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EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT

Empowered by the Spirit: Campus Ministry Faces the Future

A Pastoral Letter on Campus Ministry Issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

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I. History and Current Opportunities

A. History and Contemporary Developments

B. Current Challenges and Opportunities

A. History and Contemporary Developments

4. The Church's response to current opportunities on campus will benefit from an awareness of the history of the Newman Movement in the United States.⁵ This ministry began in 1883 at the University of Wisconsin with the founding, through lay initiative, of the Melvin Club which was designed to keep Catholics on campus in touch with their religious heritage. A decade later the first Newman Club was established at the University of Pennsylvania, with much the same purpose. It was named after John Henry Cardinal Newman, who was the English leader in the nineteenth-century intellectual renewal in the Church and later was chosen the great patron of campus ministers in our country. During this initial stage, farsighted leaders recognized that the growing number of Catholic collegians attending public institutions needed support and instruction in their religious heritage. They responded by establishing clubs for Catholic students, with their own chaplains and residence halls.

5. In 1908, the second stage began with the establishment of the first association of Catholic clubs in state universities. What would become the National Newman Club Federation replaced this first effort about the time of World War I. This phase, which lasted until 1969, was often characterized by a defensive and even hostile attitude on the part of Catholic students and their chaplains toward the academic world, which was perceived as dominated by a secularist philosophy. During this period, many students and chaplains in the Newman Movement felt estranged from the rest of the Church and decried the lack of support from the hierarchy.

6. The third stage, begun in 1969 in response to the Second Vatican Council and continuing until the present, has produced some healthy new developments. First, the Church as a whole has grown in appreciation and support of campus ministry. It is true there are still problems: some colleges and universities lack officially appointed campus ministers and many others are understaffed and suffer from financial problems. At times, there are misunderstandings between the Church on campus and local parishes and diocesan offices. However, progress has clearly

been made in integrating campus ministry into the life of the Church. Today, there are over two thousand Catholics ministering on campuses throughout the country—a significant increase over a couple of decades ago. There is an increased commitment to providing well-trained campus ministers who appreciate the need for continued professional and theological development. Student groups at all levels collaborate with official representatives of the Church. Diocesan directors of campus ministry help keep campus concerns before the whole Church. More Catholics appreciate the importance of campus ministry and support diocesan funding of this work. Through this pastoral letter, we affirm these positive developments and pledge to work with others to build on them. We bring to the attention of the whole Church the importance of campus ministry for the future well-being of the Church and society. Our goal is to foster a closer relationship and a greater spirit of cooperation between campus ministry and the rest of the local Church. Campus ministry is an integral part of the Church's mission to the world and must be seen in that light.

7. Second, we endorse the improving relationship between the Church on campus and the academic community. While problems remain, Catholics have developed a greater understanding of the positive values and legitimate concerns of higher education. Many campus ministers have established good working relationships with administrators, faculty, and staff. There is greater appreciation of the way the Church benefits from the teaching, research, and service carried on by colleges and universities. Similarly, many administrators view campus ministry as an ally in the common effort to provide an integrated learning experience for the students. Faculty members frequently value the presence of campus ministers who demonstrate an appreciation of the spiritual life and can articulate their Catholic heritage. In our consultations, we found that many leaders in the academic community welcome a word from the Church on matters of mutual concern.⁶ Our hope in this letter is to build on this fund of good will and to heal any wounds which linger from past mistakes and misunderstandings. With respect for the freedom and autonomy of the academic community, we believe it is time to foster a renewed dialogue between the Church and higher education, to the benefit of society as a whole.

8. Third, we affirm the development of ecumenical and interfaith relationships. There are, of course, problems in resolving longstanding differences, and at some colleges and universities dialogue and cooperation have been difficult to establish and maintain. However, on many campuses, the Catholic community and other religious groups who share a common vision of ministry and who are interested in ecumenical and interfaith cooperation have developed strong working relationships. This occurs especially with other Christian Churches, with whom we share a common commitment to Jesus Christ, and with the Jewish community, with whom we hold a common heritage and shared Scriptures. In some situations, Catholic campus ministers share an interfaith center and collaborate in some ministerial tasks. In other places, the Catholic community cooperates with other religious groups through regular meetings, joint study, and shared prayer. Mutual trust has grown as members of various religious traditions work together on common programs, such as projects to promote social justice. We commend this ecumenical and interfaith progress and give full support to greater and more creative efforts in this direction. Catholics who are deeply rooted in their tradition and who maintain a strong sense of identity with their religious heritage will be better prepared to carry out this mission. We appreciate the contributions and cooperative attitudes of most of the various religious communities on campus. The Catholic community on campus might also seek to engage those who are concerned with human ethical values of our society but do not directly relate their concerns to a faith tradition. To those who demonstrate less tolerant attitudes, we extend an invitation to join in the dialogue. In this pastoral message, we address the Catholic campus community and discuss its particular

challenges and opportunities. While we will not treat directly the ecumenical and interfaith dimensions of campus ministry today, we hope that the Catholic communities on individual campuses will be prompted by this letter to renewed dialogue and collaboration in serving the common good.

9. Finally, this third stage in the history of the Newman Movement has produced a remarkable diversity of legitimate styles and approaches to campus ministry, designed to match available resources with the unique situations at particular colleges and universities. These creative responses range from well-organized teams serving the needs of a large university parish to an individual ministering part time in a small community college. The styles include ministries that are primarily sacramental and those that rely mainly on the ministry of presence. Some campus ministers work on Catholic campuses where they can influence policy decisions, while others serve in public institutions where they have little or no access to the centers of power. In some situations priests are working full time, while in others the ministry is carried out almost entirely by members of religious orders and lay people. Ministers on residential campuses can offer many set programs for students, while those who serve on commuter campuses must be attentive to the creative possibilities demanded by such a fluid situation. Most serve on one campus, although some are responsible for several colleges and universities. While we cannot discuss in detail all styles of ministry, we will offer principles and strategies designed to encourage all those concerned with the Church on campus to make vigorous and creative applications to their own situations.

B. Current Challenges and Opportunities

10. We believe this is the opportune time to address a challenging word to the Church on campus. Catholics are attending colleges and universities in numbers that far exceed their percentage of the general population.⁷ It is crucial that these emerging leaders of Church and society be exposed to the best of our Catholic tradition and encounter dedicated leaders who will share their journey of faith with them. Thus, the time is right to encourage campus ministers to renew their own spiritual lives and to facilitate the faith development of the Catholics on campus.

11. Today, there is a growing interest among many Catholics in various ministries. On campus, there is a great reservoir of energy and talent that could be utilized in the service of the Church and the world. Therefore, the time is right to challenge faculty members, administrators, support staff, and students to contribute their time and gifts to the common effort to help the academic community achieve its goals and to build up the Church on campus.

12. The academic world is in the midst of an important debate on how to improve the quality of higher education in our country.⁸ Fundamental questions about the purpose, methods, and direction of higher education must be addressed, as colleges and universities continue to define their mission and to improve their performance. Therefore, the time is right to encourage Catholics on campus to participate in these local debates and, thus, to contribute their insights and values to this crucial national discussion.

NOTES

⁵ See John Whitney Evans, *The Newman Movement* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980).

⁶ Among the many consultations with administrators, faculty, students, selected experts, and others, we found especially helpful the close to 300 responses

received from presidents and elected faculty leaders representing institutions of higher education from all 50 states who informed us of their hopes and concerns.

- 7 In both 1983 and 1984, 39.3 percent of college freshmen were Roman Catholic. See Alexander W. Astin, *The American Freshman National Norms for Fall 1983 (and 1984)*, published by the American Council on Education and the University of California at Los Angeles. Catholics constitute about 25 percent of the general population in the United States.
- 8 Cf. "Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Education" (National Institute of Education, 1984); William J. Bennett, "To Reclaim a Legacy" (National Endowment for the Humanities, 1984); "Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community" (Association of American Colleges, 1985); and "Higher Education and the American Resurgence" (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1985).

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II. Campus Ministry and the Relationship Between the Church and Higher Education

A. History

B. The Contribution of Higher Education

C. The Contribution of the Church

D. Campus Ministry Described and Defined

A. History

13. Campus ministry is an expression of the Church's special desire to be present to all who are involved in higher education. Throughout its history, the Church has been instrumental in cultivating the intellectual life. During the period of the Fathers, great centers of learning at Antioch and Alexandria instructed the faithful and promoted the integration of faith and culture. The Church contributed her resources to the task of forming medieval universities and founded many of them, including the great schools of Bologna, Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge. In the modern world, government increasingly has taken over the responsibility for higher education, with a resulting split between the Church and the university. This has occurred in our own country with the establishment of a massive system of public higher education that has its own autonomy. Shortly after 1900, it was evident that enrollments in this system were growing faster than those in the Catholic and Protestant colleges, which for so long had constituted higher education in the United States. From the perspective of faith, Christians often detected in public institutions a growing secularism that celebrated the autonomy of reason and left little room for consideration of religious questions or moral values. This situation intensified after World War I, and the Church responded not only by increasing her traditional commitment to higher education, but also by trying to protect Catholic students from the antireligious elements perceived on public campuses. During this period, the Church and higher education experienced a good deal of mutual misunderstanding. Some people in the academic world feared that the Church would try to reassert, in more subtle ways, its control over higher education. On the other side, members of the Church, at times, regarded secular higher education as a threat to the Christian way of life. The time has come to move beyond these misunderstandings and to forge a new relationship between the Church and higher education that respects the unique character

of each. We remain convinced that "cooperation between these two great institutions, Church and university, is indispensable to the health of society."⁹

B. The Contribution of Higher Education

14. We respect the autonomy of the academic community and appreciate its great contributions to the common good. Higher education benefits the human family through its research, which expands our common pool of knowledge. By teaching people to think critically and to search for the truth, colleges and universities help to humanize our world. The collegiate experience provides individuals with attitudes and skills that can be used in productive work, harmonious living, and responsible citizenship. Since higher education in the United States has taken on public service as one of its tasks, society has received significant assistance in solving human and technical problems. The Second Vatican Council placed this contribution in a personal context when it said that people who apply themselves to philosophy, history, science, and the arts help "to elevate the human family to a more sublime understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty and to the formation of judgments which embody universal values."¹⁰

15. The Church, as well as society as a whole, benefits from the contributions of higher education. The members of the Church hold a common faith in Jesus Christ, a faith that seeks understanding. When the academic world produces new knowledge and encourages critical thinking, it assists Christians in the process of deepening and articulating their faith. When higher education fosters fidelity toward truth in scientific research and collaborative efforts to improve the quality of life in our world, it helps to prepare for the acceptance of the gospel message."¹¹

16. There is no doubt that the world of higher education has its own problems that must be addressed and dehumanizing practices that must be challenged. Fidelity to the Gospel demands critical judgment, as well as affirmation. It is, however, vital that campus ministry maintains a fundamental appreciation of the contributions made by higher education to society and the Church.

