

**AFFIRMING THE PURPOSE OF BUSINESS:
THE INTELLECTUAL CONVERSION OF THE BUSINESS STUDENT**

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If we want to know what a business is, we have to start with its purpose. And the purpose must lie outside the business itself.

In fact, it must lie in society, since a business enterprise is an organ of society.

Peter Drucker

Introduction

It will come as no surprise to hear that if you ask the average business student at the University of St. Thomas the question “what is the purpose of business?” they will give you the standard response found in their textbooks and reiterated in their courses – that it is to maximize shareholder wealth and that the primary objective of the corporation is to maximize the value of the firm as measured by stock price.¹ It is an assumption that has been drilled into them repeatedly in virtually all of their classes – even to the extent that they are warned that they will fail unless they give that answer on their exams – or so I am told. This conviction – that the purpose of business is to maximize shareholder wealth – is the foundation upon which business education rests and the lynchpin of its curricula, at least in the West.

This point of view is of particular concern when it is taught within the context of the presumably more integrated curriculum of a business school existing within a Catholic university or college. It has led to tension, perhaps even conflict, between the liberal arts and business faculty and quite understandably so. How do we persuade the business student that it is possible to achieve economic success while pursuing *authentic* human happiness – when the curricula of the business school seems designed to put these two aims into conflict? How can we convince the business student that they have an authentic vocation, which, by definition, must entail adherence to a transcendent standard, if we continue to reduce their mission to economic ends alone?² How can we avoid contributing to their sense of fragmentation and the sometimes schizophrenic division between the call to pursue the so-called higher goods and the demands of their business careers?³

The fact is that when a student graduates with a degree in business, they soon confront a quite different reality than that presupposed in their classes. Their experience will reveal that the daily challenges of leading and working in a business enterprise are much richer and contain many more elements than concerns for profit. Even more to the point, this arguably reductionist outlook robs the business student and the business person of the full range of meaning inherent in

their vocation. It narrows their view of their calling, hollows out the meaning of their work and puts the hope of living an integrated life for the most part out of reach.

At the heart of this paper are two convictions: first, that another vision of the purpose of business, one that accounts for a fuller range of human intentionality and meaning, is both necessary and possible; and second, that the only place where another vision of business can be systematically presented is in the business school and further, that the only educational institution obliged by both its tradition and its identity to present this vision is the Catholic Business School (CBS).⁴

The premise that God's creation is fundamentally teleological is an intellectual current that runs throughout the Catholic intellectual tradition. The notion of intrinsic finality consists in the premise that every being has within itself a natural tendency to perfect its own nature and further, that its activity is directed toward that end. A corollary is that, in order to determine what the good is for a creature, one must first consider toward what end that creature is ordered. This is understood to be true for human persons, it is true for families and, it can be argued, it is no less true for the business organization. The contradictory claims made by both liberal arts and business faculty concerning the good toward which business is ordered will only find resolution when both have a common vision of its intrinsic purpose. To arrive at such a vision is one of the several aims of this paper.

First, as my title suggests, I am proposing a pedagogical approach that seems to have been effective in the classroom in persuading business students to consider a more comprehensive vision for the purpose of business and the meaning of their vocation.⁵ This approach is grounded in the structure of conversion suggested by Bernard Lonergan and the course content I will be describing is designed quite intentionally to engage the student in a process of intellectual conversion.

Secondly, as I have already indicated, I hope to persuade both faculty and business professionals that to define the purpose of business as the maximization of shareholder wealth is a truncated, even disrespectful view of the potential of the business firm to contribute to the common good. This definition cannot even begin to capture the rich texture of the contribution that business can make – indeed is already making – to the communities it serves. My argument is that the purpose of business is human flourishing and that business accomplishes this goal when it properly serves its mission as an instrument of human fulfillment. I am prepared to argue that only this definition permits the CBS simultaneously to reflect its identity while affirming the quite legitimate economic objectives of the institution of business.

My third aim is to propose (in outline form) a Trinitarian theology of work. My proposal relies for its starting place on John Paul II's argument in *Laborem Exercens (LE)* that that we reflect the image of God when we work. I take his argument a bit further and suggest that, not

only do we reflect the God who creates through our work, but we also reflect the God who redeems and sanctifies. Our work is thus creative, redemptive and sanctifying. I have organized the course and the paper around this theological insight.⁶ I believe I can claim that John Paul's assertion in *LE*, that "work is the key, maybe the essential key, to the social question," has revealed itself to be profoundly true and that it provides a necessary point of departure for the question of the purpose of business. This claim provides the central premise of the paper and constitutes its central insight.

I intend to show that an extended reflection on the meaning of human work leads inevitably to a more comprehensive vision for the purpose of business because it reveals that our hope in a prosperous future issues from the *same* impulse as our wish for authentic happiness and our dreams of fulfilling our own potential.

My thesis is that the purpose of human work and of business is human flourishing and that both the foundational goods and the excellent goods⁷ that these human activities pursue are ordered toward this end. Thus, business fulfills its social responsibility when it operates according to the principles that issue from its very nature as an instrument of human fulfillment. My hope is that this thesis will enable both students and faculty alike to discontinue the effort to *prioritize* the social and economic ends of business and to focus instead on their simultaneous achievement.

Method and Outline

The course and the paper are organized according to two distinct schema. The first is Bernard Lonergan's theory of conversion. The second is my proposal for a Trinitarian theology of work. Therefore I will begin with a brief outline of both of these ideas, since they provide the backbone of my conceptual framework. I will then go on to fill in the body of the framework. The case for a new vision of the purpose of business is built slowly and, following Lonergan's method, it begins in experience. In another manner of speaking, rather than begin with the "ought," we begin with the data of experience – and in the attempt to understand the pattern in that experience, the student is led to entirely new conclusions about the purpose of business. I hope to demonstrate that this starting point is essential to the process of conversion that follows.⁸

Bernard Lonergan and the Structure of Conversion

It may be common knowledge that Bernard Lonergan's theory of conversion issues from his cognitional theory; both are complex accounts, rich in meaning and full of implications for human living. Both are represented in Table 1. Since my purposes are somewhat narrow in this paper, I will not treat them in great depth.⁹ Though some account of the theory will be

necessary, my intention in presenting this is simply to show how it serves as a framework for the course.¹⁰

Loneragan's cognitional theory begins with the premise that the desire to know is natural and that, since it is, there must be some natural means by which human persons come to know, for a loving God would most certainly not have imbedded such a desire in creatures without a concomitant capacity for fulfilling it.¹¹ These means also are accessible to our observation and verification. They are the naturally occurring operations of human cognition, Lonergan's pattern of inquiry: experiencing, understanding, judgment, and decision.¹² Each of these levels is open to reality under a different aspect – as experienced, as intelligible, as true, and as good. Each level builds on the preceding one: without experience there is no understanding, without understanding, no judgment, without judgment, no decision.¹³

Table 1: Lonergan's theory of conversion in relation to his cognitional theory¹⁴

RELIGIOUS CONVERSION: FALLING IN LOVE WITH GOD

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	Cognitional Theory				Conversion Theory
<i>Decision</i>	<i>Deliberating, evaluating, Deciding</i>	<i>Is it good?</i>	<i>Be responsible</i>	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑	Moral Conversion: From satisfaction to value
<i>Judgment</i>	<i>Reflecting, marshalling and Weighing the evidence</i>	<i>Is it so? Is it true?</i>	<i>Be rational</i>	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑	Intellectual Conversion: from what I think is so to what is really so
<i>Understanding</i>	<i>Inquiring, imagining, conceiving, formulating</i>	<i>Is my understanding of it correct?</i>	<i>Be reasonable</i>	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑	↑
<i>Experience</i>	<i>Seeing, hearing, touching Smelling, tasting</i>	<i>What is it?</i>	<i>Be attentive</i>	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑	↑

Loneragan's theory of conversion is a complex articulation of the dynamism inherent in human nature and the significance this has for human action and moral living. In Lonergan's account, conversion refers to a transformation of the subject and his context; it permeates his consciousness and his actions.¹⁵ It results in a new horizon, radically altering the range of one's vision, extending the boundaries of what is included within the "sweep of our interests and our knowledge."¹⁶ Things that had been ignored or invisible, now are seen. This shift in horizon can happen once or it can happen many times. Each time, a new boundary marking one's range of concern is established.

