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Mission as a Dialogic Unity of Contraries

Ronald C. Arnett

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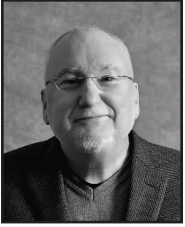


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Prof. Ronald C. Arnett

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intercultural dialogue clarifies mission, which strengthens Catholic identity

MISSION AS A DIALOGIC UNITY OF CONTRARIES

INTRODUCTION

Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit assumes a particular orientation to Catholic education: a mission that is dialogic, responsive to uniqueness of localities, and attentive to ecumenical spirit. Leonardo Franchi, who has devoted much of his career to Catholic education and is the author of *Shared Mission: Religious Education in the Catholic Tradition*,¹ provided a thoughtful set of guidelines for understanding Catholic education from a macro and global perspective. Franchi² stated that “the Holy See’s teaching on education . . . purposes ‘intercultural dialogue’” as an overarching theme of Catholic education. Franchi defines intercultural dialogue within the framework of conversation between and among different religious traditions. Franchi indicates that *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love*³ emerged from the Second Vatican Council and its Declaration on Catholic education, *Gravissimum educationis*, which framed a seven-point plan for Catholic education from an intercultural perspective: (a) Catholic identity, (b) common vision, (c) responsible globalization, (d) grounded identities, (e) self-knowledge, (f) respect for other religions and cultures, and (g) an ongoing commitment to shared responsibility. The aim of *Gravissimum educationis* was to invite intercultural dialogue as a creative force for social harmony. Franchi’s article indicates two major presuppositions—(a) intercultural dialogue requires knowing the ground of one’s own faith before engaging another in dialogue; and (b) intercultural dialogue requires attentiveness to the formation of Catholic educators and teachers. Key to the formational process are knowledge of the importance of liturgy and an active love of education within church tradition.⁴ Franchi asserted that intercultural dialogue clarifies mission, which strengthens Catholic identity. Dialogue begins with knowledge of the faith tradition composed of embodied Catholic culture flowing from liturgy and art, music, and humane reflection. Such an understanding of intercultural dialogue jettisons participation in culture wars for a willingness to learn from contrary perspectives. Franchi cites Pope Benedict XVI’s “Courtyard of the Gentiles” initiative as an effort to reach out to proponents of atheism beyond pathways of safety in order to understand God’s world more fully. Emerging insight comes from dialogue between and among historical issues within a given culture, doctrine, and tradition—education is fundamentally a dialogic task. In the interplay of Catholic faith and culture and the

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meeting of difference, knowledge naturally develops. A Catholic understanding of education begins with deep knowledge of the foundations of one's own faith and a willingness to meet Otherness. Dialogue presupposes a Catholic culture, an ongoing conversation taken into an emerging exchange.

Pope Francis claimed dialogue as the educational heart of learning, connecting a Catholic tradition with a pluralistic society. Franchi explains, "Catholic educators are called to appreciate and learn from the famed Benedictine union of learning and service of which they are the inheritors."⁵ One of the bases of formation is a liturgy that embraces the Trinity, while turning away from self-centeredness. Liturgy is not a mere construct of community but "a truly Trinitarian action that looks beyond the circle of the worshiping community."⁶ Such a perspective counters the golden calf of today's education, a focus on the self. The liturgical embodies mysteries of the faith, navigating Catholics from sadness through joy, acting as everyday reminders of death and resurrection.

Liturgy points to the good of the faith, with the teacher generalizing this focus in nuanced participation of grace with others. Augustine termed this conception of education as movement toward God and away from ourselves in acts of service to others. As Franchi writes, "The liturgy has no space for superficiality, banality, and self-centeredness."⁷ Emphasis on liturgy moves one from trifles to points of signification. Catholic educators, engaging in an intercultural dialogue, love the tradition of the church as they engage modern insights. This dual focus is the dialogic fulcrum of Catholic education and learning. This position coincides with the work of John Henry Newman (1801–1890), where science interacts with doctrine and tradition, which act as "curators of a museum."⁸ Catholic educators enrich love of tradition through prayer, reflection on sacred texts, and engagement in pastoral practice, bringing together a Christian anthropology of "faith-reason."⁹ Loving church tradition and education requires meeting the reality of the world in a moment facing an ever-increasing antireligious sentiment within the West. One is met with a dialogic narrow ridge of embodiment of tradition with a willingness to encounter and potentially learn from new insights and positions. The dialogic task is to resist a refusal to learn from difference and to resist a dismissive response to one's own tradition.

