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## THE DOOR TO A DEEPER BEHOLDING: THE OPEN NARRATIVE

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There is much rumination these days about the Catholic intellectual tradition. The topic is ordinarily raised by those who are burdened with and saddened by its absence in places where it is expected, like Catholic institutions of higher education. The burdened include bishops, popes, presidents, trustees, faculty, some at least, usually older. Their burden could be lessened if they remembered the adage of that great philosopher, Donald Rumsfeld: “you go to war with the army you got.” Were that to be obeyed one would engage the issues about Catholic identity or the Catholic intellectual tradition “with the army you got.” Who are they? The faculty in place, some of whom are Catholic, some used to be Catholic, some were never Catholic, some are wary of Catholicism, fearing its encroachment on their academic freedom, etc. It doesn’t work to have the Catholic intellectual tradition helicoptered into a faculty that isn’t asking for it, or don’t want it or don’t think they want it or don’t understand it or think they do and don’t need it.

I would count myself among the resisters if those who promote the Catholic intellectual tradition lack a sense of its historicity and ubiquity. Some proponents of this tradition see it as coming from a golden past, a classical period that needs to be retrieved. I know of no such period. “A classicist would feel it was perfectly legitimate to impose his culture on others for he conceives culture normatively and he conceives his own to be the norm.”(Lonergan 363 of M)

So what’s the alternative? Start by finding out what “they” i.e. the faculty already in place say they are doing. In a previous piece I mentioned the process I have used with faculty. I ask them about the good they are about or seek to achieve. Here I would like to revisit that process in order to have the reader open to beholding what might already be there but is not seen.<sup>1</sup>

One of Gerard Manley Hopkins’ poems is a good text for seeing what was there all along but wasn’t seen. He had found himself disconsolate since summer was over and winter was approaching. He looked down from St. Beuno’s, the Jesuit house where he was studying located some 15 miles from the Irish sea overlooking the Clywd valley, and began to see past his sadness. There were the leaves falling from the trees coloring “the azurous hung hills”, and the huge puffs of “silk-sack clouds” swirling across the valley and harvesters shouting their pleasure

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to an essay by Fr. Michael Himes for this insight. “Finding God in all things: A sacramental World View and Its Effects” in *As Leaven in the World* ed. Thomas Landy, (Sheed and Ward 2001)

over the abundance of the harvest. His *Hurray in Harvest* expresses a repentant awareness: “these things, these things were here and but the beholder - wanting.” Inspired by this poem Himes comments that “the whole of Catholic education is a training to be beholders...a lifelong pedagogy to bring us to see what is there.”

The thesis I will elaborate on here is that a school’s catholic identity might be seen more easily if faculty could see one another anew in a new light and, from there, were more open to understanding Catholicism differently. The new in either or both of these instances could come about by beholding what hadn’t previously been beheld. (When isn’t there something wanting in us beholders that needs to be beheld?) As long as it is taken for granted that one is sufficiently acquainted with one’s colleagues so that nothing more is to be expected and the same with Catholicism’s intellectual tradition, then things will stay where they are. ‘It is what it is, they are what they are, so let me get on with my work.’ If the beholders do not see themselves as wanting, then nothing will change and the usual institutional strategy of ‘let sleeping dogs lie’ about the subject of Catholicism will continue.

An example would help, this one of a beholding that took place in me at the most recent faculty workshop I have conducted. I was paired with a young member of the communications department of his Catholic college. I inquired about the good he was trying to do at his school. In some ways it was simple enough to understand what he said. He tries “to shake up my students” so that they might see a layer deeper into their motivations they hadn’t suspected or explored before. Ayn Rand’s skepticism about altruism had been an important author for him in his earlier life. She convinced him that there can be a kind of violence done to those to whom or for whom they are trying to do good. Unintentionally, of course, but well meaning do-gooders can make the other an object that meets their own needs.

