

**A DIVIDED LIFE:
ONE OF THE MORE SERIOUS ERRORS FOR THE CHRISTIAN PROFESSIONAL**

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No man, for any period, can wear one face to himself and another to the multitude
without finally getting bewildered as to which may be true.

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Compromise is said to be the way of the world and yet I find myself
feeling sick trying to accept what it has done to me.

Douglas Coupland

The trouble with the rat race is that if you win, you're still a rat.

Lily Tomlin

Context: This past year, I have been working on two curriculum course committees focusing on a new required business ethics course for our MBA students and a spirituality of work course, which will provide a deeper reflection on ethical issues for our business students. One of the questions we have wrestled with is “What’s the problem?” There are of course many problems in business and the professions in general, but when we look at the problems of Enron, of Parmalat, of Tyco, as well as other professions, the doctors in Auschwitz, the priests who have abused children, lawyers who have enriched themselves at the expense of justice, we are often faced with what *Gaudium et spes* calls one of the more serious errors of our age: “The split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives.”¹ The Council fathers saw this division as so serious that our eternal salvation is at stake: “[L]et there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one hand, and religious life on the other. The Christian who neglects his temporal duties, neglects his duties toward his neighbor and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation.”²

While the document speaks of this division in terms of the modern age, the divide between our professional and religious life is a symptom of a much larger problem of our human condition—original sin. In paragraph 13 of *Gaudium et spes*, when speaking about human sin, the document explains this sin in terms of division: “man is split within himself.”³ St. Paul and St. Augustine were profoundly conscious of this division. In Romans, Paul writes: “What I do I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate. . . . The willing is ready at hand, but doing the good is not. For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want” (Romans 7:15-19). Augustine calls this internal conflict and division the “monstrous fact,” and in the *Confessions* he locates this split not in our nature but in our will (Aquinas will later develop Augustine’s thought here by distinguishing between will and passions which illumines the

conflict rather than between two wills in conflict). He explained in first hand terms his own suffering from two wills, neither of which was complete, “and what [was] present in the one [was] lacking to the other.” Then in referring back to Paul’s quote above, he confessed:

In my own case, as I deliberated about serving my Lord God (Jer. 30:9), which I had long been disposed to do, the self which willed to serve was identical with the self which was unwilling. It was I. I was neither wholly willing nor wholly unwilling. So I was in conflict with myself and was dissociated from myself. The dissociation came about against my will. Yet this was not a manifestation of the nature of an alien mind but the punishment suffered in my own mind. And so it was ‘not I’ that brought this about ‘but sin which dwelt in me’ (Rom. 7:17, 20), sin resulting from the punishment of a more freely chosen sin, because I was a son of Adam.⁴

What both Paul and Augustine reveal for us is that we are fallen in a way of division, of a struggle between grace and sin. This struggle is found in the very word division which comes from the Greek *diaballein* where we get the word “diabolic” (to scatter, break apart, rupture).⁵

Yet, the authors of *Gaudium et spes* seem to think that something about our age has made this division worse, that this split or division is a “more serious error of our age,” than in other ages. What is it about this age that fosters rather than resists this split? An immediate response can be seen in the language and categories we use to describe our lives. We live in an age where our categories are no longer distinctions but separations or walls: public/private, body/soul, church/state, spirituality/religion, faith/work.

While many historians may trace the origins of this modern split to different sources, it would seem that Machiavelli is a significant source for intensification of these divisions in the modern world. He recognizes this division, but not only does he not lament, but he accepts it and actually explains that a unity of life leads to a loss of power. For Machiavelli, “how we live is so far removed from how we ought to live, that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done will rather bring about his own ruin than his preservation.” Yet unlike Machiavelli, whose word to the prince on the price of success--“learn how not to be good”--counsels a principle of expediency, while maintaining when advantageous a façade of virtue, we tend to accept a divided life, acquiescing in a pretended necessity to maintain a “*split personality*”⁶ by maintaining a separation between public and religious life, and seeing any unity between the two as a certain fanaticism or at best a naïve religiosity failing to confront the necessary compromises for social peace.

Alasdair MacIntyre describes this particular modern division as “compartmentalization”:

By compartmentalization I mean that division of contemporary social life into distinct spheres, each with its own highly specific standards of success and failure, each presenting to those initiated into its particular activities its own highly specific normative expectations, each requiring the inculcation of habits designed to make one effective in satisfying those particular expectations and conforming to those particular standards. So what is accounted effectiveness in the roles of the home is not at all the same as what is so accounted in the roles of the workplace. What is accounted effectiveness in the role of a consumer is not so accounted in the

role of a citizen. The detailed specificity in the multiplicity of roles is matched by the lack of anything remotely like adequate prescriptions for the self which is required to inhabit each of these roles in turn, but which is itself to be fully identified with none of them. Yet it is this now attenuated core self, which in the compartmentalization of the distinctively modern self has become a ghost . . .⁷

MacIntyre provides one of the more convincing contemporary explanations of *Gaudium et spes*' claim of the seriousness of this divided life. What he makes clear is that our culture not only fails to challenge this compartmentalization, but that it works particularly hard at avoiding its confrontation.