C. The Contribution of the Church

17. The Church brings to the dialogue with higher education its general mission to preach the Gospel of Christ and to help the human family achieve its full destiny.¹² Thus, the Church seeks to help higher education attain its lofty goal of developing a culture in which human beings can realize their full potential.¹³ In providing this assistance, the Church joins its voice with others in promoting the ideal of educating the whole person. From our perspective, this means keeping the dignity and worth of human beings in the center of our reflections on the purpose of higher education. Education is the process by which persons are "assisted in the harmonious development of their physical, moral, and intellectual endowments."¹⁴ It aims at the formation of individuals who have a sense of ultimate purpose and are moving toward greater freedom, maturity, and integration. At the same time, genuine education nurtures a sense of responsibility for the common good and provides skills for active involvement in community life.

18. We think that it is important to keep the problems of higher education in a larger societal and educational context. Thus, family life must be seen as central to the process of educating the whole person, since "the family is the first and fundamental school of social living."¹⁵ Moreover, improvement in the quality of higher education is dependent on primary and secondary schools doing a better job of cultivating the intellect, passing on the cultural heritage, and fostering

constructive values. If students are better prepared by a healthy family life and solid primary and secondary education, institutions of higher learning can attend to their primary purpose, "the passionate and disinterested search for the truth," which makes human beings free and helps them achieve their full humanity in accord with their dignity and worth.¹⁶ The search for truth should also include the ability to handle ethical issues and to achieve a harmonious integration of intellect and will.

19. The Church also brings to the dialogue its traditional understanding of wisdom. We believe that the faith community and the institution of higher learning are involved in a common pursuit of the life of wisdom.¹⁷ There are various interpretations of wisdom, but we agree with those who hold that its pursuit includes discovering the highest principles that integrate all knowledge; uncovering the deepest secrets that constitute human nature; and achieving a personal synthesis in which knowledge and love are ultimately united. For us, the mystery of human existence is fully revealed in Jesus Christ. He reminds us of our profound dignity and our immense potential. He provides us with perspective and teaches by example how love illumines knowledge. The wisdom that we learn from Christ includes the cross, which confounds the wisdom of the world (1 Cor 1:18-24). From the perspective of the cross, we are called to challenge the limitations and contradictions of the world (1 Cor 3:18-23). At the same time, our wisdom tradition includes an understanding of God's mysterious plan to bring all things in the heavens and on earth into unity under the headship of Christ (Eph 1:9-10). The risen Lord has poured out his Spirit on all creation and so we are moved to celebrate truth, goodness, and beauty wherever they are to be found. Since no single community can monopolize the gift of wisdom, the Church joins with the university and others in the search for wisdom. But, when the quest for wisdom is forgotten or diminished, then the Church must keep the ideal alive for the good of society. When the so-called wisdom of the world is employed in support of injustice, the Church must proclaim the wisdom of the cross, which challenges all oppressive structures. In the Church, the practical wisdom enunciated by the Hebrew sages is celebrated; the traditional philosophical wisdom is remembered; and the integrating wisdom of faith is proclaimed. For Christians, this whole quest for wisdom finds its summation and final fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who is the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24). We are convinced that the Christian wisdom synthesis, merely sketched out here, is a valuable resource in the continuing dialogue between the Church and higher education.

20. In a new relationship, the Church can work with higher education in improving the human community and establishing a culture that enables all human beings to reach their full potential. While admitting our failures in the past, we are concentrating on the future and a new era of cooperation. In the dialogue, we expect to learn and benefit from the work of higher education and will contribute our support, experience, and insights.

D. Campus Ministry Described and Defined

21. Campus ministry is one of the important ways the Church exercises her mission in higher education. Its goals include promoting theological study and reflection on the religious nature of human beings "so that intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth can proceed together; sustaining a Christian community on campus, with the pastoral care and liturgical worship it requires; integration of its apostolic ministry with other ministries of the local community and the diocese; and helping the Christian community on campus to serve its members and others, including the many nonstudents who gravitate toward the university."¹⁸ Campus ministry gathers the Catholics on campus for prayer, worship, and learning in order that they might bring the light of the Gospel

to illumine the concerns and hopes of the academic community. All the members of the Church on campus are called, according to their own gifts, to share in this ministry, guided by the professional campus ministers. "The work of campus ministry requires continual evaluation of traditional methods of ministry and also new approaches which are licitly and responsibly employed. These latter can be highly appropriate in the campus setting, where there exists an audience receptive to the kind of sound innovation which may in the future prove beneficial to the larger Catholic community."⁹ Such creativity has produced great diversity in organization, style, and approach, as campus ministers strive to form a searching, believing, loving, worshipping Catholic presence on campus. With this diversity in mind, campus ministry can be defined as the public presence and service through which properly prepared baptized persons are empowered by the Spirit to use their talents and gifts on behalf of the Church in order to be sign and instrument of the kingdom in the academic world. The eye of faith discerns campus ministry where commitment to Christ and care for the academic world meet in purposeful activity to serve and realize the kingdom of God.

NOTES

- ⁹ "To Teach as Jesus Did: A Pastoral Message on Catholic Education," in *Pastoral Letters*, vol. III, 1962-1974, no. 63.
- ¹⁰ "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M. Abbott, SJ, ed. (New York: America Press, 1966), no. 57. (Hereafter all documents from Vatican II will be cited from the Abbott Text).
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² *Ibid.*, no. 92.
- ¹³ "The Church of the University," *The Pope Speaks*, vol. 27, no. 3 (Fall 1982): 252.
- ¹⁴ "Declaration on Christian Education," in *Documents of Vatican II*, no. 1.
- ¹⁵ John Paul II, *On the Family* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference Publishing Services, 1982), no. 37.
- ¹⁶ "The Church of the University," p 250.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 252.
- ¹⁸ "To Teach as Jesus Did," no. 67.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 49.

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III. Persons Who Serve on Campus

A. The Baptized

B. Professional Campus Ministers

A. The Baptized

22. The Church carries out its pastoral mission to the academic world both through its communal life and through the Christian witness of its individual members. "The baptized by the regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood" (cf. 1 Pt 2:4-5), in order that through all their works they may "proclaim the power of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light."²⁰ All the faithful on campus, by virtue of their baptism, share in the task of bringing the humanizing light of the Gospel to bear on the life of the academic community. They are called to live out Christian values while engaging in the teaching, learning, research, public service, and campus life that constitute the academic world. They are united with other believers in this work but make their own unique contributions, according to their personal talents and specific circumstances. "As generous distributors of God's manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another" (1 Pt 4:10). The Second Vatican Council further specified this scriptural teaching: "From the reception of these charisms or gifts, including those which are less dramatic, there arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of [humankind] and for the upbuilding of the Church."²¹ Thus, all the baptized members of the academic community have the opportunity and the obligation, according to their unique talents and situations, to join with others to help higher education reach its full potential.

23. The faithful are called not only to bring Christian witness to the academic world, but also to exercise their baptismal prerogatives by helping to build up the Church on campus. While many persons today generously contribute their time, talent, and experience to the faith community, Catholic faculty, staff, and administration have a unique opportunity and calling to lead and direct campus ministry programs, according to their gifts. These individuals are particularly needed on the many campuses throughout the country where no campus ministry programs presently exist. This contribution is enhanced when individuals take time to prepare themselves through prayer and study for this work. In section four of this letter, perspectives and strategies will be

enunciated to build the various aspects of campus ministry. We hope that students, including the large number of older students,²² administrators, faculty members, and all who are concerned with higher education will be able to make creative applications to their own situations based on the conviction that the Spirit moves among all the People of God, promoting them, according to their own talents, to discern anew the signs of the times and to interpret them boldly in the light of the faith.²³

B. Professional Campus Ministers

24. Some members of the Church on campus are called to lead the faith community. Ideally, these men and women are professionally trained and exercise the kind of leadership that serves and empowers others. As officially appointed campus ministers, they are sent to form the faith community so that it can be a genuine sign and instrument of the kingdom. Their task is to identify, call forth, and coordinate the diverse gifts of the Spirit possessed by all the members of the faith community. Their challenge is to educate all the baptized to appreciate their own calls to service and to create a climate where initiative is encouraged and contributions are appreciated. One of the most important functions of campus ministers is to provide a vision and a sense of overall direction that will encourage and guide the other members to contribute to the well-being of the academic community and the Church on campus. If they understand their own family relationships in a faith perspective, they will be able to help others who are trying to improve the quality of their family lives. Setting up programs that embody this vision is a concrete way of encouraging others and of demonstrating what can be done with cooperative efforts. The goal of this style of leadership is to multiply the centers of activity and to unleash the creative power of the Spirit so that the community of faith can be an authentic sign and instrument of the kingdom.

25. Some professional campus ministers exercise the universal priesthood based on baptism, and others are ordained priests or deacons through the sacrament of holy orders. It is a sign of hope that a growing number of lay people serve as leaders in the faith community on campus. We commend members of religious orders who continue to make important contributions by gathering and encouraging the faithful. It is of historical significance that women "who in the past have not always been allowed to take their proper role in the Church's ministry"²⁴ find greater opportunities on campus to exercise their leadership abilities. Deacons often possess special talents and important life experiences that enhance their leadership skills. We encourage the priests who help form the faith community in a great variety of ways. Their prayerful celebration of the Eucharist, which invites active participation and manifests the unity of the congregation, as well as their compassionate celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation are especially important. All those officially appointed to lead the Church on campus have a great responsibility to form vibrant communities of faith and an exciting challenge to bring forth the gifts of individual believers.