There are three levels at which it can occur: the intellectual, the moral, and the religious. Religious conversion, as the gift of God's love, holds causal priority, but this does not mean one begins with it.¹⁷ The order in which they occur may vary, but to be complete, the subject must experience all three levels of conversion.

As can be seen in Table 1, these moments of conversion relate to Lonergan's cognitional levels. Religious conversion is a process that relies on the action of God; it is the movement of grace that descends from above and involves the whole person. Intellectual conversion begins in experience and proceeds through the level of understanding to judgment; it is a process of coming to know the true. Moral conversion takes place when the subject inquires further, beyond the true, to the question of the good. It is at this level, the level of decision that the subject must decide whether or not to bring her actions into conformity with what she has affirmed as true.

Lonergan's Theory as a Pedagogical Device

The theory is presented on the first day of class and serves several purposes throughout the course. First, it enables me to clarify that my aim in the course is not the religious conversion of the students (that is up to the Holy Spirit). Nor is it their moral conversion (that is up to them).¹⁸ I state quite explicitly that the aim of the course is directed at their intellectual conversion. It is designed to introduce them to a new way of thinking about the purpose of business, one that I hope will dispel the myth that its economic and social objectives are unavoidably in conflict.¹⁹ Equally important, my hope is to persuade them that, as future business professionals, they have a genuine vocation, one that has as much sacred meaning and gravity as that of any other profession.

Secondly, the course does not begin with theory but with experience, and quite intentionally moves through each of the levels of Lonergan's cognitional theory. The first assignment is to complete a "work experience reflection," designed to elicit from the students what they already "know" about management from their personal experience of having been managed.²⁰ The exercise reveals that they know without benefit of any theory that to be managed well requires that several elements exist in their work environment and or are embodied in their leaders. Respect, competence, the ability to recognize problems and solve them at their origin and a commitment to human development are among the most important.

This exercise and the principles that emerge from it provide the ground and the touchstone for the remainder of the course. In Aristotelian fashion, the students arrive at first principles through a process of induction; the remainder of the course is devoted to a deductive process, that leads them to draw conclusions concerning the purpose of business. In Lonergan's terms, each subsequent reading is intended to help the students make sense of the data of their experience (the level of understanding) and to lead them to insights into the truth (the level of judgment) of human work and its primary locus – the world of business. The students are asked

to state what they might be willing to affirm unequivocally as true throughout the course and especially at a final wrap up session. Thus, we quite intentionally follow the framework provided by Lonergan's schema: we begin with experience, we return to it as we acquire new understandings and insights into the patterns it suggests, we consider what might actually be true about those insights and finally, we explicitly affirm the truths we have discovered and list them as a potential catalyst for decisions and moral action upon graduation – if not sooner.

What we are after in this process is what Lonergan refers to as “insight,” that moment when the student first understands something and then has the further insight that this something is actually true, real. This is a moment of intellectual conversion, when the student's horizon shifts and is accompanied by the further insight that his or her commitments and actions must follow suit if he or she is to be an authentic human being.

A Trinitarian Theology of Work

A second organizing schema of the course is my proposal for a Trinitarian theology of work and thus the conceptual framework of the course is divided into three parts: work as creative, work as redemptive and work as sanctifying. The readings and lectures are organized according to this Trinitarian view of work.²¹

The starting place for this framework is John Paul II's argument in *Laborem Exercens* that when we work we reflect the image of God. Work is equated with the command found in Genesis to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.” In carrying out this mandate, John Paul says, “every human being reflects the very action of the creator of the universe.”²²

But since the Trinity not only creates, but also redeems and sanctifies, it can be said that, if we are made in the image of God, human persons also must reflect these aspects of the Triune God, not only in their work but certainly in their work. Thus we consider work first as a participation in the creative aspect of God, then work as participation in God's redemptive action and finally, work as participation in the sanctification of ourselves and of the world. We will return to these themes shortly.

We are ready to consider in some depth the series of readings and proposals that constitute the content of the course. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to provide a detailed analysis of each of them. I will lay out the essential elements and pedagogical purpose of each reading then identify the key insights that provide the lynchpins in the process of intellectual conversion of interest to us here. What follows is not exactly exhaustive; in the interests of space and time I have not included every discussion topic or exercise. I am presenting the conceptual highlights of the course.

Part One: Work as Creative

1. The Meaning of the Human Person and of Human Action in the World: *Gaudium et Spes*

In general, students walk into the classroom on the first day of class with the assumption that theology has little to do with business or with their careers. In fact, they actually assume that these two “disciplines” exist in and refer to fundamentally separate realms. So the first step is to open the door to a possible connection. The students already have discussed their work experience reflections and we have highlighted the key points, which consistently include the recognition that their experience of work is greatly enhanced when their human dignity is recognized and affirmed.

Their first reading assignment is several passages from *Gaudium et Spes*.²³ This document provides several of the fundamental principles that serve as a foundation for our reflections; its implications are spelled out throughout the course. In virtually every class, the students find the unequivocal affirmation of the dignity of the human person stated so clearly in *Gaudium et Spes* to be compelling and meaningful because they realize it refers to them and not to some theoretical worker in the future. They recognize the truth of the statement that “man is split within himself” and our first in depth discussion is of the “dramatic struggle between good and evil” pointed to in the document.²⁴ The business student usually has not considered the possibility that their lives would be the locus of such a struggle or that the unfolding of their careers could reflect its dramatic contours.

We consider the document’s fundamental anthropological principle, that “[t]hrough made of body and soul, man is one.”²⁵ Man is “obliged to regard his body as good and honorable” and so our material needs must be met. But this is not the only aspect of the human being we can verify, for we arrive at the “proper truth of the matter” when we recognize in ourselves the existence of a “spiritual and immortal soul.”²⁶ Here, again, we do not advert to some abstract and unknown person. The context remains the work experience exercise which revealed that the worker is more than just an instrument; the spiritual aspect of the person comes to light when the students consider the unique gifts and aspirations they each bring to their work, an aspect also visible in those with whom they have worked.

The document is also unequivocal in its recognition that “God has called man and still calls him so that with his entire being he might be joined to him in an endless sharing of a divine life beyond all corruption.”²⁷ The true and final end of the human person is not finite, cannot be reduced to the earthly realm, and only is found in ultimate union with God. So while, as we will see, the authors of *GS* wish to be clear that human persons must be free to pursue ends that correspond to the exigencies of the temporal order, it is equally clear that these ends do not satisfy or complete all that they are. We are corporeal spirits, a unity of body and soul.²⁸ As such we are to honor both our bodies and our spirits. A leader or manager in a business organization is obliged to recognize these two aspects of the person who is – always and without exception – the union of body and soul.

Perhaps the document's major impact comes when we reflect on several passages from Chapter Three that reveal the complementary relationship that exists between the order of grace and the temporal order. Though admittedly a theological viewpoint seen from the position of the believer, the text serves to dispel the myth that the world of the spirit and the world of creation somehow occupy separate and unrelated spheres. The central thesis of this chapter of *GS* – that our activity is in accord with God's will and represents a furtherance of his plan – brings these two worlds into contact and colors all our deliberations in the course.

