Realizing a Mission: Teaching Justice as "Right Relationship"

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As a Roman Catholic priest, I often hear the confessions of people seeking God's absolution; yet, I have a confession to make. In 1972, when I was halfway through law school, several of my classmates and I took a study break to see Francis Ford Coppola's adaptation of Mario Puzo's novel The Godfather.¹

In the opening scene of the film, Bonaserra, an undertaker, seeks a favor from Don Corleone. Bonaserra's daughter, a recent victim of violence and attempted sexual assault who nonetheless retained her honor and virtue, convalesces in the hospital. The undertaker wants the Don to kill the two young men who tried to rape his daughter. He implores Don Corleone for justice—that is, revenge. The Don reminds Bonaserra that his daughter is still alive and that murdering the perpetrators would not be justice. The Godfather and the undertaker compromise: the two boys responsible for the assault will suffer as Bonaserra's daughter has.²

Don Corleone and Bonaserra agreed that making the attempted rapists suffer as their victim had was justice. Was that justice? More importantly, what is justice, and what is the role of the Christian academy regarding it?

Notions of justice range from the inscription above the portal of the United States Supreme Court, which proclaims "Equal Justice Under Law," to John Rawls's "justice as fairness."³

¹ THE GODFATHER (Paramount Pictures 1972).
² See id.
³ See JOHN RAWLS, A THEORY OF JUSTICE 3–53 (1971) (explaining his theory of "justice as fairness").
There is also the ancient wisdom of the Prophet Micah: "You have been told, O man, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: Only to do right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God." This insight offers more than mere concept. It contains the counsel of God and how the Almighty expects us to conduct our affairs, both interior and exterior, as individuals who are not only teachers but also members of the human family. As such, we find ourselves in relationships with many others. God's justice is not just for one or for some; it is for all. If each of us is created in the image of God, then is not each of us entitled to God's justice?

At the heart of seeking, teaching, and doing justice is the realization that all is dependent on the transcendent truth that is God. This justice is viewed from a different perspective than a purely human one. Many of us consider ourselves to be people for whom faith in God is important. What makes a Catholic lawyer's vocation different from that of so many other people of faith is that the vineyards of labor principally relate to the legal academy and the profession of law. Unlike many of our secular colleagues who profess to seek justice, we are a people who pray. Prayer can supply answers to questions about how we may act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God. The voice of God is not necessarily found in thunder, earthquake, or fire. It is often found in the quietest of places, and that is where we search for true justice.

"True justice" is different from the justice that so many others have attempted to seek or define, as a real case illustrates. After the United States Supreme Court decided United Steelworkers of America v. Weber, in which the Court upheld a racially-based preferential training program, Judge Gee, the lower federal court judge who wrote the earlier opinion

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4 Micah 6:8 (New American Bible).
5 See John 8:31-32 ("Jesus then said to those Jews who believed in him, 'If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'").
6 See I Kings 19:11-12 (New American Bible) ("A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD—but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake—but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was fire—but the LORD was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound.").
8 See id. at 208-09 (explaining why the program was being upheld).
reversed by the Supreme Court, noted his "personal conviction that the decision of the Supreme Court in this case is profoundly wrong." He disagreed with the Court on two points: (1) the plain meaning of Title VII, as corroborated by its legislative history, indicated that racially-based hiring practices are prohibited; (2) that the "Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens."

While he believed that the Supreme Court's opinion was "gravely mistaken," Judge Gee hastened to add that it was neither immoral nor unjust because "in some basic sense it may well represent true justice." Unfortunately, Judge Gee did not identify what true justice is.

Might we, of the religiously affiliated legal academy, be in a vital position to help determine what true justice is? If so, how might we incorporate it into our teaching? In many ways, our work in our educational institutions frequently presents us with the need to concentrate on matters of faith and justice. As fellow workers in the Lord's vineyard, we are involved in both reflecting upon and teaching justice. We who labor in these schools are united with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is God's work in this world with which we identify. As God's disciples, we are asked to cooperate with others so that we can influence in a positive and faithful way, the structures of society where decisions are made and values are shaped.