Purpose and Thesis: This division or compartmentalization then arises from our nature as sinful people, and is exacerbated in modern culture. Keeping these two overarching sources to the divided life in mind, what I want to focus on in this paper is how we understand and arrange the relationship between our work and our leisure. This relationship is of crucial importance in beginning to overcome this most serious error of our modern age. While our conceptions of both work and leisure will be crucial here, I believe that within our increasingly globalized economy, we have become dominated by what Josef Pieper called over 50 years ago a "total work mentality" which eclipses the spiritual and religious notion of leisure.⁸ My argument is that without the resources of a rich and religious understanding of leisure, any degree of integrity in professional life is impossible.

My thesis is a simple one then: no matter how hard we try, through technical progress, economic and financial formulas, strategic foresight, or marketing myopia, we will never get *work* right, unless we get *leisure* right. It is in leisure, properly understood, that we find the deepest understanding of the person as receptive, and in particular, receptive of grace that informs our integration of work and leisure. But this is not an attempt to escape the importance of work. We will not get either work or leisure right unless we see them in their relation, a relation not one of mere balance, but of profound integration. Leisure and work are not simply two isolated periods of time in human life, but rather as Karl Rahner has written, they are "moments in a person's self-realization which exist only in their relation with one another and are the primary constituents of human existence itself."⁹

To understand this relationship between work and leisure, I will contrast two visions of how we might look at their relationship which will highlight the problem of the divided life described above. The first section reflects a "total work mentality" reflected in the careerism of contemporary culture and its pervasive instrumentalization of leisure. The second section sketches what a life of unity looks like when leisure and work are rightly understood and the religious character of leisure is taken seriously. I will then conclude with suggestions of how a Catholic university, as a cultural institution whose very vocation is the promotion and development of authentic leisure, can begin to educate professional students according to this unity.

1. Career: Instrumentalizing Leisure to Maximize Achievement

24/7/365 = *The Total Work Mentality*

Work and Career: With the increasing amount of education and number of skills a person needs to participate in today's knowledge economy, work is increasingly engaging much more of the person. The worker, and especially the professional, is defined "by a sense of expanding power and competency that renders work itself a source of self-esteem."¹⁰ In addition to supplying material goods, work, especially understood as a career, contributes to the development of one's psychological health by being creative, autonomous, and fulfilling. One's career becomes an important means to one's own self understanding.

Careerists are not so much money-mad (although some certainly are), but rather they are goal-oriented.¹¹ In many respects, the careerist reflects the very etymology of its name: *car*. As William F. May explains, both career and car refer to movement, and increasingly a private way of movement, in order to achieve particular goals. The car, one's "*auto*-mobile" or self-driven vehicle, lets the person travel alone. Even though the car drives one out into society, it does so with a "glass-enwrapped privacy" that shields one from traveling with others. In similar terms, the careerist calculates his travels not in public but in private terms. Like the privacy of a car, the careerist is interested in what goals—education, contacts, money, skill, power, etc.—are necessary to get from here to there. While the activities of careerists are within the law, they have little connection to the public good. As May points out, "questions of public obligation and responsibility seem marginal and episodic at best, distracting and suicidal at worst. The careerist travels by public thoroughfares and largely obeys the rules of the road, but toward his or her own private destination."¹²

What results in this individualistic notion of work is the inability of careerists to enter into the moral debates over their work, especially a moral debate that takes seriously the religious and spiritual character of the professional. If the goals of work are determined by the emotive impulses of private individuals, it will be difficult to adjudicate good and bad work, except through legal categories. But even here it is not strictly private, since often the achievements of our careers are confirmed as worthy by the standards of others. As the former editor of the Minneapolis Star Tribune said to me about his own career in the journalism business: "When I focus on achievement and accolades somebody else was always keeping score. Somebody else always decided if I was measuring up."

Leisure and Education: The reasons for such a strong careerist presence in the workplace today are multiple and complex; but one cause for its strength can be found in the declining cultural formation of education, particularly university education, as a form of leisure. School, which takes up the first fourth of our lives, is one of the biggest portions of our non-work lives. Yet, increasingly this non-work sphere is becoming understood solely as instrumental to the work arena. School is simply that which prepares us for work. Each class is seen in terms of how it will prepare "me" for the work world. School, and in particular university education, is understood as simply "instrumental" in so far as it gives me the techniques and skills to do well in the corporate and professional world.

The focus on school as an instrument to career success is increasingly crowding out a classical understanding of what education should be about. Josef Pieper writes that “leisure in Greek means *skole*, and in Latin *scola*, the English school.”¹³ The person of leisure is the “scholar.” Education in the classical liberal arts tradition was that employment of the mind in which one could better “see” creation as it is. By looking at art, science, math, history, philosophy, literature, theology, etc. one could glimpse the mystery of creation. This act of seeing is a form of contemplation done with others, done within a community. This classical view of education is losing ground as education becomes more technologically driven, geared toward successful test scores, and ultimately toward careerist aspirations.