The document makes an unambiguous claim that the labor of humankind to better the conditions of human life “accords with God's will.”²⁹ The human person, made in the image and likeness of God, was instructed in the first books of Genesis to fill the earth and subdue it, and, by this labor we are “unfolding the Creator's work... contributing by [our] personal industry to the realization in history of the divine plan;”³⁰ implicated are “even the most ordinary everyday activities.” This effort, “whereby humans through the course of centuries have labored to better the circumstances of their lives” is good because it develops the person who, through such activity, “learns much, he cultivates his resources, he goes outside of himself and beyond himself.”³¹

Because as human persons we are made in God's image and called to build up the world, we are responsible for engaging in the temporal order in order to extend God's kingdom through its constant renewal. The autonomy of earthly affairs, rightly understood, is thus affirmed. This autonomy cannot be an expression of absolute independence from God, for God created all things and, without the Creator, the creature would be unintelligible, would disappear. Nonetheless, created things are “endowed with their own stability, truth, goodness, proper laws, and order,” and the autonomy of this order “harmonizes with the will of the Creator” and therefore must be respected.³² The student is left with a new understanding of his or her own activity: it operates according to its own calculus, but it is not divorced or alienated from the action of grace. Now, the punch-line to all of this is found in the following passage: “Hence, the norm of human activity is this: that in accord with the divine plan and will, it harmonize with the genuine good of the human race, and that it allow men as individuals and as members of society to pursue their total vocation and fulfill it.”³³

With some relief, the students realize that what is demanded of them is not to restrain their wish for greatness or for financial success; on the contrary they are to pursue it unreservedly, as long as it harmonizes with the genuine good of humanity. In fact, the Christian manager or leader is “not deterred by the Christian message from building up the world, or impelled to neglect the welfare of their fellows, but [is] rather more stringently bound to do these very things.”³⁴ The results of “man's own talent and energy” are a “sign of God's grace.”³⁵ We have established that the vocation of the business person has enormous importance in the divine

plan. In fact, it can be said that it is often the business enterprise that allows the members of society “to pursue their total vocation and fulfill it” since it is often the business firm that insures the foundational goods necessary for sustaining human living are supplied to those who need it, thus permitting them to pursue the more excellent goods. I will return to this theme throughout the paper.

These conclusions provide the platform for reflection on our next topic, the purpose of work, especially as illuminated by Pope John Paul II.

2. The purpose of work: *Laborem Exercens*, “Leisure as the Basis of Work” (Naughton), “Professions Under Siege” (Bellah)³⁶

a.) *Laborem Exercens* The context for exploring the purpose of work in the next section of the course is not only, or even primarily, the work of those the business students may someday manage, but of their own. The pedagogical aim is to lead the student to several insights concerning the nature of work and the role it plays in an integrated life. They are also confronted with the rather disturbing idea that they may not be considered professionals in the truest sense of that word, unless and until they can say that their work commitments correspond to certain criteria.

We begin our investigation with a thorough reading and reflection on *Laborem Exercens* by Pope John Paul II. The fundamentally theological meaning of work is quickly revealed with the first two arguments he presents. The first, that we reflect the image of the God who creates and cooperate with him in the on-going process of creation, brings a new context for the creative aspect of work. Business students usually envision a future in which their creative energies will be put to work in the service of a customer and/or a company. That this could be a kind of participation in God’s creative activity, albeit on a human level, provides an entirely new horizon.

John Paul’s second argument is grounded in the somewhat surprising fact that the call to work in Genesis 2 comes before the fall and not after. Thus, work cannot be seen as a punishment for sin, though God tells both Adam and Eve that it will become more burdensome because of it. Both will have to struggle with creation now, rather than live in peaceful, painless harmony with it. But, if Scripture is to be believed, we can most certainly say that since the call to work comes before the fall, we can understand it as a natural part of our human condition. In fact, John Paul tells us that the only conclusion we can draw from this account is that **work is in fact a fundamental dimension of human existence**. Work is not incidental to our lives; it serves more than merely an instrumental role in our quest for happiness. It is an integral part of the mystery of creation itself and a legitimate object of both theological and personal reflection.

Perhaps most compelling for the students is the Holy Father’s distinction between the subjective and objective dimensions of work. This permits us to distinguish between the external

results of work and its affects on the being of the person. Work is one of the ways we provide for our bodily needs; this is understood to be a sacred aspect of it also, since *GS* has made clear that we are to care for our bodies. John Paul's analysis clarifies that the value of work is found, not in its objective results, but in the fact that the "one doing it is a person."³⁷ And, most importantly, John Paul's distinction leads directly into the question of who we are becoming through our work, both in terms of what kind of work we choose and how we accomplish it. We discuss at length John Paul's argument that we become who we are through the work that we do, i.e., "more of a human being," and that, therefore, our work must be seen as one of the primary vehicles available to us as we try to become that most excellent person God had in mind when he created us.

Last, his related argument, that work is an *actus personae*, a fundamentally human act by someone who is "capable of acting in a planned and rational way with a tendency toward self-realization" has meaning both for them personally and for those whom they will manage.³⁸ From this they acknowledge that they have high aspirations for their own work and that they must assume that others do as well. They see that it is through their work that they become either who they are meant to be – or not, that reducing one's reasons for working to money or fame overlooks its most essential dimension: that work, while it does provide for material well being, is also a vehicle for personal becoming.

We discuss this point in some detail and with reference to the other sections of the encyclical in light of John Paul's claim that work is the key to the social question. In particular, we explore John Paul's historical and philosophical arguments concerning the priority of labor. The Holy Father points out that the creation of capital is itself the result of human labor at work throughout history and that the productive capacity of capital can only be attributed to labor as the efficient cause.³⁹ The notion that "capital" is somehow of greater value than "labor" is easily put to rest.

Here I introduce a notion from natural law, viz., that we are already in debt to our Creator for the gift of life and that this gift obligates us to become that most excellent person God had in mind when we were created. People all over the world are obligated to their Creator in this way and their rights to food, shelter and the means to support themselves and their families all issue from this "natural law." The point is made that if work is a principle means of fulfilling our obligation to our Creator, then any decision or action that compromises another person's opportunity to work is a serious matter.

We conclude that the purpose of work is human flourishing, in terms of both the material and spiritual well-being of human persons.⁴⁰

b) "Leisure as the Basis of Work": Though it is easy to forget it in a "24/7" world, there is more to life than work. And so we next turn our attention to "Leisure as the Basis of Work" by

Dr. Michael Naughton. Drawing on the insights of Josef Pieper's *Leisure as the Basis of Culture*, Naughton argues that leisure and work represent the two fundamental rhythms of life and that how we understand our work will be reflected in our understanding of leisure. In leisure, as in work, we must always be aware of both its subjective and objective dimensions, for our choices in leisure also will form us.⁴¹

The students grasp these preliminary points and are intrigued by the simplicity of the idea that life contains but these two basic rhythms. But their attention is caught primarily when Naughton points out that work can be thought of as a job, a career, or a vocation and that each of these views of work will correspond to a particular view of leisure.⁴² Viewed as a job, work becomes instrumental and is primarily for the purpose of maximizing one's consumption; leisure is used to spend the monetary gains from work in the purchase of either material goods or leisure activities. Seen as a vehicle for the pursuit of a career, work is valued in more psychological terms and becomes primarily a means of gratifying one's self-esteem needs. Here again leisure has an instrumental purpose; it is for self-renewal so that one can return to work refreshed and ready for another round of productive activity.

Naughton is careful to point out that these are not unimportant or somehow immoral views of work; work *is* a job and a means to a financial end; it should also be psychologically rewarding.⁴³ But these visions of work do not attain to its "most excellent value." They simply do not capture its full meaning and purpose. Only the search for one's true vocation, when I put my gifts in the service of the true and the good in a place and in a way that only I can do, can fully satisfy the full meaning of human work.

Leisure understood in relation to my work as a vocation finds its highest expression in worship and in the moments of quiet reflection that call for an active receptivity and openness to a reality greater than myself. In these moments, I penetrate the deeper meaning of reality; I am informed by it, fed by it. To live out one's vocation would mean that my work could itself become a form of leisure, because both, then, would be ordered toward God.

Few of the students want merely a "job" though most have never thought of the possibility that that is all their work amounts to if their only purpose for working is an economic one. Most or all of them are intent on pursuing a career. But these ways of thinking about work no longer have the same attraction when considered in light of the more excellent value represented by the possibility of discovering one's vocation. Most students sense that their deepest desire is to find work that fulfills them and that allows them to put their gifts at the service of something greater than themselves. Yes, they also wish to prosper financially. But until now they have put out of their minds any concerns that there might be an essential conflict between these two desires. At this point in the course, they are beginning to have new questions.

