

Seeing Things Whole

The Theological Importance to Business Education: University Capstone Signature Course for Business Students

Michael Naughton
University of St. Thomas
Email: mjnaughton@stthomas.edu

With a response by
Msgr. Richard M. Liddy
Seton Hall University
Email: liddyric@shu.edu

[S]cholars and practitioners must rebuild management's underpinnings. . . [this] will require hunting for new principles in fields as diverse as anthropology, biology, design, political science, urban planning, and theology.

Gary Hamel, *Harvard Business Review*

The reformation of the business community in light of the recent scandals “begins where we all were formed, namely, in our homes, our schools and the cultural organizations that touch our youth. This is an issue of the embedded values that shape and govern our lives and that steer us through uncharted and dangerous waters.

Chuck Denny, former CEO of ADC Communications

Training is distinguished by its orientation toward something partial, and specialized, in the human being, and toward some one section of the world. Education is concerned with the whole: whoever is educated knows how the world as a whole behaves. Education concerns the whole human being, insofar as he is *capax universi*, “capable of the whole,” able to comprehend the sum total of existing things.

Josef Pieper, *Leisure the Basis of Culture*

Too many institutions have simply added more liberal arts courses to already burdensome programs of professional education. Rarely have they attempted to integrate liberal and professional education in ways that have meaning for all students.

Frank Rhodes, Cornell University President

The Church's social doctrine, which has “*an important interdisciplinary dimension*”, can exercise, in this perspective, a function of extraordinary effectiveness. It allows faith, theology, metaphysics and science to come together in a collaborative effort in the service of humanity. It is here above all that the Church's social doctrine displays its dimension of wisdom. Paul VI had seen clearly that among the causes of underdevelopment there is a lack of wisdom and reflection, a lack of thinking capable of formulating a guiding synthesis, for which “a clear vision of all economic, social, cultural and spiritual aspects” is required. The excessive segmentation of knowledge, the rejection

of metaphysics by the human sciences , the difficulties encountered by dialogue between science and theology are damaging not only to the development of knowledge, but also to the development of peoples, because these things make it harder to see the integral good of man in its various dimensions. The “broadening of our concept of reason and its application” is indispensable if we are to succeed in adequately weighing all the elements involved in the question of development and in the solution of socio-economic problems.

Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*

Certainly since *Ex corde ecclesiae*, there has been a serious and robust conversation and debate over the identity and mission of the Catholic university. With over 200 institutions of Catholic higher education in the US, our discussions should be serious and robust, since there is a lot at stake.

An important characteristic of this discussion centers upon whether one sees a problem in Catholic higher education and if so how do they describe it. For some, Catholic universities are doing quite well. Their climb up the ranks of *US News & World Report* manifest their emergence out of mediocrity and into respectability. For others, there is a serious concern of assimilation, where Catholic universities have severed themselves from their own tradition and have simply adapted the norms and principles of the larger secular academy. Still others see an ecclesial conservatism seeping into academic life which threatens the independence and autonomy of the Catholic university. How we see the problem will determine how we see the solution.

My focus of this background note will be on the theological problem in the integration of liberal and business education. I will address this problem both in terms of business schools and theology departments, since they both contribute to the failure of this integration in their own particular way. I will then lay out one attempt to begin to overcome this fragmentation through a university capstone course that fosters an integrative relationship between liberal and business learning, faith and reason, spirituality and work, principle and policy, virtue and technique, etc. I will also discuss the unique characteristics of such a course and its particular challenges.

It is important to be clear that no one course can deliver the necessary integration within a university. If this is the only place where integration occurs, it will be received as an anomaly rather than as a synthesis. In the appendix of this paper, I describe where integration should be occurring throughout the curriculum which will make this course consistent with the curriculum.