This conflict between an instrumental and useful view of education and the more humanistic and classical view is nothing new. In *The Idea of the University*, John Henry Newman recounts the conflict between these two notions of education during the 18th and 19th centuries. For Newman, an education that only focuses on the useful runs into a significant question: *useful for what?* It is precisely the “what” that raises the question of the “good.” Can usefulness and utility provide their own criteria? If education is seen as the means to increase economic goods of profits, efficiency, productivity, the nagging question is profits for what, efficiency for what. Here the assumption is that more profits and efficiency is “good” simply because it provides more of them.

For Newman, education has to engage the good on its own terms. This is why one should first see education as an encounter with the good (and the true and the beautiful), which makes it an authentic act of leisure. Yet, Newman explains that there is an abundant quality to the good, which is always overflowing and impacting what is around it.

Good is not only good, but reproductive of good; this is one of its attributes; nothing is excellent, beautiful, perfect, desirable for its own sake, but it overflows, and spreads the likeness of itself all around it. Good is prolific; it is not only good to the eye, but to the taste; it not only attracts us, but it communicates itself; it excites first our admiration and love, then our desire and our gratitude, and that, in proportion to its intenseness and fulness in particular instances. A great good will impart great good. If then the intellect is so excellent a portion of us, and its cultivation so excellent, it is not only beautiful, perfect, admirable, and noble in itself, but in a true and high sense it must be useful to the possessor and to all around him; not useful in any low, mechanical, mercantile sense, but as diffusing good, or as a blessing, or a gift, or power, or a treasure, first to the owner, then through him to the world.¹⁴

For Newman, then, the good is never contained, which is why he argued for a liberal education, but not to the exclusion of professional education. Since the good is always overflowing, liberal education can inform and influence professional education. This is why for Newman “*though the useful is not always good, the good is always useful.*”¹⁵ Liberal education for Newman is act of leisure, which has the capacity to inform professional education in a way that its usefulness can be directed to the good. Liberal education, as leisure, has the resources to help the professional integrate her work and the deepest truths of her humanity. It is a liberal education that gives the professional time to develop “the faculty of grasping the world as a whole and realizing his full potentialities as an entity meant to reach Wholeness.”¹⁶

What Newman helps us to see is that once a theological vision or formation within an education is removed, the professions increasingly become secularized and “careerized,” and lose the capacity to not only examine, but even to ask, what makes the useful good. In many respects, the increasing instrumental rationality in the professions has its root in the increasing instrumentality of education or leisure.

Integration and Achievement (the subjective dimension of work): What is most tragic about this loss of leisure in education is that there is little left in the human subject to see far beyond the instrumental achievements or personal fame. What we are left with is a self defined only by their achievements, or lack thereof. An example will illustrate the problem.

When Doris Kearns Goodwin was asked to write Lyndon Baines Johnson’s biography, she thought that she would portray a man who had lived his last years with great satisfaction of power, fame, monetary wealth, status, etc.; and yet, Goodwin writes,

the man I saw in his retirement had spent so many years in pursuit of work, power and individual success that he had absolutely no psychic or emotional resources left to commit himself to anything once the presidency was taken from him. Years of concentration solely on work meant that in his retirement he could find no solace in recreation, sports, or hobbies.

The tragedy of the careerist is this: what happens when there is no source of formation, no sphere not instrumentalized to the achievement of the career, no place and time of rest? If LBJ is any indication, the subject loses touch with the resources that give him the capacity to develop more wholly. This is why one of the most important insights in the Catholic social tradition as it relates to the professional is what John Paul II calls the subjective dimension of work.

The subjective dimension of work helps us to see that when we act, we affect and change *objects* outside or beyond ourselves (“transitive”). This is most evident in our work. Most professional education and literature, for example, is all about how to change things: build a team of employees with complementary skills and talents, use various technologies, attract a consistent flow of capital to fuel growth, discern opportunities in markets, argue and win cases, etc. It is in the objective changes that one begins to see the significance of humanity’s dominion over creation. People have the rational capacity to see and anticipate opportunities and to change the world. John Paul II calls this the objective dimension of work.¹⁷

However impressive these objective changes are in communications, computerization, construction, travel, etc., and however impressive one’s title may be, work is not simply an activity that terminates in an object or in status. The worker changes not only the world, but she also changes herself (“immanent”). As a self-reflexive activity, work reflects right back into the person—it changes *me*, the employee, lawyer, teacher, carpenter, entrepreneur, the president. We see this quite clearly in the physical changes of the blacksmith. As he forms the metal with his hammer, the very activity is forming his physical body in the development of his muscles. This dynamic, while obvious on one level, is quite striking on another, especially when we take into consideration not only the physical aspects of work, but also the intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual. When people work, they not only make a choice about what they work on, that is, the objective dimension of work, but they also simultaneously make a choice about themselves,

that is, the subjective dimension of work. Human work remains in the human worker and “determines the subject’s immanent quality or value.” In many respects, the subjective change may last longer than some of the objective changes he or she has initiated.