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10 See id. ("What could be plainer than the words of the late Senator Humphrey—defending the bill against the charge that it adumbrated quotas and preferential treatment—that 'the title would prohibit preferential treatment for any particular group . . .'? ").
11 Id. (citing Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537, 559 (1896) (Harlan, J., dissenting)).
12 Id.
13 Id. (emphasis added). Judge Gee concluded his opinion with the following reflection:

"[T]here are many actions roughly just that our laws do not authorize and our Constitution forbids, actions such as preventing a Nazi Party marching through a town where reside former inmates of concentration camps or inflicting summary punishment on one caught red-handed in a crime.

Subordinate magistrates such as I must either obey the orders of higher authority or yield up their posts to those who will. I obey, since in my view the action required of me by the Court's mandate is only to follow a mistaken course and not an evil one."

Id. (emphasis added).
Most of our personal work in this regard is indirect: we are teachers. Yet, as teachers, we spend much of our time working with those who will be shaping the future. We might profit from the dialogue between Thomas More and Richard Rich found in Robert Bolt’s play, *A Man For All Seasons*. Richard Rich is ambitious and wants to go to King Henry’s court to have access to power, privilege, and prestige. More counsels Rich to become a teacher, for he knows power and the corruption it can bring. When Rich protests and rhetorically asks, “who would know it?” More replies: “You, your pupils, your friends, God. Not a bad public. . . .”

Especially for Christians, Jesus, as a teacher, provides a model for More’s answer to Rich. A great deal of Jesus’ work was devoted to informing the minds and touching the hearts of others. He encourages us to follow God’s commandments by living in right relation with God and in just relationships with our neighbors. When that first century lawyer asked Jesus what was the greatest commandment, Jesus replied, “you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength . . . [and] . . . [y]ou shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.” Jesus made the connection between the first commandment, concerning love of God, with a second, love of neighbor. The two are inextricably related. One cannot love God without being concerned for one’s neighbor. God’s justice must therefore intersect our human justice. In the promulgation of the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, the Second Vatican Council addressed the subject of justice on at least twenty-four occasions. The frequent acknowledgment of this issue in the *Pastoral Constitution* brings the Great Commandment into the contemporary world.

The decision-making process of governments and business institutions and their shaping of public values often determine how members of society live with one another. Do the policies
and values developed and enforced by these institutions foster or hinder the right relationship between members of society regardless of their role, and their participation in decision-making and value-shaping? These are the questions that repeatedly confront the students who will become the decision-makers and value-shapers of tomorrow. As their educators, who are also people of faith in God, should we not prepare them to address these questions and challenges?

The Great Commandment permeated the work of the fathers of the Second Vatican Council when they noted that the Church, through its apostolic work, must express its commitment to the Gospel through "the principles of justice and equity demanded by right reason both for individual and social life and for international life." The Second Vatican Council added:

With integrity and wisdom, [people of good will] must take action against any form of injustice and tyranny, against arbitrary domination by an individual or a political party and any intolerance. They should dedicate themselves to the service of all with sincerity and fairness, indeed, with the charity and fortitude demanded by political life.

The values of any culture, however, are formed by its members. Therefore, the hearts and minds of those who comprise the culture must adopt God's justice in their own lives so it, in turn, can be reflected in their culture. The wisdom of God's ways can be incorporated into this culture through the process of education.

