

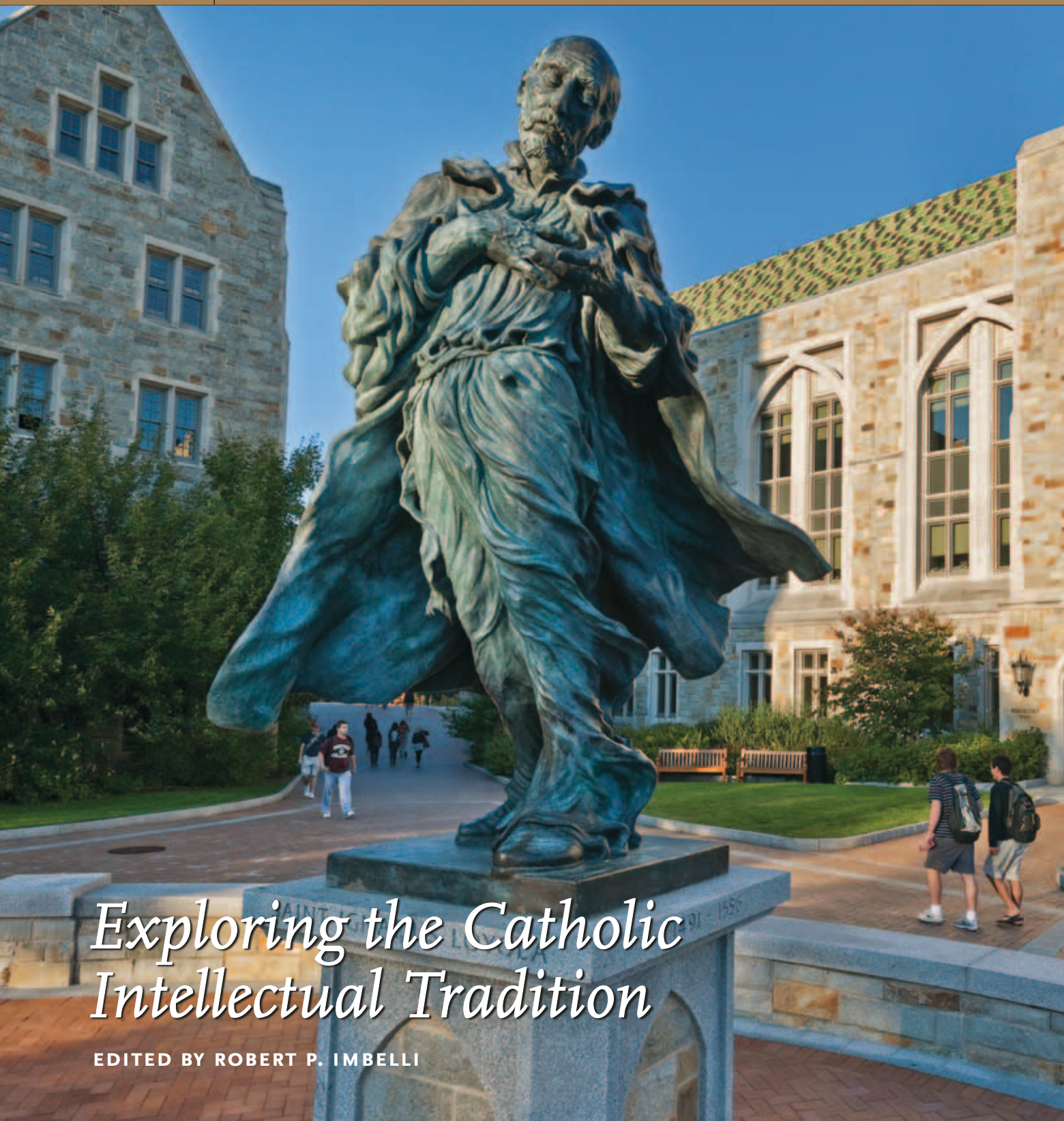
the CHURCH in the 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CENTER BOSTON COLLEGE

SESQUICENTENNIAL  
ISSUE

# C21 Resources

SPRING 2013

A CATALYST AND RESOURCE FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



*Exploring the Catholic  
Intellectual Tradition*

EDITED BY ROBERT P. IMBELL

## The Church in the 21st Center is a catalyst and a resource for the renewal of the Catholic Church.

*C21 Resources*, a compilation of the best analyses and essays on key challenges facing the Church today, is published by the Church in the 21st Century Center at Boston College, in partnership with the publications from which the featured articles have been selected.

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### ON THE COVER

The sculpture of St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), founder of the Society of Jesus, was created by Pablo Eduardo in 2006, and sits on Higgins green on the Boston College campus.

PHOTO CREDIT: Courtesy of Office of Marketing and Communications, Gary Wayne Gilbert



## FROM THE C21 CENTER DIRECTOR



Dear Friend:

The Church in the 21st Century (C21) Center proudly presents “Exploring the Catholic Intellectual Tradition,” a collection of essays, reflections, prayers, art, and poems that offer treasured insights into the Catholic tradition. We are honored to have collaborated with Fr. Robert Imbelli, the guest editor of this issue, who generously offered his passion for and a lifetime of experience teaching the Catholic intellectual tradition.

As another installment in the Sesquicentennial Series of *C21 Resources*, we continue to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of Boston College. The cover of this issue fittingly presents a recent sculpture of St. Ignatius of Loyola on the Boston College campus. Since being commissioned in 2006, Pablo Eduardo’s dynamic likeness of the founder of the Jesuits has transformed a common space on campus into a place of contemplation, study, and conversation frequented by students, faculty, and returning alumni.

The act of creating an intentional space for contemplation and conversation (where people actively engage the past seeking insights for a better future) could be a metaphor for the Catholic intellectual tradition. The Catholic intellectual tradition is one way in which the Church enlivens its people throughout the ages. It draws on the most creative expressions of believers from early times to the modern age. Theologians, philosophers, poets, musicians, mystics, sinners, and saints have devoted their talents to articulate their most intimate encounters with Christ.

A key challenge posed by St. Ignatius is for us to “find God in all things,” a conviction that grace permeates all creation. From this spiritual disposition, we present the Catholic intellectual tradition with great respect for the unique perspectives and concerns of people throughout history, a celebration of individuals’ gifts and insights about God working in their lives. The Catholic intellectual tradition thus is an array of grace filled expressions - emotions, passions, delights, triumphs, frustrations, and tragedies - oriented (God willing) toward Christ. May this issue deepen your faith and ground your relationship to the Church within a broader, a truly sacramental vision.

If you would like to share this issue with family, friends, students, colleagues, or fellow parishioners, we are happy to fulfill requests for additional copies. I invite you also to take advantage of the numerous videos and other print resources nested in the C21 website.

Most sincerely,

Erik P. Goldschmidt  
Director



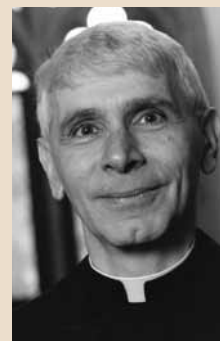
# C21 Resources

SPRING 2013

## EXPLORING THE CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

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### ABOUT THE EDITOR

**ROBERT P. IMBELLI**, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, received his B.A. from Fordham University, his S.T.L. from the Gregorian University in Rome, and his Ph.D. from Yale University.

He came to Boston College in 1986 as director of the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry. He served in that position for six years before assuming full-time teaching responsibilities in Boston College's Theology Department.

Father Imbelli has written essays and taught graduate seminars on the great Catholic theologians of the 20th and 21st centuries: Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Avery Dulles, and Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI. He also contributes to publications like *Commonweal*, *America*, and *L'Osservatore Romano*.

He edited and wrote the introduction to the C21 volume *Handing on the Faith: The Church's Mission and Challenge*, and has enjoyed teaching the two-semester undergraduate core course Exploring Catholicism: Tradition and Transformation.







# The Heart Has Its Reasons

*Robert P. Imbelli*

At heart it's a love story. As Robert Wilken writes in his splendid study, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*:

"The church gave men and women a new love, Jesus Christ, a person who inspired their actions and held their affections. This was a love unlike others. For it was not only that Jesus was a wise teacher or a compassionate human being who reached out to the sick and needy, or even that he patiently suffered abuse and calumny and died a cruel death, but that after his death God had raised him from the dead to a new life. He who once was dead now lives. The Resurrection of Jesus is the central fact of Christian devotion and the ground of all Christian thinking."

And Wilken continues: "After the coming of Christ, human reason had to attend to what was new in history, the person of Jesus Christ."

The Catholic intellectual tradition is the two-millennia effort to ponder the meaning and implications of that new reality and to investigate its relation to other facets of human experience. It addresses the new questions that arise from humanity's ongoing discoveries in the realm of science and the ever more pressing encounter with the other great religious traditions. The Catholic intellectual tradition is the joyful celebration and the continuing exploration of what St. Augustine called the "beauty that is ever ancient, ever new."

It should be noted at the outset that the word "intellectual" is not used here in a narrowly academic or merely conceptual sense. Augustine's invocation of "beauty" is a clear signal that the aesthetic enjoys equal rights of citizenship with the conceptual in

"giving an account of the hope that is in us" (1 Peter 3:15). St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* stands side by side with the great Gothic cathedrals whose soaring architecture inspired him. Raphael's frescos draw liberally from both the sacred Scriptures and from secular sources. The poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J., breathes the same air of truthful discovery as do the stupendous revelations of contemporary astronomy. Indeed, one of the salient contributions that the Catholic intellectual tradition can make to our contemporary conversation is to resist reducing reason to the merely pragmatic or technical and to restore our sense of wonder at a universe "charged with the glory of God."

Already at the dawn of modernity Pascal cautioned against a reductive

understanding of reason with his stirring affirmation: "the heart has its reasons which reason does not understand." Pascal, great mathematician and philosopher, was certainly not countenancing irrationalism, but insisting, with Shakespeare, that "there are more things in heaven and on earth" than are dreamt of in a narrowly rationalistic philosophy or a merely utilitarian science.

The essays that follow explore multiple facets of the priceless diamond that is the Catholic intellectual tradition: its varied expressions in theology and philosophy, natural law and morality, scientific research and artistic creativity. There also emerges from them an enhanced conviction of the responsibility incumbent upon the Catholic university to steward and advance that tradition.

One can, of course, rightfully distinguish sub-traditions within the great tradition, like branches arising from the mighty river. Franciscan and Dominican, Benedictine and Ignatian sensibilities can complement and even compete with one another. Both contemplative and active commitments, concern for justice and care for the earth, can find there ample resources and generous hospitality. The various sub-traditions surely sensitize to features essential to a fuller understanding of the Catholic tradition and are omitted at the peril of an only partial vision. Indeed, one constitutive meaning of “catholic” is “comprehensive:” embracing the whole. And a Catholic university has the crucial responsibility of incorporating the richness of diversity within the common search for truth and wisdom that constitutes a distinctive community of mind and heart: an “alma mater.”

#### The Gift of Incarnation

However, though there are multiple strands of the Catholic intellectual tradition, multiple ways of bringing it to expression, there is an underlying “depth grammar” that each particular representation must embody and exemplify. Many of the essays gathered here speak explicitly of this depth grammar, referring to it as “incarnational” and “sacramental.” They celebrate “a sacramental vision of reality,” a sense that material reality, the body, the flesh (though always prone to being distorted by sin) is fundamentally good, because created by God.

But the Catholic intellectual tradition goes further yet. “Incarnational” and “sacramental” are not just ideas, abstract principles. They are rooted in the concrete, indeed in a person. For the overarching confession, the article upon which the whole tradition stands or falls, is its confession of the Incarnation. God’s eternal Word entered fully into the human condition, into human history with its hope and joy, its suffering and pain. The “incarnational principle” is founded upon the Person, Jesus Christ.

It may appear that, in appealing

now to the “Incarnation,” I depart somewhat from the opening of the essay that stressed Christ’s resurrection. But my suggestion is that we might better consider the Incarnation not as a mere point in time, an instantaneous happening, but as the entire process of God entering fully into the human condition even unto death and new life. Thus, Incarnation culminates in resurrection, in humanity fully transformed in the Glory of God. Resurrection is the goal of Incarnation.

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*The Catholic intellectual tradition is the joyful celebration and the continuing exploration of what St. Augustine called the “beauty that is ever ancient and ever new.”*

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Moreover, the Good News is that with the resurrection of Jesus, humanity’s own destiny is both revealed and enabled. Jesus not only shows the way, he creates the way in his own risen body. In one of his last poems, “That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection,” the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins exclaimed:

“In a flash, at a trumpet crash,  
I am all at once what Christ is,  
since he was what I am, and This  
Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch,  
matchwood, immortal diamond,  
Is immortal diamond.

This robust sense of Jesus’ Incarnation, culminating in his resurrection from the dead, stands at the very heart of the Catholic wisdom tradition. It has been powerfully reaffirmed recently by the Canadian

Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor.

At the conclusion of his monumental work, *A Secular Age*, Taylor writes that Christianity “is the faith of the Incarnate God.” But he adds, perhaps surprisingly, that we need “to struggle to recover a sense of what the Incarnation can mean.” The question thus arises: Why the struggle? Has not the Catholic intellectual tradition over the centuries clarified in carefully honed doctrines and decisions its meaning? I think it fair to say that Taylor is not so much speaking of doctrinal clarifications as concrete implications. What does incarnation faith call us to? What are its challenges to us, particularly in a secular age?

#### The Threat to Incarnation

From its very beginning the Catholic intellectual tradition confronted a significant threat to its incarnational faith. The movement known as “gnosticism” maintained that God would never contaminate himself by entering fully into the human condition, taking on the burdens of the body and the horrors of history. Though the name can sound esoteric, gnosticism remains a potent and perennial temptation. Charles Taylor has helpfully provided a term that suggests, by way of contrast, this perennial threat to faith in the Incarnation. He calls it “excarnation.” Excarnation is humankind’s inveterate tendency to shun matter in its messiness. It represents the contemporary form of gnosticism. Thus, it disparages the body and the consequences of embodiment, such as history, community, and the physical environment. This excarnational attitude denies the need for, even the very intelligibility of language about “solidarity” and the “common good,” which permeates and orients Catholic teachings about social justice and environmental concern.

