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## "A Powerful Force for Good": Our Responsibility in Catholic Higher Education

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# "A Powerful Force for Good": Our Responsibility in Catholic Higher Education

Jan 13, 2021

January 12–14, 2021: Part of the dCEC Winter Conference discussing what it means to “dwell together in unity” and pursue the common good. Hosted by the University of Notre Dame de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture. Speaker lineup: <https://ethicscenter.nd.edu/programs/fall-conference/>

## Transcript – English (auto-generated)

*Errors have not been corrected.*

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[Music]

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your notre dame livestream will begin soon thanks for watching [Music]

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6:14

[Music]

6:22

your notre dame live stream will begin soon thanks for watching

6:36

good evening everybody welcome back for this evening's keynote conversation on our responsibility in

6:42

Catholic higher education my name is carter sneed and i'm the director of the nicholas center for ethics and culture and also professor of

6:49

law here at the university of notre dame the nicholas center as i mentioned last night is dedicated to sharing the

6:55

richness of the Catholic moral and intellectual tradition both here at notre dame and in the

7:00

public square as notre dame i'm particularly thrilled about tonight's panel as we have with us four

7:06

outstanding advocates for the Catholic intellectual tradition all of whom are exemplary scholars and administrators in their own

7:12

right and i'm pleased to say four people who i'm honored to call colleagues and friends it's such a gift to the

7:18

university to have marcus and sarah as our deans what's more the nicholas center in particular owes much to the long

7:24

friendship and support of president tom hibbs i'm delighted they could all take

7:30

time from their busy schedules to be with us here this evening to moderate uh tonight's conversation is

7:36

my dear friend anna bonta moreland associate professor of theology in the department of

7:41

humanities and director of the honors program at villanova university and is also a past miser visiting fellow

7:48

at the Nicola center for ethics and culture her areas of research include faith and reason medieval theology with an

7:55

emphasis on thomas aquinas the theology of religious pluralism and comparative theology

8:01

in the humanities program at villanova professor moreland regularly teaches courses

8:06

in theology interreligious dialogue and on shaping an adult life and on the rise of

8:13

modern atheism her most recent book is muhammad reconsidered a Christian perspective on islamic

8:21

prophecy published here in 2020 by the university of notre dame press led by the wonderful director stephen

8:27

wren so without further ado i will turn things over to anna

8:33

thank you carter i'm delighted to moderate uh our this evening's panel

8:38

i want to acknowledge though that we are missing having just had dinner at moore at the

8:44

morris inn walking over to mckenna hall being in the mckenna hall auditorium

8:50

so we're going to do the best we can uh the only comfort is that you could be in your slippers

8:55

and that's terrific um the comfort to me is that carter has his signature scarf

9:00

so um that's a a token of continuity from our in-person ethics and culture conferences to this

9:07

year and looking forward to the next year as well i am thrilled to be moderating the

9:14

conversation this evening before i do though i just want to mention that there's a

9:19

you can click on the q a icon at the bottom of your zoom screen at any time to submit a question to the

9:26

moderator those questions are going to magically appear on my end and i will be able to

9:31

vocalize those questions for you we're going to have a brief conversation and then we'd like to include you in the

9:37

conversation so that you can ask your questions and um our three distinguished

9:42

administrators can take a crack at answering them and we'll solve the world's problems this evening

9:49

so i'm going to introduce our three panelists in do order right now dean cole

9:55

dean marcus cole is the joseph a matson dean and professor of law at notre dame law school where he was appointed in

10:02

2019 a leading scholar of empirical law and economics of commerce and finance he

10:08

came to notre dame from stanford law school where he held two endowed chairs and served on the faculty from 1997

10:15

to 2019. his extensive legal and scholarly

10:20

background includes serving as a national fellow at the hoover institution a fellow at the

10:26

university of amsterdam center for law and economics and a visiting professor at several

10:31

institutions around the world including the university of amsterdam the university of vienna

10:36

leiden university northwestern university korea university and pete king university school of entrance

10:43

transnational law in shenzhen china but now he calls he calls south bend

10:48

home professor thomas hibbs was appointed the ninth president of the university of

10:55

dallas in 2019 he previously served as the inaugural dean of the honors college and

11:01

distinguished professor of ethics and culture at baylor university where he taught for 16 years and before

11:08

that as professor and chair of the philosophy department at boston college hibbs received his phd in medieval

11:14

studies at the university of notre dame and is the author of three books on the thought of thomas aquinas

11:20

as well as author or editor of nine other books in countless academic and popular articles

11:26

we're delighted that president hibbs was able to join us this evening and lastly dean sarah mustillo is the ia

11:35

o'shaughnessy dean of the college of arts and letters and professor of sociology at the university

11:40

of notre dame an expert in the social causes of childhood mental illness and statistical methods

11:46

used in social science research mustila joined the notre dame faculty in 2014

11:53

after serving seven years as a professor of sociology at purdue university and six years on the faculty at duke

11:59

university school of medicine she was chair of notre dame's department of sociology from 2016 to 2018.