26. In order to meet these challenges, campus ministers often form teams which provide a broader base of leadership to the faith community. Individual members bring their unique personalities and gifts to the team and work cooperatively to set direction and carry out some programs. The team members are co-responsible for the well-being of the faith community and accountable in their own areas of activity and competency. At the same time, they have the support of their colleagues when needed. Praying together helps the men and women on the team to keep in mind the true source and goal of their mission and to experience a sense of solidarity. We encourage the formation of such team ministries, which serve as models of ministry and community for the rest of the Church.

27. There are certain general challenges faced by all campus ministers. To be effective, ministers must attend to their own spiritual development. Campus ministers who are serious about their prayer life and can speak openly about their relationship to God will be able to direct others. Ministers who have wrestled with the great questions of meaning, purpose, and identity can offer helpful guidance to other genuine searchers. Those who have appropriated the faith and mined the riches of the Catholic heritage will be in a better position to invite others to join the faith community. If they genuinely care about the weak and oppressed, they will inspire others to work for social justice. Finally, campus ministers who have achieved an integration of faith and culture will naturally serve as role models for students and faculty members who are trying to achieve a similar synthesis. In summation, the leaders of the faith community must be perceived as persons who know the struggles of life and who are working to develop themselves spiritually.

28. Campus ministers are also called to empower the faith community and its individual members in the task of helping their colleges or universities to reach their full potential. Ministers who have a genuine respect for academic life and for institutions of higher education will see clearly the importance of this work and find creative ways to respond. A healthy self-confidence will enable them to relate openly with faculty members and administrators and to empathize with students who are struggling with their personal growth. By gaining the respect and confidence of the various members of the academic community, they will find many ways to get involved on campus and promote human values in the institution. Campus ministers with solid training and good credentials will have more opportunities to enter into the mainstream of academic life on campus. Today, it is clear that campus ministers must not remain on the margins of the academic community but must accept the call to bring the light of the Gospel to the very center of that world.

29. To prepare for meeting all these challenges, we encourage campus ministers to take responsibility for their own personal and professional development. Clear contractual arrangements that include carefully defined expectations and procedures for accountability and evaluation help to set a proper framework for their personal enrichment. Membership in appropriate professional organizations, participation in activities on diocesan, regional, and national levels, involvement in support groups with other campus ministers, and regular interaction with a spiritual director can provide motivation and direction for improving their performance. If campus ministers are to remain flexible in response to the rapidly changing needs of the campus community, they need to study contemporary developments in Scripture and theology while deepening their knowledge of the Christian tradition. Attaining an advanced degree or achieving competency in a particular area not only contributes to professional development, but helps gain respect in the academic world. Today, skills in counseling and spiritual direction, as well as knowledge of family systems and life cycles, group dynamics, and adult education are especially valuable for leaders of the faith community. An understanding of the nature and dynamics of the academic world enables campus ministers to apply Christian teachings and values more effectively.

30. In addition to these common challenges, campus ministers find that the unique situations of their particular campuses create their own concerns and opportunities. For example, campus ministers at community colleges must respond to the needs of students who live at home and have jobs. They often need assistance in defining their roles and responsibilities in the home. Many students are married and are present on campus only for their classes. Some ministers have been able, in these situations, to form small faith communities around shared prayer or social action projects. At these two-year colleges, the ministry of presence is especially

important, as is securing the support and active involvement of interested faculty members. These institutions are often open to the addition of religion courses into the curriculum. Skills in marriage and career counseling are especially valuable. It is important for these campus ministers to maintain close relationships with neighboring parishes because that is where many students will find their primary faith community.

31. It is possible also to identify other particular challenges. Campus ministers on private denominational campuses must be especially attentive to the ecumenical dimension. Those who work primarily with minority students, including recently arrived immigrants, refugees, and international students, must be in touch with their cultural background and family experiences, as well as the unique challenges they face in the academic world. Large state schools produce logistical problems for campus ministers in handling so many students. On commuter campuses, making contact with students is difficult in itself. All of these particular challenges represent opportunities for creative ministry.

32. Professional campus ministers are crucial to the work of the Church on campus. They bear the heavy responsibility of guiding the faith community and empowering others to assist in the task of helping higher education reach its full potential. The extent and intensity of these demands remind them that they must gather others to assist them. They should expect support and guidance from the diocesan director of campus ministry, who is the usual liaison with the bishop and the local diocese. The director can help facilitate their personal growth, call for a proper accountability, and possible diocese-wide programming. As the diocesan bishop's representative, the director encourages the interaction among campus ministers in the diocese who serve on public, Catholic, and other private campuses. We recognize our responsibility as bishops to offer all campus ministers moral support, to provide financial assistance to the degree this is needed and possible, and to help them achieve the competency they need to be effective witnesses of the Gospel.

NOTES

- 20 "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," in *Documents of Vatican II*, no. 10.
- 21 "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity," in *Documents of Vatican II*, no. 3.
- 22 More than two-fifths of the current student population are 25 years of age or older.
See footnote 3.
- 23 "Called and Gifted: The American Catholic Laity," in *Pastoral Letters*, vol. IV, 1975-1983, no. 19
- 24 *Ibid.*, no. 27.

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IV. Aspects of Campus Ministry

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A. Forming the Faith Community

1. Community and Alienation on Campus

34. Campus ministry attempts to form faith communities in an academic environment that knows both a healthy sense of solidarity and a good deal of alienation. Ideally, colleges and universities gather teachers and students together into a community of shared values and common dedication to the pursuit of truth. In fact, on campuses there is a good deal of collaborative effort. Organizations abound, close friendships are formed, interest groups gather the like-minded. Many administrators, faculty members, and students move easily in this world and find that it satisfies their needs for companionship and involvement. Many Christians freely gather into communities of faith in which they share their strengths and gifts with others.

35. On the other hand, lonely voices on campus cry out for intimacy, and mildly estranged individuals express a desire for more personal interaction. Students who leave home and come to large universities often feel lost in the vast impersonal world. The world of research and scholarship can seem cold and demeaning to graduate students. Commuter students who are on campus only briefly for classes do not have the opportunity to form close bonds with others. Some sense of alienation seems inevitable for international students who must cope with a new culture. Recently arrived immigrant and refugee students experience the isolation and loneliness of being separated from family and homeland. Older students worry about fitting in and being accepted and, at times, have the added complication of marital and family pressures. Even students in small private colleges can experience a lack of depth in their relationships and a consequent sense of estrangement. Complaints are also heard from faculty members about the superficiality of their relationships with close colleagues and the lack of opportunities for interaction with those in other departments. Some feel cut off from the centers of power as important academic decisions are made without their input. The difficulty of gathering students

for anything except social events and concerts is a continuing problem for student affairs leaders. Administrators speak openly about the fragmentation of campus life and search for ways to overcome it. The voices of estrangement are many and varied. Campus ministers who listen well know that there is a genuine hunger for community in the academic world, as well as a strong sense of solidarity.

2. The Importance of Christian Community

36. The call to form communities of faith flows both from the very nature of the Gospel itself and from the pastoral situation on campus. Christianity is ecclesial by its very nature. The communal character of salvation is already clear in the Hebrew Scriptures: "It has pleased God, however, to make [human beings] holy and save them not merely as individuals without any mutual bonds, but by making them into a single people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness."²⁶ This truth was exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ who, led by the Spirit, gathered together a community of followers. The Twelve served as official witnesses of his saving mission and symbolic representation of the new People of God. Through his striking parables and miraculous signs he proclaimed the kingdom in which all human beings, animated by the Spirit, were to live in peace and harmony. The death and resurrection of Jesus brought a new outpouring of the Spirit which "makes the Church grow, perpetually renews Her and leads Her to perfect union with Her Spouse."²⁷ Under the influence of the Spirit, the Church remembers the prayer of Jesus that "all may be one, Father, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe" (Jn 17:21). All the baptized, empowered by the Spirit, share responsibility for forming the Church into a genuine community of worship and service. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church is called, with all of its limitations and sinfulness, to wend its way through history as the visible sign of the unity of the whole human family and as an instrument of reconciliation for all.²⁸

37. Today, the Church on campus is challenged to be a credible sign of unity and a living reminder of the essential interdependence and solidarity of all people. Thus, the faith community seeks to gather those who wish to serve others and to bring healing to those in the academic world who are restricted by artificial barriers and wounded by alienating practices. The Church gains credibility when the dream of community produces genuine commitment and intelligent effort. In the ideal community of faith, the Mystery that rules over our lives is named and worshiped. Dedication to Christ is fostered, and openness to all truth, goodness, and beauty is maintained. The life of the Spirit is nourished and discussed. Positive images of God, Christ, Mary, and the afterlife warm the heart and structure the imagination. The common good is emphasized and personal development encouraged. Individuals experience true freedom and at the same time accept responsibility for the well-being of the group. Traditional wisdom is available and the best contemporary insights are valued. Prayerful liturgies enable us to praise God with full hearts and create a sense of belonging, as well as nourish people for a life of service. Members are known by name and newcomers are welcomed. Unity of faith is celebrated while legitimate pluralism is recognized. Individuals find both support and challenge and can share their joys and sorrows. The members hunger for justice and have the courage to fight the dehumanizing tendencies in the culture. The community knows the sorrows of life but remains a people of hope. In this ideal community of faith, the members are of one heart and mind (Acts 4:32) and receive the spirit of wisdom which brings them to full knowledge of Jesus Christ who is the head of the Church (Eph 1:17-23).

38. By working toward the dream of genuine community, campus ministry unleashes human potential and contributes to the common struggle against the forces of alienation. A Church serious about building community reminds others of the beauty and nobility of a life lived in harmony and peace. The baptized who experience acceptance, healing, and empowerment in the faith community are better prepared to bring an understanding ear, a reconciling touch, and an encouraging voice to alienated persons on campus.