In the course of the conversation which lasted more than two hours the deeper context of his life’s story only added to my respect for him. He grew up in a Mormon culture though neither of his parents were of that faith. They were, as he put it, “diluted Protestants” who went through the motions of being Christian so that he and his sister could go the route of being serious Christians. He tried and didn’t succeed. Especially after his best friend was killed in a motorcycle accident, he “put the God question to rest” since he couldn’t make sense of what had made his own and his friend’s life inexplicable if there really was a God. So atheist is a category with which he identifies. And gay is another category he eventually used to describe himself. If the conversation had started with either or both of these descriptors they would have distracted me from seeing the struggle going on in him to be true to his own lights and to contribute to the well-being of his students to whom he is clearly committed. I commended him at the end of our exchange for the effort he puts into being the person of integrity I concluded he was. He appreciated the compliment but allowed that he was “pretty empty inside.”

I have been bemused many times since then about how someone who doesn’t believe in God can be a sacrament. Before my eyes he became an outward sign of the presence of God at work in him. I am not naive about sin, my own, maybe his, all of ours. But what the Creator has created and pronounced “good” still is, fall or no fall. Good is what has come forth from what God has made, not good only, granted, but enough good to begin the inquiry into the good that comes

forth in such different ways. I ask myself why is it that one can believe in a Creator who is ultimately the reason why ducks are and waddle and giraffes are and amuse – and not see or allow that from the same creative source someone could be different from the rest of us and everyone is different from everyone else?

The process I have used in 14 workshops with faculty on the good each is attempting to do gives a very different picture of one another than they have had before. But I am coming to see that the good as beheld in this person and that, one person at a time, shouldn't be left at that. What if it could also be seen as operating in the seldom noticed interactivity of persons and, in turn, in the organization of the good in the simple and complex ways it is organized. Think of the amount of cooperation that it takes for there to be a good of order in a family as just one level to be marveled at. But then multiply that marvel by the complex cooperation that it takes for a good of order to operate in a university that has, say a thousand faculty, and half as many other employees who are administrators and staff and all the other services a university provides. Throw in four times more the number of students and look at the degree of interdependency of each part of the enterprise on and to the rest of the enterprise and you get something to marvel at, as wondrous as the transportation system of the city of Los Angeles at morning and evening rush hour on weekdays.

The good of order is seldom noticed by all of us who depend on it and contribute to it all the time, all of us in social interactions that are very local and intermediate and universal. The frequency of disorder, on the other hand, is what is all over the place and if we miss it the media will surely bring it to our attention. But the good of order should be noticed and not once. And it should have some explanation other than individuals just doing their thing. Order takes something more than the gift of administration though that is a good too. Since we take the good of order for granted until there is some glitch in its tenuous, fragile, interdependent networking, the recommendation here is to not take it for granted but to notice and celebrate it. All the moreso since no one person is its author. It meets the needs of those who are dependent on it and are beholden to the cooperative intersubjectivity of so many. All are contributing to it, all are a piece of it while no one of them is its author. And what is even more remarkable is that every single unit of this complex networking is pursuing a good personally construed and dependent on every other unit in order to pursue his or her good. What is wanting here? Beholders beholding the marvel of interactivity or intersubjectivity or simply, the good of order produced by so many while the Producer or Executive Director is off stage and as unnoticed as the order itself.

The complaint so far being voiced here is that there are at least two pervasively present layers of the good that are being taken for granted. Our beholding is wanting and we don't even know that it is. What is even more disconcerting is that, of all places, this inadvertence to what is before our eyes and unseen is in an institution of higher learning. Surely, more should be expected of the so called knowledge industry.

The good of each and value of order – so far so good! But to stick to a campus, what are the other values that are being pursued, however helter-skelteredly. Beholding can become more of an art if this question is pursued. It is more likely to become an art if time is given to a third level of the good, viz. inquiring into the values one's colleagues are giving their lives to actualize. If these were individually named a creed of values could be written. This would, in effect,

articulate the actual mission that was being pursued from below, so to speak, by the collectivity of those co-authoring the creed. Left undone what is lost? A school's personnel is left to rely on the general genre of values written in the university's mission statement. Since these galvanize little or no commonality, a values creed would begin to give a sense of community to those who authored it.

Although it is a climb, Lonergan's brilliance about this matter comes out in these several observations. But a brief explanation of the difference between notions and concepts before quoting him would be in order. Both the notion of the good and the notion of value intend but do not as notions know the particular contents of either until their content becomes conceived into a particular, conceptualized in other words. A notion is heuristic in the sense that it is a known unknown that is heading towards a known. Once it is concretized conceptually it has gone the route of denotation and direct signification rather than that of connotation that is evocative of a whole.