THE GROUNDS OF DIALOGUE

Education centered within an intercultural dialogue assumes respect for one's own tradition and that of another. Intercultural dialogue situated with the faith describes

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mission as a unity of contraries, composed of deep knowledge of one's own tradition accompanied by a simultaneous willingness to venture into the new and the different. Dialogue does not presuppose adherence to or agreement with another's position, but it does necessitate a genuine effort to understand another viewpoint. This position of dialogic learning is akin to Buber's¹⁰ work as a Jewish philosopher and theologian of dialogue, as in Arnett's 1986 work.¹¹ Buber emphasized that dialogue begins with the ground under one's feet, not with the immediate conversation itself. Long before a given exchange transpires, one has been in dialogue with ideas and events fundamental to one's own narrative formation. The movements of Buber's dialogue are threefold: (a) know one's own narrative ground; (b) attend to the position of another; and (c) seek to understand, not necessarily to condone. Intercultural dialogue is far from relativistic; it stands upon narrative ground and tradition with a willingness to learn from the other as one tests one's own presuppositions. This understanding of dialogue contrasts significantly with psychological dialogue, as represented by the clinical framework of Carl Rogers¹² in the United States. Where Rogers assumed that dialogues begin without presuppositions, Buber and the educational orientation of intercultural dialogue assume that the narrative ground of self and the other shape both the direction and substance of an exchange. Dialogue is not an act of conversational neutrality. The stress on presuppositions that undergird one's dialogic contribution shapes the philosophical hermeneutic dialogic project of Hans-Georg Gadamer, which commences the interpretative process with bias and prejudice, such as tradition, culture, and knowledge of the church. Such a position on intercultural dialogue recognizes that, ultimately, the goal of education begins with traditional ground and the courage to learn from dissimilar perspectives. Dialogue is a unity of contraries of both traditional ground and a willingness to meet the new, situated within revelation, not relativism.

A UNITY OF CONTRARIES, *EX CORDE* ECCLESIAE AND CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The theme of a unity of contraries undergirds Michael Rizzi's¹³ citing of *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, which frames participation of Catholic and non-Catholic faculty and students within a Catholic university. The religious sentiment that directs Catholic education is a willingness to search for truth both within and outside of one's own tradition. The community of the faith nourishes itself in knowledge of its tradition and in a willingness to reach out to the powerless, the stranger, and the

outcast; venturing out to otherness comes from assurance situated within a tradition of faith.

Rizzi's analysis of Catholic education in the United States¹⁴ is centered on five periods: the Frontier Period (1789–1862), the Morrill Act/Land-Grant Period (1882–1920s), the Inter-War Period (1920–1945), the GI Bill Period (1945–1967), and the Land O'Lakes Period (1967–present). In the Frontier Period, the Catholic presence was often one of few educational options. As the number of Catholic colleges increased, one practice was constant: lack of discrimination against contrary beliefs. Many of the early Catholic schools from that period closed. More than 70% shut down by the 1800s, with only 305 remaining in 1965 and closer to 200 remaining today. In the Morrill Act/Land-Grant Period, one witnessed a large introduction of land-grant universities that stressed practical sciences to assist the economic needs of the middle class. Catholic schools increasingly emphasized business and the professions, including education, medicine, and law. This era found many of the Catholic women's schools now re-chartered to deliver a four-year baccalaureate education. The first men's school to enroll female students was Marquette University in 1909.¹⁵ A number of the Catholic orders sent clergy to earn graduate degrees, with Notre Dame's Theodore Hesburgh, CSC, being a prime example; he earned his doctorate from Catholic University of America. The GI bill, with its multiple grants and loans, required expanding Catholic personnel as schools increased in numbers. The dramatic rise in student numbers resulted in priests, brothers, and sisters no longer being able to fill all the necessary roles on a campus. The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) inaugurated two significant changes—elevating “the role of the laity in Catholic institutions” and embodying less involvement “by church authorities.”¹⁶ Additionally, independent boards of trustees became common. The Land O'Lakes statement of 1967 largely frames the nature of the Catholic educational mission to this day. The goal of the statement was to transform small teaching academies into modern research universities without losing their Catholic identity. Ownership and management of Catholic schools continued connections with the Church but became more informal, consistent with Article 1 of the Land O'Lakes statement that emphasized academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

