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Distinctive Imperatives for Teaching Marketing in a Catholic Business School

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***Abstract:** We contend that there are distinct and socially beneficial perspectives, rooted in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT) and Catholic Social Teaching (CST), which can help nurture future managers to be more attuned to the societal and ethical impacts resulting from their marketing decisions. In this paper, we briefly review several of these themes and illustrate how such messages can be integrated into the marketing instruction that takes place inside of business schools at Catholic universities.*

The Nature of Marketing

The American Marketing Association's "official" definition of Marketing (2007) is as follows: "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." It is implicitly understood that some knowledge of marketing theory and principles is an essential component of any professional manager's cannon. Marketing is taught as part of all accredited B-school degree programs. Academic marketing departments are a staple of most business schools. Clearly, marketing is a central business discipline, with a defined common body of knowledge, which is essential to the management of business and not-for-profit organizations of all types. The very process of commercial business activity is driven and culminated by marketplace selling and exchange. As business luminary Dr. Peter Drucker (1954) put it long ago, "There is only one valid definition of business purpose: to create a customer." The advertising dimension of U.S. marketing alone is a \$130 Billion economic sector (*Advertising Age* 2009). Thus, marketing is a foundational and economically important business function. The question that we explore in this paper is whether Catholic principles and perspectives can offer something unique and useful to the pedagogy of marketing.

The Social Impact of Marketing Decisions and Practices

One major reason that Catholic intellectual perspectives have something important to contribute to the marketing conversation is because marketing policies, procedures and systems also have an enormous influence, both good and bad, upon society. And, in regard to how economic actions *ought to* impact

society from an ethical and equitable standpoint, Catholic Social Thought, as we shall delineate below, has a long-standing and worthy opinion to offer on such matters. But first, we turn to the former point—the nature of marketing itself, and expand briefly on the essential “marketing and society” connection, and what it implies for a complete and balanced understanding of marketing practice.

Several years ago, we wrote, “In business firms, marketing is the most visible functional area because of its interface with consumers. Communicating with and satisfying a customer is the essence of marketing. Selling and advertising are especially noticeable and essential in achieving the marketing mission. Since marketing is so close to the public view, it should not be surprising that it is the subject of considerable societal analysis and scrutiny (Laczniak and Murphy, 1993, p.xii)”. We further observed that marketing related professions—sales representative, advertising executive, PR manager—were among the *least* trusted occupations in terms of their perceived honesty among the public. This remains true today. Therefore, students who study marketing as an occupation have a unique “social credibility” problem—one that they need to understand, take collective responsibility for and overcome as they enter the business world. Furthermore, their marketing professors and instructors should aid them in coming to grips with this challenge. Put differently, while marketing is an essential business function, those who manage it are not as generally admired as those who practice medicine, social work, civil engineering or even accounting. Quite the opposite, marketing is usually viewed with some suspicion due to its propaganda aspects and some of the mischief that various marketing campaigns have caused over the years.

Next, it is important to recognize that when marketing actions are illegal or unethical (which happens all too often), these missteps impose significant external costs on the general public. Again, as we previously opined:

...consumers who are tricked into buying a product they do not need or who end up paying substantially more for the product or service than justified, incur an excess economic cost and will start to resent the marketing system. Some groups, like the poor, the old, the handicapped, the mentally feeble, children and immigrants, are particularly vulnerable to [exploitive] marketing practices. These groups can least afford the extra costs. Sometimes when businesses run aground, such as the recent [financial scandals], government is forced to pick up the tab. Similarly, when certain industries pollute the environment...the taxpayer bears the cost of these questionable business practices (Laczniak and Murphy, 1993, p.10).

Therefore, marketing strategies and their implementation affect *distributive justice* in the economy--that is, extant marketing practices shape how the benefits and burdens of economic exchange are fairly divided among the participants in the economic system (Laczniak and Murphy, 2008). Such inequities may take the form of unjustly low payments to producers of ingredients such as coffee, tea or cocoa beans; it may involve a limited choice of relatively inferior products to disadvantaged consumer segments; it could manifest itself in deceptive terms or conditions of the sale. Even the question of whether marketing helps foster an acquisitive society that is far too materialistic—what Catholic social tradition calls *consumerism*--is worth contemplating. Whatever the issue, such concerns also imply needed discussions about how marketing practices influence the “quality of life” in a community or broader society. There ought to be thoughtful examinations regarding what the overriding criterion for

ethically measuring a marketing system should be. For instance, is the ultimate standard of a marketing exchange system simply economic efficiency? Is it whether the existing marketplace conventions contribute to a flourishing community? Might the moral measure of a specific market be how it treats its most disadvantaged participants? How can markets that are both efficient and fair be constructed?

There is little debate among business educators that they have *some* professional responsibility to educate their students about the social, ethical and value questions associated with their field of study. The Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME), being promoted as an offshoot of UN Global Compact for Corporations (2008), are the latest manifestation of what this B-school exposure ought to include *in the ideal* about such ethical and social perspectives (see **Exhibit One**). Similarly, a basic familiarity with the ethical norms inherent in marketing also seems expected of marketing managers by the business community. This is directly indicated in the following language of the American Marketing Association's *Statement of Ethics* (2008):

As marketers, we recognize that we not only serve our organizations but also act as stewards of society in creating, facilitating and executing the transactions that are part of the greater economy. In this role, marketers are expected to embrace the highest professional ethical norms and the ethical values implied by our responsibility toward multiple stakeholders (e.g., customers, employees, investors, peers, channel members, regulators and the host community).

The thorny question, however, is always this perennial: “Exactly *what* values and *which* ethical frameworks should be applied to morally evaluate business and marketing practices?” And, it is with this interrogative that Catholic Social Thought can provide some unique and genuinely helpful insights for the task of demarcating the marketing norms and ethical values that should be manifest in Catholic business school education (see **Exhibit Two**). Benedict XVI adroitly addressed the nature of markets and its connection to justice in his recent encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*:

In a climate of mutual trust, the *market* is the economic institution that permits encounter between persons, inasmuch as they are economic subjects who make use of contracts to regulate their relations as they exchange goods and services of equivalent value between them, in order to satisfy their needs and desires. The social doctrine of the Church has unceasingly highlighted the importance of *distributive justice* and *social justice* for the market economy...If the market is governed solely by the principle of the equivalence in value of exchanged goods, it cannot produce the social cohesion that it requires in order to function well. *Without internal forms of solidarity and mutual trust, the market cannot completely fulfill its proper economic function.*
[35]

Thus, a strong argument can be made for considering the social principles of the Catholic thought in the evaluation of ethical questions about economic matters including marketing. But how should these concepts best be integrated into the teaching of marketing at Catholic business schools?