"If we objectify the content of responsible intending, we get the transcendental *concept* of value, of the truly good. But quite distinct from such transcendental concepts...there are the prior transcendental *notions* that constitute the very dynamism of our conscious intending promoting us from...factual knowledge to responsible action." BL12 of M This deeper dynamism of our conscious intending is "the work of the transcendental notions...(they) intend the unknown that, gradually, becomes better known." (Ibid) How much better known this unknown could become that these transcendental notions are intending if the conceptions each one comes up with about this or that value and this or that good were to be articulated and shared together. Were that to be done the goods and values that, left inarticulate in the present superficial state of faculty interaction, would emerge from its present unknown to a known. Why bother? Lonergan notes that "any ignorance or error, any negligence or malice that misrepresents or blocks this (dynamism of our conscious intending of value and of the truly good) is obscurantism in its most radical form." 12m Obscurantism could be ranked as the highest of reasons for closing a school or for not opening it!

Those who would like the catholic intellectual tradition to be taken more seriously might think about this deeper level of the dynamism of our conscious intending whence it and every other intellectual tradition takes its rise. It is at the level of the transcendental notions that all authentic intellectual traditions are one. How they conceptualize the good and value is where they become distinct. The transcendental notions of the good and of value are not something we think about every day but they are actually the dynamisms pushing our conscious intending towards concretization. So we should look more closely at how they push us to form concepts and "from mere understanding towards truth and reality, from factual knowledge to responsible action." 12m Ignatius' insight suggests that we need to see how the co-Laborer would assist all intelligence in its seeking to understand or as here, move from notion to concept. This keeps "the God who conducts Himself as One who labors" with human beings in their understanding from being extrinsic to their efforts to concretize the good and the worthwhile (#236 of *Spiritual Exercises*)

Transcendental notions are broader than any category yet they are not abstract. "They are utterly concrete...they are the fount not only of initial questions but also of further questions...pushing

up towards a fuller understanding and ever further doubts urging us to a fuller truth.”<sup>36</sup> The same can be said about the notion of the good. It is always concrete. “As the transcendental notions of the intelligible, the true, the real head for a complete intelligibility, all truth, the real in its every part and aspect, so the transcendental notion of the good heads for a goodness that is beyond criticism...it invites, presses, harries us, so that we could rest only in an encounter with a goodness completely beyond its powers of criticism.”<sup>36m</sup>

We are beholders who are wanting but we would be much less wanting if we beheld the goodness being intended in our midst. And imagine how much less wanting students in a school would be if their faculty were to “objectify” with and for one another the good and the value they are each intending. While it is true that “personal value is the person in his or her self-transcendence...as originator of values in themselves and their milieu,”<sup>32m</sup> still the social and cultural value of these, were they to be shared, would make our teaching milieus so much more rewarding. It seems odd to mine gold alone when cooperation would mine so much more. How much more meaning would flow into one’s life and work as a faculty member, not to mention administrators and students, if these value intentionalities were to become more formally part of the culture within which one works.” It is the function of culture to discover, express, validate, criticize, correct, develop, improve such meaning and value” as the individual has come to personally. (Ibid)

What would such a values creed look like were it to be attempted? I’m not sure but it would surely have things about integrity, autonomy, academic freedom, objectivity, honesty, respect for tradition, industriousness. Heaven forbid! it might even begin to look like some old texts similar to a version of the list of the fruits of the Spirit or a communal avowal to resist the works of the flesh.(Gal. 5:19-23) But would that be so bad? If it sincerely represented the best in the participants it might even be redolent of a tradition of virtue with their need to strive for intellectual, moral maybe even religious virtues to boot. A missiology that comes up from below is more likely to create community than a mission that comes down from upstairs has done.

Notice the structure of the good as it is spelled out here. There is the particular good of the individual moral agent. There is the good of order of the collectivity of moral agents and there is the good of value as these can be articulated by those in a common enterprise.

A university community is a community only insofar as it comes to common meanings communally attained. Where this is lacking people invariably reside in their own worlds, pursue disharmonious goals and operate at cross purposes. Common meanings can be arrived at only by a communication with one another and with the potential community. Meanings arrived at mutually can be constitutive both of an individual as a member of the community and of the community itself. It would be equally naive to expect common meaning to be arrived at spontaneously as it would by decree. Divergent meaning leaves a community fragmented. And no communication at all leaves monads at a distance from one another guessing about whether they are functioning from common meanings or not.