1. The Problem: I see theology, defined as faith seeking understanding, as essential to this project on the curriculum and its relationship to business education. The way I see the problem is that theology is increasingly marginalized within the curriculum and that it is increasingly being replaced by substitutes, which have a role in Catholic business education, but are nonetheless poor replacements to a theological vision. Newman explained, “The human mind cannot keep from speculating and systematizing; and if Theology is not allowed to occupy its own territory, adjacent sciences, nay, sciences which are quite foreign to Theology, will take possession of it.”¹ Service learning, a secular approach to business ethics, a generic spirituality of

¹ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* Part 1, Section 4, ‘Bearing of other Knowledge on Theology’, p. 96

work or a public policy agenda for corporate social responsibility can be strategies of mission and identity in an increasingly pluralistic context, but if they are used as replacements to a Catholic theological vision of work, leisure, property, capital, etc., they will not be robust enough to sustain on an institutional level the Catholic character of the university. Without a theological vision, without faith deeply connected to an ecclesial commitment, without a deep sense of the primacy of the receptive, of leisure, of culture, of liberal education, business education will find itself unanchored from and subject to the academic forces of specialization as well as the economic instrumentalization of business.

To make this rather abstract claim a bit more concrete, let me illustrate its importance with one story. For the past couple of years, my department in the college of business has hired several business ethicists. I have been struck by the number of candidates, many of whom come from a diverse set of faith and philosophical backgrounds, who express a genuine desire to come to a Catholic university. They explain that it is a place where they will not have to struggle to justify their discipline of business ethics. And for the most part they are correct, but what they don't often seem to appreciate, is that it is the presence of a theological vision, namely the Catholic intellectual and social tradition, and the presence of an ecclesial reality, the church, that allows them to take this commitment to the importance of ethics within business for granted. This tradition and church, which many of them do not have any particular commitment to, is the reality that often allows them to practice their trade. This so-called spiritual capital, however, is not contributed to, and for the most part tends to be ignored. Many of these business ethicists teach as if God does not exist through a plethora of ethical systems of deontology, utilitarianism, rule based, etc., which as a collective marginalizes the social role of faith.

A non-theological, non-faith, non-cultural understanding of business ethics will fail to sustain and renew the Catholic university. It is precisely this exclusive secular approach to business ethics which is contributing to the eroding of the theological and ecclesial foundations on which business ethicists stand.²

Catholic business education is both a moral project and an important theological and ecclesial one as well. Once its moral orientation is severed from its theological and ecclesial commitments, business education at a Catholic university will eventually be either unhinged from its very commitment to moral leadership or it will drift into an understanding of the moral that is at odds with its fundamental commitments as a Catholic university.³ A business education embedded within a Catholic university is a way to help students to live out their vocation, and to draw upon the moral, spiritual, and theological resources that dispose them to become saints—men and women who humanize the world for God's greater glory. While such theological and spiritual ends may not resonate within a secular academic environment, it is precisely such ends that have the best probability for the university to resist the forces of secularization, materialism,

² See Dennis McCann critique of business ethicists and their general lack of knowledge on the Catholic social tradition in "Business Corporations and the Principle of Subsidiarity " *Rethinking the Purpose of Business: Interdisciplinary Essays from the Catholic Social Tradition*. Ed. S. A. Cortright and Michael Naughton. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002).

³ For a convincing argument and series of case studies on this point see James T. Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1998), see especially pp 819-851.

hyper- specialization, individualism, instrumentalism, legalism, and other corrupting influences that burden the modern business school.⁴

Many Catholic business schools get nervous with theological and in particular ecclesial language and for the most part they tend to ignore or suppress it. Porth, McCall and DiAngelo surveyed Catholic business schools and found that most had mission statements, many had references to ethics, but very few connected such missions and their understanding of ethics to the Catholic character of the university. Of those schools with undergraduate learning goals, over 80% of the respondents “measured student outcomes with respect to ethics education but only 6% assessed learning with respect to religious identity.” When ethics was mentioned, it was an understanding of ethics that was secular in nature and for the most part tended to be utilitarian. The authors explained that “when we asked which specific ethical theories and outcomes students were expected to learn, responses were, with a few exceptions, indistinguishable from that which one would expect from an ethics assessment at a secular or state university. Answers ranged from a simple stakeholder analysis to a more substantive reference to utilitarian theory, deontology, virtue theory, and rights. Only a small minority referred to concepts or theories that had a distinctly Catholic content.”⁵