Catholic Perspectives for Business Education and Marketing Instruction

In any organization, form should follow function. So, in the instance of whether Catholic business schools that teach marketing classes might benefit from integrating Catholic intellectual perspectives, we

might first look at the *mission statements* of these colleges and universities along with the *learning objectives* that they put forth for their students. As one would expect, a significant diversity in the language of such documents exists but there are also many essential commonalities because of the historical and doctrinal Catholic approach to higher education from which they all evolve.

Hanson (2008), in a paper presented at Fordham University, usefully attempted to summarize the connecting themes that ideally comprise business education at Jesuit B-schools. It is instructive to briefly review these—adapting them slightly for compatibility to Catholic business colleges in general—in order to better understand what Catholic business schools claim they try to achieve. We then reflect on each of the learning objectives, including some of the motivations behind each objective, in order to better discern what these educational mandates imply for the instruction of *marketing* at Catholic B-schools.

1. *Catholic business education should strive to develop moral and spiritual character in their graduates.*

Reflection: The articulation of a coherent ethical framework that can be applied to one’s managerial discipline would seem to be a *sine qua non* of a well rendered Catholic business education. For example, Kennedy (2010) writes that “. . . professional ethics must attend to the importance and development of character for the professions. . . Ethicists must take on the task of clarifying which virtues are especially important for different professions.” In the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, the virtue ethics approach to the analysis of problems has always been significant as major thinkers such as Augustine and Aquinas added the notions of faith, hope and charity to the classical Greek foundation. In marketing, it is fortuitous and noteworthy that the largest professional organization of marketing practitioners in the world, the American Marketing Association, has promulgated a *Statement of Ethics* (2008) that utilizes the virtue ethics approach as its motivating source (see **Exhibit Three**). Herein six “values” of ethical marketing are delineated—honesty, responsibility, fairness, respect, transparency and citizenship—and each is described within the context of marketing practice. It would seem an imperative that all marketing graduates of Catholic universities become familiar with these intrinsic marketing “virtues” and more importantly, their underlying rationale, i.e. adhering to these professional values helps marketing practitioners “serve the organization *and also act as stewards of society* [emphasis added].”

2. *Catholic business school students should be nurtured to use their managerial skills for the benefit of others.*

Reflection: Here it is important to emphasize, as part of Catholic business education, that our marketing graduates should perceive all human persons as possessing a unique human dignity with certain universal rights that are inalienable. In a marketing curriculum, such empathy is created by positioning administrative education as not merely a profession but also as a *vocation*—an opportunity to work in service for the betterment others (Novak 1996). Too often, marketing studies are portrayed as a career path that hones the skills of personal selling and product promotion instead of a vocation rooted in authentic client service that is directed to achieving an economic improvement for all parties to an exchange transaction. Significantly, the latter sentiment is highly consonant with the hallowed “marketing concept”—the basic

philosophy of marketing, which advocates customer service and satisfaction as paramount to marketing success. Marketing opportunities for Catholic B-school students to better serve others might be found by generating internships with social service agencies, encouraging social entrepreneurship as part of the marketing curriculum and providing other service learning opportunities in NGOs that place marketing students in proximity with those in the community who face special buying challenges due to their economic circumstance or other vulnerabilities. The “Respect” virtue of the AMA Statement of Ethics is particularly worth recalling in this context. The accompanying commentary on this core value for marketing practice specifically mentions the concept of “human dignity” as well as the ethical obligation of managers to “value individual differences” and to avoid stereotyping others in their marketing campaigns. The words of Benedict XVI in *Caritas in Veritate* (quoting Paul VI), concerning the purposes of commerce, also seem relevant to this learning mandate: “The primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity. [63]”

3. *Catholic business schools should foster in their graduates a special concern for the welfare of employees in the organizational network they manage.*

Reflection: This mandate provides marketing instructors an excellent opportunity to examine the subtext of “profit maximization” that is so common in marketing strategy and many other business classes. It reminds marketing managers that they serve a role beyond the one dimensional agency of “investors’ representative”. This learning mandate also recalls the very roots of Catholic Social Teaching (CST)—*the principle of worker rights*. As Klein and Laczniak (2009) recently wrote concerning this principle:

[It] advances the idea that work is central to human growth and that workers help to continue the wonder of God’s creation. This is the oldest teaching of modern CST dicta, embodied in the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, published in 1891, and elaborated in Pope John Paul II’s *Laborem Exercens* (1981). [Both] these documents proclaim: “All people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions as well as to organize and join unions or other associations” (National Conference of Catholic Bishops 1997 [5]). These encyclicals endorse worker rights to organize in unions and suggest that duties of past loyalties by workers always need to be recognized. “Any business that does not enhance its workers and serve the common good is a moral failure no matter how healthy the bottom line” (De Berri et al. 2003).

For teachers of marketing uncomfortable with introducing the social encyclicals in their marketing classes, this business school learning goal, at minimum, should provide the impetus to integrate the UN Declaration of Universal Human Rights (1948) and the UN Global Compact for Corporations (2000) into teaching and classroom exercises. The former document underscores the right of all workers to safety, a living wage and reasonable hours. The latter document, the UNGC, affirms collective bargaining, bans forced work, abolishes child labor and prohibits employment discrimination. Both the “worker rights” precept of the CST--to steadfastly protect employee welfare--and its progeny the UNGC, which is being characterized as an emergent

global ethics, have enormous implications for employee welfare. Marketing students must be schooled in the importance of treating their own employees justly as well as constructing their supply chain networks with an eye to fair and favorable labor conditions. Marketing trends such as outsourcing, the increased usage of immigrant (low cost) labor to reduce product prices and the expanding prevalence of white collar “contract workers” who serve without benefits packages or job security, all underscore the contemporary relevance of this learning objective.

4. *Catholic Business school education should highlight the social ramifications of organizational decisions that are made.*

Reflection: This mandate, which also can be seen as directly inspired by Catholic Social Thought (CST), is one of the most practical goals of Catholic business education because it contributes to a long term economic perspective that is helpful to ethical and managerial effectiveness. Kennedy (2010) links such social focus to the CST *principle of the common good*, which paves the way for the development of a managerial attitude of corporate responsibility. Kennedy remarks, “Contrary to the views of some economists, business organizations exist not as isolated operations but as integral elements of a good society. The Catholic idea of the common good...provide(s) a foundation for both justifying business as a moral enterprise and developing a coherent concept of social responsibility.”

