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## THE GOOD UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND THE RESEARCH VOCATION OF A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

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*Responding to challenges questioning the possibility of distinctively Catholic higher education, this article seeks to establish an integrated vision for Catholic universities. Relying on the works of Philip Gleason, Ignatius of Loyola, and Bernard Lonergan, the author provides a framework for the important research function of Catholic universities and conceives the mission of Catholic institutions of higher education as contributing to the ongoing, creative, and redemptive work that is ultimately God's plan for humanity.*

Much recent discussion of the distinctive nature and character of Catholic higher education has focused upon its special commitments to the teaching and formation of students, especially with regard to service and social justice. Increasingly four elements play leading roles in attempts to define the character and identity of Catholic colleges and universities. Those four components are: (1) a high level of personal and institutional commitment to excellence in teaching; (2) concern for development of the student's whole person in her or his intellectual, ethical and spiritual dimensions; (3) emphasis on the formation of women and men in service of others; and (4) promotion of social justice especially in regard to the poor and the oppressed.

Commitments to teaching, formation of the whole person, service, and social justice must be indispensable elements in Catholic higher education. However, excessive focus upon these dimensions alone is too narrow, and will not provide a sufficient basis for a distinctive style or distinctive institutions of Catholic higher education, for at least four reasons.

- First, there are a great many non-Catholic colleges and universities that have strong commitments to some or all four of these elements. To cite just one illustration, there has been a phenomenal growth of service learning programs outside of Catholic higher education over the past decade.

- Second, if Catholic higher education were to be defined exclusively by means of these four elements, there would be no clear rationale for how the vast

majority of courses and disciplines – the professional schools, the natural sciences, the social sciences, languages and arts, for example – contribute to such goals, or why they should be part of a Catholic institution. It is, after all, the academic and professional disciplines that provide the focal points of classroom instruction and dictate the standards of academic evaluations that students receive.

- Third, casting the identity of Catholic higher education exclusively or even primarily in terms of undergraduate formation and instruction terms bears an ominous resemblance to the pattern that Marsden has analyzed in detail in *The Soul of the American University* – a pattern that led to the secularization of the great Protestant universities in the 19th century (Burtchaell, 1998; Marsden, 1994). Catholic institutions of higher education resisted this pattern because they were run by religious orders, because they had a vision of education that integrated formation, learning, science and scholarship, and because they were susceptible to interventions by church authorities. Since the 1960s, all of these forms of resistance have been seriously weakened (Gleason, 1995; Leahy, 1991; Marsden, 1994). In light of these changed circumstances, therefore, it would be unwise to rely solely upon the four elements mentioned above to sustain Catholic identity at institutions of higher learning.

- Fourth, scientific and scholarly research is constantly transforming both the content of what is taught and how it ought to be taught. Hence, excessive concentration upon teaching and formation of students, and especially with regard to ethics, service, and social justice, as the defining features of Catholic higher education entirely neglects the activities of faculty members in research and publication. It also neglects the powerfully important impact that research has upon the student-directed dimensions of institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, research and publication are playing ever more important roles in shaping the sense of identity and self-worth of Catholic colleges and universities. As they strive to establish high quality and credibility among the best institutions of higher learning, increasingly Catholic institutions are being evaluated by national rankings, parents, student applicants, funding sources, and peers at secular institutions. For all of them, the quality of research and publication is a prominent factor.

It would, therefore, be a great mistake to neglect to think long and seriously about what sort of role research ought to play in Catholic institutions of higher learning precisely as Catholic. As Marsden points out, a major factor in the demise of the religious identity of the major Protestant universities in America, including Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, Michigan, and Chicago, was their adoption of models of research and the hiring of research faculty that were indifferent to the faith traditions of their founders. These decisions, as he argues, meant that the faith traditions became increasingly irrelevant, first to the intellectual life, and eventually to student teaching, student formation, and indeed to every aspect of these institutions (Marsden, 1994).

So, while teaching and formation of students' minds and characters must

remain a major mission of Catholic colleges and universities, it is not enough to say that special concern for these alone will suffice in providing the unique identifying marks of Catholic institutions. The greatest challenge to be faced is how to think about scientific and scholarly research itself, and how it is intrinsic to the mission of Catholic institutions. Something over and above teaching, formation, service, and justice is needed, if Catholic universities are to survive as distinctive institutions with special and valuable contributions to make to education and society.

