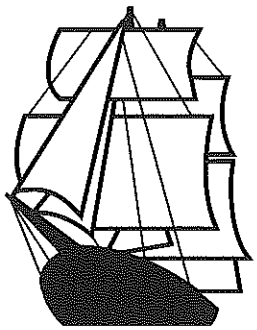

The MAST Journal

Papers of the Conference for Mercy Higher Education

Gwynedd-Mercy College, Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania
June 15–17, 2006

The Journal of the Mercy Association in Scripture and Theology

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Dear Sisters and Friends of Mercy,

The MAST Journal is pleased to print the Proceedings of the Conference for Mercy Higher Education held at Gwynedd-Mercy College, Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania from June 15-17, 2006. The theme of the program was "Transforming Hallmark: Education and Action for Justice." The 250 participants included administration, staff and faculty from Mercy colleges and universities, along with canonical sponsors and trustees. Dr. Kathleen Owens, President, academic officers and administrative staff from Gwynedd-Mercy were wonderfully warm and hospitable to all the attendees, supporting a schedule designed to enhance inter-action and conversation. A serenely beautiful and well-groomed campus was a delight to the eye.

The Planning Committee conceived the educational focus as a four-part framework: Legacy, Mercy and Justice, Mission, and Curriculum. This vision was carried out by Mary Kathryn Grant, executive director of the Conference for Mercy Higher Education, along with Maureen Reardon, R.S.M, vice president of mission services at Mercy Community Health; Avis Clendenen, Ph.D. of St. Xavier University; Maureen Crossen, Ph.D., of Carlow University; Marilee Howard, R.S.M., Ph.D. of the Institute Justice Office; Rose Cecilia McCully, C.S.C., CMHE adjunct staff and Carol Morris, CMHE adjunct staff. The program was enriched by several prayer services composed and led by Maureen Crossen.

Plenary speakers and respondents included women from other institutions of higher education, as well as Mercy. These included Margaret Farley, R.S.M., of Yale Divinity School and respondents Maryanne Stevens, R.S.M., president of College of St. Mary in Omaha, Elizabeth McMillan, R.S.M. of San Pedro Sula Seminary in Honduras, Diana Hayes, J.D., S.T.D. of Georgetown University, Mary C. Sullivan, R.S.M. of Rochester Institute of Technology and Rosemary Jeffries, R.S.M, president of Georgian Court University with her fellow administrators Patricia E. Koch, trustee; Ruth Ann Burns, vice president of marketing and Evelyn Quinn, provost.

These proceedings provide the papers presented by keynote speakers, respondents and session presenters. Typically, speakers gave longer presentations than could be printed here. It is surely more difficult to synthesize and limit one's argument after a talk has been given than to offer the original version, which was designed to engage a live audience. The editor is most grateful for presenters' skillful accommodation to the constraints of these printed proceedings.

Presenters of individual sessions were academics from Mercy institutions. Included in this volume are papers by Dr. Avis Clendenen of St. Xavier University; Dr. Wade Luquet of Gwynedd-Mercy College, Dr. Jennifer Reed-Bouley of College of Saint Mary, Dr. Alex Mikulich of St. Joseph College in Connecticut, Dr. Kasturi Rumu DasGupta of Georgian Court University, Dr. Susan Sanders, R.S.M. of St. Xavier University, Dr. Martha Brown of College of St. Mary and Sharon Redding , M.N., R.N. of College of St. Mary.

Some academic administrators provide a useful summary of creative, student-support programs they oversee at their institutions. These include Dr. Martha Brown, Heidi Jacobson and Lori Werth of College of St. Mary.

Not all the fifteen presentations involved formal papers. Some session leaders gave a PowerPoint presentation, or conducted an interactive process with attendees. Some included trustees, their staff or students as copresenters. Gratitude is due these faculty and professionals for enriching the program: Diane Guerin, R.S.M, Ph.D. of Creative Conflict Consultants and Kathy Kelleher, M.Div. from the Justice Office of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy; Dona

Molyneaux, D.N.Sc. of Gwynedd-Mercy; Helen J. Speziale, Ed.D., of College Misericordia, Jayme Hennessy, S.T.L., of Salve Regina University, and Cathleen Cahill, R.S.M., M.T.S., of St. Xavier University.

This year, the Mercy Association in Scripture and Theology (MAST) celebrates the twentieth year of its founding and the sixteenth year of the journal's publication. One of the organization's principal thrusts has been to support the intellectual life of Sisters of Mercy and Associates who are involved in theology, scripture, spirituality, history of the Mercy congregation, and related disciplines.

It was notable that among the planners, presenters, and participants at the Conference for Mercy Higher Education were a good representation of MAST membership from past and present years: Mary Rose Bumpus, R.S.M., Helen Marie Burns, R.S.M. (past institute liaison), Avis Clendenen, Maureen Crossen, Mary Jeremy Daigler, R.S.M., Mary Daly, R.S.M., Mary Ann Dillon, R.S.M., Marie Michele Donnelly, R.S.M., Judy Eby, R.S.M., Margaret Farley, R.S.M., Marilee Howard, R.S.M., Rosemary Jeffries, R.S.M., Sharon Kerrigan, R.S.M., Elizabeth Linehan, R.S.M., Patricia McDermott, R.S.M. (present institute liaison), Elizabeth McMillan, R.S.M., Mary Aquin O'Neill, R.S.M., Aline Paris, R.S.M., Eloise Rosenblatt, R.S.M., Maryanne Stevens, R.S.M., Mary C. Sullivan, R.S.M., Marilyn Sunderman, R.S.M., and Anita Talar, R.S.M.

Included in these proceedings is a listing of Mercy colleges and universities from the program materials, along with a list of canonical sponsors. Representing these sponsors, Linda Werthman, R.S.M., Ph.D., gave a reflection on the scripture readings at the closing ritual and blessing on the last day of the conference.

At this editor's request after the meeting in June, Dr. Kathryn Grant, executive director of the Conference for Mercy Higher Education, provided a short explanation of what "canonical sponsor" meant. It may have been her last publication, for she died August 15, 2006. The entire program now stands as her final work and a memorial to her dedication and vision.

Eloise Rosenblatt, R.S.M.

THE MAST JOURNAL, begun in 1990, is published three times a year by the Mercy Association in Scripture and Theology. Members of the Editorial Board are Sisters Eloise Rosenblatt, Editor (Burlingame), Mary Sullivan (Rochester), Patricia Talone (Merion), Mary Daly (Connecticut), Carol Rittner (Dallas), Kathleen McAlpin (Merion), Aline Paris (Vermont), and Maureen Crossen (Pittsburgh). Subscriptions correspondence to Marilee Howard, R.S.M., Managing Editor, at 8300 Colesville Rd., #300, Silver Spring, MD 20910, e-mail mhoward@sistersofmercy.org. Manuscript submissions to Eloise Rosenblatt, R.S.M., at 1600 Petersen Ave. #40, San Jose, CA 95129, e-mail erosen1121@cs.com. Layout, design, and printing by BIBAL Press, an imprint of D. & F. Scott Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 821653, North Richland Hills, TX 76182. Back issues at $5.00 may be ordered from BIBAL Press at (888) 788-2280, sales@dfscott.com or www.dfscott.com.

Wisdom, Dignity, and Justice
Higher Education as a Work of Mercy

Margaret A. Farley, R.S.M., Ph.D.

My focus in this essay both is on the particularity of a Mercy charism in higher education and also on the way in which this charism belongs to the whole church. Since this is an abridged version of an original paper delivered at a conference on Mercy Higher Education, some of what I say will not be backed by the analysis that I initially tried to provide. Yet my analysis and argument are contained elliptically in my title: "Wisdom, Dignity, and Justice: Higher Education as a Work of Mercy." What I will try to show is the following: (1) Wisdom involves many things, but central to it is a recognition of the dignity of human persons and the value of all creation. (2) Genuine recognition of the dignity of all persons, along with insight into the treasures of the rest of creation, yields imperatives of justice. (3) Justice both calls for and makes possible relationships of compassion or mercy. (4) At its best, higher education aims at wisdom. Along the way, wisdom may be awakened and challenged by the claims of mercy and justice. When wisdom, dignity, justice, and mercy are held together, then higher education can be a work of mercy.

Wisdom

The more skeptical among us might raise our eyebrows at the statement that the central goal of higher education is to grow in wisdom. In a time and society marked by narrow specialization of disciplines, economic pressures, desires not only for survival, but for upward mobility, what even counts as "wisdom"? When trends in higher education seek to accommodate not only new forms of learning but also new challenges to *any* learning that aims at universal theorizing, what might "wisdom" mean? When departments are more and more isolated from one another in colleges and universities, and scholars find it difficult to understand the world through one another's lenses, what kind of "wisdom" might we search for or expect?

I take such questions seriously, but I do not think they undermine a goal of wisdom in higher education. Insofar as the questions reflect extreme forms of deconstruction and distorted desires shaped by multiple culturally hidden forces, they do seem to be conversation stoppers and to render moot any longing for wisdom on which we might base our educational goals. But questions like these may also be a starting point in a search for understanding and wisdom. If, for example, educating in a postmodern world allows us to deconstruct inadequate theoretical idols and illusions of isolated individuality, if it brings us to an appreciation of diversity, engagement with the Other, and humility in the face of the partiality of knowledge, then it may still be education that begins in and aims toward wisdom.

Whatever its ultimate goals, all higher education has importantly to do with the initiation of new generations of persons into a civilization, a culture in which or against which they must find their way. The Greeks educated for virtue and for freedom of intellectual inquiry; the humanists of the Renaissance educated for the reform of society and for individual self-fulfillment; Christians have educated persons in the workings of the world and in the

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relationship of the world to God. None of these educational traditions, nor any combination of them, has ever been divorced from preparing persons to make a living, to enter a career, to advance the skills and services that a society needs.[1] Both theoretically and practically, both individually and communally, higher education has sought to initiate persons into a civilization and a culture through some form of expansion of mind, social analysis, development of skills, experience of relationships, and capacity building for freedom of choice guided by some form of wisdom.

Unlike other strands of Christianity, the Catholic tradition has continued to believe in the basic intelligibility of creation and in the basic capacity of the human mind to understand what is revealed in creation.

The goals of higher education today, insofar as they are adequate, take into account not only relativity in physics, but the culture-bound perspectives of history, literature, psychology and sociology, philosophy and theology. We have learned to value pluralism when it does not mean that "anything goes." We have learned to welcome diversity (or at least we have learned that we ought to welcome it) and to see the possibilities of unity within it. We have learned to value community and the freedom it nurtures. We have experienced the necessity of interdisciplinary study, but also the humility it requires as we realize that everyone knows something that others do not know; and that we will all know more only if we are willing to share our knowledge and our methods.

Real wisdom in every respect comes from learning—through whatever process or with whatever resources—about the interrelationships of all beings and the dignity at the heart of every person. Much of higher education through long centuries of its development has been an attempt to learn just this, but to learn it primarily by studying human achievements—in science, the arts, politics, architecture, the winning of wars and the conquering of territories, the possession of land and the fruits of human labor on the land. Yet as Michael Buckley pointed out in the early 1980s, what was missing from these studies, from this education, was an encounter with human suffering.[2] Learning of human successes without learning of human pain, or learning about conquerors without learning about the exploited and the conquered, learning about the leaders and their ideas without learning about the marginalized and the poor, led and still may lead to the estrangement of an educated elite from the lives of the desperate and from the worldwide phenomenon of human misery.

This has changed (to some extent) in higher education generally since the early '80s, and certainly (again, to some extent) in Catholic higher education. Most colleges and universities at least offer possibilities of community service, urban immersion, and travel that is not only to learn of the glories of human achievement but the need for solidarity between persons in diverse cultures with diverse hopes and needs. Moreover, renewed studies of, for example, the classic content of the humanities, empirical research by social sciences, and humanitarian goals of many of the sciences, open the eyes of students not only to human impoverishment and injustice but to the mystery of the human person—to the dignity, the beauty, and the basic needs of all persons.

Dignity

The Catholic tradition stands out among the multiple traditions of Christianity in that it has sustained a kind of optimism about learning. Unlike other strands of Christianity, it has continued to believe in the basic intelligibility of creation and in the basic capacity of the human mind to understand what is revealed in creation. Although the Catholic tradition, like others, has taken seriously the "human condition" limited by human nature and damaged by human sin, it has never thought that humans are either so limited or so injured and incapacitated that they cannot learn (however partially) about the universe and about humanity itself. Not only the

Bible, but creation itself has been considered a revelatory text.

This learning, the study of this text, is not simple, however. Think of the ways we try to understand the cosmos, the universe, the planet Earth. Think of the academic disciplines we have developed in order to understand the worth of every creature—not only their instrumental worth but their worth in themselves. The motivations for such study may be multiple, but in Catholic education they can include the sort of inquiry that once motivated St. Augustine. Searching for God, Augustine described his questioning of the earth: "What is this God whom I love?" and "Tell me about God, you who are not God." All things on the earth answered him, he said, from the "sea and the deeps and the creeping things with living souls," to the "blowing breezes and the universal air with all its inhabitants," to the "sun, the moon, the stars." "They cried out in a loud voice: 'God made us.'" My question, Augustine said, "was in my contemplation of them, and their answer was in their beauty."[3]

But if study of the world is complex and ongoing, think of the study of ourselves. Discipline after discipline seeks to probe the meaning of the human species and of each human person. The concrete reality of human persons includes multiple elements and dimensions.[4] At least sometimes in our own experience and in our academic explorations, we have glimpsed a core value at the heart of each person, a value that grounds a claim that all of us are ends in ourselves. In this recognition rises the further claim that we are to be treated as ends, not only as means. There are multiple warrants for these claims. One of them is our capacity for free choice. By our freedom, we possess ourselves; our selves and our actions are in an important sense our own. By our freedom, we can determine the meaning of our own lives and, within limits, our destiny.

We are also terminal centers, ends in ourselves, because of what today we call our relationality. We possess ourselves and transcend ourselves not only by our freedom but by our capacities to know and be known, love and be loved. We belong to ourselves yet we belong to others; we are centered both within and without. Each of us is a whole world in herself, yet our world is in what we love.

Freedom and relationality, moreover, do not compete; they are intimately connected. Relationships make freedom of self-determination possible (for without them we cannot grow in freedom); but freedom is ultimately for the sake of choosing relationships—of choosing what and how to love. Herein lies the basis of human dignity and the requirement to grow in wisdom regarding what humans need. Out of wisdom about all the creatures of the world, and especially about human dignity, arise imperatives of human justice.

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Justice

The threads of ideas that I have been trying to identify may now be ready for weaving into a fabric whose background is Catholic and Mercy higher education and whose central design is justice and mercy. Let me come now to the threads of justice.

Justice of course can mean many things. One of the tasks of higher education in initiating persons into civilization and culture is to test the multiple theories of justice that have been proposed through many centuries and in many different cultures. Some of these will prove to have been inadequate, and some of them simply wrong. Some will be more adequate than others.

Examples of theories of justice that cannot be adequate for our society or our church today are theories that accommodate human slavery (a seemingly obvious example), or theories that assume a basic inequality among persons on the basis of race or gender (an example apparently not yet so obvious to everyone).[5] Indeed, we judge such theories to be not only inadequate but wrong. In the past, there were no doubt cultural reasons why such theories were not questioned, but today we (or at least most of us) condemn them as distortions of justice, as theories that actually support and reinforce systemic injustice. When we ask how such views of justice could have held sway for so many centuries and

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in so many cultures, the only answer can be that the dominant culture found reasons to avert its eyes from the dignity of some human individuals and groups, thereby not recognizing them as human, or at least not fully human. And despite long struggles for a better recognition of this dignity, we, too, still fail in practice if not in theory to oppose and remedy attitudes of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and cultural imperialism—attitudes that continue to exist in societies and in the hearts of countless people, including ourselves.

No one expects higher education to be the sole solution to failures in wisdom and justice. It has not been so in the past, nor is it in the present. Indeed, institutions of higher learning are vulnerable like all institutions to the culture blindness that is endemic to any given society. Yet, higher education is surely that realm of society where primary challenges to failures and distortions of thought ought to be taken seriously. It may even be that realm of society where critical challenges can be formulated for the moral failures that abet distortions of thought (moral failures such as greed, complacency, or the desire for power). Higher education functions, after all, not only to initiate persons into a culture that is already made, but thereby to influence the culture for better or for worse.

Wisdom, human dignity, and justice, therefore, remain not only relevant but crucial to the shaping of higher education. Lest this stand as a platitudinous assertion, let me try a quick thought experiment. Suppose we here today were in a position to found a new college or university; and suppose we knew that our own children or some particular individuals close to us would be the first students in this institution of higher education. What would we want to provide for these students, from their first day of matriculation to their last day before graduation? I will speak for myself, readers can test the plausibility and desirability of what I propose.

I would want these students, my children or my friends, to find first of all an institution that is itself marked by justice. I would want a community of learning in which students could trust the competence of teachers, the care and commitment of teachers, and the extraordinary wisdom of at least some teachers. I would want a college or university in which members of the administration and the staff work together for the same goals and are committed to adjudicating disagreements in ways marked by fairness and due process. I would want an institution in which just wages are paid to everyone, so that faculty, administration, and staff can be free and happy to work for more than their monetary wages. I would want an institution where interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary teaching and learning are rewarded, so that junior faculty will not be penalized for it nor will any student who appreciates its value be deprived of it. I would want an institution in which the students experience harmony, though not necessarily always agreement, among faculty and between faculty and administration; where faculty can recognize administrators as their advocates, not their adversaries; and where administrators can trust faculty, even when they are frustrated by them.

Above all, I would want this institution to be just toward its students. It would give them the education they need and deserve. It would respect and even reverence them—in their diversity, their uniqueness, their plurality of gifts and possibilities. It would therefore aim in its policies, its actions, and its ethos, to nurture the capacities in the students for freedom and for relationship. It would not fear, but rather cultivate, students' possibilities for self-determination and for discerning their responsibilities. It would awaken their desires for union, through knowledge and love, with more and more of what can be learned about the vast reaches of the universe, the microscopic smallness of the tiniest of creatures, the diversity of human cultures and occupations, and human persons as embodied spirits. Each student would be able to encounter at least one teacher who might change their lives, not through indoctrination, but inspiration.

The students would not be living in a paradise, isolated from human misery and pain. No matter how just the institution in which they studied, they would have opportunities to learn to accept human

frailty, and to learn about forgiveness and patience. They would learn, and co-learn, about human sufferings that are a part of embodied life—such as natural disasters, illness, limitations great and small. They would be given the tools to recognize that the future of all of creation is in some way dependent on them—whether in terms of Earth's environment, the intrinsic worth of every being, or the survival of the human species. They would have at least encouragement to learn to see the gem of dignity in each human person, no matter how different from themselves, no matter how challenged in abilities, no matter even how wicked. They would begin to understand that some sufferings do not have to be; that some sufferings ought not end in either dominance or death, but in change. They would have possibilities to discern whether and what actions they may and must take to make the world more just, and to make their countries, families, churches, sexual partnerships, and future occupations and professions more just. They would have ample opportunity to discover their own limitations, frailties, and powerlessness; but they would also learn of their own dignity.

These students would also have lives outside of their community of learning. They would, like students everywhere, have to engage in their own education in spite of economic constraints and pressures. They would have to make decisions in terms of their relationships with the ordinary political, social, ecclesiastical spheres of the wider world. They would bring all of their experiences to their learning—with no questions ruled out, no methods dismissed as not worth a try, no voices silenced because of their backgrounds.

And since this institution that I am imagining for my children and my friends would be Catholic and Mercy, it would foster an ethos, and have at least some participants, to witness to students that their freedom is ultimately a capacity to decide for or against what they believe is ultimate; that their capacity for relation stretches even to the infinite; that they may dare to hope in an unlimited future.

I have seen colleges and at least parts of universities where this kind of wisdom and justice is possible and even present. Yes, of course, there are serious obstacles and genuine limitations on what any form of higher education can provide. Not all students are ready to take advantage of the possibilities I describe. And despite their own preferences, there are many students who cannot take the time for a full college experience, who must therefore learn piecemeal and against great odds (though all the while meshing their learning with their everyday experience). Institutions, too, have fiscal limits, the kind of limits that threaten to turn decisions about faculty, programs, and equipment into sheer business matters. I have known colleges, universities, and students with all of these difficulties. No matter what, however, I would want to argue that no institution of higher education can be justified if its structures, its internal relationships, and its provisions for its students are unjust—which is to say, if they are unsuited to the pursuit of wisdom or respect for human dignity.

Mercy, like love, can be helpful or harmful, wise or foolish, inaccurate or true, creative or destructive. Mercy, like love, must therefore have standards, criteria, measures, whereby it is good or wise or true.

Mercy

Mercy both requires justice and makes it possible. How does it require justice? Mercy, like love (of which it is a form), can be helpful or harmful, wise or foolish, inaccurate or true, creative or destructive. Mercy, like love, must therefore have standards, criteria, measures, whereby it is good or wise or true. At the risk of being too brief and hence too blunt, let me simply say that the fundamental norm (measure, standard) for a right and good love, and a right and good mercy, is the concrete reality of the beloved.[6] If this is missed, mercy will miss its mark; it will harm rather than help. As examples: If I love and am "merciful" toward persons as if they are things, or things as if they are persons, I love them both unjustly. If I love and care for my stu-

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dents only as supporters of my reputation or fulfillers of my (or my institution's) ambitions, they will be right to say that I do not really love them but only myself. Or if I do in fact love them for themselves, but I am obtuse when it comes to understanding their genuine needs, I may injure them when I offer them what I have imagined they need or wanted them to need. If education leads anyone to judge persons from a false bias, to interpret situations naively, it will not lead to genuine mercy. This, then, is how mercy requires justice. Or better, the requirement for true mercy is, therefore, the wisdom to understand well—insofar as we can—concrete realities, contexts, relationships, and the claims they make on us in justice.

But mercy also makes justice possible. Mercy enhances the knowledge that is needed for justice, and it motivates actions that respond to the claims of justice. Mercy (or compassion) adds to love an element of stronger affective response and an assumption of more acute access to knowledge of the concrete reality of others. Love is a response to persons as lovable, as valuable; mercy is this same response with the added notion of "suffering with."[7] Precisely because mercy involves beholding the value of others and suffering with them in their need, it opens reality to the beholder; it offers a way of "seeing" that evokes a moral response—to alleviate pain, provide assistance in need, support in wellbeing. Mercy therefore illuminates justice and propels it to action.

To appeal to a Christian theological perspective: It is our belief that the mercy of God is intended to flow not only into and upon us but through us, one to the other. By God's grace, we are to understand one another's and the whole world's need for beauty as well as for bread, for companionship as well as for peace, for mutual respect and mutual strengthening of our loves, our justice, and our hopes. This is why we participate in higher education (whatever our role or position) as co-learners. Do we not grow in wisdom through the mutuality of our efforts—administrators, staff, students, faculty? Do we not gain clarity about the demands of justice through the challenges of one another? Is not this kind of receiving and giving a whole work of mercy whereby we at least try to advance human knowledge and wisdom, affirm freedom and dignity in a cherished universe, make choices about our loves, and strive to mend the world with justice?

Notes

1 See Christopher F. Mooney, *Boundaries Dimly Perceived: Law, Religion, Education, and the Common Good* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), part 3.

2 Michael Buckley, "The University and the Concern for Justice: The Search for a New Humanism," *Thought* 57 (June, 1982): 219–33.

3 Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. Warner (New York: New American Library, 1963), 10.6.

4 I have treated these elements of human reality in a number of other writings, most recently in *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2006), chapter 6.

5 For a remarkable study of the long centuries in which Christians accepted slavery, see John T. Noonan, *A Church Which Can and Cannot Change* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005). For the failure of church and society to recognize the equality of women and man, see Farley, *Just Love*, passim.

6 In the original version of this paper, I provided more extended examples of this. Here I only refer the reader to my *Compassionate Respect: A Feminist Approach to Medical Ethics and Other Questions* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), esp. 3–20. See also *Just Love*, 196–206.

7 See *Compassionate Respect*, 39–43, 72–79.

Response to Dr. Margaret Farley

Diana L. Hayes, J.D., S.T.D.

I am truly honored to be invited to participate in this program of the Conference for Mercy Higher Education and to respond to Dr. Farley's challenging paper. Our paths have crossed many times over the years but, I believe, this is the first time I have responded to a presentation by her; it is a privilege to do so.

Dr. Farley sets forth a convincing argument for envisioning higher education as a work of mercy, flowing from the interaction of wisdom, dignity, and justice. She presents a lucid understanding of each of these parameters and how they come together in harmony to further the vision of the foundress of the Mercy order, Catherine McAuley. As we are basically on the same wavelength, I would like simply to highlight and possibly expand on several of the points she has raised from the perspective of one who is not a part of the Mercy community and whose context, as an African American lay woman in the Church, shines a somewhat different light on the three aspects of mercy under discussion: wisdom, dignity, and justice.

First, let me briefly sketch the context in which we all are living today, especially in the United States. It is a world where, on the one hand, to be a person of faith is to be looked upon as someone who is foolish; one who believes in the irrational; one who needs a "crutch" of some kind to survive; this is the world of secularism which is becoming increasingly appealing to many, especially the young (from their teens through their thirties). On the other hand, we find ourselves, despite this pervasive secularism, confronted by a militant, conservative, fundamentalist form of Christianity which leaves many uncomfortable at the ways in which our faith is being used and abused, but which also appeals to the young.

Neither situation is viable and many fear the inevitable clash between these two worldviews. But where do we stand in the midst of all of this? As educators and administrators, do we stand by and watch as our country involves itself in "police actions" around the world that pit the poorest and least educated of our nation against the poorest and least educated of other nations, directed by elites who watch from afar safely and untouched in any way? As Dr. Farley notes, we no longer seem to have a sense of the common good, that understanding that forced us to recognize how all of our lives are intertwined and therefore affected by actions or failures to act at the highest levels of both our government and our church.

Historically, Catholic schools came into existence in the U.S. as a countersign, places of learning for those with the least, opening doors and possibilities denied them by private and even public institutions. It was the goal of Catholic education, at every level—not just the university or college, to provide opportunities for those who otherwise would have none. Those newly arrived to the United States were welcomed with open arms by the Church while "other" Americans looked askance at these immigrants, who were of many tongues and nations but joined by their Catholic faith. Many wondered if they would ever truly

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How do we grapple as well with changing student bodies, the composition of which, if Catholic institutions are to follow the changing demographics of both nation and church, reveal faces of color, coming from Latin and Central America, Africa, the Caribbean, and right here in the U.S.—African and Latino/a Americans.

become "real Americans." Today, of course, we know the answer to that question is yes; yet it is being raised anew with new immigrants and not so new ones—Catholics of color, who are seeking opportunities long denied them.

