we can and must think of the whole of university life in terms of vocation, even in religious terms. But I will quickly add that we can do so only if we operate with a renewed sense both of the meaning of a university vocation and the meaning of religion.

### ***The Vocation to Be Human***

The Lilly initiative is directed toward fostering theological discernment of vocation among undergraduate students. This initiative can be successful, I believe, only if the faculty members guiding the students have themselves engaged seriously in this type of discernment. Yet here we face two difficulties.

The first is that in their current states, graduate training and professionalization seldom if ever provide faculty with any guidance or resources for this type of self-reflection. In many cases the inspiring moments and people that awakened in us a love of our discipline and a vocation to it are kept only dimly at the margins of our awareness. Those inspirations are now often eclipsed by the rigors of methods and argumentation, the professional standards of the disciplines, and the pressures to publish and win grants.

A second difficulty is that our own vocations can seem too narrow to be of any use in helping our students to discern their vocations. What can we possibly offer them, except for the rare student who has decided to embark upon a career as a biochemist, a specialist in American foreign diplomacy, a scholar of the ancient classics or of French literature, a Latin American historian or a New Testament theologian?

In this matter, I find the remarks of theologian Michael Himes to be enormously helpful. According to Himes, each person has a fundamental vocation: to be a human being:

I think that fundamental vocation to be a human being and the discovery of what that may entail ... is always at the core of being a human being, which means that human beings have a responsibility to become as free, as intelligent, as courageous, as imaginative, as creative and above all as loving as they possibly can. And that they have to seek out ways in which to make their intelligence, their freedom, their wisdom, their courage, and their ability to love to be as deep and as rich as they could in their lives.<sup>7</sup>

He continues by proposing that in order to truly discern one's own unique way to live out the vocation to be a human being, each person needs to answer three basic questions:<sup>8</sup>

- "Whatever you are considering – whatever undertaking, role, position, job, profession, lifestyle – is it a source of joy?"
- "Is it something that genuinely taps your talents and is likely to continue to challenge those talents?"
- "Is it a genuine source of service to those around you?"

First, joy is at the heart of every true vocation. If the activities that fill up our days are pure drudgery, this is a sure sign that we are not following our true calling. But knowing what brings us joy is not as easy as it might seem at first. Joy is different from fun. Fun is in the present. It is intense and immediate and therefore obvious. Yet fun is ephemeral; it comes and goes; it is largely dependent upon outward circumstances. Joy, on the other hand, is more subtle. Joy resides in the background feeling of peace that we have about the well-being of our life as a whole. Joy is lasting; it remains a constant undertow, beneath the coming and going of times of intense fun or boredom, of pleasure or pain, of success or

disappointment. Himes himself contrasts "joy" with "happiness," rather than with "fun," because happiness has multiple and confused meanings. Classical thinkers from Plato to Marcus Aurelius to Thomas Aquinas saw the need to distinguish true happiness from its illusions. Aristotle founded his ethics upon happiness (*eudamonia*), by which he meant something closely akin to what Himes means by joy. Like Himes, Aristotle contrasted the true and deep meaning of happiness with the superficial and trivialized ideas (like fun) that people commonly have about happiness.<sup>9</sup>

So while answering the first question – "Does this bring me joy?" – seems simple at first, that apparent ease turns out to be an illusion. In discerning our vocation to be a human being, we need to consider in serious and sustained ways what true joy and true happiness really are. This includes, of course, considering seriously whether unavoidable situations of boredom and even suffering are to be endured and become meaningful because one's life as a whole is ultimately a deep and true source of joy and happiness.

Universities bring together scholars of Western and non-Western cultures, cultures that have assembled great resources for reflecting on the question of what is true joy and true happiness. University faculty members, therefore, bring both to students and to one another great resources for reflecting upon the question, "Whatever undertaking I embark upon, is it a source of true joy and happiness for me?" Hence the discernment of vocation in this sense can be recognized as a proper function of higher education.

The second question – "Is it something that genuinely taps your talents and is likely to continue to challenge those talents?" is also more difficult to answer than it seems at first. Talent has to do with our *potential* – not just the potential for one deed, but for ongoing, developing growth in a role, a profession, a way of life. But potential is invisible. We have to actually *do* something *before* we really know if we have the potential or talent for it. In addition, the evaluations of others serve as indispensable inputs into our own self-evaluation of our talents. Together these two factors can make discernment of talents seem too risky. Better to stick with something safe than to try something that might result in failure and disapproval. As Himes notes, the vocation to be a human being requires courage, and perhaps courage is most needed in discernment of our talents.

Initially, this second question about what will develop our talents seems quite independent of the first about joy. A great many Americans go through a stage when they are convinced that being a star athlete will bring them joy, only to gradually discover that they do not have the talent that is required. That discovery can be long delayed by a great reluctance to part with the dream. Impossible dreams can prevent people from discovering their real talents and individual potentials for sustained development. This does not mean, of course, that just because someone tells us we do not have the talent for something, that we should immediately abandon our dreams. Certainly others can be mistaken about our talents; but we can also deceive ourselves about our true talents.

The drama of discovering talents is very much part of university life. Many students come with their hearts set on definite career paths – medicine, engineering, writing, finance, for example – only to be confronted through their professors' evaluations of the gap between their aspirations and their talents. If we search through our memories, many of us who are now professors will also recall such difficult moments of self-realization. So it can seem as though joy is an indicator of what we really want, but talent dictates what we have to settle for.

In my opinion this is a mistake, however. In fact the question about joy and the question about talent are deeply interrelated. Everyone has talents and gifts. There is a very natural and spontaneous joy that comes with exercising them and thereby discovering them. "I didn't know I could do that!" Much of the difficulty we and our students face in discovering our talents comes from highly influential cultural forces such as the mass media. These superficial forces in our culture have narrowed the range of pursuits that seem worthwhile.

Fortunately academic institutions preserve memories of ways of life that do not always appeal to the present-day mass market. They also practice and teach methods of criticism that can help liberate people from manipulation of their imaginations, feelings and thoughts by forces like the media. In addition, in certain kinds of universities (but certainly not all), small sub-communities sprout up and provide continuing encouragement and supportive challenge for young (and not so young) people to try out their talents. Once again, therefore, institutions of higher learning are especially appropriate places for discerning one's vocation to be a human being.

The third question – “Is it a genuine source of service to those around you?”—is perhaps the one that is least prominent and least clear in the minds of young people as they seek to discern their vocation to be a human being. (I think in some ways it is also the most difficult question for university faculty members to answer, and I will return to this issue later in this article.) The cause of the great difficulty in answering this question is too narrow an idea of “service.” To many of our most admirable students, service means direct, face-to-face “helping needy people.” In these types of service involvements, the feedback about success is quite immediate – serving food at a “soup kitchen,” playing games with depressed children, tutoring, sympathetically listening to people as they tell their problems, and so on. Now if people ask themselves, “Is this direct face-to-face service a source of true joy for me?” and “Does it give me sustained opportunity to develop my true talents?” many will certainly say “Yes.” But it is also true that many will have to *honestly* say, “No.” While they will recognize that direct service of the needy is of great worth, they will also realize that it is really not for them. This realization can make it seem that most of us cannot use all three questions as genuine guides for discerning their vocation. It will certainly seem that university professors cannot – at least not in their roles as teachers and researchers. Maybe, then, we have to settle for a “Yes” answer to two out of three.

Yet there is no reason for restricting service to the immediate, the direct, the face-to-face, or even to “the needy.” Rachel Remen has pointed out that “helping the needy” can become a trap. Fixing and helping, she argues, are different from true service. In fixing and helping we are aware only of our strengths and the others’ weaknesses, while service is primarily a matter of wholeness. “But we don’t serve with our strength, we serve with ourselves... Our limitations serve, our wounds serve, even our darkness can serve. The wholeness in us serves the wholeness in others and the wholeness in life.”<sup>10</sup> In service, the good of the whole human being is foremost. In genuine service, what will count as a talent is rather unpredictable. Talents for immediate, direct assistance are not the whole story. Wholeness is lost if seemingly useless talents are forgone. The wholeness of a human being includes her or his unique talents, whether or not these are generally regarded as “strengths.” Service, therefore, is not simply a matter of *what* is done. It is more a matter of *how* it is done. “God loveth adverbs.”

The wholeness of a human being develops over time, always in fits and starts, with miscues, and with detours. In reality, seldom is there immediate feedback and gratification when true service of wholeness is operating. Real service requires critical thinking about long term consequences. It also requires thinking critically about how to best organize a great diversity of human talents and joys into cooperative ventures, in order to accomplish what cannot be achieved by one person’s direct action alone. These kinds of critical thinking are central to the academic life of universities. History, psychology, sociology, biology, economics, accounting, management and organizational studies, engineering, nursing, indeed even philosophy and theology, to name but a few disciplines, are all dedicated to thinking critically about long term consequences and complex organizations. When their methods of thought are connected with the question of the human being as a whole, then they contribute in indispensable ways to answering the question, “Is this of genuine service, *in the very broadest sense*, to those around you?”

The question of service, therefore, is not by itself incompatible with the questions of joy and talent, provided that all three are pursued thoughtfully and critically. There is a deceptive wisdom beneath the seeming simplicity of Himes’s three questions. None of them is answered easily or in isolation from the others. The answers will come gradually, over time, and with several mid-course corrections. If our students are to answer these questions well, they will need access to resources, and especially faculty members who have themselves asked and answered earnestly about their vocations to be human beings.

But, we may still ask, what is *theological* about a process of discernment that involves asking and answering these three questions? Shouldn’t theological discernment be a matter of asking what *God wants*, rather than what gives *me* joy, opportunity for sustained development of *my* talents, and is of service to humanity? Yet Himes’s three questions can in fact be recognized as deeply theological. Himes himself is deeply influenced by St. Augustine. Perhaps no mark of the Augustinian influence is stronger than his reflections on joy, which is why Himes was so emphatic in insisting upon joy as the first criterion of the vocation of being human. “Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.”<sup>11</sup> Joy is what fills the restless heart when it finally finds what it seeks. Joy in this sense is not merely a human achievement. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit; it meets the infinite restlessness of our hearts. Likewise, our talents are created by God. The vast diversity of human talents is part of God’s Creation – gifts from the Creator for the benefit of all Creation. In using our

talents in service of God's Creation, we serve the Creator. So Himes's three questions are indeed the sources of discerning what God calls us to be. Now I do not doubt that there may be some people who receive their sense of vocation in a vision or dream where God appears to them directly. Yet even for them, such vocations are matters of joy, talent and service of others. Be that as it may, I believe that this is not how God's calling is to be discerned for most people. Most of us need to engage in a more prolonged and communal process of asking and answering about joy, talent and service.

### *Self-Appropriation and the Research Vocation as Service*

In exploring Himes's three questions, we have not yet touched upon what Weber claimed was the special vocation of a university faculty – its dedication to scientific and scholarly research. In what sense can the abstruse concerns of research be related to the sense of vocation that we have been exploring? After all, Weber's cleavage of science and value seems to demand a disregard for the question of how can my research be of service to others. I believe that the relationship between the question of service and the special research vocation of a university's faculty can be made clearer and more specific if we consider another way of speaking about discerning one's vocation to be a human being – what theologian Bernard Lonergan calls "self-appropriation."

Lonergan organizes his approach to self-appropriation by inviting people to engage in a series of exercises intended to bring about a heightened, personal awareness of and commitment to their own interior own activities. The first stage of his exercises focus attention to our own stirrings of wonder and inquiry. Sometimes our questions are quite vivid, but often they are subtle and barely noticed. Lonergan's exercises are aids in recognizing the pervasive presence of questions in all aspects of our personal and professional lives. In a second stage, self-appropriation involves becoming more aware of the ways that we employ our senses, imaginations, memories, insights and intellectual creativity in responding to these inquiries. In a third stage, it leads ever more to the discernment of the subtle and easily disregarded ways that inquiries will continue to linger when they have not been adequately answered. Self-appropriation makes us aware of our reflective dissatisfactions with inadequate answers and our desire for well-supported judgments. It brings to our attention the ways in which we tend to stifle the calls of inquiries. By means of these exercises, Lonergan intends for us to gradually notice the difference between our arriving at genuine answers, as opposed to the ways in which we smother and stifle our intelligent inquiries and surrender our critical integrity.

Lonergan's own self-appropriation of inquiry led him to the conviction that human inquiry is unlimited. There is literally nothing, in a very deep sense, that we do not have the capacity to inquire about and the desire to understand correctly. Because each and every human has an unlimited capacity for wonder, self-appropriation of inquiry is the appropriation of one of the fundamental ways in which we are drawn to God.

Inquiry, and all the intelligent innovations and critical methods that follow from it, are by no means restricted to people involved in university education and research. But inquiry is undeniably at the very heart of university life. Inquiry is indispensable to all genuine learning and creative teaching. Inquiry is the driving force of the scientific and scholarly research that yields the ideas, theories and methods eventually taught in classrooms and laboratory instruction. For those engaged in the various vocations in university life, therefore, self-appropriation would especially be a matter of reflecting upon the structures of inquiry characterizing our various disciplines.

In the early stages of his career, Lonergan confined his approach to self-appropriation of the activities involved in knowing, and to their philosophical and theological consequences. This limited degree of self-appropriation led to what he called the "three levels of cognitional structure" – the levels of experiencing, understanding, and judgment. Later in his career he recognized the need to expand the process of self-appropriation to activities involved in feeling, deliberating, valuing, choosing, self-determination, and loving. Here inquiry also plays a fundamental role – questions about what I should chose, why I should chose to do that, which values should prevail, and what kind of a person will I make of myself.

But in addition to appropriation of how these questions and our responses to them occur in our own thinking, self-appropriation in this broadened sense also involves appropriation of our fundamental commitments. Sooner or later we will confront the fact that we all hold fundamental commitments which affect our work as well as our living. Our fundamental commitments run deeper than the fundamental propositions that we believe or even know to be true. Our fundamental commitments are our basic ways of living, our fundamental ways of being-in-the-world. In our living we

embody tacit assumptions about what can be or cannot be real, about what could or could not be known, about which values outweigh all others, about the ultimate meaning of life, and about how we align ourselves with respect to religious issues. Such fundamental commitments are also embedded in the methods of our disciplines as well as in the recesses of our personalities. They affect how we observe, how we read, how we think and argue, what we chose to teach and publish, and ultimately what we pass on and thereby affect the course of history. Eventually, therefore, self-appropriation in university vocations will lead to reflection on and discussion of such fundamental commitments and their ultimate consequences for ourselves and for our impact upon human history.

Ultimately our fundamental commitments are matters of what we love most highly and conversely what we abhor or resent most strongly. This claim may sound absurd to a university constituency that has come to think of itself as fundamentally committed to rationality and as opposed to irrational forces like love. But this reaction is itself the product of Weber's doctrine, and before him, of the Enlightenment's portrayal of reason. A careful reading of Weber himself reveals that he was fully aware of the fact that research as well as life is carried out within the context established by fundamental commitments, fundamental loves.<sup>12</sup>

No doubt many faculty members will be reluctant to admit that love constitutes the horizon of scientific and scholarly knowledge. To some extent this is quite understandable. There is a naive love that avoids hard, critical questions and prefers to see reality according to its romantic vision – something that Weber rightly disparages.<sup>13</sup> Again there is the historical record of malevolent deception and exploitation of people (especially women) in the name of love. Such factors rightly give rise to a healthy suspicion about deceptions and false claims in the name of love. But these factors have also led to academic forms of bias against the reality of love itself. It has come to pass that love of poetry, love of the history of fifteenth century France, love of the interior workings of subatomic particles, love of understanding the ups and downs of commercial life, or love of God have been deemed irrelevant to and even antithetical to academic pursuits. Nevertheless, it is precisely these sorts of loves that do in fact absorb us into the disciplines and vocations that we pursue as members of universities.

Hence as university researchers, almost in spite of ourselves, we do have fundamental commitments and they are affairs of love. The difficulty is that we have multiple loves, divided loves, and even as St. Augustine would claim, disordered loves. In some cases we are quite aware of our loves (and as well, their opposites, our resentments). Yet in many cases our loves and resentments operate beyond our awareness or control. Because this is so, Lonergan recognized that there is a great need for self-appropriation of our loves and resentments, and of their workings in our own lives, including our university lives. Because we have multiple and frequently conflicting loves, sustained discernment is needed in order to notice differences among loves, to better understand and critically disentangle loves, and to make what Ignatius of Loyola called an "election" for the forms of love that are more authentic. Hence our loves and the fundamental commitments that they engender are not in and of themselves incompatible with academic pursuits; they are, in fact, quite inseparable. Love need not be an irrational intrusion into the rational and academic work of scientific and scholarly research. Loves are irrational in the measure that they are disordered, and one sure sign of disorder is the dismissal or repression of inquiries. Special methods are required for the discernment of loves and fundamental commitments, methods to discern the difference between loves compatible both with unconditional love and unrestricted inquiry, and those that are not.

The spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, for example, are structured so as to deepen the exercant's consciousness of the presence of God's unconditional love in her or his life. God's unconditional love is the love of everything about every thing. As such, it is a love that does not negate, but rather, includes and goes beyond all partial loves. Ultimately, human love is disordered when some partial, conditional love has become one's fundamental commitment, and no proper place has been left for any other love. In the spiritual exercises, one's other loves are gradually experienced in relation to God's unconditional love. The other loves are gradually recognized, now as enfolded in God's love, or now as distorted into resentments, or now perverted into means of fleeing from unconditional love. For Ignatius, this intensification of knowledge of oneself in terms of one's actual loves in the light of God's unconditional love sets the stage for a decision, an "election" for unconditional love as one's own fundamental commitment. While there may be a first, critical moment in a person's life (not necessarily in an explicitly religious context) when he or she decides for unconditional love, this is a decision that needs to be made over and over. Repetition of the exercises facilitates such

growth. As a person grows toward a life of unconditional love, she or he gradually comes to recognize ever more subtle incompatibilities between unconditional love and their own disordered loves. Likewise, a person comes to recognize in very personal ways how talents and learnings they have acquired are to be used in new ways in the service of unconditional love. This of course can be especially true for those engaged in university life.

According to Lonergan, therefore, to pursue the vocation of being a human being is to practice what is learned through self appropriation. He summarized the practice of being an authentic human being under what he called the "transcendental precepts":

- Be attentive
- Be intelligent
- Be reasonable
- Be responsible
- Be loving

Drawing a connection between Himes's terminology and that of Lonergan, we could say that every person has the basic talents of inquiry, sensitivity, insight, critical reflection and evaluation, and responsible and loving choice. One's vocation to be a human being consists in observing the basic precepts – Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be Reasonable, Be responsible, Be loving – in response to the circumstances that come one's way. The precepts include attending to, understanding, and accepting the more particular and special talents and abilities unique to oneself. They include being attentive to what one loves and what brings one joy. They also include being attentive to and critically understanding the circumstances and people around oneself – both in one's immediate vicinity and in regions and times far removed. On the other hand, one can evade one's vocation to be a human being (be "inauthentic" is Lonergan's term) by acting in ways that are inattentive, unintelligent, unreasonable, irresponsible, or unloving.

But how do these practices, especially by university faculty, converge upon the question of service? The *ultimate* goal of self-appropriation, as Lonergan conceived of it, is coming to an intimate knowledge of ourselves as participating in the unfolding of the grand drama of cosmic and human history. In his view the good of human life, personal and communal, is brought about, little by little, by women and men practicing the transcendental precepts. History sends circumstances and experiences our way. How we respond determines both the kinds of persons that we become, and also determines what our contributions to human history will be. Everything depends upon the ways we respond. We may respond attentively, intelligently, reasonably, responsibly, and lovingly – or not. Because the human good is brought about in these ways, to act according to the transcendental precepts is always to be of service to others, although the fact that this is so may not be immediately obvious. Self-appropriation is a matter of becoming ever more attentive to our responses. It was Lonergan's conviction that deepening awareness of and commitment to them would form the core of a method for promoting the gradual transformation of the world.

Lonergan's view of the dynamics of human history can be aptly characterized by a phrase from Flannery O'Connor: "the good in us is under construction." In her *Introduction to a Memoir of Mary Ann*, O'Connor offers a meditation on how it is that God draws good out of what seem to humans to be hopeless imperfections and tragedies.<sup>14</sup> Lonergan's understanding of history resonates with that of O'Connor, but at the same time he nuances it by identifying three distinct dynamics that are constantly interacting to produce the human condition. Those three dynamics are: first, the progressive evolution of the universe and its continuation in human intellectual advancements; second, the breakdowns and destructions of those human achievements due to what he termed the "biases"; and third, the ongoing process of divine love redeeming humanity from humanly originated failures and catastrophes.<sup>15</sup>

To be more specific, in Lonergan's view human life and human history is overwhelmingly a matter of interpersonal relations and interactions. These interactions take place within the settings of informal patterns and customs, as well as within more formalized institutional structures. At their best, these informal patterns and formal institutions serve to assist people in meeting their deepest needs and realizing their noblest goals. According to Lonergan, such patterns and institutions originate in the creativity and adaptability of human intelligence. New ways of organizing to solve problems and meet needs spring from perceptiveness, inquisitiveness, and that spark of insight that discovers new ways of doing things. Likewise the array of meanings that underpin, enrich, constitute and regulate human interactions and



institutions also spring from the intelligences of human beings, according to Lonergan. The intelligence and willingness of millions of humans are required to sustain, communicate and adapt these patterns to the promotion of the common good of all. In Lonergan's view, acts of human intelligence abound in all cultures, all ages, all walks of life. People have to use their intelligences to learn how things get done in any community, and to learn what its members hold dear and what they abhor, before they themselves can take on the responsibility for either sustaining or changing its intuitions. In addition, therefore, to the acts of intelligence involved in assimilating already existing patterns and devising innovations, the good under construction is also the product of critical and reflective judgments that form the basis for the criticism and reform of human meanings and social arrangements. Human personal and communal life is an ongoing construction in which questions, and intelligent and critical responses to them, play a leading role.

In his philosophy of self-appropriation, Lonergan envisions the work of scientific and scholarly research as playing a very special role in this historical process of the good under construction. Research is also a matter of adding new understanding to the heritage of scientific and scholarly thought that has gone before, advancing it, criticizing it, revising it through the interplay of questions and answers that are the heart of the academic enterprise. Although university professors often despair that their work is in vain, it remains true that the types of insights that originate in academic and scientific research have their own distinctive and wide-ranging impacts upon the human condition. This is evident in the rapid changes in our technology, and in the more gradual transformations of organizational, economic, and political structures which have flowed from the ideas generated in universities over the last century.

But of course human affairs are not solely products of human intelligence and critical reflection. Besides the intelligent, reasonable and ethical components in human interactions and institutions, there is the undeniable fact of a second dynamic – the ignorance, arbitrariness, absurdity, and cruelty rife throughout our dealings with one another. In reality a great many human decisions are defective in intelligence and lacking in critical reflection. Worse yet, those who suffer the effects of unintelligent, uncritical, unethical decisions, experience their suffering to be meaningless and unintelligible – which only increases their suffering. This lack of intelligibility produces in the recipients themselves cycles of frustration, anger, bitterness, hatred, disaffection, revenge, violence, alienation, and increased prejudice of all kinds. Lonergan was most emphatic that any adequate understanding of history must also take into account of the cycles of unintelligibility and injustice in the human condition. He was certainly not unique in this emphasis. What is unique is his notion that we ought to regard the alienation and disruption and violence in human affairs as matters of bias – of a fundamental distortion of and a deviation from the creative and constructive employment of intelligence. So, in addition to the contributions to the human condition that come from intelligent actions, there are also the corrupting effects that result from the distorting biases.

Those of us who find our callings in university professions are not free from distortions of inquiry and intelligence, even though we may *profess* that our fundamental commitment is to the noble goal of always seeking truth. In reality our fundamental commitments are a mixture of the noble and the ignoble. As Lonergan notes, there are forms of blindness and prejudice in the fundamental commitments that are peculiar to academic work. These subtle and sophisticated distortions can become entrenched in the academy by means of methods and fads. University faculty are highly sensitized to the real, destructive biases derived from (distorted) religion that can affect their work. More recently we have started to become aware of non-religious biases that have become incorporated into academic standards that are perhaps more subtle, more pernicious, and have long-lasting impacts. Humanism can contain a deep prejudice against modern natural science. Positivism is prejudiced against concepts and arguments that do not involve a direct appeal to sense data – and especially against religious concepts. The Enlightenment concepts of reason and truth themselves are now being exposed for bias toward domination and control. Certain schools of economists hold marketplace efficiency as the supreme value, while their socialist and social justice critics seem blind to even the limited legitimacy of market efficiency. And so on.

When the fundamental commitments embedded in research methods and academic fads are contaminated with bias, they also have wide ranging social and historical impacts. The methods lead to research findings and publications. When introduced into classrooms, these findings affect the hearts and minds of those we teach. When introduced into corporate boardrooms or governmental hearings, they form the bases of policy decisions. Precisely because of the prestige of universities, distortions in methods and fads lead to corruption of society at large. In this way university

research can also play a profound role in the second dynamic of human history, the breakdowns and destructions of those human achievements due to biases. Precisely because of the wide ranging impacts of our academic researches, we must also be concerned about the ways in which academic biases, no less than academic achievements, leave their deep marks upon the human condition. Hence there is a great responsibility for self-appropriation, not only of the authentic inquiry that is at the heart of our academic methods, but also of the academic biases that have surreptitiously become incorporated into the methods and the personalities of those of us engaged in university research.

Ideally, unencumbered human intelligence would produce gradual but ever increasing improvement of the human condition – such was the optimism of the Enlightenment that led to the elevation of science and reason over value in the modern secular universities. However, the realities of bias, senselessness, and violence pose profound questions about the ultimate outcome of human history. Is the outcome of O'Connor's "good under construction" really good after all? Will the good of intelligent solutions to personal and social problems outweigh the social and historical evils of unintelligence and malice? Or will human efforts to live intelligently and ethically ultimately be submerged in the rising tide of human evil? Here Lonergan, like Flannery O'Connor herself, bears witness to yet a third dynamic in human affairs — the healing power of God's unconditional grace and self-sacrificing love. It is love in this profound sense that empowers family members to forgive one another the wrongs done unto them. It is unconditional love that motivates people to take on exceptional responsibilities to care for victims and repair devastation when they have no ethical obligation to do so. It is unconditional love that motivates people to renew and deepen their loyalties and to dedicate themselves to reform and renewal of institutions and communities in the wake of scandals. It is unconditional love for our students that can motivate us to keep trying when their immaturity or apathy make our efforts seem futile; and love that makes us ever more sensitive to what might really be interfering with a student's learning. It is love of a field of study that can sustain scientists' and scholars' commitments to their lines of inquiry despite indifference, criticism and even ridicule. Such love can be more powerful than frustration and bitterness.

One of the more profound aspects of Lonergan's work is his way of situating love, not as a blind, irrational force in opposition to intelligence and rationality, but rather as intrinsically related to the creative and normative role that intelligence, reflection, and freedom play in human history. He identifies love as the power that heals and overcomes the human resistances to novel inquiries, and turns the pursuits of intelligence and criticism into passionately embraced *desiderata*.

Because God's grace and unconditional love, no less than human intelligence and human violence, are real and present throughout human history, there is a great responsibility for self-appropriation, not only of the authentic inquiry that is at the heart of our academic methods, and of specifically academic forms of bias, but also of the operative presence of unconditional love in our own living and academic work, and in that of our colleagues and students. Self-appropriation of our participation in this complex interplay of intelligence, bias, and love will intensify our abilities, as faculty members, to serve the construction of an ultimate good in which, to quote T. S. Eliot, "All manner of thing will be well."

