

**KEEPING THE LIGHT ON: IDENTITY AND MISSION ACTIVITY  
AT JESUIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

**Santa Clara University**

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It is a great pleasure and privilege to be here with you today. Santa Clara is at the center of all that is good about contemporary Jesuit higher education: an outstanding president, Fr. Paul Locatelli, who has led the university in the holistic pursuit of excellence in all that you are doing, and a vibrant, engaged Jesuit, Catholic institutional identity. It is an honor to be part of the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Bannan Institute where we are all reminded of our friend and esteemed colleague, Bill Spohn, whom we miss so much. Happily, Fr. Kevin Quinn and Paul Woolley continue Bill's great work. It is special to see good friends from the Bannan family like Ben and Katie Dalby and Katie Steinke, and to be with some of my favorite colleagues from other Jesuit schools, Kathleen Maas Weigert, Kim McElaney, and Jennifer Haworth, who are part of this program. Kevin, once we get past this keynote, you have assembled a great group of presenters!

In the Vietnam war years, it was fashionable to classify people as "hawks" or "doves." A Jesuit friend of mine thought of himself rather as an "owl," that interesting bird able to swivel its neck to see in all directions and thus have a complete view of things. Around the same time, George Bonham, then editor of *Change* magazine, described himself as "bullish with a wary eye on the realities."

When talking about the Jesuit, Catholic identity of our schools today, we have our hawks and doves, bears and bulls, pessimists and enthusiasts -- unfortunately not always talking constructively with one another. We are challenged to imitate the owl and look all around us to find a more comprehensive view. We might start with a bit of history. Before reflecting on where we are and where we are going, it is helpful to see where we have been, and how we came to be where are today..

The issue of Jesuit, Catholic identity has a most interesting history, with many of the same questions and themes playing over and over again, with different accents, and in many different

contexts. I have been around long enough to have lived through much of that history, and have the scars to prove it.

When I was a student at Fordham University in the late forties to early fifties, no one was asking “Is Fordham still Jesuit and Catholic?” There were too many Jesuits walking around in long, black cassocks, essentially everyone on campus was Catholic, there was a tightly structured curriculum centered on neo-scholastic philosophy -- more than 30 credits of it, and a benevolent dictator Jesuit served as Dean of Students. Twenty years later, as a faculty member at Georgetown, I was chairing a committee that was asking how the Graduate School could be Catholic. Things had changed rather quickly.

Since then, in many different settings and in several different roles, I have been part of the discussions and initiatives focused on the Jesuit, Catholic identity of our colleges and universities, as they face their own and others’ questions about whether they still are Jesuit and Catholic. Of course, the answer depends heavily on what one means by “Jesuit” and “Catholic.” We will say more about that later.

### **What Has Brought us to This Point?**

Discussions on just what makes a university Catholic, and how a Catholic university should relate to the Church and the local bishop, date long before *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, and indeed go back to the early universities of Bologna, Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge, including St. Thomas Aquinas and his troubles with the Archbishop of Paris. More recently, we can cite 1949 and the establishment of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU), in collaboration with the Vatican Congregation on Catholic Education.<sup>1</sup> Under the leadership of Fr. Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C., and with the support of Pope Paul VI, IFCU evolved into an organization increasingly independent of the Congregation, to the chagrin of the Congregation. This foreshadowed the tensions accompanying the development of *Ex corde Ecclesiae*. Meeting in

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<sup>1</sup> This historical discussion relies on personal recollections and on a number of references, including: Gallin, Alice, OSU (Editor), *American Catholic Higher Education: Essential Documents 1967-1990*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992; Gallin, Alice, OSU, *Independence and New Partnerships in Catholic Higher Education*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996; Gleason, Philip, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995; Leahy, William P., S.J., *Adapting to America: Catholics, Jesuits, and Higher Education in the Twentieth Century*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1991; O’Brien, David, *From the Heart of the American Church: Catholic Higher Education and American Culture*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1994; O’Keefe, Joseph M., S.J., (Editor), *Catholic Higher Education at the Turn of the New Century*. Boston: Center for International Higher Education, School of Education, Boston College, 1997.

Tokyo in 1965, IFCU decided to develop a document on the distinctive character of a Catholic university in the context of the recently published Vatican II document, *The Church in the Modern World*.