3. The Challenge of Forming the Faith Community

39. When the dream of a genuine faith community is alive, then the search for effective strategies is intensified. Attitudes are crucial. Campus ministers whose personal outreach is warm and welcoming are likely to gain the active participation of others in the community. The ministry of presence in which leaders of the faith community make themselves available by being on campus regularly and getting involved in activities and events is a valuable way of making initial contact with potential members of the faith community and of enhancing existing relationships. Administrators, faculty members, and students who sense that they are valued as persons and that their talents and initiatives are appreciated, will find involvement more attractive.

40. On many campuses, Mass and communion services have proven to be powerful means of building community. Ministers who put a great deal of effort into preparing liturgies that are in accord with the Church's liturgical directives and are prayerful, coherent, and aesthetically pleasing, generally find an enthusiastic response. If they keep in mind the sensibilities of the academic community and strive for wide participation, the broad use of legitimate liturgical options, and a flexible style, the inherent community-building power of the Eucharist is enhanced. There is a greater recognition today that stimulating homilies that apply the Gospel realistically and convey positive religious images are especially important in fostering genuine religious conversion and a sense of closeness to the worshiping community and the Church as a whole.²⁹ It is a sign of hope for the future that so many collegians are gaining a deeper appreciation of the power of the Eucharist to raise the mind and heart to God and to serve as "a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity."³⁰

41. In many sacramentally oriented campus ministries, the adult catechumenate process has become an especially valuable means of incorporating new members into the Catholic Church and strengthening the faith of those who are already members. As a result, the Catholic faith community becomes stronger, more attractive, and inviting. The presence of adults who have freely chosen to join the Church moves some members to think more deeply about their own relationships to the Church. Those who serve as sponsors often gain a new appreciation of their faith and a renewed sense of the Church as a community of committed believers. A community will attract newcomers as more and more of its members demonstrate enthusiasm for the faith and an attractive style of Christian living.

42. On other campuses, different forms of community building predominate. For example, campus ministers at some commuter colleges form community through bible study programs. Through personal contact, they gather together faculty members and students for shared reading and discussion of the Scriptures. This leads into group prayer and joint projects to serve others.

Such programs reveal the power of the Scriptures to call individuals out of their isolation and to give them a sense of solidarity as they struggle to live out the Christian life in the academic world.

43. The experience of Christian community on campus is important to the life of the whole Church. Students who have such a positive experience and are taught their responsibilities to the larger Church will continue to be a very valuable resource for family, parish, and diocesan life when they leave school. Campus ministers can prepare for this by maintaining good ties with local parishes and giving students the opportunity to be of service there.

44. Building up the community of faith on campus is the responsibility of all baptized persons. The desire to serve and the hunger for community must be tapped. Individuals who are personally invited to join in this task and given freedom and encouragement to use their gifts and talents for the benefit of the community are more likely to respond. It is the duty of leaders to provide vision and encourage others to accept their responsibilities. The task of forming Christian communities on campus encounters great difficulties but also brings deep satisfaction. This crucial aspect of campus ministry is worthy of vigorous and creative efforts so that the Catholic community can be an authentic sign and instrument of the kingdom on campus.

NOTES

²⁶ "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," no. 9

²⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 48.

²⁹ Fee et al., *Young Catholics* (New York: William H. Sadler, Inc., 1980), pp. 154-155.

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B. Appropriating the Faith

1. *The Challenges to Faith on Campus*

45. Campus ministry has the task of enabling Catholics to achieve a more adult appropriation of their faith so that they can live in greater communion with God and the Church, give more effective witness to the Gospel, and face the challenges to belief that exist in the academic world. In the classroom, students learn to question traditional assumptions and to tolerate diverse opinions on important questions that cause some to doubt their religious beliefs. Most students eventually encounter the modern critics of religion who charge that belief is either infantile or dehumanizing. In some classes, the scientific method that has advanced human learning so effectively is presented as a total world view, which supplants religion and renders obsolete other approaches to truth. Some professors give the impression that maturation involves rejection of religious beliefs. In these and other ways, the academic world challenges the traditional belief systems of many students.

46. Campus life tends to reinforce these intellectual challenges. Catholic students, at times, find their faith shaken by encountering peers who profess widely divergent world views and life styles. Today, a significant number of Catholics are attracted away from their religious heritage by fundamentalist groups that employ aggressive proselytizing tactics and promise clear answers and instant security in the midst of a frightening and complex world. When students learn more about the harsh realities of life and monstrous evils that have been part of human history, they are, at times, forced to question their belief in a God who seems callous in allowing such human suffering. Finally, the whirl of campus life, with its exhilarating freedom and the pressure of making good grades, can so dominate the attention of students that they drift away from their faith without much real thought.

47. Many Catholics on campus, including faculty members, are unprepared to deal with intellectual challenges to the faith. They are unable to explain their belief to interested friends or to defend it against attacks by hostile critics. Their understanding of the faith has not kept pace with their knowledge in other areas. The legitimate pluralism of theology and spirituality in the Church confuses them. They have not achieved an adult appropriation of their religion that would enable them to speak about it not only with conviction but also with intelligence. At times, this produces frustration and anger over the inadequacy of their religious training.

48. These problems are intensified by the general religious illiteracy in our culture. Public education is not committed to passing on the religious heritage. Many good people do not recognize the importance of religious

knowledge for a well-rounded education. Most colleges and universities still do not have departments or programs of religious studies, nor do they provide adequate opportunities to explore the religious dimension of various disciplines in the curriculum. In the academic world, there are still those who think that teaching about religion necessarily involves proselytizing and that it cannot be done in an academically sound way. This attitude compounds the problems of campus ministers who seek to promote a more mature appropriation of the faith among Catholics.

49. On the positive side, the challenges on campus prompt some Catholics to explore and deepen their belief. Doubts, which are frequently a part of faith development, at times lead to further study and renewed convictions. The academic world provides intellectual stimulation and helpful resources for those who want to explore their religious tradition. There is a growing interest in religious studies and an increase in programs and courses around the country. Some public institutions have excellent departments or programs in religious studies that demonstrate that this can be done legally and according to proper academic standards. Today, within the academic community a few voices are heard insisting that a well-educated person should have a knowledge of religion. At some institutions, campus ministry has produced excellent programs in theological studies that supplement the offerings in the curriculum through a wide variety of credit and noncredit courses, seminars, and lectures. The faculty members and students who have achieved a more mature appropriation of their faith provide important witness on campus and are a sign of hope in the struggle against religious illiteracy.

2. Principles for Appropriating the Faith

50. By its very nature, Christianity calls us to an ever-deeper understanding and appreciation of our faith. Baptism initiates us into a lifelong process in which we are gradually formed anew in the image of our Creator and thus grow in knowledge (Col 3:10). The Scriptures remind us that this process means moving beyond childish ways to more mature approaches: "Let us, then, be children no longer, tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine that originates in human trickery and skill in proposing error. Rather, let us profess the truth in love and grow to the full maturity of Christ the head" (Eph 4:14-16). The Scriptures also call us to move beyond illusion to a deeper way of thinking and relating to God: "You must lay aside your former way of life and the old self which deteriorates through illusion and desire, and acquire a fresh, spiritual way of thinking" (Eph 4:22-23). Members of the faith community who achieve a more mature grasp of their Christian faith are in a better position to understand themselves and their world. Those who continue their theological education are better able to reflect on their experiences in the light of the Gospel. By assimilating the meanings and values in the Christian tradition, believers are better equipped to affirm the positive meanings and values in the culture and to resist those who are opposed to the Gospel. Individuals who are well grounded in their own Catholic heritage are better prepared to enter into ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and cooperation. The Second Vatican Council reminded us that Christians have the task of achieving "a public, persistent, and universal presence in the whole enterprise of advancing higher culture."³¹ The Council called upon Christians to "shoulder society's heavier burdens and to witness the faith to the world."³² Those best qualified for this great work are the believers who have understood the implications of their faith and are able to articulate their deepest beliefs. The Scriptures offer us this advice: "Should anyone ask you the reason for this hope of yours, be ever ready to reply, but speak gently and respectfully" (1 Pt 3:15-16). To respond credibly, intelligently, and sensitively to honest inquiry requires careful and systematic preparation. All the members of the community of faith have a right to the kind of theological education that prepares them to meet this responsibility.³³ When we consider the demands of the academic world, it is clear that the Church on campus has a special responsibility to enable all of its members to appropriate the faith more deeply in order to give effective witness to the academic community.

51. The importance of achieving an intelligent appropriation of the faith can also be established by examining the nature and purpose of education. As we have noted elsewhere, "a truly liberating and elevating education is incomplete without the study of theology or religion."³⁴ We must continue to encourage the study of religion in our society as a whole because, as Cardinal Newman insisted, religious truth has an inherent value and is "not only a portion but a condition of general knowledge."³⁵ Educated persons should know something of the history, teachings, and practices of the various world religions and be especially versed in the Judeo-Christian tradition, which shaped Western civilization in general and our own culture in particular. Furthermore, they should be aware of the religious aspects of other disciplines, such as literature, history, and art, as well as the religious dimension of our contemporary culture.³⁶

52. Traditionally, theology has been known to the Church as the "Queen of the Sciences." Today, we must emphasize its continuing power to keep alive the great questions of meaning, purpose, and identity and to provide a coherent vision of life, which serves as a framework and unifying principle for all learning. Theological study helps to produce the kind of intellect described by Cardinal Newman "which cannot be partial, cannot be exclusive, cannot be impetuous, cannot be at a loss, cannot but be patient, collected, and majestically calm,

because it discerns the end in every delay; because it ever knows where it stands, and how its path lies from one point to another."³⁷ The study of theology not only helps us gain this kind of perspective, but also helps us to understand in greater depth Jesus Christ who reveals to us the secrets of the Father. In a well-rounded Christian education, the teachings of the Church are presented with fidelity to the magisterium and with the contemporary situation in mind. This kind of solid theological training enables the members of the faith community to achieve a genuine synthesis of their rich religious heritage and the best in the contemporary culture.