Certainly, the institutions founded by the Sisters of Mercy, at whatever educational level, have sought to and in many ways have succeeded in enabling many to become a part of U.S. society. Their special emphasis on women has been especially critical. Just as Catherine McAuley attempted with her first institutions in Ireland to "raise up the status of women through education and training," to prepare them to not only successfully enter the world of work, but also to be committed to that world's transformation for the betterment of society, so the institutions established in the United States and elsewhere continue to have the same mission, one that consists of four characteristics:

- Regard for the dignity of the person
- Academic excellence and lifelong learning
- Education of the whole person: body, mind, and spirit
- Through action and education, the promotion of compassion and justice towards those with less, especially women and children. (Mercy Higher Ed. Site)

Dr. Farley is working within these hallmarks of Mercy education as she develops her understanding of "Wisdom, Dignity, and Justice: Higher Education as a Work of Mercy." She affirms, therefore, that

- Wisdom—involves many things, but central to it is recognition of the dignity of human persons and the value of all creation;
- Genuine recognition of the dignity of all persons . . . yields imperatives of justice
- Justice both calls for and makes possible relationships of compassion or mercy

Wisdom

Beginning with wisdom, she notes that "the central goal of higher education is to grow in wisdom." She is not alone in this assertion. If I may be allowed to bring into our discussion another charism that I am very familiar with, that of Jesuit higher education, former Georgetown President Leo O'Donovan affirms that

> A university should be a community of wisdom. It should be a place where discerning the signs of the times and learning to make wise choices are constant concerns for all of its faculty and students, administration and staff.

Arguably, Catholic universities and colleges throughout the US have served such a purpose, living out the role of "extended family" for American Catholics, especially first-generation students in much the same way that the historically Black Churches and their schools served after Reconstruction and continue to serve to this very day.

Yet the demands being placed on higher education have changed and continue to change as disciplines grow more specialized, costs of tuition and fees continue to skyrocket, and so-called cultural wars are being fought from the right and the left. Where do we find a common place to stand? How do we grapple as well with changing student bodies, the composition of which, if Catholic institutions are to follow the changing demographics of both nation and church, reveal faces of color, coming from Latin and Central America, Africa, the Caribbean, and right here in the U.S.—African and Latino/a Americans. This requires a shift in our understanding of who we, as

faculty, staff, and administrators at Catholic universities, need to seek out, recruit, and serve. These groups are the historically marginalized in our society, denied access to wisdom because of their skin color, language, social class and other factors usually not within their control.

Dr. Farley continues: "whatever its ultimate goals, all higher education has importantly to do with the initiation of new generations of persons into a civilization, a culture, in which or against which they must find their way." She continues, "higher education has sought to initiate persons into a *civilization and a culture* through some form of expansion of mind, social analysis, development of skills, experience of relationships, and capacity building for freedom of choice guided by some form of wisdom." Although she is correct in characterizing the purpose of a university in such a way, for me such a statement raises some concerns. What exactly is meant by the words "civilization and culture," especially in the singular? What culture, what civilization is she speaking about? The immediate response of many would, of course, be the American culture, American civilization, but what exactly does that mean? Whose culture? Whose civilization? These are, I believe, critical questions as we find ourselves enmeshed today in what many claim to be "culture wars."

Her citation of David Tracy, that "we are all struggling for new interpretations of ourselves" is true, but it is at the same time insufficient because, for some, that search is a matter of life and death. Who is meant by "we," both in this quote and in the following statements regarding pluralism, diversity, community, and interdisciplinary study? To be honest, I don't think that I or other persons of color like myself, whether men or women, are included here for, in actuality, we are the "others" that are challenging U.S. society and the Catholic Church by our growing presence, to acknowledge, welcome, and affirm pluralism, diversity, community, and interdisciplinary studies. We, persons of African, Latino/a, Native American, and Asian descent as well as those who are GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender), and those who are poor regardless of race or ethnicity, have historically been the outsiders looking in, asserting viable cultures and civilizations of our own, which are and should be recognized as necessary components of any form of culture and civilization that claims the name American or preferably United Statesian for, as the poet Langston Hughes noted, "We too sing America."

Who is meant by "we" in the statements regarding pluralism, diversity, community, and interdisciplinary study? To be honest, I don't think that I or other persons of color like myself, whether men or women, are included here.

What has usually happened, however, whether consciously or unconsciously, is that we have been required to assimilate into one rather narrow understanding of culture and civilization that is white and Eurocentric. That initiation has been difficult, often painful, and has led, too often, not just to the loss of language, traditions, cultures, etc., but to the loss of family and friends who no longer recognize or accept us; sadly, we often don't recognize ourselves any longer as well.

If "real wisdom" does emerge from learning about "the interrelatedness of all beings and the dignity at the heart of every person," then is it not incumbent upon all of us engaged in higher education at whatever level to learn about and interact with those "others" within our midst? Should we not situate ourselves, as best we can, within their context using their hermeneutical lens, a critical lens of suspicion, to help us to discern what wisdom truly means for them as well as for all of us in its fullest, most pluralistic and diverse form? Then, we must help to pass that wisdom on, of many civilizations and cultures not just one, thereby, preparing our students to navigate difference and recognize it as divine rather than dangerous. I agree with Michael Buckley's assertion that what has

been missing from Catholic and truly all forms of religious education is "an encounter with human suffering." But here again lies another danger. How do we learn of and/or encounter human suffering in ways that do not, unknowingly, perpetuate it; that is, by objectifying those who suffer. They must be seen as creators of their own histories rather than just being the passive participants in a history that is created around and for them, for the edification of others.

Service learning programs, urban immersion and other similar types of interaction and solidarity are excellent means of doing so and are and have been historically a part of Mercy higher education. The question remains, however, how do we continue to do this with the changes presently taking place in our society and church? How do we participate with the "least among us" without further burdening them? How do we reach out to them and encourage them to join us in ways that do not require the loss of their histories, cultures, traditions, and languages (as too many are advocating today). Education should not be a forced assimilation but a true integration of the hearts and minds of diverse peoples. In doing so, we are not creating division but encouraging true solidarity.

Human Dignity

This leads me to the issue of human dignity. What is—or perhaps more accurately who is—a human being and what are our responsibilities towards them? As Dr. Farley notes:

> The concrete reality of human persons includes multiple dimensions . . . Human persons are . . . essentially relational, situated in creation like other beings, but with particular interpersonal and social needs, and with capacities to open to others, including God . . . Each person is unique, but every person is a common sharer in humanity.

The question that arises for us here is: How, then, do we overcome centuries of denial of the innate dignity of all human persons in a nation (and, sadly, a church as well) that defined persons of color and often women as less than human? This is where the work of Mercy has, I think, been quite critical. Catherine McAuley's purpose was ". . . through action and education,(to) promote compassion and justice towards those with less, especially women and children." The efforts of Mercy institutions of higher education to "empower the poor through education" is as vital today as it was in the nineteenth century. Women, especially women of color, are still seen as of lesser value and significance, not just throughout the world, but in the U.S. as well. Today, we are increasingly seeing women denied educational and employment opportunities simply because of the color of their skin, the language they speak, their legal status in this country, and their gender. Sweat shops and sexual slavery have reemerged especially in immigrant communities. Mercy's efforts to provide educational and social service opportunities for "persons on welfare, single mothers, and those with no resources for educational financing" is to be applauded. Yet there is still so much more to be done to protect and promote the lives of women who have been told all of their lives that they have no value.

The efforts of Mercy institutions of higher education to "empower the poor through education" is as vital today as it was in the nineteenth century.

At the same time, I feel it necessary to simply note briefly that much of this will be of little value without a foundation that was formerly present in the Catholic community, that of Catholic elementary and high schools where Catholics live. The closing of, in major cities, all inner city Catholic schools raises a serious question about our concerns for the future of the poor and marginalized in our midst. Catholic schools served (and where they still exist still do serve) as "feeder" schools for our colleges and universities. Their disappearance in the very places they are most needed will challenge any and all efforts to ensure diversity amongst not just our student body but among our faculty and staff as well. It reveals a continuing diminishment of the value and worth of Black, Latino/a and Native American

children, a denial of their creation by a loving God and of the dignity and respect due to all of God's creation.

Freedom is a critical part of what it means to be human, as Prof. Farley affirms. But freedom means also freedom of choice, the freedom to choose what and how to love. There is no freedom where there are no choices, in settings of violence, drugs, unsafe and dysfunctional public schools, gangs—sadly the list is endless in urban and some rural areas today. What choices exist in such environments? Few or none. So where is the freedom? Where is the human dignity? Where is the opportunity to grow in wisdom? This is and should be a challenge for all of us.

Justice

I now move to Dr. Farley's discussion of justice. As she states: "Higher education . . . is about growth in wisdom. There is no wisdom, however, without recognition of the dignity of human persons and the beauty of all creation. And without recognition of human dignity and the treasures of human creation, there can be no justice." Farley provides an interesting discourse on justice as foundational for higher education in company with wisdom and human dignity. I especially found her "thought experiment" as to what we would want to provide students in a new college or university a powerful and hope-filled statement. I agree wholeheartedly in her vision of a community of learning that teaches justice, shares, and cultivates wisdom and freedom. I agree with all of her points, but most importantly the concluding ones. She is describing not a utopia, but a college or university where students would also be exposed, necessarily, to the harsh and often painful realities of the world(s) in which we live today. This is truly the challenge of her vision, however. It is human nature to want to shield our children from the ugliness of the world. But to do so is to ill-prepare them for adulthood. They must learn of and experience, to a certain extent, all that life has to offer, utilizing the freedom of will granted them by God while recognizing and discerning that in so doing, they are making a fundamental option—for or against the ultimate, for or against God.

I would, however, add to the obstacles she names one increasingly prevalent today—the denial of access to higher education because of the restriction and elimination of financial resources once offered by state and especially the federal government as well as the all out assault on affirmative action. The burden, as with almost all actions of charitable and other non-profit institutions today has been relegated to the religious sphere; ironically, that same sphere that, as mentioned earlier, many feel has no place in the public sector. How do we continue to be inclusive of all students, including the neediest, in the face of increasingly higher costs and fewer federally funded educational financial programs?

Mercy

We end with mercy. Throughout the Old Testament, we note that we are called to care for the widow, the orphans, and the strangers in our midst. Jesus, in the New Testament, expands upon this mandate, affirming that we are indeed our brothers' and sisters' keepers and are responsible for, as well, our neighbors, broadly defined. We are to love them as we love God and as we love ourselves—a daunting task, especially in today's secular, individualistic, materialistic world, full of rage against those who are different in whatever ways. If they don't look like, act like, or agree completely with us, that is reason to attack. So where is there a place for compassion, for concern for others? And how do we translate compassion, mercy, into action for and on behalf of and with others, most particularly, those who are the least like us?

I shook my head in sorrow, but also in recognition of the truth of Dr. Farley's narrative of the AIDS symposium. It is so much easier, it seems, to speak with compassion. It is impossible, she notes to truly render mercy (compassion) if one fails "to identify the concrete needs" of those for and with whom you are allegedly acting. A Band-Aid is only a temporary cover-up for a festering sore. If, as Martin Luther King, Jr. noted when discussing the disease of racism, the sores are not exposed to the open and healing air and cleansed with the harsh remedies of compassionate action, the disease will never be healed.

For many, mercy is abstract, requiring little effort and no sacrifice: be kind to old ladies and children, donate money to charity, and perhaps even do a bit of volunteering work over a weekend. But as noted earlier, if those for whom the acts of alleged mercy are being performed are not seen and treated as human persons with equal dignity to ourselves, capable of acting on their own behalf if given the means to do so, regardless of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities, or creed, then it is not true mercy. It is the objectification, the thingification, of a fellow human being and that has gone on for too long a time, both in our Church and this nation. Again citing King, " We must learn to love one another or die (Birmingham Jail). That is as blunt a statement as I have ever heard.

Farley adds:

> Mercy, compassion, add to love an element of stronger affective response and an assumption of more acute access to knowledge of the concrete reality of others. Love is a response to persons as lovable, as valuable; mercy is this same response with the added notion of 'suffering with . . ." Mercy . . . illuminates justice and propels it to action.

Our students know how to love, or so they believe, in a romantic sort of way or in a familial way but we must help them to understand how to love the "other," those in need, not in a condescending or patronizing way but in the way that Jesus loved humanity, an agape love. This is the true understanding of mercy.

Ignacio Ellacuria, one of the martyred Jesuits of El Salvador, challenges us in this way:

> We must seek simultaneously to build a new human being and a new earth, although the newness of the new human being will not attain fulfillment realistically and collectively except through active participation in striving to build a new earth . . . The formal standpoint from which Christianity projects its liberating work is not that of power or domination but that of service . . . The university of Christian inspiration is not a place of security, selfish interests, honor or profits, and worldly splendor, but a place of sacrifice, personal commitment, and renunciation (206)
>
> Correctly understood, Christianity defends and promotes a sense of fundamental values that are essential to our current process in history and therefore very useful to a universal endeavor committed to that process in history . . . Christianity regards the poorest as both the redeemers of history and the privileged of the reign of God in opposition to the privileged of this world. Christianity struggles vis-à-vis those things that dehumanize, such as the yearning for wealth, honors, power, and the high regard of the powerful of this world; it strives to replace selfishness with love as the driving force in human life and in history and it is centered on the other and on commitment to others rather than in demands made on others for one's own benefit. Christianity seeks to serve rather than to be served; it seeks to do away with unjust inequalities; it asserts the transcendent value of human life, and the value of the person from the standpoint of God's son, and hence it upholds solidarity and kinship of all human beings; it makes us aware of the need for an ever greater future and this underlies the active hope of those who work to make a more just world in which God can thereby become more fully manifested. Christianity regards the rejection of human beings and of human kinship as the radical rejection of God and, in that sense, as the rejection of the source of all reality and of all human realization.

I believe that, in many ways, I have been preaching to the choir this afternoon. The charism of Mercy has revealed itself over the past century and a half in acts of true love, of true compassion. That work must continue and expand to welcome the new, yet so old, Catholics as well as those of other faiths in our midst who seek a Mercy education for the wisdom, affirmation of human dignity, and justice it can provide them, and thereby prepare them for the harsh new world in which we live today. In so doing, we will hopefully prepare makers of peace who will go forth and "study war no more," making of this world truly a world of compassion, a world of mercy.

Editor's Note

Dr. Hayes's quotations of Dr. Farley's paper are from the original draft of Farley's address, which she edited for this volume. The quotations from Ignacio Ellacuria are taken from John Hassett and Hugh Lacey, eds. Towards a Society That Serves Its People: The Intellectual Contributions of El Salvador's Murdered Jesuits (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1991) 206.

Response to Margaret Farley

Elizabeth McMillan, R.S.M., Ph.D.

When I was asked to participate on this panel, I was a little taken aback. I had been out of Mercy higher education for almost twenty years. When I asked what the planners were looking for, I learned they were hoping I could offer the perspective of a "practitioner." Then I asked myself, "Aren't we all, those of us gathered here, Sisters of Mercy and you, our associates in the ministry of higher education, striving to be practitioners of mercy and justice?"

I am aware, for example, that Carlow University has made a serious commitment to mature women, who for various economic and social reasons were not able to go to college after graduation from high school. Many of these women are working mothers, residents of the predominantly black community on the hill behind the Carlow campus. Also worth noting is that Carlow has had a women's studies program since the early 1970s. I assume that all of you on your various college and university campuses through your teaching and research, through student services programs as well as through "service learning" opportunities at home and abroad, have been and continue to be "practitioners" of mercy and justice.

It turns out that what people were looking for from me was a word about our commitment to live mercy and justice from the perspective of a Sister of Mercy living in Latin America, where the gap between the rich and poor is a chasm. I went to Guatemala in 1992 to teach in a seminary and, while there, I also taught in a program that the Christian Brothers had for young religious. I moved to Honduras in 1998 at the request of the Providence Regional Community. There my principal ministry is the religious formation of our own Sisters, and other young religious who participate in the diocesan intercongregational program of courses, retreats and workshops.

This move to Central America certainly has occasioned a shift in my perspective, and deepened my appreciation for my own call to Mercy. I have come to realize that Mercy is the only appropriate response to misery. And in Central America misery abounds. Those who cross borders to get here to the United States literally risk their lives to escape it, and as you know, not a few even lose their lives in the attempt.

Sobrino's View of Mercy

In her keynote, Margaret insisted that, "The requirement for genuine mercy is . . . the wisdom to understand—insofar as we can—concrete realities, and a recognition of the claims that these realities make upon us in justice. Love and mercy, when they are just, are not blind." Some of you may have read Jon Sobrino's book, *The Principle of Mercy: Taking the Crucified People from the Cross*. [Orbis Press, 1994]. The original in Spanish came out in 1992.[1] Sobrino proposes mercy as the foundational—the most fundamental—theological principle, the key to understanding something of God, and of the mission of his son, Jesus Christ. Sobrino titles his autobiographical intro-

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duction, "Awakening from the Sleep of Inhumanity." He confesses that it was not until after returning to El Salvador from his years of study in the United States and Spain that he "awakened" to the "real world of the poor," to the inhumanity they endured, and to the realization that he had something to *learn from* them, and not just to *do for* them.

Along with his Jesuit brothers on the faculty of the Jesuit university in San Salvador, he began to probe spiritually and theologically the scandal of what he called, "entire crucified peoples." Six of these men, as most of you know, were martyred by the Salvadoran military for challenging the country's political and economic elite. The book, *The Principle of Mercy*, is a collection of articles that reflect Sobrino's and their painful quest for justice in El Salvador. In this book, he hopes to arouse those of us in the North from our complacent inhumanity toward our neighbors. So it seems to me, a critical challenge for us, for any Mercy college or university, is to awaken students to an awareness of the inhuman conditions in which the majority of the people in our hemisphere—indeed, in our world—live.

Community Service by Mercy Faculty and Students

Margaret made reference to the fact that most colleges and universities now offer possibilities for community service, urban immersion, and travel to foreign countries. These programs offer them an opportunity to serve and to experience solidarity with the people. Groups from Mercyhurst College have been coming to Honduras since 2000 with Sister Kathleen Leap, and since Kathleen's death this past year, with Michelle Schroek. For about as long, students and faculty from Georgian Court University, accompanied by engineers, have made an annual trip to dig a well in a remote Honduran village. Carlow nursing students travel to Chimbote, Peru, where the Pittsburgh Mercys have had a mission for years. No doubt you offer students at your institutions similar opportunities. In my experience, these young people make a genuine contribution to the welfare of the people directly affected by their labors. And if they are open to the experience, and they are provided with good orientation and accompanied on site, they go home changed. In the words of Sobrino, they are "aroused from the slumber of their inhumanity".

While the Mercyhurst group was in San Pedro a couple of weeks ago, I used the opportunity to get an idea of how their service learning program worked. I understood that it is a requirement of the theology department, but that the service placement for credit can also be set up by other departments, say sociology. The challenge has been for the faculty to adopt methodologies that make the experience an integral part of the process intended to achieve the goals of the course.

Off campus learning is not new to us in higher education. Internships, clinical practice, social work placements, student teaching—we have been doing for years. What may be new to some students is going into the streets, to the border with Mexico or to Latin America to see how the poor, and even the destitute, live. Accompanying them in the process can be challenging. We are called in these times, I feel, to help students come to the realization that we all have some personal responsibility for closing the enormous gap—the chasm—between those who have no worries about whether their children will eat today, and those of us who literally cannot imagine such a life.

Referring to an article by Michael Buckley,[2] Margaret reminded us, "Learning of human successes without learning of human pain, or learning about conquerors without learning

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about the exploited and conquered, learning about the leaders and their ideas without learning about the marginalized and poor, led and still may lead to the estrangement of an educated elite from the lives of the desperate and from the worldwide phenomenon of human misery." We who minister in Mercy colleges and universities cannot take this risk.

I'll close with a quote from my friend, Sister Maria Green, who died five years ago. Maria was dean of students at Carlow in the late seventies. The quote is from a homily she gave on Mercy Day 2000, a year almost to the day before she died. She reminded us:

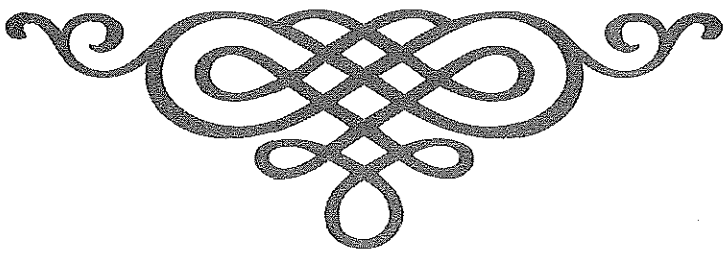
> Catherine understood that in her unique gift for ministry to the sick poor of Dublin she was a *steward* of God's mercy. She realized that this mercy is the same attribute by which God identified himself when he told Moses, "I have come down because I have heard the cries of my people." . . . She knew that it is a great privilege to be called to this vocation. She said God has *engaged* us to comfort those who are sick, to free people from ignorance and to help the poor attain full human dignity.

This is the Mercy charism that all of us, those of us in our colleges and universities along the rest of us in our various ministries, are called to treasure and to revitalize constantly.

Notes

1 The original came out in Spanish under the title, *El Principio—Misericordia: Bajar de la cruz a los pueblos crucificados.* [Sal Terrae, Geneva, 20—39001 Santander, Spain, 1992.] The omission of the preposition, "*de*" is deliberate. His point is that mercy is the ultimate founding principle of all Christian morality, not simply one moral principle among others. It is mercy that reveals who God is, and how he acts in human history, and what he is calling us to. So the English translation should read: *The Principle—Mercy*

2 "The University and the Concern for Justice: The Search for a New Humanism," *Thought* 57 (June, 1982): 219–33.



Catherine McAuley and the Characteristics of Mercy Higher Education

Mary C. Sullivan, R.S.M., Ph.D.

The characteristics of Mercy higher education as Catherine McAuley would have envisioned them in the context of the educational institutions she created and promoted in her day, and as she would, I believe, elaborate and slightly adjust these characteristics in response to the needs and circumstances of today deserve the careful discernment you have begun. Creative fidelity to the values in the Mercy heritage bequeathed to us by God through Catherine McAuley involves both knowing her contextualized philosophy and theology of education, as revealed in her instructions and practice, and interpreting her views in the context of present realities.

Among Catherine's enduring educational values are, I believe, the following:

- The dignity to be accorded each student and educational coworker
- The fundamental necessity of Christian learning and spiritual development
- A special concern, in learning and practice, for those who suffer material poverty
- A persistent effort to diminish all sorts of debilitating ignorance
- The primacy to be always given to mercifulness and spiritual consolation
- The demanding effort to "practice what we teach/preach," i.e., to be ourselves, personally and institutionally, insofar as humanly possible, examples of the Mercy heritage we claim to promote and transmit

Creative fidelity to the values in the Mercy heritage bequeathed to us by God through Catherine McAuley involves both knowing her contextualized philosophy and theology of education, as revealed in her instructions and practice, and interpreting her views in the context of present realities.

In developing these Mercy values, I will be referring to Catherine McAuley's writings, particularly her Rule, her letters, and her "Spirit of the Institute" essay; her own practice as recorded in the early annals and biographical manuscripts about her; and the recent discussion document of the CMHE, "Mercy Higher Education: Culture and Characteristics" (Winter 2004). I will attempt to say in more concrete language what Catherine McAuley would now mean by the abstract words "Mercy mission and values," "Mercy heritage," "the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy," and "the prevailing values of the Mercy charism."

In *The Fire in These Ashes,* Joan Chittister explains the Irish practice of *gríosach*: the domestic practice in Ireland of "burying [the] warm coals [of the hearth] in ashes at night in order to preserve the fire for the cold morning to come" (Chittister 36).[1] Irish people have long had this tradition of preserving live coals under beds of ashes at night in order to start the new fire the next morning.

When the House of Mercy on Baggot Street—the original convent of the Sisters of Mercy—was first occupied, it was still in an unfinished state. Catherine herself slept in a dormitory room with seven others, including three children. The Derry Manuscript tells us that

> The sitting room and oratory was the room fronting Herbert St. between the great Hall and the private staircase, and was both plainly and scantily furnished . . . Recreation was held on the great

> corridor [across the front of the house], where during the winter months a fire was lighted.[2]

From this hearth—at the center of the house Catherine built for "the purposes of charity"—flowed warmth for all who entered or lived in the house. But the great fire of the house came not from this hearth, but from Christ. It was the zealous fire that her friend Michael Blake recognized in the heart of Catherine McAuley: "the charity of the Redeemer, whose all consuming fire burn[ed] within her."[3]

Deep inside each Mercy institution today are the live coals of Catherine McAuley's charity, her realization that the Mercy of God both precedes and supports, and is in some way dependent upon our own mercifulness. We are the beneficiaries of God's Mercy as well as the instruments of that Mercy to others. The Mercy of God, extended to us and to all God's people, is thus an extremely fundamental reality for Sisters of Mercy and the institutions they sponsor. Indeed, we recognize that the following of God's own mercifulness is the defining demand placed upon our corporate and personal lives.

I. The original Rule of the Sisters of Mercy, which Catherine herself composed, is preserved in Dublin in a manuscript in her own handwriting. In composing her Rule, Catherine used the Rule of the Presentation Sisters (hereafter: PR) as her point of departure—sometimes copying it verbatim; sometimes altering it by the addition or deletion of words, phrases, sentences and even whole paragraphs; and sometimes writing new chapters. When one compares the two Rules, word for word, one sees Catherine's mind and heart very deliberately engaged. One sees the conscious editorial choices she made about what to include, what to exclude, and what to say to those who would follow her.

I would like to focus initially on chapters 1 and 2 of the Rule, "Of the Object of the Institute" and "Of the Schools."[4] As I do so, you will need to mentally translate Catherine's nineteenth-century theological language into twentieth-century terms. Chapter 1, article 1, says:

> The Sisters admitted into this religious congregation besides the principal and general end of all religious orders . . . must also have in view what is peculiarly characteristic of this Institute of the Sisters of Mercy, that is, a most serious application to the Instruction of poor Girls, Visitation of the Sick, and protection of distressed women of good character. (1.1)

There is in our founding a persistent strand of special concern for women and young girls that has never been muted or weakened, even though we recognize, as Catherine did on other occasions, that debilitating ignorance, poverty and distress afflict both sexes. Catherine's keen awareness that women and girls bear particularly acute and central burdens in situations of poverty and suffering is an enduring insight on her part, no doubt derived from her own experience of walking the streets, visiting the sick poor, tending the dying, and answering knocks on the door. It was one of her founding inspirations to perceive in a special way the added depth in the poverty of women and girls and to be moved to relieve it by establishing schools for poor girls and employment training for homeless women.

Here are two key themes in the theology of Catherine McAuley: first, the example of Jesus Christ and the animating effect it should have on the character of one's daily life; and, second, Jesus Christ's own declaration that he is identified with the poor.