Again, we conclude, with a deeper understanding this time, that especially when it is seen in relation to the broader context provided by meaning of the leisure, the purpose of work is human flourishing.

The final essay we consider in this part of the course is Robert Bellah's "Professions Under Siege: Can Ethical Autonomy survive?" We first discuss the fact that, in general, the business manager is not considered a professional in the same way that a doctor or a lawyer might be – or, perhaps not at all. Bellah points to several things that make the business person's claim to be a true professional a bit problematic. Leading the list is business's singular concern for profit; a professional must be concerned first for those she serves. Another is the need for a credential that would reflect mastery of a coherent, integrated body of knowledge; perhaps an MBA would satisfy this requirement if we could claim that there is an integrated body of knowledge at work in business. Bellah seems to argue that the business person does not have a stable framework for decision making and action, such as the law or human anatomy does for the lawyer or doctor.⁴⁴

But it is the third characteristic that provides the sharpest blow: Bellah points out that every true profession reflects a tradition of ethical responsibility and invokes a transcendent standard to which the professional is committed. The students are asked to consider what the transcendent standard might be to which the institution of business and its managers are committed. It is a bit of a shock when they realize that they cannot name it.

The students are variously chagrined, angered or skeptical about this stern critique of their profession. They are mostly unaware that there are even criteria that purport to delimit the meaning of professional. But they do accept that, if they want to be a true professional, they must shoulder the responsibility that comes with the classification. We consider Bellah's set of criteria and highlight his proposal for the tri-partite structure of professional life: the relationship between the professional, the person being served and a transcendent standard.⁴⁵ The lawyer must be committed to the law itself; the medical doctor to the well-being of the patient. What transcendent standard will suffice for the "professional" business person? I argue that this standard can only be the pursuit of authentic human flourishing.

3. The purpose of business: *Centesimus Annus*, "What's so Special About Stakeholders?" (John Boatright); "The Purpose of Business" (Alford/Naughton); "Is Creating Wealth a Virtue?" (Savage)⁴⁶

a. *Centesimus Annus*: These reflections support our investigations in the next section of the course when we turn to the question of the purpose of business. The first document we consider is John Paul II's 1991 encyclical commemorating the 100th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, *Centesimus Annus* (*CA*). *CA* is an enormously important document since it provides a clear account of the Church's position on economic freedom and its relationship to other aspects of

community life. Though we consider several chapters from the document in class, in what follows I focus only on the several passages that represent a turning point in the course

The students are generally surprised to learn that the Church offers a substantive analysis of these issues and that it advances a positive albeit qualified view of business. They find the document affirming for its acknowledgement of the right of business – indeed its obligation – to make a profit. But their enthusiasm is somewhat attenuated by the fact that it also argues that profit is only a regulator of business and not the only criteria of its success. I quote the following passage here at some length since it is central to my own argument that the purpose of business is human flourishing:

The Church acknowledges the legitimate *role of profit* as an indication that a business is functioning well. When a firm makes a profit, this means that productive factors have been properly employed and corresponding human needs have been duly satisfied. But profitability is not the only indicator of a firm's condition. It is possible for the financial accounts to be in order, and yet for the people — who make up the firm's most valuable asset — to be humiliated and their dignity offended. Besides being morally inadmissible, this will eventually have negative repercussions on the firm's economic efficiency.⁴⁷

The fact that the Church affirms the legitimate role of profit puts to rest any latent concerns the students may harbor that the demand to attend to human dignity in the economic sector is just a euphemism for some kind of socialist agenda. This frees them to consider that their own work experience reveals the truth about the business organization: that it is a locus of human hope and joy as well as economic gain. The same passage from *Centesimus Annus* goes on to say that

In fact, the purpose of a business firm is not simply to make a profit, but is to be found in its very existence as a *community of persons* who in various ways are endeavoring to satisfy their basic needs, and who form a particular group at the service of the whole of society. Profit is a regulator of the life of a business, but it is not the only one; *other human and moral factors* must also be considered which, in the long term, are at least equally important for the life of a business.⁴⁸

John Paul's argument that a business firm is designed to enable persons to work together in a community to satisfy their own "basic needs," as well as to serve society points to the concrete goods and services that businesses are organized to provide. This is not an abstract understanding of the purpose of the firm; it is grounded in what the firm actually *does*. We will return to this theme in a moment.

At this point in the course, the students are asked to consider anew their own work experience and its significance in light of John Paul's argument in CA. Two things become consistently clear: one, that their more positive work experiences were in organizations that also were intent on making money and two, that these firms simply went about it by creating conditions that permitted the workers – and thus the company - to be successful. These firms generally affirmed the dignity of the worker and attended to their development and to the

environment in which they worked. The students understand that John Paul is right; a business that *only* pays attention to profit cannot possibly be successful. Profit is a result of doing many things well and, as John Paul argued in *LE*, cannot be achieved without an acknowledgement that labor is the primary efficient cause and the source of creativity, productivity and prosperity.⁴⁹

The next critical argument found in *CA* we consider concerns the relationship between the economic sphere and the other dimensions of community life. The students have already grasped the significance of the error in economism; they are impressed by the analysis and easily recognize that so-called capitalism, when divorced from a moral context or grounded in a reductionist view of the human person, makes the same anthropological error found in communism and socialism.

We consider the now famous paragraph where John Paul argues that the economic sphere cannot be thought of as independent of the legal/judicial and moral/cultural spheres of community life but must be seen as integral to them. In the following passage, he is responding to the question of whether or not, in view of the “collapse” of communism in 1989, capitalism should be considered victorious and represent the goal of the countries now making efforts to rebuild their economy and society (again, I quote the passage at some length since it is central to my own arguments):

The answer is obviously complex. If by "capitalism" is meant an economic system which recognizes the fundamental and positive role of business, the market, private property and the resulting responsibility for the means of production, as well as free human creativity in the economic sector, then the answer is certainly in the affirmative, even though it would perhaps be more appropriate to speak of a "business economy", "market economy" or simply "free economy". But if by "capitalism" is meant a system in which freedom in the economic sector is not circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality, and which sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious, then the reply is certainly negative.⁵⁰

It is reasonably easy to demonstrate what even the most committed laissez-faire capitalist must admit: business relies on both the legal system and the cultural milieu in which it operates for its success. This is even easier to see since the fall of the Soviet bloc as countries try to imitate the economic system of the west without the appropriate legal and cultural norms needed to support it. Business firms rely on an educated workforce, though business is not responsible for the educational system. Business firms rely on the availability of reliable employees who come to work on time, give an honest day's work, possess basic interpersonal skills and respect the norms of common courtesy. But business is not responsible for insuring the integrity of the workforce. Business firms rely on a body to oversee the governance of commerce and on the availability of recourse to legal remedies when the rules of commerce are abridged. But though business is not responsible for these elements of our infrastructure, it does need them to insure a

coherent and predictable context for its legitimate activity. These few examples serve to illustrate the undeniable fact that business relies for its continued success on the moral/cultural and legal/juridical dimensions of our community. Laissez-faire capitalism (just like the “self-made man”) is but a myth. The business firm cannot ignore its reliance on these factors; to do so would be to deny the data. Though business has its own unique function within this broader context, its purpose cannot be isolated from them. This analysis leads to the inevitable conclusion that since business relies on society for its success, it must have a concomitant responsibility to society as well. As John Paul points out

what is being proposed as an alternative is not the socialist system, which in fact turns out to be State capitalism, but rather *a society of free work, of enterprise and of participation*. Such a society is not directed against the market, but demands that the market be appropriately controlled by the forces of society and by the State, so as to guarantee that the basic needs of the whole of society are satisfied.⁵¹

By now, it is clear that we cannot simply assume that the purpose of business is only or even primarily directed toward the maximization of shareholder wealth. Though not completely convinced, the students are ready to consider another vision of the purpose of business.