The challenge confronting Catholic higher education has been given a powerful expression in the closing lines of Philip Gleason's study of twentieth century American Catholic higher education, *Contending with Modernity*. Gleason writes:

The task facing Catholic academics today is to forge from the philosophical and theological resources uncovered in the past half-century a vision that will provide what Neoscholasticism did for so many years – a theoretical rationale for the existence of Catholic colleges and universities as a distinctive element in American higher education. (1995, p. 322)

Gleason's remarks suggest that Neoscholasticism once provided such an integral vision, and his justly lauded book amply documents just how Neoscholasticism did that, despite the limitations that led to its inevitable collapse.

In other words, what is needed is a vision that integrates into a coherent whole the four student-directed emphases, the various academic and professional disciplines, and the methods of science, scholarship, and criticism. It is precisely the absence of an integral vision that incorporates the properly academic dimensions of the higher education as such, which poses the most difficult but most crying challenge of the present situation for Catholic higher education.

This article endeavors to offer a modest contribution to this enormous task, and to stimulate conversation about a new integral vision for Catholic higher education. The article is divided into three sections. The first section provides a brief survey of Gleason's analysis of Catholic higher education in the first two-thirds of the 20th century, and the role that Neoscholasticism played in it. In the second section, the idea of human history as a good under construction is proposed as a possible model to fill the void left by the eclipse of Neoscholasticism. The final section explores the ways that Ignatius of Loyola's exercises in discernment and Bernard Lonergan's idea of self-appropriation can contribute to putting this vision into practice.

## **GLEASON ON CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION**

Gleason provides a careful contextualization of how Neoscholasticism came to play a central role in the identity and practices of American Catholic colleges

and universities in the first two-thirds of the 20th century. His contextualization proceeds on two fronts. He first traces the transformations of the organizational structures of Catholic education in the first decades of the century. Then he analyzes how subsequent Catholic educators turned to Neoscholastic thought in their attempts to address the problems posed by what was called a “modernist” vision of reality and humanity. The two, as Gleason explains, were intertwined. “The organizational modernization ... made it possible to institutionalize the [Neoscholastic] intellectual revival in the colleges, while the revival in turn reinforced the Catholic identity of the colleges at a time when they were undergoing a process of institutional modernization” (Gleason, 1995, p. 137).

The early part of the 20th century witnessed the transformation of the structures of Catholic higher education. At the turn of the century Catholic education was organized along the lines of what was called the *Ratio Studiorum* (“Course of Studies” or “Order of Studies” are possible English translations). The *Ratio Studiorum* was the classical model of liberal education. As one document from the Jesuit Missouri Province put it, *Ratio Studiorum* was conceived of as liberal education, which “fully develops all the faculties, forms a correct taste, teaches the student how to use all his powers to the best advantage, and prepares him to excel in any pursuit, whether professional or commercial” (Gleason, 1995, p. 53). The principal method of the *Ratio Studiorum* was education in the classical languages, Latin and Greek, in order that students might be brought “into contact with the noblest minds of antiquity” (Gleason, 1995, p. 5) and acquire a “mastery of [Ciceronian] Latin” (p. 53) in order to achieve “*eloquentia perfecta*, the ability to speak Latin fluently and with persuasive power” (Gleason, 1995, p. 5). This cultivation was in itself a noble end but, especially among Jesuits, it was conceived of as providing the preparation for a still higher end, namely: the study of philosophy and ultimately theology. Originally this meant the philosophy of Aristotle and the theology of Thomas Aquinas (Farrell, 1938), but by the 18th century the understanding and even teaching of both had fallen into much disarray. Even so, this overall, integrated structure of studies was regarded as “an almost perfect synthesis of religious and educational values” (Gleason, 1995, p. 35).

In other words, the goal of the *Ratio Studiorum* was the production of the whole person, a cultivated person, where “cultivated” meant a culturally specific model of human perfection, the classical ideal. In his study of the founding of the Society of Jesus, John O’Malley, S.J. has reminded us of how the first Jesuits were instrumental in developing this *Ratio Studiorum* as the model of college education. It was indeed a monumental achievement in its day, frequently bringing order to the chaos of what passed for education (O’Malley, 1993). That it survived for over 300 years testifies to its achievement and value. It should be noted that this *Ratio Studiorum* and its ideal of studying the classics also formed the original core of the Protestant colleges that evolved into the leading American universities. The classical conception of higher education in the Protestant colleges survived well into the 19th century. As the Protestant col-

leges began the transition to universities, they did so by replacing this classical, formation ideal of their institutions with the ideal of the research university borrowed from the great European universities. The transformation of the church-related Protestant colleges into thoroughly secular institutions was centrally bound up with abandonment of the classical *Ratio Studiorum* conception of the aims and goals of higher education.