### ***The Wider Religious Horizon***

In drawing upon the thoughts of Michael Himes and Bernard Lonergan, I have tried to show how one may approach the discernment of vocation, and especially the vocation of university faculty. Pursuing Himes's three questions or Lonergan's self-appropriation does not require any explicit commitment to a specific religious or theological tradition. Yet both are Roman Catholic theologians, and I have explained *why* their methods are indeed properly *theological* discernments of vocation by employing specifically Christian vocabulary. This makes sense for a university like Seton Hall that has a specific Catholic religious heritage, and for the Lilly initiative that is promoting vocational discernment in specifically Christian terms.

But we live in an increasingly pluralistic age, and the community of students, faculty, and staff at even Catholic institutions is increasingly pluralistic. We also live in a post-modern context which fosters great suspicions of the hegemonic tendencies of particular traditions. While it is my view that the discernment of loves has been the aim of all of world's great spiritual practices, as it is in those of Ignatius of Loyola, this alone may not satisfy those concerned about pluralism. "Love," after all, has particularistic Christian resonances (*agape, caritas*) that cannot be ignored. It may

be objected, therefore, that to approach the question of the discernment of the vocation of the university faculty in the terms provided by Himes or Lonergan is too narrowly Christian, perhaps too Catholic, an approach, and that in our present day something more open to the pluralism of religions is needed. Lonergan himself offers one resource for meeting this demand for a wider pluralistic context. Another is offered by a Protestant historian of religions and Islamicist, Wilfred Cantwell Smith.

Lonergan argued that at the heart of every religious tradition is what he calls "religious experience." While each tradition develops its own ways of characterizing that experience and prescribes the proper ways of living in accord with it, Lonergan argued that religious experience can also be characterized universally by means of its relation to the structures of inquiry, sensitivity, insight, critical reflection, deliberation, and responsible choice. "Just as unrestricted questioning is our capacity for self transcendence," so, according to Lonergan, religious experience "is the proper fulfillment of that capacity. That fulfillment is not the product of our knowledge and choice."<sup>16</sup> Religious experience as such is just experience. As such it is experienced as unrestricted fulfillment of unrestricted capacity or desire. Specific religious traditions interpret that experience and therefore presuppose it, but they do not constitute it. Because it is an experience of fulfillment of our unrestricted capacity, it is an experience of infinite mystery; none of the finite interpretive traditions can totally exhaust it. Because bias is to be found in every human being and every human institution, it can be assumed that every religious tradition interpreting this experience will suffer distortions and manifest even grotesque aberrations. Yet none of these limitations negates the unrestrictedness or universality of religious experience as such.

As a Catholic theologian, Lonergan drew upon specifically Christian terms to further characterize this religious experience – first and foremost, as "being in *love* in an unrestricted fashion," but also as "gift of the Holy Spirit," and as "sanctifying grace." He even went so far as to craft a specifically Catholic, theological argument as to why religious experience (and indeed grace for salvation) in this specific sense is a gift by God to all human beings, regardless of their contact with or acceptance of any specific religious tradition.<sup>17</sup> Hence, as John Haughey has argued, "the presence of originating love [religious experience] would be the right starting point for those who would undertake encounters and dialogue with other religions ... the less fruitful starting point would be the doctrinal positions of different religions."<sup>18</sup>

A second source for widening the horizon for theological discernment of a university vocation is the work of Wilfred Cantwell Smith, for which Lonergan expressed great admiration. Cantwell Smith argued, perhaps provocatively, that it is no longer meaningful to speak in terms of the nouns, "religion," "a religion" or "religions." The lines of definition and demarcation, he argues, are too blurred. Instead, he traces the etymology of the term to go back to its origins in the adjective form, "*religiosus*," referring to particular qualities of sacred places or to human ways of behaving and being-in-the-world – to "reverent or devout persons careful in the conscientious fulfillment" of proper deportment toward the sacred.<sup>19</sup> Hence, he argues, it is more profitable both for critical scholarship as well as for promoting practical cooperation, to speak of religious persons rather than of religions. Like Lonergan, therefore, he argues for a pre-interpretive basis for discussion and study of religion by distinguishing "faith" from the interpretive expressions of it by various religious traditions. Unlike Lonergan, whose characterization of religious experience proceeds from self-appropriation, Cantwell Smith proceeds more inductively. He surveys a vast range of religious expressions, gradually refining and clarifying what he means by the personal comportment of "faith." Any such expression, he writes, is "totally mundane. Yet its significance lies in the fact that it points beyond itself to the [person] who framed it, and beyond ... to the transcendent vision." Hence, he insists that "when any of these things is an expression of religious faith, then it cannot be fully understood except as an expression of religious faith."<sup>20</sup> His claim stands in marked contrast to what Weber proclaimed to be the limits of legitimate academic (*wissenschaftliche*) treatment of religion in the university.<sup>21</sup> As a test case of his approach, Cantwell Smith raised the provocative question, "Is the Qur'an the Word of God?" in a lecture to a Christian theological audience. His answer:

Those who hold the Qur'an to be the word of God have found that this conviction leads them to a knowledge of God. Those [like Weber] who hold it to be the word of Muhammad have found that this conviction leads them to a knowledge of Muhammad. Each regards the other as blind. From what I have said, you will perhaps discern that in this matter I feel that in fact each is right.<sup>22</sup>

In arguing for a transcultural basis for religion, Lonergan, Cantwell Smith, and Himes all drew profoundly from their own particular religious traditions. It was because of their deep appropriation of their own traditions that they were able

to find meanings in the expressions of their traditions that pointed beyond the limitations of those expressions themselves. Their practice is quite different from a "lowest common denominator" approach sometimes pejoratively ascribed to liberal Protestantism. Rather, Lonergan, Cantwell Smith, and Himes represent further instances of the practice described by Jewish scholar, Henry David Aiken: "any authentic affirmation of one's humanity begins at home, moving out toward others in the form of a large-spirited hospitality which, in offering refuge or possible friendship to the stranger, can respect [her or his] inviolate being only if one honors one's own."<sup>23</sup> Religious experience and faith always arise and are nurtured in the context of some particular tradition with its own practices, symbols and sacred texts. Every living tradition has its own integrity. There is danger in eclectically trying to mix and match according to one's idiosyncratic likes and dislikes. Genuine religious encounters are always rooted in solid formations in particular, living traditions, and move both inward and outward: inward, discerning ever more attentively, intelligently, critically and lovingly what is really central to the religious faith of one's own tradition and what is extraneous or distorted; outward, discerning "behind" the external differences of a different tradition the commonality underlying the way of living that makes people "religious."

This means that theological discernment always needs to be rooted in some particular religious tradition. There is no "view from nowhere" in this matter. Universities like Seton Hall or my home institution, Boston College, must begin the enterprise of vocational discernment by working inward and outward from rootedness in their own rich, living, particular Roman Catholic religious heritage. Theological discernment of vocation is therefore a proper and appropriately academic function of a religiously affiliated universities—insofar as they have developed sophisticated resources for the kind of hospitality endorsed by Aiken and others discussed in this forum

In this regard, therefore, I would say that Weber was wrong. While it may very well be that specific distortions of religion which irked Weber must be pruned away if we are to follow the vocation of being a university faculty, it is simply a mistake to think that religious experience and the attempts to think, evaluate and chose in light of its horizon can be abandoned. To do so is simply to truncate one's vocation to be a human being.



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# DISCOVERING YOUR VOCATION: THE DISCERNMENT OF DISCERNMENT

*by Robert C. Bird*

"Sure, the job is boring and the hours are long, but the salary is great."

Too often I heard this or a similar phrase from friends and acquaintances, and I would nod with approval. In my mind, my job as a practicing lawyer was an exchange of time for salary. The purpose of a job was to provide money to pay the bills, buy goodies and take vacations.

My prior work at a large firm was lucrative, but unfulfilling. The days always seemed interminably long. Only late Friday afternoon seemed to hold promise of two days of freedom. To paraphrase a famous song, I was working for the weekend. But that was what work was for, wasn't it?

I remember all the accompanying stresses far too well – brooding over tasks after the workday was done and fretting endlessly during weekends. I even named one of my recurring apprehensions the "Sunday night blues." Right around six o'clock in the evening, my mind commuted to work. My body remained at home, but my brain was already plugging away at Monday morning's tasks. Relaxation, more like recovery from the prior week, was no longer possible until next weekend. An already long and unpleasant work week was made 14 hours longer by my own mind. Part of "my" Sunday and sometimes even Saturday ("they" unquestionably owned the other five days), were now lost to the job.

It was the worst of both worlds – neither the relaxation of home nor the productivity of work. I did not relax during those precious waning hours of the weekend, as my brain had long since left for the office. I was not productive either, as anyone who has experienced the Sunday night blues knows, mere brain churning accomplishes very little. My dream job had turned into the "un-vocation," the anti-job, the work that satisfied nothing but my bank statements.

Fast forward five years. I have just finished my second year as an assistant professor in the Stillman School of Business at Seton Hall University. The "Sunday night blues" are but an unpleasant memory. My three tasks of research, teaching and service are a pleasure to complete. I publish, I hold office hours, and I socialize at buffet lunches with my colleagues. As I write this essay in the depth of summer, I already long to begin fall classes in the way a child looks forward to a day at an amusement park. My work, or should I say my "calling," enriches my life, energizes it, and provides wonderful fulfillment.

I did not wake up one morning and suddenly discover that academia was in my future. Rather, my "un-vocation" prodded me in that direction. The challenging task of discernment, the discovery of a personal and fulfilling vocation in work, allowed me to find an intellectual home. Just like the old adage, "luck is preparation meeting opportunity," so discernment lays the groundwork for a calling.

Discernment does not come as an epiphany. Discernment takes time, effort and planning. Before discernment can even begin, it requires the understanding that a job can be a vocation, can be a calling. In other words, discernment requires discernment of discernment.

Certainly, there was a time when I did not recognize discernment. According to Michael Hines, author of the essay, "Fostering Vocational Discernment Among Undergraduates," vocation revolves around three questions:

- 1) Is your work a source of joy?
- 2) Does it genuinely tap your talents and will it continually challenge them?
- 3) Is it a genuine source of service to those around you?

The latter two I could have no doubt answered "yes" to. Certainly a large-firm law practice both challenges one's talents and serves the clients who pay extraordinary amounts of money for a lawyer's time.

The answer to the first question, however, "is your work a source of joy," is far more difficult. Ultimately, I would have answered "yes" to the first question, not because I genuinely believed my work brought joy, but because I would have equated joy with payment or completion of a task. Joy is far more complex. Joy, according to Hines, is a "deep sense, an abiding sense, of the rightness, the goodness, the fruitfulness of what one does with one's life." As I found through my own trial and error, understanding that such joy can exist in work lays a critical foundation, indeed the only possible foundation, for discovery of discernment.

So here I sit, propelling myself down the rails of the tenure track, teaching students, writing articles and serving the University. My vocational cup is brimming with a sense of joy, self-challenge, and service to others. Now that I have found a continually enticing vocation, how can I share the joy of developing discernment in my students?

I teach law to business students. Law and business – today these topics might seem to those with a classical background to be the educational equivalent of technical training for life in a moral vacuum. My students study to become bond traders, dot-com managers, accountants, lawyers, financial planners, insurance salespeople and marketing analysts. Do such students, on the fast track to financial prosperity and rife with marketable job skills, need to recognize discernment?

Absolutely. This past spring, a business student stopped by my office. She told me that she enjoyed my course and wanted to talk to me about attending law school. She had gathered applications, thought about the LSAT, and considered various law schools. I asked her what kind of law she wanted to practice. Her eyes perked up as she said with pride, "corporate law." "Wonderful," I said, "but tell me, what is corporate law?" The same eyes that seemed so enlivened by her career choice now seemed to focus on a distant place. She pondered the question for a moment and answered, "I don't really know, business stuff?" Another student wanted to pursue a career in entertainment law. I asked why. She eagerly responded, "because I enjoy the creative process and want to be around creative people." I did not hesitate. "Then don't go to law school. Go be a creative person," I said.

As the above examples highlight, business students may be among the most needful of understanding vocation. I am still disconcerted by the fact that a student would consider spending three brutal years and nearly \$100,000 to enter a lifelong profession rife with discontent with the understanding of her chosen field as "business stuff." I have no doubt this scenario is repeated in faculty offices and over kitchen tables everywhere.

Students planning to work in business may also have outside pressures pulling them away from discernment. Some students may study business merely to please nervous parents who are primarily concerned with providing financial stability for their children. Others may study business because they are unsure of their own interests. Still others major in a business discipline because they understand a college degree as little more than a ticket to the good life. Business study can be a siren song of materialism, and any number of 17-year-olds can easily hear its call.

Thus, I add a fourth task to my job as teacher at Seton Hall, researcher, teacher, service provider and *developer of discernment*. I emphasize in my classes the importance of "doing what you love." In my office hours, I ask pointed questions. Who really wants to go to law school, you or your parents? What is something that you enjoy so much that would not consider it work? What makes you passionate about living?

I ask my students to ask themselves "What is it that brings you joy in your life?" I hope that I make a difference.

Seton Hall is an intellectual, spiritual and cultural home for many whom the University calls to its service. The discovery of discernment, no less important than discernment itself, opens one's mind to hearing the call of vocation. Business students, lured by money and the need for job security, need to hear the call as much as anyone. I hope that my own journey through discernment, a journey that never truly ends, can serve as a modest example for students, colleagues and friends.

# CONFESSIONS OF A HERETIC

by George P. Browne

## *Outwitted*

He drew a circle that shut me out  
Heretic, Rebel, A thing to flout  
But Love and I had the wit to win  
We drew a circle that took him in.

— Edwin Markham

When I joined the Catholic Studies summer seminar on finding vocation, I understood we should be seeking ways in which an institution, such as Seton Hall, might better assist our undergraduates in this task. While I did expect to bring my experiences in working as a teacher and undergraduate adviser to bear on the task, I had not thought of exploring my own career paths and decisions as a part of this process. Yet the first assignments, both in reading and homework, asked us to look at the history of our own vocation and ways in which it compelled us and brought us joy. This essay begins where my journey ended, with an effort to understand the ways in which my college education offered me the challenges and opportunities that led me to the occupation and the place, both spatial and psychological, in which I have pursued it. It ends where I began, describing in the outcomes of my work the rewards of my vocation.

For almost 40 years now, I have been engaged at Roman Catholic universities, first as a graduate student, then as a faculty member. However, the prelude that shaped me to this pursuit was at a very different place. The College of Wooster is a Presbyterian liberal arts college with a tradition of intellectual growth and of sending its graduates into people-related professions. I remember three themes that were particularly important to my experience.

### *The Challenge to Learn*

The central course to my first year at Wooster was Introduction to Liberal Studies. Through many books, much writing and discussion, we explored the broad disciplines through which one might grapple with reality. Among the books that particularly resonated with me were Carl Becker, *Progress and Power*; Robert Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers*; James Conant's meditation on fire as a medium for studying the scientific method; and *The Brothers Karamazov* for seeing the world through literature. At the other end of my four years, an interdisciplinary review of the Western Concepts of Man came back to the ideas that shape our understanding of the world and lead toward a "tentative working philosophy of life" to take into the wider world. The discipline to read, to gather information, to wrestle with ideas and interpretations, to make use of different tools of analysis was central to the intellectual growth that marked my undergraduate career.

### *The Challenge of Community*

For a century before I came to Wooster, the college had sought to encourage its students in service. This theme was a subtle part of the life of the college. I remember working with the Boy Scout troop I had joined as a ninth-grader, helping cook for the "Wooster in India Dinner," to raise the funds and awareness to support a graduate for two years of teaching at a high school in India, and opportunities to contribute through bread and soup suppers. Many years later, through the alumni magazine, I read about the "theme houses" the college was encouraging. Students might propose a service project — my nephew and friends collected leftover food from the dining halls for shelters and food kitchens where it might be reused — in exchange for the privilege of living together in small off-campus houses instead of the large residence halls. This was an epiphany moment for me. The college chose, quietly and at the margins of the academic core, to encourage students to ways of altruism. Alongside the college newspaper, the Symphony Orchestra, varsity athletics and the many other co-curricular facets of college life, we were encouraged to think of others, to find ways to engage the wider world, to build habits of participation that might last a lifetime.

### *The Challenge of Performance*

Since the late 1940s, Wooster has demanded of every graduate research and writing, a project within the major that requires independent learning and the communication of results. Independent study is a hallmark of the college, for



each student a lonely and exhilarating exploration of a problem of her or his own choosing and the excitement of sharing it with faculty mentors, and sometimes far beyond. For the faculty of the college, independent study is likewise a challenge. Each faculty member must take responsibility for several students each year, even when they are headed into corners the faculty member knows little about. Thomas Felt had only a minor in Latin American history to his name when he supported me through the study of French heretics creating and losing a beachhead in 16th-century Catholic, Portuguese Brazil and, more daunting, a yearlong exploration of slavery in the Brazilian world. Alongside their work with juniors and seniors engaged in independent study, faculty are expected to model the research/performance aspect of academia. To this end, the college supports a model leave program, one year in five for faculty with active research projects, one in seven for all faculty, at full pay. Out of my own undergraduate research experiences, I learned I could undertake research and thrill at process and product. Without it, I doubt I could have considered an academic vocation.

Through these experiences, shared in different ways by my peers, I wandered the byways of the personal search for direction. Early I learned that my dream of mastering higher mathematics and physics was hubris. It took longer to discover that the call to ministry and the mission field, which was the example of my parents and grandparents, was not mine. A flirtation with joining the Foreign Legion in modern guise was dashed by the discovery that the Air Force opened the doors of flight school only to those with perfect eyesight. And so I turned to graduate study as an alternative that might either postpone or answer my own vocational quest. To my astonishment, the door that opened widest was at The Catholic University of America, which offered not only to support my interest in Brazilian history, but also a full three-year fellowship, courtesy of National Defense Education Act by the U. S. government. Manoel Cardozo, department chair and scholar of colonial Brazil, assured me that my Presbyterian heritage and faith would not be an issue in this new setting.

Details of graduate study and my teaching career are less germane to this essay than the insights garnered over four decades in the Catholic academic community. During my first year as a student at Catholic University, a fellow graduate student, a Discalced Carmelite, and I became friends and had many talks about religious issues. Learning about Saint Theresa de Avila and the history of the order and its place in the world of the Age of Discovery was a special part of our discussions, but the most important insight for me was that the Catholic Church is a very diverse institution with a broad range of tolerance for diversity and differential interpretation of both history and doctrine. As an outsider in a Catholic institution, this was a reaffirmation that my faith and background were not an impediment to acceptance or success.

Over the following decades, my work submerged issues of religion and faith in the world of academics. For historians, as for those in the social and natural sciences, the reality of research and writing is based on the verifiable, and questions of faith are generally banished to the realm of speculation and personal life. The role of religion as a factor in the story of human experience was simply one part of the clash of peoples and cultures as we studied the expansion of European society around the world. While issues of faith and doctrine shaped polities, politics and policies from the colonial Americas into the 20th century, the historian's focus was on the behaviors and the results, not on the nature of the faith that lay behind them. Religious differences share the stage with other differences — legal and social traditions, economic ideas and ambitions, technology and scientific attitudes — in shaping the cultures of the modern world, the focus of the courses I taught and the research I pursued.

In the context of the re-writing of the Seton Hall core curriculum in the early 1980s, religion resurfaced as a significant component of intellectual thought. As a member of a small group of faculty that devised and then taught an early multidisciplinary course for the core, I became intrigued with the interaction of religions in the world of the European diaspora and in the development of the Americas. To understand, the Traditional Cultures of the Non-Western World, as we called our new course, we had to examine the patterns of interconnected and overlapping Asian, African and American religious traditions in contrast to the exclusivist traditions emanating from Southwest Asia and represented by the Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths. It was humbling as well as enlightening to realize that to many around the world, it was not incompatible to practice Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism in conjunction; it was possible to believe that there were multiple paths to the ultimate reality, even though the understanding of this reality might seem very different. Particularly for all those of us brought up to understand that there was but one path to enlightenment, the realization that most religious traditions accept the possibility of many paths can be both liberating and unsettling. The historical

implications of exclusive religious views in contrast to inclusive ones demand rethinking of the evolution of cultural relationships across the world over the past five centuries. During the past two decades, these insights bore particular fruit for me in the teaching of courses that introduced students to the variety that shapes the modern world. They were part of the intellectual armamentarium to introduce and analyze the "other" world, which did not fit easily into the "western" concepts that inform the world of most of our students. In the context of this summer's "vocations" seminar, they take on new meaning.

A major focus of our discussion in the seminar was filtered through the ideas and interpretations of the work of Bernard Lonergan, S.J. Particularly relevant to my concerns were the ideas developed in the essay, "Lonergan's Universalist View of Religion," by Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. The conflict of religious views is often a center for power conflicts. It can also become a refuge for refusal to believe that "others" can have a different religious tradition without being in error and condemned to perdition. Crowe argues that Lonergan spoke from the Christian tradition, broadly based, to posit that God's grace is sufficient that all should have access to salvation. While this formulation is particularly Christian in its articulation, it is properly understandable as a statement that other traditions may indeed generate access to ultimate reality. Whether we come from the Christian tradition or from another, it behooves us to suppose the possibility

that God loves a slow-learning people enough to allow them long ages to learn what they have to learn, [to] suppose that the destiny of the world religions is contingent on what we all learn and do – say, on Christians being authentically Christian, Hindus being authentically Hindu, and so on – then responsibility returns to us with a vengeance ....

This loving God of Lonergan and Crowe resonates as the God with the potential for multiple paths and, perhaps, the God of saints and heretics alike. I am brought back to the simple faith statement of the early Calvinists as articulated in the Westminster Confession, "The chief end of man, is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever." As religious beings, once we recognize the divine, we must worship. Out of worship, we gain joy in the living of life. While it may not reshape the focus of my scholarly concerns on the demonstrable and the explainable as the center of my teaching and research, the opening of my personal understanding to the implications of a more universalist perspective on the variety and values of religion can reshape the comparative and contextual spaces in which they take place. This perspective also reinforces the importance of toleration for diversity and respect for difference of interpretation as central to the teaching of a Christian and Catholic university.

#### **Four stories**

The four anecdotes that follow are success stories from those I have taught. I was not a central figure in the education or the vocational directions these men and women took, yet as they have shared their experiences with me, the ways in which I did share in their growth reflect the results of my calling, and bring pride and joy in what I do as a college teacher.

As an adviser to "undecided" students, my office was one of the first stops for a 41-year-old woman who came back to the Seton Hall career she had never started. Her father was a maintenance worker at Seton Hall, and she was all set to begin college when his sudden death required that she go to work instead. Over two decades, she rose from secretary to a junior partner in a firm whose business was reconditioning refrigerated containers. When the senior partners retired and sold the business, she found herself without a job and with the resources to go to college. She was going to major in "finance" and head right back into the business world. Over a couple of consultations, I learned about Sarah. She owned a sailboat and was active in Union County Republican politics. We also talked about ideas and about options. Within a week, she became an English major and soon reported that she had new insights and interesting things to say at cocktail parties. Learning was exciting! Sarah graduated with honors in three years, and did, indeed, return to the business world, as comptroller at a mid-size New Jersey corporation.

About a year ago, I received an e-mail from a 1970s history major. Since graduation, he has taught high school history. The memory shared was of earning an A- on his research paper in Introduction to Historical Research. He recalled how I tempted my hands, holding the paper, and explained that this very good paper on the American Revolution could not earn an A, because of consistent problems — read sloppiness — no punctuation and form in his footnotes. The anecdote, related with the relish he must use in the telling to generations of his students, is clearly a part of his strategy for encouraging focus and care on their part.

Last summer brought another e-mail from a 1989 graduate. She, too, had been my student in Introduction to Historical Research. Our theme that semester was "Revolution," and Julie wrote a raw and exciting paper about her uncle, who had been a missionary teacher in China in the 1940s and remained into the Revolutionary era. I was enthused by her passion. Of all the students I have advised, Julie was the only one I actually encouraged to look at history rather than law. Ignoring me, she went to law school and graduated. She has worked in advocacy for nurses and deprived culture women at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Now, as she looked for ways to enhance her skills, Julie was ready to return to academia. She was interested in a program in the history of medicine and public health at Columbia University or maybe women's studies at Drew University. Would I write a letter of recommendation?

This spring came an invitation from the University to help find a "Jack Kent Cooke" scholar candidate. Seton Hall was invited to submit one nominee to a brand new, national competition to aid talented undergraduates. We would need to create a selection process, winnow nominees and assist the chosen scholar in preparing the application. It was exciting to recruit colleagues for a selection committee, to encourage nominations from across the campus, and to meet the 11 very special juniors and sophomores who were nominated. The committee's final choice was special even among these scholars. To support our choice I sought feedback from her professors, who responded with details on what made Judith so good. One of her first-year professors stated:

"She is one of six students in 35 years of teaching at Seton Hall University. While I do not have my records with me, I clearly remember that Judith led the class in every aspect of General Chemistry I and II. But grades are not the reason Judith is unique. Her whole attitude toward learning makes her the wonderful student that she is. She often came to my office, not because she did not understand the material or that she had difficulty with an assignment, but because she wanted to truly understand the entire concept at a more advanced level than being taught in the class. It was a pleasure to sit with her during these sessions and experience the joy that one wishes all students would have."

These students and many more have taught me the joy of what I do.



# WHY I TEACH

by Kristina Chew

I used to be a classics professor. I ran a small program in classical civilization at the University of Saint Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and taught Latin, classical Greek, mythology and classical literature. Before that, I was a Latin teacher to seventh through 12th graders in Saint Louis, Missouri. I became a classics major in college because I was, and am good at, Greek and Latin: I excelled at parsing participles and memorizing each new irregular verb, and read so many poems of Virgil and Catullus so many times that reading a few words — *sunt lacrimae rerum, cui dono lepidum novum libellum!* — is as comforting as sitting in my grandmother's kitchen with its odor of cooking oil and Chinese herbs.

Here at Seton Hall University, I am a writing instructor. I teach, grade, talk to students in and out of the classroom, and think, scheme and dream of how they can transform their writing from assignment into essay. I am writing this now in the summer, which I have "off" to do my "own" work, a phrase that, now that I have written it, looks wrong.

My work is what I do in the classroom, sounding out the difference between a thesis that argues a point rather than simply summarizing, going over the rule for apostrophes and starting up an inquiry into how a writer can say "the first thing you notice when you sit down with Michael Jordan is how very much like Michael Jordan he is." "Isn't that simply a repetitive statement?" I ask the students. "I mean, how can he just say that Michael Jordan is like ... Michael Jordan?" It is a happy moment when someone raises his or her hand to cry out "No! It's not, what he really means is ...." And it is still a good moment when no one raises a hand. I hold up my book, look into the students' eyes and offer questions, ask to hear a passage out loud, walk around the room and listen.

The causes behind my change from teaching classics to writing are people, especially certain students and Charlie, my 5-year-old son who has autism. Autism is a neurobiological disorder that profoundly impairs a person's communicative and social functioning. When you have a little boy who has figured out how to say and use "yes" after one year's worth of one-on-one teaching, and who fumbles and fights hard to put the initial // sound on "fries," you find yourself reading too eagerly the notes that the speech pathologists and special education teachers write:

Kristina,

7/16/02

Charlie had a great day! This morning during work he spontaneously and independently asked Melissa for the potty. In the pool this afternoon he played more than ever before! He played catch with Jack — he let me pour water over his head and asked for more! Then when we walked back to the classroom he opened the door UNPROMPTED! Charlie is usually the first to the classroom door and he always stands there until someone says something. Today he just waited for us to catch up and then opened the door for all of us! Yeah Charlie! He's been in such a great mood all day!

Have a great night!