12:08

she is co-editor of the american sociological review the author of more than 50 peer-reviewed

12:13

journal articles and a frequent speaker at domestic and international conferences on topics

12:19

ranging from child mental health and wellness to advanced statistical methods

12:25

dean mustillo is going to take the lead this evening all of the three panelists have had a chance to look over some questions that

12:33

i sent to them previous to our conversation this evening they've each selected one the method of

12:39

procedure for the first part of our conversation is dean mustilla will choose

12:44

a question make some comments about it and then uh dean cole and president hibbs will

12:52

uh comment upon the question as well and then we'll just take it from there and just see how it goes

12:59

so i turned the baton over to you sarah thank you wonderful to be here tonight

13:06

uh we we had a list of six questions that we could choose from to get started tonight and i

13:12

think i chose one of the more provocative ones uh to get us to get us going so i will read the question and then

13:17

offer some thoughts in a time when our political fabric is being pulled apart from all sides

13:23

the church's own fabric reflects these tensions what responsibility do Catholic



13:29

universities have to keep the church's fabric from tearing apart and what active steps can universities

13:35

take to ease these tensions i'll read it one more time since we're on zoom

13:41

in a time when our political fabric is being pulled apart from all sides the church's own fabric reflects these

13:47

tensions what responsibility do Catholic universities have to keep the church's

13:52

fabric from tearing apart and what active steps can universities take to ease these tensions

14:00

i was playing in the parking lot the other day um and the car in front of me had a bumper sticker

14:05

on it that said science is real so is God and i love that bumper sticker because

14:13

i felt like it you know you'd only see that at a Catholic school um you know at a place where where we

14:19

can believe in both science and God and we should believe in both science and God

14:24

but to the question what responsibilities do Catholic universities have to keep the fabric from tearing apart

14:31

i think Catholic universities have the responsibility to model how to disagree

14:36

with deep love and deep respect and how to speak with both conviction and humility but also

14:43

how to listen and even be changed by opposing viewpoints or at the very least to learn from them

14:50

what does that mean concretely i can think of a couple things that Catholic universities can do to help us achieve that aim so one of

14:57

the things we can do is to provide a historical perspective um i was talking about chris smith who's

15:02

a friend of the de Nicolaa center um and a fellow sociologist the other day and he reminded me that

15:08

um if we can think about a historical perspective on polarization that um

15:14

that puts our present in the context of the past meaning there's never been a time in the

15:20

history of the church where we haven't had conflict um there's never been a time when there weren't strong disagreements among the

15:27

faithful over all kinds of issues so it's helpful to look back so that we don't wrongly believe that

15:33

we're in a truly unique situation and at this time the fabric may really tear apart

15:38

conflict is built into the Catholic view of the development of doctrine and our readiness to rethink our beliefs

15:45

in light of our developing human experience in new times so i think our key isn't to avoid

15:52

conflict but it's how to have virtuous conflict so i think that's the second thing we can do

15:57

as a Catholic university is we can help channel disagreements into productive

16:03

discussions we can try to enhance mutual understanding and maybe even advance

16:09

insight now that's a very academic answer to a situation that's often

16:14

fraught with emotion and conviction and righteousness and stubbornness and what i see a lot around the

16:21

university and even around the nation is a lot of people figuratively throwing bombs at each other

16:27

and not having that kind of virtuous disagreement um i think i see a lot of people

16:33

talking at each other being willing to get into the same room but then not really listening to each other because they're so dug in on their

16:40

own perspective and convinced they're right so that's what i'd like to see us do better and that's what i'd like to see

16:46

the Catholic universities do is that we can model uh for the church

16:51

how believers of the same faith with very different views can have productive conversations

16:58

in which each person or each group seeks to listen seeks to understand each other to rise

17:04

above incivility to rely upon reason and evidence to engage with one another

17:10

and to deal with disagreements with with deep respect for one another as brothers and sisters

17:15

in the church we can also model that for the nation as well and not just for the church

17:21

how do patriots who love the same country but hold very different views how can

17:26

they have productive conversations in which each person or group seeks to listen and understand the other

17:33

rise above incivility rely upon reason and evidence uh and and deal with disagreements with

17:40

deep respect for one another as fellow citizens of the same country

17:46

i think if we could do that we would be able to prevent further tearing of the fabric in the country

17:51

and keep patriotism from turning into nationalism thank you sarah marcus

17:59

yeah i i don't see how anyone could disagree with what sarah just said i think that that's an important responsibility

18:05

of uh Catholic uh universities and of Catholic education um

18:11

but i i would i think i would go further uh i think that what we're seeing right now

18:17

is a failure of higher education generally to get uh students to think not just think

18:24

critically but self-critically and what i mean by that is that um we we've come to a point

18:31

particularly in our politics where politics has become um almost um like a religion

18:39

for a lot of people and when it comes to our faith and our Catholicism a lot of people

18:46

attempt to to shape the their faith to to to match their politics rather

18:53

than the other way around um and it's it's it's led to this dualistic

19:00

thinking um uh in fact it was a very um uh interesting um op-ed uh recently over the last

19:08

couple of days uh by father james martin the Jesuit priest

19:13

and prolific author who talked about this and it made me think that what a lot of

19:19

us do when it comes to our faith is to is is to is to um we've already

19:27

made free commitments to our political beliefs and we we try to shape our our faith uh uh uh to those political

19:35

beliefs um a lot like uh judith jarvis thompson's trolley problem right so if

19:41

you remember the trolley problem you've got five people on the tracks in one direction and if you don't divert the train

19:48

uh to to kill one person it's gonna kill the five and so we've we've gotten into this um

19:54

mindset where we've um we've become devoted to um

20:00

one particular approach or solution to a problem uh rather than another and

20:07

these commitments uh to me um are misguided and one of the things that

20:13

we can do as educators is to get our students to recognize that

20:20

life is much more complex than the trolley problem there there are not clear-cut answers

20:27

that lead us to vote for republicans or democrats that

20:33

that that their their uh is innocent life to protect in

20:39

the womb but there's also innocent life to protect on the streets and we we need to

20:47

find more complex solutions and we need to be more um uh self-critical when it comes to our

20:53

political commitments and make sure that our politics isn't supplanting our faith and i think that uh as Catholic

21:00

universities we can take a lead in introducing our students uh not just

21:05

the critical thinking but to to be self-critical as well thank you tom would you have anything to

21:11

add yeah uh great great comments first of all i want to say thanks to carter for the invitation i got to

21:18

catch some of carter and the great david solomon earlier and uh happy to be with my friend anna