Taylor has further aided our coming to grips with the challenge we face by contributing another term: the “buffered self.” The buffered self is one that resists relationships and commitments, prizing its individual autonomy above all. Such a self is ever

more constricted and confined, the very opposite of catholic.

If excarnation truly characterizes much of the contemporary individual and societal mind-set and behavior, then the challenge of faith in the Incarnate God, as articulated in the Catholic intellectual tradition, is bound to exhibit a countercultural dimension. It will advocate a fundamental option for the needy and dispossessed, the biblical “widow and orphan:” those who have no “buffer,” who enjoy no privilege. In resisting the culture’s excarnational tendencies, the Catholic intellectual tradition (and its bearer: the Catholic university) will echo, to some degree, St. Paul’s injunction to the Romans: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind; that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:2).

But the Catholic tradition offers still further insight. It traces the excarnational forces operative in humankind to the dread of its vulnerability in the face of death. Thus, we erect defenses and concoct stratagems to ward off threats, both real and imagined. In so doing the paradoxical result is that these control strategies can quickly turn death-dealing: violating relationships, scapegoating, ultimately eliminating the other who is feared as an enemy. Humanity’s history, from Cain to the atrocities of the 20th century, bears abundant and depressing witness to where the “logic” of excarnation finally leads.

### **The Cross as the Tree of Life**

No wonder, then, that the cross stands as the privileged Christian symbol. For the Incarnation, the entrance into the human condition of the Son of God, could not bypass death. The tradition marvels that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, and the Son so loved us that he gave himself for our salvation. The cross represents this wondrous love that does not deny death, much

less inflict death, but enters into death in order to transform it. Jesus’ cross incarnates God’s supreme Word of love: “my body for you.”

Hence the Church’s liturgical tradition acclaims that Christ, by his cross and resurrection, has conquered sin and death and set humankind free. And the Catholic intellectual tradition, from Augustine and Aquinas to Charles Taylor and Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, has sought to give a reasoned account of the hope that the Christ’s life-giving death and resurrection to new life has revealed, and to ponder its implications for persons and for society.

### **PRAYER OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS**

O Lord my God, grant me  
understanding to know You,  
zeal to seek You,  
wisdom to find You,  
a life that is pleasing to You,  
unshakable perseverance,  
and a hope that will one day  
embrace You.

As mentioned earlier, great works of art can communicate as effectively, and certainly more affectively, than the necessarily abstract renderings of philosophers and theologians. Dostoevski’s *The Brothers Karamzov* is the magnificent unfolding, through the heights and depths of human relationships, of a single verse from the Gospel of John that serves as epigraph to the novel. “Amen, amen, I say to you: unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (Jn 12:24).

But no work of art depicts this

Paschal Mystery more vividly than the resplendent 12th-century mosaic that fills the apse of the Basilica of San Clemente in Rome (image on page 2). It depicts the cross of Christ as the Tree of Life. The face of the crucified Christ radiates peace. At the foot of the cross stand the Mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple, in rapture at the redemption wrought. They are both concrete individuals and symbols of the Church that arises from Christ’s sacrifice. Perched on the cross the 12 doves, representing the 12 apostles, ready themselves to fly off, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to proclaim the Good News to the four corners of the world.

But the extraordinary vision of the anonymous artists is yet more catholic. From the cross flow streams of living water and from them springs a verdant acanthus bush. Its swirling branches enfold and fondle humans in their multiple activities: farming and shepherding, building and studying. Women and men, monks and laborers, even pagan gods are gathered into a holy communion: sacred and secular united in harmony. The crucified and risen Christ reconciles and recapitulates not only humanity, but all creation.

Splendid as the masterpiece is it only serves as backdrop for the altar upon which the Eucharist is daily celebrated, extending Christ’s life-giving sacrifice in space and time. Here art cedes to reality: The bread and wine, fruit of the earth and work of human hands, become the very body and blood of Christ.

It is quite possible, I like to think probable, that Dante Alighieri paused to contemplate the mosaic and to participate in the Eucharist at San Clemente during his stay in Rome. The experience may have sustained him on his own transformative journey that gave birth to the Catholic intellectual tradition’s greatest poem. The *Divine Comedy* is certainly the story of an individual learning how to love truly, purged of self-centeredness and freed to love generously. But it tells a tale





that transcends the individual and history itself. It sings a love song that is cosmic in scope, because the Triune God it celebrates is recognized, in the final ecstatic verse of the poem, to be “the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.”

The Incarnation of God’s love is not primarily a fact of the past. The risen Christ is present in the community gathered in his Name, present in the Word proclaimed, and especially in the Eucharist celebrated. It is for this reason that Robert Wilken insists: “The Resurrection of Jesus is the central fact of Christian devotion and

the ground of all Christian thinking.” One often hears that there are three great religions of the Book: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. There is much truth in that perspective; but it risks slighting a unique distinctiveness. Christianity certainly gives pride of place to both Old and New Testaments in its liturgy and theology. But Catholicism in particular is far better described as the religion of the one to whom the Book points: the person of Jesus Christ.

The Catholic intellectual tradition, in its multiple forms, is the quest to explore the significance and

implications of the inexhaustible Mystery of Jesus Christ, to give expression to the reasons of the heart. As the following essays show, that quest continues today. The essays represent, if you will, tesserae in the many-splendored mosaic that is the Catholic intellectual tradition. ■

ROBERT P. IMBELL is the editor of this issue of *C21 Resources*.

PHOTO CREDITS: Page 2: The Cross as the Tree of Life from the apse mosaic from Basilica San Clemente in Rome, 12th century. Copyrighted by the Wikimedia Foundation. | Page 6: Jonathan Petersen '11, at the Great Saint Bernard Pass in Switzerland, next to the monastery of St. Bernard, while traveling with Nathaniel Sanders '12, and Kevin Morris '12.

“Late have I loved you, Beauty ever ancient and ever new; late have I loved you! For you were within me, and instead I sought you outside. In my unloveliness I lost myself in those lovely things you created. You were with me, but I was not with you. The lovely things kept me far from you, yet if they did not have their being in you, they would not be at all.

You called and cried out to me and shattered my deafness. Your radiance shone upon me and dispelled my blindness. Your fragrance caused me to draw in my breath, and now I yearn for you. I tasted you and now hunger and thirst for you. You touched me and I burn for your peace.”

—St. Augustine, *Confessions*, book 10



# The Catholic Intellectual Tradition and the University

*Margaret Steinfels*

Catholic intellectual life is central to Catholic identity. It is fundamental to the life of the Church, big *C* and little *c*, cathedral and congregation—to its continued vitality and to the Church's missions in this culture. This is not a narrow ecclesiastical tradition, but a broad and infinitely useful one.

This tradition is carried on, pursued, criticized, developed, wrestled with by people from many different backgrounds. The way they think and write, read, and reflect very frequently rests on their education in American Catholic colleges and universities. So along with the preservation of knowledge, the scholarly work of retrieval, the building up of bodies of knowledge, and the education of the young, your schools are central to the practice of the Catholic intellectual life. Colleges and universities cannot claim to be Catholic if this tradition is not part of its core understanding; this tradition cannot survive if Catholic colleges and universities do not renew it, maintain it, nourish it, support it, and pass it on.

In the last several decades, Catholicism in the United States has become more charismatic, more Pentecostal,

more experiential, open to both old and new currents of spirituality and meditation; it absorbs individualistic and congregational attitudes from American religion generally. But Catholicism is also and always has been a Church with a brain, with a mind. So as important as these new manifestations may be, it is essential to the Church, to its mission in the world, to the lives of ordinary people, that there be a vigorous and Catholic intellectual life.

Yes, carrying on this tradition is an enormous challenge. You have to overcome bigotry and bias, including especially the prejudices Catholics themselves have against their own tradition. A Catholic intellectual is not an oxymoron. You do not have to be a Jesuit to be a Catholic intellectual. Yes, Catholicism and Catholic ideas have a checkered history. What institution, tradition, idea does not? From Plato to Foucault, from nominalism to deconstructionism, if human ideas have consequences, we can be sure some of them are bad. We have our fair share.

Many people, perhaps some of you, consider that the Catholic intellectual tradition is singular in its intellectual repression and oppression, its narrowness and dogmatism.



Well, I say go read a history book! Some of you may be skeptical that the adjective *Catholic* adds anything to an institution or discipline except the judicial authority of ecclesiastical officials. I disagree. For 2,000 years, Christians have struggled in multifarious ways with everything from body and soul to kingship and regicide, from usury to voluntary poverty, and today still struggle with everything from medical decision making to political theory, from child care to spiritual counsel, from race to gender. It is this tradition that pressed through the centuries the idea of civilian immunity in war. The distinction between ordinary and extraordinary care of the sick and the dying remains a viable one because this tradition teaches it.

It is a deep and rich tradition; it is a tradition worthy of our attention and study. If this tradition does not have a place in Catholic colleges and universities, what is that you are doing? What tradition has a better claim?

All thinkers and thinking are based in some tradition. A tradition is not a browned and dried-up certificate of deposit in the bank of knowledge, but a locus for questioning, a framework for ordering inquiry, a standard for preferring some sets of ideas over others; tradition is the record of a community's conversation over time about its meaning and direction. A living tradition is a tradition that can raise questions about itself.

What am I talking about? Let me at least sketch what I think the Catholic intellectual tradition looks like.

"The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the women and men of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts.... Christians cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history." That opening paragraph from *Gaudium et Spes* speaks of our responsibility for all that is genuinely human, for what draws the minds and hearts of women and men. The Catholic intellectual tradition is universal in its breadth and its interests, that is a notion set forth, defended, repeated, and encouraged throughout the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.

As *Gaudium et Spes* says, our tradition is not set against the world. But neither is it naively accepting of every current of opinion that washes up on the shores of a pluralistic culture. It helps us to maintain a robust and refreshing level of skepticism. What do I find of value? A tradition where reason and discourse based on reason are honored and practiced.

Let me describe just a few of its characteristics.

First, reason and faith are not antagonistic or unconnected. In the Catholic tradition we do not accept what we believe blindly or slavishly—we are urged to think about and to understand what we believe. This is in some contrast to the society in which we live. American culture, with its Protestant history, tends to see religion as an expression of

the individual, the subjective, the emotional, the immediate. In public life, religion and religious belief are confined to the realm of the private and personal, sometimes in an absolutist reading of the First Amendment, sometimes with the prejudice that religious thought has nothing to contribute. For the revivalist, faith is a personal and private encounter. For many in the cultural elite, as Stephen Carter argued in *The Culture of Disbelief*, faith is understood as a curious avocation, a personal hobby.

It is a loss to the whole society when any religious group accepts that role. In contrast, Catholics—the bishops, but many Catholic politicians and citizens as well—have often brought a philosophical and linguistic sophistication to public policy issues. If, for example, laws that would permit euthanasia and assisted suicide are kept at bay in the United States, it will be because the bishops, Catholic institutions, nurses, doctors, lawyers, ordinary citizens have been willing to express their deeply held beliefs, religious and philosophical, in a reasoned discourse that can build consensus across the whole society.

A second and closely related characteristic: Catholics have a tradition that takes philosophy and philosophical thinking seriously. This means that from the beginning, Christianity had to adapt systems of thought that were alien and even contrary to its religious beliefs and yet were crucial to its mission: that is, rendering its knowledge of God's presence and action in the world in a way that would make sense to others.

We don't usually think of Paul of Tarsus as a philosopher, but there he was in the agora debating Epicureans and Stoics, and in front of the Areopagus explaining the heretofore unknown God. Nor did it stop there. Eusebius, Bede, Augustine, Ambrose, Anselm, Thomas, Catherine, Teresa, etc., right down to our own time: American Catholic colleges and universities in the years after World War II were often the home to diverse philosophical schools—phenomenology, existentialism, Hegelianism, liberalism, pragmatism, and Thomism—at a time when secular schools prided themselves on a univocal voice in their philosophy departments. The sometimes imperfect hospitality in our tradition expresses the conviction that a disciplined mind and systematic thought can help discern important things about what is real.

A third characteristic: Our tradition challenges the belief that facts come in pristine form—no baggage; no assumptions, no preconditions, no ends, no language that fills it with meaning. Our culture likes to treat facts as a given, as autonomous, unadorned objective realities; but a fact is an abstraction from something thicker and deeper containing implicit ends, whether or not the researcher, commentator, or scholar acknowledges them. There are virtually no value-free facts, from the construction of public opinion polls to descriptions of brain synapses or histories of the decision to drop the bomb on Hiroshima. The Catholic tradition reminds us that the fact/value distinction is practically a nil



one, although our tradition is tempted sometimes to think there can be fact-free values.

Nonetheless, in our tradition epistemology and ethics are always interrelated. So, for example, the notion that education can be a value-neutral process in which teachers simply convey facts and the students simply receive them, in which behavior is neither right nor wrong but a matter of personal choice, in which judgments are neither better nor worse but simply someone's opinion, is nonsense, as the condition of so many schools grimly illustrates. This same analysis could be applied to psychotherapy, opinion polling, political analyses, medical decision making.

This brings me to a fourth and last point: It is a characteristic of our tradition, at its best, to resist reductionism; it does not collapse categories. Faith and reason are compatible but not equivalent. Our tradition rejects fundamentalistic readings of Scripture; the human person is neither radically individualistic nor socially determined. Empirical findings are not solely determinative of who we are and what we do. Yes, absolutely: Findings in psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, neurobiology enrich our understanding of the human person and the human project, but they do not exhaust that meaning or determine that trajectory.

We are neurons and neuroses, but not only neurons and neuroses; neither DNA or TGIF fully determine who we are or what we will do this weekend. There is space for grace and free will, thought, conscience, choice.

Time flies, and the list goes on: Symbolism is taken seriously; so is analogical reasoning; images provide us with alternative ways of knowing. All of these are implanted in minds and hearts by our sacramental and liturgical practices. Our tradition takes mysticism seriously, so we know that ordinary everyday consciousness is not the last word about reality. The practice of caring for the poor and thinking about caring for them shapes political philosophy and social theory. The struggle everywhere to link faith and culture blesses us with an abundance of fictional worlds from Shusaku Endo's *Deep River* to Isabel Allende's *Eva Luna*.