Gleason also points out that in its original 16th century European setting, the emphasis on classical languages and cultivation had eminently practical value, since mastery of Latin was required for careers in the church, law, medicine, and government. However, in the context of a modern American society undergoing massive transformations, this original integration of practical and cultural values was severed. By the late 19th century, the American Jesuits, who became the staunchest defenders of the *Ratio Studiorum* model, had to base their arguments on the cultural values alone. This resulted in the almost myopic disregard of needs for practical education (Faherty, 1968; Gleason, 1995).

The way in which the *Ratio Studiorum* was organized around classical languages also had another serious negative consequence. Jesuit faculty members were expected to teach all the subjects offered in a given year of studies; for example, classical languages, English, mathematics, and history. Thus Jesuits became generalists in language instruction and character formation, but this “prevented them from becoming real scholars in any field” (Gleason, 1995, p. 58).

Such problems eventually led to a major reform movement in Catholic education. These reforms included a separation of preparatory education from the college education proper, and an increasing accommodation of programs of instruction that better prepared graduates to gain employment in the new industrial and bureaucratic society. The Protestant institutions had undertaken similar sorts of reforms two generations earlier. These reforms led to the erosion of the *Ratio Studiorum* and left Catholic institutions of higher learning in need of a new model for integrating its course of studies with its faith commitments and its goals of educating the whole person.

That new integrating vision was supplied, Gleason argues, by the renaissance of Neoscholastic philosophy beginning around 1920. By the late 18th century, the philosophy and theology of Thomas Aquinas had been largely abandoned by Catholics and non-Catholics alike in favor of Cartesian and Enlightenment philosophical trends. The revival of interest, and the historical, scholarly studies that gave it intellectual substance, were stimulated by Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical of 1879, *Aeterni Patris*. The encyclical endorsed the virtues of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas for establishing “Catholic teaching on a solid intellectual foundation” (Gleason, 1995, p. 105). The Neoscholastic revival was also spurred by earlier papal condemnations of Modernism and Americanism. Decades later these authoritarian motivations would contribute to the demise of Neoscholasticism. The loss of its vitality was made painfully evident in John Tracy Ellis’s stinging critique in 1955 of the anti-intellectualism of American Catholicism. Many Catholic college faculty of the

1960s still bristled at the anti-intellectualism of this period, and felt the breath of fresh air that followed the demise of Neoscholasticism.

Despite the eventual negative impact of the authoritarian promotions of Neoscholasticism, their initial effect was to set off an era of intellectual vitality throughout the Catholic community, and especially in American Catholic colleges and universities. By the end of the 1920s, “Neoscholasticism had become a ‘school philosophy’ that served for Catholic colleges very much the same functions that Scottish common sense philosophy and Baconianism served for Protestant colleges in the first half of the nineteenth century” (Gleason, 1995, p. 105). Neoscholasticism offered a metaphysical synthesis of the connections among knowledge, reality, God, the natural universe, the human place in it, and the norms of human conduct. By way of contrast, in the modern philosophies and worldviews that displaced Scholasticism’s integral vision, these elements became fragmented; or they held to one or another sort of reductionism; namely, that all human experiences, meanings, behaviors, and truths can be reduced to laws of matter in motion. On the other hand, because Neoscholasticism understood each human person to be part of the intelligible unity of all reality, it constituted “the basis for a system of personal and social ethics in which moral obligation flowed, not from the teachings of religion, not even from the *command* of God, but from God’s *being*, the structure of reality itself” (Gleason, 1995, pp. 117-118). As such, Neoscholasticism also offered a way of integrating faith and reason:

The God-centeredness, the emphasis on the supernatural dimension, the insistence on viewing all things *sub specie aeternitatis* [from an eternal perspective], which underlay the whole movement of the Catholic revival and constituted its most important feature, involved much more than rationality, important as that was.... For God’s *being* did more than illuminate the human intellect. Once understood, the divine plan for humankind required action, a commitment to its fulfillment on the part of every believer. And even more important, God’s infinite perfection simultaneously awakened spiritual longings that could be satisfied only by personal union with God. To learn more of God and God’s creation was not merely to be called to apostolic action; it was to be drawn more powerfully to God as the object of contemplation, of worship, of prayer, of devotion, of the soul’s desire for spiritual fulfillment. (Gleason, 1995, pp. 121-122)

Gleason’s allusions to the intimate connections between the study of Aquinas’ thought, and the intellectual, literary, aesthetic, and mystical dimensions of the Catholic renaissance are borne out in the careers of such figures as Flannery O’Connor and Thomas Merton. In addition, Gleason narrates in some detail how Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin, and the emergence of the Catholic Worker and the Catholic Action movements of that period were also dependent in important ways on the integral vision that came out of this Neoscholastic revival (Gleason, 1995).