Kathy

I am grateful beyond words for these notes. To read a child's actions (especially when that child is minimally verbal), to analyze what is going on, and to write it all down clearly and honestly is a skill. It is this skill that I strive now to teach; it is in teaching this skill that I have understood teaching to be my vocation.

I first got an inkling that teaching was more than work for me — more than an engaging intellectual pursuit — through teaching Greek to Max. Max was a freshman in my mythology class during my first year at the University of Saint Thomas. Throughout class, he would sit with his chin pointing up and his eyes *not* on the book that, despite many reminders to the class, was shut. He wore a black trench coat, dark red flannel shirts, huge black work boots. The sentences in his papers were very, very long, even by the standards of an ordinary run-on sentence. It took Max a long time to write out his quizzes, the words like leaves in glass between the lines of college-ruled paper.

Midway through that spring semester each student had to meet me in my office. I then learned about Max's learning disabilities. "It's the Rocky Mountains," he said, wagging his elbow to describe the peaks and valleys of his academic

skills as revealed through diagnostic testing. Having gone through years of school with his disabilities so labeled, Max had wanted to undertake his college studies without "extra help."

Max wanted to be a classics major.

"I could take Spanish, like I did in high school. I know how to get a B," he explained. "But I'll just be sitting at the back of the class. I won't learn anything. I really want to learn Greek."

There were no more than 10 students in the class in the fall, and, in the spring, there were three, of whom only Max was a Saint Thomas student. (The other two women were retired and were auditing.) Was I to teach "to" the auditors or to Max, the "actual" Saint Thomas student? To learn Greek and Latin, it's unavoidable what you have to learn: a hefty pile of grammatical forms and rules and endless lists of vocabulary. A good language teacher makes it fun by leading students into the idiosyncrasies, the secrets of the language, through laughter, the occasional game, songs and food and the frescoes of Pompeii. But a student has to learn the grammar. The elementary student of Greek and Latin has no choice but to memorize forms and endings as laid out in the textbook.

Max needed to learn Greek. My work as his Greek teacher was not just to make sure he had mastered every iota of the textbook curriculum of Greek grammar — the three voices of verbs, six tenses, numerous participles, the definite article, the various types of third declension nouns, the correlatives, the difference between the optative and subjunctive moods. My work was to take apart the grammar and teach Max each bit of Greek, bit by bit.

I rewrote the textbook for Max. He learned the Greek alphabet a few letters at a time when the other students were reading basic sentences. By the second semester, he memorized single vocabulary words bit by bit, while the other students translated passages. Over fruit juice and coffee, Max and I talked over the dynamics of the class, which were to become even more interesting in the next semester with the addition of a precocious, home-schooled, high school student.

The experience of teaching Max made me think hard about what it means to teach classics, and just to *teach*, at a large diocesan university that is very much a part of the culture and the place in which it is located, Saint Paul, Minnesota. At many other schools, Max would have been discouraged from taking Greek because he could not keep up with the class according to a preordained curriculum. I learned that it was me, the teacher, and my teaching methods that needed to change to meet the needs of the students who appear in my classroom.<sup>3</sup>

Max went on to major in history and studied in Rome and Prague during his four years at Saint Thomas. "Hiya teach," he wrote me this past May to tell me that he was "three weeks from graduating (on time)."

My understanding of teaching as a vocation was further strengthened by my need to teach Charlie, especially when he did not seem teachable — when we dragged him to a toddler table and praised him for five seconds of quiet sitting. A vocation can call you, and the real humanity of it lies in figuring out how to rework your life and thinking and beliefs to meet the choice, the calling that something bigger than you, that God, has placed in your lap.

The three of us — my husband, Jim Fisher, Charlie, who had just had his second birthday; and I — were sitting in a hospital conference room, or rather Jim and I were sitting in chairs the colors of institutions (orange-brown or gray-mauve), and Charlie was somewhere on the carpet. Possibly he was lying down or sitting in a half-crumple. A small team of medical professionals was telling us that Charlie's diagnosis was autism.

We had actually known that Charlie had autism six months before, on a very bad day in December at a conference with Charlie's day care teachers. There was a mumble of "brain" and "wrong" and "something," and the head teacher turned her face to the floor. Charlie did not talk, but that was not the heart of the problem; the problem was that Charlie was not showing so many of the other signs of evolving play, increasing interest in his peers, some communicative ability to express his needs, beside crying — that appear so effortlessly in typical children.

Now it was summer and the 95° heat pressed against air-condition-cooled windowpanes. We were given the clinic team's assessment and a write-up of Charlie's diagnosis, a run-through of various treatments and support services, and a folder of information sheets and brochures

"Any more questions?" asked the social worker.

To be truthful, that is a question I often find myself asking students, whose usual response is, "No, is class over now?" They scoop up their things and leave in a rush. That is how Jim scooped up Charlie (I had the folder), and we hurried to our car on that day in late July 1999.

That's when I learned not why I teach, but why teaching is just what I do, just as I chop vegetables for dinner and boil water for rice. Starting in that above-average hot summer, we would learn that a child like Charlie — "classically" autistic, nonverbal, looking slantwise through the slats of a fence, uncomprehending of his own name — needs intensive, individualized teaching for many, many hours a week; needs a heavy diet of stimulation to his five senses and most of all for his developing brain — needs a lifetime's worth of teaching to be done not only because it is good work, or because one wants to do it, but due to sheer and simple need, and love.

Though I did not know it at the time, teaching Greek to Max was an invaluable experience for teaching Charlie. Just as I taught Max the Greek alphabet one letter at a time, so we have taught Charlie to produce each vowel and consonant. When he was 2 years old, Charlie learned sign language for "potato chip"; six months later he could say "ip"; and just last week — he is 5 years and a few months old — he can say, "chip." As slow as this process takes, it is work I love doing that we make fun for Charlie by tossing him in the air and singing and dancing when he says, "chip."

Work and need, love and play: The connections among these are articulated in Robert Frost's poem "Two Tramps in Mudtime,"<sup>4</sup> in which the work is chopping wood. A conflict arises between the narrator, who is chopping wood because he loves to do this "job," and two tramps who want to do the work for him, for pay that they need:

*Out of the mud two strangers came  
And caught me splitting wood in the yard,  
And one of them put me off my aim  
By hailing cheerily "Hit them hard!"  
I knew pretty well why he had dropped behind  
And let the other go on a way.  
I knew pretty well what he had in mind:  
He wanted to take my job for pay.*

Frost's poem depicts the narrator as just minding his own business: "That day, giving a loose my soul, / I spent on the unimportant wood." He simply *likes* to split wood and has no specific need of shelter, food or money. It takes the watching presence of the two tramps to stir the narrator into understanding his own need for his work. "The time when most I loved my task / The two must make me love it more / By coming with what they came to ask." The narrator comes to understand his work through others' wanting it and, even more, wanting it because they want to be paid money for that work — because they need the work in a way that he does not. As the poem continues, the narrator re-experiences the basic motions of splitting wood in a newly self-conscious voice:

*You'd think I never had felt before  
The weight of an ax-head poised aloft,  
The grip of earth on outspread feet,  
The life of muscles rocking soft  
And smooth and moist in vernal heat.*

Academics are like the narrator. How many an academics cite as their reasons for studying poetry, or walruses, or the Civil War, a *love* for their subject? I understand my work (as a writing teacher, in my situation) as not simply a job, but a vocation, because not only do I find myself teaching something I love — writing and literature — but because of the need for students to write their ideas clearly and think critically.

In "Two Tramps in Mudtime," the particular work the narrator is occupied with is cutting wood. The altercation with the tramp shows the narrator why, with a change of person and situation, his pastime of splitting wood is work: "My right might be love but theirs was need." The narrator so loves his work that he refuses to give up his ax to the tramps, who

clearly need the work and its rewards (money). To justify himself, the narrator seeks to redefine work as needing to be play simultaneously, and to equate one's need for that work with one's love for it.

*And where the two exist in twain  
Theirs was the better right—agreed.  
  
But yield who will to their separation,  
My object in living is to unite  
My avocation and my vocation  
As my two eyes make one in sight.  
Only where love and need are one,  
And the work is play for mortal stakes,  
Is the deed ever really done  
For Heaven and the future's sakes.*

The narrator initially separates love from need; chopping wood is play, not work. After his encounter with the work-wanting tramps, the narrator wishes for a unification between his work and play, so that work, play, love and need would be all bound up into one thing that would not merely be the perfect job, but a perfect way to live. The tramps would then not be in their situation of 'have-nots' who sleep "God know where last night./But not long since in the Lumber camp" and want "to take my job for pay." (There is, indeed, a difference of opinion between the two tramps; only one stops to watch the narrator chopping wood.) The tramps only play hard, for the simple stakes of cash and its equivalent, food, and are a little too desperate to work. There is no play in their work, while the work the narrator envisions — "play for mortal stakes" — has promise and purpose for the future.

To the end, the narrator resists giving his work to the tramps who attempt to use their simple, jobless presence, "[staying] their stay," to bring him around to "their logic," that "... I had no right to play/With what was another man's work for gain." The tramps remain jobless (and still in need of money, food and shelter), the narrator gains, it seems, some insight but hangs onto his ax — Frost's narrator is not resolved about how much play and need there is in his work.

"Two Tramps in Mudtime" presents a vision of a way to live, in which work and play are simply factors in daily living, one moment in the narrator's progress to this joining of work and play.<sup>5</sup> Are we teachers the narrator, fortunate to possess an ax and wood to split at will, or the tramps, awkward beggars too concerned with what they need to think about how their work could be unified with play?

When I taught classics I was that narrator, enjoying my work — presenting the ablative absolute with a smile and teaching students to sing "Happy Birthday" in Latin — and increasingly anxious that, while what I taught was intellectually fascinating, Caesar's *Gallie Wars*, Cicero's orations and the love poetry of Sappho were not curriculum to draw the future special education teachers, speech pathologists and occupational therapists who fill Charlie's mind with learning. Latin and Greek need to be taught; one never knows when one may meet a student like Max who simply *wants* to learn an ancient language. My sympathies are with the tramps now. I enjoy teaching, I still dance around the room, but I teach because students need to be able to articulate ideas in writing — and because I need to.

In the month after Charlie was diagnosed, we learned — after fervid nights of reading Internet Web sites and the first volumes of what has become a small library of autism books — about an intensive in-home treatment for autism known as "ABA" — Applied Behavior Analysis — that draws on the principles of behavior therapy to teach autistic children. A psychologist at UCLA, Ivar Lovaas, had found that some autistic children who were provided with 40 hours a week of ABA therapy were able to function — to talk, interact socially, attend school — so as to seem indistinguishable from their same-aged peers. We found a consultant to supervise the therapy in our house and then had to find therapists who would sit down with Charlie for several hours each week. College students were suggested and here — both my husband and I being professors — we were not (for once, in that hard time) at a loss. We posted flyers on the bulletin boards of university departments in psychology, education and communication disorders. The phone was silent for weeks and then September came, students returned to their dorms, and the phone starting ringing — and, one Saturday morning at the end of the month, a small group of young women were sitting in our living room watching the consultant teach Charlie to "come here" to her at the table and tickle, praise and hug him when he made the slightest attempt to do so —

and Charlie's life was saved. The therapists came three or four times a week and taught Charlie to come to the little blue table in his room, to understand language (beside his name, he did not know his body parts, colors, really not what anything was called, and he was almost 2 years old), to play with toys instead of arranging blocks and cars in the same patterns on the rug.

Since that first group of therapists in Saint Paul, we have had many more, almost all college students (two graduate students and one high school senior being the exception), in Saint Louis, Missouri, and here in New Jersey. Different professionals — a psychologist, a speech pathologist — have supervised Charlie's therapy program, but I have found myself gradually taking on the teaching and training of new therapists. I assign readings in books about autism and Xerox chapters from manuals on ABA and autism; facilitate discussion about teaching problems; explain techniques such as differential reinforcement by modeling them; critique each therapist's written notes so that she learns to record accurately and honestly what happened during a therapy session ("Charlie did awesome work on receptive instructions, counting, and sequencing" does not say much about what he is actually doing); train each therapist by observing her working with Charlie for several weeks; write up new programs. This teaching has occurred entirely outside of the classroom, in the living room and child's bedroom of our house. And thanks to these teacher-therapists, Charlie talks more and more every day, zips around on his bike, flies on airplanes from coast to coast, joins in a pack of children splashing through a Slip 'n' Slide and takes his turn down the slide, and finds joy in the companionship of others.

None of Charlie's teacher-therapists have been students in my classroom. More than one has discovered her vocation through the long hours of teaching. Alecia was a student in an honors class taught by my husband at Saint Louis University. Alecia wrote me this e-mail letter in October 2001 after working with Charlie for several months:

Just wanted to say hi. I hope that everything is still going good in New Jersey and Charlie is still doing great at school. I am working as a lead therapist with a boy who is similar to Charlie now. It is a lot of fun, but what I really wanted to tell you was that I have decided (through working in a classroom this summer and then as a lead) that I really feel that I am called to do ABA. So, I dropped pre-med and am looking at a degree in psychology so that hopefully I can be hired as an associate when I graduate and then continue to do more graduate work and hopefully become an analyst. Anyway, I just wanted to tell you thanks for the opportunity you gave me to work with Charlie because I seriously think that is the reason that I found what I am supposed to do. Stay in touch, good luck with everything, and thank you again!

Love, Alecia

Working with young women like Alecia — and Stella, Christie, Alli, Sara, Arielah, Tara, Annemarie, Kelly, Kristen, Lindsay, Claudette, Versha, Beth, Andrea, Kristy, Megan, Peggy, Elizabeth, Shiri — has given me the opportunity to see what "I am supposed to do," and to love in my work, Charlie's teacher-therapists, and, of course, my family and Charlie.

"I remember how much Charlie progressed over the year," Alli wrote, "and it seems like he is progressing even more and doing very well. I have his picture in my room as a reminder of him and how thankful I am to have had the opportunity to work with him. I really miss you all. He impacted [sic] my life in so many ways."

"When I look into these little kids' eyes I see such courage," wrote Kelly, who plans to make working with autistic children her career. "I sometimes wonder what exactly it is that God intended for us when he sent the world these special children ... and I'm quite sure it was partly to help us find our courage .... Let me know if there is ever anything that I can do."

Teaching is a vocation when it is work that is simultaneously play, when you do it not only because you love to but because you have to.

A vocation is the work one is called to and is found through experience, through those opportunities — meeting individuals like Max and Alecia — that rise to meet us when we are not looking. So Saint Augustine's *Confessions* narrates the changes in himself from his childhood to his immoral life in Carthage and his conversion on hearing a child's voice reciting *tolle, lege* — "take and read" — whereupon he opens the Bible to Paul's letter to the Romans, which passage leads him to embrace the discipline of Christianity. Augustine finds himself called to change his life; the motif of calling



appears in the first chapter of the *Confessions*, which with the author seeking God by calling on (*invocans*) Him, addressing Him directly.

*quaeram te, domine, invocans te et invocem te credens in te: praedicatus enim es nobis. invocat te, domine, fides mea, quam dedisti mihi, quam inspirasti mihi per humanitatem filii tui, per ministerium praedicatoris tui. (1.1.1)*

I translate:

*Let me seek you, Lord, calling on you and let me call on you believing in you: For you have proclaimed this to us. My faith which you have given me, which you have breathed into me through the humanity of your Son, through the ministry of your priest — calls on you, Lord.*

God Himself has given Augustine the faith that he uses to call on God — God has given him the tools to call on Him; Augustine has come upon these tools only by calling on God, and it is his faith that initially enables him to do this. He looks for God by calling on Him, but, in order to call on Him at all, Augustine must already be believing in God.

My faith in teaching arises in the very act of teaching, in the long moments when I am standing in the classroom among students. My sense of why I teach occurs when I am seeking to turn a collection of sentences into a coherent paragraph, and when I am seeking how to lead the student to do this instead of simply dictating instructions. Faith in what I am teaching — how to write a lucid paragraph — faith in my students, that they can do it — calls me back into the classroom, to keep trying again to get my lesson across to my students, even on those difficult days. I keep going back. I keep brainstorming more assignments and questions and exercises to lead students into the ways of thinking and clear self-expression.

And I keep finding myself teaching new teachers for Charlie. The latest is Buddy, who lives next door and is 6 and really wants a little brother (he has two sisters, one 7 and one 5).

"I wahn *crack*-ker cookie. Cracker yesss." Charlie's eyes look right at me for a few seconds. It's late afternoon, Charlie is home from school and hanging around the kitchen, looking expectantly up at the cabinet with his snacks.

"What's he saying?" asks Buddy.

I take the box of crackers from the kitchen cabinet. "He's saying he wants a cracker."

"But it sounds like he said cookie."

"He did say cookie. At first Charlie couldn't say cracker so we taught him to say cookie." I hand one to Buddy. Charlie hurries over and looks at the cracker in Buddy's hand. "Say 'do you want a cracker?'" I coach Buddy.

"Do you want a cracker Charlie?" says Buddy, simultaneously passing Charlie the cracker, which is promptly eaten. "He didn't say anything."

"Let's try it again." I hand Buddy another cracker. "This time say 'do you want a cracker?' then *wait* for Charlie to say something before you give him the cracker."

"Hey Charlie, want another cracker?" Buddy holds it out.

"Yess." Charlie reaches, Buddy gives.

"I want another cracker," Buddy says to me. Intent on Charlie who is chewing his cracker, he breaks off a little bit.

"Cracker I want cracker!" Charlie calls.

"Here Charlie." Buddy holds out the piece and looks closely at Charlie. "You want this?"

"Yes." Charlie takes the bit of cracker from Buddy, who takes a small taste too.

Buddy chews thoughtfully and looks at me. "These aren't bad. Hey!" Charlie is poking at his hand, which still holds some cracker. "Wait! What do you want?" Buddy said fiercely, looking right into Charlie's big brown eyes.

"I want cracker! More cracker!" Charlie says, wiggling and reaching.

"I got him to talk!" Buddy yells. "I need another cracker."

"Here you go," I say, opening the box. "You're catching on to this fast," I observe.

"I'm *teaching* Charlie to *talk*," Buddy says with the air of a newly minted expert. Charlie pokes at his hand and I sit at my kitchen table and indeed it seems to me that what we think in advance and in theory we are "called" to do may well not be — may only be a phase on the way to — what truly calls us. We need to be ever watchful for that student who comes out of the rows of desks and catches you, wanting to learn.



### Works Cited

- 1 "These are the tears of things," Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.462 : "to whom do I give a darling new little book," Catullus, *Carmina*, 1.1.
- 2 Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Net Worth," in *The Presence of Others: Voices and Images That Call for Response*, 3rd edition, ed. Andrea A. Lunsford & John J. Ruszkiewicz. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000: 534.
- 3 Just as I redesigned the Greek textbook for Max, so in my writing classes at Seton Hall I teach Plato and John Henry Newman along with Martin Luther King, Jr., Dave Barry, and Zora Neale Hurston.:

Show how Dr. Frankenstein and his monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* can be seen as a symbol of the scientist and his creation or scientific invention.

"Seeing is believing" is a common truism in our society—but is it true? Write an essay in which you analyze the powers and problems (and even perils) of images by comparing and contrasting the views of two of the essays by Plato, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Kenneth Brower, and Ward. Then, test the validity of the author's views by applying their ideas about images to (1) a stereo type of a person or group; or to (2) an image from a magazine, newspaper, or other source.

Some students have told me that the questions in my essay assignments are the hardest they have had to address.

- 4 Robert Frost, *The Poetry of Robert Frost*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1969.
- 5 Furthermore, the poem is set in a transitional time, in April between still-wintery March and May that more surely promises spring warmth leading into summer.

*Be glad of water, but don't forget  
The lurking frost in the earth beneath  
That will steal forth after the sun is set  
And show on the water its crystal teeth.*

## ON VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT AND PLAYING THE BLUES

*by Colleen M. Conway*

Soon after attending the seminar this summer, I dove into a new novel by one of my favorite authors, Robert Hellienga. Little did I know that a major theme in *Blues Lessons* would be vocation. The novel begins with 16-year-old Marty anticipating the visit of a missionary to his hometown and getting his first inkling of what a call upon his life might involve.

At the time my cousin Lotte, who was three years older than I, had been waiting for her vocation for almost a year, and a great deal of importance had been attached to Miss Prellwitz's visit. "*Voco, vocare,*" my mother explained. "*To call.* She's waiting for her calling." My mother taught Latin and French at the high school.

Her *calling*? Very mysterious. Was it like waiting for a telephone call? When the telephone rang you could hear it ring: one ring for Lotte's parents, Uncle Barent — my father's half brother — and Aunt Margriet; two rings for Uncle Piet and Aunt Sophie, next door; and three rings for our house. But how would you know when you got this other kind of call? Would a bell ring inside your head? Would you pick up an imaginary phone? And then the missionary came, Miss Prellwitz, and I began to understand.

What leads Marty to understand is not the presence of Miss Prellwitz, but the evening sounds of a blues guitar wafting over his father's orchard during the missionary's visit. Drawn body and soul to the music, Marty stumbles into the campfire light of the migrant workers and so discovers country blues. It is music that calls to him, that fills him up, "like Miss Prellwitz's prayer, like Cory's kiss, like a wound." Soon after, Marty quits his piano lessons, much to his cultured mother's dismay and devotes himself to learning blues guitar. The rest of the novel involves Marty's struggle to live out his vocation. He eventually quits his job at the Railway Post Office to make it as a bluesman, in spite of being a white boy from Michigan named Martin Dijksterhuis.

For many of us, the discovery of our vocation does not ring like a bell in our head. Most of us do not even experience the sort of call that Marty did — a sensory experience of something that fills our being, calls to us and beckons us to follow. Instead, we make our way through life, taking what we think is the next best step, choosing one thing and not the other until we find ourselves at work.

At least, that has been my experience. In hindsight, I might speak of teaching courses in biblical studies to college students as "my calling." But it was not even on the radar for me when I was 16, or even when I was 26. Rather than being called to this vocation, it is more the case that other people in my life invited me to consider what was possible. A financial aid director encouraged me to apply for a scholarship. A professor invited me to lunch and told me that I had what it took to do doctoral work in biblical studies. Some graduate students shared their experiences and identified with my feelings of inadequacy as I contemplated doctoral work. None of these encounters were things I had sought out myself. I was not convinced of what skills or potential I had for what is now my "vocation" until others pointed them out to me.

This brings me to how I see my own role, my own vocation, at Seton Hall. On the one hand, I find much joy in the classroom setting. I love opening up the ancient world of the biblical text to my students. And I feel satisfaction as I observe students learning to think and write critically. But, if I think about what most helped me find this vocation, it was not the subject matter alone. Rather, it was the people I mentioned above, the people who took time to talk with me about my future. Recalling this helps me to realize that some of the most important things I can do for my students at Seton Hall may well happen outside of the classroom. I would like to invite my students to imagine themselves in lives they had never imagined. I would like to help them to consider what is possible. This means recognizing and affirming my students' strengths as well as being honest about their growing edges. It also means helping them ask central questions of themselves: Does the work bring me joy? Am I good at it? Does it fulfill a need?

That said, if I am to reflect honestly about my own journey and others that I know, it seems important to disconnect the notion of vocation from the notion of job or career. Many students go to college to prepare themselves for a job. After college, they may well get the type of job for which they prepared. Yet, rare is the person who stays in the same job anymore, or even the same career. When I went to college, I trained to be an elementary school teacher. I did that for four years and, if asked, would have spoken about it as my vocation. What I eventually found out is that while teaching is my vocation, teaching elementary school was not. In other words, one may have many jobs in the course of a lifetime that may or may not fit with one's sense of call. I am less interested in helping my students get a job and more interested in helping them discover what makes them feel alive, fulfilled and useful to the world.

Disconnecting vocation from job also speaks to my discomfort with the potentially privileged aspect of "vocational discernment." In thinking again about *Blues Lessons*, I found some irony in the fact that Marty finds his calling while listening to a migrant worker named Chesterfield play the blues. He then forgoes an education at the University of Chicago because it does not fit with his sense of call. Now Chesterfield never had a chance to say no to a college education. In fact, I wonder what Chesterfield would say about "vocation" were he asked? Did he feel called to drive a tractor hauling apples? Did he discern that apple picking was his vocation over, say, mechanical engineering? Or is Chesterfield's calling necessarily something he fulfills apart from the work he must do to survive? In other words, if we define vocation as one's career choice, what does it say about the majority of people in the world for whom there is no choice but to make a life out of whatever was dealt to them? Are they any less called than the rest of us?

In raising these questions, I do not mean to discount the importance or usefulness of vocational discernment at Seton Hall. Instead, I hope to open up the notion of vocation, to detach it from the confines of a "job." There are ways to find fulfillment and serve others in life beyond finding a job. Sometimes, a job is just a job. I am constantly impressed by the pressures some of my students feel to graduate and get a job because of the difficult financial situations in their families. With these sorts of pressures bearing down on them, the notion of discerning a vocation may seem like a nice, but unrealistic and impractical exercise. But that is only the case if we insist on a link between vocation and job.

Certainly, I want our students to be successful and productive after graduation. But, I also hope they will reflect on vocation, their own and others, in ways defined more broadly than their first job out of college. If they do, their imaginations, indeed, their lives may remain open to possibilities that will be true sources of joy. For some, this joy may come in the form of employment. If we can help our students discover a link between work and a joy-filled life, all the better. For others, however, their vocation may turn out to be what they do with their lives apart from their job. Who knows? Maybe some will find that they are called to play the blues in the evening, filling themselves and others with joy.



### Works Cited

- 1 Robert Hellenga, *Blues Lessons: A Novel*. New York: Scribner, 2002.

# MY VOCATION — MY CALLING

*by Lucia Crossley*

I believe that my calling is to be a disciple for Jesus. My actual vocation is motivating and teaching others to reach their full GOD-like potential and becoming the best person that they can be in their situations and or surroundings. In my vocation, I believe that I am placed or called to the venues or locations where I can be of the most help to others at that time and to bring GOD's "light" to that situation. I also believe that I am called to settings that provide *me* with further growth and understanding of God's grace and that greater prepare me to live a life that demonstrates His teachings.

With an inexplicable passion for motivating, teaching and reaching God's *human* resources, through elevating and continuously struggling to live God's principles and commandments, I've noticed that I am able to affect change in communication, cooperation, collaboration and ultimately the output wherever I go.

I began my career in corporate sales for large fortune 500 companies. I first gained my business and communication skills while working for Xerox Corporation and then Eastman Kodak Company in the Business Systems Management Division, as an account executive responsible for major equipment sales to corporations and executives in the financial district and Wall Street brokerage firms. I went further into Corporate America where I worked for a major health insurance company and was employed as marketing manager responsible for teaching, training and motivating large groups of employees; I also was responsible for managing a multi-million dollar budget that included sales to large employer groups and a 19-member staff.

Health "insurance" eventually led to "health *care*", which led to "managed care." Working for a national insurance company that provided health care coverage for groups with two or more employees, I was exposed to and could witness the lifestyle choices between those who have and those who have not. Out of a deep sense of fairness and concern and desire for equity, I was drawn into the midst of those who needed help, change, salvation, advocacy and blessings the most; and I was able to help to contribute to the fulfillment of the prophecy (as I thought I knew it) that those who are last shall be first. I experienced a career change that led me to work within the nonprofit sector and to participate and act as a change agent in my role as consultant to UMDNJ in the city of Newark. UMDNJ was desirous of changing the constituents for whom their managed healthcare division (University Health Plans) served. My role was to analyze current operations and recommend implementation strategies to have their health plan expand its members and service area beyond welfare and Medicaid recipients in Newark to become a viable and competitive, quality-managed healthcare plan for all citizens of Essex County. In this position, I was further able to demonstrate my ability and desire to convene groups and develop strategy that contribute to affecting change in the neighborhoods and communities and lives of poor people in the city of Newark.