To sum up: Yes, these characteristics can be found in other traditions. Yes, the Catholic tradition has been untrue to them at times or embraced them only kicking and screaming; but finally they have been embraced because our tradition becomes part of the culture in which it finds itself—it must become part of the culture intellectually as in all other ways. Why? Because of its mission to transform the world, as we read in *Gaudium et Spes* (No. 40): The Church, a visible organization and a spiritual community, “travels the same journey as all humankind and shares the same earthly lot with the world; it is to be a leaven and, as it were, the soul of human society in its renewal by Christ and transformation into the family of God.”

Today in our culture, where the commodification of human life, human relationships, body parts goes on everywhere, that engagement, that mission, means keeping



the human person at the center of our inquiry. The human person must be seen in his or her social context, where an implicit and shared understanding of the good can be found and expressed.

All of this is deeply congruent with a religious tradition that is incarnational and sacramental, that keeps before us the idea of a God who acts in history on our behalf, a God who sent Jesus, who lived among us, who taught, who died for us, who rose from the dead and is present in the eucharist. We are to love the Lord and love one another as he has loved us.

And there's the rub and that's the challenge. Catholic higher education, Catholic identity, Catholic intellectual life, the Catholic Church and its work in the world must finally be the work of a community of believers. In our culture that is a suspect category, nowhere more so than in the university. ■

MARGARET STEINFELS is the past editor of *Commonweal*, and currently serves as founding co-director of the Center on Religion and Culture at Fordham University.

Article previously published in spring 2007 *C21 Resources*

PHOTO CREDITS: Page 7: Student panel discussion, “Hey, Did I See You at Mass” with moderator Kerry Cronin. Photo courtesy of Office of Marketing Communications, Caitlin Cunningham. | Page 9: Georges Rouault (French, 1871-1958), *The Holy Face*, 1946. Copyright ARS, NY.

# Revitalizing the Catholic Intellectual Tradition:

## The Next Critical Challenge for Catholic Higher Education

Gregory A. Kalscheur, S.J.

I can't understand it," she wailed. "I sent her to Catholic school for 12 years and she doesn't even go to church!" If I had a nickel for every time a parent said those words (substitute "religious education" for "Catholic school"), I would be gainfully unemployed. While some parents couldn't care less or, worse, don't even notice, most parents and even grandparents are appalled that their children, especially their 16- to 22-year-olds, seem to have forsaken their heritage, their Catholic faith.

Determined to clarify their Roman Catholic identity in the face of potent secularizing trends and concerns that they had sacrificed their Catholic distinctiveness for secular academic respectability, Catholic colleges and universities in the United States over the past 20 years have adopted new mission statements and added personnel and programs designed to reemphasize the religious dimensions of the Catholic college experience.

Today at many Catholic colleges, students and parents find explicit attention to the Catholic nature of the institution: a wide variety of programs aimed at students' spiritual and religious formation, numerous well-attended Masses and retreat experiences geared to young adults, service programs reaching out in all directions, and encouragement of students to discern not only what career they will pursue after college but what kind of persons they will become. More and more Catholic college undergraduates are being challenged to explore the vocation in life to which God is calling them.

But this rich set of opportunities for student personal, spiritual, and religious formation seems not always to have been matched by a parallel interest in and emphasis on reaffirming and revitalizing engagement with the Catholic intellectual tradition. As Pope John Paul II explained in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, his 1990 vision of what a Catholic university should

be, the special intellectual legacy of the Catholic university "is distinguished by its free search for the whole truth about nature, man, and God." Rather than exploring the implications of this dynamic legacy, discussions of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* sometimes seemed more inclined to focus on presumed tensions between maintaining academic freedom and protect-

ing orthodoxy. One could get the impression that *not*

inviting certain speakers, *not* honoring certain public officials, or *not* hiring so many non-

Catholics was more important than en-

couraging the university community

to engage the full range of authent-

ically human questions opened

up by a commitment to pursue

the whole truth about nature,

the human person, and God,

wherever that search for truth

might lead.

Ten years after *Ex Corde*

was formally adopted by U.S.

Catholic bishops in 2001,

Catholic colleges and uni-

versities today must meet the

challenge to reaffirm and re-

vitalize their engagement with

the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Failure to do so will mean that they

are content by default to risk leaving

Catholic identity to what happens out-

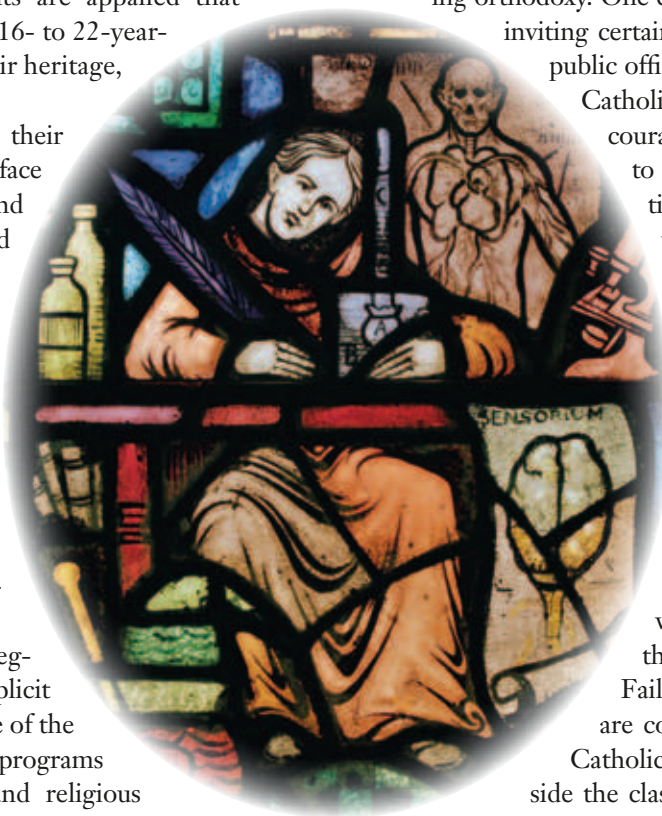
side the classroom by abandoning the con-

viction that, to be authentically Catholic, they

must integrate their 2000-year intellectual legacy into the academic life of their campuses.

Admittedly, getting hold of the Catholic intellectual tradition is a challenge. It contains a vast repository of theological thought; philosophizing; devotional practices; works of literature, visual art, music, and drama; styles of architecture; jurisprudential principles; social and political theorizing; and other forms of cultural expression that have emerged in vastly different parts of the world in the course of 2,000 years of Christian religious experience.

For Christians, the dialogue between faith and culture is as old as their earliest efforts to articulate what it means to be





a distinctive faith community. As the Christian way moved beyond its original Jewish communities, attracted Gentile converts, and spread across the Roman world and beyond, a Christian intellectual tradition developed, which was the product of a continuous dialogue between faith and cultures.

This dialogue reflected two essential characteristics of the Christian, and especially the Catholic, understanding of human experience: that faith necessarily seeks understanding, and that all intellectual inquiry leads eventually to questions of ultimacy that invite faith responses. As a result, reason has been intrinsic to the life of the Catholic Church, which sees the search for truth as a manifestation of the Creator. For the Catholic, thinking is part of believing, and the Catholic view sees no conflict among faith, knowledge, and reason; it looks to how they illuminate one another. The most probing questions in every discipline are never deemed to be in opposition to faith, but are welcomed into the conversation on the conviction that ongoing discovery of the intelligibility of the universe will reveal more of the truth about God.

In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, “the world of reason and the world of faith—the world of secular rationality and the world of religious belief—need one another and should not be afraid to enter into a profound and ongoing dialogue, for the good of our civilization.” This is a two-way process. Reason plays a purifying role within religion, while religion supplies a corrective to reason, reminding reason to take full account of the dignity and destiny of the human person.

At my own Jesuit Catholic university, we’ve tried to invite people to enter into this expansive dialogue in search of truth, meaning, and justice through the publication of a document entitled *The Catholic Intellectual Tradition: A Conversation at Boston College*. Our hope is that that the search for truth in all disciplines can be enriched by engagement with the tradition, because it is our conviction that, in the words of the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, “[t]he world is charged with the grandeur of God.” The Catholic intellectual tradition is at work whenever questioning in any field is open to moving out of narrow disciplinary isolation and toward the horizon of human dignity, the common good, and the wholeness and fullness of life that the Christian tradition calls God’s reign.

The Catholic intellectual tradition that flows out of this dialogue is a living tradition, not a static traditionalism, which draws from the riches of the past to give life to the future; a simultaneous capacity for continuity and change gives it a growing edge, allowing it to develop in new ways even as it retains its firm roots in the foundational Catholic worldview. In the Catholic university, wisdom accumulated in the past is handed on, criticized, reworked, and re-appropriated in response to new questions prompted by new experience, new evidence, new arguments, and new interlocutors. This way of proceeding gives life to the Catholic intellectual tradition.

A university animated by the Catholic intellectual tradition embraces all who are dedicated to learning from one another, and remains open to contributions that may come

in a range of ways. This persuasion challenges a Catholic university to engage all people, cultures, and traditions in authentic conversation—conversation undertaken in the belief that by talking across traditions we can grow in shared understanding that opens all parties to the possibility of changing their views.

In my own work at Boston College Law School, I draw on the Catholic intellectual tradition in exposing my Civil Procedure students to Martin Luther King’s *Letter from the Birmingham Jail* and its discussion, informed by Augustine and Aquinas, of the natural law understanding of the difference between just and unjust laws. I ask those same students to think about what sort of person they are becoming and what sort of world they are shaping as they learn to use the power and the legal tools that our procedural system makes available to lawyers. I also offer a seminar on Catholic Social Thought and the Law that allows students to explore the Catholic vision of the person, the relationship between the person and society, and the role played by law as an institution in structuring the good or just society. But a Catholic university’s engagement with the tradition must go beyond the content of any particular course. The shared project of the university is enlivened by the tradition whenever faculty and students across the disciplines begin to understand themselves as more explicitly engaged in a conversation with one another and with seekers of truth around the world and across time, together working toward the freedom, wholeness, and fullness of life that God desires for God’s creation.

Over the long history of the tradition, there have been times when the dialogue between faith and reason has been difficult—times when Church teaching and secular scholarly research have stood in tension. During such times, the tradition, at its best, has urged more careful inquiry on both sides, confident that even though “there may be momentary collisions, awkward appearances, and many forebodings and prophecies of contrariety,” as Cardinal John Henry Newman, the great 19th-century scholar, has put it, the unity of truth will ultimately be seen.

Catholic colleges and universities today must build upon the good work they have done in providing rich formational opportunities to their students by enlivening engagement with the Catholic intellectual tradition on their campuses, thus living up to the deepest meanings and aspirations of the Catholic university.

American higher education and society will be enriched by Catholic universities embodying in our national conversation the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry. ■

GREGORY A. KALSCHER, SJ, is an associate professor at Boston College Law School.

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 10: Photo courtesy of Office of Marketing Communications, Gary Wayne Gilbert.

# The Catholic Intellectual Tradition, Social Justice, and the University

*David Hollenbach, S.J.*

**T**he United States and the increasingly interconnected global society of today face daunting challenges in their efforts to secure justice for all their people. The Catholic intellectual tradition possesses some distinctive resources that can help respond to these challenges. Thus, Catholic universities can draw on this tradition to make significant contributions to social justice in our nation and our world.

It is the role of the university—above all of the Catholic university—to retrieve, criticize, and reconstruct understandings of the human good and thus of social justice. The Catholic university should be a place where professors and students bring their received tradition's understandings of how people should live together into intelligent and critical encounter with understandings held by other peoples with other traditions.

In particular, the university should be a place for critical exploration of the ways diverse religious communities envision our shared life with one another. This is especially needed in a world where religious difference sometimes threatens to become violent conflict.

One of the most important contributions of the Catholic intellectual tradition to such exploration of religion is its conviction that religious faith and human reason need not conflict but can be mutually illuminating. Religion is not simply an irrational force to be controlled or eliminated from the lives of persons committed to the life of the intellect. Therefore, the careful study of religion should be fully at home within the intellectual forum of the university. Such study can lead not only to private self-understanding but to publicly relevant proposals for how we can live together in peace and justice.



## **Inequality, Poverty, and the Meaning of Justice**

Our country and our globalizing world are also challenged by deep inequalities and poverty. We are in urgent need of an understanding of social justice that helps us address these problems. Our society is often quite inarticulate when it comes to expressing the meaning and basis of its fundamental moral values. The argument about the meaning of justice, of course, is as old as Western civilization. It goes all the way back to Moses and the prophets in the Hebrew Bible and to the pre-Socratics and Plato in Greece. This argument has been brought to vigorous new life in our own day through the important religious contributions of liberation theology and in the renewed philosophical debate launched by John Rawls. The university is a major venue where ideas about the meanings of justice and their relevance to our life together must be explored.

The moral norm of justice has deep roots in the Catholic intellectual tradition. For example, Thomas Aquinas drew on the Bible's double commandment to love God with all



one's heart and to love one's neighbor as oneself to affirm that a right relation to God requires commitment to the common good of our neighbors. Aquinas synthesized this biblical argument with Aristotle's insistence that the good of the community should set the direction for the lives of individuals, for it is a higher or more "divine" good than the particular goods of private persons. Thus, for Aquinas, as for Aristotle, justice calls for commitment to the building up of the *civitas* or *polis*. In the terms we would use today, justice requires social solidarity and mutual responsibility for one another.

When the Catholic intellectual tradition uses the term *social* justice, it is not concerned simply with one-to-one relations among the individual members of society. *Social* justice addresses the economic and political structures and institutions through which our life together is organized. These structures and institutions should themselves be characterized by solidarity, i.e., they should be marked by reciprocal inclusiveness rather than by exclusion and inequality. The inclusive solidarity is demanded by the equal dignity of every person as created in the image of God and as having a capacity for freedom and reason.

This solidarity will require cooperation across the deep economic divisions that separate the poor living in core U.S. cities from the well-off upper middle class of American suburbs. Such divisions are the very opposite of solidarity. Solidarity and social justice also raise challenges on the international level. The much discussed phenomenon of globalization points to new links among nations and peoples that are developing today on multiple levels. From the standpoint of social justice as understood in Catholic tradition, some aspects of this thickening web of interdependence must be judged negative, others are positive. The negative face of globalization is evident in the continuing reality of massive poverty in some developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. To be sure, markets and trade can be engines of improved well-being. But many people, perhaps the majority in the poor countries of sub-Saharan Africa, lack all access to these markets and so do not benefit from them. Exclusion and marginalization again appear as the markers of the injustice that causes poverty.