Aquinas’ thought also contained an integral view of what science is, what

sorts of sciences there might be, and how they are related to the larger metaphysical scheme of things. Hence, it was recognized early on by certain key figures that Neoscholasticism could also supply a context for research, as well as for the teaching and formation of students (Gleason, 1995). Frequently alumni who were educated during the late stages of that period, in spite of the obscurities of the content and the often poor quality of instruction they received, still testify that it gave them a greatly cherished orientation for the rest of their lives.

This survey of Gleason's study is not intended as an expression of nostalgia or an exhortation for a return to Neoscholasticism. Neoscholasticism declined because of its own limitations, and because it was often supported by appeals to authority that alienated many students and faculty alike. Moreover, the versions of Neoscholasticism available at that time, even at their best, were not up to the task of integrating new and rapidly emerging forms of knowledge, or the rise of professional training, or the new methods and standards of research demanded by these developments. Rather, this summary is intended to deepen appreciation of the challenge that Gleason says we now face. In its own time, at its best, Neoscholasticism offered a compelling vision integrating the learning, science, scholarship, faith, ethical norms, commitment to justice, and a rich spiritual life. A comparable vision is needed today if the character of Catholic institutions of higher learning is to be sustained.

## **THE GOOD UNDER CONSTRUCTION AS A NEW INTEGRAL VISION**

With a view toward the development of a new integral vision, this section draws upon the philosophical and theological resources developed by the late Jesuit thinker, Bernard Lonergan. Lonergan was himself a product of both the era of the *Ratio Studiorum* and the Neoscholastic revival. He learned not only to read but to lecture in Latin, if not in a Ciceronian style, at least in an unmistakable, almost comical sing-song rhythm that is preserved on tapes and CDs. His early, unpublished works reflect much of the exuberance of the Catholic renaissance and its hopes for transforming modern society. In his earliest published scholarly work, he also contributed to the historical, scholarly retrieval of Aquinas' thought.

But Lonergan also recognized that there were severe limitations to the abstract and excessively deductive character of Neoscholastic metaphysics, its sometimes complacent self-assurance, and its classicist indebtedness to the culturally limited ideals of the *Ratio Studiorum*. Most importantly, he came to the conclusion that Neoscholastic metaphysics could not do justice to the rich complexities of human subjectivity, to the dynamism of the evolving natural universe, or to the dynamics of human history. He frequently quoted the comment of historian Christopher Dawson that Neoscholasticism was not up to the task of thinking on the level of history. Early on, therefore, he set about searching for



an approach to philosophical and theological issues that would overcome these various limitations, but would still retain what was best and most admirable from the classical and Neoscholastic visions of an integration of education and scholarship.

One of Lonergan's ideas in crafting this new vision is what he called self-appropriation. The ultimate goal of self-appropriation, as Lonergan conceived of it, is coming to an intimate knowledge of oneself as participating in the unfolding of the grand drama of cosmic and human history. Every human being is born into a unique set of circumstances and experiences fashioned by the history that preceded her or his birth. Individuals' responses to their circumstances and experiences determine both the kind of person they will become, and also determine what their contribution to history will be – what circumstances will be passed on to those who follow. Everything depends upon the *ways* people respond. For Lonergan, self-appropriation is a matter of becoming ever more attentive to these responses.

Lonergan's view of the dynamics of history can be aptly characterized by a phrase from O'Connor: "the good in us is under construction." In her *Introduction to a Memoir of Mary Ann*, O'Connor (1961) offers a meditation on how it is that God draws good out of what seem to humans to be hopeless imperfections and tragedies. Lonergan's understanding of history resonates with that of O'Connor, but at the same time he nuances it by identifying three 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 corruptions 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. Human history has an unknown destiny. Whatever that destiny will turn out to be, Lonergan argued, it will be brought about through the complex interactions of these three dynamics. In effect, Lonergan forged an integral vision based, not on a metaphysics of being as Neoscholasticism did, but on a dynamic conception of history as the good under construction. However in his early works, up to and including *Insight*, he was still attempting to formulate this new integral vision in terms of a metaphysics.

To be more specific, in Lonergan's view human life and human history are 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 human 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 ever shifting vicissitudes of daily living. In Lonergan's view, acts of human intelligence abound in all cultures, all ages, all walks of life. People must 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. Hence, in addition to the acts of intelligence involved in assimilating already existing patterns and devising innovations, the good under construction is also the product of what Lonergan called critical and reflective judgments that form the basis for the criticism and reform of human meanings and social arrangements. In his view, human personal and communal life is an ongoing construction in which questions, and intelligent and critical responses to them, play a leading role.