It is often heard within my own religious congregation, the Society of Jesus, that the mission of education in our schools includes: (1) rigorous academic work that cultivates and challenges the mind; (2) care for the whole person; and (3) a commitment to service and social justice. Applaudable as these elements may be, they are really no different than the educational mission of many other schools which have secular foundations. After all, is there any school that abhors academic rigor, avoids challenging the mind, is not concerned with

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20 See Matthew 22:35-40 (New American Bible) ("You shall love the LORD your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind.").
21 Gaudium et Spes ¶ 63.
22 Id. ¶ 75.
students’ development, or is committed to injustice? Church
sponsored education, like the promotion of justice, must not be
separated from its wellspring of faith. As Pope John Paul II
stated in the Apostolic Constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*:

The Christian spirit of service to others for the promotion of
social justice is of particular importance for each Catholic
university, to be shared by its teachers and developed in its
students. The Church is firmly committed to the integral
growth of all men and women. The Gospel, interpreted in the
social teachings of the Church, is an urgent call to promote “the
development of those peoples who are striving to escape from
hunger, misery, endemic diseases and ignorance; of those who
are looking for a wider share in the benefits of civilization and a
more active improvement of their human qualities; of those who
are aiming purposefully at their complete fulfillment.” Every
Catholic university feels responsible to contribute concretely to
the progress of the society within which it works: For example,
it will be capable for ways to make university education
accessible to all those who are able to benefit from it, especially
the poor or members of minority groups who customarily have
been deprived of it. A Catholic university also has the
responsibility, to the degree that it is able, to help to promote
the development of the emerging nations.23

If the guiding vision of justice is intimately linked with faith
that is deeply rooted in the Scriptures and Church tradition,
then so must education that claims the modifier “Catholic” as
part of its *raison d’être*. We must acknowledge that the
Christian understanding of justice needs to transcend those
notions of justice derived from ideologies, philosophies, or
political movements, which are unable to reflect the justice of
God.

Teachers of law students, who will enter a powerful and
influential profession after they graduate, prepare tomorrow’s
thinkers, business leaders, lawmakers, power brokers, and other
teachers. These future lawyers will have the chance to occupy
important positions in the structures where vital decisions are
made and important values are shaped. If they learn well the
lessons we teach or should be teaching them, they will become
ministers of God’s justice in this world. As servants of God and

as His conscious instruments in this world, we have many ways to provide meaningful examples for our students as we humbly engage in the divine enterprise of bringing salvation, justice, and reconciliation to a world affected by its sins. Accordingly, we should be mindful of the models of justice upon which we pattern our conduct—conduct being one of the most effective teaching tools we have. But what exactly are the models that we should consider, and what fruit do they bear so that we may pass it on to our students?

In a responsible search for the meaning of justice and its "true form," we could begin with an understanding of this term in the context of our contemporary individual rights-oriented social and legal institutions. But, as Mary Ann Glendon capably demonstrates, the tendency to make some, but not all, rights absolute in the American legal culture has minimized the significance of fraternity.24 Glendon argues that unrestricted individualism can "foster a climate that is inhospitable to society's losers,"25 i.e., those who are especially dependent on others, which undermines both civic and personal virtue. For her, this form of individualism "shuts out potentially important aids to the process of self-correcting learning [and promotes] mere assertion over reason-giving."26 A merely contemporary search for true justice would exclude a long legacy of the human encounter with, and pursuit for, the meaning of justice and its relation to the community; that is, justice that goes beyond the individual who is me, you, or one of our students. We must also realize that our contemporary search for true justice should be understood in the context of its history.

In his dialogue, *The Republic*, Plato often raised the question of "what is justice?"27 Answers were quickly offered,