b. “What is so special about Shareholders?” We next turn our attention to two articles that help to develop this vision. The first is “What is so special about Shareholders” by John Boatright. This article rather artfully dismantles the usual justifications for the argument that corporate managers have a unique and special fiduciary duty to shareholders. The pedagogical purpose of the reading is to have the students consider the several ways this claim – that managers have a special fiduciary duty to shareholders – has been justified in business theory and to watch as the author systematically undercuts them.⁵² Of course, Dr. Boatright’s aim in the article is not to dispel this claim but to ground it in something more reasonable. His conclusion, that it is simply sound social policy to do so, provides a nice opening to a consideration of the common good model of the firm found in the next essay, the chapter on the purpose of business from *Managing as if Faith Mattered* by Dr. Michael Naughton and Sister Helen Alford.

c. “The Purpose of Business”: This very complex and thorough essay serves several purposes in the course. First, it provides an excellent analysis of the shareholder and stakeholder models of the firm and permits a very structured discussion of the distinctions to be made between them. Further, the authors propose a “common good” model of the firm, arguing that the “organizational common good is *the promotion of all the goods necessary for integral human development in the organization, in such a way as to respect the proper ordering of those goods*.”⁵³ Their theory is grounded in a complex description of the various types of goods a firm

(or anyone) might seek to achieve: foundational and excellent goods, private or particular goods and public or common goods, and finally, real and apparent goods.⁵⁴

This description of the various types of goods allows for a sound critique of both the shareholder and stakeholder models. According to the authors, the shareholder model emphasizes primarily the “foundational” goods, such things as profit and capital investment, over “excellent goods” such as human development.⁵⁵ Foundational goods are defined as goods that are necessary in order to pursue some other good. Though they are important and necessary to the health of the firm, just as breathing and eating are necessary to sustain human life, they do not capture the full meaning of the purpose of the firm.⁵⁶ Though a firm interested only in maximizing the wealth of the shareholder may happen to produce socially useful products, since its aim is not the common good *per se*, concerns for the larger good of the employees or of society will usually suffer in times of duress or crisis.

Though the stakeholder model has some advantages over the shareholder model since it militates for an expanded vision of the constituencies business serves, the authors argue that it ignores the distinction to be made between individual or particular and public or common goods and does not “make room for the genuinely common goods of the firm.”⁵⁷ The stakeholder model still reduces the parties involved to “interest maximizers” and ignores the transcendent nature of the “common good” to which all human activity should be ordered. This analysis is insightful and helpful to the students. But it has overlooked one important aspect of the purpose of business. Indeed none of the three models consider it adequately. Both those who would argue that only goal of business is to make money and those who would argue somewhat abstractly that business has a responsibility to the common good forget that the first thing a business does is serve a customer.⁵⁸ These theories of business make no explicit recognition of what the firm actually *produces*, that is, the concrete good that the firm is organized to produce and deliver to its customers, the product or service which the customers, in turn, rely on the firm to deliver. Depending on what the actual product or service of the firm is (we are referring here to *authentic* goods, not merely apparent goods), this *result* could/should be seen as the foundational and essential contribution of business to the common good. The fact is that without the business enterprise, the human capacity to pursue the so-called more excellent goods would be compromised. Because I can go to the gas station to put fuel in my car, or to the grocery store to put fuel in my body, I can go to work, to school, to Church, to the park with my children. A business performs an essential public service when it provides the community with products and services that permit its members to pursue a life that has meaning for them, that is, when it enables persons to pursue their own flourishing.⁵⁹ Indeed, for many people that pursuit takes place within a business enterprise or some kind of organizational context. As a locus of work, it

also provides the means for its leaders and employees to “satisfy their basic needs’ and fulfill their own potential.

Business is already making these contributions to the common good, notwithstanding the examples we can all point to of instances where it has failed.

But any profession has instances of failure and, more to the point, every profession relies on business principles to some extent for its own sustainability. Business thus contributes both concretely to the common good by serving its customers and at a more abstract level, by investigating and implementing best practices that reveal the more and more efficient ways other types of organizations can improve and sustain their operations. In the class, students are asked how they know if a firm is socially responsible. The response always includes examples such as Target’s contribution of a percentage of its profits, United Way drives, pollution clean-up activity. These are good examples of organizations that are extending themselves for the common good. But the social responsibility of the firm includes providing not only jobs, but products and services that fulfill genuine human needs at a price that reflects their true value. This can only be accomplished over the long term if the firm is managed well, if the employees are treated respectfully and provided opportunities for development. If a firm ignores this responsibility, no matter how generous it is in other ways, it cannot serve its purpose.

The business firm is an instrument of human fulfillment and its first responsibility is to serve the community by providing goods to it so that its members can pursue their own most excellent goods. A person without food, without shelter, without transportation, without education cannot do so. Businesses exist to provide such things and, if they do it well, generate revenue and profit as a result of their efforts. The value of the enormous contribution business makes to the common good is revealed. The vocation of the business student is clear. His future is to order his business career **and** his life to the advancement of human flourishing.

d. “Is Creating Wealth a Virtue?” We consider one final essay to round out our picture of the creative aspect of work and of business, “Is Creating Wealth a Virtue?” (Savage). In this essay, I present the rather self-evident argument that before wealth can be distributed it first must be created. Though human persons do not create *ex nihilo*, we do further the creation by working to put the goods of the earth at the service of genuine human needs.

We discuss the anthropological dimensions of wealth creation in both its objective and subjective dimensions. The central premise of the essay is that the source of material wealth is first of all personal, that is, it issues from the God-given gifts with which each of us was born and which we put to work in order to provide for ourselves and our families. These gifts are as varied as the human persons who embody them. Each is called to discover his or her own place in the giant workbench that constitutes the collective effort of humankind to provide for its own

material and spiritual well-being.⁶⁰ The business person reflects in particular the capacity for creativity, for industriousness, for identifying genuine human needs and constructing ways of fulfilling them. They are essential to the divine plan because they provide for human needs that each of us would otherwise have to fulfill individually. Even in a small village in a remote location, individuals divide up the labor and trade with one another.

The institution of business, especially in the west, has mastered the art of creating and maintaining what Lonergan calls “patterns of cooperation,” repeatable actions that make concrete goods available on a predictable basis. The capacity to achieve and manage these patterns issues from the God-given talents of the business person, gifts that are developed in community and leveraged through the infrastructures that emerge from the three dimensions of community life described by John Paul II in *CA*: the economic, legal/judicial and moral/cultural. Thus, it must be governed by a concern for our fellow man; its pursuit must “harmonize with the genuine good of humankind.” The students understand that every action they take or decision they make forms them and their efforts to generate wealth issue from the same human desire to become that most excellent person God had in mind when they were created. They learn that to ignore one’s vocation and choose a career that makes more money is simply a slow form of suicide. The purpose of their work and of business is grounded in the achievement of human flourishing – their own, that of those they manage and of the communities in which they operate.

Part Two: Work as Redemptive

1. The Principles of Catholic Social Thought and the Meaning of Suffering

The first part of the course is designed to explore how persons, through their work and, by extension, business and professional life, reflect the image of God who creates. In part two, we turn our attention to the possibility that, in working and serving in professional roles, we also reflect the image of God who redeems. We begin, of course, with the concrete experience found in the domain of business. From this vantage point, the students recognize virtually immediately what is meant by the redemptive aspects of work and of business. Providing a job to a person badly in need of work to support his family is the first example that comes up. Establishing a business enterprise, particularly in a depressed area (but not only in such locations!), so that goods and services can flow to it is also seen as a form of redemption. This reveals that business contributes to the material well-being of the community and allows its members to thrive, to enjoy leisure and to pursue their own most excellent goods. Also key is the redemption of the created material resources at our disposal, most particularly when we put them to use in the project of achieving human flourishing (with many caveats about the need to be good stewards of the environment).