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 are the undeniable facts of ignorance, injustice, 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, find 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. Hence human evil also has a dynamism. Lonergan was most emphatic that any adequate understanding of history must also take into account 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 dynamism of injustice, alienation, disruption, and violence in human affairs as a matter of “bias.” The word, bias, has a variety of meanings. In Lonergan's technical sense, bias is a fundamental distortion of and a deviation from the creative, constructive, and critical employment of intelligence and ethical authenticity. He identified four fundamental forms of bias (Lonergan, 1992), but there are of course many varieties of each. When speaking as a theologian, Lonergan equated bias with sin. So, in addition to the dynamism of the good under construction that comes from intelligent human actions, there are also the corrupting dynamisms that result from the distorting biases.

Ideally, unencumbered human intelligence would produce gradual but ever increasing improvement of the human condition – such was the optimism of the Enlightenment that still underpins 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 and Lonergan's “good under construction” really good after all? Will the good of intelligent solutions to personal and social problems outweigh the social and his-

torical destructiveness 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 O'Connor, bears witness to yet a third dynamic in human affairs — the healing and redemptive 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 intuitions and communities in the wake of scandals. It is unconditional love for students that can motivate teachers to keep trying when immaturity or apathy makes their efforts seem futile; and love that makes teachers 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 life-long lines of inquiry despite indifference, criticism, and even ridicule. Unconditional love when actually practiced is more powerful than injustice, 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, critical 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 objectives of intelligence and criticism into passionately embraced *desiderata*. Because God's grace and unconditional love, no less than human intelligence and human injustice, are real and present throughout human history, we can dare to hope that this complex interplay of intelligence, bias, and love will together lead to the construction of an ultimate good in which, to paraphrase T. S. Eliot and Julianna of Norwich, "all shall be well and all manner of thing will be well."

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 academic and scientific research. The intelligent improvement of the human community is always a matter of adding our own new insights to those that have gone before. Although university professors frequently feel that their work is not appreciated and 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 transformation of organizational, economic, and political structures that have flowed from ideas generated in universities over the last century. If Catholic colleges and universities are to make distinctive contributions to the good under con-

struction, then they need to be putting forth research that incorporates distinctively Catholic resources. One way of doing so is the topic of the next section.

## SELF-APPROPRIATION, IGNATIAN DISCERNMENT AND INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE

For Lonergan the ultimate goal of self-appropriation is to understand and accept oneself as a responsible agent in these dynamics of history. It would seem, therefore, that self-appropriation would require one to become a historian. While Lonergan recognized the great importance of the study of history, he did not organize his approach to self-appropriation around the study of history as such. Instead, he began much more modestly, inviting people to engage in a series of exercises intended to bring about a heightened, personal awareness of and commitment to the activities of their own conscious living. Since in his view the good of history is brought about, little by little, by women and men engaging in these activities, it was Lonergan's belief 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 approach to self-appropriation can be compared to Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*. In particular, there are strong affinities between what Lonergan means by self-appropriation and Ignatius's notion of "discernment." Ignatius's spiritual exercises form a progressive structure intended to lead to a fundamental decision — "election" is Ignatius's term. In aid of that decision, Ignatius offers a series of rules or guidelines intended to help one make an examination of one's consciousness (Lonergan, 2002). The purpose of this examination is to "discern the movements of spirits" in one's own consciousness. Ignatius himself began to be aware of the often subtle differences between the promptings of good spirits and bad spirits — feelings which were stirring within his consciousness — when he was recuperating from wounds suffered in battle. Out of these personal experiences of discernment and election, Ignatius gradually composed a written guide for the sake of "helping souls" that eventually became his *Spiritual Exercises*.

Similarly, Lonergan proposes a series of exercises that enable people to become gradually more attentive to the acts by means of which they participate in, respond to, and contribute to the human historical good under construction.

The first stages of Lonergan's exercises are meant to assist one in paying ever closer attention to the stirrings of wonder and inquiry. Sometimes experiences of inquiry and wonder are quite vivid, but sometimes they are subtle and barely noticed. Lonergan's exercises are aids in realizing the pervasive presence and importance of the inquiring spirit in all aspects of personal and professional life. Self-appropriation involves recognition of the recurring presence of inquiries. It also involves becoming more aware of the ways that one employs sensations, imaginations, memories, and insights in responding to these

inquiries. But it also leads ever more to the discernment of the subtle and easily disregarded ways that inquiries will continue to linger when they have not been answered intelligently. Such discernment brings awareness of reflective dissatisfactions with inadequate answers and the corresponding desire for well-supported judgments. It brings to attention the ways in which one tends to stifle the calls of inquiries. These exercises in self-appropriation are intended to heighten our awareness of barely noticed questions. They also aim to make us more attentive to imaginative efforts to find intelligent answers to inquiries. By means of these exercises, a person can gradually notice the difference between arriving at genuine answers, and the ways in which she or he tends to smother and stifle intelligent inquiries, and to surrender critical integrity. In the movement of history, inquiry and wonder are the source of intellectual creativity. By means of exercises of self-appropriation, people can come to know themselves as intelligent, inquiring, critical, and meaning-originating agents.