53. A Christian faith that fails to seek a more mature understanding is not faithful to its own inner dynamism. A culture that is unaware of its religious roots and substance is impoverished and weakened. Educated Christians who have not grown beyond an adolescent level of faith development are limited in their ability to achieve personal integration and to make a contribution to society. These dangers remind campus ministry to maintain its dedication to forming the best possible learning community. The goal is that all of the members of the community achieve a deep understanding of their faith so that they are better prepared to witness to the kingdom of truth in the world.

3. Strategies for Appropriating the Faith

54. In order to move toward these goals, it is vital that campus ministry creates a climate in which theological learning is respected. Campus ministers help to produce this climate by reminding all the members that they need an adult appropriation of the faith that matches their learning in other areas, in order to function as effective Christians in the world. This message is strengthened if the campus ministers are perceived as being serious about continuing their own theological education. The presence of faculty members and students who are already finding enlightenment and satisfaction in theological studies is a powerful motivation for others. A tradition of pursuing theological learning must be established in which all the members sense their responsibility to achieve a more mature understanding of their faith.

55. If the faith community shares this broad appreciation of the importance of religious studies, then individual programs are more likely to be successful. Program planners should be aware of the courses on campus that deal with religious matters, as well as the current needs and interests of faculty and students. For example, the existence on campus of an increasing number of fundamentalist groups has intensified the need for scripture courses that combine the historical-critical method with opportunities for personal application and shared prayer. Such courses tap the current interest in relating the Scriptures to everyday life and prepare members of the faith community to deal with the aggressive recruiting methods employed by some fundamentalist groups. In general, campus ministry should supplement the religious offerings in the curriculum and provide a wide variety of opportunities for Catholics to study and appropriate their religious heritage and to reflect critically on their experiences in the light of the Gospel.

56. Effective strategies must deal realistically with the situations of the targeted audiences. Theological studies can be made more attractive for students by arranging credit for courses offered by the campus ministry program. For example, through a theologian-in-residence program, students on a state university campus could gain academic credit from a nearby Catholic college for theology courses taught at the campus ministry center on the state campus. Programs for faculty members and administrators must respect their vast experience while, at the same time, taking into account their general lack of systematic theological training.

57. Campus ministry has the responsibility not only to provide theological education for Catholics, but also to work with others to improve the response of higher education to the problem of religious illiteracy in our culture. The key to making progress in this idea is to overcome the unfortunate assumption that the study of religion cannot be a genuine academic discipline. The academic community must be shown that religion is worthy of careful and systematic study because it is central to human existence and is an important wellspring of our culture. Professors who deal with religious questions in their courses can help to overcome this bias by teaching this material according to rigorous academic standards of objectivity and with obvious respect for opposing opinions. If the bias against religion as an academic subject can be overcome, then a variety of positive steps might be possible, such as establishing a religious studies program, organizing a lectureship devoted to religious questions, and founding an endowed chair for Catholic thought. If the climate on campus were more open, then campus ministers with advanced degrees might find opportunities to teach part time in appropriate departments or programs. Even if some of these larger initiatives are not possible, campus ministers still can provide a valuable service for students by identifying the courses on campus in which the religious aspect is treated well and fairly.

58. In the faith community, it is understood that religious literacy is for the well-being of society and that

theological learning is for the sake of a deepened faith. The goal is an adult appropriation of the faith that fosters personal commitment to Christ and encourages intelligent witness in the world on behalf of the Gospel.

NOTES

³¹ "Declaration on Christian Education," no. 10.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., no. 2.

³⁴ "Catholic Higher Education," no. 22. In this regard, it is important to distinguish theology, which involves a faith perspective and commitment, from religious studies, which can proceed in a more neutral fashion.

³⁵ John Henry Cardinal Newman, *The Idea of a University* (Garden City, N.Y.:Image Books, 1959), p. 103.

³⁶ "Catholic Higher Education," no. 22.

³⁷ Newman, *The Idea of a University*, p. 159.

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C. Forming the Christian Conscience

1. Moral Relativism on Campus

59. The Church on campus must facilitate the formation of a Christian conscience in its members so that they can make decisions based on gospel values and, thereby, resist moral relativism. Many questions of personal values and ethics inevitably arise for individuals in the academic community. Students are concerned with the moral dimension of such matters as relating to family members, abortion, sexual conduct, drinking and drugs, forming friendships, honesty in their studies, and pursuing a career. At times, faculty members experience a conflict of values as they try to balance their research and teaching and attempt to remain objective in the classroom while expressing their personal opinions. Their integrity can be tested as they fight against grade inflation and struggle to maintain academic freedom while accepting external funding for research. Individual courses often produce particular ethical and value questions. This occurs in obvious ways in philosophy, literature, and the life sciences and in more subtle ways in the physical sciences and technology courses. For example, a computer course may be based on assumptions about human nature that need to be discussed. Ethical questions also arise in relation to institutional policies and practices, such as whether a particular college or university is demonstrating a proper respect and care for the athletes it recruits and utilizes.

60. As members of the academic community deal with these questions, they unavoidably come under the influence of the moral climate that dominates their particular college or university. The eyes of faith discern, in the academic world as a whole, the predictable mixture of grace and sin that characterizes all institutions. On the one hand, the climate is shaped by high idealism, dedicated service, a long tradition of civil discourse, great tolerance for opposing views, sensitive care for individuals, hard work, and a deep love for freedom. Examples of personal virtue are evident in students who resist intense peer pressure and maintain their high moral standards; in faculty members who make financial sacrifices to stay in the academic world and who carry on their teaching and research with responsibility and integrity; in administrators who consistently speak the truth and treat all members of the academic community humanely. Organizations and groups often help raise the moral tone of the campus by being involved in charitable activities and espousing high ideals. In some fields, such as business, medicine, law, and the life sciences, more courses are being offered that deal with ethical questions. Periodically, a wave of idealism sweeps our campuses which reminds us of the great potential for goodness in the academic community.

61. On the other hand, Christians recognize in the academic world a strong strain of moral relativism that tends

to reduce genuine freedom to license and an open-minded tolerance to mindlessness. Rational discourse about ethical questions degenerates into nothing more than sharing personal feelings. Sin is reduced to neurosis or blamed on societal pressures. The project of forming a healthy conscience is neglected in favor of a selfish individualism. In this climate, some persons assume that it is impossible or useless to make judgments about whether particular actions are right or wrong, whether some values are better than others, and whether certain patterns of behavior are constructive or destructive.

62. If this philosophy predominates on campus, Catholics are hard-pressed to maintain their values and principles. They find it harder to mount an effective critique of institutional practices that violate the high ideals of higher education and fail to respect the dignity of human beings. Young adults who are moving through various stages of moral development are often confused by mixed messages and conflicting philosophies. Students must contend with peer pressures to enter into the drug scene, to cheat on exams, to engage in promiscuous sexual activity, to have abortions, and, in general, to adopt a hedonistic life style. Some other students find that their commitments to spouses and families are called into question. Faculty members and administrators, at times, experience subtle pressures to go along with morally questionable institutional policies and practices.

2. Conscience in a Catholic Perspective

63. In this situation, campus ministry has the crucial task of assisting in the formation of Catholic consciences so that individuals who will continue to face very complex ethical issues throughout their lives are prepared to make good moral judgments according to gospel values. The Scriptures remind us: "Do not conform yourself to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind so that you may judge what is God's will, what is good, pleasing and perfect" (Rom 12:2). Conscience formation involves just such a transforming renewal of mind in accord with the will of God.³⁸ For, conscience is that "most secret core and sanctuary of a person where one is close with God."³⁹ There we hear the voice of God echoing in the depths of our being and calling us to heed the law written on our hearts. As Cardinal Newman wrote in the last century: "Conscience does not repose on itself, but vaguely reaches forward to something beyond itself and dimly discerns a sanction higher than self for its decisions, as is evidenced in that keen sense of obligation and responsibility which informs them."⁴⁰ "Conscience, then, though it is inviolable, is not a law unto itself."⁴¹ It is rather through our conscience that we detect a call from God, summoning us to love the good and avoid evil. It is in response to this call, heard in the secret recesses of our hearts, that we make the judgments of conscience required by the concrete circumstances of our daily lives. This requires an informed conscience, one nourished in prayer, enlightened by study, structured by the Gospel, and guided by the teachings of the Church. Self-deception is all too easy; blindness and illusion can easily mislead us. "Beloved, do not trust every spirit, but put the spirits to a test to see if they belong to God" (1 Jn 4:1). Thus, we need the community of faith to challenge our illusions and to call us to greater self-honesty.

64. In emphasizing the objective call from God, mediated through the Church, we do not want to lose sight of the fact that the divine summons must be answered freely and intelligently. "Morality, then, is not simply something imposed on us from without, but is ingrained in our being; it is the way we accept our humanity as restored to us in Christ."⁴² Thus, all human beings are bound to follow their conscience faithfully in order that they may set the course of their lives directly toward God.⁴³ We are freely responsible for ourselves and cannot shift that burden to anyone else. We come to the full measure of freedom by putting on the mind of Christ. When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free (Gal 5:1). By preaching Christ and his message of freedom, the community of faith seeks to inform the consciences of all of its members. The Christian who possesses a conscience structured by the Gospel of Christ and who is guided by the continuing presence of Christ's spirit in the Church is better prepared to deal with the rapidly changing complexities of the world today. When genuine virtue is acquired, then good actions flow more spontaneously and new strength is found to live according to one's ideals. Individuals whose conscience has been tutored by the Gospel understand that their task is not only to resist evil but to help transform the world.

65. This portrayal of the informed Christian conscience stands in stark contrast to moral relativism. If morality is based on the call of God, then it cannot be totally arbitrary. Moral relativism betrays the essential structure of human persons who are ultimately dependent on a God who calls all of us to account. A conscience that remembers its source and is nourished and supported by the community of faith is the best resource for dealing with the complex questions of personal values and ethics.