21:24

again and uh to share the stage with uh with marcus and sarah

21:29

here a couple thoughts i i think we're in big trouble in our culture and my

21:35

big disappointment about our universities is that at best uh we sort of reflect the

21:41

problems of the culture and at worse i think we make them worse often uh by the way we conduct ourselves on

21:48

campuses i mean it was striking to me i remember a a tweet from john height uh during the

21:55

kavanagh hearings which now seems like it was 40 years ago uh but where he said if you want to know

22:01

why we're seeing the division we see today and he put up a poll survey results of uh answer to the

22:08

question do you hate members of the other political party and in the 1980s this

22:13

hovered in the low teens and in the last 10 years it's been bursting upward toward 50 percent

22:20

of americans who say yes i hate members of the political party that i'm

22:26

not a member of we also have very good survey data showing that it is the most politically

22:34

informed people who get their opponents wrong when they're asked about

22:39

their beliefs and the sources of their beliefs these are striking civic civic animosity

22:46

and ignorance amongst the most active and informed people in our culture we're living i

22:52

think in an age of ideological insanity in our culture uh we're living at a time when uh

22:59

newton's law of an equal and opposite reaction politically it's actually an opposite

23:05

and exponentially higher reaction of each side to one another what can we do about this

23:12

well i i think that on our campuses and this has been said

23:17

uh uh by both sarah and marcus we do have to we do have to teach uh

23:24

self-criticism we do have to teach rational disagreement i think there are two things two virtues

23:30

that need to be connected with that you know there are books ben sasse's book arthur brooks's book

23:35

on love your enemies these are important books i think what's missing in some of the arguments

23:42

about civility and where universities can really step in is that what we believe particularly

23:47

at Catholic universities what we believe is that taking objections seriously to my position

23:54

are important for my own pursuit of truth and for our communal pursuit of truth

24:00

remember bernard williams in in his book on truth and truthfulness some years ago

24:05

said you know one of the virtues of truthfulness is accuracy which is a passion for getting it right

24:12

and academics at our best in our fields exhibit that i think we need to exhibit that more

24:18

actively in the classroom and we need to exhibit for our students a willingness to

24:23

entertain quite seriously positions that are opposed to the ones that we hold

24:28

and have students see us doing that and we need to invite students we need to give them the

24:35

sense of trust the sense of hope that they can relax for a moment about

24:41

their ideological commitments and actually think about the issues and be drawn out

24:46

into serious argument the other thing in addition to a commitment to truthfulness i do think

24:51

and this is this runs all through pope francis's recent encyclical fratelli tutti



24:57

i think we need to think deeply about the virtue of solidarity uh and how we think about that in our

25:03

communities especially on campuses and around our campuses and a sense of uh what we

25:11

owe to one another out of what aquinas calls misericordia or mercy

25:18

uh a sense of our being bound to one another in both the pursuit of

25:24

truth and even more rooted in a kind of trustfulness and love and those are hard things to do all at

25:31

once but but i think this is the mission of a Catholic university

25:36

is to counter the kind of ideological insanity that dominates our culture and to do so

25:41

by giving students the freedom to pursue the truth in wonder and joy and friendship and in

25:49

solidarity with one another thank you tom marcus and sarah do you

25:54

have any follow-ups can i ask a follow-up question myself

26:00

then i know there are a lot of undergraduates who tune in to who both attend this conference and who

26:06

are tuning in tonight and i guess i want to ask the kind of pre let's disagree together

26:13

question which is i find in the classroom that my students are too nervous about

26:19

even saying what their deeply held convictions are so there's a problem of politeness and

26:25

there's a there's an inability to disagree from the get-go so how do you even get them into the

26:31

gate to vocalize with their deeply held conditions

26:36

does that make sense as a question yeah it does and i think um

26:43

i think what we've lost is an atmosphere or environment of charity um

26:49

that we are we are not giving people permission to express

26:56

their their their true thoughts or their true feelings um because of a fear that um

27:04

there will be a violent uh response to it and um one of the things we can do

27:11

at Catholic universities is create an environment and atmosphere of charity

27:16

um where we um we recognize that um we are all part of

27:24

the same environment and at the same deference and latitude that we would

27:30

want that we would extend it to others um and and i think that Catholic

27:35

universities have an opportunity to to make a unique contribution in that area

27:41

um that that a lot of the secular universities have failed to make

27:49

great thank you marcus yeah so i'm uh i'm glad tom brought up

27:55

uh for telly tutti because although i like all of the questions i i and i think they're all important i

28:01

think that the tom's mention of fertility tutti uh leads me to to ask to try to answer uh

28:09

this question um the question is this summer brought issues of racism in this

28:14

country to the fore and away not seen since the 1960s how can

28:19

Catholic universities respond to this pressing need in a distinctive way so um

28:26

i'm old enough to remember the 60s uh and i'm um and i'm disappointed with what

28:33

um the events of last summer and the events of the last year have and

28:39

perhaps even the last four years have revealed about our society and the the position of race

28:48

in our society i think what it's revealed

28:54

much to my disappointment is that we failed we have failed when it comes to addressing issues of

29:00

racism we've basically put a band-aid on it and i've been in discussions with my

29:07

colleagues carter among others about um uh both what what is it about

29:16

the approaches that have been taken that have failed and how can Catholic universities respond in a

29:22

distinctive way and as i think about it i think it what what is at the core

29:27

of um of uh our faith of Catholicism and at the core of

29:34

our our faith is a belief that each of us is made in the image and likeness of God

29:43

and that we should strive to see each other the way God sees us

29:50

God sees each of us um and i think what what um flows from this is that

29:58

uh it starts to reveal the the real failure of how we've addressed racism in this

30:03

country over the last 30 or 40 50 60 years

30:09

since i was a kid and that is that we we've we've combated racism

30:16

in an anti-Catholic way we've combated racism with more racism in other words we

30:24

we see the problem and we think the solution to the problem is to treat everyone categorically