Catherine recognized the "arduous" nature of the work of Mercy education. In article 2 of the first chapter, she states what she believed was the most basic and sustaining motivation of those who teach. She writes:

> In undertaking the arduous, but very meritorious duty of instructing the Poor, the Sisters . . . shall animate their zeal and fervor by the example of . . . Jesus Christ, who testified on all occasions a tender love for the Poor and declared that He would consider as done to Himself whatever should be done unto them. (1.2)

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the character of one's daily life; and, second, Jesus Christ's own declaration that he is identified with the poor, that what is done to or for them is done to or for him.

It is not possible to overstress the decisive force in Catherine McAuley's life of the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:40: "Whatever you do to the least of these my brothers and sisters you do unto me." She deliberately inserts Matthew 25:40 twice in the Rule; and this scriptural passage is the key to interpreting her understanding of the works of mercy, including the work of education: that is, in teaching others we are indeed teaching those with whom Jesus Christ is profoundly identified.

Catherine begins her major statement about Mercy education—her chapter 2, "Of the Schools"—with the following article, taken verbatim from the Presentation Rule:

> The Sisters appointed by the Mother Superior to attend the Schools shall with all zeal, charity and humility, purity of intention and confidence in God undertake the charge and cheerfully submit to every labor and fatigue annexed thereto, mindful of their vocation and of the glorious recompense attached to the faithful discharge of this duty. (2.1)

The Sisters are to pray to God and to Mary, the model of faith and service, *before* they enter school, not *when* they enter; the kind of prayer Catherine advocated could be done only privately.

Here we note five virtues to which Catherine refers over and over in her Rule, letters, and other writings: *zeal, charity, humility, purity of intention,* and *confidence in God.* In her view, it is these attitudes, born of reflection on the example of Jesus Christ, which make it possible to "undertake the charge and cheerfully submit to every labor and fatigue" (2.1) related to the work of Mercy education. Clare Augustine Moore—an associate of Catherine's on Baggot Street—once wrote: "I cannot say that our dear foundress had a talent for education; she doated [sic] on children and invariably spoiled them . . ."[5] I am more inclined to think that what Clare Augustine saw was Catherine's immense love for her students, her zeal for their development, her humility and purity of heart before them, and her absolute confidence in God's ultimate care of them. In a harsh and destitute age, Catherine was never above a little tenderness and doting.

She addresses the content of Mercy education in the next three articles in the chapter "Of the Schools." In each case, she alters the texts in the PR in ways true to her own spirit. Article 2 begins:

> Before the Sisters enter School they shall raise their hearts to God and to the Queen of Heaven, recommending themselves and the children to their care and protection. (2.2)

Catherine's alteration of this sentence as it appears in the PR (2.3) is noteworthy. The Sisters are to pray to God and to Mary, the model of faith and service, *before* they enter school, not *when* they enter; the kind of prayer Catherine advocated could be done only privately, in anticipation of the attitudes and practice to which the example of Jesus Christ calls and with deep remembrance of his presence in those about to be served. She does not say, as did the PR, that the Sisters are to "salute with all reverence interiorly the Guardian Angels of the children" or recommend "themselves, and the dear little ones to [the Angels'] care and protection." Her own kindly Protestant associations, over the whole course of her adult life, would have made her reluctant to be too elaborate about Guardian Angels.

In this paragraph, Catherine uses the verb *inspire,* as in the PR: "They shall endeavour to inspire [their students] with a sincere Devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ, to His Real Presence in the Most Holy Sacrament, [and] to the Immaculate Mother of God . . ." (2.2). In this sentence are three key elements of her faith and catechesis: the Death and Resurrection of Christ; the Eucharist; and the special discipleship of Mary of Nazareth. To these three themes she will devote two entire chapters later in the Rule.

To Mercy educators of the twenty-first century, this paragraph says a number of enduring things: about the primacy of *Christian religious education* in our ministry; about what ought to be the genuinely *inspiring*—that is, the life-sustaining, and life-influ-

encing—character of the religious education we offer our students; and about three *essential theological emphases* in any Mercy institution that hopes to be faithful to the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy: namely, a realization of what the death and resurrection of Jesus means for those we serve and for their brothers and sisters in this world; an appreciation of what the Eucharist can be for them and their friends; and an understanding of what Christian faith and hope really are, as seen in the life of Mary of Nazareth. Catherine McAuley would, of course, rejoice in modern biblical scholarship and modern theology, which reveal the even greater richness of these crucial mysteries.

Article 3 of this chapter on the Schools addresses the teaching of prayer. Here Catherine writes:

> The Sisters shall teach the children to offer their hearts to God when they awake in the morning . . . [and] return thanks for all His favors . . . They shall instruct them how to direct all their thoughts, words, and actions to God's glory, implore His grace to know and love Him, and to fulfill His Commandments, how to examine their conscience, and to honor and respect Parents and Superiors. (2.3)

Catherine's simplicity in her treatment of prayer leads to a number of alterations in the PR text. For example, she does not say: "teach the children to offer themselves up to God from the first use of Reason," as in the PR (1.3). As the adoptive mother of at least nine children before she ever thought of founding a religious Congregation, her understanding of human development was much more subtle, and her theological expressions were always humanly sensible. She simply wishes us to teach others how to pray in light of God's present and future gifts to them. Catherine does not propose teaching students to examine their consciences "every night," as does the PR, but simply *how* to do so—implying that, whether young or old, they will, on their own, discover when such examination is needed.

What is most important about this article on teaching others how to pray is the fact that Catherine includes it in her Rule as one of only three articles on the content of Mercy education, thus giving to *instruction in prayer* a priority that she does not give to other topics.

In Article 4, she writes, in part:

> They shall teach them the method of assisting devoutly at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, how to prepare for Confession, and be ever attentive to dispose them for the Sacrament of Confirmation, and for Holy Communion . . . The Angelus and Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity being said, general instructions shall be given by an appointed Sister for about half an hour, adapted to their state and capacity and rendered practically useful by explanation. (2.4)

Three aspects of this article are significant: first, Catherine asks the Sisters to teach "the method of assisting devoutly at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass," a detail entirely missing from the PR (1.4); she changes the PR reference about disposing the children for their "first Communion" to their recurring need to dispose themselves for "Holy Communion"; and finally she says that the instruction given should be "adapted to their state and capacity and rendered practically useful by explanation" (2.4).

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Catherine concludes her chapter, "Of the Schools," with a final paragraph that is entirely her own composition. She writes:

> The Sisters shall feel convinced that no work of charity can be more productive of good to society, or more conducive to the happiness of the poor than the careful instruction of women, since whatever be the station they are destined to fill, their example and advice will always possess influence, and wherever a religious woman presides, peace and good order are generally to be found. (2.5)

Here, "religious woman" refers, not to a woman with religious vows, but to any woman (and by extension any man) who has been so empowered by "careful," that is, by mature and life-giving, religious instruction that her or his influence is "productive of good to society" and "conducive to the

happiness of the Poor." Where such a person presides "peace and good order are generally to be found." Like other articles in the chapter "Of the Schools," this paragraph is a great challenge to the work of Mercy education. It calls for continual re-imagining of the scope and outreach of this work of mercy.

In Ireland in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, much of the Roman Catholic population generally suffered the illiteracy, deep ignorance, poverty, and demoralization that were the long-lasting, apartheid-like effects of the penal laws against Catholics enacted by England between 1695 and 1720. The Anglo-Irish statesman Edmund Burke (1729–1797) once called the penal laws, "a system of wise and elaborate contrivance, as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."[6] The "relief acts" between 1778 and 1829 repealed the various penal laws, but by then enduring damage had already been done to the Irish Catholic population.

In Carlow, Cork, and Naas, Catherine encouraged the establishment of pension (i.e., tuition) schools for girls whose parents could afford to pay for their daughters' education, poor girls being already well served by the Presentation Sisters in Carlow and Cork.

It was into such a world, with all its neglect of poor children and poor families, that Catherine McAuley deliberately took up the work of instructing poor girls and sheltering and training homeless girls and women—first in Dublin and later in other cities in Ireland and England.

She created a school for poor girls and an employment training shelter for homeless women at Baggot Street. Of the education of the women in the House of Mercy she wrote: they shall "be instructed in the principal mysteries of Religion," and prepared "to approach the Holy Sacraments." She noted further that "Suitable employment shall be sought for and great care taken to place them in situations for which they are adapted," since "Many leave their situations not so much for want of merit as incapacity to fulfill the duties they unwisely engaged in."[7] She also built a commercial laundry where the women could train for employment other than household service.

Catherine urged Mercy poor schools to affiliate with the Board of National Education. Such affiliation required teacher certification, school inspections, and observance of the board's regulations, but it also made the schools eligible for national grants. In her lifetime, the poor schools in Dublin, Limerick, and Tullamore all achieved this affiliation.

In Carlow, Cork, and Naas, Catherine encouraged the establishment of pension (i.e., tuition) schools for girls whose parents could afford to pay for their daughters' education, poor girls being already well served by the Presentation Sisters in Carlow and Cork. The Carlow pension school opened in May 1839, and the Carlow Annals for that year reports: "Although properly speaking the education of the middle class is not a feature of our Institute, yet our venerated Foundress gave her fullest sanction to its being undertaken by this Community."[8] Writing to the superior in Cork in October 1839, Catherine said:

> The pension school in Carlow is making great progress. You must get their regulations—it is quite simple . . . The girls are obliged to acquire a perfect knowledge of the lessons at home—so that to hear the classes is all—one the French class, another Grammar & Geography, [and] so on. They have already commenced at Naas and have 18 pupils—also a poor school.[9]

Some early Sisters of Mercy, notably the superiors in Kinsale, Limerick, New York, San Francisco, and St. Louis, were strenuously opposed to Mercy pension schools, as incompatible with the emphasis on poor students in the Rule. Mary Francis Bridgeman of Kinsale argued this view in the *Guide for the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy*, which she drafted and which was approved by a gathering of *some* Mercy superiors in Limerick in 1864 and published in 1866.

However, the *Customs and Minor Regulations of the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy, in . . . Baggot Street, and its Branch Houses*, published in Dublin in 1869—apparently the long-delayed result of a much earlier meeting planned for superiors in Dublin in the late 1840s—states that:

> Our Venerated Foundress, in naming the Works of Mercy peculiar to the Congregation did not in any way exclude such other good works as circumstances in various places might make desirable . . .
>
> . . . Sisters of Mercy . . . are dedicated to the exercise of the Works of Mercy, and should not, *on principle*, exclude any one of them, unless . . . it practically interferes with those characteristic of the Congregation.[10]

Over time and in various places, as "circumstances" made desirable, evolved not only tuition schools, including our present Mercy colleges and universities, but also schools for boys, infant schools, coeducational schools, and educational programs for adults. In England, the convents in both Birmingham and Bermondsey, London, developed some of these Mercy endeavors very early in their histories, while maintaining their commitment to the instruction of poor girls and women.

II. But how did Catherine McAuley think Mercy education occurs? And what in her view was the overriding purpose of Mercy education? Catherine's response to the first question involves a "method" that requires a lifetime of human effort, as well as God's help. The method is *good example*—that is, a Mercy educator's own evident practice of what she or he teaches.

Throughout her Rule, her letters, and her other writings, Catherine repeatedly urges the necessity of our being an *example* of what we propose to teach. Her most fully developed statement on this topic occurs at the end of her handwritten essay on the "Spirit of the Institute." This essay is her much abbreviated and frequently altered transcription of a treatise in Alonso Rodriguez's work, *The Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection*, first published in Spain in the early seventeenth century.

In her essay, Catherine makes Rodriguez's thoughts and convictions her own, often omitting passages, altering words, and inserting phrases and sentences that are her own composition. In her two paragraphs on the benefit and necessity of giving good example, she says:

> I shall now speak of the most effectual means of rendering ourselves useful to our neighbour . . . The first means which the saints have recommended to render us most useful to others is to give good example and to live in sanctity. Saint Ignatius says . . . "the good example which we give by leading a most holy and Christian life has the greatest power over the minds of others . . . It was for this reason that our Blessed Saviour marked the way to Heaven by His example. "Jesus Christ," says Saint Luke, "began to do and to teach" (Act. 1.1), thus signifying to us that we should do first what we would induce others to do . . . the way to virtue and to piety is shorter by example than by precept. Saint Bernard speaking on this matter says, "Example is very efficacious and a very proper lesson to persuade because it proves that what it teaches is practicable and this is what has most influence on all."
>
> "Our weakness is so great," says Saint Augustine, "that we can hardly be moved to do what is right, except we see others do it . . ."[11]

The challenge these words present to Mercy educators may not have fully dawned upon us. We are to *be* and *do* what we *teach*. If we wish to teach mercifulness, we must speak and act mercifully towards others.

The challenge these words present to Mercy educators may not have fully dawned upon us. We are to *be* and *do* what we *teach*. If we wish to teach mercifulness, we must speak and act mercifully towards others. If we wish to teach forgiveness, we must forgive others and ask for their forgiveness. If we wish to teach that the Eucharist is Christ's life-nourishing, joyous gift to the whole community, the Eucharist must be evidently nourishing and joyous in our own lives and institutions. If we wish to teach others to serve and respect those who are economically poor, we must first serve and respect them ourselves. This is the primary principle and method of Mercy education as Catherine McAuley conceived and practiced it.

In Catherine's view, and in the view of the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament writers, the overriding purpose of every educational endeavor which seeks to be faithful to the revelation of God, is *consolation*; yes, consolation. The primary purpose of all teaching that is born of God, the Supreme Educator, is to console, to comfort. Thus, for Catherine, the purpose of all Mercy education is not primarily to develop students' intellectual skills, or to teach them information and formulas—however necessary and valuable such learning may be in their lives—but to comfort, encourage, and console them in the most thorough and lasting way possible. To assure them that the God of all Consolation has already visited them and uplifted them; that God has embraced and loved them forever; that the Spirit of God is always with them, encouraging, consoling, and helping in whatever grief, affliction, or weakness they may now or one day experience.

The primary purpose of all teaching that is born of God, the Supreme Educator, is to console, to comfort.

Catherine McAuley believed that the deepest ignorance of those we instruct is spiritual: their lack of awareness of the reality of God's Merciful Consolation. Her understanding of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ lay behind her understanding and practice of mercy; it urged her, in her own words, "to instruct and *comfort* the sick and dying poor" (Rule 3.1), to give herself "to the instruction and *consolation* of those who required . . . assistance."[12] She also wished to console and encourage Mercy teachers themselves, so she wrote:

> We ought then have great confidence in God in the discharge of all these offices of mercy, spiritual and corporal—which constitute the business of our lives, and assure ourselves that God will particularly concur with us to render them efficacious as by His infinite mercy we daily experience.[13]

III. In the discussion paper titled "Mercy Higher Education: Culture and Characteristics," prepared as a draft for the Conference in Winter 2004, we read the following:

> While each Mercy institution of higher education has its own mission statement and articulated core values, four characteristics unmistakably define the formative culture of every Mercy campus:
>
> [1] Regard for the dignity of the person
> [2] Academic excellence and life-long learning
> [3] Education of the whole person: body, mind, and spirit
> [4] Through action and education, promotion of compassion and justice towards those with less, especially women and children[14]

The Executive Summary of the paper calls these four characteristics "the first attempt to name those qualities which should be the hallmarks of Mercy higher education," and claims that "Anchored in these four characteristics, the culture of a Mercy college or university endeavors to witness its Catholic identity and to honor its Mercy heritage."[15]

With some modification, I accept these four characteristics. However, in light of the founding views of Catherine McAuley that I have discussed, and allowing for some slight extension of her views in accord with evolving theological, ecumenical, and interfaith understandings as well as present economic and social circumstances, I would like to suggest the addition of three more characteristics, or at least the addition of more explicit language to the four characteristics already listed.

A fifth characteristic of Mercy higher education I would propose is the following:

> [5] Religious learning and spiritual development, through frequent courses in Christian theology and the Scriptures, courses in other religions, Catholic liturgical celebrations, and other religious events

I do not believe that the wording, "education of the whole person: body, mind, and spirit," is adequate to represent this central element in the Mercy heritage coming to us from Catherine McAuley. While Catherine herself would, I believe, have surely embraced the ecumenical and interfaith respect, aspirations, and understandings of the present time, she would not wish such desirable collaboration and co-learning to silence or diminish a courteous emphasis on and provision for explicitly Christian and,

where necessary, Catholic religious education and experience. Such emphasis was the primary, though not the only, characteristic of her practice of the works of mercy, including the work of education.

There is a gracious way for a Mercy college or university both to respect whatever interdenominational and interfaith profile its students, faculty, and staff may have *and* to provide through its curricula and extracurricular programs explicit opportunities for sharing its heritage of Christian-Catholic learnings and practices, including the sacraments. Excellent religion courses—Christian theology courses as well as courses in, for example, Islam, Jewish theology, and philosophy of religion—would seem to be a necessary hallmark of a Mercy institution, as would frequent opportunities for well-celebrated liturgies, paraliturgies, spiritual retreats, and other Christian events and experiences. If one reads the chapter "Of the Schools" in Catherine's Rule with some depth of analysis, one can see that Christian religious education, including instruction in the major Christian mysteries and sacraments, and care to promote experiences of Christian prayer were very important emphases in the educational practices she wished to see in Mercy schools.

A sixth characteristic I would propose for Mercy higher education is an explicit focus on God's Mercy and our call to mercifulness, as, for instance, in the following wording:

[6] Education in and a commitment to mercifulness, as revealed in the Mercy of God made manifest in Jesus Christ

It does not seem possible to me that a college or university that is sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and wishes to consider itself "of Mercy" could so regard itself without aiming to be explicitly attentive to mercifulness in all the myriad ways an institution of higher learning might do so. Mercifulness can be defined as a set of qualities and actions: forgiveness, gentleness, sensitivity, empathy towards distress, charity of mind and heart, sympathy, self-sacrifice for the sake of another's need, loving kindness, humility—all the ways the charity of God expresses itself for our sakes. Catherine McAuley frequently said:

> The Charity of God would not avail us, if His Mercy did not come to our assistance.[16]

and

> The mercy of God comes to our assistance and renders practical His charity in our regard; Mercy not only bestows benefits, but receives and pardons again and again, even the ungrateful; how kind and charitable and merciful, then, ought not Sisters of Mercy to be.[17]

In a Mercy-sponsored institution, this demanding responsibility surely extends to all our coworkers and partners in ministry!

Merciful behavior does not mean that an institution has to lower its academic or grading standards, its dorm rules, or its employee expectations or requirements.

Merciful behavior does not mean that an institution has to lower its academic or grading standards, its dorm rules, or its employee expectations or requirements. Rather, what is involved is the manner of thinking and acting at all levels, the atmosphere of collegial life, the tenor of the campus, the mutual relations, the willingness to listen to and experience the "other side" of situations—the language, the look in the eyes, the presence of compassion. Education in and an explicit commitment to mercifulness will suffuse both the real and the perceived character of the whole place, from the maintenance workers and history professors to the president. Such attention to the Mercy of God and to human mercifulness will even influence, where appropriate, the curricula, the content of courses, and, again where appropriate, their methods and objectives. Such a characteristic of a Mercy college or university will give concrete reality to the vague abstract words we so easily use about ourselves: "Mercy values," "Mercy heritage," "the tradition of Mercy."

My final recommendation is the addition of a seventh characteristic—a much more difficult characteristic than all the rest. An educational institution cannot be faithful to the essential Mercy values and practices coming from Catherine McAuley

without seriously attempting to be faithful to her primary pedagogical principle and method: her belief that "the first means . . . to render us most useful to others" is "to give good example."[18]

Here the proverbial rubber will really hit the road. For example, to aspire to be a culture where there is "regard for the dignity of the person" will make enormous personal and professional demands on each teacher's and administrator's conduct and speech, if this characteristic is to be more than simply boilerplate words in the college or university's mission statement or catalog. And, to be a place of "academic excellence and lifelong learning," it will not be enough to lecture students about this goal; they will need to see in their teachers and the staff, the same ardent and personal pursuit of "academic excellence and lifelong learning."

In a letter to Frances Warde, Catherine once gave the following advice:

> Sister Mary Teresa has delighted me telling of the instructions you give—shew them in your actions as much as you can . . . and your Institution will outdo us all.[19]

Of her own personal efforts to practice what she preached, Catherine once wrote: "she teaches me by her example what genuine meekness and humility are. The adage—'never too old to learn'—is a great comfort to me."[20] If students do not see evidences of the characteristics of a Mercy education in their teachers' example, as well as in their words, such characteristics will be only half affirmed, if at all. The personnel of a true Mercy educational institution will "never be too old" to learn to teach "by example more than by precept . . . and chiefly by example."

So, to the set of characteristics of a Mercy college or university, I would add the following:

[7] The strenuous effort to give good example, by modeling, personally and corporately, all the values it seeks to promote through its educational and other endeavors

It is now morning in the world of Mercy higher education. It is time to brush away the night's ashes and expose more clearly the live coals that have long sustained the life-giving fires of Mercy colleges and universities. These coals are the essential characteristics of a true Mercy education, the specific and enduring educational values of Catherine McAuley embedded in general references to the "Mercy tradition" and the "Mercy heritage." I can only wish you profound fidelity and creativity in this demanding endeavor. May you succeed with God's and Catherine's help and inspiration. Thank you.

Notes

1 Joan Chittister, O.S.B., *The Fire in these Ashes* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1995), 36.
2 Mary C. Sullivan, R.S.M., *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy.* (Dublin and Notre Dame: Four Courts Press and the University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 49.
3 Ibid., 163.
4 McAuley, Catherine. "Rule and Constitutions of the Religious Sisters of Mercy" [her handwritten manuscript approved and signed by Daniel Murray on January 23, 1837], in Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy* pp. 295–328. References to the Rule are cited by chapter and paragraph, separated by a period.
5 "Memoir," in Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley,* 200.
6 Quoted in Giovanni Costigan, *A History of Modern Ireland* (New York: Pegasus, 1969), 91.
7 Rule 4.1, 2, and 3, in Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley,* 299–300.
8 Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley,* 228.
9 Mary C. Sullivan, R.S.M., ed., *The Correspondence of Catherine McAuley, 1818–1841* (Dublin and Washington, D.C.: Four Courts Press and The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 209.
10 Customs 101–102 in *Customs and Minor Regulations of The Religious Called Sisters of Mercy, in the Parent House, Baggot Street, and its Branch Houses* (Dublin: J. M. O'Toole and Son, 1869).
11 Sullivan, ed., *Correspondence,* 463.
12 "Spirit of the Institute," in Sullivan, ed., *Correspondence* , 460.
13 Ibid., 462.
14 "Mercy Higher Education: Culture and Characteristics." Discussion Paper. Winter 2004 Draft. Chicago: Conference for Mercy Higher Education, 2004, p. 2.
15 Ibid., 2.
16 Bermondsey Annals, in Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley,* 117.
17 Limerick Manuscript, in Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley,* 181.
18 "Spirit of the Institute," in Sullivan, ed., *Correspondence,* 463.
19 Sullivan, ed., *Correspondence,* 116.
20 Ibid., 105.

The Mercy University of New Jersey
Journey to Excellence

Rosemary E. Jeffries, R.S.M., Ph.D., Patricia E. Koch, Esq., Ruth Ann Burns, and Evelyn Quinn

Presenting the story of Georgian Court, the Mercy University of New Jersey, at this conference of Mercy Higher Education was a great joy and privilege. Yet, presenting this very tangible example of a college becoming a university following the eloquent and inspiring presentations of Margaret Farley and Mary Sullivan challenged me to consider how the transformation of Georgian Court exemplified in some way the lofty characteristics of Mercy higher education they outlined. The following text highlights the presentation and integrates key conference learnings.

Visioning and planning at Georgian Court occurred in a spectacular and beautiful campus setting. Beauty surrounds and blesses the campus community. As Margaret Farley suggests, Georgian Court University has this special gift of "access to the wisdom embedded in creation." Our environment is equally enhanced by each member of the community working together to provide an atmosphere where students can prepare to meet the challenge suggested by Margaret, "to not only encounter culture successfully, but more importantly to influence the culture."

The support of a visual PowerPoint for the presentation of the Georgian Court Story helped to illustrate the "wisdom available in creation" and can be easily accessed on our Web site (www.georgian.edu) through a virtual tour. Including three key partners from the campus community to present this story offered a clear example of the collaborative effort that transforming an environment requires. I was joined by Patricia E. Koch, Esq., chair of the GCU board of trustees; Ruth Ann Burns, vice president for marketing and external affairs; and Evelyn Quinn, associate provost for academic development and student life. I excerpt from their contributions to this presentation.

I began the presentation with this introduction:

The story of Georgian Court began in 1908, when it was a liberal arts college for women, and continues through its many transformations, including becoming a university in 2003. I often say that we are in the business of transformation—that is, the business of transforming lives. This is not a story of merely moving campuses, building new structures, and growing academic programs, but a story of being in the business of transformation for mercy.

Georgian Court, first known as Mount Saint Mary College, was accustomed to transformation from the beginning. The college moved and was renamed before celebrating its silver anniversary. Throughout the ninety-eight-year history, programs and buildings were added to meet the needs of new generations of women and eventually men in evening and graduate education.

In 2001, as the eighth president of Georgian Court, I inherited an institution ready for re-visioning itself once again. It was an institution with a broad program of educational offerings at both the bachelor's and master's

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levels, and it was an institution with enormous potential.

We focus this presentation on the past five years, but our story is rooted in the past ninety-eight years of activity, or as Catherine McAuley might have said, "being a compass that goes round its circle without stirring from its center."

With the center being God, rooted in our Mercy mission and Mercy core values, we set about visioning for the future. My inauguration ceremonies used the theme "Walking the Path Together," and were designed as a celebration of the Mercy core values of respect, compassion, justice, integrity, and service. That set the stage for the process of visioning and planning. I invited the whole Georgian Court community to envision with me: "Where will Georgian Court be in the next five years?"

Here is the vision statement we boldly proclaimed in that first year:

> *Georgian Court University is a Mercy university distinguished by a special concern for women. We are committed to academic excellence and Mercy core values. We educate and empower students to succeed, serve, and lead in a diverse local and global community.*

That three-sentence vision has been the work of the past four years. It energized our Board of Trustees and created the template for the campus to create a strategic plan to make the vision a reality. The visioning and planning set the board, faculty, staff, students, and administration on the path together.

My administration is blessed with a very active and committed board that made the fast pace of change possible. Pat Koch, our board chair, will provide some insight to the critical role of the board in propelling the visioning and planning.

Part I
Highlights of Pat Koch's Remarks

The board embraced the vision set forth by the administration and, in fact, adjusted the mission to more boldly state the importance of the Mercy core values and the dynamic community environment as the key to transforming Georgian Court. We embraced our role of supporting the administration while at the same time working with them to improve the management and function of the college as it made plans to become a university.