Lonergan's own self-appropriation of inquiry led him to the realization that human inquiry is unlimited. There is nothing 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 humans are drawn ever onward to build up the good under construction, and one of the fundamental ways in which people 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 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, laboratories, and pre-professional practicum settings. 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.

One of Lonergan's more sophisticated claims is that when people concretely turn to self-appropriation of the disciplinary structures of inquiry, sooner or later they will confront the fact that everyone holds fundamental commitments which affect their work. Fundamental commitments run deeper than the fundamental propositions that people believe or even know to be true. Fundamental commitments are basic ways of living, ways of being-in-the-world. In their living, people 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 they align themselves with respect to religious issues. Such fundamental commitments are also embedded in the methods of disciplines as well as in the recesses of personalities. They affect how people observe, how they read, how they think and argue, what they choose to teach and publish, and ultimately what they choose to pass on and thereby affect the course of history. Eventually, self-appropriation of university

vocations will lead to reflection on and discussion of such fundamental commitments and their ultimate consequences for faculty members themselves and for their impacts upon human history.

But those who find their callings in university professions are not free from distortions of inquiry and intelligence, even though they may *profess* that their fundamental commitment is to the noble goal of always seeking truth. 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. The *Ratio Studiorum* itself held a deep prejudice against modern science. Neoscholasticism had a blindness to the challenges of thinking in evolutionary and historical terms. Positivism is prejudiced against concepts and arguments that do not involve a direct appeal to empirical data – and especially against religious meanings. The Enlightenment concepts of reason and truth are now being exposed for bias toward domination and control. In Freudian thought, there is a biased disregard of higher motivations and a reductionism of all human behavior to the lowest of mechanisms. Certain schools of economics hold marketplace efficiency as the supreme value, while their socialist and social justice critics seem blind to even the limited legitimacy of market efficiency. Widely held views about how academic criticism should be conducted, as set forth by willful proponents of skepticism, falsificationism, or deconstructionism, are subtly at variance with the realities of spontaneous human inquiry as disclosed by sustained self-appropriation. And so on.

When the fundamental commitments embedded in research methods and academic fads are contaminated with bias, they 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 contamination 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, it is necessary to 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 engaged in university research.

While bias is the second of Lonergan's dynamics, love is the third dynamic in his account of the good under construction of human history. Ultimately, fundamental commitments are matters of what one loves most highly and, conversely, abhors most strongly. This claim may sound absurd to a university con-

stituency 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 the Enlightenment's portrayal of reason, a product of its stories about the great heroes and martyrs of reason, and the great crimes against reason by the powers of religion, superstition, and tradition (Byrne, *in press*; Segre, 1998). The effect of such portrayals is to cultivate a love of the sort of reasoning modeled in the Enlightenment's narratives, and to engender enmity against its antagonists. There are of course many variations upon this theme of how academicians acquire the basic loves and resentments that motivate and structure their teaching and research. Bondi (1993), for example, offers a poignant account of how this narrative affects the life of a scholar, and how God's love can heal and transcend it. Kuhn (1970) has argued that all "normal" scientific research operates within paradigms inculcated in graduate training, and that the acquisition of a paradigm is comparable to a religious conversion—comparable to falling in love, as Lonergan (1972) would claim.

Perhaps the most profound of all current academic biases is the bias against love. To some extent this is understandable. There is naïve love that avoids hard, critical questions and prefers to see reality according to its romantic vision. There is the historical record of malevolent deception and exploitation of people (especially women) in the name of love. Such facts rightly give rise to a healthy suspicion about the deceptions and false claims in the name of love. But these facts 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 15th 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 professors into the disciplines and interests that they pursue as members of universities.

Hence university researchers, almost in spite of themselves, do have fundamental commitments, and they are affairs of love. The difficulty is that people have multiple loves, divided loves, and even as St. Augustine would claim, disordered loves. In some cases people are quite aware of their loves and, as well, of their resentments. Yet in many cases loves and resentments operate beyond conscious awareness or control. If this is so, then there is a great need for self-appropriation of loves and enmities, and of their workings in people's lives, including university lives. Because people have multiple and frequently conflicting loves, sustained discernment is needed in order to notice differences among loves, to understand and critically disentangle loves, and to make an "election" for the forms of love that are more authentic.