The alternative to this exclusion is a pattern of interaction characterized by inclusion and reciprocity. The United States Catholic Bishops have called such inclusion the most basic requirement of justice. In a just society all persons and groups should be able to attain at least "minimum levels of participation" in the life of the community. Put in negative terms, the ultimate injustice occurs when persons or groups are treated as if they were not members of the human family. Inclusion and participation based on equality are the fundamental requirements of social justice as these are understood in the Catholic tradition.

## Suffering and Hope

Ideas such as these can open the minds of those who grapple with the Catholic intellectual tradition to hope for a more just society. They can also help us see and take seriously the stark realities of human suffering in our world, such as grave poverty, massive displacement of refugees by war, and tragic levels of HIV-AIDS infection across much of Africa. These are but a few manifestations of the long history of human being's sinful propensity to treat one another in inhuman ways. The Catholic intellectual tradition is deeply committed to the conviction that a Christian humanism is both possible and required by Christian faith itself. But this must be a humanism that pays serious attention not only to the heights to which human culture can rise but also to the depths of suffering into which societies can descend.

There are strong currents in American academic life today that insulate both professors and students from experience of the human suffering in our world and rigorous reflection on it. The Catholic intellectual tradition is actually inseparable from a broader and deeper spiritual tradition that includes mercy as one of its central virtues. Aquinas saw prudence and justice as the central moral virtues in the moral life of all humans. But he saw mercy—the ability to feel and respond to the suffering of a person in need—as the most God-like of virtues. The Catholic tradition, therefore, in both its intellectual and spiritual dimensions, calls all those who share it to open their eyes to see and their hearts to feel the pain that mars the lives of so many men and women in our world today.

In Catholic universities this will mean serious efforts to link rigorous academic programs with carefully designed service learning. It suggests that professors in at least some areas will be engaged in both teaching and research that seeks new understanding of the suffering in our world, what its causes are, and how to begin to alleviate it. Such endeavors are under way already in many Catholic institutions of higher learning.

The Catholic tradition makes the extraordinary claim that the ultimate ground of meaning for all human struggles is a compassionate God who both understands and even shares human suffering. This belief can sustain hope and courage in the face of the conflicts and injustices of our world. In my judgment, this is the deepest source of the Catholic tradition's contribution to social justice. It is most relevant to the task of the Catholic university today. ■

DAVID HOLLENBACH, S.J., holds the University Chair and is the director of the Center for Human Rights at Boston College.

Reprinted with permission, *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education*, Vol. 36, Article 10.

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 12: Meg Stapleton Smith '13, while studying abroad in El Salvador. Photo by Anthony J. Medina, Loyola University Maryland '13.

# Faith, Reason, and Culture

## Pope Benedict XVI

Faith by its specific nature is an encounter with the living God—an encounter opening up new horizons extending beyond the sphere of reason. But it is also a purifying force for reason itself. . . . Faith enables reason to do its work more effectively and to see its proper object more clearly (“Deus Caritas Est,” 28).

The conviction that there is a Creator God is what gave rise to the idea of human rights, the idea of the equality of all people before the law, the recognition of the inviolability of human dignity in every single person, and the awareness of people’s responsibility for their actions (“Address to Bundestag,” Berlin).

The central question at issue, then, is this: Where is the ethical foundation for political choices to be found? The Catholic tradition maintains that the objective norms governing right action are accessible to reason, prescinding from the content of revelation. According to this understanding, the role of religion in political debate is not so much to supply these norms, as if they could not be known by nonbelievers—still less to propose concrete political solutions, which would lie altogether outside the competence of religion—but rather to help purify and shed light upon the application of reason to the discovery of objective moral principles. . . . This is why I would suggest that the world of reason and the world of faith—the world of secular rationality and the world of religious belief—need one another and should not be afraid to enter into a profound and ongoing dialogue, for the good of our civilization. Religion, in other words, is not a

problem for legislators to solve, but a vital contributor to the national conversation (“Address at Westminster Hall,” London).

*Development must include not just material growth but also spiritual growth, since the human person is a “unity of body and soul,” born of God’s creative love and destined for eternal life.... There cannot be holistic development and universal common good unless people’s spiritual and moral welfare is taken into account, considered in their totality as*



body and soul (Encyclical, “Caritas in Veritate,” 76).

*The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa. . . . The Church has a responsibility toward creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. In so doing, she must defend not only earth, water, and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She must above all protect mankind from self-destruction. There*

is need for what might be called a human ecology, correctly understood. The deterioration of nature is in fact closely connected to the culture that shapes human coexistence: *when “human ecology” is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits.* Just as human virtues are interrelated, such that the weakening of one places others at risk, so the ecological system is based on respect for a plan that affects both the health of society and its good relationship with nature (Encyclical, “Caritas in Veritate,” 51).

It is not the elemental spirits of the universe, the laws of matter, which ultimately govern the world and mankind, but a personal God governs the stars, that is, the universe; it is not the laws of matter and of evolution that have the final say, but reason, will, love—a Person. And if we know this Person and he knows us, then truly the inexorable power of material elements no longer has the last word; we are not slaves of the universe and of its laws, we are free. In ancient times, honest inquiring minds were aware of this. Heaven is not empty. Life is not a simple product of laws and the randomness of matter, but within everything and at the same time above everything,

there is a personal will, there is a Spirit who in Jesus has revealed himself as Love (Encyclical, “Spe Salvi,” 5). ■

Quotations compiled by NATHANIEL PETERS and ROBERT IMBELL.

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 14: Pope Benedict XVI greets a child during his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican, Wednesday, April 18, 2012. © Alessandra Tarantino / AP/Corbis



# Intellect and Virtue: The Idea of a Catholic University

*John Garvey*

I have been arguing that the acquisition of virtue has a bearing on how we learn. This is a lesson all university students should take to heart. Students at the University of Kentucky should find the Newman Center. Harvard students should meet the chaplain at St. Paul's Church. But this is an incomplete argument. What is the particular contribution a Catholic university makes to the integration of virtue and intellect?

Let me close with four brief observations about this point. First, although we sometimes speak of learning virtue from a holy man, we learn it better as members of a group. As the Catechism says, the Christian "learns the example of holiness [from the Church;] he discerns it in the authentic witness of those who live it . . . ."15 Both the yogi and the group provide the necessary illustration. But it's like learning a foreign language. No tutor alive can match the experience of living with a family that speaks Korean.

Groups have this additional advantage over yogis: Besides offering round-the-clock instruction, they also provide a counterweight to the culture. In raising our children my wife and I have found that it is hard to fight the culture. We deliver one message about materialism, sex, self-sacrifice, and alcohol; our children see another in school and the media. Our lesson gains credibility if the children see a community of people they know and admire living it.

Second, as Christians we believe that the community we live in here is not just us. It is God with us, in the sacraments we celebrate every day. His grace is more important than our

mutual example in helping us see and drawing us to the life of virtue.

Third, we must not lose sight of the essential connectedness of intellect and virtue. When Aristotle says that if you want to listen intelligently to lectures on ethics you "must have been brought up in good habits," he does not mean simply that you must do *a* before *b*. (As we might say, if you want to get from Boston to Washington you must first go through New York.) The cultivation of virtue enables the student to learn what the teacher is teaching. It is part of the language they both speak.

To put it in concrete terms, student life, campus ministry, residential life, athletics, and student organizations are not offices concerned with different parts of the day and places on campus than academic affairs. They are integrally related. As Pope Benedict said at this University in 2008, this "is a place to encounter the living God . . . This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching."

Finally, I have been talking about the role of virtue in the life of the intellect. But I want to conclude by observing that the intellectual life of a Catholic university is something that is unique among institutions of higher education. Whatever your intellectual field, you are probably familiar with the phenomenon I might call the coffeehouse effect. Carl Schorske describes in his interesting book *Fin de Siècle Vienna* how intellectuals from many different fields gathered in the coffeehouses of Vienna at the turn of the 20th century and created a special intellectual culture: Kokoschka

and Schoenberg, Freud and Klimt, Mahler and Mach. We can see the same thing at other times and places. Elizabethan London was a city the size of Lubbock, Texas, and it produced Shakespeare, Marlowe, Spenser, Sidney, Jonson, and Bacon. Bach, Handel, and Telemann were all born around 1685 and studied one another's work. The world's best violins have all come from Cremona, Italy, where they were made by the Amati, Guarneri, and Stradivari families.

The Catholic University of America is a university—a community of scholars united in a common effort to find goodness, truth, and beauty. It is a place where we learn things St. Monica could not teach her son. Holy as she was, she could not have written the *Confessions* or *The City of God*. Smart as he was, neither could Augustine have written them without the intellectual companionship he found first at Carthage and later among the Platonists in Milan. The intellectual life, like the acquisition of virtue, is a communal (not a solitary) undertaking. We learn from each other. The intellectual culture we create is the product of our collective effort. A Catholic intellectual culture will be something both distinctive and wonderful if we bring the right people into the conversation and if we work really hard at it. ■

JOHN GARVEY is the president of the Catholic University of America. Prior to his appointment he served as dean of Boston College Law School for 12 years.

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To read full text and watch video of John Garvey's inaugural address, visit: <http://president.cua.edu/inauguration/index.cfm>

# Saints Preserve Us: A Conservator Reflects on the Influence of Saints in the Preservation of Books

*Barbara Adams Hebard*

“Christ is coming down from the cross!” exclaimed an agitated colleague as she rushed into the conservation lab in the John J. Burns Library at Boston College on a sunny spring day in 2009. I had begun working at Boston College only months earlier so was not immediately aware of exactly what this meant in the context of my position as conservator. However, my quirky sense of humor kicked in and I responded, “Sounds like a job for the Virgin Mary.” Upon questioning my colleague it became clear that the intervention of the Blessed Mother would not be necessary; the cross in this instance was the processional cross traditionally used for the Baccalaureate Mass prior to Commencement at Boston College. The Christ figure had become loosened, there was concern that it would fall off, and my colleague was certain that I could fix it. So taking out a screwdriver, I tightened the tiny screws that held the figure to the cross. As I worked, I pondered the fact that this minor act was giving me the opportunity to meditate on the crucified Christ and to consider how my Catholic faith and my daily work are intertwined. My primary work here is to preserve and conserve the rare books and archival materials owned by Boston College; this includes an impressive collection of Jesuit imprints, precious books of hours, manuscripts of Catholic authors, and hundreds of thousands of other rare items.

Rare books and Catholicism are closely bound together for me; while a student in Boston’s North Bennet Street School bookbinding program,

I also was in the process of joining the Catholic Church. When tooling books, it has been my practice to say a “Hail Mary” as the hot gilding tools touch the leather surface. I am not the first person involved in the book arts who has felt the need for the intervention of saints—indeed, the saints themselves have a history of preserving books.

St. Benedict (d. 480) was clear on the treatment of monastery property, including books. In Chapter 32 of his *Rule* he wrote, “Whoever fails to keep the things belonging to the monastery clean or treats them carelessly should be reproved.” He further stated that a monk could not give, receive, or retain anything as his own; citing as an example “not a book.” Although ordered not to own books, the brothers were required to read them during Lent, as stipulated in Chapter 48: “Each shall take a codex from the library.”

St. Ethelwald (d. 687) was a “hands-on” saver of an important text, *The Lindisfarne Gospel*. He is credited with creating a binding for it after the text block was miraculously preserved from water damage. The text block, apparently in an earlier binding, had fallen overboard during a storm at sea. *The Lindisfarne Gospel* evidently has a luckier history than the bindings that have held it—while the text still survives, the binding made by Ethelwald was later lost.

St. Cuthbert took a more passive role in the preservation of a bound volume of the Gospel of St. John. The seventh-century book, the earliest surviving intact European book, was produced by monks of Wearmouth-Jarrow

in northeast England. It was buried alongside Cuthbert on Lindisfarne. When the monks fled Lindisfarne because of coastal Viking raids, they brought Cuthbert’s coffin with them. Later, in 1104, the book now known as the St. Cuthbert Gospel was found in his coffin in Durham Cathedral.

St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1224) could well be the patron saint of book conservators: He had much to say about the care of books. In a letter addressed to his order Francis said, “To impress on ourselves the greatness of our Creator and our total subjection to Him, we must take utmost care of the sacred vessels and the liturgical books which contain His holy words. For this reason I admonish all my friars and encourage them in Christ, that wherever they may find the written words of God, they give them all possible reverence; and if such books are not fittingly stored or are piled together in some unseemly place, they should, insofar as it concerns them, gather them up and arrange them in a becoming manner, and so honor the Lord in the words which He has spoken.” St. Francis also brought up the subject in his Letter to the Custodes, “The written words of the Lord, wherever they may be found in dusty and dirty places, should be taken and stored in a proper place.” Additionally, in a letter to the clergy Francis stated, “His written words are also sometimes kicked around underfoot”: referring to the 13th-century practice of storing liturgical books on the floor near the altar.

St. Celestine V (d. 1296) is sometimes regarded as the patron saint of bookbinders, although book conserva-





Letter of St. Francis of Assisi to St. Anthony of Padua:  
 “I am pleased that you teach sacred theology to the brothers  
 provided that, as the Rule states, you ‘do not extinguish the Spirit  
 of prayer and devotion’ during this study.”

tors or preservation librarians might more closely relate to him. Born Pietro Angelerio, he became a Benedictine monk at age 17. This pious young man favored a more isolated and rigorous life than usual for that order and lived a solitary life in a cave. It was said that, to keep ever occupied and fend off the temptations of the devil, Pietro copied books: an act of preservation. He

later became pope, choosing the name Celestine V; however, he resigned after only a few months in office.

These saints were involved in aspects of preservation long before book conservation was established as a career. As I work in the John J. Burns Library, located in the lovely collegiate-gothic style Bapst building, I ponder the responsibility of caring

for an important Catholic collection and feel proud that, at least in terms of book preservation, I am in the company of saints! ■

BARBARA ADAMS HEBARD is the conservator at Boston College's John J. Burns Library.

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 17: Books from John J. Burns Library, Special Collections. Photo courtesy of Office of Marketing Communications, Caitlin Cunningham.