This subjective dimension of work is on one hand a descriptive concept, which tells us that to understand the phenomenon of work we not only have to understand the objective dynamics of work, but also the subjective. But the subjective dimension of work should lead us to moral claims as well. It should persuade us that human work should not be reduced to simply financial or productive goals—however important those goals are—precisely because the subjective changes are changes that affect human character.

John Paul explains that “the (primary) purpose of any kind of work that man does is always man himself,” so that “man does not serve work, but work serves man.” The reversal of this point is profoundly brought out by the Jewish theologian Abraham Heschel who wrote:

How proud we often are of our victories in the war with nature, proud of the multitude of instruments we have succeeded in inventing, of the abundance of commodities we have been able to produce. Yet our victories have come to resemble defeats. In spite of our objective triumphs and achievements, we have fallen victims to the work of our hands; it is as if the forces we had conquered have conquered us.¹⁸

Our objective “triumphs and achievements” can too easily become forces that corrupt the subjective soul. Rather than being conquerors we have become conquered by our own objective achievements. This is why Heschel, writing out of his Jewish roots, argued for the importance of the Sabbath, of leisure, of rest. He argued that “The solution of mankind’s most vexing problem will not be renouncing technical civilization, but in attaining some degree of independence of it.”¹⁹ We are commanded to rest by the third commandment because our capacity to develop as subjects cannot be found only in work. Ultimately, this is why careerism fails, because it marginalizes and instrumentalizes all forms of leisure it comes in contact with: education becomes training, holy days become vacation days,²⁰ Sabbath becomes a catch up day, etc. What is desperately needed is an understanding of work not as career but as vocation or calling and a notion of leisure which can inform one’s calling without being instrumentalized to it. This is what the next section is about.

Work	Leisure	Integration
CAREER	UTILITY	ACHIEVEMENTS

2. Vocation and Contemplation: The Integration of Giving and Receiving

Work as Vocation: In the Catholic tradition, our first call is to be fully human, to be who we were created to be. While our work belongs to our vocation, work does not exhaust this vocation. Thus, when we speak of vocation, unlike career, our first thought is to the whole of our humanity, not just our work. This vocation to be human, what *Lumen gentium* calls “the universal call to holiness,” is fundamentally expressed in how we give of ourselves. Quoting *Gaudium et spes*, John Paul writes in *Centesimus annus* that “it is through the free gift of self that man truly finds himself. This gift is made possible by the human person’s essential ‘capacity for transcendence’”²¹.

Even though work does not exhaust this vocation, it does constitute one of its fundamental dimensions,²² precisely because our work allows us to exercise our gifts in serving others. This is why the term “gift” is a key to understanding what our vocation of work should be. We often hear in the common parlance of the culture that “We can be whoever we want.” While on one hand such a statement is an attempt to move a young person to see potentialities that he has not yet seen in himself; on the other hand, it deludes a person into thinking that he is the source of his own gifts and talents. This statement can be not only bad theology, but tends to contradict experience. We each have been given certain talents and natural endowments that come to us through our genes, family, society and our individual history. We each have a particular “take” on life that informs who we are.

In a deeper way, the notion of gift reveals to us that a core dimension of our identity as individuals is found in our relationships and in our gift of ourselves to others in the work we do. This is not a reality we can deny, unless we want to deny ourselves. One of the more powerful stories that reveal this fact of nature is found in the story Lewis Hyde tells in his book *The Gift* where he speaks of the “gift economy.” Hyde explains that when Native Americans encountered Puritans in their first set of gift encounters, they were baffled by their possessiveness over gifts given them. Native Americans expected their English visitors to give back their gifts in order to keep them moving. This idea of setting gifts in motion equally baffled the Europeans, who negatively characterized Native Americans as “Indian givers.”²³ Yet, what Native Americans understood, and what we should take heed of, is that when a gift is not shared, it corrupts the holder. The one who makes the gift an occasion for selfish hoarding, who fails to put the gift in motion, becomes corrupted by the gift itself. Or in more Christian eschatological terms “We actually become, eternally, what we have given ourselves to.”²⁴

Leisure as Contemplation: But here we run into a significant problem with the notion of gift found within our experience of giving: What enables us to give authentically, in a way in which we do not exhaust ourselves, in ways that we don’t give away ourselves too cheaply, in a way that we “find ourselves”? Here we see why the thesis I articulated at the beginning of this essay is so important. There is a certain “primacy of leisure,” a primacy of the receptive that we have to embrace if we are to work with any degree of authenticity and integration.