Leading a caucus of American delegates to the 1968 IFCU meeting in Kinshasa, Fr. Hesburgh hosted a meeting at the Notre Dame villa in Land O'Lakes Wisconsin, from which resulted the famous (or infamous, to its critics) *Land O'Lakes Statement: The Nature of the Contemporary Catholic University*.<sup>2</sup> This statement helped frame the issues that have been the basis for tensions between Church authorities and American Catholic higher education for over 40 years, especially its insistence that

*...the Catholic university must be a university in the full modern sense of the word, with a strong commitment to and concern for academic freedom, and that this institutional autonomy and academic freedom are essential conditions of life and growth, and indeed of survival for Catholic universities, as for all universities.*

Critics of this so-called “Declaration of Independence,” often forget the distinguished composition of the group issuing the statement. It included two bishops, two high-ranking monsignors, one of whom is now a cardinal (Cardinal McCarrick), the superior general of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, the assistant superior general of the Society of Jesus, and the presidents of Notre Dame, Boston College, Fordham, Georgetown and St. Louis. Also forgotten is that of the ten sections of the document, only the first spoke of autonomy and academic freedom. The other nine sections were devoted to how Catholic universities could assure that Catholicism would be “perceptibly present and effectively operative.”

In 1972, after years of negotiation between Cardinal Garrone, the Prefect of the Congregation on Catholic Education, and IFCU, the document, *The Catholic University in the Modern World*<sup>3</sup> appeared. The document had the reluctant approval of the Congregation, because it envisioned “university institutions without statutory bonds linking them to ecclesiastical authorities.” This issue of a juridical connection between universities and the Church as essential to a Catholic university would later be a neuralgic issue in the discussions of *Ex corde Ecclesiae*.

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<sup>2</sup> The Land O'Lakes Statement is reprinted in O'Keefe, op. cit., pp 119-124

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted in O'Keefe, op. cit., pp 125-185.

Discussions leading to the revision of Canon Law began soon after, in 1976. For the first time, Canon Law would contain a section on higher education (Canons 808-13), and the debate began about a “canonical mission” for theologians (or “mandate” then *mandatum* as it would later be called). Despite prolonged attempts to eliminate this canon, including a last minute visit to Pope John Paul II, the mandate appeared in the final text, only to be largely ignored, until *Ex corde* would resurrect the issue.

By 1985, a draft of a *Schema on Higher Education* appeared, and vigorous discussions on what would become the Apostolic Constitution, *Ex corde Ecclesiae* had begun. The first draft led Fr. Hesburgh to note, in a comment as relevant today as it was then, that the draft posed a terrible dilemma for Catholic universities, “to choose between being real universities and being really Catholic, when in fact, they are already both.” Significant consultation led to a final version of *Ex corde*,<sup>4</sup> issued in August, 1990. The final document had removed many of the objectionable elements of previous drafts.

“Part I: Identity and Mission” presented a magnanimous vision of the Catholic university which included many of the ideas from *Land O’Lakes* and *The Catholic University in the Modern World*. “Part II: General Norms” reflected the concern for control dating back to 1949, and laid the basis for complementary specific ordinances to be developed by local bishops’ conferences to fit regional circumstances.

Readers would recognize in *Ex corde* that the characteristics cited for a Catholic university were almost the same as those described in the 1972 document, *The Catholic University in the Modern World*:

1. A Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such;
2. A continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;
3. Fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church;
4. An institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life. (*Ex corde*, Part 1, A, 1, #13)

Unfortunately, for the next nine years, much of the conversation focused on Part II and the norms developed by the U.S. bishops, especially the requirement of a *mandatum* for theologians, while the grand vision of Part I, which had met widespread and even enthusiastic acceptance, receded

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<sup>4</sup> Reprinted in O’Keefe, op. cit., pp 165-189.

into the background. Colleges and universities spent time and energy on the defensive, distracting them from the more important task of trying to realize *Ex corde*'s magnanimous ideals of a Catholic University in rich dialogue with culture, and the place where the Church does its thinking. Interestingly, Pope Benedict XVI, in his recent affirming and encouraging address to Catholic educators, did not mention *Ex corde*, but did offer a similar positive and challenging role for the Catholic university to related faith and reason, Gospel and culture.

In the mid-90s, while the *mandatum* discussions were going on, several hundred Catholic educators gathered at the University of St. Thomas, attempting to move the discussion of Catholic mission and identity away from a debate about juridical relationships and toward mission-inspired work for social and civil responsibility, with a commitment to research and teaching in Catholic Studies.