30:30

and and take people and treat them as placeholders for a race or an ethnicity or a gender

30:39

and that has not brought us any progress

30:44

the idea of each of us being created in the image and likeness of God

30:51

means that at our core we are not black or white or um

30:58

asian we are at our core individuals and to the extent that we

31:04

fail to treat each of us as individuals if we treat people as placeholders

31:09

for a particular race then we are only putting a band-aid over a deeper problem because we are

31:16

failing to interact with people as individuals

31:22

as creatures of God uh who are created in the image and likeness of God we are

31:27

doing something that is antithetical to our Catholicism to our faith uh

31:34

and um we have to acknowledge that and we have to correct it and i think

31:40

one of the ways we can correct it at uh Catholic universities is to reject

31:45

the secular um band-aid approach uh to racism and start to treat people

31:51

like individuals um with all of the uh various characteristics that they have

31:56

that we ought to value that real diversity involves valuing people of different

32:02

racess different cultures but also of different talents um uh different backgrounds

32:08

and um if we if we fail to do that then we can't expect progress from others with this is an

32:15

area in which we as Catholics and as Catholic universities in particular

32:20

ought to be leading the rest of our society thank you marcus tom do you like

32:27

anything to add yeah i i mean i i it's hard to it's hard to say more uh than um than

32:35

what marcus just did you know i i've been thinking a lot about and started last summer with

32:40

uh a conversation series that i set up did one uh with bishop baron and then with my good friend and fellow ud alum bishop

32:47

flores from brownsville trying to to help us in the church develop

32:52

a language for thinking about these things that's authentically Catholic and and i think uh one of the one of the

32:58

things that marcus highlighted is the emphasis upon unity but our ability to take difference within unity

33:04

seriously i mean i think of the foundation of the church at pentecost right with the disciples going

33:09

out and preaching and everybody hearing the one truth of the gospel in their own

33:17

individual language and then i think of the vision of heaven in uh in revelation i see a people of every

33:24

nation race and tongue right this this sense of unity of a diverse sets of

33:32

people i also think in the wider culture we've got a language of justice

33:39

that is disconnected from mercy now of course we don't want to shortchange justice and

33:45

have cheap forgiveness but if justice is completely separated from mercy

33:50

that that's heretical in the Catholic view right so connecting justice with mercy

33:57

we have conceptions of dignity that are floating free from any sort of foundation whatsoever

34:03

both in the language that marcus was using about being created in the image and likeness of God and in the natural law tradition we have

34:10

a basis for thinking about the grounding of dignity and the grounding of dignity not just in souls

34:16

but in our embodiment as carter is emphasizing in his most recent book so i think we have been

34:24

we have been too shy uh to talk about these issues and take them seriously but we've also been to and and maybe

34:30

there's other other motives than shyness involved there too but we have certainly been too shy to

34:37

invoke the richness of our traditions and of our language and of our uh the

34:43

depth of our theology to contribute to these contemporary discussions and i think we'd find if we

34:48

did that that we would be connecting up with an older civil rights movement of martin luther king and others that

34:55

was very much rooted in notions that are very akin to Catholic social thought thank you tom

35:02

sarah final word on this question it's hard to add to what both of them said but i will um

35:08

but i'll try uh i was thinking when i read this question about um how Jesus's message is both

35:16

particular and universal um and i was thinking about how you know

35:21

Jesus was born in a particular time in a particular country in a particular ethnicity to a particular family of

35:28

modest means you know in a particular religious context um and so forth under a particular ruler

35:35

and throughout Jesus's life in ministry of course he tried to reach across boundaries of

35:41

sex of ethnicity um we all know the stories the women at the well and all the rest um but if we think about the first

35:48

generation of Christians and how they struggled with kind of how to take the particular and you know

35:56

translate that into the universal gospel i think you know you can especially see it through paul's letters and it

36:01

culminates um in in the line that God has no favorites and and i think about that you know in

36:08

terms of the themes of the particular and the universal that that we realize the universal in the

36:13

particular and so you can't say that you love God if you don't love the person in front of

36:19

you right so um so i think that

36:24

you know what that means is that if we if we don't love each other you know kind of equally if we don't as

36:30

marcus said like see through the categories um then then we're not truly loving God

36:36

and and i agree with what tom said you know about dignity that we have a framework for this we have a framework

36:41

for how to do it um which also means i believe what marcus said that we have failed

36:48

that we have failed to do this as a church and if you if you go back through church documents

36:53



you could find teachings about discrimination and about racism back

36:59

decades you know john paul ii wrote about it the u.s conference of Catholic bishops have written about it

37:05

and so the fact that it's it's in all those documents it's in all those teachings you know it goes back to

37:10

scripture yet it's not a part of our you know what we talk about on a daily basis and what

37:16

we teach about and what we emphasize in the church um i think that's you know where we as a

37:21

Catholic university can really make a difference is to is to make sure that we bring that to the fore that we're talking about it all

37:27

the time that we're teaching about it all the time and that we're really emphasizing the message that that unless

37:33

you love everybody you don't love God so so let me add

37:38

one more thing if i may uh sarah's reference to the the whole history of this problem um

37:45

um uh just brought an image to my mind from what what tom said uh you know tom mentioned um the

37:52

pentecost and the apostles speaking in languages and being understood by

37:58

everyone to whom they they um they encounter it's the same

38:03

message but they can all understand and juxtapose that against the tower of babel where um

38:10

they're all speaking different languages and can't understand them so i think what i'm saying is that the

38:16

secular approach the tower of babel approach has failed and and um and

38:23

the Catholic church i'm sorry the Catholic approach where we see each other as individuals

38:29

made in the image of likeness of God that's the pentecost right that's where we have