Professors of marketing, whether teaching in Catholic business schools or not, know instinctually that the analysis of social outcomes ought to be taken into account in the assessment of possible options. Recently, in specifying the connections of marketing strategy to society, we wrote:

...consistent with the idea of marketing also influencing societal well-being, it is also imperative to thoughtfully analyze the *ethics* of marketing. Even the most cautious and traditional business theorists and practitioners are willing to grant that business practice is judged and constrained by social norms of behavior, and therefore, the considerable influence of social outcomes always weighs heavily on business... consumer satisfaction is only a first order understanding of what marketing is about. Substantial satisfaction for a particular segment of consumers does not necessarily translate into *net* benefits for society. Clearly the satisfaction of some consumers sometimes allows for dysfunctional second order effects and beyond. Tobacco marketing is [an] obvious example (Laczniaik and Murphy 2006, at 155 and 158).

To practically undergird this idea of considering the social impact of everything that business does, marketing courses at Catholic business schools should emphasize the *stakeholder concept* and deconstruct the more prevalent “shareholder primacy” model. Stakeholders, of course, are all those groups or individuals who are significantly affected by (or affect) business decisions. Actions taken by business organizations that (knowingly) cause major harm to any stakeholder group raise, by definition, ethical questions. And, as we have argued at length over the years, “[T]he adoption of a stakeholder orientation is essential to the maintenance and advancement of ethical decision making in all marketing operations” (Laczniaik and Murphy 2005, at 167). Indeed marketing departments at Catholic business schools could make an important social statement by teaching that the “stakeholder orientation” is the *new* “marketing concept” because

it makes both good economic *and ethical* sense. To bring our commentary full circle, we note the recent words of Benedict XVI:

... from the perspective of the Church's social doctrine, there is ... a growing conviction that *business management cannot concern itself only with the interests of the proprietors, but must also assume responsibility for all the other stakeholders who contribute to the life of the business: the workers, the clients, the suppliers of various elements of production, the community of reference (Caritas in Veritate [40]).*

5. *Catholic Business school instruction should exhibit a special concern for the poor and marginalized who are frequently left out without the primary benefits of the mainstream economy.*

Reflection: Naughton (2010), opining on the various strands of the Catholic intellectual tradition, captures the motivation behind this learning mandate quite succinctly when he observes:

Drawing upon the example of Jesus, who reached out and gave special consideration to the poor and marginalized, scholars and reflective activists in the Catholic tradition [should] critically examine and resist injustice, exploitation, and violence in society and articulate new ways of building communities of justice and peace.

In the realm of marketing, fairness in market exchange is the fundamental ethical challenge of all buyer-seller transactions. Such problems seem to be unusually acute for consumers who are “disadvantaged” in some way. At the micro level, injustices commonly involve an imbalance of power between buyers and sellers. Sometimes, as in the case of sub-prime mortgage contracts, loan originators shield information from home buyers that should have been disclosed (Jennings 2009). More often, certain segments are “vulnerable” to particular marketing appeals that sellers are willing to exploit for purposes of increasing their sales and profitability. Children, the advanced elderly, immigrants, minorities, the poor and illiterates are potentially vulnerable market targets. (Market segmentation and targeting are integral strategies to the practice of marketing.) For example, children fall prey to advertisements for unhealthy food promoted on Saturday morning cartoon shows; undocumented workers, without access to traditional banking, are victimized with high fees when they wire money back to their home country; and consumers with bad credit ratings are rate squeezed by “payday” loan lenders (Laczniak 1999). At the macro level, especially in developing markets, many consumers simply may not have access to critical goods even if they have money to pay for some of it. To such vulnerable segments, a special ethical responsibility is owed by marketers, originating in part from CST perspectives, which articulates special options for the poor and marginalized.

Marketers who desire to discuss such concerns in their courses can find a relatively sophisticated literature in marketing that addresses these issues. For example, going back as far as the 1970s, academic marketers have charted the special obstacles faced by disadvantaged consumers (Andresen 1975). Santos and Laczniak (2009b) categorize distinct streams of research involving vulnerable consumers of various types including the poor, the homeless, the illiterate and those with physical disabilities. And in another paper, Santos and Laczniak (2009a) specifically derive the characteristics of a “just” market when sellers engage impoverished consumers from

developing economies by using the principles of Catholic Social Teaching as the foundation of their arguments. Based on that analysis, they define and discuss the importance of concepts such as “authentic and non-exploitive intent”, “co-creation of value”, “interest representation” and “investment in future consumption” as necessary conditions of justice when marketing to the poor.

Taken together, the above articulation of the learning goals for Catholic business colleges, along with our “reflections” concerning its connections with Catholic intellectual tradition and marketing theory, suggests the following:

- Catholic business school aspire to purposeful and unique educational experiences that are to be imbued in their marketing (and business) students;
- These learning goals can be sourced in Catholic perspectives such as CST but also meaningfully bridged to marketing theory and practice;
- The marketing curriculum is a fertile ground to explore, nurture and experience the essential elements of Catholic, mission inspired learning mandates.

This said, why do we not already find a distinctly Catholic perspective better embedded in marketing and business instruction at Catholic business schools?

Integrating a Catholic View into Marketing Classes: Getting Started

Typical objections and resistance from B-school faculty to linking Catholic perspectives with disciplinary instruction in marketing (and other functional fields of study) take the following forms:

- (a) Ethical ideas of a philosophical or theological nature should be taught by the humanities or liberal arts faculty not B-school professors;
- (b) Discussions of particular ethical values and social perspectives, especially religious based ones, are inherently “normative” and therefore run contrary to the analytical and “positive” dimensions of management science;
- (c) Business faculty members are unwilling to present value-laden ethical frameworks, particularly religiously motivated ones, because many business teachers consider religion to be decoupled from economic matters; furthermore, even professors of good will are very uncomfortable espousing religious perspectives when they cannot easily perceive them as directly linked to their own discipline.

These objections need to be examined and overcome.

The first objection (i.e. leave it to the philosophy department) can be dispensed with most quickly because the case against it is compelling. For one, international accreditation standards for business schools require the coverage of ethical and social issues and ideas *within* the business curriculum. Moreover, as professional educators, the business professorate has the responsibility to foster trust and integrity among future managers by holding before them “the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline”

(AAUP *Statement on Ethics* 1987). In other words, it is a professional requirement that educators introduce their students to the prevailing norms and ethical values of their selected discipline. As for the exploration of religion-derived principles per se, it is difficult to argue that a thoughtful discussion of these should be avoided in business class when case examinations of tough business decisions report that executives often rely on their religious beliefs when adjudicating difficult ethical questions (Murphy et. al. 2005).