My experience with university faculty is very positive about these explorations about deeper

dimensions of the good once they get to the table. But the trick is getting them there since the bugaboo that hangs over everyone is the matter of time. There is so little time! My only comment is that we spend time on what we value. Since we don't know what we are missing by the inadvertencies mentioned here, time isn't given to turn them into what could be moments of new beholding. But there can be another reason that keeps such beholdings unexpected. The closed narrative!

Narratives: Open, Closed, Amorphous

What is needed in a person for this kind of beholding to happen? Grace, of course; the grace of "intimate knowledge" already referred to would be wonderful. At least the grace to be aware that something is wanting...like the meaning of 'what we think we are doing together here in this university.' It would also be good to realize how little faculty know one another, beyond the other's field of study. Even if one doesn't believe there is such a thing as grace, the willingness to have one's self articulated narratives develop porous boundaries, enough to be affected by otherness, in this case that of their colleagues, is essential. In brief, an open narrative is the precondition for a deeper beholding.

Having an open narrative will make one aware of the certitudes and contingency of our own narrative and its limits. The encounter I described above touched and challenged me. I was confronted with a strangeness, an alterity. I could not remain an observer or a detached listener but had to enter into the exchange from the particularity of the good I seek to do and the values I seek to realize. There was both an irreducible otherness and yet a kinship that was surprising given our pronounced generational, religious and sexual differences. Yet there was a mutuality in the witness we were each provoked into bearing. I presume that part of his experience was the same as mine that there is more to this mystery that is religion than either of us had appreciated in the same way before the encounter. Also the same could be said about ethics. The more 'other' he became the more self aware I became. Interrupting settled boundaries is enriching. (This category of the open narrative comes from Lieven Boeve's *Interrupting Traditions* (Peeters Press, Louvain)

For me, the premier instance of an open narrative is that of Jesus of Nazareth. He was open to God, to his Hebrew faith, to the means his faith provided him with to glorify God and to his neighbor. He was open especially to the neighbors who weren't counted worthy by the gatekeepers of worth and worthiness in his culture. Foundational to all of this was his openness to be led by the Spirit out into the desert and from there eventually to the Cross, a journey not always according to his own will.

But was Jesus' always an open narrative? At times it seemed it was forced into widening. A case in point seemed to develop when the Syrophenician woman begged him to drive out the demon her daughter was plagued with. His response was "Let the children (of Israel) be fed first. For it is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs." (Mk 8:27) She would not be put off. "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's scraps." Whether it was her courage, the depth of her need, the title she addressed him with or his compassion when desperation confronted him, his boundaries came down. He said "for saying this, you may go. The demon has gone out of your daughter." (v29) Otherness had his sense of himself and his

mission grow. The more other the other the more open he became.

I like the way Lonergan speaks of openness, seeing it as an intrinsic component of human consciousness and the pure desire to know. He spells it out in terms of fact, achievement and gift. First, open is the primordial, pervasive fact of everyone's existence. It has the reader reading this, for example. But openness is also an achievement when the would be knower's desire to know is satisfied, this time. So the achievements of openness are life long. But in addition to openness as a fact and openness as an on-going achievement there is openness as a gift. Why is this necessary? Because the successive enlargements of the actual horizon of one's consciousness "only too clearly lie under some law of decreasing returns." One can live within a closed narrative with one's horizon stuck, it goes just so far and no farther. "There is the need of openness as a gift, as an effect of grace where grace is taken as *sanans* (healing grace)." But he goes on to speak of these successive enlargements as falling into two classes, those that are possible to human consciousness and those that are open to ultimacy so that one can go beyond the resources of every finite consciousness. In this latter case the grace is elevating (*elevans*) and will flower into the light of glory when the subject will know God face to face. So, in brief, a narrative that is open all the way needs the gift to keep from obeying the law of diminishing returns which wants to settle into closed horizons.