The Land O'Lakes statement consists of 10 major points that propel the contemporary Catholic university:

- A Catholic university is an authentic university defined by distinctive characteristics. The Catholic university is a

unity of contraries, embracing the full range of academic disciplines important to a society while working from a clear Catholic perspective.

Nourishing creative dialogue among different areas of study limits the danger of theological or philosophical imperialism

- A Catholic university must respect and support theological disciplines.
- A Catholic university must elaborate a Catholic and Christian anthropology and also attend to the larger religious heritage of the world.
- A Catholic university must foster interdisciplinary dialogue by supporting multiple disciplines and academic fields of study. Nourishing creative dialogue among different areas of study limits the danger of “theological or philosophical imperialism,”¹⁷ making space for multiple scientific and humanities methods of inquiry in the pursuit of knowledge on a Catholic campus.
- A Catholic university must act as the reflective intelligence of the Church. Catholic universities, according to the document, must increase their counsel to the larger Church to address a complex and demanding future. Such dialogue is essential for the university, Church, and larger society.
- A Catholic university must embrace a public commitment to research to attend to a world spinning increasingly out of Christian control.
- A Catholic university must engage in public service, assisting the inner city, government activities, society, the Church, and the larger world.
- A Catholic university must foster an undergraduate education nurtured by ultimate questions, theologically and philosophically. The campus environment should assist students in their full development both spiritually and socially, encouraging responsive responsibility in examination of historically relevant social issues, such as shared rights, the pursuit of international peace, and the ongoing issue of human poverty.
- A Catholic University must nourish special characteristics of a Catholic community of learners, encouraging students to move their learning and insights into ongoing commitments attentive to application of faith and knowledge to promote the flourishing of others.
- A Catholic university must be flexible, shifting Catholic organization and administration characteristics to

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address historical changes. What must remain is a profound commitment to service, to people, to respect for others, and to an ongoing responsibility for God's world.

The current president of the University of Notre Dame, Fr. John Jenkins, CSC, revisited the Land O'Lakes statement in a piece titled "The Document that Changed Catholic Education Forever," published in *America*. He reminded readers that Land O'Lakes is a property owned and operated by the University of Notre Dame, composed of 7,000 wooded acres of trees, vegetation, and approximately 30 lakes.¹⁸ Land O'Lakes is on the border of the upper peninsula of Michigan and Wisconsin. In this natural setting emerged a powerful and, for some, controversial document that set the tone for the contemporary Catholic university. The background for the Land O'Lakes statement was the reforms of the Second Vatican Council and the International Federation of Catholic Universities, with Hesburgh serving as the head of the federation at that time. Major leaders of Catholic universities gathered in response to a significant document of the Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et spes*.

The goal of Land O'Lakes statement was to work within a unity of contraries of institutional autonomy, protecting academic freedom and, simultaneously, enhancing Catholic identity. Jenkins states that the Land O' Lakes setting was tranquil, which stands in contrast to the reception of the document in the years since its release. Some indicated that the document introduces confusion into Catholic education and creates controversy over its direction. Critics suggested that perhaps the Land O'Lakes statement originated from a personal desire for academic prestige, which necessitated asking the Church to remain outside the influence of academic work. Hesburgh, who chaired the gathering, had experienced interference from the Church in 1957, when he attempted to publish an edited book of papers for the International Federation of Catholic Universities, an organization he headed. He was asked to withdraw a number of the papers from publication "because of one paper on religious freedom, written by the eminent theologian John Courtney Murray, S.J, who was at that time highly controversial . . . later a highly influential contributor at Vatican II."¹⁹ Hesburgh wanted to protect the academic freedom and integrity of Catholic universities. Without such fortification, the Catholic university could not assume the role of a contemporary research university. The Land O'Lakes statement did not seek absolute independence from the Church; the task was to underscore public recognition of two competing responsibilities: academic