The second objection, concerning the avoidance of espousing normative values in business education, is an approach that many business faculty members adopt and would just as soon avoid admitting or discussing publicly. As Friedland (2009) argues, many business colleges operate like trade schools, basically training their students in the techniques of accounting, finance, marketing and management. And, when they do address ethics, it is often introduced as just another business tool; that is, ethical codes and other artifacts of corporate social responsibility are seen as a public relations screen that can save the corporation legal costs or forestall adverse public opinion. Nevertheless, as we have argued elsewhere (Laczniak and Murphy, 2006), there is an inherent and undeniable normative dimension to the ethos of business decision-making because of its effects upon the commonweal. As a practical matter, the (undeclared) normative ethical philosophy of too many corporations is a form of *economic utilitarianism*. Therein, managers are perceived as agents attempting to maximize investors' financial return while simultaneously sheltering their firm from any regulatory constraint. This in itself is a normative ideology, increasingly discredited in its pure (and treacherous) form by recent global economic events.

The third objection, about the difficulty of linking religious values to the focus of business disciplines, is a genuine challenge for some professional school professors, but one that can be met with the force of will. Catholic business schools promise their students that they endeavor to deliver a distinctive education consistent with their Catholic mission and identity. Faculty members in Catholic business schools simply must be better trained to understand their institutional ideals and culture, and to do their part to help in the educational delivery of that promise. The stakes at risk in this undertaking could not be higher as Benedict XVI noted in *Caritas in Veritate*:

The Church's social doctrine has always maintained that *justice must be applied to every phase of economic activity*, because this is always concerned with man and his needs. Locating resources, financing, production, consumption, and all the other phases in the economic cycle inevitably have moral implications. *Thus every economic decision has a moral consequence.* (37)

In Marketing, such discussions are uncommon but not rare. On occasion, the material available will explicitly connect Catholic Social Thought (CST) with marketing issues. For example, writing in the *Journal of Macromarketing*, a publication that examines the interaction of marketing, markets and society, Klein and Laczniak (2009) link the principles of CST with twenty-six areas of marketing practice in order to provide ethical counsel for managers (see **Exhibit Four**). In the spirit of what Miles, Naughton and Ruddy (2007) characterize as the “publicly argued” dimension of the Catholic intellectual tradition, the principles of CST are postulated as a natural law based and blended moral philosophy, intended for marketing managers of all denominations and beliefs, which may help sharpen their ethical and social judgment in business affairs.

Summary

Catholic business schools have arrived at a crossroads. They can take the easy path and train economically competent managers in a largely vocational manner or they can strike out in a more challenging direction. The harder and higher road would involve shaping Catholic B-school students of conscience who (a) comprehend that authentic organizational leadership always involves an outlook that is sensitive to justice and service to others; (b) understand that economic power inevitably affects the larger social order and that managers are the key stewards of that resource; and (c) firmly believe that managerial responsibility can shape the common good while creating economic and social value for stakeholders. Future leaders, inspired by the themes of CST, are desperately needed precisely because: “*Development is impossible without upright men and women, without financiers and politicians whose consciences are finely attuned to the requirements of the common good...*” [Caritas in Veritate at 71].

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EXHIBIT ONE: UN Global Compact and Principles for Responsible Management Education

▶ **Principles of Human Rights** (Businesses should):

Support and respect the protection of human rights

Assure they are non-complicit in human rights abuses

▶ **Principles of Labor** (Businesses should):

Uphold the freedom of association and right to collective bargaining

Seek the elimination of forced and compulsory labor

End all child labor

Eliminate discrimination in employment and occupation

▶ **Principles of Physical Environment**(Businesses should):

Support a precautionary approach to environmental issues

Promote greater environmental responsibility

Encourage development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

▶ **Principles of Bribery** (Businesses should):

Work against corruption including extortion and bribery

The Principles for Responsible Management Education

As institutions of higher education involved in the development of current and future managers we declare our willingness to progress in the implementation, within our institution, of the following Principles, starting with those that are more relevant to our capacities and mission. We will report on progress to all our stakeholders and exchange effective practices related to these principles with other academic institutions:

Principle 1

Purpose: We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

Principle 2

Values: We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

Principle 3

Method: We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

Principle 4

Research: We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.

Principle 5

Partnership: We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.

Principle 6

Dialogue: We will facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

We understand that our own organizational practices should serve as example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students.

Exhibit Two

KEY PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING [as described in Klein T. A. and G. R. Laczniak, “Applying Catholic Social Teachings to Ethical Issues in Marketing” *Journal of Macromarketing* (September 2009)]

The Principle of Human Dignity

The most basic and fundamental instruction of CST flows from the idea that *all* persons (“created in the image of God”) have inherent worth regardless of race, color, or creed. Dignity is not “earned” but rather it is always a given right to be accorded to all persons in all circumstances. This principle is used to argue that “*The economy exists for the person, not the person for the economy*” (National Conference of Catholic Bishops 1997 [1]) and that an excessive focus on profit maximization can be harmful to authentic personal development because rewards and burdens may not be justly distributed (*Compendium* 2005).

The Principle of the Common Good

This principle flows partly from the above noted theme #2 and its “call to family, community and participation” of everyone in the benefits of the commonwealth. From it unfolds the CST doctrine of the “universal destination of goods” (*Compendium* 2005). This implies that the goods of the earth should be used for the benefit of all, not exclusively from an economic perspective, but from a balanced social, cultural, and community standpoint. While CST clearly affirms the right of private property, this teaching provides a foundation for the notion that “all persons have the right to secure the basic necessities of life.” Included here would not only be the right of all persons to food, shelter, and available work, but also access to education and affordable healthcare (Pope John XXIII 1963 [11]).

The Principle of Subsidiarity

This is one of the most basic articulations of rights and responsibilities inherent in CST. It states, “It is an injustice...to assign to a greater or higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do” (Pope Pius XI 1931 [79]). It grants that everyone, as they are able, needs to contribute as well as receive from the community: “If able, all people have ... a ... duty to work and provide for their families” (National Conference of Catholic Bishops 1997 [6]). Commentators on this principle also imply that the concept warns about the dangers of over-regulating business activities and, indeed, such an argument can be sustained. However, the same principle is also used in CST to insure that sufficiently powerful parties weigh in to offset persistently unfair practices in society: “Society has a moral obligation, including governmental action where necessary, to assure opportunity, meet basic human needs, and pursue justice in economic life” (National Conference of Catholic Bishops 1997 [8]).

The Principle of Preference for the Poor and Vulnerable

This teaching recalls the Gospel admonitions of Jesus to “Love thy neighbor” and “What you do for the least of my brethren, you do for me.” Here CST argues that “the proper end of economic activity is the progress of the entire community, especially the poor” (Massaro, 2005). This centrality of the obligation to help the poor is manifest not only in CST, but also in *every* other major religious doctrine - Jewish, Protestant, Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist.