Despite the worst fears of a Mexican standoff between bishops and theologians and bishops and universities, the past eight years have witnessed mostly good relationships, with the *mandatum* being handled quietly as both bishops and institution demonstrated mutual respect and understanding. There has probably been more helpful contact among bishops, theologians and presidents than ever before. Colleges and universities have been able to concentrate on attempts to realize the Catholic identity envisioned by the first part of *Ex corde*.

### **Other Stimuli**

Concurrently with the origins and then the development of the issue of Catholic identity, Catholic colleges and universities in the United States were undergoing massive and sweeping changes in response to a whole range of number of other stimuli. Let me cite three.

Monsignor John Tracy Ellis<sup>5</sup> famous query in 1955, "Where were the Catholic intellectual leaders?" was the most prominent of many voices critical of the quality of Catholic higher education. Despite the pockets of quality that did exist in a number of the colleges and universities, these criticisms by and large struck home. They stimulated dramatic efforts to improve the academic and institutional quality of Jesuit and Catholic colleges and universities in the U.S.

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<sup>5</sup> Ellis, John Tracy, "American Catholics and the Intellectual Life," *Thought*, 30/118 (Autumn, 1955), 351-388.

A second major stimulus for change was the Second Vatican Council. The Council's document, *Gaudium et Spes*, on the Church in the Modern World, proposed a whole new ecclesiology moving the Church from the serene, lordly mountaintop of certitude and clarity down into the messy valley of human challenges, risks and ambiguities, a move that to this day leaves many uncomfortable, if not openly resistant. In fact, one might say that many of today's tensions and struggles are ecclesiological. The Council also created new opportunities for lay leadership by emphasizing the responsibility identified with one's baptism, and celebrated a new openness to dialogue, ecumenism and diversity. Our campuses responded quickly and enthusiastically to these new emphases.

A third stimulus for change was the major growth, encouraged by readily available federal dollars for construction on campus and for student financial aid. Colleges and universities grew dramatically in size, complexity and diversity.

Responding to all of these challenges and opportunities, Catholic, and specifically Jesuit colleges and universities have made dramatic strides in the past 40 years in academic and institutional quality, professionalism, and lay leadership that have led to new respect among their peer institutions. In hindsight, the strong presidents behind this progress are often faulted for sacrificing Catholic identity in the urgency to grow and develop. In fairness to them, we need to recognize that without the ambitious vision of those women and men, Jesuit and Catholic higher education would not be here today trying to foster that identity. The most severe critics would claim that, in the process of making this very obvious progress, our colleges and universities have lost or are losing their identity as Jesuit and Catholic. Other observers, seeing very different colleges and universities from the ones they had known, simply ask the honest question, "Are we still Jesuit and Catholic?"

A number of vocal critics would answer with a strong and virulent "No." Some have started their own universities as alternatives to what they see as "Catholic lite" or not Catholic at all. George Marsden<sup>6</sup>, James Burtchaell<sup>7</sup>, and Philip Gleason<sup>8</sup>, etc. see us at various stages along the same

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<sup>6</sup> Marsden, George M., *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, and *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Burtchaell, James, *The Dying of the Light: the Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998.

road that led to the secularization of many Protestant institutions. Most recently, Morey and Piderit<sup>9</sup> register their doubts about our future because our lay leaders lack the extensive formation in a tradition that prepared clergy and religious to lead Catholic institutions. David O'Brien<sup>10</sup> is a more sanguine observer, seeing many opportunities for a vigorous, engaged Catholic identity and mission to transform not only the American Church but American higher education. Michael Buckley, S.J.,<sup>11</sup> David Hollenbach, S.J.,<sup>12</sup> and, most recently, Scott Appleby,<sup>13</sup> in his February 2008 address to the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, all strike a more positive response to the identity question.

### **The Jesuit Dimension of This History**

Jesuit colleges and universities were very much part of the same realities and pressures affecting their peer Catholic institutions. Encouraged by an influential Canon Law position, the “McGrath thesis,” and influenced by Vatican II’s insistence on the important role of the laity, Jesuit communities took the major step of incorporating separately from the college or university and turning over institutional control to a predominately lay board. This step was taken with no little angst on the part of those who saw this as too readily handing over a precious asset for which they had given their lives for. I was able to gain an insider’s view of both the Jesuit community side and the university side in these transactions, being a negotiator for the Jesuit community at Georgetown, while at the same time being a negotiator for the university Board at St. Joseph’s.