The premise within business ethics, as well as within business education, is that ethical behavior can be managed without connection, integration or even reference to religion, faith, and culture. This represents an increasing problem in our career oriented world where business people and professionals invest such an extensive amount of time and energy in their workplaces that not only are their other communities such as family, church, civic, suffering from neglect, but they increasingly view themselves more as a manager, entrepreneur, vice president, engineer, etc. than as a Christian, father, wife, parishioner, etc. In an article in the *Harvard Business Review*, Christopher Bartlett and Sumantra Ghoshal seemingly acquiesce to this trend and propose that business is *the* place of meaning for people:

Institutions like churches, communities, even families, which once provided individuals with identity, affiliation meaning and support, are eroding. The workplace is becoming a primary means for personal fulfillment. Managers need to recognize and respond to the reality that their employees don't just want to work for a company; they want to belong to an organization. More than providing work, companies can help give meaning to people's lives.

As important as it is to have meaningful work, once it is severed from the cultural reality of family, church, and the larger community, its autonomous character will eventually disorder the self-understanding of the person as well as their relationship to their work. Business cannot

⁴ For a description of some of these problems see Warren Bennis and James O'Toole, “How Business Schools Lost Their Way,” *Harvard Business Review* 83 (May 2005): 96-104; Jeffrey Pfeffer and Christina T. Fong, “The End of Business Schools? Less Success than Meets the Eye,” *Academy of Management Learning and Education* (2002), <http://www.aomonline.org/Publications/Articles/BSchools.asp>; Sumantra Ghoshal, “Bad Management Theories are Destroying Good Management Practices.” *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 4(1) (2005): 75-91; “MBAs and Ethics,” <http://www.capital-flow-analysis.com/investment-essays/mba.html>.

⁵ Porth, McCall, and DiAngelo Stephen Porth et al, “Business Education at Catholic Universities: Current Status and Future Directions,” <http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/conferences/becu/Finalpapers/PorthMcCallDiangeloF.pdf>. Also published in *Journal of Catholic Higher Education*.

replace other communities, especially a religious community and the family community, without doing serious damage to the culture and to the person. The family and religion are primary institutions that give meaning in terms of our origin, destiny, and identity. A corporation and the work it gives does not have resources to “give meaning to people’s lives” let alone make itself an authentic community. This will come from the culture (leisure is the basis of culture), and especially the community in the culture that is bounded by a love that helps people to love their neighbor as themselves, not simply on an occasional or instrumental basis, but as a life-long project. Yet, this ability to love, which is the basis of all authentic communities, will not occur without a restoration of transcendence, of a “receptivity,” a grace that moves us out of our own particular self-interest and narrow notions of the good.

Finally, an exclusive secular view of business and business ethics fails to tell an important story in business of those leaders who take religious faith seriously. What is ignored in the history of business, as well as its many cases, is how many companies started with a vision that was informed by the religious faith of their founders, companies like Cadbury (Quaker), Herman Miller (Calvinist), Service Master (Evangelical), Malden Mills (Jewish), Dayton Hudson, now Target (Presbyterian), Cummings Engine (Disciples of Christ), Mondragon (Catholic), etc.⁶ The leaders and founders of these companies were nurtured in a culture in which a good life involved more than one person. The cultural institutions they were formed in, particularly the family, religion, and education, instilled in them a theological vision out of which a moral orientation was developed. This moral vision caused these leaders to question their own individual self-interest and utility-maximizing inclinations, and seek to order their own good toward the common good. If a Catholic business education fails to introduce students to a culturally religious orientation, it fails in its deepest reason and purpose as a cultural institution.

Yet, the problem I am attempting to outline here is not just a business problem that has been secularized. Theology plays a crucial role in a Catholic business education that can promote the integral human development of our students; however, theology and liberal education is perhaps the largest obstacle to the integral nature of this development. There are multiple dimensions to this. For one, theologians for the most part have ignored business questions, leaving it to their philosophy colleagues to engage the field of business ethics. While there is a strong interest in Catholic social thought among theologians, there is a tendency for that interest to focus on either political questions or macroeconomic issues. Theology as a discipline has tended to see politics as the instrument to economic justice, rather than educating leaders within business to change their own institutions.⁷ Obviously both are important, but theology has not engaged business students in their own work, when, in many cases, they are the highest number of students they have.