The Principle of Worker Rights

This theme advances the idea that work is central to human growth and that workers help to continue the wonder of God’s creation. This is the oldest teaching of modern CST dicta, embodied in the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, published in 1891, and elaborated in Pope John Paul II’s *Laborem Exercens* (1981). These documents proclaim: “All people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions as well as to organize and join unions or other associations” (National Conference of Catholic Bishops 1997 [5]). They grant workers the right to organize in unions and suggest that duties of past loyalties by workers always need to be recognized.

The Principle of Solidarity

This concept recognizes that all people and social groups are united in a brotherhood that seeks common growth and fulfillment, in the debt of one another for the support that we require in community. It provides a framework for the idea that “... economic life should be shaped by moral principles” (National Conference of Catholic Bishops 1997 [2]) because all persons both seek and want a fair opportunity to attain betterment in their lives. This foundational theme of CST is the basis for advocating ethical responsibilities of rich nations to poor as well as the special ethical obligations of multinational businesses operating in developing countries (Tavis 1999).

The Principle of Stewardship

This precept captures the responsibility of every party - including corporations - to contribute to the care of the earth. It is among the newest in the evolution of CST. It calls for economic actions always to “respect the integrity and cycles of nature” and to fastidiously avoid environmental exploitation (*Compendium* 2005). It views the physical environment as a common pool of abundant resources not to be exploited for the benefit of only a few or at the expense of future generations. It connects to the “green ethic” and the “sustainability criterion” so prominent in current competitive strategy discussions (Elkington, 1998). However, it must be noted that this principle stops short of endorsing the Gaia Hypothesis (Lovelock 1979), which, in effect, deifies nature. In CST, nature is man’s garden, to be protected and enriched as an instrument of humanity, but not given autonomous status.

Exhibit Three: AMA Statement of Ethics

- *AMA Statement of Ethics (revised 2008)*

ETHICAL NORMS AND VALUES FOR MARKETERS

Preamble

The American Marketing Association commits itself to promoting the highest standard of professional ethical norms and values for its members (practitioners, academics and students). Norms are established standards of conduct that are expected and maintained by society and/or professional organizations. Values represent the collective conception of what communities find desirable, important and morally proper. Values also serve as the criteria for evaluating our own personal actions and the actions of others. As marketers, we recognize that we not only serve our organizations but also act as stewards of society in creating, facilitating and executing the transactions that are part of the greater economy. In this role, marketers are expected to embrace the highest professional ethical norms and the ethical values implied by our responsibility toward multiple stakeholders (e.g., customers, employees, investors, peers, channel members, regulators and the host community).

Ethical Norms

As marketers, we must:

- Do no harm. This means consciously avoiding harmful actions or omissions by embodying high ethical standards and adhering to all applicable laws and regulations in the choices we make.
- Foster trust in the marketing system. This means striving for good faith and fair dealing so as to contribute toward the efficacy of the exchange process as well as avoiding deception in product design, pricing, communication, and delivery of distribution.
- Embrace ethical values. This means building relationships and enhancing consumer confidence in the integrity of marketing by affirming these core values: honesty, responsibility, fairness, respect, transparency and citizenship.

Ethical Values

Honesty – to be forthright in dealings with customers and stakeholders. To this end, we will:

- Strive to be truthful in all situations and at all times.
- Offer products of value that do what we claim in our communications.
- Stand behind our products if they fail to deliver their claimed benefits.
- Honor our explicit and implicit commitments and promises.

Responsibility – to accept the consequences of our marketing decisions and strategies. To this end, we will:

- Strive to serve the needs of customers.
- Avoid using coercion with all stakeholders.
- Acknowledge the social obligations to stakeholders that come with increased marketing and economic power.
- Recognize our special commitments to vulnerable market segments such as children, seniors, the economically impoverished, market illiterates and others who may be substantially disadvantaged.
- Consider environmental stewardship in our decision-making.

Fairness – to balance justly the needs of the buyer with the interests of the seller. To this end, we will:

- Represent products in a clear way in selling, advertising and other forms of communication; this includes the avoidance of false, misleading and deceptive promotion.
- Reject manipulations and sales tactics that harm customer trust.
- Refuse to engage in price fixing, predatory pricing, price gouging or “bait-and-switch” tactics.
- Avoid knowing participation in conflicts of interest.
- Seek to protect the private information of customers, employees and partners.

Respect – to acknowledge the basic human dignity of all stakeholders. To this end, we will:

- Value individual differences and avoid stereotyping customers or depicting demographic groups (e.g., gender, race, sexual orientation) in a negative or dehumanizing way.
- Listen to the needs of customers and make all reasonable efforts to monitor and improve their satisfaction on an ongoing basis.
- Make every effort to understand and respectfully treat buyers, suppliers, intermediaries and distributors from all cultures.
- Acknowledge the contributions of others, such as consultants, employees and coworkers, to marketing endeavors.
- Treat everyone, including our competitors, as we would wish to be treated.

Transparency – to create a spirit of openness in marketing operations. To this end, we will:

- Strive to communicate clearly with all constituencies.
- Accept constructive criticism from customers and other stakeholders.
- Explain and take appropriate action regarding significant product or service risks, component substitutions or other foreseeable eventualities that could affect customers or their perception of the purchase decision.
- Disclose list prices and terms of financing as well as available price deals and adjustments.

Citizenship – to fulfill the economic, legal, philanthropic and societal responsibilities that serve stakeholders. To this end, we will:

- Strive to protect the ecological environment in the execution of marketing campaigns.
- Give back to the community through volunteerism and charitable donations.
- Contribute to the overall betterment of marketing and its reputation.
- Urge supply chain members to ensure that trade is fair for all participants, including producers in developing countries.

Implementation

We expect AMA members to be courageous and proactive in leading and/or aiding their organizations in the fulfillment of the explicit and implicit promises made to those stakeholders. We recognize that every industry sector and marketing sub-discipline (e.g., marketing research, e-commerce, Internet selling, direct marketing, and advertising) has its own specific ethical issues that require policies and commentary. An array of such codes can be accessed through links on the AMA Web site. Consistent with the principle of subsidiarity (solving issues at the level where the expertise resides), we encourage all such groups to develop and/or refine their industry and discipline-specific codes of ethics to supplement these guiding ethical norms and values.

Revision adopted by AMA Board of Directors on 10/24/08.