In 1969, in the midst of the separate incorporation discussions, Jesuits and their colleagues gathered at Regis in Denver for discussions on Jesuit identity, many of which are still relevant today.

Not only the institutions, but also Jesuit provincials were concerned about identity in the midst of change. In 1974-75, the inaugural project of the newly-established Jesuit Conference of Provincials, “Project One,” as it was called, was an attempt to develop a national rationale for

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<sup>8</sup> Gleason, Philip, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Morey, Melanie M. and Piderit, John J., S.J., *Catholic Higher Education: A Culture in Crisis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006

<sup>10</sup> O'Brien, David, *From the Heart of the American Church*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1994.

<sup>11</sup> Buckley, Michael J., S.J., *The Catholic University as Promise and Project*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1998.

<sup>12</sup> Hollenbach, David, S.J., “Is Tolerance Enough? The Catholic University and the Common Good,” *Conversations*, 13 (Spring, 1998).

<sup>13</sup> Appleby, Scott, “Lifting the Siege: The Promise of Catholic Higher Education in Church and Society,” *Origins*, Vol. 37, No. 37 (February 2008)

Jesuit higher education. After long and widespread consultation that seemed to be going nowhere, the effort was abandoned in favor of a letter from the American Provincials, entitled *The Jesuit Mission in Higher Education*, and individual Jesuit communities were encouraged to develop rationales in collaboration with their lay colleagues. These rationales can be seen as the predecessors of today's mission statements.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> General Congregation of the Jesuits in 1975 created a major new agenda for Jesuit colleges and universities when, in its Decree 4, it stated that “The mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement,” emphasizing that every Jesuit and every Jesuit institution had to be committed to a faith that does justice, a commitment that has been re-stated and clarified in each succeeding General Congregation.

In the eighties, there were various efforts to explore what today we call our Jesuit, Catholic identity, including a meeting on Jesuit-Lay Collaboration at Creighton University in 1988. *Assembly 1989: Jesuit Ministry in Higher Education* at Georgetown brought together the largest ever group of Jesuits and colleagues engaged in higher education, with Fr. Kolvenbach delivering the keynote address. The very successful “Assembly ‘89” led not only to the National Seminar on Jesuit Higher Education and its publication, *Conversations*, but to subsequent gatherings of campus representatives engaged in “identity and mission” activities. In 1993, Mission and Identity Coordinators formed an AJCU Conference that meets annually to share ideas, concerns and best practices. In June 1999, St. Joseph's University sponsored a major conference, “Jesuit Education 21: A Conference on the Future of Jesuit Higher Education.”

One of the great influences on contemporary Jesuit colleges and universities was the brutal murder of six Jesuits and their two co-workers at the *Universidad Centroamericana*, the UCA in El Salvador on November 16, 1989. This was an attack on Jesuits and on a Jesuit university committed to what Fr. Ignacio Ellacuria, the rector and main target of the assassins, called a “new kind of university” reflecting the Jesuit commitment to a faith that does justice and, deeply committed to the “national reality” of poverty and oppression. This commitment was made as a university, engaged in teaching, research and “social projection.” Evidence of the impact on our campuses of what happened that night is seen not only in memorials, such as the crosses in front of the Mission Chapel here at Santa Clara, but more importantly in the ways in which that event has influenced how our universities do business, and in particular, engage society. This is clearly

true at Santa Clara where Fr. Ellacuria had delivered a challenging graduation address and where his closest friend and colleague, Fr. Jon Sobrino is a frequent visitor.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Jesuit commitment to a faith that does justice was celebrated here at Santa Clara in October 2000, with Fr. Kolvenbach's memorable address raising the commitment to justice to a new level of seriousness and clarity. This address has had an almost unprecedented impact on our institutions, and leading to the engaged pedagogy that Dr. Weigert will speak about, and the commitment to educate for solidarity with a globalizing world..

### **Mission and Identity Activity**

The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) has conducted three surveys, in 1997, 2004 and 2008, of mission and identity activity on our campuses.<sup>14</sup> Frs. Joseph Appleyard and Howard Gray<sup>15</sup> published an excellent review article in the Fall 2000 issue of *Conversations*." A review of the AJCU reports, the Appleyard-Gray article, and the discussions at the annual meetings of mission and identity coordinators, shows an obvious and significant development in the sophistication and effectiveness of this activity on each of our 28 campuses.