38:34

a spirit-filled approach toward others that that sarah was just

38:41

talking about

38:46

thank you marcus tom would you like to take a question out of the hat yeah so i

38:52

want to because i want to make a point uh about um something that's in a book so you ask

38:58

that one of the questions we had was what book would you recommend to students at Catholic universities to read this year

39:03

and you know a book that's uh that's really impressed me and i think is really uh relevant to uh

39:11

the obstacles um to education for young people today and something that we're

39:16

facing matt crawford uh and an essayist and an author and uh daytime motorcycle

39:23

repair guy uh you know famous for the sa uh shop class as soulcraft which then became a

39:29

book and one of his i think he's written a book on self-driving cars and safetyism most recently but the one before that

39:36

it's called the world beyond your head on becoming an individual in an age of distraction

39:42

and you know one of the things that i think a lot about uh in um at all the institutions i've

39:50

been at especially at baylor and now at the university of dallas and especially for our really high achieving students is the

39:57

the question of resilience and um you know when we do these recruitment

40:03

events for really high caliber students and you have a kind of panel of faculty

40:08

it's funny they're they're very intense they've got they're goal-driven they've got much better study habits

40:15

than i ever did at their age uh but they're all when they ask questions it's all a

40:21

version of how do i come here and make sure that i'm going to succeed right and so i would always interrupt

40:28

when we were doing these panel discussions at baylor and say you know what the thing you're going to have to do is to

40:34

fail and bounce back from it and you can see their little heads moving next tuesday i will fail and i will bounce back from

40:41

it but of course that's not the kind of failure we're talking about it's not something you can plan it's got to be the kind of

40:47

thing that hits you upside your head when you're not expecting it and really makes you doubt whether you

40:53

can go on and how do they develop that kind of resilience there's a great image that Crawford uses uh

41:00

and and he uses Freud uh effectively I think to say that Freud's

41:05

notion that for young people there's the pleasure principle and then there for adults there's the

41:10

reality principle and becoming an adult is about learning to navigate the

41:16

reality principle the way in which the world and other people push back on

41:22

my will right and and what here's the the image from Crawford that I love says

41:28

the the world of social media and the world of screens that all young people

41:34

almost all young people have been brought up in he says this gives them the illusion and us to the extent

41:40

that we participate in it heavenly heavily of a frictionless universe

41:46

right a universe where nothing pushes back I don't like this conversation I move to

41:51

this group I don't like these images I move to these images for as long as I want or don't want I

41:58

can come on screens the plasticity of the way in which I interact with the external world

42:04

gives me the illusion of a frictionless universe this is the illusion of having extended

42:11

adolescence right or extended childhood of pursuing the pleasure principle without having to confront

42:18

the reality principle the way in which the external world and other people's wills are going to

42:24

push back against mine so everybody who pushes back against my will is as a group haters right whether they are actual

42:31

haters or not just because they disagree with my opinions so the

42:36

what we need to do is to train students to live in a universe of fiction of friction

42:43

and to enjoy it right not just to experience it as painful but to experience

42:48

the navigation of the reality of people and of things as something that we don't

42:54

just try to navigate to get around to get what we want but that we actually enjoy interacting with

43:01

in ways that develop our will and develop our character for fortitude and prudence and in the

43:08

end resilience so that we're used to things pushing back and others pushing back

43:13

and we actually take delight in the way in most cases we can respond to that and grow from it

43:20

so i love that image from Crawford's book that he develops at length of a frictionless universe

43:26

versus a universe where friction is all around us but we learn to navigate it in adult

43:32

ways and we learn that this is part of what it makes it enjoyable to be

43:37

a virtuous adult thank you tom okay it's the favorite

43:44

book question of the book you'd recommend undergraduates read this year sarah how about you

43:52

oh sarah you're on mute okay let marcus go i'm gonna see if i can pull it off the shelf oh sure sure marcus okay so i'm not

43:59

gonna recommend one i'm gonna recommend three oh man um the first one is very

44:05

quick um so first i'm not gonna bite the hand that feeds me i'm uh

44:10

i've got to recommend carter snead's book what it means to be human um i uh it is uh it is

44:17

a really important book uh and uh you can see once you get into it you can

44:23

see why the the wall street journal has listed it as one of the 10 most important books of the year so i just wanted to give a shout out to

44:30

carter for his book um but two other books go to what i was talking about about

44:40

thinking about educating students to be both critical

44:46

and self-critical and the two other books are a little bit older but i i think they're important

44:51

because they show the the breadth of Catholic thought the first one would be michael novak's

44:57

business as a calling um where he demonstrates the the uh

45:05

social Catholic teaching foundations of going out and getting a job and working

45:12

and doing your part to shoulder your place in the economy and that it's

45:20

important for each of us to do that but a lot of people who read that might think of it as a defense of

45:26

of capitalism a Catholic defense of capitalism but i want to position that against

45:32

another book by reverend james martin as one of my favorite authors he's a Jesuit priest

45:39

he has a new book out coming out called learning to pray but it's not quite out yet but um

45:46

an older book that he has is uh is called the Jesuit guide to almost everything

45:52

and people think of him as a more liberal Catholic thinker um but the reason why i recommend these

45:58

two books together is to demonstrate that there is no one way to be Catholic

46:03

there's no one way to think uh as a Catholic and that there that being Catholic and Catholic

46:10

education and Catholic social thought is much more complex

46:16

than the way it's been uh simplified in our political life and so um it's it's hard for me to

46:22

recommend just one book because i think to be truly educated you want to

46:27

to to introduce students to [Music] ideas that are often in conflict with

46:33

each other so those are my three

46:38

sorry go ahead and miss yes i will uh recommend just one because it's really long and if we're talking about recommending something to

46:45

undergrads uh this is about all i could suggest um it's a book called stamped from the