3. Methods of Conscience Formation

66. Campus ministry is called to bring the Gospel of Christ to bear on the moral problems faced by members of the academic community. This can be done by personal encounters such as spiritual direction and counseling, as well as through homilies, classes, and seminars. When campus ministers address these questions, it is vital that

they are perceived as being in touch with the texture and complexities of the moral problems generated by campus life. They also must have a working knowledge of the wisdom found in the Catholic tradition on particular moral questions. A good way for campus ministers to multiply their effectiveness is by facilitating peer ministry programs in which individuals who have successfully dealt with particular moral problems can help others in similar situations. For example, a senior athlete who managed to keep a healthy perspective on sports and maintain good grades could be prepared to speak with other athletes struggling to keep their values intact in highly pressurized situations. Students who have freed themselves from the drug scene could help others interested in breaking their drug habits. For older students struggling to keep their marriages together, conversations with faculty members who kept their commitments in similar circumstances could be mutually beneficial in enriching their married lives. In all such peer ministry approaches, it is important that those serving others are well prepared through a proper grounding in gospel ideals and church teachings on these moral questions. Engaging members of the faith community in such peer ministry programs is a valuable way of extending the effort to form Christian consciences.

67. Courses or seminars provide a more structured approach to the formation of conscience. For example, undergraduate students can be gathered for a seminar on the question of premarital sex, contraception, and abortion. An open atmosphere is needed so that the students can speak freely about the prevailing attitudes and peer pressures on campus, as well as about their own outlooks and modes of decision making. A skillful leader can use the discussion as a basis for bringing out the Christian teaching that insists that sexuality is best understood in terms of personal relationships and that intercourse is a sign of the total commitment associated with marriage. In dealing with this and all areas of personal morality, the Catholic tradition must be presented as containing a wisdom that illuminates the mystery of human existence and encourages behavior that is in the best interest of the individual and society.

68. A good deal of conscience formation must be done on an individual basis. Counseling, spiritual direction, and the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation provide excellent opportunities to apply Christian teachings to an individual's precise situation and current stage of moral development. Through these means, persons can gradually discover the illusions and destructive patterns that impede the development of a conscience fully attuned to the Gospel. Such settings also provide the occasion to proclaim the great mercy of our God, who deals patiently with our weaknesses and guides us gradually to full growth in Christ.

69. If campus ministry hopes to deal effectively with questions of personal values and ethics, it must be concerned with the general moral climate on campus. When individuals maintain high moral standards despite pressures, they make an important personal contribution to the moral tone of the academic community. Since colleges and universities have the task of fostering critical thinking and transmitting our cultural heritage, they should include questions of values and ethics in this general mission. Members of the faith community who understand the importance of the moral dimension of life are called to join with others in promoting a more extensive and informed discussion of ethical issues on campus. This can be done in a great variety of ways, such as facilitating an appreciation of the need for courses on ethics in each department and program, encouraging professors to treat the questions of ethics and values that arise in their courses, and sponsoring lectures and seminars on particular moral questions. It is especially helpful to get the whole academic community involved in concentrated discussions. For example, campus ministers could join with other interested groups in sponsoring a "Values and Ethics Week" on campus, designed to deal directly with moral issues. During this week, all professors are encouraged to spend class time discussing the ethical implications of their courses. Informal discussions and structured seminars are arranged throughout the week. In order to give the whole program momentum and status, major speakers are brought in to address current ethical concerns. The important element in these strategies is to move the academic community to carry on its proper task of promoting critical thinking in the area of values and ethics.

NOTES

³⁸ "The Church in the Modern World," no. 16.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Cited in "The Church in Our Day," in *Pastoral Letters*, vol. III, 1962-1974, no. 205.

⁴¹ Ibid., no. 206.

⁴² "To Live in Christ Jesus," in *Pastoral Letters*, vol. IV, 1975-1983, no. 22.

⁴³ "Declaration on Religious Freedom," in *Documents of Vatican II*, no. 3.

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EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT

Empowered by the Spirit: Campus Ministry Faces the Future

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IV. Aspects of Campus Ministry

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D. Educating for Justice

1. *The Search for Justice on Campus*

70. Campus ministry is called to make the struggle for social justice an integral part of its mission. The academic world generates questions not only of personal morality but also of social justice, which includes issues of peace and war, as well as reverence for life in all phases of its development. Some questions arise as colleges and universities determine their internal policies and practices. How, for instance, should they balance their concern for quality education with a policy of open access that gives disadvantaged students the opportunity for higher education?⁴⁴ Issues also emerge as higher education interacts with other institutions. A prime example is whether universities can maintain their integrity, freedom, and a balanced research program while accepting massive funding from the Department of Defense for research on weapons systems. Periodically, a social justice issue captures the imagination of a significant number of students on campus, producing demonstrations and an appeal for direct action. A more sustained commitment to particular justice issues is demonstrated by some individuals, such as those who remain active in the peace movement over a long period of time and those who maintain the effort to gain legal protection for unborn human life. Such persons of conscience often encounter apathy, misunderstanding, and rejection and therefore deserve the special support and encouragement of the Church.

71. The academic community could generate intense debate over all these issues. In general terms, some want the university to remain detached from social issues, while others look for more active involvement to achieve a more just society. Most agree that higher education makes a valuable contribution by providing a forum for discussing the great questions of the day in a civil and reasoned fashion so that constructive solutions can be worked out.

72. Finally, it must be admitted that there is a great deal of apathy in evidence on campus today. Many are caught up in their own concerns and have little if any interest in social matters. Others who have been actively involved are now weary of the battles and have retreated into less demanding activities. Most students do not even think in terms of altering unjust structures through political action or social involvement. In general, alongside striking examples of personal commitment to justice, we sense a strong current of individualism that undercuts concern for the common good and eclipses the urgency of social concerns.

2. *Principles of Catholic Social Teaching*

73. Campus ministry is called to be a consistent and vigorous advocate for justice, peace, and the reverence for all life. All the baptized should understand that "action on behalf of justice is a significant criterion of the Church's fidelity to its missions. It is not optional, nor is it the work of only a few in the Church. It is something to which all Christians are called according to their vocations, talents, and situations in life."⁴⁵ With this in mind, campus ministers have the responsibility of keeping alive the vision of the Church on campus as a genuine servant community that is dedicated to the works of justice, peace, and reverence for life, in all stages of its development.

74. As we noted in our pastoral letter on peace, "at the center of all Catholic social teaching are the transcendence of God and the dignity of the human person. The human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world; all of the Church's work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person. For each person not only reflects God but is the expression of God's creative work and the meaning of Christ's redemptive ministry."⁴⁶ In our day, the sanctity of the life of the unborn calls everyone to protect vigorously the life of the most defenseless among us. When we reflect further upon Christ's redemptive ministry, we see that he demonstrated a special care for the poor and the outcasts of his society. He came "to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives" (Lk 4:18). In identifying himself with suffering persons, he provided us with the strongest motivation to work for justice for all (Mt 25:31-46). In word and deed, Jesus taught us the essential unity between love of God and love of neighbor. His followers understood that if you claim to love God and hate your neighbor, you are a liar (1 Jn 4:20). The Gospel he proclaimed and the Spirit he sent were to transform and renew all of human existence, the social and institutional dimensions, as well as the personal.⁴⁷ This analysis suggests a rationale for the commitment to justice, a rationale that should be known and understood by all members of the Church.

75. In the struggle for justice, we need Christians who understand that "knowledge of economics and politics will not in itself bring about justice, unless it is activated by human and religious ideals. However, religious ideals without the necessary secular expertise will not provide the kind of leadership needed to influence our complex society."⁴⁸ The faith community on campus, which includes individuals with significant academic achievements, is especially well equipped to achieve the integration of an informed faith with knowledge and skill in the social arena. To accomplish this, there must be great emphasis on "teaching and learning the tradition of Catholic social thought, the creation of an environment for learning that reflects a commitment to justice, and an openness on the part of all Catholics to change personal attitudes and behavior."⁴⁹ We call special attention to the coherent body of Catholic social thought developed during the past century in papal encyclicals and reflected in our pastoral letters.⁵⁰ It is especially important for Catholics on campus to assimilate these teachings and to use them in their work for justice.

76. As the faith community carries on this educational task, it must remember that the goal is not learning alone, but constructive action to eradicate injustice and to transform society. Christians must learn how to empower individuals and groups to take charge of their own lives and to shape their own destinies. The sin that infects the social order must be not merely analyzed, but attacked. Unjust structures and institutions must be changed, as must policies and laws that fail to respect human life. To be a credible partner in this task, the Church on campus should remember that "any group which ventures to speak to others about justice should itself be just, and should be seen as such. It must therefore submit its own politics, programs, and manner of life to continuing review."⁵¹

3. Working for Justice

77. Considering the apathy on campus, the faith community has the vital task of raising consciousness on social issues and providing motivation for study and action. Leaders in the faith community who are already actively committed to the struggle for justice are a valuable resource in this effort. Drawing on their own experience, they can try to recruit others to work on specific justice issues. The very presence in the faith community of a core group dedicated to justice serves as an example and invitation to others to contribute their own talents and gifts to create a more humane society. Since apathy and excessive individualism are such pervasive problems, it is important for all those who are concerned about social justice to sustain their efforts even in the midst of limited successes.

78. Education for justice can be carried out in a variety of ways, ranging from scripture studies and liturgies with a justice orientation to seminars and guided readings on a particular justice issue. Education for justice is enhanced by including an action component. For example, a seminar on hunger that raises consciousness on the issue should include suggested actions, such as joining an appropriate organization, writing congresspersons, or helping out in a local food distribution center. Given the gravity of the nuclear threat, it is especially important to study the issue of peace and war. Such studies should include a discussion of ways to

implement the summons to peacemaking contained in our pastoral letter *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*.

79. Since the struggle for social justice demands involvement and not simply objective analysis, the Church on campus should provide ample opportunities for all of its members to work directly in programs and projects designed to create a more just social order in which peace and reverence for life are possible. Students who are involved in service projects, such as visiting nursing homes, tutoring disadvantaged children, or helping out during vacations in impoverished areas of the country, often grow in appreciation of the people they serve, as well as discover more about the complexity of institutional problems. Systematic reflection on such experiences in the light of the Gospel and the social teachings of the Church enhances their learning and prepares them to be life-long seekers after justice.