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excellence and Church tradition. Critics failed to understand that “the authors of the Lakes statement were determined to produce a document that would be submitted, alongside documents from elsewhere around the world, for review by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education of the Holy See.”²⁰ This goal was in stark contrast to a rallying cry for unilateral independence from the Church.

The Land O’Lakes statement stressed a Catholicism that could infuse an academic community with learning that was no longer dependent upon one location and that was capable of encouraging learning and dialogue between and among diverse disciplines. Conversations about God, the notion of the good, and the ultimate ends of human life accompany academic excellence at a Catholic university. Critics claimed that the Land O’Lakes document moved too closely to secularism; Jenkins countered with a reminder that the charge of Catholics is to participate in all of God’s world. The Land O’Lakes statement framed the “why” for Catholic universities to compete with the finest secular institutions. The statement encouraged Catholic universities to maintain their commitment to both academic excellence and Church tradition.

Jenkins asserted that since the 1967 Land O’Lakes statement, the world decreased reliance upon a faith stance. Thus, Pope John Paul II (1920–2005) in his 1990 *Ex corde ecclesiae* reinforced the Land O’Lakes statement with autonomy and academic freedom but, in addition, stressed the necessity of upholding connections with the local Church and the bishop in a given region. *Ex corde ecclesiae* was a wakeup call about a changing historical moment, a reminder that both parts of the unity of contraries (academic freedom and commitment to Church tradition) require constant support. Catholic leaders must discern shifts in a historical moment, emphasizing “the correct balance between autonomy and communion.”²¹

The Land O’Lakes document was a public praising of academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and high scholarship standards. In the 1998 *Fides et ratio*,²² Pope John Paul II directed bishops to focus on faith and reason. Pope John Paul II, now Saint John Paul II, underscored the importance of inquiry as fundamental to Catholic tradition. Faith and reason work hand in hand within the mission of Catholic education. If there was a limitation of the Land O’Lakes document, it was having too much confidence in the institution of the Church, which unleashed undue hope for Catholic education with increasing emphasis on educational autonomy. Both academic freedom and commitment to church tradition are essential, and at various times, one emphasis requires greater attention

than the other. A unity of contraries is far from the notion of a “golden mean” (Aristotle).

In the introduction to the *Apostolic Constitution of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on Catholic Universities*, Pope John Paul II (1990) specifically addressed Catholic universities as being born from the head of the church, stating, “I would like to manifest my deep conviction that a Catholic University is without any doubt one of the best instruments that the church offers to our age which is searching for certainty and wisdom” (parag. 15). Catholic universities are central for human progress and for the development of the church itself. John Paul II (1990) avowed that the Catholic university possesses the “institutional autonomy necessary to perform its functions effectively and guarantees its members academic freedom” (p. 3). Additionally, every Catholic university needs to have, according to John Paul II, four major characteristics: (a) individuals in each Catholic university capable of Catholic inspiration; (b) ongoing research within the light of the faith; (c) a fidelity of message, uniting church, faith, and academic inquiry; and (d) an institutional commitment to being of service to God’s people. These four characteristics undergird teaching, research, and service.

In a Catholic university, research needs to privilege “(a) the search for an integration of knowledge, (b) a dialogue between faith and reason, (c) an ethical concern, and (d) a theological perspective” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 4). Knowledge is revealed to the human person, carrying moral and ethical implications. With a deep commitment to the tradition and the faith, Catholic universities have sufficient ground to welcome those without religious belief but who are capable of advancing disciplinary insights. Every Catholic university must advocate for the Church and for the advancement of knowledge in society. Academic participation on a Catholic campus needs to respect the Church and Catholic doctrine in order to speak a truth that much of society rejects. Ethical religious principles must guide every aspect of a Catholic university. Pursuing organizational excellence in Catholic universities in creative responsiveness with the Holy See and the International Federation of Catholic Universities necessitates a cultural dialogue between the gospel and the world with active participation in ongoing conversations within the culture.