Exhibit Four

**Applications of Major Themes in Catholic Social Teaching
to Selected Social/Ethical Issues in Marketing**

Issues	Human Dignity	Common Good	Subsidiarity (Family & Community)	Option for the poor & Vulnerable	Dignity of work & rights of workers	Solidarity	Stewardship (Care for God's creation)
Product design & promotion	A		B	C	D	E	F
Promotion & pricing	G		H	I			
Consumer ethics	J		K				L
Public policy & regulation	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
Globalization	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

Product Design and Promotion

- A. ***Marketers should place a high priority on safety and refrain from promotions that take advantage of information asymmetries and motivations that reflect psychological insecurity or immaturity.*** As an example of an actual response to this issue, Gillette appointed a Vice President for Product Integrity, who was given veto power over new product ideas.
- B. ***Marketers ought to take seriously their obligations to guard the interests of consumers, while honoring the rights of both companies and consumers to make choices that are as free from coercion or limits as practicable.*** Consumer hotlines and warranty policies that provide for replacement or repair of products that fail, even beyond express provisions in the product guarantee exemplify the observance of those obligations.
- C. ***Marketers should consider the needs of low- and moderate-income consumers, the elderly, and those with physical handicaps and refrain from questionable promotions and finance schemes that target disadvantaged consumers.*** Retailers that maintain operations in low-income neighborhoods meet these needs. Advertisers that refrain from targeting vulnerable populations with promotions requiring ethical analysis are actualizing these concerns. (Of course, some products cannot stand up to objective scrutiny and might not be launched in the first place.)
- D. ***Marketers need to balance legitimate interests in controlling operating costs against the equally legitimate interests of channel members and their families in protecting stable employment, compensation sufficient to support a decent family life, and a safe workplace.*** Problems posing questions about balancing conflicting interests may sometimes best be solved through consultation and efforts to expand the domain of options under consideration. Employees or key dealers might be willing to trade off current demands for some ownership interest in a supplier. More generally, treating these key business constituents as partners, rather than adversaries, is likely to lead to more cooperative solutions to operating problems that are, in any event, ones that are shared.
- E. ***Marketers should consider the global impact of their operations and recognize obligations to balance the impact of strategies on workers, consumers, and other stakeholders in the various regions where they do business.*** Businesses that make a serious effort to check on Third World contractors' labor and environmental practices, especially those sellers who work with independent NGOs to certify vendor claims, are fulfilling this demand.
- F. ***Marketers need to recognize environmental obligations in design and promotion decisions that affect ecological considerations, e.g., energy efficiency, plant and vehicle emissions, and recyclability of products and parts.*** For example, companies increasingly impose a "green criterion" in their product development, e.g., their logistics strategies and new product proposals now require response to these broader obligations.

Promotion and Pricing

- G. ***Marketers should refrain from promotions and pricing schemes that take advantage of information asymmetries and/or buyer weaknesses.*** The development of an advertising campaign in a highly competitive media environment is a significant challenge under this principle, given the temptation to "push the envelope" with respect to acceptability regarding what is misleading or deceptive, pornographic, or ethnically stereotypical. As a practical matter, however, unreasonable scruples applied to these prospects might well put advertisers – and agencies – out of the race. One

organizational response to this problem is to create an ombudsman system whereby agency and advertiser employees can raise concerns and have them adjudicated by a party or panel that is disinterested in the outcome but is sensitive to both economic and ethical concerns. Of course, in some cases, the implication of this procedure for advertising agencies is a lost client or declined business.

- H. ***Marketers should avoid programming that threatens family or community integrity while emphasizing strategies that are responsive to local needs.*** For instance, in today's markets, electronic games have great potential for family-oriented recreation as well as for activities that simulate socio-pathological conduct. Thus, marketers should take measures to communicate Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) ratings to all buyers and encourage enforcement of the same with their distributors.
- I. ***Marketers must recognize special obligations to children and adolescents as well as those whose addictions may be stimulated by promises and images projected over the worldwide web.*** This concern goes to product suitability as well as to age appropriate promotion content and media.

Consumer Ethics

- J. ***Consumers should make choices that meet authentic needs while avoiding products, behaviors, and lifestyles that may endanger others.*** Here, "risk to others" as a choice criterion would be applied to recreational purchases such as hunting weapons and vehicles, especially those targeted to young or inexperienced users.
- K. ***Consumers must recognize their responsibilities to marketers and others that protect the integrity of marketing transactions and relationships while honoring freedom of choice.*** Timely payments and truth telling in applications for warranty relief fulfill such ethical obligations of consumers.
- L. ***Consumers ought to choose products and services and disposal methods that protect environmental sustainability, e.g., favoring energy efficiency, renewable resources, and recycling.*** Here again, this implies the application of a "green criterion" when selecting, using, and disposing of products with environmental implications.

Public Policy and Regulation

- M. ***Policymakers should adopt regulatory strategies that preserve, insofar as possible, freedom of individual choice, while recognizing the value of improving economic opportunities and health and safety for all persons.*** Policies that internalize social costs and benefits or facilitate consumer information may better serve these concerns than those that prohibit or mandate, e.g., product content or designs. Some may argue, for example, that contemporary playground equipment safety standards have gone too far in protecting children from the risk of injury – to the point that children are over-protected and that "play value" has been eliminated from these products.
- N. ***Policymakers must meet their obligations to serve the common good, irrespective of variations in political and economic power across constituencies, refraining from corrupt practices (e.g., bribery or extortion), while fostering the development and maintenance of institutions and policies that advance individual liberty.*** Requirements for transparency regarding provenance and content, readable use instructions, and information about product risks generally advance the welfare of all while maintaining freedom of choice.
- O. ***Policymakers ought to recognize obligations to families and communities whose interests may be lost in regulatory strategies that do not honor the principle of subsidiarity.*** While social and ethical

issues that arise in marketing have a degree of universality about them, solutions need to recognize local conditions. An advertising concept appropriate for adults (e.g., erectile dysfunction remedies) may be inappropriate in television, print, or internet media with a significant juvenile audience.

- P. ***Policymakers need to recognize special obligations to protect the welfare of the poor, disadvantaged minorities, youth, elderly, and others whose ability to navigate and take advantage of complex markets might otherwise be compromised.*** The appropriate standard of care regarding adequate information where vulnerable consumers are concerned may not be “the reasonable adult,” but a credulous teenager or an older adult approaching dementia.
- Q. ***Policymakers ought to balance responsibilities to workers and consumers while protecting the dignity of both.*** In many respects, this concern is resolved by recognizing that workers *are* consumers; the apparent conflict is contrived, not real. More generally, this obligation calls for balancing interests when cost or demand level factors are in play.
- R. ***Policymakers should refrain from policies that unnecessarily serve the interest of only some segments of society, taking into account both local and global interests.*** While the current trade situation might be adverse to certain domestic production interests, economic isolationism is probably a less appropriate approach to serving those interests than less radical adjustments to terms of trade that retain advantages for foreign and consumer interests.
- S. ***Policymakers ought to observe the interests of future generations in regulatory strategies that protect the natural environment.*** Many regulatory questions confront conflicting environmental and economic (especially employment) concerns. Job preservation or growth is desirable, e.g., in the forest products industry, which has been hard hit by environmental protection policies that control production quantities and methods. Nonetheless, the environmental devastation that occurred as a result of indiscriminate harvesting and processing practices in the 19th and early 20th Century must not return. Publicly supported research and policy experimentation might lead to results that would reduce that conflict.