We embarked on a plan to revitalize the campus with a new residence for the Sisters of Mercy, a new residence for students, a new chapel, a new science wing, and a renovating the court café for commuting students. Additionally, there were many upgrades to the existing campus, for a total investment of $28 million accomplished by some borrowing, some gifting, and creative use of surplus from operations. All of this planning, renovating, and building really is focused on creating an institution that moves gracefully into the twenty-first century while being centered on all that is the beauty of Georgian Court, a Mercy university.

While that activity of revitalization, planning, and visioning went on, we quickly recognized the need for resources and engaged the development counsel to help us create a Campaign for Georgian Court. The institution had not raised significant funds in the past, but the new vision clearly called for more aggressive attention to this.

Working together with the administration, our board worked for a full day in retreat, crafting the case and the strategy to attain our stretch goal of $10 million dollars. The buy-in by trustees to this goal, and the buy-in to the vision itself, makes us a board that really thinks with, acts with, and invests in the administration.

I am proud to report today that within about half the time allotted for raising our goal of $10 million, we have raised 78 percent so far and will easily achieve and exceed this goal. Our public launch was a highlight of our April board meeting.

We are proud to be part of Georgian Court University, and we are equally proud as board members to be part of the larger mission of the Sisters of Mercy. That is a blessing in all of our lives. For my own part, it was my trip to Baggot Street in 2002 that helped me understand what I was involved in through Georgian Court and, ultimately, in this wider Mercy mission. I recognized as I stood on the footsteps of Catherine's house, where the quote about the education of women was framed, that I was part of something much bigger, and that it had become an important part of my own spiritual journey.

It is all about partnering with each other as board members and as administration and

campus community. That is what is transforming Georgian Court and, I might add, transforming all of us privileged to be a part of this great university, my alma mater. It is very much in the business of transforming the lives of young folks who are students now and for students who will come in the future.

Part II
Highlights of Ruth Ann Burn's Remarks

When we first transitioned from a college to a university, we faced the challenge of low visibility, low brand recognition, and an outdated image of a "girl's finishing school." As Sister Rosemary would say, "We were the best-kept secret in New Jersey." In fact, some people thought we were located in Georgia, not Lakewood!

Of course, none of those issues were true anymore, but reality had not caught up with old, lingering perceptions.

Branding and image were new concepts to Georgian Court and, in fact, to higher education generally. Think of branding as the articulation of your university's unique qualities. What makes Georgian Court stand out in the crowded marketplace of New Jersey? What experience can we give students that no one else can?

Keys to effective branding are visual identity—you know it when you see it—think Disney, Starbucks, Nike. Positioning is your value statement for internal and external audiences, integration across all media, and internal coordination—getting total buy-in.

Higher education branding always begins with research. You are shifting from an institutional perspective to a marketplace perspective. Everyone must know the mission, vision, competition, and your unique qualities or "distinctives."

We used focus groups with key stakeholders and, simply put, we asked them, "What are our "distinctives"? What do we have that other higher education institutions don't have? What is the GCU value proposition?"

Here is what research told us about GCU "distinctives": To a person, the Mercy core values came up number one, followed by our small class size—a one to fourteen faculty/student ratio. Next was a caring faculty who deliver student-centered learning, and are interested in each individual student. Our safe and historic campus steeped in tradition, along with leadership in education and access and success for diverse students were also named.

Here is what research told us about GCU "distinctives": To a person, the Mercy core values came up number one.

Diversity as a strength is a major "distinctive" for the university. GCU educates students of color, students of all income levels, many first generation to attend college students, and nontraditional students.

Positioning ourselves as "The Mercy University of New Jersey," we developed a new logo and tagline. Using a traditional column, evoking the classic Georgian architecture of the campus, we added the tagline, "A tradition of excellence . . . a future of success." The tagline works on both an institutional level and a personal level for students.

We established our visual identity, changing the college colors to a bold gold and electric blue. We worked on visual distinctiveness, consistency in voice and graphics, and clarity of message points.

For example, in print ads for the School of Education, we said, "If you want to teach . . . why not learn from the best." This staked a claim to GCU's largest school and most developed brand. For open houses we used "Georgian Court can make a difference in your life, so you can make a difference in the world."

We redesigned our website, GCU's portal to the world. On the home page, we used student voices to explain why they chose our university. We also needed to make informed media buys based on the dominant media per category. Frequency is critical because research shows that it takes six to seven impressions to spark attention. It is the repetitive impressions in multiple mediums that change image and behavior over time.

The first place we started working was in enrollment marketing. We launched a total redesign of our enrollment materials, bringing them up to par with

the best national universities. In all we created thirty-nine individual pieces. The premier piece is the Women's College viewbook with the theme "Do you dare to dream? We do too."

The viewbook sets up the brand with a classic feel and a bold, upbeat look. Large, appealing images showcase the beauty of the campus while an uneven band of smaller images picks up the design element from the website. A rice paper wrap goes over the cover with the new logo and presents the institution as prestigious and different from the competition. Ghosted images of dramatic architecture are used in other pieces for dramatic effect.

The total image campaign continued with strategic billboards throughout the year, promoting the women's college, coeducational graduate and evening programs, and GCU at Woodbridge. We always used a female and male photo in the pictures to emphasize the coed evening and graduate divisions, and our coed offsite facilities.

We created New Jersey Transit king-size bus posters and train station platform posters. Up to thirty buses a day travel throughout the state, giving us the mobility of a moving billboard. We shrink-wrapped a bus that travels strategic routes in the region. We used train posters located along the Jersey shore line and the NJ Transit line moving from Princeton Junction to New York City, on which two million commuters travel daily.

We also started to use radio and cable television effectively to support our fall and spring open houses, announcing that we were New Jersey's newest university and only the second Catholic university in the state. Throughout the year, selected buys are made to keep the GCU name front and center.

We started to design all print ads in-house to keep the visual look consistent and to keep our message points sharp. We targeted ten Catholic newspapers in New Jersey and New York and also utilized church bulletins. And we developed a full-page editorial ad for the *U.S. News & World Report* fall issue ranking America's best colleges.

And as part of our branding campaign, all campus signage changed to the new look and feel. While we garnered a lot of awards for best-in-class marketing, our real achievement was research that showed that almost all focus group participants saw and responded positively to some component of our multimedia branding campaign. GCU is not in Georgia anymore!

It is clear from the first sentence that this is a women's college, and we are about women's leadership.

It is clear from the first sentence that this is a women's college, and we are about women's leadership. The viewbook addresses the three areas where Georgian Court women grow in stature and influence: personal, professional, and community/world.

Student/alum spreads put a face on Georgian Court and connect the tradition of the past with the students of the future. And the Mercy core values are woven into the school sections, each accompanied by a quote about the particular value. We called this phase of the campaign "putting a face on GCU."

Part III
Highlights of Evelyn Quinn's Remarks

Putting a face on Georgian Court made a difference to our place in the region among our competition, but it equally supported the internal visioning and planning taking place on the campus. Our students, faculty, and staff saw the enhanced images of Georgian Court University and worked in hundreds of ways to make the vision a reality in the everyday.

These are some of the steps of the visioning and planning process and highlights of some innovative changes to the curriculum and program.

The college community was inquisitive and somewhat skeptical of what might be happening at the visioning retreat. The dining hall was abuzz with questions, comments, theories, and concerns about what the visioning retreat might be, and how

would it affect each individual and the college as a whole. Having experienced the inauguration of our new president, Sister Rosemary, there was already energy and enthusiasm for what might come. The visioning retreat was identified as a symbol of change as we moved into the new century.

As the team returned to campus, strategies were developed to introduce the visioning statement at a community-wide event and present the next steps in "walking the path"—the original theme introduced by Sister Rosemary at her inauguration. A visioning task force was established to begin the conversation, engage the community, encourage persons from every constituent group to volunteer to be involved in one of the seven subcommittees to "map the vision," and make the words of the statement come to life.

Seventy-eight members of the community stepped forward to serve on the seven committees stemming from the vision statement: University Status, Academic Excellence, Community Engagement, Concern for Women, Mercy Core Values, Student Empowerment—Leadership and Success, and Global Character.

Between November 2001 and April 2002, committees, discussion groups, and forums met at breakfast, lunch, and dinner and every time in between in the dining hall and all over campus. There was not a corner of the campus that did not experience the excitement, the struggle, and the euphoria of dreaming of all the possibilities for the future of Georgian Court College. From those collective dreams came a fairly well integrated strategic plan to make the future of Georgian Court College the reality of Georgian Court University.

By the time the strategic plan was developed and the first draft finalized, more than three hundred community members, including students, faculty, all levels of staff and administration, and the board of trustees, had in some way participated and/or contributed to the creation of the plan. That level of involvement also enhanced the sense of ownership and investment in making sure the plan would succeed.

The result of the intensive planning and collaboration can be seen in the vibrant and growing community of Georgian Court University today. For example, in building the bridge between academic and student life, several signature programs were initiated and are growing in number and stature within the community.

Given our special concern for women, we realized the NSSE results pointed to our need to focus on the total woman, providing learning opportunities starting in the classroom and extending into the local and global community. Living-learning communities were established one a year over the last three years. Resident and commuter students join together in three distinct communities: the International Cultures Community, the Gateway to the Arts Community, and the Outdoor Adventures Community. Each community is mentored by a full-time faculty member and a graduate assistant. Through these communities, students are immersed in a variety of cultural activities and make connections between what they are learning in the classroom and what they are experiencing in the local and global community.

Our vision suggested that our students should be leaders. We set a goal to develop a special program for women's leadership. The Women in Leadership Development (WILD) program started with nineteen students in the pilot program and now includes almost 150 women. These students attend intensive retreats, seminars, and workshops to explore the meaning of being an ethical woman leader. Our women are networked with women of influence first in our regional area

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We at Georgian Court University know we are "still going round the circle without stirring from the center."

and then extending to the global community. Whether it is having tea with Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, or a fireside chat with Lesa Lardieri-Wright, vice president of Pfizer Corporation and a GCU graduate, or traveling to the Philippines for a human rights conference or working with students in Croatia to begin a student leadership exchange, the WILD program challenges students to embrace the challenges of being a professional woman in a global society.

As we educate women to take their place in the global community, we know our students have not traveled extensively and in many cases have not left New Jersey. We invite all of our first-year students in the Women's College to travel to Spain with the First-Year Experience faculty during spring break. While this is certainly a well-planned educational experience, its most important effects are to entice the students to explore the world, feel comfortable taking the risk of leaving the comforts of home, and develop an appreciation for diversity and the richness of cultures other than their own.

Service was another key element of our vision statement. Many students volunteer after their Spain experience to be a part of other international opportunities, such as the Honduras Mission, which brings fresh water to a remote village, or the Border Experience in Mexico. Service learning is now the force that is uniting service projects and building the critical components of learning, reflection, and analysis. Georgian Court is the first private institution in New Jersey to join the NJ Compact, a consortium of higher education institutions dedicated to developing a network of service learning supports, best practices, and projects to focus efforts statewide.

The academic program that is fundamental to all learning has been enhanced by increased emphasis on faculty/student research and most recently through the development of a revised general education curriculum and requirements for graduation. The Presidential Commission on General Education just completed a major transition from a cluster system of education to a core/distribution system that embraces the Catholic intellectual tradition and the global perspective. This new configuration integrates experiential learning in the form of internships, international experiences, and service learning and highlights student/faculty research.

Little did we all know that when Sister Rosemary invited us to "walk the path," that we would really engage in a marathon. Perhaps the most surprising dimension of this most recent transformation is that for all that we have accomplished, for all we have put in motion, we are all recognizing this is just the beginning. We know the best is yet to come.

Conclusion

I believe our challenge in preparing to celebrate one hundred years in 2008 is to be ever true to our heritage, paying respect and praise to it, yet not resting on our accomplishments and being tempted to believe we have arrived. We at Georgian Court University know we are "still going round the circle without stirring from the center." On the twenty-fourth of each month, in preparation for our centennial, we ask folks to take ten to twenty minutes of quiet prayer/time reflecting on the gifts we bring to and receive from our Mercy mission. We embrace Mary Sullivan's challenge to focus on the spiritual. I invite everyone to pray with us as we prepare for this milestone in the history of Mercy higher education.

Holding on to the center while going around the circle of change is what makes Georgian Court and all of our Mercy institutions of higher education capable of transformation and, more importantly, capable of providing an atmosphere for students to engage in personal transformation by equipping them with the skills to transform our communities, our workplaces, and ultimately our world to be places of justice and mercy.

Women of Duty and Daring
Hildegard of Bingen and Catherine McAuley

Avis Clendenen, D.Min., Ph.D.

Transformational persons are those who are able to realize the inherent self to the maximum extent possible and in turn influence others to do the same. Their lives witness an extraordinary degree of uniqueness, imagination, and individuality[1] Twelfth-century German Benedictine Abbess Hildegard of Bingen and nineteenth-century Irish Catherine McAuley are two such transformational leaders. This article explores intriguing episodes of duty and daring in each of their lives that reveal qualities of leadership so needed then *and* now.

Portrait of Twelfth-Century Hildegard of Bingen

In 1098, Hildegard was born into an epoch of spiritual fervor amid the growing corruption of a church bent on the Crusades, which led "poor and frail" women, like Hildegard, to rise up and challenge the clergy to reform. Hildegard wrote prolifically between the ages of forty-two to eighty-one. In addition to two major works on medicine and natural science, Hildegard completed a trilogy of theological works: the multimedia illuminated manuscript for which she is most famous, *Scivias* (abbreviated from the Latin for *Know the Ways of the Lord*), *The Book of Life's Merits,* and *The Book of Divine Works*. She composed seventy-seven liturgical songs and recorded them in the *Symphonia: The Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations*. Fifty of her homilies and more than 300 letters from her active correspondence remain extant.

Historian Gerda Lerner says, "The life of Hildegard of Bingen exemplifies the breakthrough of a female genius who managed to create an entirely new role for herself and other women without ostensibly violating the patriarchal confines within which she functioned."[2] Hildegard of Bingen thrived in an era on the cusp, a time of political and religious tumult not so vastly different from our own. "Her sheer force of will," Newman says, "combined with a dazzling array of spiritual and intellectual gifts, a courage hardened by decades of struggle, and a prophetic persona, which she displayed in season and out, made her a formidable opponent; and she did not take defeat easily."[3] Such could equally be said of nineteenth century Catherine McAuley.

Portrait of Nineteenth-Century Catherine McAuley

The life and vision of Catherine McAuley, nearly six centuries after Hildegard, provides another deep story of a woman whose spiritual and intellectual gifts, courage hardened by struggle, and a prophetic persona made her a formidable opponent; and, like Hildegard, Catherine did not take defeat easily. From her childhood to her middle years, she knew what it was like to be forced to the edges of her culture and to experience the prejudice with being Irish *and* Catholic in an age of intolerance.[4]

Catherine's impetus to make some lasting efforts finds its roots in her own lived experience of facing hardship with faith and courage. Catherine

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often reflected upon adversity as key to her theology of the Cross—the central transformational symbol of Christianity. Catherine experienced many losses over a lifetime beginning with her father's death when she was five, their family's fall into poverty, and her mother's death in 1798 when Catherine was twenty. She buried her sister Mary, mother of five children, in 1827. She cared for her sister's children and outlived some of her beloved nieces and nephews. Driven by a deep faith, a pragmatic sense of Christian duty, and a depth of human compassion, when, in 1827, Catherine inherited the fortune of a couple she had lived with for twenty years, she built the first House of Mercy. Catherine's selection of a site on Baggot Street in one of the wealthiest and most exclusive sections of Dublin flaunted the as yet unrevoked late seventeenth-century Penal Code, which prohibited the erection of a "Catholic" building on a main thoroughfare of Irish cities and towns.

During the last seven months of her novitiate, a very strict mistress of novices made the duties of the time quite burdensome for Catherine. One can imagine how difficult the duty of months of enclosure and silence must have been for a mature woman of such burning vision and apostolic zeal.

This proved to be the first step toward the foundation, in 1831, of the Sisters of Mercy, many of whom would die from the cholera and typhus that plagued Ireland in the early years of the foundation. In a letter to Frances Xavier Warde on November 9, 1840 following the death of two young novices Catherine says, "I suppose all will go on well to shew us that what we think a drawback will be followed by greater progress. If they should have a new foundation—it will not be without the cross."[5] Those animated by her charism today ought to be mindful that her mission was founded as much on the claims of Calvary as the comfortable cup of tea.[6]

Catherine's Decision for George's Hill

Catherine McAuley was in her forties when she experienced a defining moment in realizing a vision. The novelty of an intentional community of lay unenclosed women without religious vows and enclosure brought such negative attention that "the criticism threatened to discourage young women from joining Catherine's endeavors and thus to undermine the very stability of the works of mercy to which she was committed, including visitation of the sick poor in their homes and hospitals."[7] Catherine began "a long deliberation" of how to proceed. On September 8, 1830, Catherine McAuley, Anna Marie Doyle, and Elizabeth Harley entered the Presentation Sisters convent on George's Hill to serve the canonically required novitiate year prior to professing religious vows on December 12, 1831 as the first Sisters of Mercy.[8] The duty of these fifteen months away from Baggot Street was a painful challenge for the then fifty-two-year-old Miss McAuley. She spent these months of confinement surrounded by novices more than thirty years her junior.

During the last seven months of her novitiate, a very strict mistress of novices made the duties of the time quite burdensome for Catherine. A letter from Mary Clare Moore to Mary Clare Augustine Moore recounts the time: [Catherine] "often said it was so hard a struggle for her to remain [at Georges Hill] on account of meeting there many things repugnant to her feelings that had she not the establishment of the Institute most deeply at heart she would (that very evening) have sent for a coach to take her back to Baggot Street."[9] This is a primary example of Catherine's sense of duty reshaping her earlier inclinations of the daring of an "unenclosed" religious congregation. One can imagine how difficult the duty of months of enclosure and silence must have been for a mature woman of such burning vision and apostolic zeal.

Centuries earlier, Hildegard had a different difficult experience but one that produced similar daring results.

Hildegard's Self-Awakening

Following the custom of noble families, Hildegard's parents tithed their tenth child, Hildegard, as a tribute to the Lord when she was eight years old. Hildegard professed her religious vows as a Benedictine nun at the age of fifteen or sixteen. During these formative years, Hildegard watched as the original seventh-century Disibodenberg site was reconstructed into a small twelfth-century medieval city. It is interesting to speculate that Hildegard's own desire to found an independent monastery, which she eventually did, found roots in a fertile mind fueled by observing the activity surrounding her. It is as if the activity of building going on around her imprinted in her young imagination the design of her own future as a spiritual architect.

An unusual child, Hildegard confided in her mentor Jutta, "When I was three years old, I saw an immense light that shook my soul; but, because of my youth, I could not externalize it."[10] This light within her soul she would eventually name the *umbra viventis lucis*: a spiritual inseeing and reflection of The Living Light, happening day or night, in full consciousness, and in multicolor brilliance accompanied by a "hearing in the soul." Hildegard remained silent with respect to the theological content of her visionary life. This imposed silence and its consequent physical debilitation enfolded itself in Hildegard's daily existence. In 1136, when Hildegard was elected abbess, she entered a role that brought her a new scope of authority. It was not uncommon for the abbess to be the magistrate over dual monasteries of both monks and nuns. The authority of medieval abbesses included the power to hold councils of other abbesses and to leave the enclosure in order to be in dialogue with other abbeys. The abbess held spiritual power to bless, proclaim the gospel, instruct, lead Eucharistic processions, and hear the confessions of her nuns. Such powers alive in Hildegard's time were a century later forbidden and never returned to the domain of female religious leadership again, even to the present day.[11]

At the age of forty-three, Hildegard finally broke silence on the content of her inner visions. She was "instructed" by the Living Light "to put her hand to writing" and "release the power and mystery of hidden and marvelous visions." In her early forties, Hildegard took the first step—she began to place her inheritance at the disposal of her talents for the next thirty-eight years of writing and public speaking. To have her work legitimated by the church, a commission was sent to Disibodenberg to examine the partially completed *Scivias*. When completed, the *Scivias* was an illuminated manuscript of twenty-six visions with theological commentary addressing an array of Christian doctrine. The examiners took their findings to the Synod of Trier where the well-respected Bernard of Clairvaux read portions of the *Scivias* aloud to the assembled bishops. Bernard urged the pope "not to allow such a brilliant light to be covered by silence but rather to confirm this charism through his authority."[12] Pope Eugenius III gave Hildegard apostolic license to continue and "commanded" her to complete her "divinely inspired" work. Such ecclesiastical sanction freed Hildegard from an imposed self-enclosure into an unprecedented future.

Both Hildegard of Bingen and Catherine McAuley exhibit the successful negotiation of life at the crossroads. The drama of living life on life's terms naturally presents people with the challenges of substantive defining moments of choice and change.

Duty and Daring

Both Hildegard of Bingen and Catherine McAuley exhibit the successful negotiation of life at the crossroads. The drama of living life on life's terms naturally presents people with the challenges of substantive defining moments of choice and change. They are models of midlife women who directly engaged the challenges of taking themselves seriously as gifted, gospel women and resisting the temptation toward being insubstantial, which can be characterized as that deep struggle to settle for

less and not the more, acceding to the limits and not the horizon. Hildegard mustered the courage *to break from* her self-imposed and culturally enforced silence. On the other hand, Catherine chose *to embrace* the silence of enclosure at George's Hill in order to meet the confining duties of the canonically required novitiate so that her vision might find acceptance. Each, in her forties, possessed an inheritance. Hildegard's was an internal,

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visionary, prophetic giftedness and Catherine's was the material, outer and actual gift of £25, 000 coupled with the zeal of a social vision to make a difference for the poor. Their midlife transition to greater vistas of generativity reveals that crucial shift that opens one, as the poet Rilke writes, to a "second huge and timeless life."[13] Interestingly, both Hildegard and Catherine were in their fifties when they confronted issues of substance in effecting their visions.

Hildegard's Decision to Leave Disibodenberg

Hildegard experienced a vision in which she was called to leave Disibodenberg and establish her own independent monastery. The abbot dismissed the possibility of such an undertaking. Hildegard, in a pattern that marked her life, was stricken with a severe malady. She was filled with energy in times when she was advancing her outer and inner work and experienced terribly depleting episodes when she was impeded in her efforts to realize what she believed to be God's will. Eventually the abbot came to see with his own eyes that the paralysis that turned Hildegard's body stonelike was the result of his interference with God's will. He reluctantly conceded, offering his permission for her to proceed.

Following her move to Rupertsberg in 1150, an exceptional action from one who described herself as "timid and lacking boldness," Hildegard made arrangements to acquire complete canonical and legal separation from the monks at Disibodenberg. She wanted to choose the monks who would provide spiritual care to the nuns at Rupertsberg, [Catherine's point during the chaplaincy crisis], keep the dowries from the women's families who joined the congregation, call the free election of superiors, hold the deed to the property, and be accountable solely to the archbishop of Mainz. Hildegard insisted this secret arrangement be put in writing and she received it from the archbishop of Mainz and Frederick Barbarossa, king and emperor of Germany.[14] The imprint of Disibodenberg's construction embedded in Hildegard's memory now took wings. Hildegard supervised the construction of a twelfth-century monastery with indoor plumbing, a complete sewage system, and a hospice for the sick and dying. Hildegard continued her remarkable life until her death on 17 September 1179 at the age of eighty-one.

Catherine McAuley and the Chaplaincy Crisis

Sullivan writes, "In the six years since its founding in Dublin on December 12, 1831, the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy had merited episcopal approval and support." But the last months of 1837 were a very painful period in Catherine's life for one specific reason: in September, a deep conflict arose between her and Dr. Walter Meyler, parish priest of St. Andrew's Church, over his unwillingness to assign a regular chaplain to serve the sacramental needs of the homeless women and girls sheltered in the House of Mercy on Baggot Street."[15] Catherine thought the continuity of pastoral care very important for both the Sisters of Mercy and the residents of the House of Mercy. "By depriving the House of Mercy a chaplain, " says Sullivan, "Walter Meyler had, in effect, removed the possibility of daily, and even Sunday, Mass at

Baggot Street. This meant that the forty or more servant women and girls living there had to go out to a parish church on Sundays, with the consequent freedom to dally in the city and delay their return to the House—the very shelter created to protect them from the sexual and other dangers lying in wait for them on the streets."[16]

Catherine writes to Sister Mary de Pazzi Delaney, "My dearest Sister Mary, will you relieve me from the distressing business about the chaplain. It is constantly before me, and makes me dread going home. I know it is not possible for me to have any more argument with Dr. Meyler without extreme agitation . . . Do get me through this—don't be afraid."[17] Catherine's correspondence with Dr. Andrew Fitzgerald, O.P., notes his seven-word summation of the controversy: "a wanton unwarranted abuse of Church authority."[18] Catherine writes to Michael Blake, bishop of Dromore, who supports Catherine's rationale for "one individual clergyman" as chaplain to the house and encourages her to again submit her case. In doing so to Rev. John Hamilton, Catherine writes quoting from a letter she sent to Dr. Meyler:

> We were happily at home today in time for all our different duties . . . but our poor young women are still about the streets, taking advantage, to be sure, of the irregularity which has been introduced among them. I will make one more effort . . . to prevail on the Sisters to accompany me to their Bishop . . . We will shew what is lost by the change that has been made . . . This sad alteration in our once orderly Establishment cannot fail to excite pity in a mind like his.

Catherine continues:

> At eight o'clock on Sunday evening, a letter was handed me from Doctor Meyler. It began thus: 'When is your procession to take place? I should like to see the theatrical exhibition—the Bishop must be apprised—perhaps you may not admire the reception you will meet, for he is too straight forward a person to be caught by your Juggle'. I read no more and put it out of my power ever to do so by burning the letter. I must now be done with the matter entirely. I will attempt nothing more . . .[19]

In a private letter to Frances Xavier Warde in January 1838 about the situation Catherine says, "It is humiliating no doubt, a smart attack on self importance, and if this part of it is well managed, it must turn to good account."[20] A few months later Catherine reports to Francis Warde, "Our Mass is celebrated very regularly every day, and the Confessions pretty well attended to—but I never feel reconciled to it . . . Pray fervently to God to take all bitterness from me. I can scarcely think of what has been done to me without resentment . . ."[21]

Catherine's daring social vision took her more than once to the edge of confrontation with the institutional church. Her sense of duty provoked in her an adaptability that deepened her endurance as a churchwoman and staved off succumbing to the bitterness, alienation, and cynicism so understandable in those wearied by the weight of injustice.

Crises and Character

The substance and style of Hildegard's leadership in moving her community from Disibodenberg and establishing the foundation at Rupertsberg, and the personal cost and artistry of Catherine's moving through the chaplaincy crisis suggest something important within their personalities that has a bearing on leadership that is transformational. They have the capacity for liminality and possess a prophetic passion.