46:50

beginning by ibram candy um it's somewhere in the neighborhood of 550 pages

46:56

um it is a history of racism uh that just goes as the title suggests

47:03

goes back to the beginning and writes about um

47:08

you know i was somebody that thought i was rather educated on these issues i study race in my work uh but i was blown away by reading about

47:16

um how far back in history it goes and all the different institutions

47:22

that kind of cultivated it and to what end and you know what kind of what the motives were for and and how it got

47:28

perpetuated um there are some the the author who wrote it is a faculty member

47:36

he was at american university when he wrote it now i think he's at boston university and he is a historian um and i think he

47:42

was an american studies department but the work was criticized some by historians for some of his techniques

47:48

and methods and for you know what he included and what he didn't include but at the same time i won a national book award and i thought it was just an

47:55

amazing book and i really learned a lot from it so i think that particularly you know

48:01

given the time given the moment this is a it's just a great work for students i think to really



48:07

um you know to really learn how kind of how entrenched in society

48:13

and in the world that racism is and to really learn about the history of it i think it's really

48:19

eye-opening great thank you sarah uh so now i'd like

48:24

to turn to some questions from the audience our virtual audience uh i'll i'm gonna read

48:30

the question twice as sarah did so that gives you a chance to to to listen and and then any of you can

48:37

really jump in okay so spencer who's an undergraduate soaring fellow of the de Nicolas center

48:43

asks what are the most difficult challenges in remaining an authentically Catholic university while engaging with a culture

48:51

increasingly unfamiliar and at times combative with respect to the values of religious faith

48:58

with this in mind what do you think the future of higher Catholic education is okay let me read it again

49:05

it's a good one spencer asks what are the most difficult challenges in remaining an authentically Catholic

49:12

university while engaging with a culture increasingly unfamiliar and at times combative with respect to

49:18

the values of religious faith with this in mind what do you think the future of higher Catholic education is

49:26

so anybody jump in

49:32

well i think i'll jump in on this uh because sarah and i talk about this a lot um uh

49:39

i think um that one of the most difficult things about

49:47

being in a Catholic university and and maintaining excellence in a Catholic university is getting buy-in

49:54

on the Catholic mission sarah and i i think both agree that

50:01

at notre dame we are able to get scholars who would otherwise go to

50:08

a higher ranked universities but come to notre dame because of the

50:14

Catholic mission and are dedicated to those shared

50:20

values but at the same time at a Catholic university you're going to have lots of scholars who

50:26

are steeped in the secular environments of their field and are not going to identify with

50:35

the Catholic mission and those Catholic values and and want the university to be more like

50:42

secular uh universities they want they they think that what's holding the

50:48

Catholic university back is all of this Catholic stuff when in

50:53

fact i believe it's the opposite it's that our opportunity for excellence is embrace

50:59

the shared values of of the Catholic mission but i think it's a constant struggle and

51:07

it's um and it's uh it's a struggle that makes you realize why there are so many

51:13

universities that were originally founded as faith-based universities northwestern duke vanderbilt stanford

51:21

even were were based uh um were faith-based uh uh uh uh founded on

51:27

of uh uh various faiths but have abandoned those faith-based

51:32

um uh uh values that that were at the the core of their founding

51:38

um because it's hard it's hard to get people to realize what's important about what we do um and

51:45

it's hard to get people to reject the the the values of the of the world and

51:51

and the other scholars in the fields in which they they participate uh so it's a constant

51:57

struggle but um if if we don't maintain that struggle if we don't

52:03

fight against that secular those secular pressures we're going to lose what's truly great

52:09

and distinctive about the contribution that only a Catholic university can make to the world

52:16

great so since we've got several questions in the queue i think given that we're our our sunset is

52:21

closing in the next half hour i'm just gonna have one person answer a student question then we'll move on to

52:27

the next one okay just because i'd like to get as many participants around our post-dinner conversation as

52:33

possible so alison cox who's a 2l at notre dame law school and a soeren fellow asks

52:39

i have enjoyed my time at notre dame so much in part because it is a place where diverse political and religious beliefs

52:45

are common and present among friend groups what is your advice for students leaving campus

52:52

for creating such communities and open dialogue post-campus life let me read it one more time allison cox

52:59

asks i've enjoyed my time at notre dame so much in part because it is a place where diverse political and religious

53:05

beliefs are common and present among friends group friend groups what is your advice for students

53:10

leaving campus for creating such communities and open dialogue post-campus life this is a really

53:16

important question anybody

53:25

well um since i know ali and um i really admire her i um i i think i'll

53:31

go ahead and answer her question here i think that what she has to do out in the real world

53:37

is what she has done here which is get to know people as individuals at their core don't put

53:44

people in categories and as they get to know you they won't put you in boxes either

53:50

and that's how you start to build your communities and once you build communities of trust

53:56

it's in it's within those communities of trust that you can um freely express yourself i think part of

54:02

the problem right now is that we have tremendous distrust throughout our

54:07

culture and it's very hard uh to have free expression um where you don't trust the the people

54:14

around you so that that would be my advice anna can i just quickly follow up on that i wanted to

54:20

let a notre dame person uh respond to a notre dame question about how to how to replicate the community there by the

54:26

golden dome um you know one of the things that i try to encourage students to do while they're here and i think they can

54:32

uh i did it both at baylor and and here at ud is to to um you're gonna have friends that uh

54:39

are um who agree with you if you're practicing your faith and so forth but seek out and make friends with uh

54:47

people who disagree with you and uh and and they help keep you honest

54:53

uh and and it's also there's a different kind of friendship there i think often with people

54:58

with whom we have significant disagreements but those are really important in this time

55:04

i think to to have a a genuine community that's different from

55:09

you know what c.s lewis warns us about in the inner ring uh where we're all we're all trying to replicate uh and