# C21UPDATE

## **The Heart of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition**

**February 7, 2013 | Lecture**

Presenter: Fr. Robert Imbelli, professor, Theology Department

Respondents: Professors Marina McCoy (Philosophy) and Khaled Anastolios (Theology)

Location/Time: Gasson Hall, Room 100, 5:30 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and Theology Department

## **The Future of Catholic Periodicals: Finances, Faith, and the Digital Age** **February 20, 2013 | Panel Discussion**

Editors Panel: Matt Malone, S.J. (*America*); Paul Baumann (*Commonweal*) and Meinrad Sherer-Emunds (*U.S. Catholic*)

Location/Time: Gasson Hall, Room 100, 5:30 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life

## **New Voices in Catholic Theology** **February 27, 2013 | Book Launch**

Presenters: Anna Bonta Moreland, professor, Department of the Humanities, Villanova University and Joseph Curran, professor of Religious Studies, Misericordia College

Location/Time: Corcoran Commons, Heights Room, 5:30 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and Theology Department

## **Meeting Jesus in Your Life**

**February 28, 2013 | C21 Lecture**  
**On the Road**

Presenter: Fr. James Martin, S.J.

Location/Time: St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, 400 Park Ave. at 84<sup>th</sup> Street, New York City, 5:30 p.m. For more information: [bc.edu/21](http://bc.edu/21)

Sponsors: C21 Center and BC Alumni Association

## **The Challenge of Catholic Teaching on War and Peace in the Present Moment**

**March 18, 2013 | Episcopal Visitor Lecture**

Presenter: Bishop Robert McElroy, Vicar for Parish Life and Development, Archdiocese of San Francisco

Location/Time: Corcoran Commons, Heights Room, 4:30 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and STM

## **Encountering Jesus in the Scriptures**

**March 20, 2013 | Book Launch**

Presenters: Fr. Daniel Harrington, S.J. & Christopher R. Matthews, professors, STM

Location/Time: Theology and Ministry Library, 5:30 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and STM

## **Accompaniment: Liberation Theology, Solidarity and a Life of Service**

**April 3, 2013 | Conversation**

Presenters: Paul Farmer, Kolokotronis University Professor, Harvard Medical School and Roberto Goizueta, professor, Theology Department.

Location/Time: Robsham Theatre, 6:30 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center, STM, Theology Department & Center for Human Rights and International Justice

## **Mysticism and the Intellectual Life**

**April 10, 2013 | Lecture**

Presenter: Lawrence Cunningham, professor, Department of Theology, University of Notre Dame

Location/Time: Corcoran Commons, Heights Room, 5:30 p.m.

Sponsor: C21 Center

## **The Many Faces of Hildegard of Bingen: New Doctor of the Church**

**April 11, 2013 | Lecture**

Presenter: Catherine Mooney, professor, STM

Location/Time: STM (9 Lake Street), Room TBA, 5:30 p.m.

Sponsors: STM and C21 Center

## **Prophetic Voices: Women in the Tradition**

**April 16, 2013 | Panel Discussion**

Moderator: Patricia Deleeuw

Location/Time: Corcoran Commons, Heights Room, 5:30 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and the Women's Resource Center

## **God and the Imagination: Praying Through Poetry**

**April 25, 2013 | Seminar**

Presenter: Paul Mariani, professor, English Department

Location/Time: Corcoran Commons, Heights Room, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

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# Teaching and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

*Anna Bonta Moreland*

I have the deep privilege to teach at a university at whose center lies the Catholic intellectual tradition. This past May at the graduates' reception, I was able to meet the parents, relatives, and friends of students whom I had had in class several semesters, a cluster of whom I had taught since freshman year. While the students had chosen to move onto different jobs, graduate schools, or internships, they did so through a genuine encounter with the best of the Catholic intellectual tradition. As I talked with Paul's aunt, or Okitchie's parents, or Tyler's grandfather, I was confident that their children had been forever marked by a Villanova education. What constitutes this mark, this encounter with the tradition?

To its very roots in the 12th-century, the Catholic university is marked by the pursuit of knowledge as *organic*,

*humanizing*, and *interpersonal*.<sup>1</sup> The Catholic tradition insists upon the intimate relation between all aspects of human culture and Christian faith. The roots of the term "catholic," of course, speak to its universal, comprehensive, and holistic scope.

Each discipline should be integrated into the Christian vision. This might sound like a myth to some today, a quaint story, but to those of us who teach at Catholic universities, knowledge is not parceled out into separate packages, in isolated compartments, one having nothing to do with the other. Knowledge is whole. Each discipline is organically related to the others, with the liberal arts at the heart of university life. That is why the liberal arts were called "sister disciplines." Theology and philosophy are at the center of this endeavor, for questions about human people inevita-

bly reach out into questions about our origin and destiny.

This does not turn a university into a Sunday school. Our students are absolutely free to make their own religious choices. But Catholic university educators believe that truths uncovered in the fine arts, the social and natural sciences, the humanities and the professions are related organically to one another as different parts of the human body. So engineering, nursing, and business students are required to take several courses in the liberal arts because they will be better engineers, more equipped nurses, or smarter businesswomen as a result of their university education.

Most fundamentally, though, they will become *better human beings*. Students are taught to develop a sensitivity to truth, to beauty, to goodness. The flip side of this, of course, is that students are to become sensitized to great human misery, to places where human flourishing is stunted or obstructed. An overwhelming number of students at Catholic universities work with the poor during the semester, in break trips throughout the United States and abroad, and after graduation.

I teach in an interdisciplinary department that does on the microlevel what the Catholic university does on the macrolevel: We investigate the human person through several disciplines, with theology and philosophy serving as the grounding disciplines. Our students learn about the emergence of modern science and modern atheism and contemporary political discourse in relationship to one another. They trace these developments back to conversations happening in ancient Athens and Israel, to translation projects happening in medieval Europe





and Arabia. In the midst of standing on the shoulders of giants, they are able to recognize the blindness and prejudice of our contemporary age.

Each of our students emerges from the humanities major at Villanova better equipped to ask herself what kind of person she wants to become, how she wants her professional life to take shape in a deeply thoughtful and sophisticated way. They graduate and continue onto graduate and professional schools, or they enter the world of business or music with a rich vocabulary of living that will sustain them in the years to come.

When we refer to the word “universities,” we simply mean institutions of advanced learning. But when medievalists first spoke of them, they were referring not so much to the *institutions* as to *people*. They were referring not to the great schools where the professional disciplines were taught, but to the guilds of masters and students. Not until the 15th century, in fact, did it become common for the term “university” to be used for the school, or place of study instead of a group of people.<sup>2</sup> This is an interesting development.

The origin of the word “university” is telling, for it recognized that at the center of intellectual inquiry lies a relationship—that of student to teacher. Becoming well-educated is like developing a taste for fine wine or learning the art of plumbing. It has to be taught. I was taught to ride a bike, to play basketball, to sew a button by people who knew these things. In the seminars I teach, I encourage

students to get to know one another and me from the very first day of class, convinced that honest intellectual inquiry emerges in a climate of trust and friendship. At the heart of Catholic university life lies *intellectual friendship*. For ideas ultimately come to life in human beings. We should not be surprised by this, given that the organizing principle at a Catholic university is the person of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Placing the human person at the center of a university education is not, of course, simply a Catholic or Christian concern. It is a genuinely *human* concern. In the words of Francis Oakley, former president of Williams College:

No education which truly aspires to be a preparation for living can afford to ignore the...fundamental and wide-ranging attempt to penetrate by our reason the very structures of the natural world, to evoke the dimensions and significance of the beautiful, to reach towards an understanding of what it is to be human, of one's position in the universe, and of one's relations with one's fellows, moral no less than material.

Towards that attempt we seem impelled by the very fiber of our being. In its total absence, while doubtless we survive, we do so as something surely less than human.<sup>4</sup>

I was marked by my experience as a graduate student at Boston College much as my students are marked

by theirs at Villanova. I remember Fr. Michael Himes telling me that teaching consists mostly in giving away what one has received. I have now come to experience this in my own university teaching. But in passing on this organic, humanizing, and interpersonal education, I continue to be marked by my students, by my deepening understanding of the intellectual tradition, and by the collegial friendships I have formed among the faculty. So everyone involved in this university endeavor—not just the students—becomes more deeply human as a result of his or her encounter with the Catholic intellectual tradition. ■

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 20: *Education of the Virgin* by George de La Tour. © Francis G. Mayer/CORBIS

<sup>1</sup>These roots are explicitly developed in: Michael J. Buckley, S.J., *The Catholic University as Promise and Project: Reflections in a Jesuit Idiom* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998).

<sup>2</sup>Francis Oakley, *Community of Learning: The American College and the Liberal Arts Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.17.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Michael J. Buckley, S.J., “Newman and the Restoration of the Interpersonal in Higher Education,” *The Santa Clara Lectures*, Santa Clara University, November 14, 2006.

<sup>4</sup>Oakley, *Community of Learning*, p.171.



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# A Student's Reflection

*Katherine Martin*

Spending time with Augustine's *Confessions*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and Teilhard de Chardin's *The Divine Milieu* in my studies at Boston College, I have come to appreciate how deeply they have impacted my relationship with God and my interactions with others.

In Augustine's *Confessions*, the saint struggles with his understanding of good and evil as well as the existence of free will. Although I did not realize it until journeying with Augustine through his lifelong conversion, free will is a concept I had never fully considered. As a former Manichean, he held beliefs concerning separate metaphysical forces, one good and one evil, each of which acted upon humankind, dictating a person's actions. Therefore, Augustine attributed the sin of man to an exterior force of evil. Such a mind-set rejects any sense of accountability and enables man to lead a life free of guilt or shame regardless of how one's

behaviors impact one's self and others. This is a sentiment that continues to prevail in society today. How often do we hear "so and so" a person or "such and such" a thing made me do it," "I had no choice," or "It really wasn't my fault"? Augustine's *Confessions* demonstrated to me the fallacy of such a notion and, consequently, solidified my belief in the existence of free will.

In his contemplation of the nature of the divine, Augustine concluded that God is complete goodness and also incorruptible, for nothing can lessen the goodness of God. He reasoned further that if creation has the capacity to become corrupted, that is, capable of becoming less good, then it must be essentially good in the first place. Having realized the inherent goodness of creation, the saint determined that the nature of evil is nothing other than the absence of goodness, thus disproving his belief in an evil metaphysical force. If evil cannot exist of itself, but rather

describes a state in which the good is not present, then sin exists not because of an outside influence on man's behavior, but because of a person's free choice against the good, namely against what leads one to God.

Without pretending to do full justice to Augustine's profound reflection, I can testify that his intellectual and moral struggle has strengthened my personal confidence in the truth of free will's existence. Furthermore, it has heightened my awareness of sin's mind-set. If I find myself blaming my circumstances or peers for certain negative behaviors, I immediately think of Augustine's insights and realize it is my free choice to do that which is good or that which is evil. While some may feel greatly burdened by such a belief since it forces man to take responsibility for his actions, I have found it to be incredibly empowering and liberating. Nothing but my own weakness can truly stand between me and the attainment of



goodness and holiness. And with God's grace, even this can be overcome. How beautiful that our all-powerful creator does not force goodness upon us, but rather gives us the ability to choose to enter into relationship with Him, who is goodness itself!

Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*, demonstrates the detrimental consequences that sin brings about, for if man rejects responsibility for his own actions, there is no hope for improvement or attainment of the good. By vividly illustrating the denial of free will and personal responsibility asserted by every sinner of the *Inferno*, Dante shows how it is the sinner's own decision that condemns himself or herself to a life of perpetual separation from the good and, therefore, from God.

In contrast, according to Dante, all a soul must do in order to enter the realm of purgatory, which ultimately grants souls access to heaven, is admit his guilt in sinning. By accepting responsibility, these souls acknowledge their ability to change and orient their desires to God. Although the process of purification and of aligning one's passions to the will of the divine involves suffering, Dante portrays how such a process leads one to genuine Christian joy and a deeper relationship with our Creator.

Dante's insight into the power of simply acknowledging the truth, in a manner similar to Augustine, has caused me to examine my attitude toward my own sins and to strive for personal conversion. It also has opened my eyes to the importance of seeking to convey the truth in my relationships, even when it may strain a friendship. If God is truth, as asserted by Augustine and demonstrated by Dante, then the greatest friendship is that in which each member strives to lead one another to the Truth and thus to goodness and joy in spite of the suffering that may occur along the way.

Finally, through reading the Jesuit scientist and spiritual writer Teilhard de Chardin, I have gained greater understanding of the goodness of human enterprise and how free will enables

humankind to participate in God's ongoing act of creation. Teilhard discusses what he calls the "sanctification of activity," addressing a common misconception among Christians today. Many, he discerns, feel a tension between their love of the world, of life, of knowing and creating, with their desire

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---

to love God above all else. Oftentimes this sense of conflicting loves results in feelings of guilt and the belief that one must withdraw from society in order to give God the devotion he is due. Teilhard asserts, however, that if we have aligned our desires with God's, we can freely choose how to contribute to God's ongoing act of creation

and unite ourselves in love with our Creator. Through our work, we pour out ourselves for others, imitating Christ's ultimate act of self-gift on the cross. Teilhard eradicated my false notion that through a deep participation in the activity of the world I am failing to give God my love and attention completely. Rather, he offered to me an understanding of free will as a means of participating in God's construction of his heavenly kingdom here on earth and inspired me to seek to encounter God in all my earthly activities.

In short, my encounters with these classic works of the Catholic intellectual tradition have strengthened my faith in free will, one of the Church's fundamental principles, have heightened my awareness of God's presence in my daily life, and have invigorated my desire to seek truth and to show love to all whom I encounter. I am grateful to these theologians for sharing their own struggles and journeys with me so that I may benefit from their experience and grow deeper in relationship with our bountiful Creator. ■

KATHERINE MARTIN is a Presidential Scholar of the Class of 2015 at Boston College.

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 22: Outdoor classroom on BC Campus. Photo courtesy of Office of Marketing Communications, Caitlin Cunningham.



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Lord, on the walls of my university stand the words:

"The truth shall make you free."

May we never forget that it was you who said this,  
O hidden Lord of all truth.

Only when I find you in my quest for truth will I be free.

Free from the narrowness of any one field of study,  
free from the desire of success,  
free from the greed of my own heart.

Only your heart can teach me to love my study and knowledge,  
to put my best into it for your sake,  
to consecrate my heart in service to you alone in the depths of my love.