24 MARY ANN GLENDON, RIGHTS TALK: THE IMPOVERISHMENT OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE 47–48. (1991) (explaining that in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, "the essence of the right to life would be reconceptualized as 'the right to be let alone' "). Christopher Mooney has similarly commented on this theme in the context of the law and legal profession. He argues that the law's "privatizing impulse has tended to become dominant and it no longer conceives its primary mission to be the responsible exercise of public virtue." CHRISTOPHER MOONEY, S.J., PUBLIC VIRTUE: LAW AND THE SOCIAL CHARACTER OF RELIGION xi (1986).
25 GLENDON, supra note 24, at 14.
26 Id.
like the repayment of a debt owed; or giving good to friends and evil to enemies. Thrasymachus, however, posited that justice is whatever is in the interest of the stronger, or might is right. Is it not, after all, the strongest, the leaders, those in charge who, because they have power, decide what is just and what is not? Socrates countered Thrasymachus with the suggestion that it is not power or might itself that determines justice, but rather, virtue, wisdom, and friendship that define what is just and what is not. In essence, it is the virtuous person who is best attuned to what true justice is. The relationship between virtues and the search for true justice emerges.

These virtues are wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. These are the interior qualities exemplified by Jesus and taught by him to those who would listen. As habits of human conduct, they direct the thought and the action that individuals pursue. Because they exist at the personal and communal level, virtues can habitually direct the actions taken by members of a community, as well as the community itself; to ascertain what decisions the community should take, and to resolve the disagreements which surface between its members. In essence, these virtues promote harmony throughout society in which tension between its members is held in check and the right relationship is restored. This harmony is characterized

28 See id. at 36–37.
29 See id. at 46 ("[Justice is nothing else than the interest of the stronger.").
30 See id. ("[D]ifferent forms of government make laws . . . with a view to their several interests; and these laws, which are made by them for their own interests, are the justice which they deliver to their subjects, and him who transgresses them they punish as a breaker of the law, and unjust."). We have seen this same reasoning used by world leaders who said that they sought justice, and then proved their point with military force.
31 See id. at 58–68. Aristotle contended that justice, or at least its best form, is true friendship that is not based on master and subservient, but on a relationship between those few prepared to give of their entire selves so that others may benefit.
32 See id. at 207 (explaining that the rightly ordered, perfect state would be "wise and valient and temperate and just").
33 Socrates explained that when the just man has become one entirely temperate and perfectly adjusted nature, then he proceeds to act, if he has to act, whether in a matter of property, or in the treatment of the body, or in some affair of politics or private business; always thinking and calling that which preserves and co-operates with this harmonious condition, just and good action, and the knowledge which presides over it, wisdom . . .
Id. at 228–29.
by the *suum cuique*: no one may take what is due to others nor may one be deprived of what one is due.\(^{34}\) What is due each person is dependent on what is simultaneously due all others because of our inevitable relationship with one another. This is what Jesus taught, is it not?

Virtues are practiced by human beings in a community setting. They are not understood as something that is good or proper simply for the individual alone. Rather, they manifest themselves in relationships and friendships in which each person renders the other his or her due.\(^{35}\) They are exercised in the midst of people who are in relationships with one another. They do not exist in a vacuum of persons who are isolated from one another or who seek separation. Virtues depend on a community where people acknowledge one another's existence and where each honors the other's right to co-exist. An important goal of practicing virtue is the achievement of multiple levels of reciprocity throughout society where each person renders to the other those concerns that each has for the self. In other words, the virtuous person is the kind of individual who extends to all others their due.

Aristotle asserted that we find the meaning of justice through the application of virtues. He examined virtuous human conduct and its relationship to doing well and achieving good.\(^{36}\) Initially, the application of virtuous conduct would lead the good person to the intermediate between excess and deficiency.\(^{37}\) Those who practice this mean would find themselves spared from those human appetites that promote the extremes we human beings frequently pursue and cultivate.\(^{38}\)

\(^{34}\) See *id.* at 216 (explaining that legal suits are decided on the ground that “a man may neither take what is another’s, nor be deprived of what is his own”).

\(^{35}\) The Hebrew people were notified about the importance of giving the other that which is due: “You shall not act dishonestly in rendering judgment. Show neither partiality to the weak nor deference to the mighty, but judge your fellow men justly.” *Leviticus* 19:15 (New American Bible). In a similar vein, the Prophet Zechariah warned: “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Render true judgment, and show kindness and compassion toward each other. Do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the alien or the poor; do not plot against one another in your hearts.” *Zechariah* 7:9–10 (New American Bible).