David Schindler helps us to see why this primacy of the receptive is at the core of the Christian revelation. He makes an interesting point between a “theistically-colored context” of the person which views the person’s image of God primarily in terms of being first creative and constructive. Whereas in a “Trinitarian-Christological context man images the Creator-Father only in and through

the receptive obedience of the Son . . . Receptivity thus seems to be the primary and indeed constitutive act of the creature's creatureliness. In a word, we have the primacy of the contemplative dimension; receiving (from the Father, in Jesus Christ) is the anterior condition for the creature's being (authentically) creative."²⁵ Thus, rather than having the primacy of the vocation understood in terms of "achievement" it is rather found in the primacy of receptivity or what John Haughey S.J. coins "receivment" or what John Paul calls a "contemplative outlook." This outlook does "not presume to take possession of reality but instead accepts it as a gift, discovering in all things the reflection of the Creator and seeing in every person his living image".²⁶ It is what Josef Pieper defines as leisure "an attitude of mind and a condition of the soul that fosters a capacity to perceive the reality of the world."²⁷

Three important habits of this receptivity/leisure/resting are:

- *Habit of solitude* and daily silence where our emotional tapes that have been playing for years can cease and where we can hear again the wisdom that "deafens every fool."
- *Habit of celebration* and weekly Sabbath where as Abraham Heschel has put it, "the goal is not to have but to be, not to own but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue but to be in accord."
- *Habit of service* and going to the margins to be with those who are unproductive, who lack power, but who like a baby, have another sort of power over us, a power, like little else, that confronts who we really are.

These habits of receivment are difficult for those of us brought up on a heavy dose of consumerism, careerism, athleticism, etc. Yet, these habits in a very concrete way enable us to hear God's call not usually in a manner of having a new kind of experience, but rather of having a new kind of insight into the experiences we have been having all along (Stebbins).

Integrity: When we begin to see our work as a vocation and our leisure as contemplation, we begin to have the resources not simply for balance, but for real integration, of becoming contemplative practitioners. What provides for this integration is the proper ordering between our being, doing and having. When we first experience our being as receivers of creation, redemption, grace, then our "doing and having and producing can all become ways of the giving which they are meant to be."²⁸

Work	Leisure	Integration
VOCATION	CONTEMPLATION	INTEGRITY

Conclusion: A Call for Authentic Professional Education in Catholic Universities.

The problem of the divided life does not belong exclusively to disparities between our “private” and “working” selves. In moments of clarity, most of us can recall from many areas of our lives reasons to regret the gap between who we ought to be and who we actually are. We struggle in seeing whether our political, social, family and sexual lives are “bathed in the gospel” or whether the gospel just stands on the side.

Nevertheless, our working life is a powerful source of fragmentation, of the estrangement of self from self or as Augustine puts it will from will, and not merely because work occupies so many of our hours. Work is central to the practical life of goal-setting and decision-making, of personal and interpersonal achievement, from which springs our well-being as creatures who are, above all, doers. We rightly fear, therefore, that if our working lives spawn inner division and conflict, our search for a happiness beyond the transitory satisfactions of “success” must fail. The measure of our need for personal integrity or wholeness is, then, our overriding desire for personal happiness. But unless we confront this serious error of the divided life in our culture, especially in our professional education and formation, we will have little chance to resist the instrumental and economic forces in the various professions.

This is why it seems to me that those of us within Catholic universities who are responsible for educating the professionals of tomorrow play a unique role overcoming this most serious error. Our vocation as educators is to begin to form students into the professions in a way that not only resists the divided life, but that seeks to promote what John Paul II calls a “spirituality of communion” which can offer a vision for a life of unity and integrity.²⁹ He explains that this spirituality of communion is about “how to ‘make room’ for our brothers and sisters, bearing ‘each other’s burdens’ (Gal 6:2) and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust and jealousy.”³⁰ This spirituality of communion along with a unity of knowledge and virtue calls upon the development of curriculum that can engage the student in an honest appraisal of his own fragmentation and division and an engagement of life that can reflect a unity of vocation and contemplation. This type of education, if it is to have the capacity to achieve such a noble and lofty goal, will need to draw upon a tradition of education that is a form of leisure and not mere utility. The following recommendations for a curriculum that can begin to instantiate this vision are particularly geared toward an American Catholic educational context.

1. *Bookend Signature Courses of a Catholic University:* While every course at a Catholic university is an opportunity for insight, grace, and conversion, the first and last courses play a particularly important role in setting the tone for both the student’s vocation as she enters the university and the student’s vocation in the world as she leaves the university. These courses can play a signatory role in making the student’s education distinctively Catholic by helping the student to seek a deeper unity of knowledge and virtue.

First Course: Freshman Seminar on the Vocation of the Student In one advertising campaign from my university, the caption was “Come prepared to learn, leave prepared to succeed.” This caused great consternation among several of the faculty, since it was playing into the careerist aspirations of incoming students. Advertising slogans aside, students entering the university need to be not only

dissuaded of their own perceptions of the instrumental character of university education, but they need to be introduced to a vision of education and their own vocation within the institution they plan to spend the next four years of their lives.