The term liminality is taken from the Latin *limen*, meaning doorway or threshold. Angela Bolster, R.S.M., defines liminality as "all about RISK . . . a counter-cultural movement on the frontier, opening up new horizons, indicating new possibilities . . . fueled by a new vision of the future."[22] Those on the *limen*, at the cutting edge of new frontiers, can live in ambiguity and perceive opportunity. Hildegard broke silence when she interiorly ripened to the point where she could no longer suppress the content of her visions. Catherine's

The liminal among us often inhabit edges of society where the *anawim* of God live. Transforming and transformational leaders find a home among the homeless, in fact and in faith. They bear the capacity to engage God's prophetic pathos as their own.

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The liminal among us often inhabit edges of society where the *anawim* of God live. Transforming and transformational leaders find a home among the homeless, in fact and in faith. They bear the capacity to engage God's prophetic pathos as their own. They bear the cross where they find it, whether caused by the medieval Crusades, the Irish Penal Laws, or the current building of walls at U.S. borders. The prophetic personality struggles and stumbles but never succumbs to despair because the *umbra viventis lucis*—the Voice of the Living Light—stirs the soul of those who artfully integrate duty with daring and daring with duty. Such transformational persons are made of the stuff of biblical proportions, the ones spoken of who pass into every generation as vessels of Holy Wisdom (Wis. 7:21–28). Twelfth-century German Benedictine Abbess Hildegard of Bingen and nineteenth-century Irish Catherine McAuley are two such liminal, passionate and prophetic women. We may ask why do they continue to stir us? We might answer: because we need them now more than ever in a time such as ours.

Notes

1 Murray Stein, *Transformation* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), xxiv, 146–148.
2 Gerda Lerner, T*he Creation of Feminist Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 52.
3 Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop, Trans. (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 15.
4 See Angela Bolster, R,S,M., *Venerable Catherine McAuley: Liminal for Mercy* (Cork, Ireland: Sisters of Mercy, 1998).
5 Mary C. Sullivan, *The Correspondence of Catherine McAuley, 1818–1841* (Baltimore: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 316.
6 Gratitude is extended to Sister Roch Rocklage, R.S.M., for this compelling insight.
7 Sullivan, 2004, 33.
8 Ibid., 34.
9 Sullivan, Mary C. Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1995), 93.
10 Carolyn Sur, *The Feminist Images of God in the Visions of Saint Hildegard of Bingen's Scivias* (New York, Mellen Press, 1993), 26.
11 Margaret Wade Labarge, *A Small Sound of the Trumpet: Women in Medieval Life* (London: Hamish Hamilton Paperback, 1986), 33, 101.
12 Renate Craine, *Hildegard: Prophet of the Cosmic Christ* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 26.
13 Robert Bly, trans. *I Am Too Alone In The World: Ten Poems By Rainer Maria Rilke* (New York: Silver Hands Press, 1981), 4.
14 See John Van Engen, "Abbess: 'Mother and Teacher'" in Newman, *Voice of the Living Light*, 39–40 and Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 153.
15 Sullivan, 2004, 94.
16 Ibid., see footnote 83, 112.
17 Ibid., 96–97.
18 Ibid., 103.
19 Ibid., 112–113.
20 Ibid., 119.
21 Ibid., 144.
22 Bolster, 3.

Did the Sisters of Mercy Contribute to the Development of Professional Social Work?

Wade Luquet, M.S.W., Ph.D.

The history of the profession of social work starts in 1884 with the wealthy men of Oxford opening a house in London—Toynbee Hall—where these men could help the poor within their own conditions in what was called a settlement house. This house spawned a movement to open similar homes throughout England, and later in the United States. Yet the Sisters of Mercy had done similar work beginning on Baggot Street beginning in 1827. Is it possible that the Sisters of Mercy inspired the men of Toynbee Hall? Or were settlements a natural progression from other forms of social charity that were developing in Europe at that time?

These were questions generated in an Introduction to Social Work course at Gwynedd-Mercy College in suburban Philadelphia after a class viewing of the film *The Women of Hull House*—a biographical film about Jane Addams and the women who began Hull House in Chicago in 1889, a settlement house that helped the poor settle into their communities and ultimately inspired the professionalization of social work in the United States. Addams's story of inherited wealth, desire to help the poor, purchasing a large house, and soliciting other women of means to assist her parallels Catherine McAuley and the original Sisters of Mercy.

Addams credits Toynbee Hall with her inspiration after visiting England in 1883–1885 and again in 1888 to see how the various charity organizations deal with the numerous poor people in London. But once again, the Sisters already had similar programs set up in the United States starting in Pittsburgh by 1843 and spreading to New York, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and other major cities. So what kept the Sisters of Mercy, as well as other noncloistered orders, out of the social welfare history books? This paper will attempt to look at various reasons for exclusion of the Sisters from this history, and some possible measures to bring justice to this situation.

Sisters of Mercy Fulfilling Religious Obligations

Some might say that the Sisters, being from a religious order, were obligated to help the poor and their work could not be considered social welfare. However, the Sisters did not begin as a religious order. In the beginning, Catherine was a woman of strong Catholic beliefs but was not a religious Sister, nor did she have a desire to become one. It was only after a threat of losing the house from the local bishop that the women began taking vows that included service to the poor that Catherine and the women of Baggot street became Sisters. And in the big picture, it is probably a good thing since the order has survived based on the rule and constitution of the Sisters of Mercy rather than on the charisma of a leader.

Most importantly, during the 1800s, almost all charities were of a religious nature because of beliefs and attitudes regarding the poor and the moral superiority of the wealthy classes. The mid-1800s was a time in social welfare history when charitable organizations and friendly visitors were the favored form of social services. These means of helping the poor fit well with Victorian attitudes and the fascination with social Darwinism that pervaded middle- and upper-class thinking of that time. On the basis of the teachings of Calvin, Wesley, and social Darwinism, those who had "made it," both socially and financially, were considered morally superior to paupers and poor persons whose labor provided income, but not enough to take care of their families. These teachings invoked a sense of obligation of the rich to the poor in an effort to help the poor, as well as to satisfy the donors' spiritual duty. Thus, the "religion" and

the "science" of charity—giving to those who will best use the charity—was born.[1]

Yet notably missing from the social welfare literature is the contribution of Catholic religious women who provided direct relief to the poor for many years prior to the settlement movement.

The Sisters' Relation to Settlement Work

Although the Sisters' work in education and health care has been well established and recognized, their work with the poor has often been underappreciated. Yet, many of their programs and houses were an integral part of the social welfare system in England and Ireland, and some may even see a prototype of settlement work inherent in the Houses of Mercy.

In the proposal for Toynbee Hall, its founder, Samuel Bennett, wrote that its purpose was "to establish a University Colony in East London where men might live face to face with the actual facts of crowded city life, might gain practice and experience in social questions, and strive to ennoble the lives and improve the material conditions of the people"[2] This, too, seems to have been the goal of the Houses of Mercy, since the Sisters made direct contact with the poor and worked to improve their conditions. However, settlement houses were more of "a clubhouse in an individual district, where the condition of membership is the performance of a citizen's duty; a house among the poor, where the residents make friends with the poor."[3] Settlement houses helped the poor settle in their communities and enjoy many of the benefits of the middle class and wealthy—art, lectures, games, and conversation—with some direct relief. In many ways, they were as much about the experience of the wealthy men who lived in them as about those whom they served.

Jane Addams (1889) credited Toynbee Hall and its founders, Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, with influencing her to start Hull House in Chicago.[4] The Barnetts credited Arnold Toynbee, a young academic who had a vision to serve the poor, but died before he could fulfill it. Thus, the question arises: Did the work of the Sisters of Mercy have any influence on either the Barnetts or Addams? A search by the archivists at both Toynbee Hall and the English Sisters of Mercy archive in Bermondsey did not find any letters written between the Sisters and the Barnetts.

My search of Addams's writings at the Jane Addams Peace Collection at Swarthmore College also did not reveal any direct contact with the work of the Sisters. However, it should be noted that Addams's handwriting, especially in her personal journals, was nearly illegible, so she could have mentioned contact with the Sisters of Mercy, but it was not readable. I also contacted the present director of the Providence Row Charity—earlier known as the Providence Row Night Refuge, a night shelter managed by the Sisters and described later—to see if he knew of contact between the Barnetts and his facility. Although he knew of no written record, he thought that it was highly likely that the Barnetts and the Sisters would have met, since the facilities are only a few hundred yards apart. While the search did not prove any direct contact or influence that was written down, perhaps this is an area of study to be pursued further, especially by social welfare researchers in England who can view primary material first hand.

The work of the Sisters may well be a "missing link" between the harshness of the Poor Laws and the start of social work created by settlement houses. Just as jazz is an evolutionary step that emerged from the sounds of many cultures along with ragtime and then to emerge into its own musical form, the settlement house may have emerged from the compassionate work of the Sisters.

However, the work of the Sisters of Mercy predated that of the settlement movement by sixty years in Dublin and spread to numerous sites across Europe and Australia during that time. If the Sisters cannot be considered part of the settlement movement, two questions must be answered: Is

The work of the Sisters may well be a "missing link" between the harshness of the Poor Laws and the start of social work created by settlement houses.

the work they accomplished with the poor of such a nature that it can be considered a formal part of the social welfare system, and if so, what kept their work out of the literature?

Was the Night Refuge Social Work?

Certainly, the Sisters of Mercy would have had no idea of the practices and values of the social work profession because the profession did not exist during the early years of their work. Yet, if one examines the stated social work values from an introductory social work text, one may say that the Sisters were practicing an early form of social work. In *Generalist Social Work Practice*, the authors state:

> generalist social workers work directly with client systems at all levels, connect clients to available resources, intervene with organizations to enhance the responsiveness of resource systems, advocate just policies to ensure the equitable distribution of resources, and research all aspects of social work practice.[5]

Given this definition, can the work of the Sisters be considered social work or, at a minimum, proto-social work? To determine whether it can, one would have to look at the work itself, and the Providence Row Night Refuge of London is a good example.

In September 1858, five Sisters of Mercy left Wexford, after being commissioned by the Very Rev. Dr. Gilbert of the Church of St. Mary's Moorfield, to come to London to take over the schools and found a night refuge for London's poor and homeless. The refuge opened in 1860 and moved to larger quarters in 1868, where it remains today as the Providence Row Charity. The refuge was London's "first absolutely non-sectarian charity in London."[6] The Reverend Gilbert was so adamant that there should be no doubt of this fact that he had the refuge and the convent paid for by two separate funding sources. As his biographer wrote:

> The Refuge and the Convent of Mercy were built at the same time, adjoining each other, but although the Sisters were to be responsible for the management, and although the work could not have been carried on without their help, not one penny subscribed for it was spent upon the erection of the convent, which was paid for by a separate fund, collected entirely from Catholic sources.[7]

John W. Gilbert, the nephew and biographer of the Reverend Dr. Gilbert, wrote this about the Sisters of Mercy:

> In dealing with Dr. Gilbert's effort with the poor, mention must be made of the foundation of the Convent of Mercy, which for so many years has been the center of social work in the parish of Moorfield . . . For thirty-seven years they have been in charge of the elementary schools, for thirty-seven years, they have ministered to the wants of the poor in the Refuge, and in addition they have for years visited the sick in the hospitals and poorer districts of the parish and at times have had control of different cofraternities and associations.[8]

The largest project that the Sisters undertook at Providence Row was the management of the night refuge. The night refuge housed several hundred men and women on separate floors in small, clean, side-by-side beds. It provided hot meals; lavatories; and, for some, job training. *Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy* described the refuge this way:

> The night refuge is a handsome building in one of the most wretched quarters of London, surrounded by labyrinths of dirty streets and dingy alleys, a sort of focus for the poor creatures reputed the dangerous classes. It is designed to give lodging and a meal to such of the decent poor as are for the moment homeless, and for whom no other respectable shelter is provided from the hideous nights of London. People who have come from sweet-smelling villages to make great fortunes in the great Bedlam; creatures turned out of their wretched lodgings and wandered aimlessly about the town; young girls with the fragrance of the daisies still beautifying their weary faces; widowed mothers with groups of sturdy orphans clinging to their scanty drapery—all enter the refuge without let or hindrance; that is, all free from drink. At three o'clock the fires are lit in the great halls, and towards five some two hundred of the most wretched of God's creatures are being thawed out or dried, and getting ready for their frugal supper. Everything is poor, but brilliantly clean. A crucifix adorns each dormitory. The men may see in their fine, airy sleeping place a picture of the beggar-saint who served God so well in poverty greater than theirs. All apartments are well supplied with lavatories—a most necessary precaution, for many of the wanderers present themselves in a state of squalor and filth sadly out of keeping with the boasted civilization of our century.

The Sisters of Mercy and other noncloistered Sisters have been left out of the social welfare and social work literature, possibly because they were women or because of the prejudice against Catholics.

> Groups of sisters go about among the women, teaching them to sew or read or prepare for the sacraments; dressing the sores of some, consoling the sorrows of others. While a poor father is lying ill in the hospital, the mother and her little ones, who are never separated from her, may have shelter here, if they cannot get better; and the nuns take care of the babes by day while the mother is looking for employment. The men in another large, well-lighted, well-heated apartment are objects of the diligent care of their hostesses, who listen to their troubles, bind up their wounds physically and spiritually, look out for situations for them, and help them to make a proper appearance by providing new garments or redeeming the old ones from the pawn. Many a well-born man and woman, after a long struggling with pride, humble themselves to accept the aid here so graciously given to Christ's representatives for His sake. The nuns wait on every one of these forlorn vagrants, welcome them with cheering words, prepare and serve the substantial supper in a way their guests often describe as "comforting." Many a poor fellow fallen into the sorest straits has here taken heart afresh and sallied forth with new courage next morning to find the work that will restore independence.[9]

It should also be mentioned that in a settlement house-like fashion, the men and women of the refuge would gather after dinner for singing and storytelling. *Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy* stated: "Music and recitations are sometimes executed here which would put some drawing-room performances to shame."[10]

Chesterton also observed:

> The evening meal over, the women sit and talk. Somebody plays the piano—it is an excellent instrument—or sings, or recites, and on occasion the company is moved to dance—middle-aged mothers with big families, elderly granddames and girls in their teens.
>
> There is an atmosphere of cheerfulness, but those who wish can pour out their sorrows or discuss their prospects with the Sister-in-charge.[11]

A report completed in 1881 stated that from 1860 to 1881, the night refuge had more than 1,054,000 lodgings each with breakfast and dinner—more than 1,600 people each week[12] (*Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy*, 1883). Providence Row continues to operate today and is still staffed by Sisters of Mercy and volunteers.

Given the values of modern-day generalist social workers, one may say that the Sisters were doing social work. They worked directly with client systems, connected clients with resources, and sought justice and equity for the poor of England. They also seemed to work from the strengths perspective as they looked for the basic good in each person and sent each off with "new courage [the] next morning to find the work that will restore independence."[13]

Where Are the Sisters in Social Welfare History?

What seems to be true is that the Sisters of Mercy and other noncloistered Sisters have been left out of the social welfare and social work literature, possibly because they were women and possibly because of the prejudice against Catholics. Men of the Church of England at Toynbee Hall are given credit for the roots of social work even though the Sisters had similar programs and did similar work in similar neighborhoods.

One explanation is the lingering effects of the Penal Laws that were passed in Ireland and England beginning in 1691. As a way of creating a state religion, England took away the rights of Catholics to own land and participate in government. The Penal Laws were especially hard felt in Ireland where 80 percent of its inhabitants were Catholic. Much of the country was plunged into poverty by the laws, and although many attempts were made to repeal them, the laws were not repealed until the passage of the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829, which offered Catholics emancipation and allowed Catholics to participate in government in Ireland and England.[14] However, Catholics continued to be discriminated against in both Ire-

land and England, and it is possible that the works of the Sisters of Mercy were ignored in the early social work literature because of the Sisters' Catholic roots.

A second explanation could be that because the Sisters were women, their work was not seen as important as the work of men and was suspect by the general population. Women, especially religious women, were taught to be humble about their good deeds. As one Sister recently told me, her early religious training emphasized, "More of He, and less of me." However, one wonders how their work would have been viewed in the social work literature if they had remained laywomen living together to help the poor within their community, as the men of Toynbee Hall had done.

Implications for Mercy Education

It is important that our students learn more about religious Sisters' impact on the field of human services and how this has created a more compassionate society. Mercy human service educators should continue the research into the Sisters' direct influence on the field of social work to see if there was contact that influenced the development of the field. At present, this research places the work of the Sisters of Mercy and the work at Toynbee Hall just a few hundred yards apart. Future research could be undertaken in the archives of the Sisters in Dublin; the Bermondsey, England convent archives; and the Toynbee Hall archive to determine if there was a direct connection between the two programs.

Researchers will also need to take an in-depth look at the work of the Sisters to determine if this was indeed an early form of social work or just another form of charity. If the Sisters' work is determined to be a form of social work, changes in the history should come about slowly—perhaps by including the Sisters' works in classroom lectures, papers, or future editions of books on social welfare history. But their work should not continue to be ignored. Women's voices and those of repressed groups need to find their way into history. For whatever reason a group has been excluded from society—prejudice, bigotry, persecution, or intolerance—social work, and those of us who teach in the human services at Mercy institutions, have an obligation to bring justice to the situation.

Mercy education has long prided itself on its nursing, education, and to a smaller extent, its human service and social work degree programs. Given the long and influential history the Sisters of Mercy have had in social welfare, it may be time to put the social work and human services programs on equal par with education and nursing. Our universities are service oriented, and probably no field of study is more service oriented than social work and human services. To be able to train young people to use their compassion to help others in direct service is to live the mission of mercy.

Notes

Author's Note: The author thanks Sr. Marion McCarthy and Sr. Jean Parkes, archivists of the Bermondsey, England, House of Mercy; Kate Bradley, librarian and archivist at Toynbee Hall in London; Steve Lee-Foster, director of Providence Row Charities in London; Sr. Joan Franey, archivist of the Sisters of Mercy of Merion, Pennsylvania; and the library staff at Gwynedd-Mercy College for answering many questions and for their help in finding archival materials for this article.

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2 W. Smart, *Toynbee Hall* (Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons, 1886), 4.
3 S. A. Barnett, "University Settlements" in W. Reason (ed.), *University and Social Settlements* (London: Methuen, 1898), 11. www.infed.org/archives/e-text/barnet2.htm.
4 J. Addams, "A Function of the Social Settlement," in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1899, pp. 13, 323–345.
5 K. K. Miley, M. O'Melia and B. DuBois, *Generalist Social Work Practice: An Empowering Approach* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2001), 9.
6 J. W. Gilbert, *Monsignor Gilbert: A Memoir* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1897), 95.
7 Ibid., 104.
8 Ibid.
9 *Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy*, Vol. 2 (New York: P. O'Shea, 1883), 296–298.
10 Ibid., 299.
11 Mrs. C. Chesterton, *In Darkest London* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), 235.
12 *Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy*, 1883, p. 298.
13 Ibid.
14 Davis, 1999.

Challenging Prior Knowledge
Strategies for College Teaching

Jennifer Reed-Bouley, Ph.D.

In teaching college students social ethics, I have found that many students' mental models of society hinder rather than facilitate new learning. Like their elders, many students interpret reality through the hermeneutic of an uncritical individualism.[1] The role of mental models in learning, an insight from cognitive psychology, has helped me to understand the challenges individualism poses to effective learning. This paper explains the role of mental models and then describes several practical teaching strategies that allow students to question their inaccurate mental models about society and replace them with more accurate models. Although there are many challenges to effective teaching, I focus here on students' individualism because it is so pervasive and persistent. The strategies described here illustrate several of many possible constructive responses to the challenges of the individualistic paradigm when teaching.

Individualism Inhibits New Knowledge

The 1988 film "A Private Universe: Misconceptions that Block Learning" illustrates the role of prior knowledge in learning.[2] "Prior knowledge" refers to correct or incorrect paradigms or mental models with which students enter the classroom prior to formal instruction. The film begins by showing interviews of Harvard graduates, faculty, and alumnae/alumni. Despite years of education in the sciences, twenty-one out of twenty-three people interviewed inaccurately describe why the earth has seasons or why the moon has phases. The well-educated adults interviewed articulate views similar to views of ninth graders with little training in astronomy.

The film proceeds to show one reason science education fails in so many cases: Teachers do not elicit students' prior understanding of concepts. Initial mental models tend to be deeply-held and durable.[3] While faculty across the disciplines often lament students' ignorance and ill-preparedness for college courses, "A Private Universe" indicates that another daunting challenge may be students' inaccurate yet firmly-held "knowledge" gleaned from experience, formal education, and other sources. Even if students' prior knowledge is unconscious or unarticulated, it plays a central role in the learning process, as it is the lens through which students will understand new information and ideas. Students may hear but simply reject new knowledge that is incongruent with their mental models. Or when teachers introduce concepts to students they believe have no knowledge of the subject, even the brightest students conflate or integrate new concepts into their previous, erroneous mental models. This results in new, yet still inaccurate understandings. The film indicates the need for faculty to ask students to make explicit their knowledge or current understanding of a concept before faculty attempt to teach the concept, lest students' prior knowledge undermine effective learning. Then faculty need to show the

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weaknesses of commonly-held misperceptions as they present new understandings.

The "private universe" of ideas applies not only to knowledge of astronomy and the sciences but to other disciplines as well, including theological ethics. In order to achieve the goal of deep learning that transforms students' knowledge, skills, and values, incorrect mental models need to be carefully examined in the classroom. Following are several specific strategies I have found to be effective in replacing students' mental model of individualism as it relates to issues of race, class and gender with more accurate mental models.

Strategies to Replace Individualistic Views

First, at the beginning of my courses, I often request that students articulate their mental models by asking them to write an informal response to a particular question about the reading or discussion. I let students know that they will not be asked to share their view with the class, but that I will read it. I then respond in writing to their ideas, affirming students' identities while gently prodding them toward understanding the issues within a broader horizon. This method lets me know their starting points as individuals, as well as common misperceptions shared by the group.

Second, I have found that direct experience or encounter is necessary but insufficient. Research on student learning shows that students' active engagement in the learning process is linked to their actual learning.[4] Community service-learning serves as a strategy whereby students can form relationships with people about whom they may only have stereotypes. The relationships can help students question the adequacy of their mental models. Then as students learn about the social inequities from which the needs for service arise, they can place what they initially judge as individuals' personal failures into a larger social context. It is crucial that prior to the service experience, faculty provide information about the population students will serve, as well as the community organizations facilitating the service. As students engage in service, their inaccurate stereotypes may be reinforced if they are not given consistent opportunities for structured reflection and social analysis of their experiences—via journaling, classroom discussions, formal papers, and other methods.[5]

Local Community Immersion

As another form of direct experience, I also host community immersions for students and faculty. In these one-day visits with various community organizations in low-income and racially segregated neighborhoods of Omaha, students and faculty learn about community challenges and assets. They read assigned journal and newspaper articles prior to the immersion in order to focus their attention on particular issues, such as public and private education, immigration to Omaha, the meatpacking industry, the prison system, or employment opportunities. After hearing presentations and engaging in dialogue at various community organizations, students analyze their experience through writing and discussion. One of the benefits of immersion is that representatives from community organizations (such as Catholic Charities, homeless shelters, and health clinics) have the opportunity to tell their own stories rather than be the object of others' analysis. Another benefit is that students meet community leaders actively working to improve their communities. Students are consistently moved by the leaders' commitment to their communities, as well as their competence and knowledge. This is a powerful lesson for students regarding the agency of people conventionally depicted as passive, as well as the knowledge present in disadvantaged communities.

Third, in courses for beginning students who are not yet prepared academically or socially for developing the relationships demanded by

community service-learning, I often use a "public project" as a way to help students learn about the complex dynamics of community problems.[6] Students research a local public issue (of their choice, yet related to the themes of the course) through involvement, interviews, and texts. The project culminates in a paper, presentation to the class, as well as a product of public significance. In the latter, usually a letter to the editor of a newspaper or public official, a student advocates a course of action, and provides reasons for this judgment based upon her research. The public project teaches students not only knowledge and creative problem solving that are present in the communities they study, but also that they as students can engage as civic agents (thus challenging a common prior self-understanding of students as disinterested spectators to social problems).

Teaching social ethics involves trying to alter students' perceptions of how social forces influence individuals' lives, and that solutions to what may initially appear to be individual problems often involve social change.

Social Analysis

Fourth, I encourage students to generate as many questions as possible about the issues we study. I first provide students with various ways of analyzing community problems, such as the social, economic, political, religious, educational, health care, and legal dimensions. Students ask who has power, who lacks influence, and myriad other dynamics of the social problems we study. The goal is not to answer the questions but to show the complexity of the issues. Students' generation of questions casts doubts on the mental model that social problems are easily remedied solely through disadvantaged individuals' actions. The questions that emerge indicate the further research needed in order to achieve more adequate understanding of the problems and point toward potential solutions.[7]

A fifth strategy designed to help question the view that individuals alone cause and remedy social problems is differentiation among four ways of responding to social problems. We begin by discussing direct service (or charity), because students are usually predisposed to prefer this as a first response to social needs. It is easy to affirm the genuine charitable responses to needs through examples from local Catholic Charities. Next I offer examples of local social problems that have proven intractable by charity alone. Local and national priorities of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development provide illustrations of empowerment, advocacy, and justice as three other, necessary social responses.

Sixth, students' reflection on their own self-understandings is another core strategy, because individuals possess strong conceptions of their own identities vis-à-vis the social issues we study. This method presumes that our study is not only about social structures "out there" but also the individual identity of the person studying. Some accessible resources for guiding students in integrating what they are learning into their self-understanding are provided by Paul Kivel in his book *Uprooting Racism*, and by Peggy McIntosh in her article "The Invisible Knapsack."[8] Both resources include checklists that allow students to identify the unearned privileges or lack thereof that contributed to their current social position. Items such as "my ancestors came to this country of their own free will and have never had to relocate unwillingly once here" and "I live on land that formerly belonged to Native Americans" help privileged students to see the unearned advantages that facilitate their success, and how they and their ancestors are sometimes successful at the expense of others.[9] Furthermore, Albert Nolan's article, "Four Stages of Spiritual Growth in Relation to the Poor" provides a vehicle by which students can examine how their views of poverty may have developed or changed, as well as catalysts and obstacles to future growth.[10]

Conclusion

Teaching social ethics involves trying to alter students' perceptions of how social forces influence

individuals' lives, and that solutions to what may initially appear to be individual problems often involve social change. Although the examples provided here relate to teaching social ethics on the college level, durable prior knowledge affects learning across the disciplines. The effects of prior knowledge point to the importance of faculty understanding their students' worldviews and common misperceptions as prerequisites to teaching new concepts. Although eliciting students' understandings may initially appear to take a great deal of time away from the content of formal teaching, it is essential. If faculty do not elicit students' prior knowledge and help them to question its accuracy, then students will reject or misunderstand the more adequate understandings that faculty wish to teach.