Though obviously the redemptive nature of human work must be grounded in the redemptive act of Christ on the Cross, we turn first to the principles of Catholic Social Thought. They are more accessible to the students and provide the basis of our discussion of the more explicitly theological meaning of joining our work to the mission of Christ. We will come to that discussion presently.

a. “An Analytical Framework for Business Ethics: Catholic Social Principles,” Albino Barrera, O.P.:⁶¹ Father Albino Barrera’s analysis of the principles of Catholic Social Thought provides an integrated account of their hierarchical order and of the way in which the principles work together. He argues that the source of all the principles is the fact that human persons are made in the image of God who loves us and has redeemed us; from this is derived the fact of human dignity and its primary implication, integral human development, that is a development that must involve both the material and spiritual aspects of our being. He names six secondary principles that issue from these two more foundational premises: solidarity, universal access, subsidiarity, participation, primacy of labor and stewardship.⁶²

There is no need to provide extensive definitions here nor argue that this list is comprehensive or correct. Obviously, others have somewhat different and longer lists that also are derived from the Catholic Social Tradition. Father Barrera’s essay and its reduction of the fundamentals of the Church’s social teaching has served the purposes of the course well, especially since the author argues for an integrated vision of the principles; one cannot have the proper impact when divorced from the others. I will simply highlight a few of the principles and some of the key points we make about Barrera’s account in relation to the redemptive aspects of work and of business.

Since we earlier laid the groundwork for an understanding of human dignity and integral human development in our investigation of *GS*, we move directly into the secondary principles, beginning with the two most accessible to future managers: *subsidiarity* and *participation*. These concepts are already part of their vocabulary; they recognize their value as both management principles and as ways of “redeeming” or liberating the creativity of human potential. What is surprising to them is to realize that they are part of a Christian worldview and actually reflect a “Christian” way of managing people. We discuss the history of the so-called “participative management movement” and the fact that its initial inspiration in the U.S. can be attributed to Japanese success with its principles. Participation and subsidiarity are commonplace assumptions now in management education, even though their implementation is somewhat uneven in American institutions. The irony is not lost on the students; this wisdom existed in our own tradition all along, but no one thought to consult it.

The principle of *universal access* is grounded in the premise that since the goods of the earth are meant for everyone, no one person or country can monopolize all the resources for

themselves. The global economy and the consciousness of other cultures and their rights have already awakened the students to the moral implications of this principle. We discuss the obligations of multi-national corporations and the legitimacy of their hegemony in creating and sustaining global markets. But the question on which we focus is: what is the vehicle by which the goods of the earth are to get to everyone? As legitimate as this principle is in a theological context, without a mechanism for achieving it, we are unable to fulfill God's command to "subdue the earth and fill it."

I point out, and the argument is not lost on the students, that business is the vehicle *par excellence* for achieving the universal destination of goods. In fact, without business's capacity for production and distribution, provided these activities are ordered toward authentic human fulfillment, this principle is without the means of achievement. We consider what might happen if multi-national corporations were to understand their role in this way and if they were brought to the realization that they are responsible for the achievement of human flourishing in the communities they serve. Such organizations could still make a profit; that is not at issue. What is at stake are the lives of countless individuals and communities who have a right to a life that has meaning. This insight reveals immediately the redemptive aspects of the business enterprise: it is ordered toward providing goods and services to communities *so that* their members can seek their own most excellent goods.

The principle of *solidarity* is enormously important for the business student who wishes to view his or her work as a vocation. John Paul II's definition, that we begin to think of the "other" as another self, illuminates the imperative that the business person must acknowledge always and everywhere his or her responsibility to the welfare of humankind. We also discuss John Paul's argument that solidarity cannot be achieved without opposition, without those who offer dissenting opinions in order to arrive at a "more adequate understanding and, to an even greater degree, the means employed to achieve the common good."⁶³ Solidarity does not mean we all agree, nor does it mean an excessively or narrowly altruistic approach to achieving business outcomes. It does require the recognition that we are "all in this together" and that I cannot ignore the suffering of others. The business professional is actually in a unique position to do something about it.

b. "Just Wages" from *Managing as if Faith Mattered*, Alford/Naughton: An important aspect of the redemptive dimension of work and of business is the concept of the just wage. There is an obvious connection between the principle of the universal destination of goods and the just wage. If an unjust portion of the proceeds from productive labor redound to the owners of the business, the principle of universal destination of goods is betrayed. The man or woman making pennies a day for their contribution as partners in the creation of material wealth are thus

denied the opportunity to create a meaningful life for themselves or their families and the redemptive meaning of work and of business is betrayed.

The chapter on just wages in *Managing as if Faith Mattered* spells out the meaning of a just wage in a way that provides for both the just claims of the worker and the legitimate economic goals of business. The authors argue that a just wage must include three aspects: it must be a living wage, an equitable wage and a sustainable wage.⁶⁴ It is unjust to pay a wage to a worker that neglects the need to insure wage equity among all employees; it is also unjust to pay one that precludes sustaining the economic life of the firm. This definition thus accounts for the needs of the individual, the needs of the community of work and the need the firm has to remain solvent; all three of these aspects must be brought into some kind of synergistic balance requiring prudent decisions and compromise. Fulfilling the redemptive aspect of a business does not require it to make self-destructive decisions. The business enterprise (when providing authentic goods and services) actually is obligated to sustain itself for the benefit of the owners, the employees and the communities it serves.

c. The Meaning of Suffering This leads us to the final and most significant aspect of the redemptive action of work and of business; it is grounded in the opportunity that work allows for suffering and the chance to join this suffering to that of Christ on the Cross. John Paul II makes the relationship between human work and the Cross of Christ quite clear. He argues that in human work, we find a “small part of the Cross of Christ,” for through our work is reflected the “*glimmer* of new life, of the *new good*” that Christ came to announce. This present life is full of toil, yes. But when we work we participate in the redemption of the world by striving to make life more human for ourselves and our neighbors:

By enduring the toil of work in union with Christ crucified for us, man in a way collaborates with the Son of God for the redemption of humanity. He shows himself a true disciple of Christ by carrying the cross in his turn every day in the activity that he is called upon to perform...[Christ] animates, purifies, and strengthens those noble longings too, by which the human family strives *to make its life more human* and to render the whole earth submissive to this goal."

All of our previous discussion is now subsumed under this more comprehensive look at the redemptive aspect of work and of business. Human activity in the world is directed at making life more human for all. The business professional suffers in a small way with Christ when he confronts the moments when difficult decisions must be made and remains true to his vocation to promote human flourishing. This suffering is also found in the daily effort to maintain what Lonergan calls the “patterns of cooperation” that sustain the firm, that is, the daily commitment to create, manage and improve the processes that lead to the successful accomplishment of the firm’s purpose – to deliver on the promises it has made to its customers and constituencies.

Part Three: Work as Sanctifying

Having explored the creative and redemptive aspects of work and their implications for the vocation of the business student, we now turn our attention to the way in which work can be a means of personal sanctification. The Catholic Christian tradition, especially through the lives of many of the saints and their writings, reflects a profound understanding of the relationship between one's daily activities and the process of sanctification. But we have only to return once again to *Laborem Exercens*, where John Paul II explicitly identifies human work as a vehicle for holiness. The Holy Father writes:

since work in its subjective aspect is always a personal action, an *actus personae*, it follows that *the whole person, body and spirit*, participates in it, whether it is manual or intellectual work. It is also to the whole person that the word of the living God is directed, the evangelical message of salvation, in which we find many points which concern human work and which throw particular light on it. These points need to be properly assimilated: an inner effort on the part of the human spirit, guided by faith, hope and charity, is needed in order that through these points the *work* of the individual human being may *be given the meaning which it has in the eyes of God* and by means of which work enters into the salvation process on a par with the other ordinary yet particularly important components of its texture.⁶⁵

John Paul II's insights lead the students to consider the possibility that work is not a separate sphere, alienated or divorced from the life of grace. It is one of the ways in which human persons work out their salvation. Indeed, when properly understood and intended, work is one of the essential means by which human persons come into deeper communion with God. This has enormous implications, both on a personal level for these future organizational leaders, as well as in terms of their responsibilities toward those whom they will lead and manage.