Too often students resent their liberal arts courses, since they have not been introduced into a vision about why such courses contribute to a liberally educated person. What is needed in such a course would be readings such as: Newman's *The Idea of the University*, Maritain's, *Education at the Crossroads*, Pieper's, *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, John Paul II's, *Ex corde ecclesiae* and *Fides et ratio*, etc. Such readings, difficult as they are for Freshman, have the capacity to shake up students expectations of what it means to be a university student. They also have the ability to stir up the soil of their own intellectual ground for a unity of thought in the various disciplines they are about to study.³¹

Last Course: Capstone Course of University Experience: Often a particular major offers students a capstone course which attempts to integrate the variety of knowledge they have learned throughout their major degree. Yet most colleges and universities do not offer a capstone or integrative experience of the student's whole education. The question for a Catholic university is what kind of course offers the capacity to integrate their whole university experience and engage the student in her vocation in the world. While ethics and service learning are critically necessary to help students experience integration, they cannot, by themselves, carry the weight of a full-body integrating experience. For example, courses in professional ethics, whether business, legal or medical, tend to relegate religious and spiritual traditions to the periphery in human decisions, which is precisely the material needed to evoke in students the vocational dimension of their lives. Yet, for many practitioners it is often from a faith perspective that human action makes sense, since what we think is ultimately good derives from what we think is ultimately true. If an applied ethics course fails to connect the human activity under examination to larger belief systems, and in particular what desires underlie these belief systems, it runs the danger of becoming either overly legalistic or highly utilitarian. It also loses the capacity to provide a full experience of integration, since it decapitates the deepest longing of human desire, namely, the spiritual. This is precisely why Catholic social thought is critical to the integration of ethics in courses on the professions.³²

Such a course in many respects gets at the specifically religious character of Catholic education. Too often Catholic universities, in their desire for inclusion, stay at a humanistic ethic that tends to risk little in the world. Newman, in a profoundly insightful passage, challenges this impulse for inclusion since it fails to get to the heart of the gospel.

I really fear that most men called Christians, whatever they may profess, whatever they may think they feel, whatever warmth and illumination and love they may claim as their own, yet would go on almost as they do, neither much better nor much worse, if they believed Christianity to be a fable. When young, they indulge their lusts, or at least pursue the world's vanities; as time goes on, they get into a fair way of business, or other mode of making money; then they marry and settle; and their interests coinciding with their duty, they seem to be, and think themselves, respectable and religious men; they grow attached to things as they are; they begin to have a zeal against vice and error; and they follow after peace with all men. Such conduct indeed, as far as it goes, is right and

praiseworthy. Only I say, it has not necessarily any thing to do with religion at all; there is nothing in it which is any proof of the presence of religious principle in those who adopt it; there is nothing to gain from it, except what they gain from it now: they do gain something now. They do gratify their present wishes, they are quiet and orderly, because it is their interest and taste to be so; but they *venture* nothing, they risk, they sacrifice, they abandon nothing on the faith of Christ's word.³³

2. *Solid Liberal Education*: Liberal education as leisure explores the fundamental meaning of the person through a wondrous encounter with creation. This encounter cultivates the capacity (both natural and grace-given) of the student to understand herself as a person, that is, as a free and intelligent subject with the capacity to know God, the true, the good and the beautiful.

A liberal arts curriculum should be ordered to giving students opportunities to experience their own subjectivity - to discover themselves as knowing the truth and contemplating what that means in terms of their relationship with creation, other human beings, and God. These are the moments of leisure and formation, which will open the student both to the truth expressed in the principles of Catholic social thought and to the possibility - the desirability - of a loving response to that truth. If our students do not experience wonder and genuine astonishment at the creation, it will be very difficult for them to conceive of the possibility of giving their lives to build up an earthly common good worthy of persons created for eternal participation in that very relationship. Or as Václav Havel explained when he received the Philadelphia Liberty Medal,

Politicians at international forums may reiterate a thousand times that the basis of the new world order must be universal respect for human rights, but it will mean nothing as long as this imperative does not derive from respect for the miracle of Being, the miracle of the universe, the miracle of nature, the miracle of our own existence.³⁴

Indeed, it is these moments of wondrous discovery that enable students to transcend the siren calls of a materialist culture by making real to them how it might be that all persons share a common destiny and, why, no matter their culture, wealth, poverty or social status, persons must never be considered mere instruments in any system aimed at earthly ends.

3. *Bridge Course from Liberal to Professional Education*: Professional education should not only be based on liberal education, but should be seen as an extension of liberal learning. Since the profession's self-understanding depends on metaphysical notions of the human person, philosophical notions of justice, historical analysis of property, and so forth, the professions as a discipline cannot be reduced to techniques. To have a liberal understanding of the professions, these ideas must be integrated into the curriculum. This makes the first course in the professions critically important, since it can serve as a hinge (cardinal) course, beginning to help students to see the professions as a form of liberal inquiry by applying the historical and philosophical insights of liberal arts to the professions. This course should begin to develop within students the *historical habit* of recovering the tradition of their professional practice, and, in Newman's words, the *philosophical habit* "of pushing things up to their first principles."