80. Campus ministry has the responsibility to work with others to enable higher education to live up to its commitments and ideals in the area of social justice. Individuals have many opportunities to speak on behalf of those who are powerless. For instance, administrators and faculty members who are helping to set admissions policies or who are involved in hiring decisions can raise up the concerns of the disadvantaged and underrepresented. Students in various organizations can be vigilant so that the rights and sensibilities of international and minority students are respected. Individuals and groups who are attuned to the social dimension of the Gospel can raise ethical questions about institutional policies.

81. Periodically, issues arise that call for a more public response by the Church on campus. Campus ministers, for instance, may be asked to be advocates for a group of students who are seeking redress of legitimate grievances or to provide leadership on a particular issue, such as combating the problems of racism and sexism. These are important opportunities, and campus ministers should respond by drawing on the social teaching of the Church and giving public witness to the Church's concern for justice and peace.

82. Finally, the faith community can touch the conscience of the academic world by sponsoring programs on campus designed to raise consciousness and to promote justice and peace. For example, the Church could organize a day of fasting on campus, with the meal money saved going to help feed hungry people. This is a means of alerting individuals to the magnitude of the problem, of offering concrete help to the hungry, and of witnessing to the social dimension of the Gospel.

NOTES

- ⁴⁴ See the report by the Southern Regional Education Board's Commission for Educational Quality, "Access to Quality Undergraduate Education," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 3, 1985, p. 9 ff.
- ⁴⁵ United States Catholic Conference, *Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference Publishing Services, 1979), no. 160.
- ⁴⁶ "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response," in *Pastoral Letters*, vol. IV, 1975-1983, no. 15.
- ⁴⁷ "The Church in the Modern World," no. 26.
- ⁴⁸ "Catholic Higher Education," no. 39.
- ⁴⁹ "To Do the Work of Justice," in *Pastoral Letters*, vol. IV, 1975-1983, no. 8.
- ⁵⁰ For important papal documents, see David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Renewing the Earth: Catholic Documents of Peace, Justice, and Liberation* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977). Among our more recent pastoral letters and statements on social justice and peace, we call attention to: "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response"; "Brothers and Sisters to Us"; "To Do the Work of Justice"; and our forthcoming pastoral letter on the economy. Finally, we note the valuable insights in the pastoral letter *What We Have Seen and Heard: A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization from the Black Bishops of the United States* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1984).
- ⁵¹ *Sharing the Light of Faith*, no. 160.

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E. Facilitating Personal Development

1. Self-fulfillment in the Academic World

83. Campus ministry has the task of promoting the full personal development of the members of the academic community in a setting that is filled with rich, if often neglected, resources for self-fulfillment. Colleges and universities provide marvelous opportunities for healthy personal growth. Classes, lectures, and seminars provide intellectual stimulation. Cultural and social events broaden horizons and facilitate emotional growth. The greatest catalyst for development comes from interaction with the concerned people who make up the academic community. There are campus ministers who can provide guidance for the spiritual quest; administrators who possess broad visions and sensitive hearts; faculty members who are generous in sharing the results of their scholarship; international students who bring the richness of different cultures; and peers who are willing to share friendship and the common struggle for greater maturity. With all of these resources, many individuals find the academic world to be an ideal setting for establishing their identities, forming relationships, developing their talents, preparing for leadership, discerning their vocations, and charting the direction of their lives.

84. On the other hand, this vast potential for growth is often ignored or impeded. Some students think of college only in terms of opening the door to a good job and a secure future. They attend classes, gain credits, and manage to graduate. Learning to think critically and achieving a well-rounded personality through involvement on campus are not part of their program. For these students, the call to self-fulfillment either falls on deaf ears or is interpreted exclusively in terms of a lucrative career and material success. The great potential of higher education to promote personal development can also lie dormant because of the policies and practices of colleges and universities themselves. The traditional task of producing well-rounded individuals who are prepared to serve the common good can recede into the background, as policy decisions are made on the basis of declining enrollments and financial pressures. Recently, voices from within the academic community have been raised, claiming that higher education has not remained faithful to its traditional goals and is not living up to its potential. Some say this is because students are not involved enough in the whole learning process.⁵² One report claims that administrators and faculty have lost their nerve in the face of cultural trends and student pressures. It charges that leaders, by failing to insist on the systematic study of the humanities, have effectively deprived students of the cultural heritage that is needed for a well-rounded education.⁵³ Others decry the lack of a coherent curriculum and call for diverse learning experiences that foster critical thinking and help produce integrated persons who can live responsibly and joyfully as individuals and democratic citizens.⁵⁴ Among the critics, there is general agreement that reform is needed so that colleges and universities can achieve their

proper goal of facilitating the full personal development of students.

2. Christian Perspectives on Self-fulfillment

85. The Church has the task of distinguishing and evaluating the many voices of our age.⁵⁵ Campus ministry must be attuned to the voices of reform in the academic community and be prepared to function as the friend of genuine personal development and as an ally in the quest for healthy self-fulfillment. Our Scriptures remind us that the Spirit calls us to put aside childish ways and to live with greater maturity (1 Cor 14:20). For us Christians, Jesus Christ is the perfectly fulfilled human being.⁵⁶ In him, we see the depth of our potential and sublime character of our call. "He blazed a trail, and if we follow it, life and death are made holy and take on a new meaning."⁵⁷ By following this path of truth and love, we can grow to full maturity in Christ (Eph 4:15). The Spirit of Jesus, poured out through his death and resurrection, energizes us for the task of developing our potential. The same Spirit enables us to recognize and overcome the selfishness in our hearts and the contradictions in the culture that distort the quest for healthy self-fulfillment. When individuals pursue personal development within the community of faith, they are constantly challenged to use their talents in the service of others and to stay open to the Spirit, who accomplishes surprising things in us (Jn 3:8).

86. The Second Vatican Council has given contemporary expression to these biblical insights.⁵⁸ Human dignity demands that persons act according to intelligent decisions that are motivated from within. We should pursue our goals in a free choice of what is good and find apt means to achieve these laudable goals. The Christian vision of human existence safeguards the ideal of full human development by rooting it in the sacredness of the person. All persons are worthy of respect and dignity and are called to perfection because they are "a living image of God"⁵⁹ and possess a "godlike seed" that has been sown in them.⁶⁰ This intrinsic relationship with God, far from limiting the drive for personal development, frees human beings to pursue their fulfillment and happiness with confidence.⁶¹ Furthermore, life in community teaches us that personal freedom acquires new strength when it consents to the requirements of social life, takes on the demands of human partnership, and commits itself to the service of the human family.⁶²

87. These principles remind us that Christians must proclaim an ideal of self-fulfillment that is solidly rooted in the sacredness of persons, is placed in the service of the common good, and stays open to the God who is the source of all growth.

88. When campus ministry brings the light of the Gospel to the educational process, the search for personal development leads to a Christian humanism that fuses the positive values and meanings in the culture with the light of faith.⁶³ Genuine Christian humanists know that the heart is restless until it rests in God and that all persons are unsolved puzzles to themselves, always awaiting the full revelation of God.⁶⁴ Thus, for them, personal development is perceived as a lifelong adventure, completed only in the final fulfilling union with the Lord. Christian humanists know that history and all cultures are a mysterious mix of grace and sin⁶⁵ and that where sin exists, there grace more abounds (Rom 5:20). Thus, while rejecting the sinful elements in the culture, they are able to assimilate the grace-inspired meanings and values in the world into a comprehensive and organic framework, built on faith in Jesus Christ. As individuals pursue their personal development, the ideal of Christian humanism lights the path and sets the direction.

3. Achieving Personal Development in a Christian Context

89. Campus ministry can facilitate personal development through vibrant sacramental life, courses, seminars, and retreats that enable Catholics on campus to integrate their collegiate experience with their Christian faith. Through pastoral counseling and spiritual direction, campus ministers can encourage individuals to make use of the resources on campus and guide them on the path toward a Christian humanism. This important work is enhanced when the ministers are perceived as persons of prayer who are serious about their own personal growth.

90. It is helpful to multiply these efforts by bringing together, in a personal encounter, those who share the journey toward Christian maturity. A program that enables an individual faculty member to meet on a regular basis outside the classroom with a particular student for friendly conversation and serious discussion provides great opportunities for the kind of exchange that is mutually enriching. Faculty members who are inspired by gospel ideals and undergo training for this kind of program are in an excellent position to be role models for students and, perhaps, spiritual mentors. Students, in turn, bring to the relationship their distinctive experience and challenging questions, which can be a catalyst for mutual growth. A great variety of such programs is possible. The key is to increase the opportunities for more personal contact between members of the faith community so that they can assist one another in the quest for a genuine Christian humanism.

91. Since there is a temptation to reduce self-fulfillment to a selfish individualism, campus ministry provides a valuable service by keeping alive the ideal of Christian humanism, which recognizes that personal growth must be open to the transcendent and in service to the common good. Through prayer groups and liturgical celebrations that link life and worship, in lectures and seminars that relate current questions and the Christian tradition, by service projects and actions for justice that put personal gifts at the service of others, the community of faith publicly manifests the Christian ideal of self-fulfillment. The sacrament of reconciliation is a powerful means for personal development since it enables individuals to confront the sins and destructive patterns that inhibit their progress and to hear again the compassionate summons to grow into greater maturity in Christ. Communal penance services that encourage an examination of the distinctive challenges and opportunities for personal development presented by campus life are especially effective in making the ideal of Christian humanism more concrete.

92. Inspired by this ideal, individual members of the faith community have the responsibility to assist their colleges or universities in the task of educating whole persons for lifelong growth and responsible citizenship. This is done in obvious ways by students who study hard and take advantage of cultural opportunities on campus and by faculty members who teach well and take a personal interest in students. In addition, there is the challenge of establishing institutional policies and practices that better facilitate these goals. Today, there is a general consensus that undergraduate education must be improved by various means, such as setting higher standards for classroom work, establishing a more coherent curriculum, and improving teacher performance through better preparation and proper incentives.⁶⁶ As the precise shape of the reforms is debated on particular campuses, it is vital that the voices of Christian humanists be joined with others of good will, on behalf of reform, which makes possible the education of the whole person. Trustees, administrators, and deans, as well as faculty members and students who serve on appropriate committees can promote policies that clearly place the well-being of students in the center of the academic enterprise. The opportunities are many and varied for members of the faith community to work with others in an effort to improve the quality of higher education so that a healthy personal development is facilitated. What is needed is the conviction that this is an essential aspect of bringing Christian witness to the campus.