The pedagogical entry point into a deeper appreciation of this insight is an exploration of the virtues tradition. It takes its point of departure from John Paul's argument, cited above, that our understanding of work, to be properly assimilated, must be "guided by faith, hope and charity" and we consider these in some detail during the class. But the students find the most compelling connections when we turn to the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance and their relation to managerial practice. The students are intrigued when they realize that the virtues are not theoretical ideas, but become actual qualities of human character and behavior. They had not thought about virtue as something that needs to be practiced, or as ways of being that, when acquired, constitute who we are at a very organic and fundamental level. I can only point to the highlights of our investigation here. But it must be said first of all that it is not difficult to demonstrate that the virtues provide excellent moral guides for managerial behavior. For example, it would be hard to define a more essential requirement for managerial success than prudence, or practical wisdom. Prudence can be defined as the capacity to discern what needs to be done as well as to discern how to go about accomplishing it. It calls on human foresight, circumspection and caution and also a certain intelligence about how things

work or could work. It is the managerial virtue *par excellence* and yet it would never occur to most business professionals that they are behaving virtuously when they practice it in the normal course of keeping their organization running.

Of course, prudence does not stand alone. For while prudence, an intellectual virtue, discerns the good to be achieved, justice, a virtue of the will, is concerned with bringing that good to fruition. The students know already from their own work experience that managers can sometimes know what the good is that needs to be done - but lack the will to accomplish it. Justice is concerned with doing what needs to be done in the way it needs to be done. It is less concerned with “what” than with “how.”⁶⁶ Fortitude understood as managerial courage and the tenacity to persist in the daily challenge of accomplishing organizational goals, temperance as the capacity for patience, the willingness to listen, to resist the temptation to act without considering all the data – these virtues are instantly recognizable to the students in their organizational context.

This discussion of the virtues provides the perfect segue for grasping the significance of the principles of quality management and the continuous improvement approach to management. These methods require patient attention to processes and a focus on the elimination of waste, bringing a new level of significance to the subjective dimension of work and the possibility of sanctification through work. They call for a fundamental respect for the dignity and humanity of every worker as well as the practice of the virtues. They reveal work in both its redemptive and sanctifying aspects because it is only when we work to benefit from God’s creation *without destroying it* that we can claim that our work is holy. These approaches permit the virtuous achievement of the economic objectives of the firm while helping to eliminate waste to both the organization and society.

Finally, we delve deeply into Josef Pieper’s volume *Leisure as the Basis of Culture*, pointing out that the authentic leader will take time to reflect on reality and permit it to penetrate him or her – that through this effort the true meaning of one’s activity is seen in light of one’s real purpose. It is of great interest to the students, if a bit of an instrumental view, that bringing this understanding and form of leisure into one’s life can actually lead to better insights into the difficult problems leaders face. With Pieper’s help, we connect the practice of leisure to the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, returning to the question of grace with which we began and introduce the “sacrament of the present moment” as a locus of clarity and peace. Of great significance here is the recognition that the liturgy of the Eucharist reflects a deep connection to work, for as the priest says during the Offertory: “Blessed are you Lord, God of all Creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.” This prayer reveals a profound truth: that the

sacrifice at the altar is where we join our work to the sacrifice of Christ and participate in the Redemption of the world.

At this point in the course, the students are asked to do a written exercise on their experience of leisure, similar to the one they completed with regard to their work experience.⁶⁷ It requires them to take one half-hour per day for reflection and to complete a week long journal or log of their experience in this regard. Thus we ground the concept of leisure in their experience of it as well.

Part Four: Conclusion: The Postmodern Context of Work

The last section of the course is a consideration of these themes in light of the challenges of the contemporary period. We read Drucker's "The Age of Social Transformation," a small selection from Robert Fogel's *The Fourth Great Awakening* and a chapter from Juliet Schor's *The Overworked American*. The intention is to ground our theological reflections in the historical context of our time, thus preparing the student to meet the unique challenges it offers.

The overwhelming majority of the students report that they experience a profound change, even conversion, in their attitudes toward their own work and the purpose of business during the course. They leave with a sense of the sacredness and gravity of their own vocation and a recognition of the enormous value the institution of business has for our culture and the future of humanity. As a result, they are more aware of its impact and its responsibility to serve the common good as an instrument of authentic human flourishing and human fulfillment. The purpose of business is revealed and affirmed through an investigation of the meaning of human work.

Attachment 1**Theology 306*****A Personal Reflection on Work Experience***

Please take some time to reflect thoughtfully on the following questions and answer them briefly but as accurately as you can. Use additional paper if needed.

1. Think of a work experience that you have had in which your impression of the way the organization was managed was essentially positive. What characterized it? What were the factors that made it a positive experience? What specifically did managers do that contributed to that? What, if any, management systems could you identify that contributed to that?

2. Now think of a work experience that you have had in which your impression of the way the organization was managed was essentially negative. What characterized it? What were the factors that made it a negative experience? What specifically did managers do that contributed to that? What, if any, management systems could you identify that contributed to that?

3. At a more general level, what would you identify as the signs of good management? What makes a good manager? Is there a difference between being a “good” manager and being an “effective” or “efficient” manager? Why or why not? If you think there is, what might that be?

4. What would your own philosophy of management be at this point? What is the job of management in your opinion? Picture yourself in your first management job after college. How would you gain the competencies you need to be successful?

Attachment 2: Sample Work Experience Reflection

NEGATIVE

Chaotic, stressful
Pretending to listen
Intimidation
Lack of trust
Only negative feedback
Cliques, favoritism
Unethical practices, cheating the customer to save money – ended up costing 2ce as much anyway
When you can't tell who is in charge

Dictatorships, no employee input. New policies were effective immediately without any transition time.
Too many layers, making decision process cumbersome and slow
Contradictory expectations.
Bias.

Signs of Good Management
Signs of general happiness

Follow through; have fun
Goal oriented, positive attitude. Flexible, adaptable, honest. Problem solver.
Technically qualified managers
Listening, understanding, organization, drive, ability to motivate without offending
Open and effective communication, compassionate but professional

POSITIVE

Trust
Self-correcting organism
Feeling of success
Good relationships
Clear requirements
No mgt involvement. Poor communication
Extra effort rewarded

Goal oriented, passionate manager
Created a learning environment
Speedy response to harassment situation

Staff is considered a team. Problems addressed respectfully. Employees treated like human beings
Lead by example
Willing to help
Open to change and new ideas
Empowers employees

Philosophy of Management
Know your employees, strengths/weaknesses.
Know your responsibility
Define boundaries, expectations. Be personal
Have a vision, motivate and inspire, form a strong staff,
Friend first, colleague second
Keep employees happy and comfortable in their environment

General consensus: A good manager is both efficient and effective.

Attachment 3

Theology 306

Name:

Second Paper Assignment

In one of the first essays we read for this course, Michael Naughton's "Leisure as the Basis of Work," we learned that true leisure is not entertainment or some form of consumption, but *contemplation*. We are now speaking of the sanctifying aspects of work and the proper understanding of contemplation and its deeper meaning.

Therefore, your assignment during the next few weeks is to rest, but to rest in a certain way. Your assignment is to find one half hour a day for quiet contemplation, going for a walk, sitting by a stream, reading or pondering a book over a solitary cup of coffee (or whatever!), having a quiet talk with a good friend about the direction of your life – you get the idea.

Further, you are asked to keep a daily log in the format outlined below – nothing complicated or lengthy. Just jot down a few notes each day about what you tried and what your experience was, any fruits that resulted from the effort, whether or not you found it valuable.

You will be expected to turn this sheet in. Your second paper assignment will be based on this experience.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity:</u>	<u>Comments:</u>

Endnotes

¹ Brigham and Ehrhardt, *Financial Management: Theory and Practice* (Thompson-Southwestern: Mason, Ohio, 2008). Workbook, Chapter I.

² Robert Bellah, "Professions Under Siege: Can Ethical Autonomy Survive?" *Logos* 1:3 (1997): 34-35.