Jennifer Hayworth and Meg Barry will review much of this activity in their paper, so that I will merely indicate how the early and very basic orientation and educational programs have developed into a whole range of strategies that now include:

- The development of more ambitious mission statements with greater clarity on the Jesuit, Catholic component of the institutional mission;
- Programs to acquaint boards of trustees to their responsibility for identity and mission and to help them discharge that responsibility;
- More extensive and effective orientation programs for new faculty and staff, as well as ongoing educational programs, discussions, seminars, etc. The influence of Fr. Howard Gray and his sensitivity to campus culture and welcoming approach to all members of the campus community are evident. This is reflected in the *Communal Reflection on the*

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<sup>14</sup> Each of these is available from the Association of Jesuit Colleges (AJCU). The most recent survey is available on the AJCU website ([www.ajcunet.edu/index.aspx?bid=309](http://www.ajcunet.edu/index.aspx?bid=309)).

<sup>15</sup> Appleyard, Joseph A. and Gray, Howard, "Tracking the Mission and Identity Question: Three Decades of Inquiry and Three Models of Interpretation," *Conversations* (18 (Fall, 2000), pp. 4-15.

*Jesuit Mission in Higher Education: A Way of Proceeding*,<sup>16</sup> a collaborative effort of provincials, presidents and rectors bearing Fr. Gray's distinguishing mark.

- Increasing integration of identity and mission issues into the curriculum and co-curriculum; e.g., in curricular changes, living-learning courses, immersion experiences and justice programs;
- Increasingly widespread experiences of the *Spiritual Exercises*;
- Vastly improved resources including: printed, audiovisual, and online materials made available by Boston College, St. Louis, Creighton and Xavier, and most recently in George Traub's two volumes from Loyola University Press;<sup>17</sup>
- Hiring for mission initiatives that are sensitive to the particular campus culture, while helping to recruit women and men who are both fully qualified and committed to the identity and mission of the institution;
- Increasingly effective and multi-dimensional campus ministry programs, as campus ministry, mission and identity and Jesuit community initiatives work more collaboratively.

The intent of all these efforts is to develop a critical mass, a sufficient number of effective people strategically placed and capable of influencing the institution, who are committed to the identity and mission of the college or university. Interestingly, "critical mass" is a term borrowed from nuclear physics where it is the mass of fissionable material necessary for a nuclear explosion. Perhaps a better analogy is Walter Ong's "yeast" capable of transforming a formless pile of dough into life-giving bread.

A number of doctoral dissertations contribute to the increased sophistication of these efforts: Timothy Lannon, on the role of presidential leadership; Sarah M. Kelly, on the degree of buy-in by faculty and staff in Jesuit schools; Patrick Rombalski, on mission and identity at John Carroll University; and Judy Deshotels, on how faculty respond to multiple identities, e.g., of their discipline, their department and their institution.

In addition to the programs tailored for individual campuses, a number of collaborative efforts are underway to foster our Jesuit, Catholic identity. They include the Heartland-Delta Conferences

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<sup>16</sup> Gray, Howard, *Communal Reflection on the Jesuit Mission in Higher Education: A Way of Proceeding*. Washington, DC: The Jesuit Conference, 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Traub, George W. S.J., *A Jesuit Education Reader*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008. and *A Jesuit Spirituality Reader*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008.

and Faculty Conversations, the Western Conversations, and the recently inaugurated Eastern Conversations. The AJCU-sponsored Leadership Development Seminar, now entering its sixth year, has enrolled nearly 200 leaders and potential leaders currently working in AJCU schools in a program meant to develop women and men committed to mission-driven, effective leadership. A Heartland-Delta Colleagues Program is being developed to offer an in-depth experience of mission through four components: the development of a cohort; an experience of the *Spiritual Exercises*; an immersion experience; and an online course on the history and spirituality of Jesuit higher education.