— Karl Rahner, S.J.



# School of Athens, School of the Eucharist

## *Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura*

In the Vatican's Apostolic Palace, in a room called the *Stanza della Segnatura*, the Renaissance master Raphael Sanzio (1483–1520) painted four frescoes depicting the main branches of knowledge: philosophy with its desire for knowledge of causes; poetry and music with their beauty that reflects divine inspiration; theology with its contemplation of divine revelation; and law with its goal of enacting justice. Together, these frescoes capture the Catholic intellectual tradition's commitment both to faith and to reason, its breadth in learning from thinkers and ideas across the

ages, and its ultimate foundation on the Incarnate and Eucharistic Christ. The two most famous are the frescoes of philosophy and theology, better known as *The School of Athens* and the *Adoration of the Holy Sacrament*. They face each other across the room, showing, in captivating and imaginative fashion, the union of faith and reason in the quest for truth.

*The School of Athens* depicts thinkers throughout history, all engaged in thought, dispute, and teaching. Though no “key” to the figures is given, scholars have identified some of the great philosophers of antiquity as well

as many of Raphael's contemporaries, such as Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, as well as his own self-portrait. At the center stand the two philosophers who embody the finest genius of classical thought—Plato, with his hand pointing toward the celestial spheres, and Aristotle, with his hand indicating the sweep of earthly realities. *The School of Athens* seems to echo the words of the Roman playwright Terence: “I am human, and I consider nothing human foreign to me.”

On the opposite wall, the *Adoration of the Holy Sacrament* confesses that the full truth of what it means to be hu-



man is made manifest in Jesus Christ. Moreover, the Incarnate Christ reveals the Trinitarian nature of God. Thus, Christ is shown between the Father and the Holy Spirit. The fresco also depicts figures from throughout the Church's history: Saints Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventure, Dante Alighieri, and even Savonarola. Far more than a "disputation" about the Eucharist (the name given the fresco by the art historian Giorgio Vasari), the painting celebrates the union of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven in common praise and thanksgiving.

Together, *The School of Athens* and the *Adoration of the Holy Sacrament* symbolize the Catholic intellectual tradition's search for the truth about both human reality and heavenly

Mystery—truth ultimately to be found in the person of Christ. Raphael affirms, through striking artistic forms, that this ongoing quest fascinates and transforms those who undertake it. His paintings have nourished and inspired the Catholic imagination through the ages. They continue to do so today. ■

Text by NATHANIEL PETERS and ROBERT IMBELL.

PHOTO CREDITS: Page 24: *School of Athens*. Ca. (1510-1512.) Fresco. Stanza della Segnatura, Stanze di Raffaello, Vatican Palace. Scala / Art Resource, NY.

| Page 25: *The Disputa of the Sacrament*. Fresco, 1509-1510. Stanza della Segnatura, Stanze di Raffaello, Vatican Palace. Scala / Art Resource, NY



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Raphael was one of the supreme artistic geniuses of history. Aside from his great frescos, his portraits and drawings are renowned. He was also an accomplished architect, appointed in the last years of his life chief architect for St. Peter's Basilica still in the early stages of construction.

Raphael's early death, at age 37, deprived humanity of countless further masterpieces. He was buried in the ancient Roman edifice, the Pantheon, which had been converted into a church. The Latin epithet on his tomb was composed by the Renaissance humanist and cardinal Pietro Bembo:

"Ille hic est Raphael timuit quo  
sospite vinci rerum magna parens  
et moriente mori."

"Here lies that (famous) Raphael. While he lived, mother nature feared to be surpassed; now dead, she fears she herself will die."



# Revisiting the Catholic Imagination

*Paul Mariani*



Let's begin with lines Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote some 135 years ago, though the words are as fresh today as they were when he wrote them. News that stays news was how Ezra Pound defined the special quality of successful poetry. To which a poet like Fr. Hopkins, working within the powerful tradition of the Catholic/Christian imagination, would add, Good News that remains always Good News.

A Jesuit scholastic winding up his classes in theology—Dominican Thomism, laced with his brilliant insights into the heart of Franciscan Scotism, Hopkins was just months away from ordination when he wrote the untitled sonnet known by its first line: “As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame.” What he caught in this poem was nothing less than the very *doing-be*, the essential inscape of the thing, the brilliant ignition of Creation caught in daylight, sunlight, God's light as it were, enacting the splendor of nature's myriad selves, unself-consciously, there to be caught or not by the human observer as something to be admired, wondered at, and its Creator praised. Two Oh! moments of recognition in one line, connected by the recurrent *ks* and *fs* and *ds* of the words flashing together. A kingfisher diving from a branch and hitting the water of a stream, say, as the sun hit it slant, so that the iridescent blues and reds

and speckled grays of the bird's feathers suddenly seemed to catch fire.

A scientist looking at a kingfisher might see it as a small to medium-sized brightly colored bird of the order of Coraciiform, divided among river, tree, and water kingfishers, all with large heads, long, sharp, pointed bills, short legs, and stubby tails.

But Hopkins wants to catch something more. Not an Audubon specimen to be stretched out on a drawing board and studied, but a living creature, caught by the eye and not the net as something to be admired for the distinctive thing it is, its brilliant colors bursting into flame.

So too with the smaller dragonfly, its wings beating incredibly fast as it darts among the lily pads of a pond, say, on a summer morning, its brilliant colors rainbowing there before us to witness to. But because Hopkins was an artist who loved to sketch, trying to capture the active inscape of the thing his eye caught there, the *doing-be* of the thing, he puns here, seeing the dragonfly as if it were drawing with flames across the canvas of the summer air.

Kingfishers and dragonflies, caught perhaps one summer afternoon when Hopkins had gone down to the Clwyd in the Welsh vales near St. Beuno's, where he pondered his Thomism.



Which got him to thinking not only about what we see, but about what we hear, like the distinctive plunk of a rock as it falls into a stone well along which it has rested for who knows how long. But alive now, alive with motion, as it strikes the water like and unlike the kingfisher. Or the pizzicato plunk of a stringed instrument—violin, viola da gamba, mandolin, guitar, piano, harpsichord, or fiddle—the taut wires suddenly come alive with the instant strike of hammer or finger or bow.

Which is like and distinctively unlike the way bells in belfries and campaniles will ring out in every small shire and university town and great city like London, each shaped to ring out its distinctive sound, alone or as part of a larger harmony. Each thing, then, doing what it was made to do, whether made by mortals, or—better—by the great God Creator.

But Hopkins's Catholic imagination is far from finished with this meditation. If everything—from stones to kingfishers—"Selves—goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,/ Crying What I do is me: for that I came," then what about each of us? What I *do* is me, we are reminded. And for most of us the words that immediately follow will resonate: *for that I came*.

There are at least 15 places in the New Testament where those words are spoken, by Jesus or describing Jesus. Most dramatically, perhaps, is the moment when Jesus, scourged and beaten before being brought back before the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate, tells Pilate point blank that he has come into the world "that I should bear witness to the truth." Or, as he told the crowds to whom he spoke: "I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in me should not abide in darkness."

The light shining on us, the Light gracing us, is what the sacral imagination sees in the quotidian round of things, so that we kiss our hand to the Creator when it dawns on us who and what the Creator is and who we his creatures are. And what are we, then, if not images of Christ as the Father sees us, each of us *being* Christ in the world, in ten thousand or a hundred thousand or a billion billion places, who play now (act, enact, imitate, and romp about) in the profound mystery of sons and daughters before the Creator, "Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his/ To the Father through the features of men's faces."

How many Christian artists and musicians and singers over the past two millennia have taken up musical instrument or paintbrush or chisel or pen or pieces of bright mosaic, as, say, in the Church of San Clemente in Rome, just yards from the Coliseum, with its extraordinary mosaic of the Tree of Life, where the cross itself—that image of suffering transubstantiated into victory and joy—is rooted in the very earth from which we all sprang, and which flowers now, embracing all of God's creation in its mothering branches: bird, beast, and humankind.

It is what the Catholic imagination adds to the reading of Creation, then, whether in the ancient Psalms or the

Evangelists or Augustine or Dante or Dame Julianna of Norwich or John of the Cross or Shakespeare or Cervantes or Donne or Herbert or Hopkins or Eliot or Péguy or Claudel or Merton or Levertov. Or—more broadly—what it looks for in whatever and whoever it meets, seeking for what it finds there that can offer substance, filtering it as needed, like water from different sources, whether the one heeded be Herodotus or Plato or Aristotle or Propertius or Pater or Rabelais or Baudelaire or Rimbaud.

It's all there, all those treasures for the taking: in the stained, glass windows of our churches and cathedrals, in the stones shaped and fitted patiently, lifting higher and higher no matter the cost in time and effort, in plainchant, in Bach and Mozart and the Congolese Missa Luba, in the earliest images of the Good Shepherd, based as much on the myth of Hermes as on the Hebrew Psalms, but reconfigured now in a new imagination, solidly rooted in the things of this world—earth, rock, fire, water, sky—but lifted by the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, who bodes and abides behind it all, through and with and in Him, as one sings at the culmination of the Eucharistic Prayer, and the world once more shivers to wakefulness to embrace the Mystery. ■

PAUL MARIANI holds the University Professor of English Chair at Boston College. He has published *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Life*, as well as seven collections of his own poems.

PHOTO CREDITS: Page 26: Kingfisher dives to catch fish. Joe Petersburger/National Geographic Stock.



Watch Paul Mariani discuss how poetry has influenced his believing heart and mind, and how writing has affected his faith: [bc.edu/c21tradition](http://bc.edu/c21tradition).

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;  
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells  
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's  
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;  
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:  
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;  
Selves—goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,  
Crying What I do is me: for that I came.

Í say more: the just man justices;  
Keeps gráce: that keeps all his goings graces;  
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is—  
Christ—for Christ plays in ten thousand places,  
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his  
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

— Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.



# “Sing to the Lord, Make Music to God’s Name!”

*John Finney*

*“One of the consummate joys for me as a choral/orchestral conductor is the ‘bringing together’ of many voices and instruments into a unified whole.”*

**T**he Catholic intellectual tradition is embodied not only in works of theology and philosophy, but in poetry, painting, and music. The Latin Mass is at the heart of the Western musical tradition, providing a canonical text that opens into myriad expressions, which sound the depths of Christian faith and hope, of human longing and rejoicing.

The settings of the Mass by the great composers are one of the treasures of the Catholic tradition. They continue to be sung in cathedrals and large churches and often appear on programs in concert halls throughout the world. Though requiring skilled performers, they offer not only aesthetic delight, but deep spiritual insight. And, of course, they are readily available in splendid recordings.

One of the consummate joys for me as a choral/orchestral conductor is the “bringing together” of many voices and instruments into a unified whole. United in singing or playing, the members of an ensemble can produce some-

thing which no individual could produce alone. No single voice or instrument could create the glorious sound of a full ensemble.

In the course of my work I have been fortunate to conduct many settings of the Mass, composed by some of the finest composers who ever lived. Time and again I have been struck by the sheer variety of musical expression in these diverse works, unified as they are by a common text. I often experience flashes of deepened understanding when I discover the way a particular composer has chosen to set a particular text.

Sometimes, a composer’s setting depicts quite literally the emotion inherent in the text. Consider a few dramatic moments from the *Credo* of J. S. Bach’s *Mass in B minor*: at the end of the *Crucifixus*, at the words “*et sepultus est*” (“and was buried”), the chorus intones the text in a low range, with sparse orchestral accompaniment. The final chord is followed immediately by a joyous outburst from both cho-



rus and orchestra at the words “*et resurrexit*” (“and he rose again”); full orchestra including trumpets and timpani, brilliant high-range music for the chorus, and a brisk tempo all combine to depict the glory of Christ’s resurrection.

At times it seems that a composer can offer profound insight into a phrase of text or even a single word. One of the greatest aspects of choral music is that the composer can allow a text to be simultaneously declaimed and “interpreted.” Even the most skilled orator can only impart a certain amount of inflection and nuance when speaking a given text. The same text, set to music by a master composer, can be “clothed” in expressive harmonies and instrumental accompaniment that can enhance and elaborate on the meaning of the text.

For example, the opening words of the Mass, “*Kyrie eleison*” (“Lord, have mercy”) can elicit music of serene prayerfulness, as in Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Mass in C major* or Franz Schubert’s youthful *Mass in G major*. In his *Coronation Mass*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart indicates that the first three iterations of the word “*Kyrie*” should be sung *forte-piano*, that is, loudly at the beginning of the word and then immediately softer, as if the worshipers are at first adamant in their plea for mercy, then immediately contrite. “*Kyrie eleison*” (“Lord, have mercy”) can also be an impassioned cry from souls filled with anxiety, as we hear in the striking opening of Franz Joseph Haydn’s *Nelsonmesse* (“*Lord Nelson*” *Mass*), with its arresting unison outcries, soul-searing dissonances, and soaring, plaintive soprano solos.

The word “*Sanctus*” (“Holy”) can be set in a way to evoke a sense of triumphant majesty, as in J. S. Bach’s *Mass in B minor*, with its full-throated choral exclamations interspersed with flowing triplets in three-part harmony, swirling around the main notes like intricate filigree on a baroque statue. The word “*Sanctus*” (“Holy”) can also call forth feelings of deep reverence and awe, as in the hushed tones and simple harmonies of the *Sanctus* in Haydn’s *Nelsonmesse*.

The text “*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*” (“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”) often receives extraordinary treatment from composers. Beethoven precedes the *Benedictus* in his *Missa Solemnis* with an exquisite orchestral prelude; the ethereal and unexpected sonority of a solo violin and two flutes creates an atmosphere of serene “blessedness” long before the chorus enters to declaim the text. Two of Haydn’s *Masses* offer markedly contrasting settings of the *Benedictus*. Haydn’s *Harmoniemesse* (“*Wind-band Mass*”) has a *Benedictus* that is infused with an effervescent joyousness that is almost giddy. In contrast, the *Benedictus* in Haydn’s *Nelsonmesse* is clouded by the same anxiety-ridden character as the *Kyrie* of that same *Mass*. The text is sung first by a solo voice, which begins tentatively, almost fearfully, and is answered by thunderous outbursts from the full chorus. The sense of anxiety that pervades this movement reaches a high point in a powerful climax, undergirded by war-like fanfares from the trumpets and timpani, before fi-

nally resolving into a brighter, more optimistic mode for the final “*Osanna in excelsis*” (“Hosanna in the highest”).