Notes

1 For a classic description of American individualism, see Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (London: University of California Press, 1985). For a more recent discussion, see Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). Many thanks to Alex Mikulich, Ph.D. for his collaboration in our presentation at the Conference for Mercy Higher Education Symposium and shared commitment to transformative education.

2 "A Private Universe: Misconceptions that Block Learning," Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Science Education Department, Science Media Group, 1988. To view or purchase the video, go to http://www.learner.org/resources/series28.html. I am indebted to Milt Hackel, Ph.D. and Jose Mestre, Ph.D. for introducing me to the concept of prior knowledge at "What Faculty and Administrators Need to Know about Learning," a workshop on the implications of cognitive science for higher education, sponsored by the American Association of Higher Education, University of Maryland, February 20–22, 2004. See also Diane F. Halpern and Milton D. Hackel, "Applying the Science of Learning to the University and Beyond," *Change* (July/August 2003): 37–41.

3 Of course, this tendency allows stability in learning. In this paper, I am only addressing the challenges, not the benefits, of prior knowledge.

4 See George D. Kuh, "What We're Learning about Student Engagement from NSSE: Benchmarks for Effective Educational Practices," *Change* (March/April 2003): 24–32.

5 See Jennifer Reed-Bouley, "Service and Justice: Understanding the Relationship through Community Service-Learning." Issue *on Teaching and Doing Justice in Higher Education* in *Listening: Journal of Religion and Culture* 37/1 (Winter 2002): 53–63. The literature about curricular and co-curricular community service-learning is growing. For a comprehensive library of service-learning publications, see the National Service Learning Clearinghouse website at http://www.servicelearning.org/.

6 I thank Edward Zlotkowski, Ph.D., Senior Scholar at Campus Compact and Faculty at Bentley College for suggesting this method to me at a 2002 faculty development workshop on community service-learning.

7 For example, in a short reflection session, a group of students who regularly ate with the residents of a homeless shelter posed the following questions about the intersections between education and homelessness: What is the educational attainment of the homeless in Omaha and how does that compare with the general population's educational attainment? What is the educational system like for those who grow up in Omaha? What educational opportunities are provided for adults for ESL and GED? What is the quality of the schools in various geographic areas of our city? To what extent is educational attainment affected by, and then indicative of, income and financial security?

8 Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* (British Columbia: New Society, 2002). Peggy McIntosh, "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," available from Wellesley College via http://www.wcwonline.org/title108.html.

9 Paul Kivel, 32.

10 Albert Nolan, "Four Stages of Spiritual Growth in Relation to the Poor," available via http://www.8thdaycenter.org/resources/publications/printbook.pdf.

A Theological Pedagogy of White Privilege and Racism

Alex Mikulich, Ph.D.

How should White scholars approach White privilege and racism in the classroom? The question raises problems for Whites.[1] If we avoid White privilege and racism in the classroom, the historical dynamics of White privilege and racism in U.S. Catholic institutions of higher education go unabated. If White teachers risk addressing White privilege and racism, we risk exposing our own participation in the cultural dynamics of White privilege and racism, and may unwittingly harm our students. Our humanity, that of our students, and our responsibility as teachers stand at stake. Risking and exposing our own bodily participation in White privilege, I believe, is necessary to become responsible teachers who step on a journey toward transformative wisdom.

As the 2006 Conference of Mercy Higher Education emphasizes, Mercy educators should "be and do what we teach." I suggest Mercy educators should be *on the way of being and doing* what we teach in an authentic becoming, embodying, and practicing—in word and deed—of the Wisdom who lures us toward personal and communal transformations into Mercy. My title emphasizes teaching and learning as ongoing intellectual, moral, affective, bodily, and religious transformations into broadening and deepening horizons of wisdom.[2] The condition of the possibility of White scholars addressing their privilege, I believe, will entail living a tension between some form of contemplative practice, on one hand, and practical protest of White privilege on the other.[3]

Our limited, situated knowledge and need for continual transformation in Mercy is no less true in any attempt to address White privilege and racism in the classroom. The need for White scholars to enter a journey toward transformative wisdom may be more necessary today because the evil of our cultural ignorance and arrogance continues to terrorize and kill peoples of colors.[4]

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Before we attempt to take up wrenching questions of White privilege and racism in the classroom, I seek to shape a safe and respectful learning space through two activities. We best begin nurturing the dignity and identity of our students through sharing our "name story."[5] First, I invite students to write answers for themselves to four questions: 1) Who gave you your name? 2) What is the ethnic origin of your name? 3) What are your nicknames, if any? 4) What do you prefer to be called?[6]

I begin by sharing my name story that includes how my Russian grandparents educated me to the reality of serfdom they endured under the Tsar, and how they escaped. After students have an opportunity to write their own stories, I invite them to share their stories with a classmate whom they have not met previously. I then ask students to introduce each other to the class using the name stories they just learned.

Sharing name stories breaks the "ice" and fosters community as it nurtures each student's sense of dignity and awareness of her identity. The name story helps subvert the tendency of White/European students to assume that they have no "culture." Students gain a sense of

"self" that enables them to begin to reflect upon their own ethnicity, the diversities within our classroom, and bigger questions of privilege and oppression.

The "respect" exercise is a second critical activity I incorporate to create a safe and dynamic learning community. I invite students to reflect: 1) How do you convey respect to others? and 2) How do you expect others to convey respect to you? Students share their answers with a peer whom they have not met prior to this course. The exercise challenges students to learn and explore points of disagreement, rather than agreement, about respect. Students gain authority about their own backgrounds and understandings, and begin to learn different ethnic, cultural, and religious understandings and practices of respect. I invite the entire class to discuss the primary points of disagreement, and negotiate boundaries that students uphold. I have found this a dynamic way for students to begin to learn how sources of disagreement open authentic conversation that may, in turn, reveal new ways of being in the world.

These exercises nurture a safe, mutually respectful, dynamic learning community able to address more troubling questions of White privilege and racism. My experience of co-parenting two African American children, worshiping at Black Catholic parishes, becoming an anti-racist activist, and my scholarship, teach me that the possibility of Whites engaging privilege authentically only begins when we attempt to educate ourselves into Black "double-consciousness." W.E.B. DuBois describes Black double-consciousness as an experience of always feeling his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.[7]

Whites cannot know the depth of that physical and psychic wound of Black double-consciousness. However, the poet, activist, and teacher James Perkinson challenges White scholars to engage a pedagogy of double-consciousness by learning to confess complicity in the continuing organization of illicit benefit (at the expense of people of color) while simultaneously struggling against the presumptions of white privilege (as a choice, not just a condition).[8]

A pedagogy of double-consciousness entails Whites listening to the wisdom of Blacks. James Baldwin invites Whites to

> Do your first works over. Re-examine everything. Go back to where you started, or as far back as you can, examine all of it, travel your road again and tell the truth about it. Sing or shout or testify or keep it to yourself, but know whence you came.[9]

Baldwin's invitation helps open students' awareness of their social locations in relationship to new horizons of historical formation and cultural consciousness. Students write about their own experience of being "raced" or "gendered" by addressing 1) When did you first learn you were raced or gendered? 2) How did you find out?[10] Attending to a single event helps students focus attention on the questions within their own experience and especially helps White/European students to begin to recognize and take responsibility for their own social locations.

"Doing our first works over" further demands understanding the history and genealogy of the language of "race" and racism in European and U.S. historical context. I begin this exploration by writing "races of the world" on the blackboard and invite students to brainstorm all possible "races" in the world of which they are aware. Examples typically posted include Asian, Japanese, Pacific Islander, Jamaican, African, Italian, Russian, Irish, Thai, Aboriginal, Hispanic, Jew, etc. I then ask students whether these terms represent the same categories. Most often, students identify how the terms represent categories of geography, region, nation-state, religion, and ethnicity. Many times students question and contest the terms and requirements of federal, state, and public forms that require disclosure of an applicant's race. The question arises: what is "race"? Where does "race" come from?

The PBS website "Race: The Power of An Illusion"[11] offers numerous exercises and information to assist exploration of the history of "race" and racism

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in the U.S. I supplement the PBS website with Cornel West's genealogy of the discourse of "race" to help students understand how "race" lacks scientific basis yet was codified in European philosophy and theology upon the authority of modern science.[12] Although White privilege and "race" has been fluid since the nation's inception, West's genealogy exposes how White male privilege is fundamental to U.S. democracy. West's genealogy demonstrates that the

> idea of white supremacy is a major bowel unleashed by the structure of modern discourse, a significant secretion generated from the creative fusion of scientific investigation, Cartesian philosophy, and classical aesthetic and cultural norms. Needless to say, the odor of this bowel and the fumes of this secretion continue to pollute our postmodern times.[13]

A "race in daily life" exercise continues this exploration by unveiling the assumptions of contemporary racial discourse. Students list ten things they normally do in the course of a week, such as e-mailing, shopping, driving, etc. Students then choose to become any "race" except their own and explore how their normal activities they listed above would change. The exercise then asks: 1) Would you be able to go to the same places, talk to the same people, and enjoy the events of your week? 2) Would you feel comfortable doing so? 3) What would be the chances that people of your new race would be found doing these things in these places and in these ways? 4) Would people of your new race be treated differently? If so, how? 5) What real differences does "race" make each day in your life? The success of the exercise in generating some sense of double-consciousness certainly depends upon the diversity and courage of participants. When a critically-engaged diversity exists, peers begin to educate each other in the reality peoples of colors (and gays) face daily. Students who resist accountability find it very difficult to deny the privileges made visible in Peggy McIntosh's famous "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack."

Students can test the validity of the race in daily life exercise and Peggy McIntosh's work through an investigation of race and gender in public institutions. I organize small groups to address the question: Who has power in your community? Examples include heads of banks, police, schools, mayor, town council, prisons, and businesses, etc. Students identify the race and gender of people in power in their locales and can test the results by exploring: in what institutions are the majority of decision-making positions held by women and/or women of colors? The answers to these questions can be tested further by exploring when and where White Americans *must* live under the decisions made by peoples of colors.[14]

Invariably, someone interrupts: So what? What is the real significance of White male privilege? Besides—as many will argue, due to Civil Rights legislation, more women, gays, and people of color than ever before are in decision-making positions of power. We must ask ourselves and our students: Why is it that the average Black male dies at the age of sixty-four years old, often of stress related diseases—before receiving a single dollar in social security?[15] By contrast, why do White males live beyond age seventy-four? Why are poverty rates for Blacks and Latinos almost three times the poverty rate for Whites?[16] Why is the incarceration rate for Blacks nearly seven times that of Whites? Blacks constitute only 14 percent of drug users nationally, but they account for 35 percent of all drug arrests, 55 percent of all drug convictions, and 75 percent of all prison admissions for drug offenses. Why do Blacks make 75 cents on the dollar on average for the same work as Whites? Why is White median wealth ten times greater than for Blacks? James Perkinson summarizes the point:

> My white wherewithal is constituted in Afro- (as indeed Latino- and Filipino- and aboriginal-, etc.) American impoverishment. Their loss is my gain. The relationship is utterly

> asymmetrical and the asymmetry is utterly relational.[17]

Many students, like us, have assimilated powerful tactics of evasion that enable all of us to deny systemic relationships between privilege and oppression. Lest we fall prey to the cynicism of our time, transformative Wisdom demands that we invite students to lament the historical suffering of peoples of colors and the multiple ways all of us share vulnerability and lose our humanity in contemporary society. Emilie M. Townes, M. Shawn Copeland, and Sharon D. Welch each recommend ceremonies of lament, gratitude, awakening, and accountability that invite affective participation in transformative Wisdom. My experience teaches me that this kind of holistic pedagogy opens an alternative moral imagination in which students experience the real possibilities of how we may yet realize that "we are each other's harvest; we are each other's business; we are each other's magnitude and bond."[18]

Notes

1 My use of upper case for White and Black relies on the argument of Cheryl Harris that "the use of upper and lower case in reference to racial identity has a particular political history. Although 'white' and 'Black' have been defined oppositionally, they are not functional opposites. 'White' has incorporated Black subordination; 'Black' is not based on domination. 'Black' is naming that is part of counter-hegemonic practice." See Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8, (June 1993): 1710.

2 Constance Fitzgerald, O.C.D., "The Desire for God and the Transformative Power of Contemplation," in Mary Heather MacKinnon, Moni McIntyre, and Mary Ellen Sheehan, ed., *Light Burdens Heavy Blessings: Challenges of Church and Culture in a Post Vatican II Era* (Quincy, Illinois: Franciscan Press, 2000), 203–222.

3 See and listen to my argument for this position at http://www.nd.edu/wpconf/ where the proceedings of the conference "White Privilege: Implications for the Catholic university, the Church, and the Academy" are available for viewing at the University of Notre Dame website.

4 See, for example, M. Shawn Copeland's description of persistent deadly racism in "Racism and the Vocation of the Theologian," *Spiritus* 2, no. 1, (Spring 2002): 15–29.

5 See bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (New York: Routledge, 1994), especially chapter 1, "Engaged Pedagogy."

6 For this and other multicultural teaching tools, go to the Multicultural Education Pavilion at http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/teachers.html.

7 W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003, originally published 1903), 9.

8 James W. Perkinson, *White Theology: Outing Supremacy in Modernity* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 4.

9 James Baldwin, "Introduction," *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948–1985* (New York: St. Martin's/Marek, 1985), xix.

10 See this and other exercises in Stephanie Mitchem, *Introducing Womanist Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002).

11 Go to http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm.

12 Cornel West, Chapter 2, "A Genealogy of Modern Racism," in *Prophesy Deliverance! An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 47–65.

13 Ibid., 65.

14 This exercise was originally developed by Dr William Jones and is described in Sharon D. Welch, "Ceremonies of Gratitude, Awakening, and Accountability: The Theory and Practice of Multicultural Education" in Jennifer Harvey et al, ed., *Disrupting White Supremacy from Within: White People on What We Need to Do* (Pilgrim Press, 2004), 249–280.

15 See Brian Smedley et al., *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Healthcare* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2003).

16 See also Joe Pettit, "The Persistence of Injustice," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* Vol. 25, 1 (2005): 197–218, here 201. As Pettit puts it, "Contemporary calls for colorblindness in our public, as well as private, lives seem to have been possible only through increasing blindness to the sociological differences that attention to skin color discloses in our society."

17 Perkinson, 15.

18 Gwendolyn Brooks, "Paul Robeson," in *Blacks* (Chicago: Third World Press, 2000), 496.

Why Is There No One at the Peace Vigil?

Kasturi (Rumu) DasGupta, Ph.D.

There are structural obstacles that society creates to deliberately inhibit the awareness and social consciousness that are the lifeblood of any real democracy. I call it the cover-up.

Context for the Paper

Deborah Kadin of Illinois notes that the United States faces the reality of "fabricated excuses for a needless and continuing (endless) war, the Federal Emergency Management Agency in shreds, warrantless and illegal wiretaps, secret prisons, torture, Katrina, large tax cuts for the wealthiest in a time of war, a culture of corruption and cronyism in Washington."[1] She asks, "Where's the outrage? Why aren't people taking to the streets?" Almost as a response to her, Doug Weaver of California, observes, "It's the overwhelming and debilitating sense of entitlement that Americans have that's the culprit, and the fear of losing what we think that we're entitled to."[2]

What exactly do Americans feel entitled to that blinds them to the tragic reality of the world that surrounds them? At the Earth Summit conference held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992, attended by 153 countries, President George Herbert Walker Bush, then President of the United States, made that entitlement plain enough when he declared, "The American way of life is not negotiable. The American way of life is a blessed one." *It is to be protected at all costs.*[3]

The New York Times columnist Bob Herbert writes:

> For the smug, comfortable, well-off Americans, it doesn't seem to matter how long the war in Iraq goes on—as long as the agony is endured by others. If the network coverage gets too grim, viewers can always switch to the E! channel (one hand on the remote, the other burrowing into a bag of chips) follow the hilarious antics of Paris, Brittany, Brangelina et al. . . . The war is depressing and denial is the antidote. Why should ordinary citizens (good people, religious people, patriots) consider their role in—and responsibility for—the thunderous, unending carnage? Enough with the introspection. Let's go to the ball park, get drunk and boo Barry Bonds.[4]

No wonder it is so vital that the *American Way of Life* be protected at all costs. What better cover for unspeakable acts and policies perpetrated in its name!

My Hopes for this Paper

As I ponder the questions that I have posed for this presentation, where is the outrage in these times of war and violence? Why is there no one from Georgian Court University at the Peace Vigil on Tuesday nights by the Peace Pole, meditating on the incredible senselessness of this war? I bring an indictment against this *American Way of Life* based on two causes: a runaway, rampant consumerism, and a pervasive anti-intellectualism. Both are sponsored by a media that has become the main delineator of cultural values and norms. Both are fallouts from an increasingly beleaguered public education system that is failing to shape the hearts and minds of the nation's young people in ways that support a civil and democratic society.

These topics are particularly important for institutions of higher learning, colleges, and universities, especially ones such as ours, which have at their center a special commitment to issues of social justice, which emanates from the core of our Catholic and Mercy identity. There is a concerted push in colleges and universities to move students

"Where's the outrage? Why aren't people taking to the streets?"

to higher planes of social awareness. Many institutions have integrated "education for justice and transformation" into their mission statements. But, ironically, this is happening at a time when we see a decline in student interest and participation across the board, especially in civic and political issues. What does it mean to have a mission and vision statement at our universities and colleges, yet no takers? What must we do to bring our students back to the table? What must we do to engage them?

My position is a simple one. We need to blow the cover. Our job is one of unmasking. We must reveal this *American Way of Life* for what it really is and how it has degraded not just Americans but the very precepts on which this country was founded. We must make it clear to our students right from the outset, that when we speak of liberation it is theirs (and ours) that is foremost on our minds. We must help them understand the conditions of our "imprisonment"—how a vulgar, even violent materialism lays siege to our humanity. Most importantly we must name the social system and speak of the social conditions that are evidence that the system perpetuates myths and lies to cover up the effects of war, violence and oppression. We must speak candidly and with courage, for to speak the truth, the absolute truth, is what will be needed.

Student Apathy and Explanation of Trend

Just a quick internet search on Lexis-Nexis for information on "student apathy" brought up 125 links. It is painful to see how young people have diagnosed themselves. The message is clear in just a single example. A student from Clemson University writes, "When the subject came up in conversation recently, a friend put the issue succinctly, "Apathy is the hate of our generation." No, we don't burn churches or houses or riot in the streets or pass blatantly racist laws; what we do is so much worse. We just don't care."[5]

What we see across colleges and universities follows an overall trend in U.S. society of declining dialogue about democracy and civic participation. Many studies have confirmed this trend. In his sociological study *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Robert D. Putnam talks about the unraveling of the fabric of American community life and points to a whole list of suspects as contributors to the decline in civic engagement and social capital. What stands out more than anything else in Putnam's study is a "very significant generational divide in who participates and who doesn't."[6] Middle aged and older people participate much more than the young. Significantly, it is with the baby boomers, who were the first generation to be exposed to television, that we start seeing a precipitous decline. All forms of civic engagement continue to plummet with each successive generation. The more exposed a generation was to television in its formative years, the lower is its civic engagement during adulthood.

Putnam also notes that each successive generation is more materialistic than their predecessors.

In her books *The Over Worked American* and *The Over Spent American*, Juliet B. Schor addresses the cultural and social dynamics of what she refers to as the "new consumerism." By this she means "an up scaling of lifestyle norms; the pervasiveness of conspicuous, status goods and of competition for acquiring them."[7] Her research shows that television has become a critically important source of consumer cues and information. Because television shows are so heavily representative of the lifestyles of the rich and upper middle class, they inflate the viewer's perceptions of what others have, and what they must acquire in order to fit in.

But the new consumerism is ultimately profoundly alienating. Putnam's research shows that there is an undeniable connection between "the generational decline in social connectedness and the concomitant generational increase in suicide, depression, and malaise."[8] For example, use of

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anti-psychotics by young people in the U.S. rose fivefold in a decade between 1993 to 2002.[9]

For the children of this country the consequences are bitter. Television, the internet, and other media trick them into believing that their worth, their credibility, their popularity, and their self-image depends not on who they are intrinsically, but how their selves are adorned and embellished by "stuff." Rampant consumerism is the fuel that stokes the fires of capitalism, of a "supply side" economy. No wonder our leaders urged the public not to let the grieving after 9/11 get in the way of spending and consumption! A blatant, ubiquitous consumerist ideology distorts perceptions about values, priorities, human worth and credibility.

As Erich Fromm writes so poignantly, "Man has created a world of man-made things as it never existed before—yet, this whole creation stands over him and he pursues them to possess them to authenticate himself. He confronts himself with his own life force embodied in things he has created, he is owned by his own creation and has lost ownership of his self."[10]

Television, Anti-Intellectualism and Public Education

In *Dumbing Us Down*, John Taylor Gatto contends that if schools are an important indicator of the wellbeing of a democratic society, it doesn't bode well that the United States "ranks at the bottom of nineteen industrial nations in reading, writing and arithmetic." He notes that the world's narcotics trade is based upon U.S. consumption of drugs; and that schools are an important sales outlet. He also notes that the teenage suicide rate in the U.S. is the highest in the world."[11]

In *Stealing Innocence*, Henry A. Giroux argues that much of this can be attributed to the fact that, right from its inception, proponents of a market ideology have had enormous influence in shaping the content and culture of American public education, where "public education is viewed not in terms of its civic function; rather primarily as training ground for turning out finished products to serve our economy and educating students to define themselves as consumers rather than multifaceted social actors in which the only form of citizenship available for young people is consumerism."[12]

Between television at home and the commercial culture of schools, "growing up corporate has become a way of life for American youth." So in the United States today, nobody who reads, writes, thinks, or does arithmetic gets much respect. As Gatto writes, "It is very difficult to teach the "basics" anymore because they really aren't basic to the society we have made."[13]

The Task of the University

What then is the role of the university, especially one informed by a Catholic social teaching? How does a university guide its students on a path of self-liberation and self- realization? How do universities, which are so intricately tied with the capitalist system, which have been in the business of providing professionals to run this system and carry on its oppression, suddenly arm themselves to subvert that same system?

As I have meditated on these questions, I have been drawn time and time again to the works of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Paulo Freire. Many are familiar with Marx and his critique of capitalism. Marx's analysis is incisive when it comes to the alienation of the human spirit that capitalism fosters. Capitalism results in alienation of the person from its "species-being" and from its intrinsic human essence. I believe more and more that the spiritual bankruptcy of capitalism unsettled Marx as much as the economic exploitation it unleashed.

Max Weber similarly predicted that our lives in advanced capitalist societies would be marked by contradictions, such as waging war to bring peace and dehumanized by lack of freedom. People would feel they were living in iron cages, experiencing less meaning, in lives devoid of magic, mystery, curiosity, and creativity.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire says that the first step of an education that is liberating must "begin with men's recognition that they have been destroyed."[14] Change can come about only when we name the system that has rendered this destruction. There can be no raising of consciousness without the unveiling, the revelation of the objective reality at the root of the injustices, at the root of the violence.

A compulsory part of a university's curriculum has to be an in-depth understanding of the reality of

oppression and its causes, in both critical and constructive ways. The university must open its doors to the marginalized and provide opportunities for the university community to connect with the world outside its gates, first locally, then globally. It must allow opportunity for students to deepen their human experience by appreciating the bonds that connect them to the world around, especially to the invisible world of the poor and voiceless, so they can see how their privilege and the poverty of so many are two sides of the same coin. Freeing ourselves and our students from these "iron cages" must be the clear objective of our universities. Our education must orient students not to turn away when they see the mangled lives and communities around them. We must live deliberately and mindfully with our eyes wide open.

I applaud Georgian Court University for taking students to build schools and install water purification projects in Honduras, to do reconstruction work in New Orleans, and to live with the workers of *maquiladoras* in Juarez. There is a danger of "false generosity" though, if such service is felt as absolution or exoneration from blame for being privileged. Service must include the imperative to make fundamental changes in one's own life, liberating one's self from the "iron cage" of extravagance, ostentatiousness and waste. Service should lead students to strive to reconnect with their deepest human spirit. Contesting the ignorance about issues of structural injustices also means fighting lies and myths, the shields the system manufactures to hide behind. It is about empowering the students to see through the veil of deceptions so they become sophisticated, astute observers in detecting the various machinations of the system. It is indeed a heroic enterprise, and it can be a dangerous one.

Conclusion

Father Jon Sobrino, in *Companions of Jesus: The Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador,* describes the risk of a university being faithful to its Catholic identity.

> Telling the truth, communicating it in a way appropriate to a university . . . has always been dangerous. The sin of the world, the structural injustice that brings death, is not only unjust but tries to hide its evil nature, even pretending to be good. It may dress up as something desirable; it disguises reality by using euphemisms; "freedom of expression," "democracy," "elections," . . . So telling the truth does not just mean dissipating ignorance, but fighting lies. This is essential work for a university and central to our faith. (The) world we live in is simultaneously a world of death and a world of lies And I discovered this in Scripture. As Paul says, the world imprisons the truth with injustice. These Jesuits wanted to free the truth from the slavery imposed on it by oppressors, cast light on lies, bring justice in the midst of oppression, hope in the midst of discouragement, love in the midst of indifference, repression and hatred. That is why they were killed.[15]

Notes

1 Deborah Kadin, Letters to the Editor, *New York Times* (May 18, 2006).
2 Doug Weaver, Letters to the Editor, *New York Times* (May 18, 2006).
3 http://www.faulkingtruth.com/Articles/GlobalWarning/1024.html Robin Buckallew, "The American Way of Life is Not Negotiable" (Feb. 5, 2005).
4 Bob Herbert, *New York Times* (June 8, 2006).
5 Colleen Gleeson, "Apathy Rampant Among Today's Youth," *The Tiger*, Clemson University.
6 Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone : The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 283.
7 Juliet B. Schor, *The Overspent American: Why We Want What We Don't Need* (New York: Harper, 1998), 4.
8 Putnam, 263.
9 *New York Times* (July 6, 2006).
10 Erich Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man* (New York, Frederick Unger, 1961), p. 43. Jon Sobrino, Ignacio Ellacuria et al., *Companions of Jesus: The Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990).
11 John Taylor Gatto, *Dumbing us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling* (Canada: New Society, 2005), 20.
12 Henry A. Giroux, *Stealing Innocence: Corporate Culture's War on Children* (New York; Palgrave, 2000), 85.
13 Gatto, 24.
14 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1990), 40, 55.
15 Jon Sobrino, *Ignacio Ellacuria and others, Companions of Jesus: The Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador* (New York: Orbis, 1992), 27.

Being a University, Being Catholic, and Being in "Good Standing"

The Catholic Identity Issue

Susan M. Sanders, R.S.M., Ph.D. and Michael O'Keefe, Ph.D.