³ In one of the excellent background papers for this conference, Dr. Michael Naughton and his colleagues suggest that "[w]hen a gulf between liberal arts and business curricula occurs, it creates the impression in students that they are receiving two types of education: one that makes them more human, and the other that makes them more money, but they are unclear about how the two fit together." Naughton et al., "Business Education at Catholic Universities:

An Exploration of the Role of Mission-Driven Business Schools,”

<http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/conferences/becu/background.html> (accessed June 1, 2008)

⁴ I am using this rubric as shorthand for the “Business School in a Catholic University” since I found it used that way in the very fine background papers at the conference website.

⁵ The pedagogy has been tested and revised and tested again for the past several years as I have had the opportunity to teach a course originally conceived by Michael Naughton called “The Christian Faith and the Management Profession.” I believe that some of the material I present in the course could be used in any course in which the relationship between the Christian faith and professional life is under consideration. It has relevance and meaning for virtually any profession.

⁶ This proposal is a work in progress and I do not intend to develop it fully in this paper. To do so would require an analysis of the analogy of being and participation, something that would be beyond the scope of our interests here. Nonetheless, at a minimum it is necessary to point out that we cannot equate God the Father with “Creator,” God the Son with “Redeemer,” or God the Holy Spirit with “Sanctifier.” The use of these terms in this way subverts faith in the Trinity. The formula “creator, redeemer, sanctifier,” when it refers to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit respectively, is not strictly Trinitarian because it blurs the distinctions among the three persons of the Trinity who all are involved together in the divine actions of creation, redemption and sanctification. This theological premise works to my advantage in the course since it permits me to argue that if we are to reflect the image of the Trinitarian God in our work, we must look beyond the creative aspect of work to its redemptive and sanctifying aspects as well. While I intend to develop this further, for the purposes of this paper, as well as in the course, these categories serve as more of a pedagogical device and in no way constitute a thorough treatment of work as a participation in the life of the Trinity.

⁷ Michael Naughton and Helen Alford, *Managing as if Faith Mattered* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 2001), 42-46.

⁸ It may be obvious, but I teach this course as a course in systematic theology, rather than moral theology.

⁹ For full account of this framework, please see my book: *The Subjective Dimension of Human Work: the Conversion of the Acting Person According to Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II and Bernard Lonergan* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008)

¹⁰ It might be worth mentioning that I have found Lonergan’s cognitional theory to be an excellent pedagogical approach in other courses and lectures as well.

¹¹ Lonergan, vol. 3 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, 1988). Lonergan’s doctrine of God in *Insight* is grounded in the move from finite knowledge to knowledge of the Infinite. In finite knowing, I know proportionate being. But in an act of judgment I can also extrapolate to a grasp of the fact that the possibility of such limited understanding depends on the existence of the intelligible *as such*. Proportionate being, which is contingent, must be grounded in necessary being. In a sense, this is Augustine’s move from *veritas* to the necessary

existence of *Veritas* in modern language. God is absolutely intelligible and is the ground of all intelligibility and therefore the condition of our knowing proportionate being. See also John O'Donnell, "Transcendental Approaches to the Doctrine of God," *Gregorianum* 77.4 (1996): 661-662.

¹² Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, 1990). This pattern is verifiable, recurrent, and normative. Its operations include "many distinct and irreducible activities: seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting, inquiring, imagining, understanding, conceiving, formulating, reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence, judging, deliberating, evaluating, deciding, speaking, writing" none of which can be called human knowing alone and by itself. They each play a role in the dynamic process of coming to know, providing subsequent operations with their material, or subsuming prior operations by virtue of having been reached. Together they constitute the human person's innate cognitional structure and drive for understanding.

¹³ Every piece of knowledge gained thus becomes the base for further knowledge; knowledge builds on knowledge, discovery on discovery and can yield cumulative and progressive results.

¹⁴ *Method*, 235-253

¹⁵ *Method*, 130-131

¹⁶ *Method*, 237. Lonergan follows Joseph de Finance in making a fundamental distinction between vertical and horizontal freedom. Horizontal freedom is a decision or choice that occurs within an established horizon; vertical freedom is the decision to move from one horizon to another.

¹⁷ *Method*, 243

¹⁸ The level of decision only comes when they face a choice sometime in the future – to either act according to what they have come to affirm as true – or not.

¹⁹ A fundamental point is made using Lonergan's schema: the Christian manager is obliged to seek **both** the true and the good. Though these are related and both constitute qualities of being, the moral obligation of the business person does not consist only in his or her concern for the so-called social ends of business. The search for truth and the willingness to recognize it is also a moral imperative, one that is of enormous importance to a successful business enterprise. Thus, the business person operates as a moral agent when he or she exercises prudential judgment in making ordinary business decisions, always provided that these decisions are ordered toward authentic goods. In addition, we consider the place of a third transcendental, beauty, in the successful business firm.

²⁰ See attachment 1. The assignment asks them to reflect on two work situations: one that they experienced as being managed well and one that they experienced as being managed poorly and to attempt to describe the factors that contributed to those experiences.

²¹ Please note my disclaimers concerning this approach in Footnote 6.

²² John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, 4.

²³ Their assignment is *Gaudium et spes* Part I, Ch. 1, #12-18, Ch. 2, #23-30 and Ch. 3 in its entirety.

²⁴ *GS*, 13

²⁵ *GS*, 14

²⁶ *GS*

²⁷ *GS*, 18

²⁸ *GS*, 14

²⁹ *GS*, 34

³⁰ *GS*

³¹ *GS*, 35

³² *GS*, 36

³³ *GS*, 35

³⁴ *GS*, 34

³⁵ *GS*, 34

³⁶ Robert Bellah, "Professions Under Siege: Can Ethical Autonomy Survive?" *Logos* 1:3 (1997): 34-35; Michael Naughton, "Leisure as the Basis of Work" in *Values, Work, Education: The Meanings of Work*, ed. Samuel Natale and Brian Rothschild (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1995), chapter 3.

³⁷ John Paul II, *LE*, 6

³⁸ *LE*, 6

³⁹ *LE*, 12

⁴⁰ By human flourishing, I mean human persons exercising their freedom in order to fulfill both their material needs and those of their families as well as their obligation to their Creator to become fully that person God intended when he created them.

⁴¹ "Leisure as the Basis of Work," 54

⁴² *Ibid.*, 54

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 61

⁴⁴ I argue later in the course and the paper that W. Edwards Deming's Theory of Profound Knowledge provides such a framework.

⁴⁵ Bellah, "Professions under Siege: Can Ethical Autonomy Survive?" *Logos* 1:3 (1997): 31-50.

⁴⁶ *Centesimus annus*; John R. Boatright, "Fiduciary Duties and the Shareholder-Management Relation: or, What's So Special about Shareholders?" *Business Ethics Quarterly* 4 (1994): 393-407; "The Purpose of Business: Working Together for the Common Good" in *Managing as if Faith Mattered*; Deborah Savage, "Is Creating Wealth a Virtue?" *Bridges* (2001): 1-32

⁴⁷ *CA*, 35

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *LE*, 12

⁵⁰ *CA*, 42

⁵¹ *CA*, 35

⁵² Since this fine article provides but a foil for considering a broader conception of the purpose of business I have decided not to include an in-depth analysis of it here.

⁵³ *Managing as if Faith Mattered*, 45. Italics in original.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 40-41

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 43-45

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 45

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 41

⁵⁸ Peter Drucker himself said that the purpose of business is to create a customer

⁵⁹ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), 86.

⁶⁰ *CA*, 43.

⁶¹ Albino Barrera, O.P., "An Analytical Framework for Business Ethics: Catholic Social Principles," unpublished paper.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 5

⁶³ Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, (London: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979), 286

⁶⁴ *Managing as if Faith Matters*, 130.

⁶⁵ *Laborem exercens*, 24.

⁶⁶ Paul Waddell, *The Primacy of Love: An Introduction to the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas*, (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1992) 132.

⁶⁷ See attachment three.