The discernment of loves has been the aim of the world's great spiritual practices. Ignatius's spiritual exercises draw upon the resources of the Christian and Jewish scriptural tradition and 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 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 their 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, though not necessarily in an explicitly religious context, when he or she chooses unconditional love, this is a decision that needs to be made over and over (Haughton, 1980). Repetition of the exercises facilitates such growth. As individuals grow toward a life of unconditional love, they gradually come to recognize ever more subtle incompatibilities between unconditional love and their own disordered loves. Likewise, they come to recognize in very personal ways how the talents and learnings they have acquired can be used in new ways in the service of unconditional love. This can be especially true for those engaged in university life.

Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises* (1914) offer a sketch of the self-appropriation of the third of Lonergan's dynamics of history – the healing power of God's unconditional and self-sacrificing love. In effect, the Ignatian exercises are intended to lead the exercitant to a personal commitment ("election") to God's love as revealed in Christ Jesus (O'Malley, 1993). Yet such self-appropriation can and does take place in other non-Ignatian, Catholic spiritual practices, as well as in non-Catholic Christian, and in the great non-Christian spiritual traditions. These are the spiritual practices and disciplines that have stood the test of time, because they have the degree of integrity and complexity that is demanded in order to foster the growth of human beings into living ever more fully according to the call of unconditional love.

The great Catholic spiritual traditions are, therefore, indispensable to the project of self-appropriation for faculty members in a Catholic university. Moreover, in the new context of pluralism, the non-Catholic spiritual traditions are equally indispensable. None of these spiritual traditions, however, was developed with the specific challenges of contemporary academic research in mind. Hence, there is need for something that will supplement the strengths of the great spiritual practices with exercises designed to appropriate how to synthesize a fundamental commitment to unconditional love properly with a fundamental commitment to unrestricted inquiry. Lonergan observed that what is needed is a supplementary structure of reflection adapted to the academic vocation that makes fundamental commitments "a topic" for dialogue (Lonergan, 1972, p. 253).

The first and most important thing to say about genuine dialogue concerning fundamental commitments is that it is *very* difficult, because fundamental



commitments are so deeply personal. People have differing fundamental commitments, and they have deep and personal reasons and loves grounding those differences. Real conversation of the kind needed for a new integral vision for Catholic universities cannot run away from those differences. Nor can it expect that the reality and profundity of those differences can be met adequately by the forms of indifference that can sometimes masquerade in lip service to tolerance or respect for cultural diversity. Real conversation about fundamental commitments has to take seriously the depth of the personal loves and resentments that underlie fundamental commitments, one's own as well as those of others. It has to acknowledge the personal challenges that will arise from real dialogue at this level.

The second thing to say about real dialogue about fundamental commitments is that it succeeds best when it operates in an indirect mode. Chalmers (1982) noted that positivism was hit by two very different, powerful intellectual refutations in the 1930s, but that neither of these had much effect on the fundamental attitudes of positivists. In part this is because the refutations were merely intellectual and did not go to the level of the personal reasons that led to commitments to positivism. But it also has to do with the fact that both refutations were frontal assaults. Real conversation about fundamental commitments works best when diverse groups of scholars come together and talk in an atmosphere of respect and love, not about their fundamental commitments, but about topics and issues of interest and concern to all involved.

There is nothing automatic about these interpersonal processes, however. A great deal depends upon the personal qualities that the participants bring to these conversations. Such conversations work best when the participants come with genuine intellectual interests in learning about something from people outside their own specialties. They also depend upon the presence of participants for whom unconditional love is really operative, whether it is named as such or not. They also depend upon the sense that these conversations will ultimately produce some sort of contribution—such as the design of a new course, publication of a volume, or organization of a conference. In other words, these conversations work best when they are perceived as leading to some contribution to the good under construction. When these factors are present, much good results.

But these indirect conversations only *surface* fundamental commitments and the ways they enter into particular issues. Here, something in addition to intellectual content, and even something more than positive personal qualities and friendship, is needed. That something more is a structured set of exercises to actually take the next step and reflect upon the fundamental commitments themselves.