The Challenge

How does a president of a Mercy college or university make daily decisions about typically neuralgic "Catholic" issues such as whether to allow a link from the university's Women's Studies website to Planned Parenthood? The response of a Mercy administrator to challenges such as these may well reflect how it construes its Catholic identity and Mercy heritage. What different approaches might we take toward our Catholic identity and our Mercy heritage, and the context of our mission of teaching, learning, scholarship, and service? What do we need to do, or avoid doing, in order to be "in good standing" with the Catholic Church?

To understand why decisions to change direction are daunting, we need first to understand the current context of Catholic higher education and some of the pressures we face. These include pluralism of faith tradition in the campus community, bias and skepticism, diminished visibility of members of sponsoring congregations, more tensions with the designation "Catholic" than with founding charism, and a drift toward secular criteria for judging a university's performance.

Addressing the Catholic Church in America, Peter Steinfels in *A People Adrift* speaks eloquently of the challenges facing the entire church and the fact that it is poised on the verge of an irreversible decline or a thoroughgoing transformation. His words can also be applied to Catholic higher education, which is also entering a crucial window of opportunity, when our options will be narrowed and our understanding and practice of being Catholic and Mercy schools will become relatively fixed such that any changes in direction will become painfully difficult. According to Steinfels, we have to choose, despite the narrowing of our options, how we will construct our Catholic and Mercy identities.

In recent years, Catholic universities have faced specific challenges from Rome and from local bishops to their claim on Catholic identity. *Ex corde ecclesiae* is a Vatican document that describes, among other norms, the expectation that theology departments teach courses consistent with Catholic teaching. Some bishops require that Catholic faculty in their dioceses receive a *mandatum*, or authorization from the bishop to teach theology. Some expect that a majority of faculty will be Catholic; some expect a majority of members of the Board of Trustees will be Catholic. Others expect presidents of the institution to be Catholic. These expectations raise the issue of academic freedom, establishment of quotas based on faith, and head counting. Administrators have protested the effect on accreditation requirements and certification processes from sponsors. Some Catholic institutions are hounded by doctrinal watchdog groups, such as the Cardinal Newman Society.

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What Does "Catholic" Mean?

Using Robert Benne's schema for categorizing church-related institutions,[1] we can examine three models of how we might characterize and analyze our Catholic identities: the purist

model, the critical mass model, and the pluralist model. We suggest that where our institutions fall along a faith-based continuum will influence not only our decisions about website links, performances of such events as the *Vagina Monologues*, and commencement speakers and awardees, but also the design of our curricula, how we select and mentor our students, faculty, and staff members, and the ways we symbolize and celebrate our Catholic identities.

In addition, two other models can describe Catholic identity of educational institutions: the proscriptive and prescriptive models. Finally, values based on Catherine McAuley's orientation to education provide a resolution.

Purist Model

In Benne's purist model, 100 percent of the faculty and most of the students are members of the founding and sponsoring denomination or members of the Christian community associated with it.. Their educational mission includes passing on a specific set of core beliefs, behaviors, and practices of the sponsoring churches. Thus, purist schools demand that those who attend the school personally adhere to the faith tradition of the school and typically require that everyone associated with the school declare allegiance to its specific faith tradition. Examples include Texas Abilene Christian, Wheaton College in Illinois, and the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

One example whose website illustrates its purist character is Franciscan University of Steubenville. With typical homepage attractions, Steubenville's homepage is striking for its religious content. Its banner is a drawing of the chapel with the cross prominently featured and set off by a dark tab that reads: "Following Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life." Its text highlights a conference entitled "Surrounded by a Cloud of Witnesses," featuring "inspiring talks, liturgies, and fellowship for adults and youth across the nation." Its images highlight "Papal Secretary, Pro-Life Champions Reach out to Class of 2006"; or male students saying the Rosary. Its links are to the "Knights of the Holy Queen" and groups committed to a rigorous Catholic way of life; or to a *Newsweek* cover story entitled "Spirituality in America" that highlighted Franciscan students for their commitment to Catholicism.

Purist schools demand that those who attend the school personally adhere to the faith tradition of the school and typically require that everyone associated with the school declare allegiance to its specific faith tradition.

The "News" section highlights religious events like "Teens Find God's Unchanging Love;" or "Church Leaders Learn;" or "Charismatic Conference;" or "Grads Follow Vocation Call;" or a "New Director of Evangelization." The "Quick Facts" tab features a chapel schedule and the mission of Franciscan University, which is actually a two-page summary of a seven-page mission statement that commits the university to "Dynamic Orthodoxy, Christian Maturity, Good Stewardship and Evangelization," and to a vision of offering "a dynamic Catholic curriculum, integrating faith and reason, in an environment in which students, faculty, and staff seek ongoing personal conversion in the power of the Holy Spirit."

Under "Admissions," prospective students are told that Franciscan University is committed to a curriculum that "unites academic excellence [with] a love for the Catholic Church," and is coupled with a way of life that "celebrates the Lordship of Jesus Christ." In the "Student Life" section, specific religious associations occupy four of the six areas listed. One of the longest is "Households," which consist of "small groups of students who choose to live as brothers or sisters and openly share ideas, faith, and fun." Under "Chapel Ministry," the expectation is that students "will grow in their understanding and appreciation of the Catholic faith through participation in worship experiences, retreats, and workshops."

"Evangelistic Outreach" offers numerous opportunities to deepen one's faith and the faith of others, particularly by relying on the gifts of the Spirit, and "Student Outreach" encourages Franciscan students to give service to those who are "spiritually and materially impoverished." Even the "Student Organizations" link features religiously focused clubs, including "Latinos for Christ," the "Intelligent Design and Evolution Awareness Club," "Students for Life," and the "Voice in the Desert," which focuses on providing "opportunities for every student to enter into a personal relationship with Christ."

Although the admissions process does not ask for the kind of profession of faith that is typical at some Protestant purist institutions, Franciscan asks students to list their parish and provide their pastor's name. Further, Franciscan asks applicants about the "religious or faith-based organizations, clubs, or activities" they have been involved in (not "if" they have been involved). Finally, one of two admissions essays asks students to explain how they plan to "integrate [their] faith life into [their] career[s]."

Conceivably, one could work at or attend Franciscan University and not be a Catholic. The Vision Statement, however, speaks of every faculty and staff member being personally committed "to seek ongoing personal conversion in the power of the Holy Spirit." How might non-Catholics and nonbelievers experience life at Franciscan University, particularly when the University's nondiscrimination statement exempts religion as a category?

At critical mass schools, the goal is not to pass on a specific faith tradition, but to uphold its religious affiliation by helping everyone associated with the school to think seriously about its religious affiliation and the kind of issues and concerns raised by that tradition

Critical Mass Model

In the critical mass model, the aim is to ensure that at least a sizable minority of faculty, staff and students are members of the Christian denomination that founded and is currently associated with the school. At critical mass schools, the goal is not to pass on a specific faith tradition, but to uphold its religious affiliation by helping everyone associated with the school to think seriously about its religious affiliation and the kind of issues and concerns raised by that tradition and the broader traditions of other religious communities. Critical mass institutions do not expect students to provide a personal testimony of faith when they apply, nor do they expect faculty, staff, and administrators to pledge allegiance to a specific faith tradition or uphold a particular code of behavior.

These schools, however, do typically privilege one religious tradition over others, especially in dialogues about religious issues. Since dialogue is best served by a diverse body of faculty, administrators, students and staff, critical mass schools welcome members of many faith traditions and even those who have no religious conviction. Further, because critical mass institutions work to maintain their traditional links with the traditions and the churches they are affiliated with, they foster the kind of educational experience that would reflect these churches and traditions, and expect community-wide support for the faith traditions of the school and its religious mission. A good example is Wake Forest University in North Carolina.

Pluralist Model

In the pluralist model, a college or a university's religious heritage is understood as part of its historical roots rather than something that is actively promoted today. Consequently, pluralist schools typically do not affirm a particular religious identity or tradition nor do they commit themselves to passing on this tradition. There is little weight given to faith tradition or

practice in the hiring or evaluation of personnel, or in the shaping of discourse, programs, or policies. Further, little attention is given to the religious affiliation of those who work at the institution or those who attend the institution, even though a school might sponsor particular kinds of religious events to serve specific constituencies.

Pluralist institutions make no commitment to raise religious issues from a particular vantage point, and some pluralist institutions make no commitment to raise religious issues at all. The founding religious tradition is acknowledged as history and heritage, but not as an important context for a contemporary mission. Saint Lawrence University in Canton, New York, is an example of a pluralist university.

Pluralist institutions make no commitment to raise religious issues from a particular vantage point, and some pluralist institutions make no commitment to raise religious issues at all.

College of New Rochelle—Pluralist Model

The College of New Rochelle's homepage contrasts dramatically with Franciscan's in its lack of a religious dimension: No chapel on the banner masthead, but an image of Leland Castle, a historic landmark and focal point that houses Castle Gallery. Underneath the castle are images of a small of gathering of women celebrating the school's sixty-eighth alumnae/i reunion and an aerial shot of the college's new Wellness Center. The "News and Events" section lists a number of activities on campus, but none is overtly religious. The rest of the homepage has images of students and faculty, diverse in most ways but not in their religious views, even when they address why Rochelle is "right for you." None of these images reflects a setting that would indicate a religious milieu. The only indication that the College of New Rochelle is Catholic lies in a statement at the bottom of the page that claims that the College is the "largest Catholic college for women in the country."

The College of New Rochelle does not request information about an applicant's faith life. The "Academics" section give a fairly short statement on the four major programs at Rochelle, but none of these describes the College of New Rochelle as a Catholic and Ursuline College. The closest to a religious focus is on the School of Arts and Sciences' home page, which states that it honors the college's Catholic heritage by offering "a curriculum emphasizing empowerment of the individual, self-reflection and a commitment to social justice and service."

Throughout, the College of New Rochelle takes its prominence from its commitment to women's education, its proximity to New York, and its hospitality. One student testimony spoke about campus ministry and a second thought that attending a Catholic school was a good idea since it means that others would be "concentrating on [their] studies and not partying all the time." The faculty testimony did not address the religious dimension of the school. The only place where religious life was significantly addressed was in the on the "Campus Ministry" web page, but even here the emphasis was much more about inclusion of others than a reflection on the importance of its Ursuline or Catholic identity. The Campus Ministry home page features a picture of two women dressed in albs; one is carrying a cross, the second bearing a candle. The caption at the center of the page reads: "Campus Ministry affirms the equality of all God's people and is committed to inclusion and collaboration. We are committed to faith in action, peace through justice, and creating a spiritual environment that celebrates seekers, servers, and saints." The links on this page direct the reader to further subjects, the most religious being "Ongoing Programs," "Community Service," "Peer Ministry," "Peace and Justice," "Worship and Retreats," and "Music Ministry."

These pages, links, and expanded links make it clear that the College of New Rochelle is a Catholic college associated with the Ursuline Sisters, and that, at least in Campus Ministry, there

is a strong commitment to social action for peace and justice. However, in contrast to Franciscan, the College of New Rochelle does not seem to focus on "being Catholic" by promoting Catholicism, or by affirming specific behaviors that might be associated with being Catholic such as prayer, participation in the Sacraments, or making public proclamations or commitments that express Catholic orthodoxy.

with only general reference to its Catholic or Ursuline context. The College of New Rochelle "strives to articulate its academic tradition and religious heritage in ways that are consonant with the best contemporary understandings of both" and does so by providing "opportunities for spiritual growth in a context of freedom and ecumenism."

A prescriptive approach typically specifies what an institution *must do* to remain Catholic or in good standing with the institutional Church . . . The proscriptive approach, by contrast, focuses on what Catholic colleges and universities *may not do*.

Rather, the College of New Rochelle, through the Office of Campus Ministry, informs and invites the campus community, in the founding spirit of the Ursulines, "to participate in a community of faith held together by prayer, sacrament, scripture, celebration and contemplation," and rooted in their "Catholic liturgical celebrations," to "branch out to embrace the rich diversity of our multi-faith College community by inviting all to worship and prayer." In stark contrast to Franciscan, the College of New Rochelle's mission acknowledges that it was founded in 1904 by the Ursulines and is "Catholic in origin and heritage."

Further articulating its educational mission, the statement talks about "academic excellence and educational growth"

Prescriptive and Proscriptive Models

While the above three approaches can be taken toward maintaining or enhancing an institution's Catholic identity, most fall into an additional two categories: prescriptive and proscriptive.

A prescriptive approach typically specifies what an institution *must do* to remain Catholic or in good standing with the institutional Church. This is the approach of *Ex corde*, which focuses on the Catholicity of those who govern, administer, and deliver the educational mission at Catholic colleges and universities. The *Ex corde* approach is formative but implies that an institution might not be able to call itself Catholic if it fails to meet the prescribed requirements. Such an approach is attractive because it is clear and measurable, but it lacks attention to the faith tradition of an increasing number of students who come to our campuses who are not Catholic or who are Catholic but fairly "unchurched." It also ignores the influential role that staff members can play in delivering potentially formative services in areas such as student services, athletics, campus ministry, counseling, scheduling, or residential life.

The proscriptive approach, by contrast, focuses on what Catholic colleges and universities *may not do* if they wish to be called Catholic or to remain in good standing. Such proscriptions typically focus on who should not receive awards or honors or be allowed to speak, or on the nature of website links, or on the types of services offered that the university offers, especially at its campus health centers. This approach, implicitly punitive, usually focuses on a specific event or incident rather than the faith orientation of those engaged in delivering the mission.

For both approaches, there is usually little conversation about the *mission* of higher education which, as we see it, is generally one of seeking and conveying truth in all its forms, through teaching, learning, and scholarship. Rather, the conversation focuses more often focuses on the *context* for that mission, that is, being Catholic and Mercy.

Catherine McAuley's Alternative Approach.

The writings of Catherine McAuley that Margaret Farley, R.S.M., and Mary Sullivan,

In considering these options, we ought to feel some urgency since, as Steinfels warns, to make choices is to shape our futures, whether to strengthen who we now are or to make changes that will take us in a different direction and, perhaps, toward a different model.

R.S.M., discussed during this conference suggest an approach that is neither prescriptive nor proscriptive. Catherine McAuley's approach may be more efficacious in creating an enduring Catholic and Mercy organizational culture than accreditations, certification, and codifications because this approach shapes ethos and practice; it emphasizes good works and good example. The importance of these elements should not be overlooked in trying to create a genuine, pervasive, and enduring educational culture that is interesting, inviting, and effective in proclaiming a gospel of love and service.

The Present and Future for Mercy Schools

Given different approaches to being Catholic, what models might we adopt to respond to Steinfel's challenge or "to be in good standing" with the institutional Church?

Although Catholic colleges and universities do not fit neatly into Beene's three models, his approach can be used to explore at least the tendencies of some Catholic schools.

These models are not offered so that a Mercy institution can be pigeonholed into any of them. Nor is one model "more Catholic," even if it is a "pure" example of each type. One model is unlikely to put a school in "better standing" than another. Rather, these models and examples are useful for identifying the present character of an institution. They become a starting point to discuss the implications of such positioning, and then to decide whether such a description is congruent with the facts.

In considering these options, we ought to feel some urgency since, as Steinfels warns, to make choices is to shape our futures, whether to strengthen who we now are or to make changes that will take us in a different direction and, perhaps, toward a different model of being institutions of higher education which are both Catholic and Mercy. The character of our mission, and the focus, visibility, and vitality of our Catholic identity and Mercy heritage should be critical concerns, not only for presidents and senior administration who face almost daily decisions about "Catholic" issues, but also for our faculties, staffs, and boards of trustees.

Shaping our future will be our decisions about engaging the religious pluralism on our campuses while maintaining our Catholic identity; expanding curricula, scholarship, and discourse to include and perhaps, to privilege Catholic perspectives, even when some assert falsely that academic freedom is jeopardized; aggressively challenging those outside the academic community, whether within the institutional Church or at its fringes, who would limit our search for truth, whether in our teaching, our learning, or our scholarship; and finally, through our good works and good example create, as Catherine McAuley did in her ministries, an ethos driven not by prescriptions or proscriptions, or by the need to rectify, certify, or sanctify, but of service, hospitality, justice, and excellence so that we may serve each other wisely and compassionately in support of human dignity and the common good.

Notes

1 Benne, Robert. *Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Traditions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) as cited in *Mentoring for Mission: Nurturing New Faculty at Church-Related Colleges*, Caroline J. Simon, et al., editors (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

Assisting Single Mothers Achieve College Degrees and Self-Sufficiency

Martha L. Brown, Ph.D. and Heidi Jacobson

Founded in 1923 by the Sisters of Mercy, College of Saint Mary (CSM) is one of seventy all-women colleges in the United States and the only such institution in a five-state area surrounding Omaha, Nebraska. During our eighty-two year history, the college has focused on "the careful education of women" in an environment that "calls forth potential and fosters leadership."

Because CSM is a women's college and because our founders, the Sisters of Mercy, have a legacy of serving women and children, we believe we bear a responsibility to reach out to "niches" of women for whom persistence toward completing a degree might be difficult. One of the most striking changes in family structure over the last twenty years has been the increase in single-parent families. Single mothers and their children constitute the fastest growing segment of persons falling into poverty. One of the many challenges that single mothers face is that they are often cut off from pursuing the educational opportunities that could provide them with the skills to find well-paying jobs to keep them out of poverty. For many single mothers, the only way they will ever become truly self-sufficient is to obtain a college education. In addition, the model they provide for their children sets a powerful example of a mother who is working hard and studying at night in order to obtain an education and a better life for herself and for her children.

With mission in mind, CSM has developed several programs designed to support single mothers pursuing a college education.

The McAuley Scholars Program provides academically able women on welfare full tuition, fees, and books. This program serves fifteen women at any one time on the campus and since its inception in 1994 has enabled thirty-nine to graduate, all of whom have productive careers and are self-sufficient economically. McAuley scholars are full-time students who are expected to maintain good academic standing, attend program activities, and participate in community service each year.

Mothers Living and Learning is a year-round residency initiative that offers single mothers the opportunity to live on campus in residence halls with their children while pursuing their degree at CSM. The students are responsible for their individual tuition, room, and board expenses, though many do qualify for financial and scholarship aid. This initiative enables women who would customarily be denied a residential college experience because of their children to have the opportunity to enjoy the community of other single mothers with similar stories-similar concerns, backgrounds, experiences, and goals-as well as similar aspirations. Obtaining a college degree while raising a child brings with it special challenges. However, when single mothers can live in a supportive environment on campus, they have a better chance of being successful students and parents. This innovative program was introduced in the fall of 2000 with nine women and eleven children and has grown to its current population of twenty-eight women and thirty-

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seven children. With recent capital improvements ten new rooms are now available, increasing program capacity by 30 percent.

Childcare Means Mom Stays in School is a program that provides funding to bridge the gap between Title XX state childcare assistance and the tuition at our on-campus, state-of-the-art child development center. CSM raises funds from private donors and foundations to maintain stipends for thirty low-income student-parents. Unfortunately, state-assisted childcare reimbursement has not increased with the annual center tuition increases, so the program currently costs approximately $90,000 annually.

An educational program is offered in support of these initiatives that includes a speaker series, community building, and other special activities. These programs address a variety of issues relevant to single mothers, such as child discipline, parenting skills, stress and time management, and financial planning.

In addition, we have learned that it is very important to provide support systems and information about referrals to community resources to assist single mothers when they are experiencing difficulty. We provide academic assistance, mentoring, career counseling, problem solving, leadership, and service opportunities through on-campus staff. We develop and maintain free or very inexpensive off-campus referral information for needs such as clothing, toys, counseling, and car repair. Since many of our single mothers receive public assistance, we have developed a cooperative arrangement with our Health and Human Services office. They designate two caseworkers to handle the cases of College of Saint Mary students. Prior to this arrangement, all of our students had different caseworkers which led to great inconsistency regarding requirements and the approval of benefits. Now that we work primarily with two caseworkers, we can get to know them, invite them to campus to meet with our students, and work cooperatively to resolve any questions or issues that arise.

Another important part of assisting single mothers who receive public assistance is to make a commitment to become knowledgeable about current state and federal legislation that may affect our students. We work closely with Nebraska Appleseed, a public interest legal advocacy group, to monitor proposed legislation. Twice in the last three years, we have taken our students to our state capitol to testify against bills that would cut back childcare benefits or disallow women on welfare to be students in four-year higher education programs. In both cases, the legislation was defeated. We believe this happened in part because of the powerful testimony from women who are working hard to become educated and get off public assistance permanently. We were able to successfully make the case that it is less expensive for the state to pay welfare benefits for a single mother while she is going to college than it is to prevent her from obtaining an education by requiring her to work full-time in a low wage job where she is likely to continue to be eligible for subsidies indefinitely.

It is less expensive for the state to pay welfare benefits for a single mother while she is going to college than it is to prevent her from obtaining an education by requiring her to work full-time in a low wage job where she is likely to continue to be eligible for subsidies indefinitely.

Finally, if you want to effectively serve low-income single mothers, it is important to make sure your campus is child friendly. We have added high chairs and booster seats to our dining hall and included child-friendly items on the menu. Student mothers who live on campus have individually assigned parking spaces so they can park near their residence when juggling groceries, books, and an infant or toddler. Our library has equipped one of the study rooms with toys and books so children can be occupied while their mom is studying.

These programs and services are a vital part of the college's identity and mission fulfillment and enable us to build on our founder's belief that "no work of charity is more productive for the good of Society than careful education of women."

Diversifying Enrollment at a Higher Education Institution

Martha Brown, Ph.D. and Lori Werth

Many colleges and universities share a common belief, born of experience, that diversity in their student bodies, faculties, and staff is important for them to fulfill their mission. This is especially true for Mercy higher education. Diversity at Mercy institutions enriches the educational experience. We learn from those whose experiences, beliefs, and perspectives are different from our own, and these lessons can be taught best in a richly diverse intellectual and social environment. Diversity encourages critical thinking and it helps students learn to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds.

New figures from the Census Bureau show that Hispanics accounted for about half the population growth in the U.S. last year. Currently, there are about 44 million Latinos in the United States. The Latino population is projected to grow to more than 115 million people by 2025, making Latinos 27 percent of the total U.S. population. With the changing demographics in this country, how can we successfully work with Hispanic females in an educational environment? College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Nebraska has developed several strategies that have successfully fostered the cultural development of the campus community.

In 2002, College of Saint Mary launched the Committee on Global Awareness (COGA). COGA was initiated as a hard-working, dedicated group of faculty, staff and students with the purpose of helping CSM become a more inclusive community. They developed the following guiding philosophy for their work:

> Everyone can feel isolated, mistreated, singled out, or alone at times, yet powerful and dominant at other points in time. Exposure to specific cultures is only a part of the picture; we also need training in the effects of being both in the majority and in the minority, the responsibilities we carry when in each role, and the ability to critically analyze points of view of the "other side" while taking into account an individual's status as it relates to ours.

Some of the important initiatives that have been implemented as a result of COGA's efforts and recommendations include the following:

- The establishment of a set of "Guidelines for Open Discourse" at CSM. These were thoroughly discussed and debated in open forums and then laminated and posted in each classroom and included in course syllabi. The guidelines are as follows, "In the spirit of intellectual inquiry, College of Saint Mary is committed to the exchange of diverse ideas and viewpoints. In this environment, honest discourse is valued; demeaning remarks are not tolerated. Each member of the campus community is encouraged to: recognize the basis of her or his own assumptions and perspectives; acknowledge the assumptions and perspectives of others; and promote understanding and respectful dissent."

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- The development of a free, noncredit course in conversational Spanish for faculty and staff. This course is offered every semester and focuses on basic Spanish and helping participants develop a list of phrases most commonly used in their work area, translated into Spanish.
- The addition of Spanish translations to typically English-only directional and room signage on campus
- The development of Spanish translations of key financial aid and enrollment publications
- Working closely with Hispanic community leaders to develop a strong summer residential academic program for Latina junior high and high school students
- The addition of a full-time Hispanic recruiter in Enrollment
- Assistant dean of students who is Latina and active with the recruitment and retention of Latina students
- Development of a Latina leadership group inclusive of all Latina students on-campus and a support group for new students who are exploring CSM as an option for higher education
- CSM has made a commitment to provide scholarships and financial aid to Latina students, including Latina students who are undocumented.
- The launching of a Center for Transcultural Learning that currently provides intensive Spanish for Health Care Professionals in our community and helps foreign credentialed health professionals obtain licensure in the United States

It is essential to begin with the development of a core group or a committee who can begin the initial development of strategies on how to diversify your institution. Including faculty, staff, and students would provide your institution with a variety of views and would make your planning a success. In addition, review the demographics and population trends. Where do you see the growth? How can your institution capitalize on the growth? Finally, it is important to remember that recruitment is only one piece of the puzzle. At CSM, we have made a commitment to develop strategies to retain students and develop a supportive environment for them to succeed. Please consider a model that develops both recruitment and retention strategies.

Passing on the Traditions
Rituals and Celebrations in Nursing Education

Sharon R. Redding, M.N., R.N., C.N.E.

As nurses, our beliefs are based on educational background and values we have been taught. What are the traditions, rituals, and celebrations that are a part of the students' nursing education experience that lay the foundation for future beliefs and practices? What symbols are significant? What beliefs are communicated? How are nurses' values demonstrated? What is the role of the nurse educator in fostering students' value systems?

Nurse educators promote affective learning. Curriculum evaluation criteria ask nurse educators how they foster affective learning and value systems. Educators in faith-based educational settings incorporate spiritual symbols and ceremonies, such as capping and pinning to enhance affective learning and promote values.

Nurse educators focus on the socialization process of individuals entering nursing education programs as well as the image of the profession. Nurses (and nurse educators) emphasize our professional image in therapeutic interactions. We role model our image when we wear a lab coat or carry a stethoscope.

Pride emanates from symbols such as nursing pins, which give both the graduate and the public a sense of who nurses are, what they believe, and the foundations of the profession. Many of the symbols used in ceremony and ritual give students a sense of history. Professionalism is reinforced in ceremony. Ceremony is also important to faculty, as we need a reminder that students shape the future of the profession and carry on the Mercy mission.

Lamps

Lamps are an important historical tradition in nursing and become the centerpiece of rituals and traditions evident in nursing education programs. Florence Nightingale's first nursing assignment was in a Crimean War hospital that lacked electricity and had small windows. One of Florence's first demands was that doors and windows be opened, as she believed that air and light were important to the wounded soldiers' state of mind. She walked the corridors of the hospital at night, when she felt that the soldiers needed support and reassurance. She carried a lamp and as a result, she became known as "The Lady with the Lamp."[1]

Sisters of Mercy

The original group of nurses who accompanied Florence Nightingale included Sisters of Mercy. As casualties increased, more nurses were needed and again Sisters of Mercy were asked to go to war hospitals. Florence did not readily accept the influx of these Sisters and did much to undermine their efforts. Eventually they were assigned to other hospitals where they received high commendations.[2] Sisters adopted Florence's practice of walking the halls and corridors with lamps and Florence went on to recognize their superb efforts.