Globalization

- T. ***Marketers and policymakers need to respect the interests of all persons, refraining from merely taking advantage of economic, educational, and other circumstances, treating some as only a means of production or economic success.*** In response to this concern, the impoverished workers and consumers in developing countries are to be considered the moral equivalents of domestic consumers and workers. This is a very challenging standard, particularly because a strong argument can be made for “taking care of our own” in both political and business contexts. However, it follows that efforts must be made to advance or protect the interests of those “others.” If import standards are not thoughtfully drafted they unnecessarily have an adverse impact on foreign producers (often the poorest poor), and provide little or no incremental protection for domestic consumers.
- U. ***Marketers and policymakers ought to provide for participative mechanisms in decisions which affect families and communities and, in less developed regions, attempt to meet the needs of families and communities in such basic areas as health care, education, and housing.*** Marketers are generally quite good at using survey methodologies to inform product and promotion decisions. Yet there may be little consultation with those most directly affected by foreign investment decisions, particularly where tradeoffs among social needs must be considered. Before committing to “best available technology” with respect to pollution control or energy consumption, the prospect that local families have desperate needs for potable water or a working waste disposal system might be considered and weighed. Simply put, global marketing efforts must better represent the interests of

impoverished, vulnerable consumers and advocate for their concerns when they are unable to effectively represent themselves.

- V. ***Marketers must recognize special responsibilities to both individuals and communities in settings where policies and regulations are weak or non-existent and refrain from participation in corrupt practices and human rights violations that appear to be inherent in such settings.*** This recognition implies that cultural relativism is inappropriate as guidance for behavior. Corrupt practices and abuses do not suddenly become proper by occurring in nations where they are not outlawed or because legal restrictions against them are not enforced.

- W. ***Marketers, policymakers, and consumers must accept recognize obligations to protect and advance the interests – liberty and welfare - of the poor, minorities, women, and rural populations in settings where these interests are exploited, ignored, or given only lip service.*** As it happens, a global economy confers major advantages in societies where economic and social divisions may be the greatest. However, whether marginalized members of those societies receive those benefits depends heavily on whether powerful local public and business officials recognize their needs in distributing those benefits. This is a call to fairness for those local officials and, in many cases, a call for imposing distribution requirements (wage, working conditions, and social welfare programs) in terms of trade and economic aid by political and economic participants in the global marketplace from more advanced societies.

- X. ***Marketers should foster, nay require, healthy working conditions and adequate wages in jurisdictions where these values are often abused, especially when labor and other subcontractors use the shield of privacy to protect practices that would otherwise be an embarrassment to their customers and clients.*** As suggested previously, this concern calls for investigation and sanctions in situations where abuses are likely. Companies should work with an NGO, independent from the marketing organization, to certify that production practices meet acceptable standards; this adds to the assurance and credibility that these conditions of labor market justice are met.

- Y. ***Marketers, policymakers, and consumers ought to observe the common interests of humanity across economic, social, and geographic groups.*** A prominent concern in this regard is the practice of selling goods (i.e., product dumping) in Third World markets that are prohibited in North America and Western Europe because of their impact on health, safety, or the environment.

- Z. ***Marketers and policy makers need to take account of the interests of future generations and the environment in all settings where those interest might otherwise be ignored, refraining from practices that are permitted because of lax or non-existent regulations.*** Procurement of forest, agricultural, and animal products that result from wholesale deforestation seems to raise a concern in this regard.

Response to

Integration of Catholic Social Thought into Marketing Curricula

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The paper by Gene Laczniaak and Pat Murphy (“Distinctive Imperatives for Mission Driven Teaching in Catholic Business Schools: The Case of Marketing Classes”) together with the Teaching Notes are a great step forward in bringing the principles of Catholic Social Thought (CST) to bear in undergraduate classes on marketing. The two authors have long been, in their joint and separate publications, the flag bearers for marketing ethics and have, to a large extent, established this subdiscipline. They have now produced a well-reasoned, very comprehensive, and substantial account of how marketing can be taught from a Catholic perspective, together with a detailed proposal for its integration into marketing classes.

Laczniaak and Murphy lay out five normative principles on what Catholic business education should accomplish: develop moral and spiritual character in students; nurture them to use managerial skills for the benefit of others; foster in them a special concern for the welfare of employees; instill in them awareness of the social ramifications of organizational decisions; and make them develop a special concern for the disadvantaged in society. Based on these premises, they sketch a program for the integration of the principles of CST into marketing courses. They relate them to the UN Global Compact that has been endorsed by several associations of business schools, and they show the compatibility of these principles with the Statement of Ethics published by the American Marketing Association. But what is arguably of greatest use for educators is Exhibit Four, in which the authors propose a matrix that links the main principles of CST to some of the central topics covered in marketing courses. Their proposals are very concrete and refer to product development, pricing, promotion, advertising, and to many issues of public policy. The Teaching Notes provide examples of how student awareness of ethical problems in marketing situations can be raised and how they can be guided to find solutions.

Being in substantial agreement with the authors, these comments present no critique but suggest possible extensions. Only two ideas shall be developed. They work on the assumption that a mind trained in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT) does indeed think differently. In other words, beyond the deposit of faith as formulated in the Catechism, there are also fundamental formal principles that are constitutive of Catholic thought. These include, for instance, the necessity of letting analysis be followed by synthesis (Maritain’s *distinguer pour unir*), the view of social reality in terms of meaningful structures, the rejection of any categorical separation between descriptive and normative principles, or a basic realism about the mind-independent existence of reality without which the Catholic understanding of the sacraments makes no sense.