A composer’s insight into a phrase of text can sometimes produce music that seems at odds with that text. Antonio Vivaldi’s masterful setting of the *Gloria* offers an excellent example. (Not part of a full setting of the Mass, this work by Vivaldi is a stand-alone, 12-movement setting of the text of the *Gloria*.) The text “*Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens*” (“Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty”) would seem to require music of a royal character, yet Vivaldi sets this text to music of an unmistakably “pastorale” character, the kind of music always associated with shepherds (complete with a “shepherd’s-pipe” melody played by the oboe). Vivaldi subtly reminds us through his music that our Lord who is the “Heavenly King” is the same Lord who is a gentle and loving Shepherd.

Though I am already acquainted with many beautiful Mass settings, I eagerly look forward to the insights and inspirations to be found in Masses that I have yet to discover. It has been a great joy to me to gain new and deeper understanding of the texts of the Mass through the musical settings of masterful composers, and for this I am profoundly grateful. ■

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 28: John Finney and Orchestra at Trinity Chapel. Photo courtesy of Office of Marketing Communications, Caitlin Cunningham.

## LISTENING RECOMMENDATIONS

(musical works referred to in this essay)

J. S. BACH: “MASS IN B MINOR,” BWV 232:  
CRUCIFIXUS; ET RESURREXIT; SANCTUS

ANTONIO VIVALDI: “GLORIA IN D MAJOR,” RV 589:  
DOMINE DEUS, REX COELESTIS

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN: “MASS IN D MINOR,” HOB  
XXII:11 (NELSONMESSE):  
KYRIE; SANCTUS; BENEDICTUS

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN: “MASS IN B-FLAT MAJOR,” HOB.  
XXII:14 (HARMONIEMESSE): BENEDICTUS

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART: “MASS IN C MAJOR,”  
K. 317 (“CORONATION MASS”): KYRIE

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: “MASS IN C MAJOR,”  
OP. 86: KYRIE

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: “MASS IN D MAJOR,” OP. 123  
(MISSA SOLEMNIS): BENEDICTUS

FRANZ SCHUBERT: “MASS IN G MAJOR,” D. 167: KYRIE

# U.S. Latinos and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

*Hosffman Ospino*

Catholics in the United States welcomed the third millennium of the Christian era searching. Nothing unusual; this is what in many ways defines Catholicism. Searching for the meaning of our lived faith here and now... for a sense of communal unity in the midst of diversity... for the ideas and expressions that sustain our intellectual endeavors as American Catholics. Where to begin? We could choose various starting points. However, whether we turn to the relics of *our* past or the changing reality of *our* present, it is very likely that the answer to those questions will eventually place us face to face with the richness of the U.S. Latino Catholic experience.

## Our Places

There are places of unique enchanting beauty. Their allure, without haste or force, seizes our imagination. When visiting them, they transport us into a different time of history without abandoning the present. When listening attentively, we hear a harmony of voices that whisper in languages that we don't always know but mysteriously understand.

It is difficult to say whether we are drawn to their beauty in religious ways or there is just something religious in them that speaks to us as women and men of faith —perhaps both. Take a short walk through the historic district of, say, St. Augustine in Florida. Contemplate the Spanish colonial architecture, the names of the roads, the location of its cathedral in the main plaza, and the beautiful Mission *Nombre de Dios*, among other treasures in “America’s Oldest City.” Words are not enough to describe what they evoke. Yet, such treasures cry out with one voice: Catholicism! To be more exact, Hispanic Catholicism. The first Catholic parish in the territory of what today is the United States of America was established by Spanish-speaking immigrants in St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565.

Travel through the vast lands of the country’s southwest. Many of the missions built by friars still stand as a reminder of the first efforts to plant Catholicism in the new continent. The documents and artifacts preserved in cultural centers in New Mexico, Texas, California, and Arizona confirm that no history of this region can be convincingly told without reference to their Catholic heritage. The names of cities like Los Angeles, San Antonio, and Santa Fe, and many more, are permanent imprints of the presence of Catholicism. To be more exact, Latino Catholicism. Until

1848 most of the Southwest was part of Mexico, a preeminently Catholic nation.

Stride through today’s highly urbanized neighborhoods in Los Angeles or New York or Chicago. Tour a Latino barrio. Murals with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe and other religious symbols immediately capture the attention. How can one ignore the cars decorated with religious imagery? Mass and other religious services are celebrated *en español*. If the time of the year coincides with Holy Week, the streets may be busy with hundreds of Spanish-speaking people *caminando con Jesús* (walking with Jesus) as part of a live, public reenactment of the Passion of the Lord. Stop at a place displaying the work of a Latino(a) artist. The explosion of colors, the creative rendering of everyday moments, and the not uncommon religious piece brazenly reflect the “sacramental imagination” at the heart of the U.S. Latino cultural imagination. It is a world imbued by the spirit of Catholicism. To be more exact, Latino Catholicism. About 70 percent of all U.S. Latinos are Catholic; over 40 percent of all Catholics in the United States are Latino.

These places, documents, buildings, expressions, rituals, and practices are testimonies of the five-century-old interplay between Catholicism and the various Latino cultural traditions that have evolved in the United States and in Latin America. Many of them have been part of the U.S. Catholic experience from the beginning. Some were incorporated when major political decisions reshaped the country’s geography. Others have crossed borders or descended onto our shores to find a home in the Church in the United States. These realities may be somewhat unknown to many non-Latino Catholics and perhaps overlooked from time to time in history books and analyses of the American Catholic experience. However, they are there, *presente!*, as unwavering witnesses. And so are the people who brought them to life and sustain them to this day.

## Our Voices

Every building presupposes an architect, every song a composer. A ritual makes sense only when we learn about the community that celebrates it. In the same manner, the treasures of Latino Catholicism point to the multiple experiences of women and men living their faith in the midst of particular circumstances. Far from being a homogenous group, U.S. Latino Catholics are defined by our diversity. Our cultural roots stretch all the way to Mexico, Central





America, South America, North America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Spain. Our stories, our ways of being, and the many expressions with which we celebrate our relationship with the God of Life in *lo cotidiano* (the everyday) breathe Catholicism.

Our entry into the conversation about the Catholic intellectual tradition is thus twofold. We bring who we are and what we do. Latinos participate in this conversation as flesh-and-blood people, women and men with real names and real stories, people who hope and struggle in the everyday. We know that we are not alone in a Church that each day grows in awareness about its diversity. Because of this, our hopes and our struggles are those of our fellow Catholics—and theirs are ours. It might be that our families have lived in this land for generations; some of us have come as immigrants or exiles searching for a better life. Yet we all coincide in this same land. We share the same places where Catholicism is celebrated. Our works and actions could not be what they are apart from our culture(s) and our faith. Without our culture(s) and our faith they cannot be fully understood. Those places, documents, buildings, expressions, rituals, and practices that give testimony of our presence are evidence of an ongoing dialogue we call *mestizaje* and *mulatez*. Both terms refer to the mixing of races that began during colonial times (i.e., white/indigenous:

*mestizaje*; black/white: *mulatez*) and it continues until our own days, a mixing that is not only racial, but also cultural, ethnic, and spiritual. In such dialogue, faith and culture inform one another confirming that where God is embraced, a new creation begins.

The intellectual interpretation of the Catholic experience must begin with the people who embody it. And people are always historically rooted in particular social, political, and cultural contexts. Once we know who they are and have listened to their voices we can better understand their expressions and their practices. It would be naive, actually meaningless and irrelevant, to conceive a “disembodied” Catholic intellectual tradition.

There are the voices of Latino Catholic giants whose intellectual contributions have opened new windows into the understanding of faith and culture. For instance, in the midst of the colonial enterprise in the 16th century in New Spain (today Mexico), the Franciscan Friar Bernardino de Sahagún masterfully documented the lives of indigenous groups producing what for many is one of the best ethnographic works in the history of the continent. He has been called “the first anthropologist.” In the 17th century, the depth of insight characteristic of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s poems and plays provided a renewed understanding of the ideas of beauty and justice. Her reflections, written

in a sociocultural context almost deaf to the voices of women, resound until today with prophetic and intellectually stimulating voice. In the second part of the 20th century, Mexican-American theologian Virgilio Elizondo, drawing from the experience of his own cultural community, invited Christians to a reencounter with Jesus. Not just an abstract or merely triumphant Jesus, but a flesh-and-blood Galilean who lived and preached in the midst of difficulties, experienced real marginalization, was nurtured by relationships with real people, and was unjustly crucified; someone to whom anyone could relate.

And there are the voices of the people in the everyday. To fully appreciate the impact of Latino Catholicism in the life of the Church in the United States and its intellectual tradition, we must walk where Latinos walk and live where Latinos live. U.S. Latino Catholic theologians have intentionally embraced a model of reflection that interprets the expressions and practices that give life to Latino Catholics *with them*, not for them. This demands a special commitment to listening to the voices of the people—many of them living in the margins of Church and society. Scholars can spend countless hours speculating about the history and meaning of *las posadas* (an Advent ritual that brings people together to reenact Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem searching for a place to stay the night). But it is when we celebrate the ritual in a Latino community, for instance with immigrants searching for jobs and a better life for their children or with a single mother who does not have enough to pay her rent, that one truly captures its deepest meaning. Any intellectual approximation to the practices and expressions that embody the richness of the Latino Catholicism must always be preceded by a moment of listening to people's voices—our voices.

## Our Tradition

The Catholic intellectual tradition is ultimately an invitation to listen to all voices, past and present. We must engage the interpreters of today and yesterday, all rooted in the particularity of our contexts and shaped by the uniqueness of our own stories. This is how the Church develops, interprets, and hands on her tradition. U.S. Latino Catholics have much to say in this regard. The places, documents, buildings, expressions, rituals, and practices imbued with the richness of Latino Catholicism are already important contributions to defining what it means to be a Catholic in the United States—religiously and intellectually. But more important than these are the people, the millions of Latinos and Latinas whose presence is steadily transforming the overall American Catholic experience.

Without a doubt, the development of the Catholic intellectual tradition in the United States in the 21st century will be intimately associated with the Latino Catholic experience. One can only look forward to those places where the intellectual articulation of Catholicism is studied to engage U.S. Latinos in conversation. Whether the conversation takes place at home where the Latino family gathers to pray before an *altarcito* (small altar) or in the university classroom where scholars retrieve the contributions of Latinos to Catholic intellectual life, we must listen. At times these voices speak loudly; sometimes they may whisper in languages that we don't always know but mysteriously understand. But we must listen attentively. After all, it is our tradition. ■

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 31: Mission San Francisco Solano altar. Photo: Y. Hirao.

## THE HOLY COUNTEANCE

Because Jesus Christ walks with us, we know he is real. Because we have come to know him as our constant companion, we know that he is indeed who he says he is: "the way, the truth, and the life." The Salvadoran Jesuit Jon Sobrino writes, "Christ's credibility is assured as far as the poor are concerned, for he maintained his nearness to them to the end. In this sense the cross of Jesus is seen as the paramount symbol of Jesus' approach to the poor, and hence the guarantee of his indisputable credibility." This is indeed a God who stayed with us, who resides in our midst—not just "spiritually" but concretely in every aspect of our world. That is how we know this God is real. It is not our Christian belief that makes God's nearness credible. Rather, it is God's nearness that makes Christian belief, especially the paschal mystery, credible.

The Christ of Latino/a Catholics encounters us through his wounded, bleeding, holy countenance, the *Divino Rostro* (Holy Countenance) seen on the walls of millions of Latino/a homes. He encounters us through his body, beaten and broken as it hangs lifeless from the

crucifix. He encounters us, above all, as he accompanies us on the Way of the Cross, the innocent victim who continues to cry out to God even at the moment of deepest anguish.

No doubt, popular religious expressions such as the Way of the Cross sometimes reflect distorted, simplistic, even dangerous views of God or the self. At least as great a threat to true faith, however, is the relegation of God to a distant corner of our world by emphasizing the immaterial, absolutely transcendent, and inscrutable nature of God. The danger of reducing the paschal event to a cross without a resurrection, for instance, is matched by the danger of preaching a Christ without a face, without a body, without wounds, a cross without a corpus.

— Roberto Goizueta

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Excerpted from "The Symbolic Realism of the U.S. Latino/a Popular Catholicism," in *Theological Studies*, 65 (2004).



# Sesquicentennial Spotlight



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**During the fall 2012 semester, Boston College began its Sesquicentennial Celebration. We offer selected remarks from the Sesquicentennial events that reflect the theme of the Catholic intellectual tradition. To watch the videos of these events in their entirety, visit [bc.edu/150](http://bc.edu/150).**

“... one of our tasks is to review the vision that we have, make sure that it’s clear, grounded in our tradition... We hear a lot about the word vision, but it’s a word that, for me, suggests a way of seeing and conceiving that is transformative, that offers realizable ideals so compelling that individuals are energized and willing to invest themselves in an activity or an enterprise far more effectively and extensively than they could ever have imagined. Vision that is effective, that’s compelling, captures in a concise, convincing fashion the aspirations and ambitions of an institution, of a group of people, and it does that in a way that inspires and sustains. So most simply, a vision challenges, encourages and calls people to engagement and greatness.”

*Fr. William P. Leahy, S.J.  
President of Boston College*

*Closing Remarks, “Religion and the Liberal Aims of Higher Education”*

“A Jesuit education has always and everywhere been considered a treasure. St. Ignatius of Loyola has inspired an education ministry with the first Jesuit school launched in 1548 and has prepared thousands upon thousands to live lives of discipleship in the Church, lives of leadership and service through an education in Christian humanism. In the Ratio Studiorum, in which Christian humanism adds to the

Greek ideal, “Know thyself,” and the Roman ideal, “Rule thyself,” a third formula, the example of Jesus gives us, “Give thyself,” the highest exercise of freedom and the most perfect expression of our humanity. To make a gift of ourselves in the words of John Paul II is the only true path to human fulfillment. This is what it means to be a man or woman for others.”

*Cardinal Seán Patrick O’Malley, OFM Cap  
Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Boston  
Remarks, Mass of the Holy Spirit, Fenway Park*

“The Jesuit tradition has been deeply committed ... to the principle that an education is not just about knowledge, but also about how to live a life. Boston College has for 150 years sustained this tradition, founded in empathy, outreach, and service... Boston College graduates are asked to carry forward that larger sense of purpose, in the words of Fr. Leahy, by ‘shaping the future ... with a sense of calling, with concern for all of the human family....’