\(^{37}\) See *id.* at 30–31 (defining vice as an extreme, and virtue as the mean).

\(^{38}\) See *id.* at 31–36 (examining extremes that are frequently pursued by individuals, and demonstrating the means that exist to avoid these vices).
What leads the person to a life of virtuous conduct and the search for justice is practical wisdom. Aristotle realized that justice might be the greatest, most complete virtue because it directs the individual to seek the balance of the intermediate in one’s life, but it also—and this is crucial to the notion of justice as right relationship—guides an individual to “exercise his virtue in relation to another person, not only himself.”

Justice must be a communal rather than an individual state because it is ultimately concerned with a relationship with one’s neighbor. “[W]hatever you did for one of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Thomas Aquinas acknowledged the significance of practical reason to the search for justice. The first principle of practical reason is based on seeking that which is good and avoiding that which is evil. As a dictate of practical reason, law’s “proper effect” is to lead those who are its subjects to seek and practice virtue in their lives. Because humans are rational beings, we are inclined to “act according to reason.”

While human beings have a natural aptitude for virtue, “the perfection of virtue must be acquired . . . by means of some kind of training.” This training is clearly the work of the religious academy. Ultimately, the direction in which reason seeks justice is not to the personal but to the communal—that is, individuals who exist in relationship with one another in their search for the common

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39 See id. at 31 (“Virtue, then, is a state involving rational choice, consisting in a mean relative to us and determined by reason—the reason, that is, by reference to which the practically wise person would determine it.”).
40 Id. at 83 (discussing justice as the greatest and most complete virtue).
41 See id. (explaining that justice is the only virtue that is exercised in relation to and for the benefit of others).
42 Matthew 25:40 (New American Bible).
43 See 1 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, SUMMA THEOLOGICA 994 (Fathers of the English Dominion Province trans., 1947) (1920) (asserting that whatever is based upon reason is in the nature of a law and directed at the common good).
44 See id. at 1009 (explaining that the first precept of law is “that good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided”) (emphasis added).
45 See id. at 997 (stating that “a law is a dictate of the practical reason”).
46 Id. at 1001 (maintaining that the proper effect of law is to lead people to seek virtue and to become good).
47 Id. at 1011 (explaining that the natural law is composed of those things to which man is naturally inclined, including acting according to reason).
48 Id. at 1013 (addressing the need for man to receive training from others to arrive at perfect virtue).
good. The soul of justice directs individuals in their relation with others. Justice is not only the direction of activity, it is also seeking the end that is good and takes account of each member of the community affected. Justice, in essence, “is a habit whereby a man renders to each one his due by a constant and perpetual will . . . .” This is the suum cuique—to render everyone his or her own.

John Finnis has contributed to the discussion on the nature of justice and its essential core of right relationship between individuals. He has suggested that justice requires each person to seek what is important to human life, not only for the self and “his own sake but also in common, in community.” In order to accomplish this, Finnis identified three elements of justice. The first is called “other directedness.” Essentially, this means that “justice has to do with one’s relations and dealings with other persons; it is ‘inter-subjective’ or interpersonal.” The second component of justice deals with duty—the rights by which individuals understand what is owed or due to each by others. The final element is equality, an equality not based on identicalness but on proportionality, equilibrium, or balance—in essence, equity. Finnis noted that justice is not arbitrary self-preference, but rather the pursuit of the common good of the community. In other words, the good of individuals is the