The self articulated boundaries of a closed narrative gets fixed on certain values and goods. The self is self transcending but only into patterns that are familiar and within a matrix of well-worn concepts. The meanings already arrived at are as far as meaning wants to go, in this life anyway. Closed narratives can be reinforced by those who inhabit the same narrative and have embraced the same meanings. Outsiders are just that. A narrative can be closed in many ways. Ideology is one of the most common. Ideology is a group bias, a walled city with its own justification built into it. It neglects to see its own bias. There is also the closed narrative of egoism where an intentional deafness impedes any hearing that would generate any commotion on the ego's boundaries. They have been set. In Catholic universities, ironically, one bias that makes a thin community of meaning is that inhabited by the bias of anti-Catholicism. Much less often but still alive and kicking is the community that is biased against anything that isn't Catholic. Bias and ideology are masterful at staying at a distance from otherness. Even the faithful God who never gives up has to o'er leap these impervious boundaries to get a hearing, though the bounded might pride themselves on their integrity or see themselves as being faithful.

There is a third possibility, the amorphous narrative of relativism. It is prey to the whims of the culture or to the strongest voice in her community or to the latest book he read or whatever fixes one's attention today. Relativist, unboundaried, open to a fault. Even if articulated their story would lack roots or history beyond themselves. Truth is unexpected and unsought. The culture of postmodernism has done its work on these minds. So metanarratives are suspect, a thing of the past. If those whose narratives are amorphous ever experienced any beholdings, they have not proven formative nor are their convictions strong. One of their few constants is what to consume and one of the most constant companions, television.

But before we leave this matter about narratives, an inevitable question should pose itself about how open and closed narratives relates to truth. If I have the truth there is no point in being open. If I don't have the truth there's no point in being closed. To narrow this down to religious truth

the question would be whether my faith has put me in touch with the living God. And if it has, wouldn't openness constitute infidelity or syncretism? Although the Old Testament is constantly railing against other gods Jesus seems to have repositioned himself about their supposed danger or existence by neglecting the question. Instead, his horizon was always poised in the direction of the inbreaking reign of God and about "the more" that its inbreaking carried with it. The implication of this horizon is that *Deus semper major*, God is always greater than our conceptions about "Him." Paul was clear that we only see through a glass darkly into this mystery. (I Cor 13:12) Jesus' own narrative kept getting interrupted and its boundaries widened. So did the narrative of the early Church as the Act of the Apostles so eloquently says.

A look at Matthew 25:31ff. only adds much fuel to the option for openness. When the Son of Man comes in glory there will be an accounting about those who were open and fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the prisoner etc. They will be welcomed "into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Why? Because, unbeknownst to themselves, they were feeding him, clothing him, visiting him. Submitting themselves to need, they were opening themselves to God and were rewarded with the unending enrichment of the Divine Other. Those who weren't open to being interrupted fared poorly. The Other became inaccessible eternally.

Are Roman Catholics Open? Is their Tradition Open?

If the answers are in the affirmative then Roman Catholics and their Church are in a position to host otherness and pluralism as Jesus did. But are they? Is it? One way of examining these complex questions is to examine the Church's understanding of its own tradition.

In a previous text I differentiated the sacred tradition as Catholicism understands it from the Catholic intellectual tradition as I believe it can be understood. The Sacred Tradition grows from reflection on Sacred Scripture and from the dogmas that have grown from that. But the intellectual tradition of Catholicism also grows with its appropriation of right reasoning, whatever its source. So Catholicism is open to what God has revealed but also to what intelligence can conclude to without the intelligence having to formally attend to what has been revealed. At its best the Catholic intellectual tradition is a "genuine, authentic, long accumulation of insights, adjustments, re-interpretations, that repeats the original message afresh for each age." (M 162) The original message was about the saving story Jesus gave birth to by his death and resurrection. It has generated many insights and undergone numerous reinterpretations and adjustments from that time on. Some of these have become dogmas and some not.

The recent Council helps in understanding the differentiation when it taught that "Holy Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit." The Church transmits more than the Word of God. since more is needed to do justice to the guidance human beings need for coming to the wholeness God intends. This "more" is the contents of the Catholic intellectual tradition. It doesn't have the same weight as the Holy Tradition nor the same authority nor the same burden. But it is a feeder of it and a complement to it. Its authority derives from the authentic subjectivity of those who come to right judgments about those areas of knowledge they have the competence to judge correctly and disinterestedly. To qualify as contributing to the Catholic intellectual tradition in

the matter judged, right reason must be operating and right judgment attained. It would help, of course, if the reason were faith enlightened and even more so if there was some degree of identification with and some understanding of the Sacred Tradition. But many who have not been Catholic have fed the Catholic intellectual tradition all through the centuries.