All of this activity reflects a seriousness about fostering the Jesuit, Catholic dimension of our colleges and universities that runs counter to the charges that, deliberately or through inattention, we have lost or are losing our identity. Of course, not only our critics, but we ourselves can ask whether all of this is enough now and into the future. Considering the reality that more and more of our new faculty and staff arrive on our campuses with little or no experience of “Jesuit” or “Catholic,” and that many of our lay colleagues most familiar with these traditions are retiring, we clearly have a formidable task ahead. The pessimism of a Marsden or Burtchaell seems excessive, but their fears provide a healthy antidote to naïve optimism that everything will work out just fine.

### **Some Hard Questions**

Throughout the long history of concern for our Jesuit, Catholic identity, a number of questions persist. Let me try to deal briefly with six of the most obvious questions.

- 1) What do we mean by “Catholic” and Jesuit” and how do the two descriptors relate one to the other?

Clearly, there are different understandings about what it means to be a Catholic college or university today. I had mentioned earlier that this can be related to different ecclesiologies or understandings of (and comfort levels with) what the Church is about. At one extreme is a Church kept relatively pure and unsullied by limiting interaction with the world around it. One tends to see threats of “secularizing” influences and behavior everywhere, and to have a very clearly defined notion of the Church (and its institutions) that one seeks to protect. At the other extreme is a Church so deeply embedded in the surrounding culture as to be almost indistinguishable from it.

Most of us live somewhere in between, being comfortable with the healthy, if challenging interaction with our surrounding culture that *Ex corde* describes as the role of the Catholic college or university:

*(a Catholic university) is ...a primary and privileged place for a fruitful dialogue between the Gospel and culture....A faith that places itself at the margin of what is human, of what is therefore culture, would be a faith unfaithful to the fullness of what the Word of God manifests and reveals, a decapitated faith, worse still, a faith in the process of self-annihilation. (#44)*

*A Catholic university must become more attentive to the cultures of the world of today, and to the various cultural traditions existing within the Church in a way that will promote a continuous and profitable dialogue between the Gospel and modern society. (#45)*

There is not the same polarity in talking about “Jesuit” as there is about “Catholic,” but there are differences about what is truly “Jesuit” or “Ignatian,” what the recent Congregations really meant, whether we have gone too far with our pursuit of a faith that does justice, especially in an Jesuit academic setting, and whether we have sold the “family business” in a bargain sale.

Despite the many differences in history, culture and location, there is an impressive consistency and coherence in the Jesuit characteristics found in the mission statements of the 28 AJCU schools, a coherence that dovetails with my own experience of working with the institutions and with the 35+ AJCU conferences or peer groups that constitute the AJCU network.

With all appropriate reservations about using a mission statement to reflect the dynamic reality of an institution, it is interesting to see how ten descriptors appear repeatedly in those statements, especially when comparing these statements with the statements of other Catholic, church-related, and non-sectarian institutions. The minimum number of times the following ten descriptors were found in 28 AJCU mission statements was 16. Seven of the descriptors were found in more than 20 mission statements. The ten descriptors are:

- “Jesuit/Catholic” (28)
- “Liberal Arts” (17)
- “Academic Excellence” (21)
- “Service” (23)
- “Fostering/Promoting Justice” ( 22)
- “Educating the Whole Person” (25)

- “Ethical/Moral Concern” (21)
- “Care for the Individual Person” (16)
- “Leadership” (18)
- “International/Global” (23).

2) Can we be “Jesuit” without Jesuits, or at least without many of them? Recalling the Morey-Piderit question, can we really replace the commitment and understanding of the founding communities?

The reality is clear. At least in the short term, we are running out of Jesuits. That may or may not change in 15-20 years, but we already know the number of Jesuits in the pipeline and it is not enough to come near to replacing Jesuits who are and will be retiring. The ten Jesuit provinces are in the process of contracting to five. Morey and Piderit point out one obvious consequence of this: we are losing those who have embodied the stories and traditions of our college and universities. Are we replacing them with women and men who can keep those stories and traditions alive and well? Various commentators have been saying for at least fifteen years that we have a window of five to ten years to pass along the tradition effectively. I have mentioned above, and Jennifer Haworth and Meg Barry will describe in more detail, the many ways this is being done.

In recent years, I have worked with about a half dozen religious congregations asking a similar question of their schools. Many are trying to keep their institutional identity alive through governance controls, e.g., two-tiered boards, reserved powers, etc. I share the skepticism of many that this is not likely to work. The tradition needs to be kept alive through people not just structures.