Sisters of Mercy have served as nurses in hospitals, homes, and prisons, and as educators at all academic levels. As changes have occurred within

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nursing education, the Mercy schools of nursing have also evolved. The early historical focus was on diploma education; the emphasis today is on associate and baccalaureate degree preparation as well as graduate nursing education programs. But, the basic tenets of Sister Catherine McAuley have remained unchanged.

College of Saint Mary carries on a tradition of providing clinical opportunities for students in diverse settings. Students work at the county jail with an underserved population that includes individuals with addictions, mental health disorders, and acute and chronic illness. For some students, this is their first exposure to a diverse nursing care setting unlike anything they may experience.

Another clinical setting that carries on the Mercy historical traditions is the VA Standdown. This is a community effort, providing a day of respite to homeless veterans. Students participate as part of a service-learning focus. Some nursing students comment that this is a life-altering experience, as they have never worked with the homeless or in a multi-agency community service setting.

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Service-Learning

The incorporation of service-learning within the nursing curriculum carries on the foundations established by early nursing leaders. Nursing programs have evolved the concepts of service-learning due to clinical practicum activities. The reflection component is evident as students gather for post-conference to discuss feelings, concerns, and the learning they have gained. This socialization process is where personal values, beliefs, and biases are shared. It is also when students hear the comments of others, which validates personal learning.

Service-learning activities are integrated throughout the nursing curriculum: organizing health fairs at Mercy housing projects, teaching babysitting and child care classes to Girl Scout troops, offering an introduction to nursing careers for fourth graders touring the nursing labs, giving flu shots at city-wide clinics, or sponsoring a blood mobile.

Nursing Pins

Nursing pins are a symbol best understood by nurses, rather than the public. Pins are unique to each nursing program and mean different things to each wearer. The nursing pin of the college is made of gold to represent the worthiness of the wearer. The pin is shaped in a circle for constancy and has College of Saint Mary in relief on the blue of truth and loyalty. The red flame signifies the flame of knowledge and the color of courage.

Nursing Caps

Nursing caps are another symbol that is well known to students and nurses, but has gradually disappeared from view in most health care settings. Yet, it remains a well-known symbol to the public. Nursing caps were originally designed to cover the long hair fashionable during the late nineteenth century.[3] Each school developed their own distinctive cap. Caps and pins became indicative of the high standards of the training school from which the nurse was a graduate. It wasn't until the 1980s that caps became impractical.[4]

A ceremony for bestowing caps and pins was frequently a part of the socialization process of student nurses. Typically, a capping ceremony was held in conjunction with the successful completion of the

students' first nursing course. Students often made a public declaration of dedication to the nursing profession. Family, friends, faculty, and administrators marked this milestone with the students.

Dedications

Dedication ceremonies with a candle lighting ritual are a common event in schools of nursing. Typically, these occur early in the nursing school curriculum. Parents, nursing faculty, and staff are invited. The carrying of a Nightingale lamp is a frequent part of this ceremony.

College of Saint Mary started a new nursing education tradition several years ago. Faculty believed it was important for students to acknowledge their commitment to join the ranks of the profession. This ceremony marks an important psychological and sociological transition as students declare their intent to move from one stage of life to another. There is the students' announcement to the greater social group and community that a developmental milestone has been achieved and that there is a concomitant assumption of a new role. Nursing faculty believe in providing a public acknowledgement of students' efforts and commitment.[5]

College of Saint Mary started a new nursing education tradition several years ago. Faculty believed it was important for students to acknowledge their commitment to join the ranks of the profession.

As a part of this ceremony, the college chapel is decorated with symbols selected to signify the enduring characteristics of nursing. There are Florence Nightingale lamps, reflecting nursing knowledge, carried by students, faculty, and nurses in the audience. A graduation hood is on display showing the color apricot for nursing. Textbooks represent the breadth of nursing knowledge and its application to practice. There is a stethoscope, symbolizing the scientific aspect of nursing. There is the warmth of candles, which symbolize the caring, spiritual qualities of nurses. There is the College of Saint Mary nursing pin.

As part of the ceremony, students are given a different pin. It is a Celtic cross to symbolize the philosophy of the nursing program, to reflect the Irish heritage and Christian nature of the college. It also signifies the caring and nurturing aspects of the profession. Another gift is a bookmark printed with the Code of Ethics for Nurses.

During the ceremony, students and members of the audience are asked to reflect on the mission of the college. The faculty believes that nursing is a journey to realize a vision of healing where the art and science of nursing and medicine converge with the power of hope and miracles. The vision depends on the daily expression of a philosophy of nursing and in each student's pledge to provide a higher standard of care for those served. Nursing students can achieve this vision because of the foundations from which nurses work. Students, faculty, and any nurses present are invited to light their lamps or candles and remain standing as they recite a pledge.

Pledges

Many people may be aware of the Florence Nightingale Pledge. Students, faculty and nurses frequently make this pledge as part of ceremonies. The pledge was composed by an instructor of nursing and was first used in 1893. It is an adaptation of the Hippocratic Oath taken by physicians. There is no evidence that Florence Nightingale had input or knowledge of its content; however, it bears her name.[6]

Stethoscopes

Stethoscopes are not a symbol that has profound meaning for nursing faculty or students in education programs. But stethoscopes are frequently thought of, by the lay public, as being a symbol of a health care provider.

Stethoscopes are one of the first tools integrated into a nursing education program. To patients, it is a symbol of the nurse's ability to recognize health and illness and to make an accurate assessment. It becomes a symbol of the nurses' need for

scientific training and embodies the trusting relationship between patient and health care provider.

Uniforms

Other than a nursing cap, probably nothing has as much tradition to nursing students as their uniform. Historically, distinctive student raiment was not evident until 1874. Students at the Bellevue School resisted uniforms even though administrators felt they were advantageous on the grounds of economy, neatness, and its effect on the esprit de corps.[7]

In time, the conventional image of a nurse was a woman in long, crisp, starched, white, cotton uniform and sensible white leather shoes. Nursing students wore capes and carried black bags.

Today's student probably wears a shirt of knit, wash-and-wear fabric; white pants, white leather sneakers; has a lab coat and a photo ID hanging around her neck. The influence of today's fashions, the need for easy-care clothing, the inclusion of male nurses within the ranks, as well as the requirements of health care institutions, have all altered the tradition of a uniform. Many hospitals require specific styles and colors of uniform so as to engender a sense of ownership and responsibility for the mission of the institution and to assist the public in recognizing their nurses. Long ago, the nursing cap was a nurses' signature.

For nursing students and faculty, uniforms symbolize commitment to nursing education, principles of teamwork and organization, as well as a level of expectation different than that of the staff in the unit where the students are being taught. Uniforms make it easy for hospital staff and patients to distinguish a student from a paid caregiver. For patients, the nursing student in uniform symbolizes someone who will spend more time with them, listen to their fears and concerns, focus on teaching, and reduce their stress.

Research studies indicate that student learning outcomes are improved when nursing students wear uniforms in a non-hospital-based clinical setting.[8] Faculty may have students wear uniforms for a specific learning experience. An example is when students complete a clinical scenario using the electronic manikin, simulating an emergency respiratory or cardiac arrest. The exercise includes cardiopulmonary resuscitation and shocking the heart. Faculty have developed a simulated case study and students are put through this activity as if they were working with a client in a hospital setting. The impact of this event is not the same when students are wearing flip-flops, shorts and tank tops. There is a sense of seriousness, a focused effort, and a cooperative energy with students in uniform.

Summary

Nursing traditions are richly symbolic of our heritage and the historical development of the profession. College of Saint Mary nursing faculty believes it is important to focus on the affective learning needs of students. We incorporate content on nursing history, the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy, nursing leaders and their contributions. Being a predominately female career path, the rituals and ceremonies take on characteristics that focus on the qualities of nurturing, compassion, caring, and healing. With the passage of time, symbols and rituals change, but the underlying responsibilities of nursing remain. As faculty, we focus on promoting students' affective learning by the inclusion of ceremonies and rituals that foster the mission of our institution and the characteristics we hope to see in our graduates. These characteristics are evident in all levels of our nursing education programs and they are to provide patient/client advocacy, compassionate care, and respectful and evidence-based service to those who are placed in our trust.

Notes

1 Dolan, J., Fitzpatrick, & M., Herrman, E., *Nursing in Society: A Historical Perspective,* 15th ed. (Philadelphia: WB Saunders, 1983), 286.
2 Ibid.
3 Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation. Downloaded 5/19/06 http://www.civilization.ca/hist/infirm/inint01e.html.
4 Kalisch, P., & Kalisch, B. *American Nursing in History,* 4th ed. (Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2004), 316.
5 Hawkins, P., & Redding S., Commissioning Ceremony: "I want to belong . . . I pledge . . . I accept. *Nurse Educator,* Jul 2004, 29 (4): 133.
6 http://www.countryjoe.com/nightingale/pledge.htm Downloaded 5/20/06.
7 Nutting, M. & Dock, L. *A History of Nursing,* Vol. 2 (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 400–401.
8 Kalisch & Kalisch, 388.

Reflection on 1 Corinthians
Missioning Ceremony

Linda Werthman, R.S.M., Ph.D.

There are a number of translations for 1 Corinthians 12:7[1]

> To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.
>
> To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.
>
> The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.

Regardless of the translation, I would suggest that there are two truths that are expressed in 1 Corinthians 12:7. The first truth is that each of us is gifted with a unique, distinctive matrix born of the convergence of factors we have no control over or claim to having orchestrated and factors that have been the result of our choices, our actions. In the Catholic tradition, we believe that is how the Spirit works: both within us and beyond us. A dance where we have a unique role by choice and by circumstances, but it is also a dance that is influenced by the movements and choices of others.

The second truth answers for what purpose: "for the common good," "for some benefit," "for the good of all." It is a truth that philosophers, poets, song writers, and just plain common sense have articulated in various ways: goodness tends to communicate itself, "No man is an island, entire of itself;"[2] "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life;[3] "not for ourselves alone; the impulse to generativity."

For many of us, a hope of these two truths being actualized in an integrated life can be concretized in another. Both persons within our life's network—parents, spouse, partner, friends, mentors—and persons whose recorded actions inspire, challenge and motivate us though we have never met them.

Our second reading is a glimpse into how one person who continues to inspire many of us. Catherine McAuley integrated her unique and distinctive matrix of gifts for the common good, for a benefit beyond herself, for the good of all. We heard in the reading from Joanna Regan and Isabelle Keiss's work *Tender Courage* that "Catherine had acquired the conviction that the life of Christ was to be imitated. She not only entered the Gospels; she internalized them. For her Jesus was [a] model, a way to be, a way to live. The gift of the Spirit to Catherine, her charism, accentuated in her an awareness of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus: salvation in the giving—the gift that was needed, neither earned nor deserved."

A gift, a goodness, that impelled her to go out to others, to share the mercy she had experienced. It was Catherine's integration of gifts given and choices made that was a seed that has brought us to this moment.

Groups, associations, movements, institutions also have distinctive gifts or characteristics and function in environments not entirely under their control. They also tap into more energy when aspiring and striving to live out a mission or purpose that is greater than that of survival. Such is the reality of each of the colleges and universities you serve in and the Conference for Mercy Higher Education.

The colleges and universities that will be stewarded, nurtured, and supported by the Conference for Mercy Higher Education are unique and distinctive matrices of the gifts and choices that have flowed from the community founded by Catherine McAuley, the persons and events that are part and parcel of the institutions within the conference, each of us gathered here, and the myriad of our colleagues not here who labor within the colleges and universities.

With the establishment of the Conference for Mercy Higher Education, we are calledto expand the boundaries of the dance beyond ourselves, beyond the higher education institutions where we serve. The challenge for each of us as we leave this symposium is how each of us will contribute to the dance called the Conference for Mercy Higher Education, integrating the unique gifts of persons and institutions for the common good, for some benefit, for the good of all.

Notes

1 "Mercy at Work in Catherine's Life," *Morning and Evening Prayer of the Sisters of Mercy*, 898–899
2 John Donne, Meditation XVII.
3 Mary Oliver, "The Summer Day."

The Canonical Sponsor Council Role and Responsibilities

Mary Kathryn Grant, Ph.D.

The term *sponsorship* was first used in the 1960s and made popular in the 1970s to describe the relationship between an apostolic work—such as schools, colleges, healthcare facilities—and the party who, in the eyes of the Church, is responsible for the institution's faithfulness to church law, church teachings and directives and to the institution's own mission and values. While there is no foundation for this use of the term sponsor in either canon or civil law, the concept carries both civil and canonical responsibilities.

The Conference for Mercy Higher Education defines sponsorship as "a sacred trust, insuring the fidelity of an apostolic work to Catholic identity and Sisters of Mercy mission and values."

Coupled with sponsorship is the role of *public juridic person*—or PJP—a term roughly equivalent to *corporation* in civil law. In the eyes of the Catholic Church, the PJP has ultimate responsibility for a specific ministry and the assets used in that ministry.

Until this year, individual regional communities sponsored Mercy colleges/universities. Most often, the public juridic person was the regional community and responsibilities were exercised by the leadership team. However, Institute reconfiguring into communities composed of multiple regional communities, eliminated the authority of regional communities and necessitated a new model of sponsorship. A decision was made to put all Mercy-sponsored colleges and universities under the existing public juridic person of the Institute.

As each Mercy college/university signs on to the Conference for Mercy Higher Education, the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas becomes its public juridic person. The Institute leadership team has delegated limited reserved powers related to sponsorship to a Canonical Sponsor Council composed of Sisters of Mercy, appointed from and by the founding communities of Mercy colleges and universites, and one leadership team member from the Institute.

The Canonical Sponsor Council appoints and removes CMHE, Inc. Board members and approves changes to CMHE bylaws affecting mission, purpose, and sponsoring authority as well as changes to CMHE articles of incorporation.

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John Hayward, JD

Contributors

Martha Brown, Ph.D., has worked in Catholic higher education for twenty years. She received her B.S. from Montana State University and her master's degree from Arizona State University. She completed her Ph.D. in 1994 in higher education administration at the University of Nebraska. She has been at CSM since 1998. Currently, she serves as the vice president for student development, overseeing the areas of athletics, residence life, student activities, campus ministry, the Achievement Center, and judicial affairs. In addition, she is the accreditation coordinator and liaison to the child development center on campus. Previously, she held positions at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

Ruth Ann Burns is the vice president of marketing and external affairs for Georgian Court University. Burns is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Douglass College and earned her master's degree in political science from Rutgers University. She is responsible for strategic communications, marketing, and external partnerships for the university. Prior to joining the university, Ms. Burns spent eighteen years in public television in vice presidential positions as station manager for Thirteen/WNET in New York, the flagship station for PBS, and as the founding VP and director of the WNET's Educational Resources Center. Burns was named one of fifteen people who made a difference nationally in Public Television. Prior to her public television work, Burns was a senior research and program associate at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University. Early in her career, Burns was a war correspondent in Vietnam. She later served two terms as a trustee of Rutgers University. She presently serves on public service boards in New York City.

Avis Clendenen, D.Min., Ph.D. is professor of religious studies at Saint Xavier University in Chicago, and an Associate in the West/Midwest Community. She is coauthor with Sister Irene Dugan, r.c. of *Love Is All Around in Disguise: Meditations for Spiritual Seekers* (Chiron Publications, 2004), editor of *Spirituality in Depth: Essays in Honor of Sister Irene Dugan, r.c.* (Chiron Publications, 2002), and coauthor with Troy W. Martin of *Forgiveness: Finding Freedom Through Reconciliation* (Crossroad Publications, 2002). Her articles have appeared in *New Theology Review, Journal of Pastoral Care, U.S. Catholic, Lectionary Homiletics, Journal of Religious Education* and *Psychology and Judaism.* She is currently completing the manuscript, *Experiencing Hildegard: Jungian Insights into the Spiritual Vision of 12th Ccentury Hildegard of Bingen.*

Kasturi (Rumu) DasGupta is professor of sociology at Georgian Court University where she has taught for seventeen years. She holds a B.A. from Delhi University and a Ph.D. from Louisiana State University. She teaches courses in sociological theory, social inequality, race and ethnicity, globalization and political sociology. Her publications have focused on domestic violence among South Asians, third world women in American higher education, raising bicultural children.

Margaret Farley, R.S.M., Ph.D. holds the Gilbert L. Stark Chair in Christian Ethics at Yale University Divinity School, where she has taught since 1971. She is a past president of the Society of Christian Ethics and the Catholic Theological Society of America, as well as being a recipient of the CTSA's John Courtney Murray Award. She has served on many national committees for health care ethics, as well as hospital ethics boards. She is codirector of the Yale University Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics, the director of the Yale Divinity School Women's Initiative on

Gender, Father, and Response to HIV and AIDS in Africa, and codirector of the All-Africa Conference: Sister to Sister. She is the author of *Personal Commitments*; *Compassionate Respect: A Feminist Approach to Medical Ethics* and most recently *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics*. In addition, she has written more than seventy-five articles.

Mary Kathryn Grant, Ph.D. was, until her death in August, 2006, the executive director of the Conference for Mercy Higher Education. Previously, she worked as executive vice president of sponsorship and mission at Holy Cross Health System Corporation from 1990-2000. She served in administrative roles for Catholic Health Association, Mercy Health Conference in Farmington Hills, Michigan, and Consolidated Catholic Health Care in Illinois. She had a history in higher education, including Mercy College of Detroit (1970–1977), Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles, and St. Xavier University in Chicago. She published frequently in *Health Progress*, and addressed professional audiences on questions of leadership, sponsorship, mission effectiveness and work-place spirituality. She held a B.A. in English from Mercy College of Detroit, an M.A. in English from the University of Notre Dame, and a Ph.D. in English and American studies from Indiana University.

Diana L. Hayes, Ph.D., J.D. is professor of systematic theology in the Department of Theology at Georgetown. Her areas of specialization are womanist theology, black theology, U.S.liberation theologies, contextual theologies, religion and public life, and African American and womanist spirituality. She is the first African American woman to receive the Pontifical Doctor of Sacred Theology degree (S.T.D.) from the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium) and has also received three honorary doctorates. She is the author of six books and more than fifty articles. She received her B.A. from State University of New York, Buffalo; an S.T.L. from the Catholic University of America, a J.D. from George Washington University, and an S.T.D. from Katholieke Universiteit Louvain (Belgium).

Heidi Jacobsen, B.A., came to College of Saint Mary, Omaha, Nebraska, in Fall 2000 as a young, single mother with her two-year-old daughter, Julia, to live in the new Mothers Living and Learning program. She began working full-time for the College in 2003 while completing her degree. She graduated from the Business Leadership Program in May 2005 and transitioned to the Enrollment Department as a transfer admissions counselor. She now works mainly with non-traditional and transfer students, as well as Mothers Living and Learning. She also works with the Fast Track to Teaching, a teaching certificate program, and is in charge of the Presidential Ambassadors and the Student Telemarketing Admissions Representatives (S.T.A.R.).

Rosemary E. Jeffries, R.S.M. Ph.D., is president of Georgian Court University in Lakewood, NJ. She earned her doctorate in sociology and M.A. in public communications from Fordham University. She also holds an M.A. in religious studies from Princeton Theological Seminary and a B.A. in art education from Georgian Court University. Sister Rosemary served in congregational leadership roles including director of communications, member of the Leadership Team and vice president from 1998 until 2001. She currently serves as a member of the Catholic Charities Board of Trustees, Diocese of Trenton; Board of Trustees of St. Joseph's College, West Hartford, CT; and secretary of the New Jersey Presidents' Council. She is the former chair of the Tri-Stat

Advisory Board for Thirteen/WNET, and a former member of the Tri-State Catholic Committee on Radio and Television. She has published in journals, such as *Campus Technology, New Catholic World* and *Horizon: Journal of the National Religious Vocation Conference*.

Patricia E. Koch, Esq., is currently chair of the Board of Trustees at Georgian Court University. She started her career in the New Jersey Office of the Public Advocate and is a senior fellow at the National Center for Victims of Crime. She spent twenty-two years with Bell Atlantic Corporation/Verizon Communications. At Verizon, she served as the principal liaison with the Federal Communications Commission. She served on the Board of Trustees at St. Thomas Aquinas College, N.Y. She was president of the Morristown, NJ City Council and served two terms as council member-at-large. Ms. Koch is presently president and owner of PJ Designs, providing all aspects of professional design services to hospitality, commercial and residential clientele. She currently lives in Washington, DC and in Virginia where she has a cattle farm.

Wade Luquet, M.S.W., Ph.D., is associate professor of sociology at Gwynedd-Mercy College. He is the author of the book *Short-Term Couples Therapy: The Imago Model in Action* (Routledge, 1996; 2nd edition 2006) and coeditor of *Healing in the Relational Paradigm: The Imago Relationship Therapy Casebook* (Routledge, 1998) and *Imago Relationship Therapy: Perspectives on Theory* (Jossey-Bass, 2005). He has also authored numerous articles in the fields of sociology, social work, and couples therapy.

Elizabeth McMillan, R.S.M., Ph.D., teaches theology in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, and is engaged in community organizing with women and religious vocation and formation ministry. From 1992–1998 she taught at the seminary of the Missionary Fraternity of Mary in Guatemala City. Previously, she taught philosophy at Carlow College in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Loyola University in Chicago. She also served as a health care ethicist on the staff of Catholic Health Association in St. Louis. From 1974–1981, she was academic dean of Carlow College. She holds a B.A. in Latin from Mount Mercy (now Carlow College), an M.A. in philosophy from Marquette University, and a Ph.D. from Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium.

Alex Mikulich, Ph.D., is a parent and anti-racist activist who teaches urban, social justice, and peace courses in the Religious Studies and Theology Department at Saint Joseph College, West Hartford, Connecticut. He is coediting *Interrupting White Privilege: Roman Catholic Theologians Break the Silence,* forthcoming from Orbis Books in 2007. He earned his doctorate in theological ethics from Loyola University Chicago in 2001.

Sharon R. Redding, M.N., R.N., C.N.E., is associate professor of nursing at College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Nebraska. She received her B.S.N. from the University of Nebraska College of Nursing in Omaha, and her master's in nursing from the University of Washington in Seattle, along with her certification as nurse educator. Her focus on maternal-child nursing is related to her work in international health care. She was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Chad and Liberia, and a nurse educator with Project HOPE in Brazil. She has published articles in *Nurse Educator*. She is a contributing author for Black & Hawks volume on medical-surgical nursing. She belongs to

Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society and the Association for Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses.

Jennifer Reed-Bouley, Ph.D., is associate professor of theology and director of the Service-Learning Program at College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Nebraska. Her recent contributions to Mercy-sponsored publications include "The Congruence Between Catholic Social Teaching and Mercy Higher Education" in the Conference for Mercy Higher Education DVD entitled "Transforming Hallmark: Education and Action for Justice" and an article, "Bringing Service and Learning Home: A Partnership Between College of Saint Mary and Mercy Housing," *Living Mercy,* July 2006.

Susan Sanders, R.S.M., Ph.D., is associate vice president for mission at Saint Xavier University in Chicago, Illinois. She has also served as associate professor of history and political science there. She received her masters degree in public policy from the University of California at Berkeley and Ph.D. in public policy from the University of Chicago. She has taught policy analysis, ethics and statistics at the University of California, at University of Chicago, and at DePaul University of Chicago, where she was associate professor of public services for eleven years before coming to St. Xavier University in 2001. She lectures widely on teen dating violence and the economic and organizational aspects of nonprofit organizations. She is the author of *Teen Dating Violence: The Invisible Peril* (Peter Lang, 2003).

Mary C. Sullivan, R.S.M., Ph.D., is professor emeritus of language and literature, and dean emeritus of the College of Liberal Arts at the Rochester Institute of Technology. She is the editor most recently of *The Correspondence of Catherine McAuley (1818–1841)* (Four Courts Press, Catholic University of America Press, 2004); the definitive biography of the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1995); and editor of the correspondence between two notable women collaborators in health-care, *The Friendship of Florence Nightingale and Mary Clare M*oore (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

Lori Werth, M.S., is vice president for enrollment management at College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Nebraska. She received her B.S. in biology from Albertson College of Idaho, and an M.S. in education and counseling from Oregon State University. She has worked at several institutions in admissions and financial aid, most recently as director of admissions at Albertson College of Idaho. Now at College of Saint Mary, she oversees recruitment for both the Omaha and Lincoln campuses, as well as ensuring that the marketing programs are to their fullest capacity.

Linda Werthman, R.S.M., Ph.D., is presently one of five officers of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the America. This central national office in Silver Spring, Maryland coordinates activities and sponsored works of the Sisters of Mercy in the U.S.A.. Previously, she served as president of the Detroit Regional Community of the Sisters of Mercy, as associate vice president and provost at University of Detroit Mercy, and a four-year term as one of two Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) representatives on the Bishop's National Advisory Council, which advises the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. She holds a Ph.D. in social welfare, policy and planning from Case Western Reserve University.

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MERCY ASSOCIATION IN SCRIPTURE AND THEOLOGY

MAST, the Mercy Association in Scripture and Theology, met for the first time in June 1987 at Gwynedd-Mercy College in Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania. Called together by Eloise Rosenblatt, R.S.M. and Mary Ann Getty, twenty Mercy theologians and Scripture scholars from fourteen regional communities formally established the organization to provide a forum for dialogue and cooperation among Sisters of Mercy and associates. The stated purpose of the organization is to promote studies and research in Scripture, theology, and related fields; to support its members in scholarly pursuits through study, writing, teaching, and administration; and to provide a means for members to address current issues within the context of their related disciplines.

MAST has been meeting annually since then, and the organization now numbers fifty, with members living and working in Australia, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America, as well as in the United States. Marilyn King, R.S.M., currently serves as MAST's executive director. MAST will hold its 21st annual meeting in Philadelphia at St. Rafaela Retreat Center June 15–17, 2007, and its 22nd annual meeting in Burlingame, California, at Mercy Center June 13–15, 2008.

Members work on a variety of task forces related to their scholarly discipline. Present task forces include: Scripture, healthcare ethics, and spirituality. In addition, the members seek to be of service to the Institute by providing a forum for ongoing theological education.

Membership dues are $25 per year, payable to Marilee Howard, R.S.M., MAST treasurer, 8380 Colesville Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Email: mhoward@sistersofmercy.org.

If you would like to be on the mailing list, write: Marilyn King, R.S.M., Executive Director, The Laura, 1995 Sam Browning Road, Lebanon, KY 40033 or e-mail mheleneking@alltel.net.

Since 1991, *The MAST Journal* has been published three times a year. Members of the organization serve on the journal's editorial board on a rotating basis, and several members have taken responsibility over the years to edit individual issues. Maryanne Stevens, R.S.M., was the founding editor of the journal, and Eloise Rosenblatt, R.S.M., currently serves in that capacity. Marilyn King, R.S.M., currently serves as MAST's executive director.

Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Auburn Regional Community
Mercy Center Auburn
535 Sacramento Street
Auburn, CA 95603