In living out my vocation, I have been led to places where I would not have chosen if those particular situations had not been chosen for me. In my previously mentioned position as consultant, I went to the Executive Offices of Legal Management for UMDNJ to speak with the vice president to let them know that I thought their management team was not following the advice of the consultants they hired (including me) and was making decisions that, in my opinion, were not in the best interest of the people in the community they served and were not in accordance with the organization's mission as they presented it to us. I did not want to be responsible for their decisions and outcomes, especially if the people that they served were not going to benefit; they were paying for our recommendations and not following them! When my assignment with UMDNJ was over, the vice president of the Office of Legal Management subsequently referred me to my next assignment with high recommendations. This next position has proven to be the lynch pin to my professional growth in working with nonprofit agencies and specifically community based organizations. By the way, UHP (University Health Plans) is now a very viable HMO, serving constituents not only in the city of Newark but also throughout Essex County and the state of New Jersey.

In my position as administrative director of the Newark in the 21st Century Task Force, I was able to provide, through organizing, developing, convening and through outreach to major civic, corporate, public organizations and foundations, a forum for data gathering, research and dissemination of information to the public at large throughout the Newark

Metropolitan Area. This launched my love for participating in providing a catalyst for positive change in the city of Newark and my interest in public policy.

After the task force was granted funding and at the end of the multi-year term, I was happily referred to my next position. I was again catapulted to a situation that broadened my knowledge base and better prepared me to continue to serve yet another group of important constituents – our youth. The W.E.B. DuBois Scholars Institute housed at William Paterson University needed a full-time director and someone to help expand the program and secure funding. The program is designed for high-achieving African-American youth, grades 9-12. The mission of the institute is to deliver a cadre of scholarly young minds that will go on to attain higher education and become future leaders able to affect change in the world. The student GPA requirement for consideration into the program was 3.0 and above.

I was able to work at William Patterson University and privileged to learn from the president and CEO of the W.E.B. DuBois Scholars Institute, and the many academic programs designed for African-American students. I helped expand the program into the Newark Public Schools and developed a relationship between the institute and Lucent Technologies Foundation through managing the school-year program and the summer academy, both were being funded by the Lucent Foundation. In both programs, we relaxed the bar on the GPA requirements for Newark Public Schools because we could not find 20 available students at that time with a GPA of 2.5 or greater. After expanding the number of Newark Public School students and the creating the Science and Technology Academy, we needed a larger campus. The institute was then extended to Princeton University. I then had the privilege of enjoying the work of managing a youth program on the Princeton campus. I saw firsthand how a change in surroundings could affect change in a youth from the city of Newark. Simultaneously, I was raising my own son who was in high school at the time so my learning experience and my contributions were perfectly matched with my personal experiences. Of the 17 students who attended the W.E.B. DuBois Scholars Institute eight graduated from high school in 2002 with a greater than 2.5 G.P.A. and received scholarships from Lucent as well as from individual colleges; one student graduated as class valedictorian.

As a result of my interactions with Newark Public Schools and the Lucent Technologies Foundation, I was eventually recruited by an organization called Project GRAD Newark. Project GRAD is a national organization in Newark that represents a partnership with Lucent Foundation, the Ford Foundation and Newark Public Schools. Within the mission of Project GRAD Newark is to provide academic enrichment to high school student grades 9-12 to ensure their graduation from high school with a minimum GPA of 2.5 and to be accepted into an accredited college. Upon completion of the requirements of Project GRAD Newark and gaining acceptance into college, each student receives a \$6,000 scholarship through the Lucent Technologies Foundation.

In my position as director of summer institutes, I coordinated the academic summer enrichment programs that took place on seven college campuses in New Jersey and one at NCA&T State University in Greensboro, North Carolina. I was, once again, instrumental in building relationships, creating partnerships, encouraging community outreach, and developing youth education programs and linkages on a much larger scale. It is my pleasure to state that during this time, I recruited Seton Hall University to become a Project GRAD Newark partner. Seton Hall has recently served as a Project GRAD Newark Summer Institute for Newark students for two years. Each summer institute received direct funding through Project GRAD Newark annually.

I believe that my knowledge base has been broadened by design. I believe I am poised to make the appropriate, next level of contributions in my ongoing process. Although I have been volunteering my services to Seton Hall for more than four years, I am now working in the capacity of a consultant with the Institute on Work, and quite appropriately among other projects, on a School-To-Careers initiative in partnership with Newark Public Schools. As I continue with my journey to further answer my calling, I feel the need to pursue a more in-depth understanding and further knowledge of the Bible. I have so many unanswered questions about discerning and about staying on the path, and about the giving-over of oneself to being led. I really believe that my next desire is to pursue a higher education in religion. I would like to be sure that I am using my talents and/or being used as an instrument in a way that truly keeps me on the path that follows the teachings of Jesus Christ.

## VOCATION AND COMMUNITY

by Nancy Enright

In *Exiles from Eden*, Mark Schwehn defines the ideal academic vocation as involving a desire to serve, distinguishing this kind of vocation from the typical contemporary model. According to Schwehn, most contemporary academics differentiate between their "work" as researchers/scholars and that of teaching, often placing the latter in a secondary light (4 and elsewhere). He advocates a creation of community that reflects certain virtues, a love for truth and respect for colleagues and students (34). Ultimately, the root of a meaningful academic community and, therefore, a vocation rooted in it, would be a desire to edify others, with Schwehn here echoing Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, whom he quotes:

There are many ... who seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge: that is curiosity.  
There are others who desire to know in order that they may themselves be known: that is vanity. Others seek knowledge in order to sell it: that is dishonorable. But there are some who seek knowledge in order to edify others: that is love [caritas] ....

(Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, quoted by Pieper, *Scholasticism*, 89; quoted by Schwehn, 60)

Clearly, such a way of looking at the academic vocation would not fit the model of the contemporary academic community as it exists in many universities today. As Schwehn points out, the way academics look at themselves has been influenced by such thinkers as Max Weber, who viewed the academic vocation as purely intellectual, with the concept of "edifying students" being held as something not even to be considered important (Schwehn 10 and elsewhere). However, Saint Bernard's four-fold classification of ways of knowing seems to me completely relevant to the academic vocation as I experience it (and as, I believe, it is truly experienced by many people). The four possible motivations for seeking knowledge are reflected in the various types of teachers and learners we encounter in the academic community, and, in fact, the kinds of teachers and learners that we are, ourselves, at various moments of our experience. And it is only by becoming — increasingly and imperfectly — the last kind of learner/teacher, the one motivated by love, that our calling as academics can have any meaning at all, in the ultimate sense. I have found this to be so in my own personal experience.

After the death of my mother in August 2000, I found it very difficult to return to work. As I thought of returning in September, my job seemed dry and meaningless to me. Though I had enjoyed teaching for many years, my mother's death touched me profoundly, and I felt the desire to do something more obviously and directly edifying to others, a *ministry*, something more definitely connected to the work of the Lord. I remember feeling, if I was single and childless, I would quit my job, but my family responsibilities (one of the great joys of my life) prevented me from making this choice. Quitting my job and devoting myself to full-time ministry of some kind would involve huge financial hardships for my family. My husband would have had to bear the burden alone, and we would have had to move from our home in Hoboken, as one salary simply could not pay the rent. I could see how impractical and even unloving such a choice would be, so I returned to work, trusting in the Lord to help me, and I knew He would.

When I returned, my department chair asked me if I wanted to give up working with technology (as the English department's "technology liaison") and take on, instead, the second language courses that were normally taught by our second language coordinator, who would be going on maternity leave, and continue to help to teach second language classes in the future. I was delighted to do this, as working with second language students has always been very rewarding to me. My gifts, the ability to encourage people who might lack confidence in a given area and the ability to help students in finding their own voices and confidence, are particularly useful in the second language classroom. Second, my chair asked if I would be willing to be the professor responsible for instructing the group of young international seminarians from Mater Redemptoris Seminary in Kearny. I was filled with joy about this development. Here was a clear opportunity for *ministry*, just as I desired, right in my regular course of work. I could help young men to prepare for the priesthood by using my training and talents as an English teacher.

I can see that our Lord was very good to me at that moment in my life. By helping me get back to work in a way that allowed me to see very clearly the ministerial aspects of it, He enabled me eventually to see all my teaching and work as ministry. In one sense, I had seen it as such all along, but I needed a reminder at this very vulnerable time.

Somehow through the personal connectedness involved in teaching these seminarians and other ESL students, I grew in a recovery of a sense of my job as my *vocation*, my ministry to others. Now as director of first-year writing, I hope to bring a sense of vocation to my interactions with my colleagues in a supervisory capacity. I hope that respect for my colleagues and true charity toward them and for their students will inform all my actions and decisions in this role. I feel, however, I am very imperfect in keeping this sense of vocation always before me. Too easily, I can get bogged down with the simple day-to-day logistics of running a writing program and, now that my spiritual crisis that followed my mother's death is over, even teaching my classes can, at times, become routine. I can all too easily lose my awareness of vocation, though our Lord is faithful in bringing me back to the right perspective. Prayer for students and colleagues and for myself helps. My daughter, in her innocence and natural holiness (at age 6), also helps. Ironically, though research itself can be a rival to teaching for some, for me research helps me to keep the right perspective, as I purposely choose topics for research that connect with the spiritual and community issues central to my own calling as an English professor, to my own *vocation*. I have begun work on two books: one, a book on Catholic literature and film, the other, a reader that reflects an awareness of community.

Part of my own and any academic vocation is the creation of a *community* within the classroom and even within and between departments. The classroom is a microcosm of the larger academic community, represented by the university as a whole. Ideally, the attributes of community, as defined by Jesus — love, self-giving, love of truth, humility, respect for others, genuine peace-making (Schwehn 32 and elsewhere) — should be evident in the college classroom and the university overall. Joe Harris also, in a much more secular context, argues for the need for specific virtues in order for the academic "community" (though he strongly qualifies the way he uses the term) to flourish (Harris 14-15). Part of this community (or "public space"), as Harris points out, involves an awareness of and respect for diversity, a valuing of others different from ourselves (Harris 15). How are these values connected with the traditional Weberian paradigm, as described by Schwehn? Is it possible to function in the "typical" academic community of the 21st century while living out Saint Bernard of Clairvaux's ideal of the learner/teacher motivated by love? Surprisingly, in one way at least, the two models connect easily. The selflessness of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, as laid out by Weber (Schwehn 15-16), can be subsumed in the pursuit of knowledge with the larger purpose of edifying others. Both models involve the quest for truth and the use of one's entire intellect, as well as a self-sacrificing spirit. Jesus says, quoting 6:4, "Here O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:28-30), and immediately connecting this love of God with love of neighbor, Jesus adds a second commandment, "The second [commandment] is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:31). The devotion of the "pure researcher" in using his or her whole mind for the subject at hand can be "baptized" and used in a spirit of loving service for others.

However, in other respects, the values of the Kingdom of God and the kind of community fostered by them go directly against the typical atmosphere of the academic world and, by extension perhaps, the typical classroom. As Mark Schwehn notes, many professors talk about not having time for "their work" (meaning research) as if teaching were incidental and keeping them from what is really central to their true vocation (4 and elsewhere). I have heard colleagues make this [sort of] comment many times; I may have said it myself. Schwehn's discussion of it clarified for me how problematic such a statement is. If we are learners motivated by love, there should be no distinction between "my work" in the sense of "pure" research and what happens in the classroom (as if that were, at best, a secondary calling and, at worst, a distraction). Instead, all that we learn as researchers and scholars should somehow inform our own teaching and make us better *servants* (yes, servants) in the classroom. A classroom that is not informed by this kind of attitude can all too easily fall into a place where the professor views him or herself as disconnected from the students, whom he looks at as distractions from his "real" and his "important" vocation of research, and — in a worst case scenario — despises for their ignorance. Instead, a true community allows a spirit of charity to flourish, despite differences, in fact, becoming stronger because of them. True charity always involves appreciation of differences, a respect for the other, as other.

I know how unrealistic this language I have been using may sound to some of my colleagues. At times, with an unresponsive student or class, I have found it very difficult to practice the kind of loving service I have been describing. How do we respond when we encounter students who are not receptive to what we have to offer? This is where the kind



of love Saint Bernard names must become most Christ-like. Practicing this is certainly not easy, particularly with the occasional student or even class (sometimes, by the luck of the draw, we get such a class) who allow the greatest works of literature (or the most exciting scientific discoveries or the most interesting historical concepts, etc.) to roll off them without a glimmer of apparent interest. I think of a colleague (also an English professor) who spent a class period leading a discussion on Tolstoy's classic moral tale "The Death of Ivan Ilych" (in which Tolstoy scathingly satirizes the materialistic values of 19th century Russia and depicts the salvation from such values of a dying man) only to hear several of his students discussing afterward their plans to gamble in Atlantic City. He felt very frustrated, not that he expected the story to change their lives, but he felt the kind of frustration we all have felt at one time or another: "Didn't you get it? Didn't you understand the importance of what this work meant?" Yes, there are times, despite our best, our most informed, and even our most loving efforts, that some students simply are not going to be interested, at least not noticeably so. However, at such moments, I believe grace comes in and helps us to keep trying and not to give in to disillusionment or discouragement. Above all, we need help in avoiding the deadly sin of pride that deals with the struggles described above by retreating behind a veneer of false superiority and arrogance.

Community — it grows out of an awareness of the commonality of all human beings and the mutual love and respect that it can (or should) engender; a willingness to be open to others and to treat them with respect and charity; a desire to edify others, as Saint Bernard says, with what we have learned. In the academic vocation, community is created when love — *caritas* — is brought into the encounter between teachers and students and even between learner and subject. This encounter can occur in the classroom, in the research library, and in the various committees and boards that make up a large part of academic life. Most of all, it should work itself out in our individual dealings with our students and our colleagues. When Saint Paul talks about our works being tested by fire (1 Corinthians 3:13-19), I believe the only ones who will survive the test will be those motivated by love. It is significant that in the same chapter, Saint Paul also warns against the dangers of intellectual pride: "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become foolish that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, 'He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness' and again, 'The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless'" (1 Corinthians 3:18-20). Saint Paul is not saying that learning or intellect is wrong. He himself was a highly educated person. However, he is warning against a separation of learning from love and, therefore, leading to arrogance. The academic vocation involves rejecting this path and seeking the path of knowledge motivated by love.



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- 3 Schwehn, Mark R. *Exiles from Eden Religion and the Academic Vocation in America*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

# VALUES: PRESERVATION AND ADAPTATION

by Stephen Finlan

Whatever draws someone into teaching or research, there is something that individual encounters as soon as he or she enters the Academy: the bitter war between conservatives and liberals in all fields of the humanities, which even spills over into the sciences. The war-rhetoric on both sides is usually full of misunderstanding, misrepresentation and fictionalizing constructions of the "other side." In the process, the zealots of both sides lose sight of their objectives, and their discourse becomes increasingly shallow.

I would like to set out some basic definitions of the two trends, liberal and conservative, which will enable a deeper understanding of the legitimate mission of each.

The Bible affirms both liberal and conservative values. From the King James's wonderful "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Proverbs 11:25), to the NRSV's "return to your God, hold fast to love and justice" (Hosea 12:6), both instincts are affirmed. *Conservatism* is concerned with preservation of values. *Liberalism* is concerned with the adaptation of values to changed circumstances of living and changed ways of thinking (and hopefully includes some of the generosity mentioned in the Proverb). Jeremiah brings the old values into a new setting when he advises, "Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile" (29:17; NASB).

"A healthy liberalism requires a vibrant conservatism."<sup>1</sup>

Without the conservation of values, liberalism has no ground on which to stand. Without liberation of thought, conservatism has no air to breathe. The two are as essential to right living as are soil and air to the life of a plant.

Religious conservatism is properly the conservation of values that embody healthy spiritual relationships with God and with people. More superficially, conservatism has meant the conservation of *ways*, beliefs, structures and institutions; but these traditions exist only because people have an instinct that something of *value* is wrapped up in them, and it is this instinct for value that really empowers the conservative instinct and leads to conservative religious traditions the world around.

The fundamental principle of liberalism is adaptation of understanding. While values may remain the same for centuries, the *understanding* of these values and their practical *application* to real-life situations must constantly change because material circumstances, ethical concerns and scientific understanding are constantly changing. Not only does the external environment change, so also does the internal landscape. The internal structures of analysis and interpretation change whenever we gain new scientific understanding or improved insight into human behavior. The goal of the true liberal is constant learning and value-embodying adaptation.

This is a matter of *new meanings*, new understandings. It also involves an enhancement of values, because these adaptations become of paramount importance. In former times, repudiation of Baalism was of primary importance, or the truth that God is not nature would not have had a chance to emerge. It was necessary to repudiate a purely naturalistic god. But now we live in pluralistic societies, and most of the religions of our neighbors are not nature religions, but tried-and-tested traditions with strong ethical development, most of them monotheistic or with monotheistic potential. The necessity of tolerance for the venerable religions of one's neighbors now emerges not as a momentary adaptation but as a matter of primary importance. It is a new *value*, or perhaps a new understanding of the ancient value of loyalty to Deity. And so it now becomes a concern of conservatism to preserve the value of religious tolerance, and to discover its ancient though neglected historical roots.<sup>2</sup> What began as an adaptation to living in a diverse culture finally becomes recognized as one of the principles of righteous character. Religious intolerance now is disobedience to God.

The necessity for adaptation is unavoidable. We will *adapt*. The question is, will our adaptations adequately embody our values? Of course, the same could be asked of our institutions: Do they really embody our professed values? Part of the learning experience is learning how hypocritical we humans often are and seeing that neither our conservation nor our adaptation embodies the values we claim to live by, at least not adequately. Thus, there follows a *second adaptation*, when we consciously bring our values to bear upon a previous adaptation that we recognize to be morally inadequate.

Thus, *religious self-criticism* is absolutely essential for the moral health of a religious community. Otherwise the universal tendency toward hypocrisy will be unchecked, and the scales on our eyes will grow thicker.

The American Catholic bishops have recognized that they need to change the rules about the response to clergy sexual misconduct. This was a painful but necessary adaptation, belatedly implementing a value (protecting children) that was already proclaimed, but not adequately embodied. When we mature spiritually, we learn that adaptation is sometimes painful or embarrassing; it is only when we have grown comfortable in our scaly-eyed existence that we think we should never have to be embarrassed again. But when we recognize our failure, and willingly confess it to God, seeking repair, then God says, "I will heal their defection, I will love them freely" (Hosea 14:5 NAB<sup>3</sup>).

Our social forms need to be capable of adaptation if they are to conserve values. To preserve the new wine of gospel truth, we must pour it into receptacles that can stretch: "pour new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved" (Matthew 9:17). If we fail to do this, if we make our structures more sacred than the thing they are supposed to carry, then we are like the Pharisees whom Jesus rebuked: "How well you have set aside the commandment of God in order to uphold your tradition!" (Mark 7:9).

Thus far, I have discussed religious values. This dynamic also applies, in a different way, to the university. In a university, the commitment is to discovery and improved understanding. There may not be agreement about values, but there is (theoretical) agreement about the necessity of adaptation and reinterpretation. There should always be open inquiry, not just instruction, in the university classroom. A religiously affiliated university is in the unusual position of affirming both a religious tradition and an intellectual openness to change. This situation provides a unique opportunity to articulate a religious vision that is committed to reinterpretation, and an intellectual vision that respects enduring values not derived from the present, popular culture. It provides an opportunity for responsible criticism of religious and cultural institutions.

The prophet Hosea affirmed the old values in an Israelite society that was making inadequate adaptations, selling out to a convenient alliance of religion and commerce (Baalism). As Israel got richer, it built more altars (10:1), but "his altars became occasions of sin" (8:11). Religion no longer functioned properly because "they have sunk to the depths of corruption" (9:9). "Israel has forgotten his maker and built palaces" (8:14); the last word can also be "temples"; it is the same word in Hebrew: *kekhal*. Hosea was probably happy to criticize palaces and temples in the same breath! He was also determined to affirm that God wanted tenderly to lead Israel, as a parent leads a child (11:3-4).

The stubborn hostility between professed conservatives and liberals in America today needs to be criticized. This situation bespeaks a degree of spiritual blindness, an eagerness to misrepresent one's opponent, a failure to recognize the other's values. If our zealous conservatives and liberals would humble themselves and recognize their indebtedness both to prior tradition and to prior adaptation, then "They shall come trembling, like sparrows ... and I will resettle them in their homes, says the Lord" (Hosea 11:11).

If we religious believers are not trembling for divine help, we have grown comfortable and blind. But if we are receptive, we will recognize that God comes to us from all sides: "Because of me you bear fruit!" (Hosea 14:9). If we, university professors, are not receptive to the best thinking of those who speak from different interpretive viewpoints than our own, we have become narrow minded and proud. But, if we are alert, we will recognize that truth comes to us from all sides, and that every teacher must be a humble learner.

Every conserver must be an adapter, and every liberal needs something really true (not just "true for me") on which to stand.

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### Works Cited

- 1 Alan Wolfe, "The Intellectual Advantages of a Roman Catholic Education," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 31, 2002), page B8.
- 2 Seen, for instance, in the book of Jonah, where only pagans show any piety! Gentiles carry out praiseworthy religious acts (1:16, 3:6-10) and are the focus of God's interest (4:11), but the Hebrew prophet Jonah grumbles against God's plan and is displeased with God's kindness toward Gentiles (4:1-2). It is a satire directed against stuffy-minded exclusiveness.
- 3 From this point forward, all translations (and versification) are from the NAB.

# ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND ACADEMIC VOCATION

*by David Ruel Foster*

My choosing to teach theology and then philosophy was based on a sense of vocation similar, I think, to a religious vocation. My vocation seemed to me what I ought to do given what I believed about God and the world. As a Catholic and an academic, I have listened closely to the debate about academic freedom and Catholic higher education. It is often said that mainstream academe views the Catholic Church and academic freedom as incompatible.<sup>1</sup> Catholics, of course, say otherwise.

My experience has been one of feeling both free to pursue the truth and happy for my Catholic fellowship. I think it is also true to say that in the not-so-distant past, Bishops have on occasion abridged academic freedom. After listening to the debate, I have come to think that a key distinction has been missed. In the essay that follows, I offer a note on historical context and a distinction between individual and communal academic freedom to show the harmony between Catholic universities and academic freedom.

## ***Transition to a Collegial Sense of Authority***

The most frequent criticism of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae's* call for a closer relationship between college and Bishop is that it endangers academic freedom. There is some historical validity to this concern; in the 20th century alone we can point to several high-profile cases. *Ex Corde* does little to address these fears. The respected Church historian, Monsignor John Tracy Ellis, in a lecture given at Seton Hall University in 1986, reminded his listeners that there were several dozen scholars who suffered in the wake of *Humani Generis* only to be vindicated later, three of the best known being Congar, Danielou and Murray. But if the Church has in the past both abridged due freedoms and hesitated to champion academic freedom, it can be better understood in view of two points:

1. The Church was in the midst of moving from a more paternal model of relating to the scholarly community to a more fraternal one.
2. Those arguing for academic freedom focused so exclusively on individual academic freedom, that the Church felt compelled to state a need for balance.

The Church's relationship to European culture stretches back centuries to a time when the culture was young and education rare. Particularly during chaotic times, it fell to Church leaders to assume a more authoritative role for an emerging civilization. The role was not unlike that of a parent who must give explicit direction and who rightfully expects obedience from a child. But time passed and the civilization matured; the last several centuries compare to the awkward years of transition wherein young adults emerge from rebellious teenagers, and parents must be willing to allow the teenager greater freedom in order to exercise greater responsibility. In like manner, Church leaders have had to adjust to a society that no longer accepts Christian principles, a more educated laity that is anxious to exercise a more responsible role, and a more educated and independent clergy. It should be remembered that not so many years ago the whole society reflected a more paternal mode, from our schools to our network television censors. Colleges had a policy of acting in *loco parentis*, including dress codes, parietal hours and "lights out" time – and those were the state colleges.

That the Bishops were quite consciously making this transition is one of the great stories of Vatican II. It was particularly evident in *Gaudium et Spes* that the Church wanted to speak to all mankind as brothers and sisters (fellow pilgrims) and to persuade them to examine for themselves the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Academic freedom is important both because it is in accord with the dignity of the individual person and because it is the best way to aid and safeguard the discovery of truth. Karol Wojtyla is a man who knows firsthand the severe repression of human freedom, including academic freedom. He also knows academic life, having served for many years on a university faculty and having directed his last dissertation from the Vatican

### *Communal or Second-Level Academic Freedom*

Personalist themes, which are prominent among both theistic and atheistic philosophers of this century, are also prominent with the present Pope. For example, in his 1998 encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, Pope John Paul II says that a person does not understand himself fully except as a person in relation. The first relation a person understands is that with other people and, especially, family. The Pope teaches that the richest knowledge we have is about persons and emphasizes the importance of friendship. One implication is that our search for truth, though personal, is done best in conversation. Another implication is that we have the right to seek the truth together, a right rooted in the freedom of the individual and the natural good we see in community.<sup>2</sup>

This insight leads to a practical characteristic of Catholic education – an appreciation for the communal aspect of the search for truth. This in turn leads us to recognize an added dimension of academic freedom. The prevalent contemporary view stresses the individual control of one's search for the truth; a more complete understanding entails a second level of academic freedom which involves the communal search for truth and the right of the community to speak for itself. The communal aspect of academic freedom does not preclude the individual's right, but rather is based on it. It is the individual's right to seek the truth, and with others to form a community that speaks with a common voice according to its principles, while giving due regard to the rights of the individual and the wider society, and within the confines of the truth and the common good.<sup>3</sup>

The first level of academic freedom is that of the individual. It is the foundation for second-level or communal academic freedom, which stems from the right of individuals to join together in a community that acts according to its own principles. A metaphor for the two levels is the difference between a one-person sailboat and a tallship. The first allows an individual maximum personal control, the ability to maneuver quickly and to go where one pleases; the larger ship does not steer easily and takes a great deal of cooperation to sail (which is where the authority of the captain comes in), but is safer and faster on long voyages.

The common understanding of academic freedom today emphasizes that freedom of each individual to seek the truth about things and to publish his or her findings. The individual scholar is the solo sailor, operating with maximum flexibility. Less recognized today is the second or communal level of academic freedom. The Church and Church-related colleges are examples of communities that operate on this level. Compared to the individual level, the communal pursuit of knowledge seems slow and cumbersome. But there are advantages to the communal level of academic research, just as there are to the large ship verses the small boat. Once under way and beyond the reefs, it can go faster and more safely over the vast oceans. A community of scholars can share work among many individuals and can extend over many generations. Furthermore, the principles that the community shares can serve as added tools with which to work. What some might consider an undue constraint, others consider a head start. Much of today's scientific research, for example, is carried out by large teams with clear lines of authority.

The two levels of academic freedom are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary. To be sure, there is a tension between them that must be kept in balance. Much of the debate over academic freedom has lacked an awareness of the rights of communal academic freedom. The debate would be advanced if the parties involved thought of the situation not as an "either ... or ..." but as one of finding the proper balance.

Taking political freedom as a parallel, it seems right that individual academic freedom is more fundamental and that communal academic freedom is built upon that of the individuals that belong to it. It is clear that tension can arise between the two levels. Neither level of freedom is absolute; both freedoms can be abused. The main means of preventing excess on either level is the healthy functioning of the other level. Ways can be found to relieve the tension without eliminating the freedom of either level. A community of scholars must make provision for someone who wants to get off – without having to walk the plank.