The first suggestion is to integrate Catholic thought into marketing education not merely at the level of CST but at the more basic level of the CIT, of which CST is an application to the sphere of social life. Laczniak and Murphy themselves mention this in their paper. Much work on business ethics takes the acceptance of an ethical orientation for granted but does not answer the question “Why should I care?” nor the further question, “Why these and not other principles?” We all know that isolated quotes from Scripture are often less than convincing, because Scripture contains other passages which, taken in isolation and without appropriate exegesis, can be taken to support the opposite position. Beyond postulating the principles of CST – human dignity, the common good, subsidiarity, solidarity, etc. – as free-standing axioms that derive their normative force from encyclicals, they can be shown to follow from an eminently reasonable and well-developed view of the role of persons and their social nature in the universe. It is not necessary to dip directly into dogmatic theology to do this, and the model reaches far beyond Catholics. CST can be presented as a whole composed of interlocking and mutually sustaining parts that together make the social sphere intelligible and meaningful. Our thinking and acting occurs at various levels. By taking two principles as examples, the following model demonstrates what is meant, where n is that level at which the principles of CST are located:

<i>Ontologic priority</i>	<i>Level Principles</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Structure of explanation</i>
	$n+2$ Entrepreneurship as vocation; joy in creative work	Marketing education	
	$n+1$ Decentralized sales teams; distributed international marketing; support for employee ownership	Marketing principles	
	n Principle of subsidiarity	CST	
	$n-1$ Persons are social individuals; human freedom	CIT	
	$n-2$ World is a structured whole (\neq atomism)	Theology/Philosophy	
	$n+2$ Making individual human worth central in business	Marketing education	
	$n+1$ Truth in advertising; product safety; abstention from stereotyping; giving consumers choices	Marketing principles	

↻	<i>n</i>	Principle of human dignity	CST	↻
↻	<i>n-1</i>	Man created in the image of God (<i>imago Dei</i>)	CIT	↻
	<i>n-2</i>	God's love and grace (<i>Deus Caritas Est</i>)	Theology/Philosophy	

As in all empirical disciplines, explanation precedes by reduction whereas the ontological structure of reality is emergent. The teaching of marketing ought to be guided by marketing practice as viewed through the lense of CST; the latter is an application of the principles of the CIT to the social sphere; and these principles are ultimately grounded in revealed and rational truths of theology. The structure of reality is the reverse of this order of explanation: God is the ultimate reality, with our understanding of the world, society, marketing activity, and our teaching of it, being located in smaller concentric circles within it, or at emergent levels above it. What we should teach in marketing courses, and how marketers and consumers should behave, follows seamlessly from an integrated and meaningful view of reality. The interconnectedness of levels is important here and needs to be communicated in our curricula.

The CIT has a material and a formal aspect. It makes assertions about God, the world, and man, but it also shows us how to think. The latter aspect is often neglected. This then allows us to answer the question of *why* the Catholic view should be privileged or studied at all: it presents a *better* – because more encompassing, coherent, and realistic – picture of the human condition and of social relations than any competing view. It simply has a better explanatory power, because it integrates facts about human nature such as sin and facts about God such as grace, and it shows that for understanding the success of marketing strategies one needs to consider the totality of relevant circumstances. It is a constant warning that excessive analysis will lead nowhere if it is not guided by a clear and moral vision. Marketing with its abundance of knowledge about failures due to disregard for basic laws of social interaction could be a treasure trove for making the intellectual superiority of the Catholic worldview plausible, through subtle facilitation of discovery rather than mere doctrinalism.

The second suggestion, which is merely a general caveat, is to be careful with excessive normativity. CST is sometimes reduced to a long list of duties and interdictions for businesses but rights for workers or consumers. This not only defeats its purpose, it also does not capture the spirit of recent papal teaching. CST is balanced in granting rights and imposing duties, and in emphasizing the opportunities *and* dangers of enterprise. The principles of dignity and solidarity give workers rights within their company, for instance to just wages and to collective representation. But the principles of stewardship and of the common good also impose on them the duty to apply themselves to the best of their ability and make the company successful. Recent encyclicals see business as a positive-sum game in which both owners of capital and other stakeholders can win. Benedict XVI continues to hold subsidiarity out as “the most effective antidote against any form of all-encompassing welfare state” (c. 57), but thereby in no way weakens the duty of solidarity. Similarly, in the field of marketing it is certainly easy to find examples of blatant violations of human dignity or of good stewardship, and the authors point to several. But they also mention that by developing products of great utility and of beauty, and by facilitating the exchange of

goods and services, it is in the power of marketers to enrich lives. Maybe our teaching needs to give more attention to these smart solutions, of which examples can readily be found. Bob Kennedy wrote a marvelous book on this topic - *The Good That Business Does*. Taking it seriously would help to free CST from the not entirely undeserved image of being the refuge of “do-gooders.” Especially the Augustinian tradition of moral theology, in which Benedict XVI himself stands, has consistently warned against an asceticism that too readily sees economic action as either right or wrong. Romano Guardini claimed the precedence of *logos* before *ethos*: expecting too much of man means moving him into the sphere of the divine. Hans Urs von Balthasar pointed out that moralism is a “hypertrophy”, or overgrowth, of action that has lost its proper intention and desires to change the world independently from grace in a manner that is blind to culture and tradition. The danger involved in liberalism in both its Catholic and Protestant varieties is that morality becomes increasingly “footloose” and serves a political purpose rather than being embedded in a comprehensive vision of meaning. For example, portraying social justice as if it were the end of CST means putting the cart before the horse. *Caritas in Veritate* reminds us that social policy ought to support humans in their endeavors to develop more meaningful lives for themselves and their families. The proper order of causality starts with charity towards others, to which we are enabled by divine grace as much as by our own nature and efforts. By virtue of desiring our fellow humans to flourish, we must introduce greater justice into our social relations, for example by providing access to resources. It is love that drives justice. Catholics need not become a business police, much as prophetic warnings and corrective action are often necessary. CST must never become doctrinaire or bookish if it is to serve a better life for all. And the teaching of Catholic principles in marketing or any business discipline must never be an afterthought, or an add-on to the “real” substance of a course (“Here comes the Catholic stuff – yawn”, many students would think). *Centesimus Annus* and *Caritas in Veritate* refer to business as a vocation and extol the creative forces of entrepreneurship. The Catholic view of the goodness of creation, which Protestants generally do not share, allows us to see also the opportunities and accomplishments and not only the sordid downsides of marketing. Let us analyze and condemn the undesirables – from payday loans and manipulative advertising to mindless consumerism – but let us also consider the many examples where new products and their distribution, pricing, and communication have improved the lives of millions, not least among the more disadvantaged. Most of all, let us demonstrate rather than merely tell students that the Catholic vision of business works. If we can inspire them with this vision as offering opportunities for self-fulfillment *and* service to others, and the first *because* of the second, we may indeed show them that marketing, too, can contribute to fulfilling God’s plan.

Easy? Absolutely not. But certainly a fascinating program. Our colleagues Gene Lacznia and Pat Murphy have made great strides towards showing how to do it. Ultimately they arrive at a positive conclusion: “Catholic principles and perspectives can offer something unique and useful to the pedagogy of marketing.” It is our task as Catholic educators to make the power of the Catholic vision come to life in our students, both by *what* we teach but also by *how* we teach it. If Catholic business education ought by right claim intellectual superiority, because we have a better view of the reality of man and society, the paper by Gene and Pat points the way. We all can build on their work. I for my part will start by integrating their recommendations into my syllabi for this fall semester.