There is, furthermore, according to the same Council “a hierarchy of truths” with some central to this Holy Tradition and some less so. “In Catholic doctrine there exists an order or hierarchy of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith.”(UR#11) There is considerable agreement among Christians about the truths that are constitutive of that faith, like the Resurrection of Jesus, for example, or the Trinitarian character of God. What would not enjoy the same stature would be the Marian doctrines. And lower in the hierarchy would be things like the social teachings of the Church e.g. the principle of subsidiarity, the priority of labor over capital, teachings on economic and social matters. Though these are not insignificant, they are not foundational to this “Holy Tradition.”

The affirmation being made here is that the dynamisms in the intentionality of faculty for the good and value can be of benefit to not only those for whom they are being produced but can also relate to and complement Catholic social teaching. Why the optimism? Because God who is the author of any intending of the good and value is not inactive in human intelligence. Of course, these intentions need to be reinforced by all the forms of mutuality and communications available to those who have undertaken a common enterprise, whether that be a marriage or university work or whatever. Theologically we are not far from reign of God insofar as it is operating in the present order. It can be accessed where those whose intending is one of good and value and are communicating with one another. The inbreaking reign of God materializes in slivers of goodness and value for those who are sufficiently wanting to take the time to behold it.

So, importing the Catholic intellectual tradition as such into a faculty is strategically inept since its presence can be uncovered already operating in many of the values held and formally taught by them. Importing it will insure it will always be homeless. If Aristotle was right that the good is what all seek, then begin “with the army you got.” Besides, doesn’t importing it also insult the co-Laborer who is tirelessly at work in the intelligence that mirrors the Divine Intelligence and the human intelligence that reflects God’s image and likeness? So odd as it might seem, the Catholic intellectual tradition is best uncovered by expecting to find God at work in people’s good will and best intentions and value driven purposes. It is best uncovered by putting the burden on the individual to give an account of the hope that is in him or her or them. As long as they are following the natural law within them their intentionality and its hopes are what enables each generation to add a new layer of the good under construction.

### Catholic Social Teaching

It is much easier to locate Catholic social teaching which is a subset of the Catholic intellectual tradition than it is to locate that tradition itself. Its principles such as subsidiarity, the common good, the universal destination of created goods, human dignity and its inalienable human rights are relatively well known. It is a tribute to the Catholic intellectual tradition that this component

of it has been so effectively articulated. In many ways it has proven effective and directional for examining questions which arise in the growing complexities of modern societies. By its probing of biblical symbols and metaphors it has motivated many to honor human dignity, the inviolability of conscience and the universal desire for political, economic and religious freedom.

But there is a paradox to note about the source of Catholic social teaching. Its power is in its ability to be reasoned to and rationality is not a preserve of Catholics. They would fully subscribe to the surprising assertion of the Council that “the truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of the human person take on light.”(G&S#22) But at the same time, the mystery of the human person has alternate understandings that supply light to literally billions of people from their particular narratives that enable them to enter the realm of transcendent meaning distinctively. The Council’s timely decree *Nostra Aetate* came about because of this conviction.

The value of catholic social teaching is that it can articulate for all peoples some of the principles that can make for their well being. It addresses people of good will and articulates what those who are not Catholic nor even Christian can understand to be the moral demands of human nature and social existence. Texts as early as St. Paul’s “the natural law is written in the human heart.”(Rom 2:15) and St. Thomas Aquinas’s comment that this natural law is “nothing other than the light of intellect infused within us by God.” show the consonance between the most basic requirements of human morality that can be known by believer and non-believer alike. The Church’s use of the universally accessible natural law gives it a home which is of great value for those who inhabit that narrative. But the value of this appropriation can obscure the fact that God keeps inscribing on the hearts of all human beings what must be done and what must be avoided to live a moral life individually and collectively.