55:15

feel uh a deep sense of belonging and affirmation of our views to spread

55:20

out those friendships so that you make you actively seek out friends uh

55:25

among those who disagree with you about important things okay wait let me just jump in with one more thing go the other thing is i think

55:33

to be to be confident in your own faith um when when i started my first job at a

55:38

graduate school i was in a i was in a department where where people were really surprised to have a person of faith

55:44

um there because atheism and being agnostic were very common and and there was a particular co-worker

55:49

who used to stop by my office all the time and say you know that stuff in the bible like it's not real right um and he would kind

55:56

of challenge me and he would prod me and um but i never got offended by it i didn't i didn't take it personally

56:02

like i i respected that he was an atheist and i think at the end of the day he respected that i was a Catholic and just wanted to engage in

56:08

conversation about it and so i think you know kind of having a little bit of a thick skin and being confident in your

56:14

own beliefs and being willing to engage in challenging conversation i think is it will help great thank you sarah

56:21

so this question really dovetails about what you've all already been talking about so um this will just give you time to to

56:27

continue a conversation a participant asks this has been a wonderful discussion about creating an environment

56:33

for engaging rational disagreement at a Catholic institution how do you balance the need to consider opposing

56:39

viewpoints while boldly living the faith and drawing people into the light of Christ and the truths we hold let me ask one

56:46

let me read it one more time this has been a wonderful discussion about creating an environment for engaging rational disagreement

56:53

at a Catholic university how do you balance the need to consider opposing viewpoints

56:59

while boldly living the faith and drawing people into the light of Christ and the truth we hold

57:06

so i'm i'm happy to offer an initial response to that i think i think um and i think we have trouble

57:13

doing this today uh i i think there's got to be a sense of confidence uh in the

57:21

liturgical life uh in the student affairs on campus and in

57:26

how you articulate your mission how it's embodied in your curriculum how it's reflected in your faculty but

57:32

that should also be a kind of there should also be built in there a

57:37

Catholic openness to reason uh and into disagreement i mean one of

57:43

the most remarkable things about aquinas is the the way in which he just seems endlessly to multiply objections

57:49

to his own view and his utter confidence or not it's not even it just

57:55

seems so natural to him that that's what you would do that you wouldn't you would start out asking a question and then

58:01

saying oh here are all the things that line up against what i'm going to say i think there ought to be a kind of

58:07

confidence in that but there's also uh and there's also got to be a welcoming of people who are not

58:12

of the faith who want to be part of this i spent 16 years at baylor university i think i was the first Catholic in

58:19

uh in higher administration there and certainly there's when you're in a different culture i went from boston to

58:25

waco and boston college to baylor there there's some awkwardness and even some cases where i thought wow that's

58:31

that's a kind of ignorant statement about Catholicism but i i always wanted baylor to be a

58:37

great baptist university it didn't seem to me that it would be good for baylor to be a kind of watered-down ecumenical

58:43

Christian university even though i was happy that baylor wanted Catholics and other

58:49

non-baptists on the faculty and in the student body and Catholics flourish there it just seemed to me that it was

58:54

important despite moments of awkwardness and and maybe even uh prejudicial comments



59:00

from people who didn't understand what they're saying occasionally uh it's still it seemed to me is really important for baylor to remain a baptist

59:08

university and for me as a Catholic to respect and encourage that and i think the same ought to be true

59:14

at Catholic or orthodox or jewish or muslim institutions

59:23

anybody else like to chime in before i move on yeah i would um i think that the way i hear that

59:30

question is it makes me think about when we have a speaker on campus or an event

59:36

that people deem to be not consistent with with our Catholic identity or with church teaching and

59:42

you know a lot of times people can get very upset about that and how can we be projecting the faith and inviting these

59:49

you know kind of people to campus and and i think that it it's very important

59:55

um for our beliefs to be challenged and it's very important for our beliefs to hear opposing

1:00:03

viewpoints and it's very important um to not you know for the university not to be an

1:00:09

echo chamber you know we're a Catholic university which means we can talk about anything here we can talk about science

1:00:15

and we can talk about faith and we can talk about you know anything we want here you know short of hate speech

1:00:21

um and so so we should welcome those opposing viewpoints even if we don't think they're

1:00:26

consistent with church teaching so that we can understand how other people see the issue and why

1:00:32

they feel the way they do and have our own feeling on the issue being formed by it

1:00:37

and we are secure enough in who we are as Catholics at notre dame that that shouldn't be such a

1:00:43

threatening thing to have those opposing viewpoints they don't threaten us

1:00:48

because we are strong in what we believe but it's very important to hear it and to learn from it is part

1:00:55

of being a university

1:01:00

thank you sarah so this will be the last question that we take from the participants and then i'll be

1:01:07

asking each of you if you have like any closing comments anything that you came with you tonight that you wanted to

1:01:13

talk about that you haven't had a chance to talk about yet okay so um this is joshua gilchrist

1:01:19

who's an undergraduate sworn fellow of the Nicola center he asks from your perspective what is the role of the

1:01:26

Catholic university in reaching beyond its own community intellectually and striving for the for the renewal of

1:01:32

the minds of all people in other words beyond the betterment of society promoted through research that

1:01:38

aids the corporal works of mercy how can the Catholic university reach out to the public and minister to people

1:01:44

spiritually and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in the world i'll read it one more time joshua asks

1:01:51

from your perspective what is the role of the Catholic university in reaching beyond its own community intellectually

1:01:57

and striving for the renewal of the minds of all people in other words beyond the betterment of

1:02:02

society promoted through research that aids the corporal works of mercy how can the Catholic university reach

1:02:09

out to the public and minister to people spiritually and proclaim the gospel

1:02:14

of Jesus Christ to the world

1:02:40

that's tough because that's a question that's a challenge to all of us

1:02:46

it's it yeah i mean um

1:02:52

i don't have an adequate answer to um to that question it it

1:02:58

it strikes me that the university is going to be mostly about activities that are