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49 See id. at 1017 (explaining that achieving the common good is the end of law and reason).
50 See id. at 1431 (“It is proper to justice, as compared with the other virtues, to direct man in his relations with others: because it denotes a kind of equity, as its very name implies . . . .”).
51 Id. at 1435 (explaining that justice, properly defined, is a habit, rather than an act, which must be performed voluntarily).
52 The maxim of the suum cuique is found in other ancient legal precepts. For example, there is juris praecepta sunt haec—noseste vivere; alterum non laedere; suum cuique tribuere (these are the precepts of the law: to live honorably; to hurt nobody; to render everyone his due). Another is a traditional definition of justice: Justitia est constans et perpetua voluntas jus suum cuique tribuendi (Justice is a steady and unceasing disposition to render everyone his due).
53 JOHN FINNIS, NATURAL LAW AND NATURAL RIGHTS 161 (1980).
54 Id.
55 Id.
56 See id. at 162 (explaining the concept of duty as “what is owed . . . or due to another, and . . . what that other person has a right to”).
57 See id. at 162–63 (discussing equality as a concept of justice that “can be present in quite various ways”).
58 See id. at 164.
"object of all justice and which all reasonable life in community must respect and favour. . . ."59 Again, this is what Jesus taught, is it not?

In the final analysis, the individual good is tied to the communal good. We, as educators who wish to awaken God’s wisdom in others as well as ourselves, should be prepared to explain this relationship to our students and anyone else whom God sends our way.60 The good for all people cannot be sustained unless the good for the individual is also maintained. By the same token, the good for each person is threatened until the good for all is secured. Recognition of the Great Commandment61 is important because the command makes the members of a community intimately aware of their similarities as human beings.

Justice cannot be rendered until each person hears the other: audi alteram partem—hear the other side, hear both sides, no one should be judged unheard. To accomplish this, those who search for justice must see that its attainment ultimately relies on each person being in right relation with the other. We, as teachers and administrators in religiously affiliated educational institutions, have a duty to instill a consciousness about relationship in those whom we encounter in our teaching and related work. Is this not what Jesus did?

What must we, as teachers and disciples, do to ensure that human institutions that we investigate in our classrooms, lectures, and research reflect more of God’s Great Commandment and the teachings of the Church? Many elements of the present world skeptically question the existence of disciples who, out of their faith and reason, search for God’s objective truth, but it is the duty of the late twentieth-century disciple to meet, counter, and dispel this perspective. As the Holy Father recently stated in his encyclical Fides et Ratio:

[H]uman beings attain truth by way of reason because, enlightened by faith, they discover the deeper meaning of all

59 Id. at 168.
60 See, e.g., AQUINAS, supra note 43 at 1395 (explaining that an individual who seeks the good of the many will also be seeking his own good); FINNIS, supra note 53, at 141, 218, 305 (discussing the interaction between the individual good and the common good); JACQUES MARITAIN, THE PERSON AND THE COMMON GOOD (John J. Fitzgerald trans., 1947).
61 See supra note 20.
things and most especially of their own existence. Rightly, therefore, the sacred author identifies the fear of God as the beginning of true knowledge: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

One forum for doing this is the very forum in which the voice of skepticism and disbelief has taken root: the American university and its legal academy.

The university apostolate is particularly well-suited for the opening of the mind that leads to the conversion of heart. It is in the academy where the mission "is completely dedicated to the research of all aspects of truth in their essential connection with the supreme Truth, who is God." By engaging the skeptical intellect in dialogue about God's justice, we disciples of the twenty-first century are well suited to use the shared awareness of contemporary circumstances to introduce both colleagues and students, who are tomorrow's leaders, to the voice of God.

If the academy is the place where kindred intellects come together to debate the great issues that confront the human family, then it is we teachers and administrators of religiously affiliated law schools who can demonstrate how individuals and their communities might ponder the problems which divert the progress of mankind and the common good.