Responsibility to and respect for faith tradition, persons, family, and society are dialogic signatures of Catholic education. The Church recognizes that Catholic universities offer an interplay of dialogue between faith and culture, which, ultimately, enhances faith about God’s world. In the *Apostolic Constitution, Ex corde ecclesiae, of the Supreme Pontiff*

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John Paul II on Catholic Universities, John Paul II summarized five general norms that should establish the coordinates of a Catholic university: (a) having a commitment to a holistic education of research, teaching, and service; (b) situating research and teaching within the spirit of Catholic ideals, which nurtures and preserves Catholic commitments and identity; (c) nourishing and preserving Catholic identity and mission; (d) appreciating conscience in teaching and research, respectful of the coordinates of the Catholic identity, and (e) embracing the autonomy of the Catholic university within its distinctive Catholic mission.

The nature of the Catholic university includes a community of scholars committed to research, teaching, and service within Catholic ideals. The Catholic university must preserve its Catholic identity, as it both protects scholarly conscience and acts as the caretaker of official university statements that sustain a Catholic identity. Maintaining a public Catholic identity is largely dependent upon the university community: the chancellor, the president, and the board of trustees, all charged with recruitment of personnel capable of contributing to the identity of a Catholic university. Teachers and administrators at a Catholic university have a “responsibility to promote, or at least to respect, that [Catholic] identity.”²³ The task of Catholic teachers and scholars is to respect the morals and doctrine of the Church.

To maintain a Catholic identity at a university, non-Catholic teachers should not be the majority. In each of the academic areas, there should be a commitment to an ethical formation. Each Catholic university should maintain communion with the universal Church, respect the responsibility of the bishop, and willingly communicate appropriate information about the university to the Catholic authorities. Pastoral care involves religious and qualified practitioners committed to the church and to the university community. Catholic universities cooperate and work with international and national organizations on issues of “justice, development and progress.”²⁴ Catholic universities are an important mission of the Church. With great hope, the Church “entrusts to Catholic universities . . . cultural and religious meaning of vital importance because it concerns the very future of humanity” (ibid.). The sacred task of Catholic universities is the promotion of scholarship and teaching through the arts and the sciences, embedded within the faith tradition of the Church. The mission of a Catholic university is a demanding unity of contraries: contributing to ongoing debates about research in all areas of study while fostering Catholic values throughout the institution. The lives of students and future generations in a society require an ongoing commitment to inquiry and faith.

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Indeed, the ongoing renewal of Catholic universities is intimately connected to a mission that carries faith to culture and society through research and inquiry. Hahnenberg revisited Hesburgh's contribution to the Land O'Lakes conference 50 years after its conception. Hesburgh placed theology in a dialogic role, mediating the move of Catholic universities into contemporary academic centers of scholarship, pursuing excellence under the umbrella of academic freedom. Hahnenberg argued that the Land O'Lakes document continues to be a touchstone, igniting both positive and negative responses, particularly in regard to its uncompromising emphasis on autonomy. However, unlike the case of Protestant campuses, theology is a defining element of the Catholic campus itself. Hesburgh contributed to a comprehensive understanding of a Catholic university, with the theology department being essential to Catholic identity, supported by philosophy. Hesburgh understood the incarnation of Christ as the mediating function between a Holy God and sinful humanity, mediating between the human and the divine. According to Hahnenberg, "[F]or Aquinas, this mediation was not the linking of two opposed realities that did not belong together. Instead, the priestly mediation of Christ implied a fundamental unity of the two, a non-competitive union of the human and the divine,"²⁵ a unity of contraries. Theology, which had been relegated to the seminary alone, becomes a central touchstone for all college students. The Land O'Lakes statement's shift from philosophy to theology was more akin to a harmonious accord; for Hesburgh, theology's mediating role required that it influence all disciplines.