But Pope John Paul’s understanding of this relationship between natural law and Catholic social teaching has narrowed it considerably. His encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* twists things a bit by speaking of the Church’s “social doctrine” and sees it as “belonging to the field not of ideology but of theology and particularly of moral theology” #41 SRS Its aim now is “to guide Christian behavior.”(Ibid) Following John Paul’s lead the foundation of this social doctrine is now not in human reason according to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. “Its essential foundation is in biblical revelation and in the tradition of the Church.”Comp #74 “It is God’s plan for the created world.”(ibid) This “social doctrine belongs to the Church because the Church is the subject that formulates it, disseminates it and teaches it.”comp#79 Where does this Pontifical council get its ideas? It claims from “the supernatural appreciation of the faith (*sensus fidei*)of the whole people.” (Though it quotes LG#12 to establish this, that is not the sense of that passage; for a much more universal optic cf. in #16 of LG}. These supernatural appreciations of the people of faith are, in turn, “taken up, interpreted and formed into a unified whole by the Magisterium, which promulgates the social teaching as Church doctrine.” #79Comp So now Catholic social teaching which has become doctrine and “is the thought of the church, insofar as it is the work of the Magisterium, which teaches with the authority that Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors; the Pope and the Bishops in communion with him!”#79 Comp

There are two ways of taking this transmogrification. One would be negative, seeing it as

representing an arrogation of that which can be known by reason so it doesn't have to find its origin in or derive from the authority of the Church and the work of the Magisterium. This could be interpreted as an example of a closed narrative at work. The other way, more positive, would be to welcome this move from natural law to a doctrine of social teaching taught by the Magisterium. It is, of course, valid for that which has its genesis in right reasoning to be taught in terms of the rhetoric of the faith since in that way it is more likely to move the faithful to pay attention to it. In doing this one takes the products of human reasoning and theological or religious reflection about the truths of revelation and folds them into the one story. So Catholic social teaching can be presented either as the product of reasoning or the understanding of it can be integrated into the body of Catholic teachings.

But, again, the negative here should not be overlooked since an opportunity for creating open boundaries between many of the world's closed narratives is then neglected. What could be grist for the mill of a mutuality between the plural narratives we function from as citizens of this world is instead used to heighten a closed narrative. The recommendation here is that we be clearer as Catholics about the several sources of understanding that Catholic social teaching comes from. Without being explicit about this a weakness ensues in how the Church's role in society and in the world at large plays out. The weakness is: positions that have been and can be arrived at through reason are taught as if they are dependent on revelation, hence meant only for its own faithful. This deprives the world of a more universal voice of reason that could reinforce and coalesce with other voices of reason about matters of great concern in public life. It also keeps narratives that could be opened, closed. Undoubtedly good pedagogues in our Catholic business schools have learned to avoid this constriction.

## Conclusion

Catholic business schools are in a position to affect the whole world through the world of business in a way that no other modern educational enterprise can. To do so they will have to understand the importance the open narrative. The open narrative does not jeopardize the particularity of a person's faith or convictions or values. It is able to bear witness to them within a plurality of narratives. But those who understand their Catholic faith as well as the universality of the notional dynamisms operating in their colleagues, will be able to host this alterity in a way that other narratives cannot because of its potential capaciousness.

Each of the principles of Catholic social teaching is a potential door to the social teachings of other faiths and humanisms. If Catholic business school personnel wanted to imitate the best in their tradition they would be like a Justin Martyr, or a Clement of Alexandria or an Origen who saw this potential of the faith and its consonance with the best reasoning being done in their world. They opened the boundaries between philosophy and that nascent faith and the enrichment was mutual. The operations of human consciousness, experience, understanding, judgment and decision are invariant the world over. The will of God is universal that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. This God is at work in all human intelligence moving it to desire the good and the worthwhile. This potential capaciousness is still aborning in Roman Catholicism. To cite just two examples. Paul VI in *Octogesima Adveniens* #37 speaks of the Spirit of the Lord permeating the universe and inspiring new and appropriate ways for humanity to exercise its creative responsibility. John Paul in *Redemptor Hominis* #11 "The

Fathers of the Church rightly saw in the various religions as it were so many reflections of the one truth, 'seeds of the Word, attesting that though the routes taken may be different, there is but a single goal to which is directed the deepest aspirations of the human spirit.'