It is instructive to recall that the Chinese Communist Party has used a similar sounding argument to explain its lack of individual freedoms. They argue that the Western criticism of a lack of political freedom in China stems from the West's overindulgence of individual rights, whereas the Communist Party emphasizes the rights of the community. In order for the Church's arguments not to have the hollow ring of those of the Chinese Communist Party, the Church must honor in practice the foundational role of the rights of the individual.

The contemporary academy should recognize that there is another level of academic freedom. Catholics should appreciate how vital academic freedom is to the vision of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Since there are communities within communities, such as a university community within the larger Catholic community, there are levels within the level of communal academic freedom. And what has been said about the individual in relation to the community can be applied to the relation of the university that stands as a sort of individual in relation to the whole Church.

Keeping with the tallship metaphor, everyone can contribute to the progress of the ship, but not everyone can expect to choose a course any more than a citizen expects to set foreign policy for a nation. Both individuals and community need certain protections. The individual needs to be protected from the arbitrary and excessive exercise of authority, and the community needs to be protected from individuals who, whether maliciously or not, subvert the will of the community.

Some wit might suggest that if the Catholic view were compared to a tallship, that the apt illustration is more the Nina and Pinta than a modern ship. Their point being that our methods and terms are dated, – perhaps this is so. A large community with traditions is often slower to adopt new things. Yet, at same time, it must be admitted that, even though the ship is old, successful voyages can be completed, as such thoughtful documents as *Gaudium et Spes* and *Fides et Ratio* testify.



### *Works Cited*

- 1 See, for example, "Letters to the Editor: Academic Freedom and Catholic Colleges," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 7, 2001, p.20.
- 2 *Fides et Ratio*, #21 & #32.
- 3 See *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, footnote 15.

# DISCERNING VOCATION IN THE MIDST OF WORK

by Marian Glenn

Halfway through the four-day seminar on vocation, I was catapulted into an experiential application of the material we'd been discussing. Mornings in the seminar, afternoons at my desk in the School of Diplomacy and International Relations, I shifted gears at noon from reflection on religious horizons, to administrative paper pushing, consulting with faculty and student academic advising. The School of Diplomacy was in the midst of intense preparations to meet the challenges of its new persona, the John C. Whitehead School of Diplomacy and International Relations. At the midpoint of the seminar, these high-speed changes flooded my consciousness when my current position, associate dean for academic affairs, was redescribed and upgraded, and the search began to fill it with an outside person. This anticipated change in my professional role at Seton Hall, perfectly timed with a seminar on vocation, challenged me to untangle the complex feelings about my work at Seton Hall and to reflect upon my future work, both as a profession and vocation.

For many idealists and humanists, the United Nations represents the best hope for the world's future. At the same time, the promise of the U.N., its power of moral *suasion*, and its consensus-derived architecture, is continuously thwarted by powerful political and economic forces. As a child of the Cold War era, caught up in the whirl of anxiety that led to bomb shelters and nuclear bomb drills, the United Nations offered hope that the many peoples of the world, or at least their governments, were working together to turn aside the war machines and build understanding, security and peace. But even at a young age, and perhaps due to my own sense of powerlessness against irrational adults, I was aware that powerful forces were arrayed against peace. Personally, I lost interest in the long process of talk and talk and talk that was the U.N.'s answer to these forces.

Growing up in the Sputnik era, I was drawn to look toward scientific progress as a more promising means for securing a peaceful future. The rationality of science was a comfort. As the era of Sputnik evolved into the war in Vietnam, and I moved through school and into college, I continued to question the talk-talk of politics and found my joy in the rational unfolding of a scientific viewpoint.

I felt the thrill of discovering a forgotten pathway when Seton Hall formed an alliance with the United Nations Association to launch a new School of Diplomacy and International Relations. For me, professionally, I'd begun to recognize the obligation of university scientists to bring their voices to policy discussions, despite the sublime pleasures of romping in the forest observing the world's natural wonders or sequestered in the lab with a microscope. My work as a scientist, projects that I'd secured funding for from U.S. and European governments, was personally satisfying and professionally recognized, yet, in my heart, I questioned whether this work was relevant to my long-recognized call to make the world a better place. I could continue to publish scientific work in peer-reviewed journals, but it would not transform thinking about ecology, nor have a measurable impact on the problems of the world. Was this the best use of my time and effort? Speaking *vocationally* was this seeming talent for scientific research really my *gift*?

The opportunity to participate in launching a new school devoted to training the management personnel for a reformed United Nations had the sound of a call. Perhaps the time was ripe for talk-talk-talk to rise and "speak truth to power." After all, the Cold War had been put to rest peacefully by popular demand. The Information Age was facilitating conversations within a worldwide community. The deep joy of working at the School of Diplomacy came from the sure sense that this team was transforming Seton Hall and was in a position to make a difference for the world. In fact, the work was so fascinating that I could put the question of answering a call on hold. Until now.

The seminar on vocation was fortuitously timed to support my needs as I reconsidered my calling within Seton Hall University; likewise, the seminar was well timed to support thinking about how discernment of the vocation of the university is linked to transformation of general education. In this paper, I will try to weave together these two themes: how discernment of vocation among each member of the faculty is linked to the vocation of a university and the transformation of her general education curriculum.

### *Discerning the vocation of our University through revision of general education*

As we watch the world becoming a global neighborhood and experience the interconnectivity of the World Wide Web, and as we approach the University's 150th anniversary, we have called a committee of faculty to reflect on how our faith-committed University community can best educate our students to become the leaders, the servant leaders, of this 21st century world. At the same time, Lilly Foundation has challenged us to implement projects for discernment of vocation at all levels of the University, and we have gathered in seminar to reflect on the University's "religious horizons." Simultaneously, the University is engaged in a wide-ranging process of strategic planning and fundraising, aimed at the sesquicentennial. In all of these various committees, seminars and planning sessions, we can set goals and work toward objectives based upon a vision of Seton Hall's vocation as a university. But how to discern this vocation? What are the *gifts* of our university?

Writing as a member of the faculty active in curriculum review and development, I have examined these issues from the perspective of faculty work: How do we envision our University community at the sesquicentennial, if we begin now to develop a vocation-centered curriculum? What do we want our curriculum to help our students become? What faculty gifts should be plumbed and developed to move us along the path toward this vision? These are the myriad challenges that we all need to address as we embark on a voyage toward the religious horizons of the University. In this brief essay, I will review some examples of Seton Hall's successful curriculum transformations and suggest how these experiences can inform our search for a means to infuse vocational discernment into the University's general education curriculum.

How should Seton Hall's general education respond to the new challenges posed by today's world? We answered this question twice during the past five years. Two major curricular initiatives have substantially transformed our undergraduate education and place our University at the forefront of educational practice: mobile computing and the School of Diplomacy. (I think also of the allied health professions programs, but their curricular changes were largely at the graduate level.)

As we embark upon a revision of our general education curriculum (University Core), perhaps the most challenging endeavor any university may successfully achieve, a detailed analysis of the previous two transformative processes may suggest effective strategies for achieving this new goal. There are important similarities between mobile computing and the School of Diplomacy. For example, millions of dollars in start-up costs were financed from University funds, as loans, repaid once the programs were launched. The differences in the transformative power of various, equally mission-central initiatives often rest upon the financial reserves available to launch the program. (Freshman Studies is an example of a program that runs on a shoestring, and has had, consequently, to pull back from the bold curricular innovations in its original conception.) The revision of general education needs the commitment of substantial internal funds. At the same time, securing external support is important to "pay back" the investment and keep the program growing. Financial commitment, secured in response to a well-articulated strategic plan, is essential for providing the "carrots" that reward faculty for their extra, innovative work in developing and launching the program.

Transforming the University's general education, while mission-central, is daunting to consider operationally. In preparation for proposing *how* such a transformation might happen, we can analyze the processes by which the two previous transformations were carried out. Curricular transformation through mobile computing has turned out to be popular and widely cited at the forefront of higher education. These changes came about through faculty's voluntary participation, encouraged through curriculum development grants and workshops. The request for proposals was developed by the information technology team (largely *not* faculty), and many individuals and groups of faculty crafted proposals to compete for this funding. Year upon year, this process has varied according to available funds and curricular goals, and faculty continue to step forward with ideas.

The School of Diplomacy undergraduate program is also at the forefront of higher education. The School's graduates are already being recognized with prestigious awards, and the School's community outreach has dazzled audiences all across campus. The required internship program, study abroad and U.N. connection are unique at Seton Hall and powerfully attractive to strong students. This new undergraduate program was developed and approved *in toto* and the transformation was launched *de novo*, with largely new faculty. The new program did not impinge upon the credit hours



of a preexisting program; rather, it offered several departments the opportunity to develop new and interesting service courses. Indirectly, the School's innovative, competency-based academic program and talented students from around the world and throughout the United States are transforming student life by raising the level of expectation of the student body toward study abroad, student governance, internships, campus activities, academic achievement, to name a few. But the success of this curriculum was only achieved by largely severing its governance from the rest of the faculty: it was conceived, approved and run as a separate program, and its power to transform the *curriculum* OUTSIDE the School of Diplomacy is small. (This separation is bridged at the graduate level through a variety of dual degree programs.)

In summary, the Mobile Computing Program and the School of Diplomacy are two highly successful curricular initiatives that may serve as models in considering how to develop and implement a University-wide general education program. They share a number of characteristics: generous internal funding, broad faculty participation, pedagogical innovations, many external hires. Also, they attract strong students and prepare students for the 21st century. University policies have been recast to accommodate them. They generate lots of positive external attention and raise the profile of the University externally, and both are continuously evaluated and tweaked.

These two curricular projects also show significant differences: With mobile computing all faculty were brought on board by receiving a laptop, and each chose his or her level of engagement. In developing the curriculum for the School of Diplomacy, a faculty member (sometimes a duo) was invited as a consultant to develop specific courses outlined by the steering committee, courses eventually taught by the new faculty hired for the School. The curriculum was conceived and developed by a steering committee that invited a broad array of faculty to consult with them. The Faculty Senate was apprised of the baby steps, and department and college committees were consulted along the way. At the end of several months the Faculty Senate approved an entire undergraduate curriculum. Thus, mobile computing succeeded by "letting a thousand flowers bloom," while the School of Diplomacy was conceived and presented as a formal garden.

Revising our undergraduate general education is again an opportunity to move Seton Hall University into the forefront of higher education. Applying national norms for general education (12 principles from the Association of American Colleges) and orienting our revision through discernment of vocation, both vocation as an anchor for faculty work and vocation for Seton Hall University, will guide the effort. In moving toward a transformed curriculum, here are some criteria that could guide the process.

1. How does the religious horizon guide our sense of the vocation of the University?
2. How does the University mission statement "forming servant leaders for a global society" guide general education?
3. How do the 12 principles guide the faculty development initiatives for reflection and revision of general education?
4. How does past experience at Seton Hall inform the process of moving from faculty development to a new core curriculum or transformed general education?

The outline below is a sketch of how this process might work between now and the sesquicentennial in 2006.

#### **Year 1: Transforming core courses**

1. Curriculum development funds aimed at weaving threads of vocational discernment into current core courses, especially ENGL 1201/1202, COST 1600, SOCI 1101, PHIL or RELS core courses and SKIL course. Faculty work in curriculum development supported by seminars on vocation.
2. Development of new courses with a global perspective, multidisciplinary approach and service orientation, in conjunction with faculty seminars on the vocation of the University.
3. Regular town meetings to discuss vocational discernment and vocation of the University with the campus community.

#### **Suggestions for course development include:**

1. Recommended reading material and library resources: Core committee could organize a resource list for faculty with curriculum development initiatives. Also, funded faculty could form in seminars, similar to the

summer religious horizons seminar, where reading material is presented and discussed.

2. Class service learning project undertaken with support from the Division of Volunteer Efforts, the College of Education and Human Services and Center for Public Service, and local parishes or schools. We need a matchmaking function to bring together community needs and faculty interested in service projects.

3. Close involvement of technical experts in Teaching, Learning Technology Center to make best use of mobile computing in new course development.

4. Commitment to continuity, so that when the course is finished, the participants will have the option to continue the service project and continue to remain in the transformed track of the core.

***Year 2: Moving the new core into the mainstream, transforming the majors***

1. Evaluation and revision of the new core courses. Fund faculty to mentor others to teach sections of the same course. Organize the new courses so students already enrolled in transformed courses can continue with the transformed core. Development of more new courses with a global perspective and multidisciplinary approach.
2. Faculty seminars aimed at developing introductory and capstone courses for the majors with vocational perspective.
3. Continue campus-wide town meetings to move toward adoption of a University-wide core and/or a transformed concept of general education.

***Year 3: Reconfiguring the curriculum to include a University-wide core or a transformed general education focused on a call to serve and a call to lead in a global society.***

1. Solicit new courses to fill holes in the curriculum and fund faculty teams to develop and teach them. Continue seminars to support discernment of vocation. Evaluate the new courses and revise as necessary, mentor faculty to teach additional sections.
2. Work with college EPCs and Faculty Senate to approve University-wide curricular changes and a process for its continuous evaluation and evolution.

***Moving from discernment of vocation to University-wide curricular transformation, the personal informs the community.***

What does it mean to discern a call to servant leadership at Seton Hall University? For example, in relation to "making a difference in the world," how to connect the grass-roots level, responding to immediate, local opportunities for service that can easily fill a lifetime of work, with the corridors of power where leadership is exercised that can respond a hundredfold with sweeping changes in policy? Is this where profession and vocation can work synergistically? When discernment of vocation becomes an element in faculty development, we strengthen our ability to consider the vocation of a university. Faculty will lead by example, to help students attune their inner ear to the call of service, while also providing the skills and the filter to help students discern their leadership roles in responding to their calls. The curriculum grows from this cultivation of professional skills and vocational attunement. The vocation of the university is to affirm the servant leadership roles of her community.



# ONE SOCIOLOGIST'S VOCATIONAL JOURNEY

by Anthony L. Haynor, Ph.D.

## Introduction

"Vocation" has been defined as a force that calls, summons, or invites an individual toward particular activities or pursuits. Individuals with a sense of vocation feel impelled or pushed to move in such directions. While in its initial formulation the idea of vocation had a "religious" underpinning, in contemporary parlance it refers to any life path that expresses the individual's core identity and taps his or her unique talents, capacities, and desires. To speak of a vocation is to make reference to the individual's authentic self, to an internalized sense of who the individual is or aspires to becoming. Living out a vocation requires the cultivation of those attitudes, dispositions, cognitions, habits, virtues, values and affective states that enable individuals to become the kind of persons that they want to be or define themselves as being. A vocation can be said to "possess" the individual to the degree that a life path is defined as inevitable, as a course that the individual is in some sense "destined" to follow. Put another way, to have a vocation is to experience a good fit, a fundamental compatibility, between who one is (one's identity), on the one hand, and what one does in the various spheres of life (familial, occupational, political, religious, etc.). This is what authenticity means—a correspondence between how individuals define themselves and how they conduct their lives.

My vocational journey as a sociologist, I argue, is double-sided. On the one hand, I see the sociological enterprise as a vocation in the sense outlined above. On the other, I am becoming more and more convinced that sociology can provide valuable insights into the meaning of vocation in the contemporary world, the opportunities for and challenges to vocational development in a postmodern age. I am just beginning to appreciate and comprehend fully how these two interests have become intertwined in my life. At this point, I cannot and would not want to separate my sociological calling from my sociological understanding of this point in human history and the possibilities and pitfalls for meaning that the current epoch presents to individuals. Put another way, the drive to understand how contemporary society and culture foster or undermine vocational development has become a critical part of my sociological vocation. In a very real sense, the pursuit of a sociological understanding of vocation in the contemporary world gives shape to, informs, and helps define my sociological identity and calling. In the next section, I will discuss the meaning of sociology as a vocational commitment. The essay will conclude with a brief discussion of distinctive sociological contributions to an understanding of vocation in contemporary society.

## Sociology as a Vocation

When I began my undergraduate studies (at Brooklyn College, CUNY), I had at best a foggy conception of what sociology was, and little or no idea of what it meant to have a calling. I began to be seduced by the sociological perspective while taking an introductory course during the summer after my freshmen year. I found the expansiveness of sociology to be quite appealing. I discovered early on in my sociological training that sociologists studied anything and everything, as Peter Berger put it, from the extraordinary to the pedestrian, from the noble to the deprived.<sup>1</sup> In retrospect, I suppose that one of sociology's lures was its comprehensiveness—it allowed me, at least at the undergraduate level, to not have to specialize in a particular substantive area. Much to my delight, sociologists studied all aspects of social life (from political ideology to family life to economic behavior to aesthetic production). The most vivid recollection that I have of my undergraduate training as a sociology major was the exposure to the classics and classic writers in the field. Required reading included *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels), *The Division of Labor in Society* (Durkheim), *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber), *Ideology and Utopia* (Mannheim), *On Theoretical Sociology* (Merton), and *Invitation to Sociology* (Berger), to name a few of the most prominent. While I did not master the intricacies and subtleties of this most impressive body of work, I was struck by the "bigness" of the issues that were addressed, issues bearing on the historicity of our collective situation and the processes that can explain social order and social transformation. As part of my undergraduate training, I was exposed as well to other perspectives within and directly relevant to the human sciences, taking classes in political philosophy (which continues to engage me intensely), world and American history, the history of philosophy, general and social psychology, and cultural anthropology. Looking back on the totality of my undergraduate experience, the *conversational chains* between scholars in the different branches of knowledge were left virtually unexplored. For example, I studied Kant in a modern philosophy course, and Weber in a sociological theory

course, but did not discover until much later in my scholarly development the sense in which Weber's methodology was neo-Kantian.

My graduate training at Rutgers University opened me up considerably to connections between and among various discourses. At Rutgers I studied with Peter Berger, whose sociological perspective drew explicitly on the phenomenological philosophy of Husserl and the sociologized version of Schutz, as well as on the pragmatic philosophy of George Herbert Mead (this in addition, of course, to the sociological classics). In his work, Berger encountered existentialist philosophy (e.g., Sartre) and explored in creative ways the nature of and possibilities for religious commitment in the modern world, given a sociological sensibility. However much I was influenced by Berger's approach (in particular his contribution to an understanding of modernity and its effect on human consciousness) and continue to find it of considerable value, I found unsettling, perhaps unacceptable even then, his value-free conception of the sociological mission. These reservations notwithstanding, I was completely dazzled by Berger's erudition, wit, insightfulness, command of the sociological classics, and intellectual passion.

I also studied with Harry Bredemeier, who introduced me to fresh pathways in my thinking about society. Bredemeier's theory, like Berger's, was impressively synthetic, incorporating as it did the contributions of sociologists and non-sociologists alike. It drew on the rational choice approach of Homans and Schelling, the social contract theory of Rawls, and the systems theory of Kuhn and others. (His last work, *Experience and Understanding*, should be required reading for all students in the human sciences.<sup>2</sup>) Bredemeier convinced me of sociology's unavoidably moral mission: to uncover the laws of social development, adherence to which would help ensure species survival and flourishing. Bredemeier's humanist sociology shaped in a profound way my evolving conception of the sociological mission. Bredemeier convinced me not only that sociology could encounter moral philosophy but that sociology was itself a kind of moral inquiry. I was bowled over by Bredemeier's capacity to pull in and synthesize a multiplicity of sources within the human sciences.

My graduate training also included a heavy dose of the theory of Talcott Parsons. I was privileged to take a socialization course with Parsons (when he was a Visiting Professor), and also audited a course on Parsons given by Jackson Toby, a highly regarded Parsons' scholar. I learned many things from my immersion in Parsons' social theories. The first was that the social order could and should properly be analyzed as a complex system of interrelated institutions. The second was that human action resulted from the interplay of behavioral, personality, social, and cultural elements, cybernetically organized. Third, Parsons' theory in its late form analyzed the place of human action within the context of the human condition, defining it as part of a "Great Chain of Being" (not a phrase Parsons used, to the best of my knowledge, but reflective of his thinking). In general, I was influenced greatly by the moral quality that Parsons attributed to human society and action and the sense in which sociology was viewed as a moral science.<sup>3</sup>

I also took an anthropological theory course taught by Robin Fox, a renowned bio-social theorist. This was a valuable experience indeed. I was introduced to the theories of Levi-Strauss, Victor Turner, and Fox himself, among others. The fundamental distinction between "nature" and "culture" was approached in innovative and intriguing ways. I appreciated for the first time the ways in which human beings were "wired for culture" and the implications of that fact for human society and its evolution.<sup>4</sup>

I studied as well with Irving Louis Horowitz, who did much to disseminate the ideas of C. Wright Mills, and published widely in the areas of political sociology, social development, and the relationship between social science and public policy. Horowitz sensitized me (in the course on social development) to the global dimension of the sociological mission. He also made me cognizant of the challenges faced by social scientists in their attempts to inform state action. I remember being struck by his claim (well substantiated I thought) that social scientists often serve a legitimating role in the policy formulation process, entering after the fact rather than serving as genuine advisers to the king.<sup>5</sup>

Lastly, I studied under Benjamin Barber, the widely respected political philosopher. I learned much from his brilliant and engaging lectures on the history of political thought and provocative writings on democracy. During this period (going forth to the present), I became interested in exploring the ways in the sociological tradition was in conversation with currents of social and political thought that preceded it (Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau and Montesquieu) and that are contemporaneous with it (e.g. Arendt). But I was neither ready nor prepared to sort this all out. (I was stung

and stunned when in response to a comment I made establishing a conversational chain between Rousseau and Durkheim, Barber questioned Durkheim's status as a significant social philosopher.)<sup>6</sup>

My dissertation reflected many of these influences. It offered a systems-based model of the relationship between personality and social structure and applied it to the modern character literature. (The imprint of Bredemeier and Berger in this project was unmistakable; Toby and Barber were the other members of the committee.) I was pleased with the effort but at the completion of this phase of my life, my sociological identity was inchoate.<sup>7</sup>

The next decade of my life was devoted to the search for a distinctive sociological voice. The publication of a paper, "Moral Postures in Sociological Research," was a pivotal event and turning point in this search.<sup>8</sup> This work analyzed the possible moral stances that sociologists could adopt in their efforts to improve society. A high point during this period was a meeting that I was "granted" with Robert K. Merton, a towering figure in 20th century sociology. I sent him a draft of the moral postures paper and he was favorably impressed by it, so much so that he invited me to visit him at the Russell Sage Foundation, where he had an office. He made editorial suggestions and told me that developing a 16 fold property space was an impressive accomplishment and while he doubted that I had completely and adequately pulled it off, he thought that it was a project well worth pursuing. I will never forget the expression on his face when I disclosed to him at the very end of our conversation that I was student of Harry Bredemeier. (Bredemeier was one of Merton's students at Columbia.) He smiled and then said that he understood why I seemed so well trained and that he appreciated that I had not disclosed this information at the front end of our interaction, for it would have unduly prejudiced him in my favor. It hit me at that point that if Bredemeier was my intellectual father, so to speak, Merton was then my intellectual grandfather, with Parsons being my intellectual great grandfather. (Merton was a student of Parsons at Harvard.) Coming to terms with my intellectual pedigree and lineage helped crystallize my sociological identity.

For the past decade, I have encountered the intellectually unfamiliar in a more intense way. An effort was made to immerse myself further in the moral philosophy literature, the developmental psychology literature, the philosophy of social science literature, and perhaps most significantly, Christian (more specifically, Catholic) ethics, social teaching, and anthropology. My understanding of these domains of knowledge has deepened considerably in the last ten years. It would not be inaccurate to say that my level of engagement with sociological work and the professional form that the discipline has taken has waned in the past decade (for reasons I will explore below.) Frankly, the products of sociological investigation (narrowly conceived) increasingly bored me.

Regarding my theological encounter, I had formal training in Christian ethics, Christian anthropology, Biblical criticism and hermeneutics, and systematic theology in the Immaculate Conception Seminary/School of Theology at Seton Hall University. The courses I took with William Toth (Ph.D. and now also Deacon) exposed me to a distinctively Catholic understanding of the good life and the good society, and kindled a continuing personal and scholarly interest in this area. I suppose that in my own way I was encountering what Parsons called the "telic system," that aspect of the human condition concerned with questions of ultimate meaning.

In recent years, Monsignor Richard Liddy has introduced me to the seminal work of the philosopher, Bernard Lonergan. I have come to appreciate how his method (which involves the transition from experience to intelligence to judgment) could form the philosophical basis of an ethically grounded sociology that I was attempting to construct. (This effort commenced in earnest with the moral postures paper referred to above.) I have learned from Lonergan how insight into the human condition requires that we ask more and more questions, a process that entails actively seeking out and encountering the unfamiliar and the alien. Lonergan's claim that critical to the acquisition of knowledge is an ongoing evaluation of taken-for-granted interpretive frameworks resonates with me; as does Lonergan's preference for an historicist rather than a classicist approach to theological and social investigation.<sup>9</sup>

In this narrative, I have left for last the relationship between my sociological and religious (more specifically, Catholic) identities. (I recall one professor at Rutgers expressing surprise and chagrin that a doctoral student in sociology could have a faith commitment.) In my vocational journey, I have become increasingly preoccupied with the project of constructing a unified identity. (This in no small part served as a catalyst for my formal theological studies.) I cannot even to begin to discuss the effort to "harmonize" my sociological and Christian vocations without mentioning the

pivotal role of Joseph A. Varacalli. We met at Rutgers in Berger's advanced seminar on intermediate structures, and for the past twenty-five years have engaged in countless discussions on the possibility of a Catholic sociology and the form that it might and should take — two working class Italian-American kids talking over pizza, during long car drives going to nowhere in particular, and during gatherings of our families (our parents became fast friends). Our conversations have at times been contentious, but always civil and stimulating (for me at least — Joe will have to speak for himself as to what insights I have provided over the years). Our respective visions of Catholic sociology have converged more at times, diverged more at others. I cannot chronicle here the various twists and turns that our conversations have taken over these years, but I can provide a thumbnail sketch of the issues, as I understand them, that kept popping up and the "solutions" that were put forward in response to them.

A major issue has to do with the possibility of developing an "autonomous" or unbiased sociology (or more broadly human science). Varacalli takes the position (drawn from the general sociology of knowledge perspective in which he was steeped) that all "knowledge" (particularly knowledge about the social world) is socially constructed, and, unless it can withstand a natural law critique, reflects in a very real sense an ideological stance. Therefore, for Varacalli, the idea of an autonomous social science that is not vitally connected to permanent truths and universal moral norms is rejected or is viewed at the very least with considerable skepticism. My position has been that the incorporation of more and more perspectives within the human sciences (broadly defined) gets one closer to the truth; that it is possible to minimize bias (a position represented by Lonergan and Mannheim,<sup>19</sup> for example) through an openness to the strange and unfamiliar. In my view, all perspectives on human behavior merit "cognitive respect" (a term coined by Berger) only in the sense that the scientific observer should be open to assimilating them into an ever evolving model of social process and human action. However, each perspective needs to be assessed or judged (in Lonergan's terms) on the basis of the empirical adequacy of the truth claims being advanced. As a result, some perspectives will be judged to be more valid than others. Varacalli's reply is that the process of judging truth claims — *sans* the incorporation of a natural law analysis — is itself socially conditioned, that one's "value" and "existential orientations" (to draw once again on Parsons) will shape significantly if not dictate the judgments that are made.

But he does not stop here. Varacalli argues that empirically legitimated attempts to make the social world intelligible fail to fully do so. Adopting a narrow empirical frame of reference results in inadequate explanations of how society works and why people act the way they do. To carry out one's scientific work within an empiricist "plausibility structure" (to use a term coined by Berger and invoked frequently by Varacalli) is to limit and restrict one's capacity to seek the truth in all of its fullness (e.g. trying to explain evil in narrowly psychological or sociological terms without bringing sin and a turning away from God into the picture.<sup>11</sup>) Varacalli's perspective is a refreshing challenge to the hubris that one encounters in much social scientific work.