4. *Solid Professional Education*: In the professional degree programs such as education, business, nursing, engineering and journalism, many of the courses take on a more practical and applied

characteristic as the course relates to what students need to know to perform in their particular field. These programs focus on providing the knowledge and skills necessary for students to function in the field of work. A business student, for example, must learn the skills of reading a balance sheet, calculating cost of capital, providing statistical analysis, targeting and segmenting markets, managing group dynamics, generating creative thinking, initiating problem solving techniques and mediating conflicts. Without such knowledge and skills that match the necessities of their professional worlds, students would not only be unprepared for their respective job markets, but they would be unprepared as moral agents to, as Charles Handy put it, “live so that others can live better after I have gone.”³⁵ A curriculum cannot promote a more just world without introducing students to the actual skills and knowledge necessary to function in their respective disciplines.

While the primary focus of the applied courses will be on the practical and technical matters of a particular field of study, it is precisely in the study of the practice that opportunities will open to the faculty and students to explore the ethical, spiritual and philosophical implications of practical aspects of the profession. Faculty within the professional schools cannot see themselves in a university context as mere technicians free from introducing into their courses ethical and spiritual aspects of their field. I realize that integration of social and spiritual realities are more subtle as well as inductive and experiential in applied courses. The idea of a full-blown theoretical discussion on the Thomistic understanding of the common good will most likely not take place in a marketing or economics course. Yet, failing to bring up the common good at that point in the class when, for example, the theory of the firm is discussed in finance, strategy or law not only misses an opportunity for curricular integration, but also avoids the practical questions business people ask themselves: “What is the social meaning of the firm?” What should a student think of a college’s commitment to Catholic social thought when in a theology or philosophy course she is taught the principle of the universal destination of all property and then the finance course in her business administration major is based on the principle of the maximization of shareholder wealth with no discussion over tensions between the two? A curriculum based within a departmental structure will always have certain tensions, but the failure to recognize those tensions and bring them into fuller conversation threatens not only a coherent curriculum but any attempt to educate the whole person, which fragments rather than develops the student.

There are of course other non-curricular activities a university should foster in order to develop greater moral and spiritual integration: spring break experiences to encounter the marginalized of the world, bringing witnesses on campus in a student’s field of study, spiritual opportunities for retreats, daily mass, prayer services, scripture studies, etc. These experiences will serve to enhance the curriculum described above. But if the curriculum is not designed in such a way that resists the divided life and fosters a unity of knowledge and virtue, there is little hope that the Catholic university will hold true to its own vocation of leisure.

Wendell Berry wrote that “the modern university has grown, not according to any unifying principle, like an expanding universe, but according to the principle of miscellaneous accretion, like a furniture storage business.”³⁶ We are in danger of having a curriculum that looks like a storehouse of pieces of furniture with little coherence to their presence and relation. Such a university curriculum does not have the capacity to address the serious error of the divided life that *Gaudium et spes* has noted. Yet, a Catholic university has a tradition that both values education as an act of leisure as contemplation, and it has a tradition that values the importance

of work as a vocation. This integration of contemplation and vocation has the capacity to place students on a road of real integrity where they can become whole human beings; anything less will leave them and us divided persons with compartmentalized lives.

Endnotes

¹ *Gaudium et spes*, 43. In *Catholic Social Thought: the documentary heritage*, edited by David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992). Later references to social encyclicals will be from this source.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Gaudium et spes*, 13.

⁴ Augustine, *Confessions*, translated by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 148 (VIII, x, 22). He goes on to write that “The mind commands the body and is instantly obeyed. The mind commands itself and meets resistance. The mind commands the hand to move, and it is so easy that one hardly distinguishes the order from its execution. Yet mind is mind, and hand is body. The mind orders the mind to will. The recipient of the order is itself, yet it does not perform it. What causes this monstrosity and why does this happen? Mind commands, I say, that it should will, and would not give the command if it did not will, yet does not perform what it commands. The willing is not wholehearted, so the command is not wholehearted. The strength of the command lies in the strength of will, and the degree to which the command is not performed lies in the degree to which the will is not engaged. For it is the will that commands the will to exist, and it commands not another will but itself. So the will that commands is incomplete, and therefore what it commands does not happen. If it were complete, it would not need to command the will to exist, since it would exist already. Therefore, there is no monstrous split between willing and not willing. We are dealing with a morbid condition of the mind which, when it is lifted up by the truth, does not unreservedly rise to it but is weighed down by habit. So there are two wills.”

⁵ Christopher West, *The Theology of the Body Explained* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2003), 21.

⁶ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince and the Discourses* (New York: Modern Library, 1940), 56.

⁷ MacIntyre explains that people in the modern West, “tend to live betwixt and between, accepting usually unquestioningly the assumptions of the dominant liberal individualist forms of public life, but drawing in different areas of their lives upon a variety of tradition-generated resources of thought and action, transmitted from a variety of familial, religious, educational, and other social and cultural sources. This type of self which has too many half-convictions and too few settled coherent convictions, too many partly formulated alternatives and too few opportunities to evaluate them systematically, brings to its encounters with the claims of rival traditions a fundamental incoherence which is too disturbing to be admitted to self-conscious awareness except on the rarest of occasions (Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice Which Rationality* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998], 397-8).