Without in any way putting down the experience of others, I happen to think that we have an advantage with Ignatian spirituality, a spirituality developed by a layman for lay women and men. It is a spirituality that resonates not only with lay colleagues, but also with life on our campuses, with its world-affirming emphasis on seeking God in all things, its restless and magnanimous pursuit of the *magis*, its special concern for the individual person as the focus of attention, its focus on Christ as the contagious model for our adulthood, its commitment to partnerships, and its linking faith with the pursuit of justice. Because this vision will be necessary to keep alive the Jesuit or Ignatian identity in our schools, it is especially

encouraging to see the increasing numbers of colleagues participating in the *Spiritual Exercises*, from which this vision comes.

3) How can/should we relate “Identity” and “Mission”?

Our identity is who we are; our mission is what we do. Some of our colleagues prefer to talk more about “mission” than about “identity,” noting that while they do not or cannot share our Jesuit, Catholic identity, they happily share the mission which resonates with their own identity. Identity can be seen as something static, closed and even coercive. Mission is seen as more dynamic, open and inviting. Appleyard and Gray<sup>18</sup> point out that both terms are objectionable if they suggest exclusion, while both are acceptable if they suggest there are many forms of identity and many ways to contribute to the mission that can embody the spirit of Jesuit education. Our campuses are increasingly sensitive to this, e.g., by operationalizing identity and mission in terms of experiences that women and men of different faith traditions and background can share. It is no secret that on each of our campuses, Christians of other faiths, non-Christians and non-believers often resonate very strongly with what we are trying to do – at times more strongly than some of our Catholic colleagues.

4) Is being serious about identity and mission really compatible with the reality and demands of today’s academy?

Denise Carmody<sup>19</sup> notes that for Catholic colleagues, discussions of identity may raise fears of litmus tests for orthodoxy, a loss of academic rigor, and being estranged from the broader academy. For Jesuit colleagues, there can be concern about being spread too thin. For all, the discussion may conjure up visions of hierarchical interference and the demise of academic freedom. When successful, the discussion can lead to the conscious appropriation of who we are.

Clearly, much of what we talk about related to identity and mission is countercultural to much of our academic culture. Our colleagues who are skeptical about, if not opposed to, identity and mission activities, can stimulate us to make sure such activities are in no way excuses for not meeting the highest standards of the academy, but as opportunities to energize and introduce a value-added component to what we do.

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<sup>18</sup> Appleyard, Joseph A., S.J. and Gray, Howard, S.J., op.cit.

<sup>19</sup> Carmody, Denise L., “The Catholicity of the Catholic University,” *Conversations Vol. 22 (Fall, 2002)*. 4-9.

Peter Steinfels<sup>20</sup> has noted that resistance to Catholic identity discussions arises from the assumption that there is really only one model for academic excellence and authentic inquiry, which is represented by the benchmark secular universities and liberal arts colleges for whom attention to religion in the school's life can be baggage threatening to impede the institution's excellence.

On the other hand, Harry Lewis,<sup>21</sup> former Dean of Students of Harvard, argues for what is missing in such schools, and Robert Benne<sup>22</sup> describes about how six premier colleges and universities keep faith with their religious traditions.

5) How do we foster identity and mission without marginalizing some of our colleagues?

There is a danger of making identity and mission activity "elitist" or "exclusivist," and establishing an inner circle to which other members of the campus community feel excluded. Some of this is inevitable when some colleagues are more interested in identity and mission than others, but it is important to make all activity welcoming, inviting, and more of a conversation to which all are invited than a form of indoctrination for a selected few. Of course, in the pluralistic world in which we live, there will always be some on campus who are disinterested or even opposed to fostering of Jesuit, Catholic identity as inappropriate for the main work of the university. They provide a healthy challenge to make our efforts more credible and more energizing within the life of the college or university.

6) Finally, and perhaps most important of all, how do we integrate identity and mission activities within an overall objective of making "Jesuit" and "Catholic" contagiously alive by everything we do on campus?

Our colleague, Monika Hellwig,<sup>23</sup> would often point out that we are not trying to recover something that has been lost, some neatly packaged, precisely described and circumscribed identity. Rather, we are trying to create something that has never existed: a Jesuit, Catholic identity combining Ignatian spirituality, the Catholic intellectual tradition and Catholic social

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<sup>20</sup> Steinfels, Peter, *A People Adrift: The Crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in America*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005, 141.