1:03:05

internal to the university although those can be ordered through service uh and uh and

1:03:11

research and so forth uh to to other communities and i think it's you know it's through

1:03:17

those those activities but also through the way in which we form students

1:03:24

uh who are able to go out in whatever discipline they're living in working in and

1:03:32

and bring the gospel in that way i mean i yeah i mean you could think about projects that universities have engaged

1:03:38

in that involve research mission service and i'm but i'm not sure if that

1:03:45

answers the question as as formulated right

1:03:50

so i want to take a stab at it because i think what came to mind for me was one of

1:03:55

the projects that we have underway in the law school which is our religious liberty initiative um so one of the recent so we have a

1:04:03

religious liberty initiative that has at its core a religious liberty clinic that takes on cases where

1:04:09

religious liberties challenged around the country and around the world and recently we had a case against the

1:04:16

governor of new york that went all the way up to the supreme court that that we won and one of my colleagues

1:04:24

remarked about that case what's really interesting about the case is it was led by a lawyer who is an lds

1:04:31

you know latter-day saints church member who supervised Catholic students and other students at

1:04:38

a Catholic university representing muslim clients

1:04:43

who were standing up to defend the religious freedom rights of orthodox

1:04:49

jews in new york only in america could something like that happen

1:04:54

but that's the kind of thing i think a Catholic university can do is is show that there are certain

1:05:03

core principles and values that are of benefit to everyone and um

1:05:11

we don't have to uh limit ourselves to our own faith circles

1:05:18

uh when it comes to taking action in the world as a university and i think that applies to research uh

1:05:24

you know scholarship as well as teaching that when we're striving for excellence

1:05:30

we can be inclusive thank you marcus anybody else

1:05:42

okay so we're almost out of time and uh i thought i would give each of the

1:05:48

panelists though an opportunity at the end of the evening to just

1:05:53

talk about anything that you wanted to talk about that you think is important for the participants who are

1:05:59

listening this year watching from all over uh to the notre dame

1:06:05

ethics and culture conference about what we owe to each other

1:06:13

you know anna when i was thinking about the the um that um that phrase what we owe to each

1:06:20

other and for higher education i was thinking about um hannah orrin's wonderful essays in

1:06:26

between past and future where she talks about the crisis in education and and there

1:06:32

she says you know what adults owe to children is to stand up

1:06:37

in front of them and say to them these are things in the world that matter these are

1:06:43

things that you need to give your attention your intelligence your devotion to

1:06:50

we can't absolutely determine uh what conclusions you'll come to about these but these

1:06:55

these questions these books these lines of investigation matter and she argues that

1:07:02

uh to for adults to abdicate that is a form of child abandonment to leave children on their own to simply

1:07:11

make their way in the world without any guidance about what from the past is important for them

1:07:17

to reckon with doesn't determine that they're going to agree with everything from the past how could they

1:07:22

the books we read from the past disagree with one another quite vehemently but it is the responsibility of every

1:07:30

educational institution and especially a Catholic one to have substantive commitments about

1:07:36

what education is for and what its content ought to be uh and and i think if we shirk that

1:07:44

we are engaging in a form of child abandonment that that is a failure

1:07:50

of us as adults as educators and as Catholics

1:07:56

thank you tom anybody else

1:08:04

i guess i was thinking in terms of our responsibility to each other what always comes to my mind is the beatitudes um

1:08:12

and thinking about the role of the you know the university the in the third part of the catechism

1:08:20

um states that the beatitudes express our vocation our end purpose um it goes on to state

1:08:27

that the beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness through reason and free

1:08:33

will so Catholic education has a responsibility to provide an

1:08:38

intellectual framework for students and and for all of us

1:08:44

to articulate and to appreciate that the ultimate end of human beings

1:08:49

happiness and actions is also pursued by God's law and grace

1:08:56

thank you sarah marcus any closing words to the closing

1:09:02

words yeah i i i'm glad that sarah um mentioned the beatitudes um she's heard

1:09:10

me say before that i uh that the reason why i came here

1:09:16

um is that i really believe that higher education uh has to answer the call of God uh and

1:09:24

in particular God's call in matthew 25 God tells us what we should what what we should be

1:09:29

doing what we owe to each other in matthew 25 he he says to us when i

1:09:35

was hungry you gave me to eat when i was thirsty he gave me to drink i was naked and clothed me and i was in prison

1:09:42

and you visited me um that's what we owe to each other we we owe obedience to God's command in matthew 25

1:09:52

and not just to feed but to feed excellently not just the clothes

1:09:58

but the clothe excellently we as Catholic educators can achieve excellence we

1:10:04

don't have to mirror uh secular secular universities i love northwestern i love nyu

1:10:11

but the world doesn't need another northwestern or another nyu the world needs notre dame and

1:10:18

to the extent that we can preserve it the world will be a better place

1:10:24

thank you marcus so on behalf of the three panelists on behalf of the organizers of this conference

1:10:31

of notre dame ethics and culture conference i want to thank each of the participants who've tuned in this evening

1:10:38

this theme of this year who knew it was going to be as prescient as it is what we what we owe to each other you've taken

1:10:44

that question seriously by joining the conversation this evening so we thank you uh the conference is not



1:10:50

over however um the it will resume tomorrow morning at 9 00 a.m eastern time

1:10:57

you can use the same zoom webinar link for all sessions and if you'd like more information about

1:11:03

the complete schedule you can go to the nikola center's website the ethics center dot

1:11:12

nd.edu it'll it's very easy to find you all navigate the web very

1:11:18

very well so thank you very much to three panelists on behalf of everyone who's

1:11:23

tuned in thank you for giving up your time we know how busy you are and um

1:11:30

we'll see you soon hopefully put in a post covered world thank you for the opportunity thank you

1:11:38

anna

1:12:14

you