At 35 years old, Hesburgh became the president of the University of Notre Dame, with just four years of administrative experience. Hesburgh's first presidential address in the fall of 1952 did not stress theology; nevertheless, he repeatedly referred to John Henry Newman's classic work, *The Idea of a University*. He also referred frequently to Leo R. Ward, who was a Holy Cross priest and a professor of moral philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. Hesburgh believed that the Catholic university and its theological foundations could integrate research in an era propelled by a pragmatic Enlightenment spirit. Confidence in Catholic tradition impelled Hesburgh to speak of the reality of Catholic academic excellence. Hesburgh wanted to move beyond Catholic parochialism and mediocracy, energized by a courageous conviction that on a Catholic campus there are no conflicts between theology and science, or between theology and other fields of study. Catholic universities, in his eyes, were the guiding hope of an enlightened faith. By

1958, however, he was no longer using the term “integration.” He then stressed mediation, a unity of contraries that refuses total integration. Theology and Catholic universities were to be “a mediator facilitating a sorely needed exchange between Christian wisdom and the world’s most pressing problems.”²⁶

In order for the Catholic universities to function as mediators, they had to match the excellence of secular and state universities without abandoning theological wisdom. One of the key elements of the university, for Hesburgh, was a spirit of engagement and openness. The focus on Catholic as universal emphasized engagement of information via a mediating dialogic role of standing between “the realm of human knowledge and the saving message of Christ.”²⁷ Hesburgh’s appreciation for the world (humanity, the Church, and the incarnation) framed the Catholic university as mediator, “neither simply church, nor simply academy,” a bridge between the two.²⁸ The goal of the Catholic university and of theology is to function as a mediator across multiple domains of inquiry and issues.

Catholic universities function as mediators in unique ways through their particular Catholic identity and charism, which work in dialogue with a larger Catholic commitment. Michael Galligan-Stierle and Jeffery R. Gerlomes Jr.’s essay on a founding order²⁹ assumes that mission and identity have a dialogic character, keeping them far from tribalism. They point to the importance of institutional vocation—just as individual persons have a particular calling, so do institutions, specifically Catholic institutions. At a Catholic university, reason and faith are inseparable, and “reason absent from faith becomes nihilistic.”³⁰ Catholic identity necessitates being part of the body of Christ as universities in intellectual contributions to the culture. The charism of a given university is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which gives particularity of Catholic expression. A Catholic institution finds identity via practices and story, charism, and mission engagement. The Catholic university undertakes a mediating role of dialogue that bears witness to its vocational calling. Members of a community of learning testify to the power of a given charism, as colleagues from Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit can attest.

Darlene Weaver’s discussion of mission and identity stresses intellectual traditions, with an emphasis on Pope John Paul II in *Ex corde ecclesiae* identifying four hallmarks of a Catholic university: “a shared vision, a commitment to service, inquiry conducted in the light of faith, and fidelity to Catholic tradition.”³¹ The Catholic tradition of faith and reason is a dwelling capable of meeting the struggles of secularism and social fragmentation, as disciplines discern both amoral and

moral foundations that explicate the particularity of Catholic ethics—illuminating distinctiveness of a Catholic approach to academic disciplines. There is encouragement in faithfulness to a Catholic tradition driven by longstanding, not immediate, litmus tests. Catholic universities draw from a Catholic intellectual tradition, finding phenomenological inspiration from “previous generations of the Catholic thought and practice.”³² The Catholic intellectual tradition manifests both continuity and responsiveness to change. The tradition of the faith addresses the demands of the given historical moment, rooted in dialogic reflection between past and emerging questions. This emphasis on a unity of contraries is the explicit theme of the work of two Duquesne University professors, Janie M. Harden Fritz, Ph.D., and John Sawicki, C.S.Sp.