During the last century, however, the nature of religiously affiliated universities has undergone dramatic transformation. While academic excellence has generally increased at these institutions, the religious soul of these institutions has also been greatly modified. This modification has had its good qualities, such as the incorporation of many well-educated and professionally accomplished men and women into positions of responsibility. In the Catholic context consistent with the spirit of *Gaudium et Spes*—the laity have responded to the call of the "secular duties and activities" that are properly theirs. For the laity involved with the formation of those about to enter the

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65 Gaudium et Spes ¶ 43 (1965).
establishments of power, “it is generally the function of their well-formed Christian conscience to see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city. . . .”66 This is so because the unity of the human person is such that the faith-related moral conscience cannot be divorced from its participation in the daily events of worldly human existence.67

In this integration, however, the religious academy should not forget that the underlying spirit of these universities must be preserved and nurtured. The adjective “religious” and the noun “university” must remain compatible and not at odds with each other. As His Holiness, Pope John Paul II recently concluded:

A Catholic university possesses the autonomy necessary to develop its distinctive identity and pursue its proper mission. Freedom in research and teaching is recognized and respected according to the principles and methods of each individual discipline, so long as the rights of the individual and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good.68

If we are to be committed to the freedom of healthy inquiry, then the Catholic educational institution and its members must be symmetrically committed to the proposition that the truth sought and the knowledge to be achieved is the transcendent and the objective—which is God.69

Thus, the adjective “Catholic” serves as the essential ingredient that directs the purpose of the academy and the goals of truth and justice that are sought. As Pope John Paul II has recognized, the university must act in harmony with the demands of faith and justice.70 Ultimately, the goal of the university is not adherence to a particular worldview or the ideology of the day, but rather is directed to the search for the fullness of truth and that truth, rooted as it is in God, will make us free.71 To the extent that some present-day theories of justice

66 Id.
67 See id. (explaining the need for Church clerics to remember that their daily activities will aid in determining the unity of God’s family).
69 See Fides et Ratio ¶ 83 (discussing the need for “a philosophy of genuinely metaphysical range . . . in order to attain something absolute, ultimate and foundational....”) (emphasis added).
70 See Ex Corde Ecclesiae ¶¶ 31–37 (discussing a Catholic university’s services).
71 See Fides et Ratio ¶ 16; ¶ 90 n.106.
advocate a separationist or secessionist thesis, they sustain, rather than address, tensions and distrusts that inevitably lead to injustice. The antidote to injustice is focused not upon separation but upon mutuality, that is, reciprocity and relationship which enable each person to see the image of one's self reflected in all others.\textsuperscript{72}

Some of us may be reluctant to approach this recognition of likeness with the other because it seems incompatible with our individuality and freedom. Yet, as Philip Rossi has noted, the mistake people often make about themselves and their freedom is that they "conceive of freedom primarily, if not exclusively, by reference to human agents in their individuality and independence, rather than in terms of their shared human communalities and their fundamental interdependence."\textsuperscript{73} While many think that it is their independence that makes them human, it is really their social dimension and interrelation that does so. They are individuals who are also members of a society. They are distinct human beings who flourish, not when they are isolated from one another, but when they relate to one another. It is human interdependence that brings people together into the community of human beings.\textsuperscript{74} Community fosters exchange amongst people and their interests. The exchange, in turn, promotes the opportunity to see that human interaction is mutually beneficial, that it serves and promotes the common good for people to "care for one another's well-being."\textsuperscript{75} As educators, we hold a major responsibility to encourage this exchange—an exchange that reminds ourselves and those whom


\textsuperscript{73} PHILIP J. ROSSI, \textit{TOGETHER TOWARD HOPE: A JOURNEY TO MORAL THEOLOGY} 5 (1983).

\textsuperscript{74} See \textit{id.} at 68. Rossi argues that

[t]his community is, first and foremost, a community of mutuality: a community of those who conscientiously foster the skills that enable the essential interdependence of their lives to work for the attainment of good for one another. Mutuality fostered in this way constitutes the core of the charity or love that in the Catholic tradition has been claimed to be the fundamental form of the life of virtue. Thus the human community that provides a condition fundamental for satisfying, for each and all, our basic human cravings is a community in which charity gives form to virtue.