“Our task [in a university] is to illuminate the past and shape the future, to define human aspirations for the long term. How can we look past the immediate and the useful, beyond what I have called the ‘myopic present,’ to address the larger conundrum of: How shall we best live? Who do I want to be today – and tomorrow? To discover not only the ways in which human civilization plans to get somewhere, but to ask the question, ‘Where does it – and where should it – hope to go?’”

*Drew Gilpin Faust  
President of Harvard University  
Sesquicentennial Speaker and Medal Recipient*

“Jesuits have believed in the redemptive power of education, and have built schools, colleges, and universities wherever they have gone. Their impulse has been to engage the world with serious thought and reflection. Boston College, like many of its peers, is indeed a flourishing experiment in Catholic and Jesuit higher education.... A campus like

this is honeycombed with discussions, retreats, and activities that challenge students to renew their faith, to engage in critical social problems, to consider professions for reasons other than self-interest. What is evident is a commitment to the holistic nurturing of students’ body, mind, and spirit.”

*Nathan Hatch, President of Wake Forest University  
Keynote Address, “Religion and the Liberal Aims of Higher Education”*



“If you think of your education as a gift given you to be grasped, as something that you’ve achieved and will hold onto, if you think of your education as a training to make more money or get a better job, if you think that your education is all about your success in being able to provide for yourself and your family, all of which are great and wonderful goods, but if you think that’s what’s central to your education, then I must say that I think you’re unworthy of your education. The reason to be educated is to teach somebody else. You’ve never fully grasped the fruits of your education until you give it away to another. The measure of the success of your education at Boston College or Boston College High School is the measure to which people who never got to come to Boston College, the measure to which their lives are richer, fuller, more genuinely human because you did go to Boston College; that it’s enabling you to give something to others. And in that process, for the first time, you will fully possess it. You never own what you don’t give away. And what you do give away you can never lose.”

*Fr. Michael Himes  
Professor of the Theology Department  
Homily, Mass of the Holy Spirit, Fenway Park*

# The Catholic Intellectual Tradition and Other Religions

Catherine Cornille

*“...the Catholic Church clearly acknowledges the presence of elements of truth and grace in other religions. This has led to the development in recent decades of the discipline of comparative theology, in which theologians engage other religions in an open, constructive, and at times critical way in order to advance Christian theological reflection.”*

The question of the status of other religions in God’s plan of salvation has occupied the Catholic intellectual tradition from its very beginning. Christian thinkers of the first centuries such as Justyn Martyr (100–167) and Irenaeus (120–203) Tertullian (155–235) or Origen (185–254) were primarily concerned with defending Christian faith against the accusations by other religions while also acknowledging elements of truth in the teachings of the prophets and of Greek philosophers. While Christianity was understood as the ultimate truth, meant to replace all other religions, Justin Martyr introduced the idea that the “seed of the Word” (*logos spermatikos*) may have already been at work before the incarnation, and Eusebius of Caesarea (263–339) later expanded into a positive evaluation of pre-Christian traditions, in particular Greek philosophy, as a preparation for the truth of the Gospel (*preparation evangelica*). Relatively little has changed since that time in the official attitude of the Catholic Church toward non-Christian religions. The most recent documents of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church reiterate these same points. The Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate*, for example, states that “although differing in many ways from her own teaching, these [other religions] nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men” (2) And the 2001 document *Dominus Iesus* acknowledges that “some prayers and rituals of the other religions may assume a role of preparation for the Gospel, in that they are occasions or pedagogical helps in which the human heart is prompted to be open to the action of God” (21, also 12). But both documents proclaim that Jesus Christ is “the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6) in whom “men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to himself” (*Nostra Aetate* 2) and that “the one true religion

continues to exist in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, to which the Lord Jesus entrusted the task of spreading it among all people” (*Dominus Iesus* 23).

The two basic principles of Christian faith that have occupied reflection on other religions in the Catholic intellectual tradition are on the one hand belief in the Uniqueness of Jesus Christ as mediator of salvation (John 14:6, Acts 4:12) and on the other the universal salvific will of God (1 Tim 2:4, Acts 14:17, Rom 2:6-7). Catholic reflection on other religions has tried to keep these two principles in balance, although one or the other may have come to dominate in particular historical periods, often in response to external circumstances or to exaggerated emphasis on the other principle. In the centuries prior to Vatican II, the Catholic approach to salvation has tended to be defined by the adage “outside of the Church there is no salvation” (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*). This expression, attributed to Cyprian (200–258) was originally not directed to non-Christians, but to those who threatened to cause schism in the Church following the Decian persecutions of the first centuries. In time, the expression did come to include “heathens, Jews, and heretics” who, as the council of Florence (1438–1445) put it, would not enter eternal life, but would “go to the eternal fire which was prepared by the devil and his angels, unless, before the end of their life they become part of the Church.” The discovery of continents and peoples who had never had been exposed to Christian revelation led to new reflection on the necessity of baptism and of the Church for salvation. Thomas Aquinas had introduced the category of “invincible ignorance” to refer to those who through no fault of their own had not come to know Christ. And the Council of Trent developed a distinction between actual baptism (*in re*) and baptism of desire (*in voto*) that applied to



all those who, while not having received the sacrament, still manifested signs of personal holiness. The rapid expansion of knowledge about and encounter with other religions in the past few centuries has led to renewed reflection on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions. Any literal understanding of the expression “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*” (as in the case of Leonard Feeney, S.J.) came to be rejected by the Church. While theological reflection on the question of salvation of non-Christians became polarized between exclusivists, who emphasize the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ, and pluralists, who recognize all religions as means of salvation, the Catholic Church and Catholic theologians have on the whole maintained a middle, inclusive position, acknowledging elements of grace in other religions while maintaining that all salvation and grace comes through the person of Jesus Christ.

One of the remarkable features about the Catholic intel-

Rahner. There has been much discussion about whether or not the document *Nostra Aetate* recognizes other religions as means of salvation. The most interesting fact, however, is that the document does not make any pronouncements on the issue. As Catholics, we are called to testify to the experience of salvation in Jesus Christ. But we simply cannot know whether or not salvation may be mediated through other religious traditions. We can neither affirm nor deny it. The silence of *Nostra Aetate* may thus be seen as an expression of great wisdom.

While the question of the salvific nature of other religions thus remains a mute point, the Catholic Church clearly acknowledges the presence of elements of truth and grace in other religions. This has led to the development in recent decades of the discipline of comparative theology, in which theologians engage other religions in an open, constructive, and at times critical way in order to advance



lectual tradition lies in the fact that it has tended to refrain from any definitive judgment on the salvific value of other religions. One might argue that the strong emphasis on the necessity of baptism and of the Church for salvation implies a rejection of all other religions as means of salvation. Some Catholic theologians, such as Karl Rahner, S.J., did go so far as to recognize other religions as means of salvation. In the second of his four theses on *Christianity and the non-Christian Religions*, he argues that a non-Christian religion could be recognized as a “lawful religion (although only in different degrees)” or as “a positive means of gaining the right relationship to God and thus for the attaining of salvation, a means which is therefore positively included in God’s plan of salvation.” This, however, goes beyond what the Church has formally taught, either before or since

Christian theological reflection. This occurs through the systematic engagement of the sacred texts of other traditions (as in the series *Christian Commentaries of non-Christian Sacred Texts*) or through theological reflection on certain teachings, rituals, or philosophical traditions. This has come to represent one of the most innovative and creative avenues of Christian theological thought, one that both respects the distinctiveness of other religions and holds open the possibility of genuine mutual learning. ■

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 35: Pope Benedict XVI and the Dalai Lama exchange greetings. Photo: Mazur/Catholicnews.org.uk



# Wisdom! Let Us Be Attentive!

*Lawrence S. Cunningham*

When teaching the Bible to my undergraduates I always ask them, when we get to the sapiential books of the Old Testament, if they know a wise person. I tell them not to think of smart persons (they are a dime a dozen in universities) but of wise persons. Almost inevitably they will mention their grandparents and often add the coda that those elders often did not have a lot of formal education. What these undergraduates intuit is that people who have had some experience in life not only possess some practical intelligence but that their intelligence has been honed and perfected by the life experience of making a living, skirting sickness, experiencing loss, knowing disappointment, and understanding that there are fewer years ahead and a lot more already passed. They are gaining, to borrow John Henry Newman's

famous distinction, real knowledge as opposed to notional knowledge.

This understanding of wisdom as a kind of deeper knowledge refined by intelligence and tempered by human experience is, when experienced, a precious thing. That experience is especially gratifying when it is grasped in the intellectual life. In the university one meets quite intelligent and sometimes brilliant people who are in full grip of their discipline. They have a passion for their "field" and the expertise to deepen it. They possess the tools requisite for the advancement of knowledge. Are we to number among these experts and authorities authentically wise persons? How do we recognize them when we do encounter them? I am not sure that I have a complete answer to that question but it seems to me that the wise intellectual shows forth some characteristic qualities.

First, the truly wise persons have a vision in which they see, with some clarity, some larger connection of their work, no matter how recondite it might be, with the larger pursuit of knowledge and how that pursuit meshes with intelligibility. Newman caught this perfectly in his 14th university sermon where he said that "a philosophical cast of thought, or a comprehensive mind, or a wisdom in conduct and policy, implies a connected view of the old with the new; an insight into the bearing of each part with the other; without which there is no whole, and could be no center. It is the knowledge, not only of things, but of their mutual relations. It is organized and therefore living knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

To acquire that vision demands a humility before the search for truth since no person grasps the whole fully (i.e., my little research result is not the



end all and be all of knowledge) while, at the same time, permitting the intellectual task at hand to be seen in the expanding horizon of the human quest for intelligibility. Thus, at the same time, one is grounded humbly by limit and exalted by finding a momentary glimpse of the larger reality of human capacity. Within the Catholic tradition this drive toward intelligibility is a turn to the source of intelligibility that we name God.

That fundamental orientation toward the source of all that is true helps to describe the intellectual life as one, not marked by career, but by vocation. That orientation is not always at the fore but it stands, tacitly, in the exercise of seeking to know. Every approximation toward a truth is to become nearer to God because, as the Angelic Doctor rightly says, “every truth comes from God” (*ST* 1.q.16 5 ad 3).

The intellectual life has as its end not only the cultivation of personal spirituality. Gladly, Chaucer says of the scholar, does he learn and teach. To be learned, which is to say, to cultivate wisdom, is contagious if only in the sense that it draws others to that wisdom. Every educated person can remember a teacher (or teachers) who provided the spark that set them on fire intellectually. What the student learned was not mere facts (important at those facts may be) but that attractive power of learning, which is the thirst for “more.” Once, when asked by an overly empirically minded researcher, of what value my work was for students, my response was simple and heart felt: “I want students to acquire a love for learning.” It only takes a moment’s reflection to understand that to pass on that gift to a young person is to give them a gift for their whole lives.

My conviction that as a professor my aim ought to instill a love for learning does have a tiny hidden agenda but one appropriate for a teacher of theology. Two generations ago the late Dom Jean Leclercq wrote a book with the wonderful title *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*. Although his book was about the relationship of monas-

tic learning to the spiritual life of the monk, his title points to a larger point, namely, that the desire to learn is, generally, a desire for God. That point is absolutely fundamental to the Catholic understanding of the world in which we live because Christianity holds that, finally, there is intelligibility available to us who live in this world. This intelligibility is available to us even though grasping it may involve a subtle and lifelong search for some, even though others may see it in a blinding intuition. In the final analysis, the love of learning means that capacity to be open to what is ahead; to see (if I may borrow the language of the phenomenologists for a moment) that ever enlarging horizon that stands before us. That kind of intellectual openness rests in both a species of faith that there is something more in tandem with a hope that the “more” can be approached.

That horizon, always before us and always expanding, can be described as God—not a being that is above us but as the foundation and background against which all understanding takes places. It is both immanent and transcendent rather the way silence is to music. To yearn for that horizon is a kind of prayer and in that yearning (often inarticulate)

we learn the truth once expressed by St. Augustine that God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves.

However, that “God” is not the god of the philosophers, to borrow a term from Pascal. For the Christian that horizon of intelligibility is the Logos who brings into existence creation, who prompted prophetic wisdom, and, finally, took flesh and dwells among us. St. John of the Cross, echoing both Aquinas and Augustine, once said that the Father uttered one Word and having once spoken needs speak no more. To know fully is to know that Logos about whom St. Paul rightly asserted: “He himself is before all things and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1: 17). Armed with that conviction we can rightly say that all learning is not only symphonic but can be salvific. ■

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 36 God Alone Gate, Abbey of Gethsemani, Trappist, Kentucky, 2012. Courtesy of Br. Paul Quenon, OCSO.

<sup>1</sup>John Henry Newman. *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford A.D. 1826–1843*. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997) 287.

## THE STONE NOT CUT BY HAND

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

Nebuchadnezzar stared while the prophet blazed.

A stone not cut, stormed Daniel, by any human hand,  
however self-assured or self-deluded. Understand:

It is the Lord has quarried here. The king’s eyes glazed,  
because all he knew was earthly power: kings who razed  
entire cities—dogs, women, babies, mules, the very land.  
Kings whose subjects, high & low, did their each command.

A stone not quarried by any hand but God’s. Amazed,  
the king fell back before the prophet’s words. A stone  
that would smash each self-important, self-made idol,  
whether built of gold or steel or any other thing their throne  
was made of. Yes, whatever insane, grand mal, suicidal  
impulse kings could conjure up. A stone shaped by God alone.  
Womb-warm, lamb-gentle, world-wielding, tidal.

— Paul Mariani



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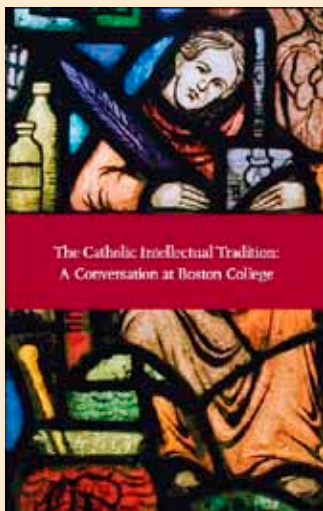
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