<sup>21</sup> Lewis, Harry. R., *Excellence Without a Soul: How a Great University Forgot Education*. New York: Perseus Books Group, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Benne, Robert, *Quality With Soul*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Steinfels, op.cit. , 161.

teaching, all forged with diverse colleagues, in a pluralistic, postmodern university setting, while facing all of the challenges of a globalizing world.

David O'Brien, in one of his unpublished pieces, sounds the rallying cry for this positive view:

*If we do serious Catholic things, we may turn Catholic identity and mission from the special concern of a few worried, shrinking constituents into a set of questions and projects that add to the teaching, research, counseling, administration and service carried on each day.*

*....We are in a position to make important contributions to: American higher education, especially by engaging issues of religion and public life; American society, by exploring issues of citizenship; and the Church by improving the intellectual quality of piety and culture in the American Church.*

In a recent lecture, he added:

*....We need to turn our relationship with the Church from a nagging problem into the enriching asset it should be. We have to be a bit bolder and less patient.*

The magnanimous vision of the first part of *Ex corde* reflects this world view, as does Pope Benedict's recent address to Catholic educators, when he emphasized that Catholic identity for universities is not a question of statistics nor a question of orthodoxy; rather colleges and universities are privileged places for a dynamic dialogue between faith and reason, Gospel and culture, with the dialogue reaching out to embrace the whole world, especially the world of the poor and disadvantaged. The recent Jesuit General Congregation and the words of our new Superior General echo the same message.

All the excellent activity to foster our Jesuit, Catholic identity and mission on our campuses, including a vibrant campus ministry, is not enough unless these efforts are part of a larger coordinated effort to make Catholic intellectual life and Catholic social teaching "perceptibly present and effectively operative" in our colleges and universities.

It is encouraging to see the development of Catholic Studies programs of various kinds on more than half of our campuses, more and more faculty research and teaching that reflect a Jesuit, Catholic identity in the selection of research topics and curricular content, in student living and learning communities, and in the ever increasing immersion experiences, not only for students, but for faculty, administrators and trustees. In the spirit of the *magis*, there is much more we can and need to do.

There are other issues we could have raised, e.g., the relation between Jesuit and Catholic and the need better to assess the effectiveness of mission and identity activities. Perhaps I have already raised too many. In any case, we have an ambitious agenda before us.

### **Looking Ahead: the Future**

At the recent General Congregation, the new Superior General, Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, and the Congregation itself, accepted the challenge from Pope Benedict to “explore new horizons and reach new social, cultural and religious frontiers, borderlands that...can be places of conflict and tension.” The Pope entrusted the Society (and Jesuit colleagues) to “build bridges of understanding and dialogue, according to the best tradition of the Society.”

All the good work our colleges and universities have done and are doing to foster our Jesuit, Catholic identity, and to make come alive the best of Catholic intellectual life and Catholic social teaching has prepared us for this challenge.

Peter Steinfels<sup>24</sup> adds a note of caution:

*Ultimately, there is in fact no panacea, no silver bullet, no once-and-for-all solution to ensure the Catholic identity of Catholic higher education. Episcopally credentialed theologians, new institutes, programs in Catholic studies, inner-city service projects, peace and justice programs, faculty retreats, faculty seminars, student retreats, ethics across the curriculum, special chairs, prestigious lecture series – no one thing will do it, but rather a constant alertness to opportunities, initiatives on many fronts, with some successes, some failures, no quitting.*

For those who ask “Are we still Jesuit and Catholic?” we can respond that we are engaged in an ongoing quest to realize the promise of being Jesuit and Catholic -- no easy task, but a magnanimous venture. With the strengths we have built in our schools, we have opportunities (and responsibilities) to participate in the transformation of our Church, nation and world.

The new Jesuit Superior General, Fr. Nicolas, reminds us that, in responding to the task before us, we will make mistakes and we need the humility to admit them and learn from them.

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<sup>24</sup> Steinfels, Peter, op. cit., 160

To our critics who reject our vision for their own vision of what it means to be Jesuit and Catholic, we would respond by welcoming dialogue and conversation, so that we can both learn from one another. There is room at the table for all.

In conclusion, you will see that I have tried to imitate the owl in looking all around us, and that I am “bullish with a wary eye on the realities.” I congratulate all of you who have made the Bannan Institute such an important part of this exciting venture.

Thank you.