The tendency within the human sciences to reduce phenomena (whether collective or individual facts) to social and cultural forces is a troubling one. One sociological interpretation is that in marginalizing alternative explanations of phenomena — whether spiritual or biological in nature — the dominant group within the human sciences attempts to protect its privileged position within the intellectual pecking order. Put another way, the dominant group has a vested interest in perpetuating a reductionist mentality.

Thus far, the only disagreement cited (significant enough) had to do with the possibility that a relatively non-biased and comprehensive human science can be constructed without the incorporation of universal *a priori* postulates. Varacalli's Catholic sociology attempts something that is quite remarkable, which if pulled off successfully would constitute a *tour de force* of monumental proportion. Juxtaposed to the postulate regarding the socially conditioned nature of knowledge is a *classical*<sup>12</sup> conception of the truth. According to the latter, there is a body of truth accessible through reason and revelation (the Thomistic influence is clear) and that Catholic teaching represents the fullness of this truth. The "superiority" of this tradition can be empirically demonstrated; simply put, societies that adhere to Catholic principles (solidarity, subsidiarity, the dignity of the person, the sanctity of heterosexual marriage) are intrinsically preferable to societies that do not, and produce outcomes that are most beneficial and least harmful to all members of the societal community. One conundrum that this presents is this: defending a Catholic world-view in light of the "incommensurability" (to draw on the work of MacIntyre<sup>13</sup>) of different perspectives, a condition put forward by people of Varacalli's persuasion as a given. I can see only three options. The first is a reliance on "faith," a position that would not persuade most non-

believers. A second is to convert and socialize others to adopt one's perspective. The final resolution, Varacalli's preferred method, is to rely on an empirical method that analyzes the benefit and harm produced by various value systems and existential systems of belief. The problem for Varacalli here is that from his perspective the empirical method itself lacks credibility given its socially conditioned nature. Varacalli is to be commended for raising these important issues. While I am not convinced that he has adequately addressed these "problems," his is a sophisticated and nuanced approach to Catholic sociology (labelled "neo-orthodoxy") and one requiring and meriting the attention of anyone interested in the relationship between Catholicism and the human sciences. (I recommend in particular Varacalli's, *Bright Promise, Failed Community*, and a symposium he edited, "Catholics and the Practice of Sociology and the Social Sciences."<sup>14</sup>)

Perhaps the real bone of contention is the degree to which sociology is viewed as a creation and extension of the Enlightenment project, how that connection is evaluated, and whether or not Christian and Enlightenment thought are in fact reconcilable.<sup>15</sup> The thrust of the Enlightenment project was to establish modern or industrial society on a rational basis in light of the breakdown of the feudal order. While an emphasis was given to human freedom it was not predominantly of the atomistic variety, and the image of the person was essentially a communitarian one. It was the contribution of the Counter-Enlightenment to point out the limits of rationality and an ahistorical conception of the human condition. Varacalli's Catholic sociology attempts to integrate the classicist assumptions of natural law theory with the historicist posture of the Counter-Enlightenment. In my view, Catholicism can be seen both as setting the stage for the Enlightenment celebration of the dignity of the person as well as profiting from its dialogue with the Enlightenment. However, I do agree that the Counter-Enlightenment serves as a necessary corrective to the social engineering tendencies of Enlightenment thought and the latter's derogation of tradition.

I gravitate more to the *historicist*<sup>16</sup> than classicist perspective, as I interpret these postures. In my view, the fact that Catholicism has been located within fundamentally different social and cultural contexts means that those with a Catholic faith commitment have had to confront fundamentally different problems in these respective historical eras. Classicism, in my view, seems to be most interested in applying timeless truths to particular historical contexts and focuses on how our understanding of eternal truths develops organically through history. That is to say, the classicist interpretation of the natural law, at any given point in time, represents a process of theological reflection in which continuity with the past is emphasized. This is certainly a respectable position to take and defend. However, for my taste, in seeing history as the stage on which the eternal truths play themselves out, classicism tends to give short shrift to how historical contexts can in a real sense give shape and form to the beliefs themselves. The assertion of the organic development of doctrine can thus serve as an "account"<sup>17</sup> offered to explain seeming discontinuities of thought.

So, where does all of this leave me now as I continue my vocational journey as a sociologist who is Catholic, and a Catholic who is a sociologist? What is my current understanding of the sociological mission? How does this understanding shape my sociological work? Along with Varacalli, I am convinced that religious and sociological identities stand inevitably in a clear cybernetic relationship (drawing yet again on Parsons<sup>18</sup>). Catholic beliefs and sensibilities "frame" and "inform" sociological activity; while sociological analysis provides the "energy" necessary to realize and actualize the religious vision and one's faith commitment in the social world. Religious commitment is superordinate in the cybernetic hierarchy by virtue of the fact that it involves a conception of "ultimate meaning." Sociology by virtue of its empirical focus is concerned with what we can experience through our senses alone. Sociology is not and cannot be a transcendent activity, although Comte and, I must say, some present day sociologists as well define it almost in those terms, that is, as a quasi-religion.<sup>19</sup> Sociology needs to focus on what it capable of doing — making our collective lives intelligible, in so far as these institutional and cultural patterns are observable and empirically accessible.

Pursuant to the discussion above, classicists, I would argue, focus more on the degree to which conceptions of ultimate being are instantiated in society (evaluating social institutions and cultural patterns highly if they conform with these conceptions and harshly if they do not), and less on the implications of historically specific circumstances and conditions for actualizing the conception of ultimate meaning to which one is committed. On the other hand, historicists tend to focus more on the degree to which social facts enable and/or constrain the realization of any given ultimate value and how conceptions of ultimate meaning can be shaped or clarified to some degree "from the empirical ground up," and less on how the conception of ultimate meaning informs the social and cultural realms of human

existence and how that conception could or should be applied to those realms. While I tend in my own work to adopt more of a historicist stance, I recognize fully the indispensability of the classicist approach. It is a matter in essence of differing methodological starting points.

On each plane — the ultimate and the temporal — I am interested in identifying, interpreting and building “conversational chains.” Regarding the former, I remain engaged in the conversations that have taken place and that continue to take place between those with discrepant conceptions of the ultimate, between those with different but complementary conceptions, and between those with similar or identical conceptions (in spite of being embedded in different discourse traditions). I now see the ultimate in terms of the capacity of human beings to “decontextualize,” that is, to distance themselves from the immediacy of their social and cultural locations, and to arrive at generalized and universal truths. This is in a very real sense a spiritual quest. In my own attempt to apprehend the ultimate, I am very interested in studying and interpreting conversations among Christians, those in other faith traditions, Kantians, and humanists (among others). Regarding the “temporal” domain, I take very seriously the hierarchical structure of empirical knowledge, finding Wilson’s idea of consilience to be a fruitful one.<sup>20</sup> The question of how a sociological understanding of human behavior (both individually and collectively) relates to other discourses (biological, psychological, anthropological, and historical) is an area that I am committed to pursue. I am only now beginning to explore the conversational chains that have developed (drawing on the work of Bruner<sup>21</sup>) between “paradigmatic” (analytical) and “narrative” (imaginative) modes of thought. My life’s work will be to examine and evaluate conversational chains between conceptions of ultimate, that is, decontextualized reality and temporal, that is, contextualized reality. I plan on devoting the rest of my life to making a contribution, however modest, to this most inspiring of intellectual enterprises. Current projects include a book (titled, *Social Practice: Philosophy and Method*<sup>22</sup>); studies of the complex relationship between Catholic thought and the human sciences; an examination of the modern and postmodern nature of the contemporary academy; and an exploration of alternative bases of moral order in the contemporary world, all of which are consistent with the perspective advanced above.

### *Vocation as a Sociological Subject*

Not only can sociology serve as a vocational commitment, but it can also study vocation as part of its subject matter. The sociological tradition has provided us with many insights regarding difficulties in and opportunities for discerning and maintaining a commitment to a vocation in the contemporary world. Let me mention a few sociological contributions to our understanding of vocation. Durkheim, in his analysis of the division of labor, argues that the specialized nature of modern life provides us with opportunities for individual expression. Industrial society allows us to carve out our niche within the occupational order, to determine for ourselves what we do best, and how we can best contribute to the collective good.<sup>23</sup> Simmel and Weber emphasize the difficulty of constructing a unified sense of self in the contemporary world, given conflicts in value systems and the pluralization of objective culture.<sup>24</sup> For Simmel, the fate of the individual in the contemporary world is a “tragic” one, meaning that the prospect of integrating these discrepant universes of meaning is highly problematic. For Weber, it requires a “heroic” effort (the influence of Nietzsche on Weber is clear here) to construct a coherent sense of self, under conditions of increasing rationalization and value conflict.

### *Conclusion*

How do these insights help to put into context the emerging discernment of my life’s work as a scholar? First (regarding Durkheim’s insight), my choice of sociology as a profession does, I think, reflect a realization on my part that this is what I do best (particularly the building of conceptual models), that it is an activity toward which I feel passionate, and that it is the way in which I can make the most significant contribution to the world. Second, the project that I have identified for myself is “heroic” in its scope (in Weber’s sense), involving as it does nothing less than (1) the analysis and interpretation of conversational chains that often reflect very different premises; and (2) the development of a coherent life and social philosophy capable of harmonizing seemingly discrepant perspectives while recognizing, of course, the degree to which some positions are in fact incommensurable.<sup>25</sup> This is a tall order, and the “tragic” potential (in Simmel’s sense) in all of this is palpable (and that is perhaps where faith comes into the picture). For the purpose of engaging in such a project (and it is a project to which all academics should be committed), after all, is nothing less than to try to transcend in a meaningful way our social and cultural contingency, as well as the dark forces of sin, cruelty, and inhumanity that have been such a part of the human condition. For academicians in general and human scientists in particular to contribute to this enterprise, it will be necessary for them to reconsider their preoccupation with professional status and



mobility, petty rivalries, reductionist explanations, and overspecialization.<sup>26</sup> If the various intellectual disciplines cannot make a meaningful contribution to our self-transcendence, then what in God's name are they good for?

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# A POSTMODERN SPIRITUALITY OF EDUCATION?

by Paul A. Holmes

Dominic Scibilia's description of the postmodern and, *mutatis mutandis*, the postmodern theologian, is apt: namely, that the "postmodern . . . calls into question the authority and integrity of any one tradition or narrative to respond to the moral quandary yielded by the modern commodification of life and learning."<sup>1</sup> At the same time, he states, our students "express a hunger for a worldview, a meaning and purpose, a communion that academic preparation for a career secure in the free marketplace cannot promise [or] deliver."<sup>2</sup> If both these statements are true, Catholic colleges and universities face a real challenge, for postmodernism, so-called, is not the problem; rather, it is one more symptom, I believe, of Western culture's recently expressed but deeply rooted uneasiness with "truth."

The challenge of postmodernism, then, must be answered in the classroom, if it is to be answered anywhere, for that is where the "truth" is both learned and taught. Parker Palmer, in his masterful *To Know as We Are Known*,<sup>3</sup> sets the stage for answering that challenge when he explains, "To teach is to create a space in which obedience to truth is practiced . . . I have been distressed [he writes] to discover that some people are unable to explore it openly because they distrust the idea of obedience."<sup>4</sup> If truth is a problem for postmoderns, then, all the more, obedience to truth (*which* truth? *who's* truth?) is a non sequitur.

In *Professing in the Postmodern Academy: Faculty and the Future of Church-Related Colleges*, Stephen Haynes is optimistic, asserting that (despite postmodernism?), "the environment in American higher education is once again a hospitable environment for conversations about faith and learning."<sup>5</sup> Such a conversation, William Hull wrote a decade ago, suggests a "way" of defining the Christian university, one that "works on the boundary between faith and learning, seeking to integrate the entire spectrum of human reason with the entire scope of divine revelation into a living whole."<sup>6</sup>

This is no easy task.

As we have participated in a faculty seminar on the vocation of the university, and our vocation within it, our focus would be — not necessarily the "administrative control" of such colleges, not so much the "academic components" of the curriculum (as they might be read in our bulletins and catalogues), and not even the "campus ethos,"<sup>7</sup> but — "the role faculty play in envisioning, articulating, and embodying an institution's affiliation with a religious body."<sup>8</sup>

The faculty's role, of course, must be balanced with the role of the administration. Stanley Hauerwas' observation is both sober and sobering: "I am enough of a realist to assume that whoever pays the bills will determine the character, for better or worse, of an institution."<sup>9</sup> As a member of both the faculty and the administration, I am interested in how both play a role, and I am confident that a great deal of good is created by members of both groups at Seton Hall University. Faculty might strengthen their hope for having a stronger hand in shaping their institution's "character" when we consider that we are the ones responsible for "the creation of a learning space wherein learners and teachers tell the metaphors, analogies and images that constitute our characters and the convictions compelling and quickening us."<sup>10</sup>

## *Truth as Communal*

In the 14 years that I have lived and worked here at Seton Hall, I have been impressed with the almost palpable sense of community that exists here. Faculty, staff, students and administrators all contribute to and benefit from the virtues that hold us together as a community. At the same time, however, the difficult challenges we face may have encouraged some of us here to develop a competitive vision of those challenges and, thus, the solutions we suggest to one another can sometimes lack a communal dimension.

Palmer suggests that the epistemology that grounds our pedagogical practices may be the cause:

It is no wonder that many educated people lack the capacity to enter into and help create community in the world, that they carry the habit of competition into all their relations with life. If we believed that knowledge arises from the commitments of communities (as some new epistemologies tell us) we would create classrooms where community was fostered, not feared. Our students, having been formed in a knowing that springs from communal commitments, would be able to use their knowledge to reweave community.<sup>11</sup>

I believe that Palmer might be suggesting that the journey into this new millennium requires that we work together. We need to embrace the many visions, or versions, of the truth that exist not only *in* each of us, but the truth that, if properly understood, exists *between* each of us.

"The minds we have used to divide and conquer creation," Palmer writes, "were given to us for another purpose: to raise to awareness the communal nature of reality, to overcome separateness and alienation by a knowing that is loving, to reach out with intelligence to acknowledge and renew the bonds of life. The failure of modern knowledge is not primarily a failure in our ethics, in the application of what we know. Rather, it is the failure of our knowing itself to recognize and reach for its deeper source and passion, to allow love to inform the relations that our knowledge creates — with ourselves, with each other ...."<sup>12</sup>

At the same time, "our epistemology is quietly transformed into our ethic."<sup>13</sup> Therefore, how we know, and how we come to be so sure about what we know, determines how we behave. I am suggesting that as the world outside the university becomes ever more shattered by individualized, subjectivist, isolated images of the truth, the world inside the university has the opportunity to embrace an epistemology that seeks a communal understanding of the truth that binds us together — especially because we are teachers at heart.

Parker Palmer speaks prophetically to the faculty's responsibility. He writes, "A learning space has three major characteristics, three essential dimensions: openness, boundaries, and an air of hospitality."<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Palmer's whole thesis is pedagogical, and the postmodern would feel very comfortable in Palmer's hospitable "learning space" — at least, until the main tenets of Palmer's "model for authentic teaching and learning" enter that space. Truth, and obedience to that truth, are real obstacles for those who believe that hospitality is a dimension of a "classroom lacking rigor, a place in which questions of true and false, right and wrong, are subordinated to making sure that everyone 'has a nice day.'"<sup>15</sup> The tenets of academic freedom, especially as it is understood by the American professoriate, make the establishment of "boundaries" for our learning spaces even more difficult.

Palmer acknowledges that "there are plenty of pedagogical experiments around these days . . . [but] the experimenters have tried to change the form of teaching without altering its content."<sup>16</sup> Truth, he writes, "comes from a Germanic root that also gives rise to our word 'troth,' as in the ancient vow 'I pledge thee my troth.' With this word one person enters a covenant with another, a pledge to engage in a mutually accountable and transforming relationship, a relationship forged of trust and faith in the face of unknowable risks."<sup>17</sup> Those risks, supposedly overcome by postmodernism, include the discovery that no one person, no one community and no one tradition has a complete grasp of the truth.

Ever since Pilate's question to Jesus (and the answer Jesus gave to Thomas when the latter asked, "How can we know the way?"), the truth has been, at least for Christians, not a *what*, but a *who*, and if this real discovery has had any real consequence, it introduces us to the necessity of engaging the Truth in an *interpersonal* way. Even more, that engagement will require a spiritual and *ethical* response — from teacher and learner alike, indeed the institution itself. If "students do not find in religious communities and their affiliates the practice of the justice of which their narratives speak so passionately,"<sup>18</sup> then the part faculty must play in forging and maintaining our institution's Catholic identity and mission is clear.

### ***Fidelity and Obedience***

Faculty loyalty to the religious and ecclesial ethos and *Weltanschauung* of their institution has, as Stephen Haynes writes, changed over the years: "Faculty members today are more likely to find their identity in academic disciplines or methodologies than in either a particular institution of higher learning or a religious tradition .... Evidence of enduring loyalty to church and college is quite rare."<sup>19</sup> How, then, can our colleges and universities engender and foster faculty loyalty to religious tradition?

Those faculty who already feel such loyalty will, quite simply, need support if they are to be a "leaven" in their institutions. If each of us is somehow encouraged to understand and appreciate our work as teachers — as a vocation — a very important foundation will have been laid. We must remember, too, that if the character of a Catholic institution is put into the hands of its theologians only, then departments of theology and religious studies will be, at best, religious ghettos in a vast secular city. As the American Association of Higher Education intimates in the theme of one of its annual conferences, faculty roles require faculty *rewards*. In other words, those who pay the bills must "put their money

where their mouths are": If Catholic colleges and universities are to remain Catholic, biologists and sociologists must be "rewarded" for their loyalty to the institution's identity and mission in the classroom; chemists and poets, and mathematicians and historians — all of us — must come to understand that the institution itself (with its resources) embraces its religious identity and tradition.

Obviously, this is not as simple, or as crass, as "paying" faculty to be faithful to the truth. It may be as simple, however, as affording various opportunities for faculty to gather as teacher-scholars to be engaged by, and in, the rich intellectual and spiritual tradition of Catholicism. This is already being done by, and in, these summer seminars offered by Seton Hall's Center for Catholic Studies, and Lilly Endowment funding will create even more such opportunities.<sup>20</sup> Fidelity to tradition, and not conformity to it, is at stake. Palmer cites Leslie Dewart's *The Future of Belief*, written more than 35 years ago: "Conformity is a relation towards another which is owing to another by reason of the other's nature. Fidelity is a relation towards another that one owes to oneself by reason of one's own nature. Conformity obligates from the outside. Fidelity ... obligates from within."<sup>21</sup>

Postmodernism is skeptical of fidelity because it denies the authority of tradition and the truth that may be discovered therein; it is even more skeptical of obedience. Etymology might, once again, come to the rescue. At its Latin root, "to be obedient" means "to listen thoroughly" so that the truth that resonates in all our hearts can be fully heard.<sup>22</sup> Fidelity and obedience, then, can be tandem virtues for those who profess in the academy. As both are calls from within, rather than from without, even "postmodern" professors might begin to feel comfortable in "plighting their troth" in the classroom, leading their students on a journey that has Truth as its destination.

Roles do need rewards. As an administrator, I need to look for incentives and rewards ("from without") that will encourage faculty to explore the sacred space where faith and learning meet. Once they have responded to such an invitation, I imagine that the rewards ("from within") will be many — both for the professors themselves, for their students and for the University.

If Parker Palmer's "spirituality of education" has a chance at transforming the teaching and learning that should be going on in our "learning spaces," Catholic universities will need to encourage efforts at such transformation. The vital interplay between faith and learning must be both articulated and funded. Only then will the "challenge of postmodernism" be met with an institutionally supported pedagogical response that will both transform the classroom and help prepare for the future of Catholic colleges and universities.

### *Postscript*

Each year, the Catholic Church celebrates the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, and the Pope offers the prayer to be prayed each day that year. Pope John Paul II closed his annual message for the upcoming celebration in 1995 with the following prayer:

"O, Virgin of Nazareth, the 'yes' spoken in youth marked your existence and it grew as did your life itself.

"O, Mother of Jesus, in your free and joyful 'yes' and in your active faith so many generations and so many educators have found inspiration and strength for welcoming the Word of God and for fulfilling his will.

"O, Teacher of life, teach young people to pronounce the 'yes' that gives meaning to existence and brings them to discover the hidden 'name' of God in the heart of every person.

"O, Queen of the Apostles, give us wise educators, who will know how to love young people and help them grow, guiding them to the encounter with Truth which makes one free and happy. Amen!"<sup>23</sup>

Because of the prayer's emphasis on teachers, I am especially mindful of my own vocation in the classroom. How easy it is for me, a theologian, to guide my students "to the encounter with Truth" and, in doing so, pledge my troth to discover the Truth that exists in and between us. But I must also find ways to invite my colleagues, of whatever discipline, to do the same. If there is any benefit to a "postmodern" spirituality of education, it is not in denying the Truth that the Catholic intellectual, spiritual and sacramental tradition teaches, but in emphasizing the interpersonal nature of that search for Truth, which should animate every classroom. Finding creative and innovative ways to "reweave" the community of scholars and administrators, as Palmer suggests, must continue to be our agenda.

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- 10 Scibilia, 94.
- 11 Palmer, 37.
- 12 Palmer, 8-9.
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- 14 Palmer, 71. See his Chapter 5: "To Teach Is to Create a Space . . .," 69-87. See Scibilia, 94: "[Postmodern] theologians invite students and scholars into our own Catholic narratives in the hope that the vulnerability of our self-scrutiny in the company of a culturally diverse learning community would prove our classrooms as hospitable learning spaces . . ."
- 15 Palmer, 74.
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- 17 Palmer, 31.
- 18 Scibilia, 92.
- 19 Haynes, "A Typology of Church-Related Colleges and Universities," *op. cit.*, 301-302.
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# A CALL WITHIN A CALL

by Richard M. Liddy

*"For in truth we are not called once only, but many times: all through our life..." (1)*

Somewhere in his writings Abraham Maslow reflects on the moments of enlightenment that happen to us in the three "b's" – the bed, the bath and the bus. When we're very relaxed, when we're day-dreaming – suddenly it hits us. We get it. We see the point. We get the bright idea.

Archimedes went running naked from his bath shouting "Eureka!" – "I've got it!" – when he hit upon the solution to King Hiero's problem: how determine if his crown was pure gold or perhaps mixed with dross by a crafty goldsmith? Archimedes' relaxing and reflective bath prepared the way for his bright idea: "Weigh the crown in water!" His insight later led to his formulation of the laws on the displacement of water.

A key moment in my own life, though not nearly so dramatic, also took place relaxing in water – in a shower, in Rome, some 35 years ago. It seems like it was yesterday. But before I tell that story, let me mention how I got to Rome in the first place.

"A local," I was born in Orange and brought up in West Orange. My father was a teacher, football coach and director of recreation in Newark from 1928 to 1968. My mother, a woman of faith, always saw to it that there were many interesting books around our house. Irish Americans, my Mom and Dad were both very committed Catholics – and so obviously, so were my brother, sister and I. In the 1940s we attended Our Lady of the Valley Church and school in Orange and there the image of the young Father Gillick, seriously intent on serving his people, made a deep impression on me. It brought out whatever "call" was there already. It was from those early days that I always wanted to be a priest.

That first call was "caught," not "taught" – caught from a family and environment that believed that Jesus came to call us to the Father – and that I was called personally to live a new life. So it was no surprise that I attended Seton Hall Prep and College from 1952 to 1958 and then – not without some trepidation – went on to the Seminary, then at Darlington, near Mahwah, New Jersey. In 1960, I was sent to study in Rome, where I was ordained a priest on December 18, 1963.

On returning home in the summer of 1964, I was asked by Archbishop Boland of the Archdiocese of Newark to return to Rome for three more years to study philosophy. The problem was that at that time I really wasn't sure there was anything to philosophy at all! It just seemed to be about "words," and what I really cared about was "action." It was the 1960s and social action was very much in the air. Philosophy seemed very remote from "real life."

Still, I returned to Rome, and, it was there, in the mid-1960s, that a classmate, David Tracy – now a well-known author at the University of Chicago – encouraged me to spend my time studying the writings of our teacher, the Canadian Jesuit, Bernard Lonergan. Lonergan had written a massive 700-page work called *Insight: An Essay on Human Understanding*. So each day for over a year I would spend hours reading *Insight* in a small room at the back of the library in the Casa Santa Maria, a residence for Americans in Rome. Lonergan's work was a study of the act of insight in mathematics, science, common sense and philosophy. It was a very difficult and demanding book, not least because Lonergan continually invited the reader to identify this act of "catching on" or "getting the point" in one's own experience. The point was insight into my own "Archimedean" experiences.

I spent long days studying that book into the early evening when the lights would often dim as Rome experienced a "brown-out" – a fitting symbol of my own search for enlightenment. Then, late one afternoon in the spring of 1966, I needed a break. I had been studying all afternoon and I decided to take a shower. And while I was showering, I thought to myself, "Where is this 'insight'?" I knew I had had insights, but I just couldn't get a hold of them. "Where is it? Where is 'insight'?" And then it hit me:

"You're asking the wrong question! You're asking 'where is insight?' and that question can't be answered! Insight of its very nature is an awareness that transcends any imagined 'where!'"

I said to myself, "You're trying to get a 'hold' of something that in the last analysis can't be 'held!'"

It was what Lonergan called “an inverse insight,” an awareness that you have been asking the wrong question, that a question for which you expected an answer, cannot as such be answered. Somehow your question involved a presumption that made the question unanswerable.

But inverse insights can have momentous implications. When Galileo discovered the fallacy of following the Aristotelians and seeking the intelligibility of motion in some supposed “impetus” within things, it opened up for him the way for the first mathematical breakthroughs in modern physics. Similarly, while reading the Platonist philosophers Saint Augustine realized that he was trying to “imagine” the divine, and a whole new way of thinking opened up for him.

When I desired to think of my God, I could not think of him save as a bodily magnitude – for it seemed to me that what was not such was nothing at all: this indeed was the principal and practically the sole cause of my inevitable error. (*Confessions* 5, 10)

The philosophical issue, as Augustine slowly began to realize, was the character of his own mind.

My mind was in search of such images as the forms of my eye was accustomed to see; and I did not realize that the mental act by which I formed these images, was not itself a bodily image. (*Confessions* 7, 1)

Certainly not as groundbreaking as Galileo’s or Augustine’s, my inverse insight was powerful just the same. It opened up for me other areas where, influenced by a desire to “picture” things, I was asking the wrong questions. The curtain was lifted on a series of new vistas. It was like a dam bursting, one insight leading to another. It was finding simplicity on the other side of complexity. As Oliver Wendell Holmes put it:

I would not give a fig for the simplicity this side of complexity, but I would give my life for the simplicity on the other side of complexity.<sup>(2)</sup>

That insight in the shower more than 35 years ago was the core of my entrée into Bernard Lonergan’s theory of consciousness, a theory about what I myself was experiencing as I wrestled with his book *Insight* – and worked on other problems as well. It was an insight into the whole process of questioning, pondering, confusion, perplexity, bright ideas that don’t go anywhere and the occasional insight that does. It opened me up to the “practical” role of philosophy – for insight is the key to effective action while oversight is the key to “blundering about.”