THE SPIRITAN CHARISM AND DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

Fritz and Sawicki’s essay³³ articulates the importance of the unity of contraries on a Catholic campus from the Bluff at Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit. They emphasize the unity of academic excellence in teaching and publication and, simultaneously, the necessity to care for the whole person of the student, in order to “serve God by serving students” (p. 53). Fritz and Sawicki cite the dual nature of the Duquesne campus as pragmatic and mission driven. Pragmatism pays the bills of the institution and assists students in their pursuit of successful careers. Practical elements of an academic campus include educational training and the possibility of career opportunity, as well as institutional support and survival, all within the background of a Catholic mission. The Second Vatican Council’s directive for Catholic universities called for constant renewal of mission. Catholic universities contribute with a faith background for direction of scholarly inquiry, with Duquesne’s emphasis on the pragmatic and the Spirit offering a unique sense of guidance on its campus.

An exemplar of Duquesne University’s pragmatic and spirit-led mission was Henry J. Koren, C.S.Sp., head of the Department of Philosophy and Theology in the early 1950s and a prolific author. The university created the Henry J. Koren, C.S.Sp. Chair in Scholarly Excellence, with a stress on mission. Duquesne University’s mission frames a unity of contraries within the practices of the Church and responsiveness and flexibility to the historical moment. Fr. Koren’s mission at a Catholic university within a Spiritan heritage embraced a unity of contraries within the tradition of the Church and attentive flexibility to the historical moment. Koren emphasized the importance of Fr. Francis Libermann, a co-founder of the

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Congregation of the Holy Spirit, the Spiritans. He came from an orthodox Jewish family and stressed the integration of the Holy Spirit and practical work in God's world: "Liebermann asks us to live the gospel in a way that is not marred by the time and place of its origin but is valid for the universal man, for human beings anywhere and at any time, because it is sufficiently flexible to become inculturated wherever the Spirit blows."³⁴ This responsiveness to the historical moment permitted Liebermann to stress an individual sense of salvation inclusive of the salvation of the world.

Spiritans listen to the needs of a given moment in God's world

Spiritans listen to the needs of a given moment in God's world and work with people in accordance with their own unique, specific, and historically driven needs. A Spiritan can understand the dialogic literacy campaigns of Paulo Freire (1921–1997). Freire did not begin with an introduction to great literature; his work with literacy began with the needs of the people before him.³⁵ He helped people read what was central to their lives, including information on farm implementation and crop rotation, pamphlets on local politics, or directions for medicine use. The people drove the literacy agenda; he did not impose an abstract view of learning upon the people. Spiritans follow a similar educational course, walking consistently in dialogue with the needs of God's world.

As a Spiritan walks into centers from which others flee, crisis meets a pragmatic certainty; no matter what the time or moment, this is still God's world

To define a Spiritan charism, one must offer examples of Spiritans in action. It is difficult to supply a theoretical framework for a group that has flexible responsiveness to the historical moment and the needs of God's people as its mandate. Spiritans bring a pragmatic conviction to help in the midst of an undenied sense of despair. This unity of contraries is a dialogic standard that permits the needs of a given moment to meet the living power of a tradition of faith. Spiritans congregate when hope vacates a given place; only then do Spiritans walk against a current hopelessness, bringing little attention to themselves as they address the needs of a people. A dialogic sense of a unity of contraries invites revelation in the meeting of despair and conviction of the faith in action. As a Spiritan walks into centers from which others flee, crisis meets a pragmatic certainty; no matter what the time or moment, this is still God's world. The Spiritan mission deals with the particular needs of the people without entrapment and without assurance of secular success. A Spiritan enacts a responsive faith that begins with the needs of God's world. Duquesne University states that it is the task of the campus to serve God by serving students. The mission of a Spiritan is to serve all of God's people, ever responsive to changes in the demands of a given historical moment. Duquesne University serves God by serving students, for God's people are forever students in that each one must learn from and

respond to changes in God's world. Their pragmatic mission is to serve in a given time and place, finding revelatory dialogue in the demands of today and the conviction of the faith in action.

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Duquesne University, Pittsburgh*

ENDNOTES

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4. Franchi, "Catholic Education," 118.
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