NOTES

52 See "Involvement in Learning."

53 See Bennett, "To Reclaim a Legacy."

54 See "Integrity in the College Curriculum."

55 "The Church in the Modern World," no. 44.

56 *Ibid.*, no. 22.

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*, no. 17.

59 "Pastoral Letter on Marxist Communism," in *Pastoral Letters*, vol. IV, 1975-1983, no. 14.

60 "The Church in the Modern World," no. 3.

61 *Ibid.*, no. 21.

62 *Ibid.*, no. 31.

63 This term, *Christian humanism*, has been used in the Church to suggest the ideal of integrating positive cultural values and meanings in a faith perspective. For a recent usage of this term, see "Catholic Higher Education," no. 19.

64 "The Church in the Modern World," no. 21.

65 *Ibid.*

66 We recall the four reports cited in footnote 8.

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F. Developing Leaders for the Future

1. Potential Leaders on Campus

93. Campus ministry has the great opportunity to tap the immense pool of talent in our colleges and universities and to help form future leaders for society and the Church. Large numbers of intelligent and ambitious young people are on campuses, gaining the knowledge and skills needed to launch them into eventual positions of leadership in the world. Many of the older students at our colleges and universities are acquiring new knowledge and skills that will enhance their opportunities to influence their world for the good. The intense course of studies pursued by graduate students equips them with specialized knowledge that can be used for the common good. When international students, trained on our campuses, return to their own countries, they carry with them knowledge and skills that can be extremely valuable in promoting progress in their own societies. While not all of the students on campuses today will assume prominent leadership positions, everyone will have opportunities to provide some leadership in their various communities.

94. The large numbers of Catholics attending colleges and universities are potential leaders not only of society, but of the Church as well. Parishes require women and men who, in actively proclaiming the Gospel, combine commitment and good will with knowledge and skills. The Catholic community is in great need of more priests who will dedicate themselves to serving the needs of others. The religious orders are looking for new members who will live a life of dedicated service. In searching for this kind of church leadership for the future, we naturally turn to our colleges and universities, where so many of our talented young people are being educated.

95. The search for church leaders on campus should also extend to Catholic administrators and faculty. The local Church should make every effort to train individuals to carry out campus ministry on campuses where there are no professional campus ministry personnel. These men and women who are blessed with extensive education perform an important Christian service in the academic world and constitute an immense resource for church leadership. Not all of these individuals have the time or calling to assume leadership positions within the faith community. However, as a whole, they constitute a valuable pool of leadership talent that could be better utilized for the benefit of the Church.

2. Leadership in the Christian Perspective

96. From the perspective of faith, the Scriptures present a distinctive understanding of leadership. Jesus told his

followers, "You are the light of the world . . . your light must shine before all so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father" (Mt 5:14-19). This suggests that all the disciples of Jesus carry the responsibility of offering personal witness in order to make a difference in the world and using their influence to bring others to a greater appreciation of the goodness of God. This kind of leadership is to be carried out according to one's own unique talents. As the Apostle Paul indicated: "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and not all the members have the same function, so too we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the favor bestowed on each of us" (Rom 12:4-6). Paul also reminds us of the deep purpose involved in such gifts when he says, "To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1 Cor 12:7). In the Christian community, genuine leadership is based not on coercive power or high status, but on loving service that leads to the empowerment of others (Mk 10:42-45). Thus, the clear teaching of Scripture is that gifts and talents are not given simply for personal advantage; they are to be used generously for the benefit of others and for the good of society and the Church.

97. The Second Vatican Council recognized the great opportunities for this kind of Christian leadership and called on all adult Christians to prepare themselves for this task. "Indeed, everyone should painstakingly ready himself [or herself] personally for the apostolate, especially as an adult. For the advance of age brings with it better self-knowledge, thus enabling each person to evaluate more accurately the talents with which God has enriched [each] soul and to exercise more effectively those charismatic gifts which the Holy Spirit has bestowed on [all] for the good of [others]."⁶⁷ Thus, from the perspective of faith, it is clear that effective leadership in the contemporary world is connected both with a sense of loving service and with a more mature development in self-knowledge.

98. The nature of Christian leadership can also be understood from the viewpoint of the vocation we all receive from God. Through baptism, "all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity. By this holiness a more human way of life is promoted even in this earthly society."⁶⁸ This baptismal vocation gives to every Christian the special task "to illumine and organize" temporal affairs of every sort "in such a way that they may start out, develop, and persist according to Christ's mind."⁶⁹ Individuals may choose to live out this general vocation as single persons, as members of the clergy or religious orders, or as married couples. In all of these states of life, there are opportunities large and small for exercising a leadership that is based on service and helps to humanize our world.

3. Strategies for Forming Christian Leaders

99. Campus ministers can facilitate the development of Christian leaders by encouraging members of the faith community to identify their gifts and to use them for the common good. Individuals must be helped to overcome their fears and to gain confidence in their abilities. They need proper training and opportunities to improve their leadership skills. For example, retreats for liturgical ministers can help them sense the importance of their roles at Mass and enable them to perform these roles prayerfully and competently. A leadership training session for officers in Catholic student organizations, at the beginning of the academic year, can give them added confidence and practical skills. Campus ministers who work with student organizers of a social justice project can provide them with Christian principles and practical advice that will enhance their effectiveness as current and future leaders.

100. In addition to developing leaders within the faith community, campus ministers should also encourage students to exercise their influence in other groups and activities. It helps to remind them that involvement in the life of their college or university is a significant factor in getting more out of the collegiate experience and that all Catholics on campus have the responsibility to work for the betterment of the academic community.

101. The development of leaders involves helping students to discern their vocations in life and to prepare for them. Most young people on campus today need guidance in preparing for marriage and family life. The preparation should include programs that encompass the following elements: the sacrament of marriage as an interpersonal relationship; the identity and mission of the family; the role of human sexuality and intimacy; conjugal love as union and as sharing in the creative power of God; responsible parenthood; and the couple's responsibilities to the larger community.⁷⁰ A significant number of collegians seriously consider vocations to the priesthood or religious life.⁷¹ Campus ministers are in an excellent position to promote these vocations. A program in which campus ministers gather interested students together regularly for discussions and prayer is a valuable way of helping them discern the promptings of the Spirit. Students moving in the direction of the single life often need personal assistance in order to deal with societal pressures and cultural stereotypes.

102. In order to get more faculty members and administrators to exercise leadership in the faith community,

campus ministers need to establish personal contact with them, offer them opportunities that fit their particular expertise, and provide them with training, if necessary. For example, counselors on campus could run marriage preparation and enrichment programs for the faith community, after studying the Church's teachings on marriage. It would also be helpful to gather the Catholic faculty and administrators together, on occasion, to give them a sense of group identity and to encourage their active participation in the Church on campus. This could be done through a retreat in which they explore ways of integrating their faith with their professional concerns. The more this integration takes place, the better role models they will be for students, who are the emerging leaders of society and the Church.

NOTES

- 67 "Decree on the Laity," no. 30.
- 68 "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," no. 40.
- 69 Ibid., no. 9.
- 70 John Paul II, *On the Family*, no. 66.
- 71 Fee et al., *Young Catholics*, pp. 154-15

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Epilogue

103. In this pastoral letter, we have placed campus ministry in its historical and cultural context and have examined it from the viewpoint of the persons who carry it out, as well as the tasks they perform. We are convinced that this ministry is vitally important for the future of Church and society. As bishops, we recognize our responsibility to "see to it that at colleges and universities which are not Catholic there are Catholic residences and centers where priests, religious, and [lay persons] who have been judiciously chosen and trained can serve as on-campus sources of spiritual and intellectual assistance to young college people."⁷²

104. The revised *Code of Canon Law* has reinforced this responsibility by reminding us that the diocesan bishop is to be zealous in his pastoral care of students, even by the creation of a special parish or, at least, by appointing priests with a stable assignment to this care.⁷³ We know it is important to find dedicated persons for this ministry who have a solid faith, a love for the academic world, and the ability to relate well to both inquiring students and an educated faculty. They need proper training, which includes personal development, practical experience, and theological study. Advanced degrees are helpful in order to gain credibility in the academic world. We are committed to providing the best professional campus ministers possible and intend to hold them accountable for dedicated and creative service to the academic community. Our responsibilities extend to ensuring that within each diocese adequate funding is available for campus ministry and that there is an overall plan for allocating resources.

105. Our hope is that this pastoral letter will mark the beginning of a new phase in the history of Catholic campus ministry in the United States. In our vision of the new era, campus ministry will succeed more than ever before in forming the faithful into vibrant communities of faith and in empowering them to bring the light of the Gospel to the academic world. Campus ministry will be better understood and supported by the Church as a whole and will therefore be strengthened to make its voice heard in the center of campus life. The spiritual life of the Church on campus will be renewed so that it can be a more potent force, enabling the academic community to live up to its own ideals. The faith community will be more in touch with its Catholic roots so that it can confidently enter into deeper dialogue and more productive relationships with other religious groups on campus. A contemporary Christian humanism will flourish, which will demonstrate to all the value of an adult faith that has integrated the best insights of the culture. The Church on

campus will be seen more clearly as a genuine servant community, dedicated to social justice, and therefore will be a more effective sign and instrument of the kingdom of peace and justice in the world. In the new era, the Church and higher education will find more productive ways of working together for the well-being of the whole human family. In our vision, campus ministry, empowered by the Spirit, faces a future bright with promise.

NOTES

⁷² "Declaration on Christian Education," no. 10.

⁷³ *Code of Canon Law* (Washington, D.C.: Canon Law Society of America, 1983), cc. 813, 814.

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