Now Lonergan has some very interesting ideas concerning what he called “Dialectic” that might contribute to such a structure (Lonergan, 1972). Consider a comment drawn once again from Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*. In its simplicity, Ignatius's comment communicates something that Lonergan derived from him regarding his notion of dialectic. The comment comes from what Ignatius

called “The Presupposition” of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Ignatius writes:

In order that both [the director] who is giving the Spiritual Exercises, and he [or she] who is receiving them, may more help and benefit themselves, let it be presupposed that every good Christian is to be more ready to save [their] neighbor’s proposition than to condemn it. If [the director] cannot, let [the director] inquire how he [or she] means it; and if he [or she] means it badly, let [the director] correct him [or her] with charity. If that is not enough, let [the director] seek all the suitable means to bring him [or her] to mean it well, and save himself [or herself]. (1914, para. 22)

Ignatius’s Presupposition and Lonergan’s notion of Dialectic presuppose meaning and value are to be sought in the expressions of everyone that we encounter, and that the function of dialogue and dialectic is to find that meaning and build upon it. Ignatius’s remark and Lonergan’s fuller development of it suggest a rather different idea of academic rigor than the one often encountered in today’s academy: namely the practices of skepticism, falsificationism, or the various hermeneutics of suspicion and deconstruction which tend to turn researchers and teachers into “Ninja critics,” as O’Reilly (1993, p. 92) has put it. To be able to carry out the sort of approach suggested by Ignatius, without abandoning our inquiring spirit, is what is needed to structure real dialogue about fundamental commitments.

## CONCLUSION

This article has not tried to argue that high quality research should play an important role in Catholic institutions of higher learning. That is already a foregone conclusion. Emphasis on research has already become pervasive throughout Catholic institutions. Leahy (1991) narrates how Catholic institutions came to recognize that their ability to attract undergraduate students depended upon developing graduate programs – and this implied, of course, that they had to attract faculty members committed to high quality, cutting-edge research (see also Gleason, 1995). Even in departments that do not offer graduate programs, research and publication now weigh heavily in hiring and promotion decisions. As Leahy notes:

Before World War II, Catholic colleges and universities in America had a clear and compelling sense of purpose: to protect the faith of Catholics and to make it possible for Catholics to obtain a college education. But changes in American culture have largely dissolved the former consensus regarding the nature, characteristics, and meaning of Catholic education. (1991, p. 156)

Certainly the increased emphasis on research in higher education must be count-

ed among those changes in American culture. For better or worse, students come to universities because of faculties' research reputations, and financial survival will continue to impose the need to hire faculty who are trained in and engaged in the cutting edge of research. But the challenge to Catholic institutions is to find ways to integrate research into an enriched sense of mission that retains older commitments without allowing them to be vitiated by alien concerns.

The loss of faith-related commitments as research increased is precisely what did happen to the prestigious Protestant universities. Yet as Marsden (1994) has shown so meticulously, the loss of those faith-related commitments was not due to research *per se*, but rather to the fundamental commitments that framed the context within which research was conducted.

Hence, the concern of this article has been to argue not that research should be integral to the mission of Catholic higher education, but rather make a contribution to how to think about research as integral to that mission. It will not suffice to accept the standards and fundamental commitments of research as conducted in thoroughly secular contexts. This article, therefore, is not so much arguing that there should be a connection, but exploring ways that might be done, ways that address Gleason's call for a replacement for the integral context of Neoscholasticism. The proposal set forth here is to conceive of the mission of Catholic institutions of higher education as contributing to "good under construction." Put simply in terms of Catholic faith, the good under construction is the result of human contributions to what is ultimately God's work of creation and redemption. Borrowing from the work of Bernard Lonergan, the proposal here is to think about university research itself as participating in the dynamics of creative, critical inquiry and innovation, of bias, and of love that heals the destructiveness of bias. The secularization of the Protestant universities took place, Marsden argues, because critical inquiry was conducted within the confines of Enlightenment's fundamental assumptions, assumptions that blinded them to the insidious subtleties of bias and the transformative power of loving grace. Integrating the latter two with the first is the challenge for Catholic institutions.

This article, therefore, has endeavored to establish five important points. First, Gleason is correct in saying that the most important challenge before us is the development of an integral vision for Catholic higher education that does for the 21st century what Neoscholasticism did for a time at the beginning of the 20th century. Second, such a vision must include the research dimension of the Catholic university as well as the commitments to student instruction, formation, service, and social justice. Third, a profitable approach toward this new integral vision is in terms of the various ways that the research efforts of university faculty contribute to or corrupt the good under construction of human history. Fourth, the reflection upon academic research in its relation to the historical good under construction is achieved through exercises of self-appropriation and discernment of methods of inquiry, of the subtle biases that have been acquired, and of the ways that love, unconditional and otherwise, has upon the work of

research, teaching and student formation. And finally, such efforts of self-appropriation are aided by interdisciplinary conversations that include some sort of structured, methodical way of dialoguing about fundamental commitments.

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