There remains the question, What practical good can come of this book? The answer is more forthright than might be expected, for insight is the source not only of theoretical knowledge but also of all its practical applications, and indeed of all intelligent activity. Insight into insight, then, will reveal what activity is intelligent, and insight into oversights will reveal what activity is unintelligent. But to be practical is to do the intelligent thing, and to be unpractical is to keep blundering about.<sup>(3)</sup>

That breakthrough moment so long ago also opened up for me the vocation of being a teacher within the larger vocation of being a Catholic priest. For if priesthood means anything, it means helping people come to a “heightened consciousness.” It means “gathering people,” inviting them to turn to one another in genuine conversation and helping them discover within themselves deep springs of authenticity: the desire to know, moments of insight and reflection, of discernment and genuine love.

I was young when that insight happened to me. Much has happened in the world since then. A new “postmodern” cultural context has been born – a context that takes the air out of the pretensions of Western modernity and that celebrates diversity and multiculturalism. But if the celebration of diversity is to characterize our future and not to revert to mutual incomprehension, then insightful conversation is essential, a “turning to one another” for understanding.

That is why I have found these faculty summer seminars so stimulating. They are opportunities for diverse faculty, coming from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, to converse about what they see and about what is deepest in their hearts. They have been occasions for insight and for love.



Throughout these ever-changing years, good friends and the love of God have enabled me to remain a priest and, hopefully, to serve God and others. It has been a wild ride – with constant change! But that moment in the shower 35 years ago has helped me to remain focused on “the call within a call,” the call to the academic life within the Catholic priesthood.



### *Works Cited*

- 1 John Henry Newman, “Divine Calls,” *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1887, page 1569.
- 2 Quoted in Margaret Wheatley, *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2002, page 20.
- 3 Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: An Essay on Human Understanding*, Collected Works of Bernard, Vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

# THE CALL FROM SOUTH DAKOTA

by Joseph R. Marbach

There are two immediate things that I have learned about writing an essay about vocations: one is that some of us are “called” to be essayists; and two, I am in serious need of a hearing aid if I am to answer that calling! Nonetheless, I will step out of the shower for a few moments (you’ll have to read Dick Liddy’s essay to understand that reference) and endeavor to share the story of my calling.

At the outset of the seminar, the first question that occurred to me was, “What is a calling?” I, like most of us, have never heard voices, been spoken to in dreams, nor seen a burning bush urging me to do something or dedicate my life to some purpose. So how do I know what a calling is, let alone what *my* calling is? As near as I can figure, one’s calling is some combination of an individual’s talents, and an awareness of a responsibility or desire to use that talent to impact the world around oneself. In my own case, I count myself fortunate to have such callings. These callings seem quite natural and are part of the essence of who I am, or at least who I perceive myself to be.

I count myself fortunate because my callings complement one another and have become vehicles through which each has been made possible. From a professional perspective, (and for this essay I will limit myself to my professional vocation) essentially I am an academic and a teacher.

## What I do?

The central task of the branch of social research ... is to explore man’s changing social environment ... in order to make known its character and content to mankind.<sup>1</sup>

Unstated in this quote is the purpose of “making known” the character and content of our changing social environment. Simply put, it is to describe and proscribe the advantages and disadvantages of living the way we do. Critically assessing the way we live is necessarily measured against the values held by the researcher; thus, for me research is necessarily a value-laden activity. This perspective in many ways makes me an advocate for institutions or practices that enable individuals to live in accordance to such values. My training as a researcher and scholar also requires that I critically assess these same institutions and practices and point out when they fail to measure up to these values. Incidentally, the values I hold are typical of most Americans – individual liberty, federal democracy and equality of opportunity – are among the three most important. In essence this view holds that politics matters. I will now address how I came to this realization.

Professionally, my uncles fostered my interest in politics. As I recounted to seminar participants, the year 1972 was pivotal in the recognition of my vocation. My father’s twin brothers were closely following Senator George McGovern’s presidential campaign. Both my uncles were in their mid-20s at the time and both had been fortunate to avoid Vietnam. Many of their friends were not quite as lucky, thus, their anti-war sentiment, and their intense interest in the fortune of Senator McGovern was especially acute.

I have vivid memories of visiting them throughout the spring, summer and fall of 1972 watching countless hours of presidential debates, primary results and, finally, election returns. While the outcome of that election disappointed my uncles, it left with me the indelible impression that politics were important and mattered in everyone’s life.

During the next decade, my uncles would involve my brother and me in their local political activities speaking with neighbors, stuffing mailboxes and planting lawn signs. By the late 1970s, these two anti-war, McGovernites had been transformed into Republican suburbanites and were serving as local committeemen for the GOP. I remember the intense family discussion debating the merits of one of my uncles running for the state legislature. (He eventually chose not to run.) From this environment my passion for all things political was formed and nurtured.

Understanding and making sense of political developments has taken up most of my adult life. As early as high school, I knew I would study politics. I was involved in student government and the Model United Nations program. In college, I was a political science major, and never considered another course of study. Graduate school was next in what seemed to me a natural progression. I had the great fortune of studying under Daniel J. Elazar, the leading scholar in

American Federalism until his untimely death in 1999. Professor Elazar reinforced my earlier convictions that politics mattered and helped channel my attention to local concerns, those that have the most immediate impact on people's lives.

Sharing this understanding has led to my second professional-related vocation, namely that of teacher. This vocation continues to evolve. My initial experience with teaching began in graduate school as a teaching assistant. At my alma mater, Temple University, teaching assistants were assigned their own classes and were responsible for course content, text selection and grading. In essence, mine was a "baptism of fire" with no formal pedagogical training of which to speak. Thus, my teaching style and philosophy was modeled after the teachers whom I thought were the most effective and left an impression upon me.

Over the past 16 years, my philosophy toward teaching has evolved from an emphasis on conveying information to challenging and engaging students to become active learners, especially through the pedagogy of service learning. I believe this evolution is a direct result of my motivation for studying political science. If, what I do matters, and if what I do is important and has an impact on the lives of individuals, then it reasonably follows that what I teach my students, and more importantly, what they learn and do should have an impact and matters, too.

I have been fortunate in finding a department that has been receptive to both my vocations and has fostered each. My colleagues in the political science department are equally concerned with developing and honing each member's research and teaching skills. We have developed what we believe to be a rigorous program of study, designed to both complement and enhance the research interests of the faculty and the learning experiences of the students. Indeed, my department has a philosophy of encouraging students to apply what they've learned through various courses in our experiential learning program. Thus, the faculty was very receptive to my proposal to introduce a service learning component to our curriculum and to a recently proposed minor in nonprofit studies.

In this environment, I have been able to pursue and intermingle my vocations. I have not been forced to sacrifice one for the other, and for that I am both fortunate and grateful.



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- 1 Daniel J. Elazar, *Cities of the Prairie*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984) p. 448.

# "SURPRISED BY JOY" AND "THE DISMAL SCIENCE"<sup>1</sup>

*by Stephen Martin*

One of the most pleasant surprises in my life is the joy I find in one of my vocations – teaching, especially since this activity is the one I spend the most time doing. If I had known in graduate school that teaching was so fulfilling I wouldn't have taken so long to finish my dissertation! Despite the years I have put into establishing a professional and even personal identity as a Catholic moral theologian, I have to come to consider myself, almost surprisingly to me, primarily a college professor.

But, of course, we teach something. And that something needs to be disseminated to a wider audience than our students in the form of our research, especially when publications are so important in gaining tenure. For most college professors, it was our joy in finding an academic subject that we had no problem devoting long hours to that led us to the academic vocation. My research provides me with joy: the joy of discovery of insight, judgments and good writing. I find joy in those I read and in myself when I accomplish it. There is also the joy of collegiality. I am continually surprised by how joyful the academic vocation can be.

But there was a time it looked so dismal I left it.

Lest it be said, that I view academia and Seton Hall with rose-colored glasses, in the name of realism I should allude to only one of the dynamics that works to undermine that joy. As we all know, there arises, especially in tenure-track positions, a tension between the joy of teaching, on the one hand, and of research, on the other, that can induce mild or even serious schizophrenia. In *Exiles from Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America*, one of the summer seminar readings chosen by our facilitator Patrick Byrne, the author Mark Schwehn unpacks the mysterious complaint, "I don't have time enough to do my own work."<sup>2</sup> "Our work" here means, of course, our research and writing in their various forms. However, our teaching loads and devotion to teaching leave us little time for the research that not only is expected of us but also got us into academics to begin with. Schwehn, writing from his experience teaching at the University of Chicago, is probably correct that in larger research universities, faculty believe their own work "just is" research and writing. However, I think at Seton Hall, we tend to complain there is little time for "our work" without really meaning that teaching, etc., is not our work as well. Hence almost a schizophrenic battle to do justice to both.<sup>3</sup>

However, I wish to push beyond this concern to show how my joy in finding my vocation as a researcher and teacher of Catholic moral theology is tied up autobiographically and academically with the "dismal science" – economics. Further, it is connected to the vocation of a Catholic university, which was also one of the topics of the summer seminar from which this publication springs.

My struggle with my vocation lies at the intersection of theology and economics, which seems for me at least somewhere between joyful and the dismal. I chose economics as an undergraduate major because I wanted to apply my self-overestimated ability in math with a desire to help the poor. It didn't take me too long to find out that economics, because of its strict fact/value distinction, wasn't about helping the poor. In so doing, I indirectly also overemphasized the importance of mathematics.<sup>4</sup> However, I found an economics teacher, Robin Linstromberg, who in asking questions of his students, encouraged me to ask questions about economics. In our seminar classes, after you thought you had answered a question sufficiently, he always asked in Socratic fashion why that was so. If you were able to answer that, he would ask you again. We usually weren't able to go beyond giving back textbook answers to real explanation. He also introduced me to writers that began to dislodge me from accepting these textbook answers, like John Kenneth Galbraith, Ernst Schumacher, Karl Marx, Hannah Arendt, etc. The problem then became one of viable alternatives.

I continued in economics for one year of master's work in a depressing and short-termed attempt to change the discipline of economics from within. I remember saying to a friend at that time, but mainly more to myself, that what I wanted to do was to insert religion into economics. I could not express it at the time, but this notion was just a vague concept that human capacity for transcendence should somehow be incorporated into economic theory. I was not personally capable of working on this at the time, possibly because I did not really consider myself religious. So in my

dissatisfaction with mainstream economics and lacking concrete satisfactory, theoretical alternatives – Marxism for me also neglected human transcendence – I dropped out of economics. I wanted no more to do with studying what the economist Tibor Scitovsky called the “Joyless Economy.”<sup>5</sup>

I began my return to an academic vocation when I started an M.A. program in theology. I chose theology, and continue to do so, mainly because of the joy I found delving into its exploration into the connection between divine transcendence and human self-transcendence. I found I had ability in this vocation and then saw a need for theology in transforming culture. One of my joys was discovering the work of Bernard Lonergan (1900-84), who I continually find elucidates best the process of human and divine transcendence. Despite my belief that I had finally put economics behind, one of the first things I read by Lonergan, written before his seminal works *Insight and Method in Theology*, was a photocopy of his then unpublished macroeconomics manuscript “An Essay in Circulation Analysis.” I did not know it then, but this began my return to spending a lot of time reinvestigating the “dismal science.” But in Lonergan’s hands, economics did not seem so dismal any more. And the economy he envisioned is less joyless than the “boom and bust” cycles of growth and misery.

At Marquette University where I received my doctoral degree, although I had no intention of becoming a Christian ethicist/Catholic moral theologian, I was fortunate to take a course in Christian Economic Ethics and another in Catholic Social Teaching. My systematic interests and aptitudes in theology and economics started to come together. I ended up specializing in an interdisciplinary program in theology and society where I was back in economics – taking a few more economics graduate courses. I ended up writing my dissertation on Catholic social teaching, “social economics” and Lonergan’s economics. Like Michael Corleone in *Godfather III*, I was “pulled back in” by economics.

Lonergan’s economic thought was finally published in 1999 as *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis* and *For a New Political Economy* (an earlier version of the former).<sup>6</sup> These were originally written by Lonergan from 1930-44 in response to the Great Depression, in order “to help the widows and the orphans” devastated by it.<sup>7</sup> In this effort, he was especially critical of the 19th-century’s “asinine confidence in political economists that has landed the 20th century in an earthly hell.”<sup>8</sup> His economics include some math, but is not subverted by it. Though not explicitly religious, Lonergan’s economic theory involves effective, democratic management of the economy, implying the ability for economic agents when needed to transcend their individual self-interest for the common good. This goes beyond mainstream economics’ “homo economicus” – the self-interested, “utility”-maximizing, “economic man.”<sup>9</sup> The very same elements that turned me off to mainstream economics – its “value-free” orientation, its inadequate understanding of economic agency, other methodological problems, and its acceptance of the inevitability of the downside of the business cycle and attendant suffering, I found were overcome in Lonergan’s economics.

Lonergan’s thought, especially his economics, has played an important role then in my academic life. Probably the most important contribution it has made in my vocation is Lonergan’s insistence and, indeed, demonstration that being a moral theologian and doing economics are not only compatible, but also necessary for Church and society. There is also a corollary for the vocation of a Catholic university. Catholic social teaching argues and Lonergan’s economics shows that self-sacrifice and concern for the common good are crucial for the effective functioning of the economic order. This goes against the ethics taught in economics textbooks – that the (legal) pursuit of self-interest leads to the common good.

What is the effect of a Catholic university education if it teaches two contradictory sets of ethics? Given the fact that students are most concerned with being successful in their careers, and, taking one look at recent headlines, the question can be asked: which set of ethics do they leave with and practice the most?

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### Works Cited

- 1 “Surprised by joy” is the title of C.S. Lewis’s 1956 account of his conversion to Christianity. The familiar derogatory term for economics, “Dismal Science,” was coined by Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881). It should be noted though, that recent research has shown that Carlyle was criticizing classic liberal economists of his time for promoting the emancipation of slaves in England, not as generally assumed, for legitimizing subsistence wage during the Industrial Revolution, etc.

- 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. viii.
- 3 This schizophrenia was institutionally induced for me early at Seton Hall University at my initial interview with someone from the College of Arts and Sciences dean's office. One of his first comments to me was whether I had a passion for teaching because that was the most important thing here at Seton Hall. One of his last comments was that publications were the most important. I left, understandably, a little confused, but soon realized that these are the *orders* of business in higher education today.
- 4 This anecdote doesn't represent all or even most economics or economists, but I think that it is a telling one. I had a teacher in a mathematical economics graduate course who explained to the class one day that his work was mainly tautological – economics as mathematical proofs, only written for other economists, not having anything to do with real-world matters. Contrast this attitude to, say, that of medical science and practice, which should be more the paradigm for economics.
- 5 Tibor Scitovsky, *The Joyless Economy: An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).
- 6 Both are part of the 22 volumes of *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran: vol. 21, *For a New Political Economy*, ed. Philip McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) and vol. 15, *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, eds. Frederick Lawrence, Charles Hefling and Patrick Byrne (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998). Lonergan returned to his economics in the late 1970s until his death in 1984, revising it in light of developments in economic theory since the Great Depression.
- 7 "Late in his life, Lonergan's theoretical work on economics, and arguably his work in philosophy and theology throughout his career, was undertaken so that "the widows and the orphans won't starve" (Patrick H. Byrne, *Ressentiment and the Preferential Option for the Poor*, *Theological Studies* 54 [1993]: 241).
- 8 From an unpublished typescript by Lonergan titled, "A Philosophy of History," 4, quoted in Frederick Lawrence, "Editor's Introduction," *Macroeconomic Dynamics*, iii.
- 9 This flaw in mainstream economics – going back at least to Adam Smith's notion that the common good was brought about by people seeking only their self-interest through the invisible hand – has been shown wrong by many, including the Nobel Prize-winning economists Amartya Sen and John Nash (subject of the book and movie, *A Beautiful Mind*). Lonergan's accomplishment is that he incorporated its corrective into the context of a full-blown macroeconomic theory.

# EDUCATIO CRISTIANA ANIMAE PERFECTIO: VOCATION OF TEACHING AND PURPOSE OF FAITH IN EDUCATION

*by Claudine Metallo*

God calls everyone to a particular state in life. Those most open to the spirit and holiness are called to the Priesthood and religious life. Others are called to sacredness of husbands and wives in holy matrimony and the blessings of having children. Still others are called to be firemen, policemen, nurses, doctors and so on.

"Every disciple of Christ has the obligation to do his part in spreading the faith .... Through the Holy Spirit, who distributes His charismatic gifts as He wills for the common good..." (Flannery: *The Documents of Vatican II*, Ch. 4, pp. 613-614; 1966) The special vocation of teaching, as Jesus did, is reserved for those who: "assist parents in fulfilling their task and who represent human society as well, by undertaking the role of school teacher." (Ibid, p. 643, #5)

Faith and family have led me to become a teacher. Teaching runs in the family, as does farming, winemaking and firefighting. Padre Pio, who was a fourth cousin of my grandmother and the Priest of the paese of Pietrelcina (BN) Italy, taught my grandmother and uncles to read, write and to pray. However, the person who most influenced me to become a teacher is my mother. A product of Seton Hall herself and a pupil of Father Hanbury (seated just a short distance away), she is a recently retired teacher of math, religion and English of 44 years. She has been nominated to *"Who's Who Among America's Teachers"* six times and has taught every level from grammar school to the university. Mom taught me everything I know about pedagogy and she always taught me to be mindful of the influence and responsibility I have in the classroom.

Christ is the perfect teacher. Padre Pio became a saint on June 16, 2002. Mom is saint-like. Since I fit in the "none of the above" category, I also keep at the forefront of my mind another piece of advice from Mom: "Stay close to the confessional and be a good role model for the children. They are like clay and form their outlook on life by your example. Dress properly and speak to the children in a respectful, authoritative voice for they are God's children."

It takes a particular wisdom to impart knowledge in a manner in which students of all levels can comprehend the material taught, while simultaneously being challenged at their different levels of understanding. The ability to teach is a gift from God that not everyone has – just as not everyone has the courage to be a fireman, etc.

Faith plays a major role in education in the Catholic schools. It permeates every subject and every classroom. The fundamental role of teachers in a Catholic institution is to always make sure that the students have a strong foundation in their faith. Parents have, by natural law, the primary duty and right to educate their children. The Church has the right and the duty to ensure that parents provide proper religious education for their children.

As teachers, albeit university professors, the students at this level are still of immature minds and not able to compete or spar on the same level as the professor. We have the moral obligation to form and develop the youth according to objective truth. To present a challenge to the students on an intellectual level is one matter, but to use them as sparring partners or sounding boards for our own agenda is an abuse of academic freedom and power. To separate children from their faith and shake their foundations so as to destroy what truths have been established both by their parents and the Church is to be an enemy of the student, and it is the commission of a grave offense on our part.

We are responsible for every word and action in the classroom – how they are perceived and understood, as the position we hold is one of authority – direct authority with direct contact with youth every day. If a student, as a result of something that we say or do, does something beneficial for someone else, we are partially responsible for that act. At the same time, should they go out and do something harmful as per the same above mentioned circumstances, whether intended or not on our part, we are responsible as well for that act in so far as the influence that we had upon them.

In a Catholic institution, it is necessary to understand that as teachers we have a responsibility to fulfill our contractual obligations. If we intend to be disloyal to them, then we have no right to teach here as academic freedom cannot be stretched, interpreted or allowed to the point where we, in public, oppose the policy, in this case, religion – Catholicism and the rules according to the Magisterium in Rome. While tenure can protect against dismissal on false

grounds, there is no ethical reason why any school, especially a Catholic school, must tolerate treasonous behavior on its soil. The school has an obligation: moral, ethical, contractual and legal to the parent and the pupil to dismiss teachers who abuse their power and to dismiss unruly students for the protection of the whole.

Our classrooms in Catholic schools cannot be open to secularization in the name of "political correctness." To do so would undermine the Ten Commandments and our very faith as the truth would then be clouded, thus defeating the purpose of the university: to inspire the search for universal truth.





## REFLECTIONS ON VOCATION

*by Roseanne M. Mirabella*

I have always been drawn to the world of politics. Some of my earliest recollections are of the Kennedy presidency and assassination. As a child in grade school, I was an avid reader with an interest in biographies, particularly those of our nation's leaders. I coveted the books and magazine articles that I acquired about Kennedy and issues of the day such as civil rights and the war on poverty. In my later elementary years, I followed Robert Kennedy's run for the presidency in the daily newspaper and in televised reports. I vividly remember the day he was shot, my disbelief as I stared at the television screen, pleading with my mother to be permitted to stay up late to learn of his condition. I can still recall my deep sense of loss when I learned he had died. This was clearly a pivotal moment in my life as I struggled to understand why and to come to terms with the realization that this had happened again. It was during this time that my mother began to encourage me to enter politics, urging me to become a lawyer and convincing me that, perhaps, I had a shot at becoming the first woman president of the United States!

The adolescent distractions of socializing and partying were clearly paramount to any serious study I might have pursued in high school. Admittedly, my preoccupation with my social life was of primary concern to me. Going to class was something required in order to spend time in high school with my friends. However, I always looked forward to my U.S. history class with Mr. Cohen. Our discussions of recent events were always interesting to me and I loved the classroom debates. This was one course in which I was motivated to read the materials and work seriously on assignments. Fortunately, I was blessed with a good mind and was able to produce the grades I needed to be accepted into Seton Hall University as a history major, despite my active social life and my shortcomings as a serious student. I was on my way to law school.

During my first year at Seton Hall, I enrolled in Western Civilization and Introduction to Political Science. My professor for the political science course was a former lobbyist who shared with us fabulous stories of his activities in the Trenton statehouse. How he could make the legislators come alive, like characters in a play. And Western Civilization turned out to be, well Western Civilization. It didn't take long for me to realize that I wanted to study politics, not history, and I quickly changed majors.

When I landed in political science as a sophomore, I began to take all of those required courses that majors must take but wouldn't pick if given the choice. Research Methods. I can still visualize myself in the corner classroom in Fahy Hall where we sat waiting for the professor to show up. Then Dr. Boutilier entered the room. Her reputation as the hardest professor in the department had us all shivering in our seats. She announced that this was Research Methods for political science students and asked if any in the room were not majors. As a few students timidly raised their hands, she addressed them, strongly encouraging them to leave. "This class is for political science majors. Other students should leave and register for a different course." Quite frankly, her approach was somewhat intimidating and as we watched them walk out the door, we wondered what terrible fate awaited us. Little did I know that I had just met the single individual who would become my lifelong mentor, my greatest cheerleader, my strongest supporter, and the person who would play a pivotal role in my eventual choice of career.

I went on to "major in Boutilier" as we called it back then. I enrolled in all of the courses she offered, particularly the theory courses. How I loved political theory and the great theorists – Plato, Aristotle, particularly Rosseau. I began to consider pursuing a master's degree, possibly a doctoral degree in political theory. Was I particularly good at it? No. I had to study long and hard to understand what I was reading. An A from Boutilier did not come easily. Did the world need another average political theorist? No, they told me. But I possessed such a passion for the big questions and wanted to spend my life contemplating the answers.

During this time period, Dr. Emma Quartaro in the social work department began a community service internship for students in the social sciences, a groundbreaking experiment in experiential education. I served as an intern for two semesters at Unified Vailsburg Services Organization (UVSO) in Newark. I thoroughly enjoyed this work and undertook all of my activities with great enthusiasm. I created a softball league for adolescent girls, edited and circulated a community newsletter, helped out with the Meals-on-Wheels program and served as a youth representative on select UVSO

committees. I discovered that I was very good at these activities. Organizing people, things and events came very naturally to me.

Public administrator. I can still recall the time when I first came to know these words and to reflect upon them in relationship to my life's work. Graduate school applications were due. Most of my friends were applying to law school. Of course, I had already decided to pursue graduate studies in political theory. Dr. Boutilier and I were talking about possible graduate schools and majors. She said, "Why don't you pursue a master's degree in public administration? There are a lot of job possibilities with a degree in public administration, while the job market for political theorists is not very good." Public administrator. This is something that tapped my talents, something I was very good at. And, there were lots of people and organizations in need of good public administrators. Finally, although my passion was still for theory, I began to see the connections between the social and political problems with which I was so concerned and the role that community-based organizations played in addressing them. Having assured me I could continue to read Rousseau in the summer, I followed her advice and applied to graduate school in public administration. This was undoubtedly the most important career decision I have ever made.

Not only did I pursue the master's degree in public administration, I went on to complete my doctoral degree in public administration at New York University. During this time period, I continued as an administrator, first in community-based organizations in Newark, later as an administrator in New York City government. I was fortunate to find a profession that tapped my talents and skills. I was good at this! And, I soon came to realize that I had found a profession that was a source of joy for me. I was passionately committed to the community members that I worked with and to the issues that I faced as an administrator. All of those big questions that I enjoyed thinking about as a student were coming to life in the real world of politics and administration. My passion propelled me to work tirelessly on behalf of those who had less, to become a servant leader. Finally, this was something that the world really needed. A public administrator committed to work in the area of social justice. Hubert Humphrey's oft quoted phrase became the barometer against which I gauged my public service activities:

[T]he moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life — the sick, the needy, and the handicapped.

Many years later, after a successful career in public service with increasingly challenging positions in city and state government, I find myself back at Seton Hall as a member of the political science faculty. I have chosen to involve myself in research and service activities that are connected to my social justice commitment, and that tap my personal skills and talents. And I involve my students in community service activities as part of their coursework. I try to bring the community and its issues to life in my classroom and to help my students understand their role in creating a better world for all of us.

Dr. Boutilier has guided me well. Now it is my turn to guide the next generations as they discover their talents, understand their passions and channel these into activities that the world really needs. It is my hope that through my example as a servant leader, I can spark the servant leader in all of them. Am I any good at it? Yes. Does it spark my passion? You bet. Does the world need this activity? Absolutely. More today than ever before.



# ANSWERING THE CALL

by Shamika A. Mitchell

The U.S. Marines have a slogan, "Many are called, but the chosen are few," which clearly identifies them as being the most selective component of the American Armed Forces. There are so many great tales about someone's life-changing moment when she or he is called upon, I have to question if these events are actually so dramatic. From a religious perspective, the stories about apparitions from the Heavens are too many in number; angels, prophets and the Lord all have made visits to unsuspecting people, bearing messages of duty and obligation, telling people they are *chosen*.

Still, I always considered the possibility that not everyone's moment of calling involves contact with the supernatural and the Divine. The Marines make the clear distinction between being called and being chosen, but for many of us, we do the choosing of our paths. While one may wonder exactly how many are called, and too many wonder why we are called, the most difficult question to solve is *why* we answer.

My history with Seton Hall University is quite serendipitous. As a pre-teen, I had a mentor named Dawn Williams, who was a graduate student at Columbia University. She eventually became a dean at Seton Hall, and, when I was transferring schools during my undergraduate years, she suggested the University, which until then, I had not considered. Although I was accepted as a transfer student, I chose Syracuse University as the place to complete my undergraduate studies. In the spring of my senior year, I decided to continue my studies, and I chose Seton Hall as my only intended school.

While I began my graduate career as a graduate assistant in the Educational Opportunity Program at Seton Hall, it was my experience as a teaching assistant in the English department that significantly contributed to my current circumstances. While the whole of the English department has been a welcoming source of support for the past two years, I would not have considered applying for the teaching assistant position had it not been for the encouragement of Dr. Mary Balkun and Dr. Angela Weisl, my mentors and advisers. Once I became a member of the English department community, it was inevitable that I would participate fully. This allowed me to experience the fullness of faculty life: what it means to be an active member of a department, a college and the University community.

Answering my calling was simple because I have a natural passion for literature and creative writing. I always wanted to read other people's stories and share my own, so it made sense that I chose to pursue the study of literature as my career, my vocation. Having a vocation means to share one's gifts and talents with others. The skills and abilities encoded in one's DNA are unique and should be used to their fullest capacity, hopefully to improve society as a whole. It is arguable whether those innate qualities are influenced by the supernatural, or if it is simply circumstance. I prefer to think that the factor is a combination of these two.

