Forming Faculty: Engaging the Catholic Intellectual Tradition
Colloquium of Catholic High School Leaders
June 25, 2015

Margaret O'Brien Steinfels (Address to the ACCU, 1995)

- "Catholic intellectual life is central to Catholic identity, and colleges and universities cannot claim to be Catholic if this tradition is not part of their core understanding and the tradition cannot survive if Catholic colleges and universities do not renew it, nourish it, support it, and pass it on."

- what is the "it" - does it make sense to talk about the "tradition" as an "it"?
- what does it mean for the tradition of Catholic intellectual life to be part of a Catholic high school's self-understanding?

Brennan O'Donnell (1999 remarks about Jesuit higher education in the 21st century)

- the most important challenge to further development of Catholic colleges and universities as institutions that will flourish as academic institutions operating with a clear religious mission is "getting the faculty- or at least a critical mass of it - involved as faculty":

"Conversations about Jesuit identity can go on a long time without anyone mentioning issues such as the Jesuit university's opportunity -- or responsibility -- to be a center for scholarly inquiry into (and in) the Catholic intellectual tradition, or its ability to offer intellectual guidance and scholarly support in the dialogue of faith and culture, or to function as a beacon in the American intellectual scene for powerful new thinking on issues of justice, or to be a place where some of the more relativistic, antireligious, and even nihilistic recent trends in the humanities are challenged and the ideals of educating for human freedom unapologetically upheld .... The greatest shortcoming ... [is the] relative failure thus far to challenge a majority of the faculty to think of their day-to-day teaching and scholarly life as shaped by their being at a Jesuit institution."

- What do you understand the Catholic intellectual tradition to be? How would describe the Catholic intellectual tradition to someone who was unfamiliar with the concept?
  
  o The Catholic intellectual tradition is ________ . [fill in the blank]

- What are the challenges that accompany efforts to promote richer engagement with the Catholic intellectual tradition in the life of the contemporary Catholic high school?

- What does engagement with the Catholic intellectual tradition look like at a Catholic high school, especially in areas of school life outside of the religion department and campus ministry?

- How might our institutions go about fostering academic communities animated by a sacramental way of seeing the world and that are explicit and intentional about pursuing catholicity?