⁸ Josef Pieper, *Leisure The Basis of Culture* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 1998), Chapter

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⁹ Karl Rahner, "Theological Remarks on the Problem of Leisure," in *Theological Investigations* vol. VI, (Baltimore: Helicon, 1969), 379.

¹⁰ Robert Bellah, et al. *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 66.

¹¹ David Brooks, "The Organization Kid" *The Atlantic Monthly* (April 2001), 40-54.

¹² William May, "The Beleaguered Rulers: The Public Obligation of the Professional." *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 2 (1992): 31.

¹³ Pieper, *Leisure The Basis of Culture*, 3-4.

¹⁴ John Henry Newman, *The Ideal of a University* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 124.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Pieper, *Leisure The Basis of Culture*, 44.

¹⁷ *Laborem exercens*, 4-5.

¹⁸ Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath* in G.C. Meilaender, ed., *Working: Its Meaning and Its Limits* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 261-267.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1983), 194-195.

²¹ *Centessimus annus*, 41; *Gaudium et spes*, 24

²² *Laborem exercens*, 11

²³ See Lewis Hyde, *The Gift* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 3-4.

²⁴ John Kavanaugh, S.J., "Last Words" *America* (January 21-28, 2002), 23.

²⁵ David Schindler, "Christology and the *Imago dei*: Interpreting *Gaudium et spes*" *Communio* 23 (Spring 1996): 159.

²⁶ John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 83

²⁷ Pieper, *Leisure The Basis of Culture*, back cover.

²⁸ Schindler, “Christology and the *Imago dei*,” 179. In a similar vein, Herbert Alphonso S.J. wrote, “Again, it should be abundantly clear that the personal vocation in *not* on the level of doing or of function, but on the level of *being*. It is tragic—even literally so—that so many people interpret ‘vocation’ in terms of mere function or mere doing. Now, the level of function or of doing is bound to enter into crisis some day—that is of the very nature of function or of doing. If then, while in crisis, I have no resources of ‘being’ [leisure] to fall back upon because my entire understanding of ‘vocation’ is resolved in terms of sheer function and mere doing, I shall be in total *crisis*. This is unfortunately the not infrequent, tragic story of quite a few lives. But if in such a crisis I can fall back on my resources of ‘being’—so uniquely gifted to me in my personal vocation—I need have not fear; I can tide over that crisis, indeed integrate it, thanks to the very personal meaning on the level of being I can find in that very crisis. For all doing flows from being.” (Herbert Alphonso S.J., *The Personal Vocation* [Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1990], 37).

²⁹ John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte*, 43.

³⁰ *Ibid.* He goes on to say in the same paragraph: “Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, ‘masks’ of communion rather than its means of expression and growth.”

³¹ In *Ex corde ecclesiae*, John Paul II writes “Students are challenged to pursue an education that combines excellence in humanistic and cultural development with specialized professional training. Most especially, they are challenged to continue the search for truth and for meaning throughout their lives, since ‘the human spirit must be cultivated in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate, to make personal judgments, and to develop a religious, moral and social sense.’ This enables them to acquire or, if they have already done so, to deepen a Christian way of life that is authentic. They should realize the responsibility of their professional life, the enthusiasm of being the trained ‘leaders’ of tomorrow, of being witnesses to Christ in whatever place they may exercise their profession” (23).

³² Another reason why applied ethics courses tend to fall short of dealing with the divided life is that they usually do not have the resources to examine the two fundamental dimensions necessary for a unity or integrity of life, which Alasdair MacIntyre describes as the following: “It is a unity through time so that the performance of the specific duties of each of life’s stages contributes to the movement through one’s life towards a perfected will and understanding. And it is a unity through the different spheres of social activity, so that conformity to one and the same set of rules and the exercise of one and the same set of virtues are required of agents in every situation, whatever role they may occupy. The name often given to what is thus required of us is ‘integrity.’ The question that this therefore raised is that of the relationship between this moral requirement of integrity and the facts concerning the compartmentalization of contemporary social life and the consequent fragmentation of the moral life” (Compartmentalization, fragmentation and the unity of the moral life,” [unpublished, February 1996], 24-25).

³³ Newman, John Henry, “The Ventures of Faith” from *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 917-918.

³⁴ Václav Havel, *The Art of the Impossible: Politics as Morality in Practice* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1997): 171-172.

³⁵ Quoted from Verstraeten, “Beyond Business Ethics.” Given at the Third International Symposium on Catholic Social Thought and Management Education” Goa, India, January 10-12 (<http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/mgmt/goa/johan.html>).

³⁶ Wendell Berry, “The Loss of the University,” in *Home Economics* (New York: North Point Press, 1987), 76.