The vocation of teaching plays an important role during children's formative years; they learn the basic necessities for proper socialization. The vocation of teaching plays a crucial role during the adolescent years, since children are learning the fundamentals of approaching young adulthood. Believe it or not, the vocation of teaching in a university setting is equally essential.

Dartmouth professor Jeffery Hart focuses on the importance of university learning and the liberal arts. If Hart's theory that "the goal of education is to produce the citizen" (129), is correct, there is a magnanimous weight placed upon the shoulders of the faculty. We are not only educators; we are also the beings primarily responsible for sustaining the future of the community, society and nation we inhabit. John Henry Newman agrees with this:

If then a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life, and its end is fitness for the world. (48)

In addition to spending time on our own personal research, we are assigned the responsibility of shaping the *world*. Now that we are in a global community, what happens elsewhere matters to us, and what we do in our classrooms will eventually affect the global sociopolitical climate. What can possibly sound more intimidating?

I am completely up to the challenge. While I love being in the classroom and researching a topic of interest, the rewarding sense of accomplishment is directly connected to my classroom experience. Research is an integral part of being a scholar, but my sense of exultation after completing a thesis or research paper pales in comparison to a simple and genuine "thank you" from a student. In this way, my desire to teach is self-serving in its hidden origins, but it is arguable whether or not anything is ever done without a self-serving motive. The thought of using one's talents to help others does provide one with a sense of happiness and accomplishment, which is self-serving, although it is not selfish or conceited. It is this love, this selfless love or *agape*, of what we do that compels us to pursue careers and life-defining goals.

In addition to sharing with students, it is equally necessary for faculty to share with colleagues. Because we share similar scholarly interests, there needs to be as much attention given to dialoguing with our academic and professional community. The dynamic of positive relationships within the faculty not only strengthen a department's foundation (which then affects all other correlated entities), but it also provides the platform to share insights about scholarly pursuits. We, then, can encourage and learn from *one another*, as opposed to pontificating one's ideas to impressionable students, which leaves the professor as the predominant source, with very little room for discussion and debate about these ideas. This method can be self-serving and self-congratulatory, which is a detriment not only to the students, but also to that professor.

Not only are these students denied the experience of *true* scholarship, which is the discussion and debate of ideas and theories, but that professor is isolated from the students' ideas and those of her colleagues. While academic discussion amongst colleagues is, indeed, more rigorous and challenging (and quite intimidating at times), it forces all those engaged in the debate to elevate its quality with careful insights and stronger analyses. The one who chooses to avoid such discussions does a disservice to the entire university community, of which she should be an active member. In short, this kind of rapport amongst colleagues improves their own scholarship. There is also a sense of fulfillment because they either realize how accomplished they are in their studies, or they realize that the library stacks are calling them for a long and intense reunion. Either way, their insights about their own academic pursuits are much clearer after such dialogue.

In response to this dilemma about the validity of intention and motive of why we answer our callings, there is much truth to the importance of title within our microcosmic society: the academic community or academy. Within this world exists the importance of having a dossier readily available to show the world one's accomplishments: schools attended, grades, glowing reports. Within this society, there is an inherent need to establish one's self apart from the mass of others. Readers may wonder how one goes about this. According to Mark Schwehn, author of *Exiles from Eden*, the answer is quite simple, "Publication ... is *the* vocational aspiration" (5). The university community and the academy are primarily focused on the accomplishments of its members, which is used as a selling point for recruiting students. (We have a distinguished faculty, so apply now!) Within this society, there is also the need to be accepted by one's peers, which places pressure on its members to engage in Academic Sport. Like the mountain climber, the neophyte Scholar is forced to grapple with the fierce Mount Scholarship and reach its summit, climb back down and then tackle the vicious Mount Publishing Company a few times, to then go up against the ever-tricky and dubious Mount Tenure, whose summit many have risked life and limb to reach, all be they unsuccessful attempts.

This tremendous emphasis on status and accomplishment not only calls the purpose of the academy to question, but it also poses a crucial question to the scholar about her motives, the *why*. Many have asked themselves why they chose this particular profession. Well, there is an allure to the pomp and circumstance of commencement exercises, with its bounteous and colorful robes, or the privilege of being called "Doctor" or "Professor," which are rightfully deserved titles.

Still, this needs to be considered when we choose to follow our callings to teach on the university level. We must ask ourselves whether or not the titles matter, and if so, why they matter. While the vocation of teaching is one that seems to lack rewards and benefits, on the university level, the rewards are tangible: faculty parking, titles, special services, a special luncheon room, published manuscripts and, yes, the colorful robes. Because of this conflict, it is difficult to clearly determine the validity of one's intention when answering the call, especially if it is lucrative.

While this competitive struggle exists within the microcosmic society of the academy and university community, there is still the hope that the most important component of the equation — the students — benefits from our efforts. Michael J. Himes, in his book, *Doing the Truth in Love*, suggests that the condition of human restlessness is to find joy. Truthfully, there is joy in teaching that has compelled me to pursue my doctoral degree. Possibly, it could be the joy of impacting so many lives and having my own life enlightened. If a professor can walk away at the semester's end without one positive reflection for each group of students, something went terribly wrong. The reciprocity is my compulsion, my fix. To be able to share and enlighten, and to be enlightened is a wonderful feeling. To share my passion with students who are otherwise apathetic about taking a requisite course, to see them *get it*, is an immeasurable feeling. While I am again preparing for the rigor of academic life, I am also deeply inspired by the possibility that one day I will be a full-fledged member of the academy, titles and all. For me, however, joy comes from sharing these passions and awakening my students' burgeoning intellectual awareness, and there is a great deal of truth in that.



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# HOW EDUCATORS WILL - OR WILL NOT AFFECT FUTURE GENERATIONS

*by Marietta Esposito Peskin*

A gardener by avocation, I think in terms of things growing and all of the variables that allow them to grow. This seminar, Religious Horizons, provided a wonderful environment to nurture my desire to learn despite my trepidation about lack of background in philosophy and religion. The following are some of the ideas that began to grow during those four mornings.

## *Who were my mentors and what were my inspirations to become a teacher?*

Lack of mentors, no sources of inspiration and serendipity were characteristics of the early years of my career. I became a teacher because the nearest college, two miles away on a direct bus route, was a "teachers' college," and my father saw no reason to go any further. Having little drive for a more exotic future to spur me in other directions, I chose teaching as opposed to the other then "acceptable" options of secretary, stewardess, marriage or nurse.

Boredom and extra time were the motivations to return to school for another degree, marketability drove the discipline chosen, and back on the bus I went. Truth be told — I always enjoyed learning and that was the path most available. A few years later, when again I had time to spare, I found the route — by car this time — to Rutgers for my next degree. There, however, I started to enjoy my studies as they related to a vocation. For the first time, I was exposed to more challenging and thoughtful discussions and readings; I also realized that I needed a more thought-provoking position.

It was only after I had been at Seton Hall for a few years that I gained personal vocational insight. As we left a reception, I mentioned to my husband, only half in jest, that I had been speaking with a woman of my age who was president of a perfume company. I was feeling a bit of a failure. His reply was a turning point; he told me the product she was responsible for would only last part of a day, whereas, the product for which I was responsible would last for generations. My career became a vocation that day.

## *What in my vocation gives me joy?*

*Agape — Self-giving love; serving, repairing, transferring skills and abilities (Himes, 1995)*

Did I have a calling? No. Did I ever reach the state of agape? No. By the standards set forth by Himes (1995), I am a failure because I often get tremendous satisfaction from my work and that I accepted this satisfaction as an idol. Be that as it may. As a practicing psychoeducational diagnostician, there are special satisfactions in being able to help parents understand more about the nature of their child's disability and helping them to see how to cope with difficult situations. Parents and potential students are told at orientations that the good news and the bad news are the same: They are told that, as students, they will be treated as adults. In truth, they are seldom treated as adults but as adults in the making, and I enjoy being able to be a part of their maturation. As the adage goes, I do not teach special education, I attempt to teach students about special education and how to become better humans.

My program colleague and I have always believed that advisement was the heart of our program, and we have encouraged students, beginning at orientation, to consult with us frequently. We have seen the results of poor advisement, but, moreover, we like to establish connections early so students view us as guides and mentors throughout all stages of their University years, their careers and their lives. This belief was reinforced when my daughter, having grown up at Seton Hall University as the child of an original working mother, decided to attend another college. The faculty support she received there was wonderful; extra discussions and reviews took place on weekends and evenings, and telephone support was often provided. Although she may not have the opportunity to pass the benefits of these experiences down to more generations, I witnessed the lifelong difference good teachers made on my child.

I am fortunate to work with undergraduates who are special; they have chosen to work with and teach those with disabilities. Prior to beginning the course of study, these undergraduates have been motivated by something in their past to take on challenges. It is fulfilling to see them apply theories, to see them have an understanding of how they can

make someone's life more useful and satisfying. A picture of me shaking hands with a governor would not give me any where near the joy I feel when I get a student's thank you note acknowledging my teaching or guidance.

### ***Religion and religious***

*Religious: to respect others with an assumption of goodness, to be moral, to love others, and to be selfless in giving. (Smith, 1963)*

Are these not the characteristics encouraged by all religions? Often a university affiliated with a particular religion — be it Seton Hall, Al-Azhar University or Yeshiva University — emphasizes those factors that make it different from institutions affiliated with different religions. Often, we so concentrate on what makes religion-based universities distinct so strongly that we forget what the schools have *religiously* in common. Would we not be better to actively endorse the *religious* commonalities rather than the differences? Could we not expend the energy to celebrate the *religious* activities of the students on a more consistent basis as much as we expend the effort to initiate or respond to activity that characterizes our religion as opposed to other religious convictions? Decreasing concentration on religion, while emphasizing the previously described characteristics of religions could:

mean a true love of ... neighbor. This has to do with a contention that living religiously is an attribute of persons. The attribute arises not because those persons participate in some entity called religion, but because they participate in what I have called transcendence (Smith, 195).

What might this mean for Seton Hall and other religious institutions of higher education? It might mean that the institutional leaders ask how religious attributes are developed within the student environment beyond the display of artifacts and the conducting of rituals associated with the particular religion. It might mean that instead of representing their religions, they provide more leadership for their community with regard to the religious aspects of their population. It might mean that the activities sponsored by Seton Hall's Division of Volunteer Efforts and similar efforts would cause as much excitement, conversation and response as a display against abortion on the University Green caused consternation and active protest.

### ***Mission Statement, Seton Hall University***

... In a diverse and collaborative environment, it focuses on academic and ethical development. Seton Hall students are prepared to be servant leaders in their professional community lives in a global society and are challenged by outstanding faculty, an evolving technologically advanced setting and values-centered curricula.

The academic and technological are currently being addressed. However, students can only truly learn to be ethical and values-centered leaders by the examples and actions of University administrators and faculty. I think we have not yet accepted the challenge.



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## AND HE DID IT

by Barrie Peterson

*"We were razzin them real hard. It was the '32 World Series. Hack Wilson especially shouted from the Bench and it finally got to Ruth so he shouts 'I'll put the next pitch over your stupid ivy wall' and pointed his bat to right center. And he did it."* My farm boy eyes opened wider as it sunk in. My Great Aunt Mae had been there, seen the most famous event in baseball, my future profession. It wasn't made up. I know an eyewitness! I had heard she, a career woman, was Secretary for the Cubs, but nothing — not her luxury South Shore Drive apartment with a doorman and cleaning lady, not her '53 baby blue Caddie, not the fact her father had invented Bosco, water softening or putting beer in cans ... not even the cartons of Wrigley gum she got as a stockholder and passed along to me annually, nothing grabbed me more than her off-hand revelation that she had been there.

The next week the Rolling Prairie elementary school nurse determined I needed glasses and I concluded I couldn't become a slugger. My process of career search began. (I would learn from Professor Michael Himes of Boston College that I began what St. Augustine's calls restlessness of the heart.)

Reflecting on the meaning of this incident from just before the shock of Sputnik, I gained three lessons in how fancy needs to be transferred into adult vocation:

1. Trance, especially powerful in a 12-year-old, also works throughout one's life. It is the fad whereby positivism ignores unresolved questions. Put another way, the developmental psychologist Erik Erickson shows how identity formation can be sidelined by hero worship or ideology (ever more stirred up by our entertainment culture and global conflicts). These false identities are relatively harmless when young, but devastating when adults succumb to these impulses.
2. Wasting energy on unrealistic fantasies can also be triggered by lack of basic information — my assuming wearing glasses knocked me out of pro ball. I didn't know then (and few youth today) understand how someone gets to the majors, let alone the slim odds. On the other hand, ignorance or low self-esteem can restrict us from growing to our potential or exploring arenas for engaging our gifts with the Divine in the creative process; finding our vocation. Many students today need to be rigorously challenged on their self-limiting false concepts or opened to worlds beyond their background via internships or study or mission trips as I was in college.
3. Vocation is an ongoing process, not a once-and-for-all time decision. The caste or father-determined job directions are largely gone. Moreover, with technology and science accelerating the rate of change to where many must retrain every few years, people are moving horizontally into new fields as life experience or business upheavals pull or push them.

More on my vocational development:

Growing up on a family farm taught me cause and effect, neighborly cooperation and to be attuned with natural forces. Also, that I didn't want to work so hard! To survive financially, first my mother began teaching school and then my father. This put enormous strain on all of us to do chores before and after school, weekends and summers. I aimed to become a teacher myself and, in 1963, went to DePauw University where I first prepared for graduate school to become a political science professor. After being strongly influenced by clergy leaders of the racial justice and peace movements I was so involved in, I decided upon seminary.

In those days, "selling out" one's ideals to a corporation was to be avoided and only the super-intellectual or the driven went to law or medical schools or pursued a doctoral degree to become a professor or scientist. Within me also was a yearning for the respect accorded to the clergy, yet I was rebellious and couldn't see myself in the parish but rather in campus, hospital or activist ministry. My experience at Princeton Seminary confirmed this direction, especially after I took an 18-month internship. The devastating events of 1968 (assassinations and efforts to end the war in Vietnam) propelled me into full-time activism and to gain another perspective on my bleeding country. I worked with the Quakers on Capitol Hill, and then sojourned in Europe and North Africa before returning to graduate. By then, the Presbyterian



Church had begun to shrink in size and away from supporting specialized or progressive ministries. I pursued my calling, however, and built a youth ministry that the church deemed too independent to be considered a ministry.

During the '70s, I continued my youth work with a delinquency prevention agency in Union County and a Perth Amboy drug treatment center. Then came a crisis of confidence and satisfaction, and I fell back on my ability to use tools and my new interest in historic preservation and, for two years, restored houses. I was then asked to head up the Volunteer Bureau of the Somerset United Way, succeeded greatly, discovering I had excellent matchmaking, speaking and training and program development abilities. This led to creating the volunteer program for Carrier Clinic and helping establish the NJ Self Help Clearinghouse.

I had become a social services program developer skilled in personnel management, able to attract and motivate people and guide them in meeting human needs, whether within an institution or in a self-help group. During this period, I was religiously disaffected, acting out of my personal values, which had been shaped so far mainly by family and rural environs, the idealism of the '60s and my rejection of Calvinism.

The '80s saw me bringing my skills together within a community college as student life coordinator. I enjoyed this demanding job for its student leadership training, special event planning, management of the student union building, work with international students and growth of campus ministry services. I also had received post-graduate training in pastoral counseling and began practicing. The hands-on efforts with students and staff were exciting, while the counseling was satisfying for its focus on individuals and couples.

As the '90s arrived, I felt America was on a retrograde, selfish and dangerous course, and needed to reinvolve myself in movements for social and economic justice. After leaving the college, I decided to work for Universal Health Care while expanding my counseling practice. I cashed in some pension to invest in the time it would take to make this transition to self-employment. By mid-1992, my new structure was taking shape and included setting up the Bergen Employment Action Project to help the massive numbers of unemployed find new work and, in many cases, careers. Now I was working for the AFL-CIO, putting my entrepreneurial energies to work in building programs, forming collaborations and writing a weekly column for *The Record*.

After helping hundreds of people gain employment, patterns began to emerge in corporate downsizing, growth of deadend and nonbenefited temp jobs, and increasing income discrepancies. My belief that the pastoral and prophetic must be linked was strengthened, and I began to move to advocacy to address the structural injustices, which were mass-producing personal misery. This is when I met Bill Toth, Seton Hall University Seminary ethics professor, at a Catholic social justice conference. By 1994, he had convened a group of faculty and clergy and lay activists to examine questions of work ethics and the Bishops' statements on the American economy. We were alarmed over stock market driven downsizing and involved in church job search support groups and retreats as a pastoral response. We were struggling to find morality in the context of degeneration, the theme of Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*. We yearned to balance competence with character. We sought inquiry and love, not position or antagonism. I jokingly dubbed our group "The Saints."

Bill and I soon agreed public discussion of policies needed to create family-supporting jobs was lacking, and that Seton Hall should put on a conference of leaders from around the state to explore solutions. We secured Father Thomas Peterson's (then Chancellor) support early in 1996 and began to cobble together funds, office space and an advisory committee to help plan and promote the conference. The January 1997 event at Seton Hall's Law School drew 250 leaders from all segments, and saw substantial discussion and many positive policies and practices shared. Ethical concerns were aired, Archbishop Theodore McCarrick (now Cardinal McCarrick) spoke and media coverage was obtained. We were thrilled, and this launched our dream, the Institute on Work, to serve as an ongoing vehicle for forming "constituencies of conscience" around workplace justice and for manifesting the rich heritage of Catholic social and economic teachings. It was this material and my developing relationships at Seton Hall that attracted me to work here, despite having become a Unitarian Universalist.

Daily trying to apply this material and guiding a wonderful part-time staff are my two biggest satisfactions. Knowledge should be not as Michael Himes notes, passively received as mere data or concept as in many think tanks, but used to

bridge academia and the employers, unions, community and faith-based groups outside our gates. Our methods were to be collaboration, transparency and referral to Catholic social teachings as antidotes to the rampant, and now official, heresy of "*homo economicus*" and market worship.

Our sense of mission quickened and the institute steadily took shape. We asked Ray Bramucci, former New Jersey labor commissioner, to be our founding director, and we enjoyed his humor, wisdom and fund-raising ability until he took a major position in the U.S. Department of Labor. We have been commissioned to do studies on employer attitudes toward welfare reform, and also undocumented workers in the state and secured foundation support for providing technical assistance for the growth and creation of nonprofit temp-to-perm agencies. I've learned much about life in Newark through our involvement in its community-based organization trade association's efforts to advocate for economic development benefiting local residents and through planning to aid the school-to-career efforts of Newark high schools. Along the way we've become the gatekeeper for nonprofits applying for the NJ Economic Development Authority's business plan writing courses and helped the governor's office of Faith-Based Initiatives with its first two state conferences.

I've learned that I need variety and am not a specialist; I often am visionary but have patience enough to steadily build. I hate injustice and the abuse of power and scapegoating of victims, yet am not a liberal, but an independent progressive. I reject the Enlightenment's idolatry of inevitable progress, which has led us to the deadends of consumerism, American military arrogance, Enron conspiracies, technology worship, and rejection of religion and the mysterious. Bernard Lonergan's allowance for different expressions of religion is essential to the humanist in me, and I see myself dedicated to "the good under construction." Matthew Fox especially inspires me with his stress on vocation as living as co-creator with God in the world's development.

My calling is clear: to use my talents being aware of, if not working on my limitations, to embody Catholic social teachings in concrete ways in Essex County as a representative of Seton Hall University. I feel congruency among my skills, ethics, personality and Catholic economic teachings. This gives me joy, intersects with my abilities, is challenging and continues to serve a real need. My style has emerged to include, when needed, the "tent-making" Saint Paul relied upon and, indeed, the Institute on Work is largely grant funded, though we receive valuable in-kind and occasional cash support from the University and our advisory committee. The other images I relate to come from Judaism, Christianity's parent: *tikkun olam* or the repairing of the world and Maimonide's highest form of charity: to help someone become able to support their family.



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# DRAWN TO THE FIRE

by William Toth

Self-reflection has never been one of my strong points. I say this only because for most of my adult years I managed to fill my life, like Mickey Mouse in *Fantasia's* "Sorcerer's Apprentice," with tidal waves of busy-ness. Blissfully married at age 24 to a red-haired beauty from Detroit, father to a large family (four sons, four daughters and two dogs), founder and CEO of a complex and demanding business, life for me meant never having to say "you deserve a break today." For many years, my *modus operandi* toward life was simple and pristine. Bite into life with verve and gusto, and don't complain if life bites back.

I think I was well into my 40s when I began to hear serious "rumors of angels." The siren call came first as a simple floating suggestion: Wouldn't it be nice to study theology? The why and wherefore remain to this day less than clear. I had taken classes in theology in my college days and thoroughly enjoyed its stimulus to mind *and* heart. I say mind and heart because as a believer even in my college days, I could not confine God only to the recesses of my mind. Even at that early juncture in my life, I had too many memories of undeserved divine blessings.

Thinking about studying theology and actually doing so posed formidable challenges. I remember the stunned look on the faces of my business associates when I informed them that I was taking graduate courses in moral theology. I think their reaction would have been the same had I told them I was studying prehistoric Patagonian architecture. There were other cumbersome realities. Getting the left side of my brain to wrap itself around Rahner, Barth and Niebuhr after 25 years of writing mind-numbing, maintenance-construction work schedules was not easy. Equally difficult were my earnest efforts to learn enough theological German to translate Wofhart Pannenburg's *Grundlagen der Ethik: Philosophisch-theologische Perspektiven*. Such sweet bliss came slowly.

Actually, if truth be told, there were many times in graduate school when I underwent agonizing reappraisals regarding my theological studies. I remember one such occasion. I had been supervising a crew working on a retaining wall somewhere in the Bronx for five hours non-stop. I recall rushing to a noonday seminar on Calvin's *Institutes* at Union Theological Seminary, my hair filled with chunks of plaster and dried cement. Although my classmates didn't seem to mind that I physically resembled the "whitened sepulchers" Jesus denounced in the gospels, their diffident response to my appearance did not quell the great insistent question rumbling in my insides: "Why the hell am I doing this?"

Now in retrospect, the question is different. What kept me to the task? What vision summoned me (*vocare*) — a husband, father and executive — to want to be a theologian? After all, I was not a priest under obedience to his Bishop to undertake graduate studies. Nor at age 50 — when I did receive the Ph. D. — did I have any great prospects of teaching theology.

Through the shroud of mystery, one thing was clear to me. I was stricken with a deep love for theology. And this deep love was matched by a desire to share the subject with others. I also harbored the strong conviction that such sharing could be of value for me and for those whom I might encounter on my life's journey.

Time has passed since I received my doctoral degree, and since that glorious serendipitous day 10 years ago when I was asked to teach theology at Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology. I think now I am slowly beginning to understand the divine dynamic at work in my life. The Bishops at Vatican II declared that all of us are called to holiness. This call to holiness is manifested every time we seek to transcend and give ourselves in self-donation. I believe now, after 10 years at Seton Hall, that my "doing" of theology is my personal call to holiness. Let me explain.

First, as I see it, to do theology as it should be done in the Church requires a personal surrender to the Spirit of Christ. I have come to the conclusion that this surrender of my finite personhood to the Infinity of the Son who is one with the Father and the Spirit must be a surrender that knows no limits — a consistent willingness to be led like a child through the torrent of words, through the mountains of propositions and concepts *about* God, to actual encounter with the living God.

This surrender has concrete ramifications for the way I do theology. It means that I approach the Scriptures — the primary source of theology — on my knees, prostrate in the conviction that the words of Scripture have within them the power to bring about, in faith, a living encounter with the Word. It also means that in a spirit of adoration I must allow the words of Scripture to exercise absolute rightness over and above all human views, and to cause all finite perceptions to be surmounted and filled out by an infinite range of meanings. Above all, my surrender of faith to the words of Scripture involves not just submission to the infinite meaning of the words, but embraces a willingness to make their meaning the ground — the very basis — of my existence. "Be it done unto me according to thy Word."

If this is not done, I fear that my theology will lack full incarnational truth. I will be like those theologians that Saint Bonaventure so soundly condemned, "those who settle for mere reading without fervor, speculation without devotion, investigation without admiration, observation without exultation, industry without piety, knowledge without love, understanding without humility, study without grace, erudition without religion."<sup>1</sup>

Not for a single moment as I study and teach theology can I forget that its roots, from which all its nourishment is drawn, is adoration and its goal is sanctification. Just as Jesus was sanctified by his witness to the Father and the Spirit, so too I, as a theologian, am sanctified in the truth by my capacity to witness with my life the obedience of the Son. It is that obedience that will free me and the men and women I teach to understand the truth. Such adoration expressed in lived witness to the truth will inevitably bring the Spirit of God to my work.

You might ask how is the Spirit manifest in my theology or anyone's for that matter?

1. The scriptures say that the Spirit "leads unto *all* truth." The Spirit leads to a certain unity; a certain catholicity of perspective and this will be reflected in one's theology. A major difference between theology and the other sciences is that while in other sciences progress consists in increasing differentiation and refinement of the subject matter, work in theology that is Spirit-filled leads further and further in the direction of the infinity that pertains to its object. A theologian can write on theology without being obliged to deal with the whole of it, but theologians gifted with the Spirit will always preserve the totality, the catholicity of truth in every detail of their thought.
2. Theologians who bear the Spirit see Christianity primarily as an event not as a set of propositions about God become man but as an event that always transcends all our bounded pre-convictions about how God deals with us.
3. Theologians who bear the Spirit exhibit the courage and expository skill to confront and rethink the principles and doctrines of the Church. Every age raises challenges to the doctrines of the Trinity, incarnation, redemption, resurrection, predestination and eschatology. Sometimes theologians would prefer to bypass the challenges and just settle for the thought of previous generations, but as we well know, the thought of previous generations is never a pillow for future thought to rest on. Definitions, as Rahner proclaimed, are not so much an end as a beginning. Whatever is merely put in storage and handed down without any fresh efforts on the part of the theologian turns stale and lifeless. Again, in the words of Balthasar, the longer the living tradition has been broken through purely mechanical repetition, the more difficult it is to renew it.

This does not mean for one moment that the theologian has to cave in to current fashions of thought, to demythologize everything in sight, or to see the primary duty of theology as providing an apologetic palatable to a bored and unbelieving academia. But the Spirit does enable the theologian to respect the historical context of theology, not to hide in the sands of timelessness, not to become a revivalist for some past practice because it is past, not to reduce theology to historical research.

The Spirit we theologians must adore is a Spirit that breathes "where he will ...," a Spirit of missions and special functions within the Mystical Body showering charisms on people to deal with the unforeseeable tasks that erupt in our

midst. And we theologians share in those charisms. For theologians and all who study theology, the light given to us by the Spirit is not just to illuminate, purify and warm us. No. It is a light that can empower us to turn speculative truth into actual living, the exercise of authority into holiness of life, theology into Christian practice, and reflection into irrefutable witness of life, even to the point of martyrdom.

Such a living light will keep us always in wonder and amazement that a God who does not need us is quite willing to die for us. With such living light the poorest and simplest of us theologians can understand the voice, the word of God, in prayer and suffering and with such living light, we can shed ever and ever brighter light on the Son of God — the infinite compelling point where the best of theologians do their best work.

In my more blessed moments, I pray that the Spirit will continue to give to the Church theologians worthy of the name, theologians that consciously unite sanctity with learning and erudition with witness. Today, more than ever, we need theologians like Aquinas and Vianney whose statues stand outside our Seminary. We need theologians who view theology not as "academics" but as Balthasar described it, "the fierce fire burning in the dark night of adoration and obedience, the fire that takes us into the abyss — the infinite loving heart of God."



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