\textit{Id} (citation omitted).

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Id.} at 145.
we encounter and engage that we are all God's children and members of His family.

Each time we engage in conversation with another who seems different from ourselves, we still see a reflection of ourselves in the other with whom we converse. As Rossi has acknowledged, the common good emerges from "the recognition of communality at the heart of moral life: 'I am as she; she is as I.' 76 What is just for the self, that is, what each person is due, can only be identified and understood in the context of what is simultaneously just for the other. Each person's due is defined by what is due all others. Our individual rights-oriented culture reinforces the differences that superficially make us opposite, but, in truth, conceal our fundamental similarity. By being honest about our human nature—that we are individuals who must flourish in community—we discover our resemblance each time we engage one another in dialogue and debate. We see in each of our conversations a piece of a mosaic that reflects the other—each and all reflecting the image of God! 77 When we assemble more of the mosaic, as we see more of the pieces come together, not only do we see the other, we also see ourselves.

When we make this discovery, when we allow it to penetrate into our deepest consciousness, we can then acknowledge that the portrait that emerges from our many conversations belongs to all of us because it represents all of us. It is both our portrait and the portrait of the other.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was right when he said that what is more important than our external characteristics is a far more precious and important internal quality—the content of our character. 78 It is the content of our individual character that reflects much of the content of the character of others. What is just for the one can never be comprehended until what is just for each other person who is connected with the question is taken into account. To understand properly what is due each person, it

76 Id. at 154.
77 See Genesis 1:27 (New American Bible) ("God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them.").
78 As Dr. King exclaimed, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Address at the civil rights march in Washington, D. C. (August 26, 1963), reprinted in THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF MODERN QUOTATIONS 121 (Tony Augarde ed., 1991).
is essential to identify what is due every other person concerned with the issue. Justice for the individual is incomplete without comprehending what is justice for the community of individuals who are related to the issue. What is just for each person must relate to what is just for others. This is justice as right relationship—this is how we live and teach the Great Commandment.79

If educational communities that call themselves religious are to be true to the mission of producing good students, good people, and good citizens, we must be clear about who we are, where we have been, and where we must go. The first charge—being clear who we are—raises the question of identity. In identifying what education is about, we must be certain that we teach and seek the justice that is God's—a justice which can be incorporated into human institutions if we accept the premise that our institutions can strive to be objective and transcendent and seek the suum cuique for each and every person at whatever stage of life.

Second, we must be clear about where we have been. To have a sense of history means acknowledging proudly the tradition that the law is an institution designed to promote the Great Commandment of living in right relation with God by living in right relation with the neighbor. Both the culture in which we live and to which we contribute, and the values we pass on to those whom we teach, must take account of the fact that the truest form of justice incorporates God's will, not just ours.

Third, we must be clear about our destiny. The direction in which much of the academy of the twenty-first century seems directed is that all views, all beliefs, all cultures are equally valid. As a result, a strong form of relativism encroaches upon the academy. The Christian academy, however, cannot afford to hold onto the view that all human perspectives are equal in quality and legitimacy. Indeed, some of these perspectives do not take account of precious human interests at the antipodes of life, which are threatened by the norms of many contemporary cultures. The university which claims to be Christian can examine and discuss such views but, ultimately, it cannot afford

79 See supra note 20.
to adopt them as its own. Such action would negate the reality that each person is precious because each reflects the image of its Divine Maker.

The call to discipleship remains strong today. In the current age, however, the challenges to seeking and observing God's justice in this world are becoming increasingly potent. It is through our holy desire and openness to God's leading spirit that His justice and truth shall prevail. We might take courage from another disciple of an earlier age. Thomas More died King Henry's loyal subject, but he was God's subject first. Might it be said of us, when we conclude our careers as loyal subjects of our teaching profession, that we were and remain God's first?