Another problem is the increasing specialization within theology. By mimicking the specialization of other fields, theology has too often lost its integrating purpose within the university. This specialization in part has led it to sever itself from faith and the church (religious studies) in the name of objectivity and academic legitimacy. Once theology is seen as one

⁶ Patrick Murphy and Georges Enderle, “Managerial Ethical Leadership.” *Business Ethics Quarterly* 5.1 (1995): 117-128.

⁷ See James Davidson Hunter, *To Change the World*.

specialized discipline among others, it no longer plays a unique role within the curriculum, and thus its marginalization is found in terms of the decreasing number of requirements in theology and in its highly specialized sub-disciplines. The increasing specialization within theology has made it more difficult to perform the integrating task within the university, especially in relation to a wonder that enlivens one's responsibility in the world and in one's profession.

At the University of St. Thomas, for example, theology courses from approximately the mid 1930s to the mid 1960s were characterized in the following way: "These courses present the truth of Catholic Doctrine positively and correlate it with the learning achieved in other college courses. The study of religion is made a coordinating principle in the entire educative process. *Constant attention is given to the implication of religion in literature, philosophy, the natural and social sciences, and the fine arts.*"⁸ In the mid 1970s, this integrating role begins to change to a role of specialization. "Using the most recent conclusions of current research in biblical, liturgical, creedal and moral studies, the courses are designed to make the student aware of the present renewal in theology which seeks to meet the mind of a science-oriented world. . . . The aim of the major in theology is to apply the approach outlined above to achieve the objective state in specialized and more intensive study."⁹ While theological education prior to 1960s had its own problems and while specialization and more rigorous methodologies have a place in theology, the danger is that theology tends to collapse in on itself with its own concerns and loses its deeper vocation to connect with other disciplines.

While many theology departments have moved down this path of specialization, not all have, nor even those that have done so, done so completely. At UST, the leadership for the past 20 years in theology along with those within Catholic Studies have sought to reclaim the integral role of theology within the curriculum. In the most recent chapter of revising the core curriculum (2000-2005), there was a strong sentiment among a majority of the faculty that 12 credits of Faith and the Catholic Tradition (theology requirements) was too much and that a reduction would be in order. Yet, simultaneously there was another expressed sentiment among the faculty that there existed a problem of a fragmented curriculum and the need for integration within the core curriculum. The Core Curriculum taskforce, along with the faculty, agreed upon a third level course in Faith and the Catholic Tradition which would foster the integration of theology and other disciplines. I describe this kind of course as a "capstone course" to the student's whole university experience where theology and related disciplines are engaged in a dialogue in which integration and tensions are explored. Since over 40% of the undergraduate majors are in business at St. Thomas, I will highlight the faith and business course which provides one encounter in a student's education to experience integration.

The course I describe below, then, is not in business ethics as it is traditionally understood, but a course in theology that examines with students the meaning of their work and how that work, and in particular the work of business, is situated within the larger meaning of their lives. The themes within this course engage the following issues: the meaning of leisure and its relation to work within the Judeo-Christian tradition, the vocation of business, eschatology and work, an understanding of liturgy and Sabbath and its relationship to work, a Thomistic understanding of

⁸ Emphasis mine. College of St. Thomas Catalog 1947-48, p. 102.

⁹ College of St. Thomas Catalogue, 1974-1976. I am grateful to Bob Kennedy and Terry Nichols who pointed this out to me.

the social nature of property and its implications for the theory of the firm, the Catholic social tradition understanding of just wages and engagement with markets, etc. Catholic universities and their business schools must capitalize on the opportunity to ground their mission in the specificity of their own university's Catholic and liberal education mission. This will create real diversity among business schools and generate a potentially rich pluralism in business education.

2. Criteria of an Undergraduate University Capstone Course on Faith and Business:

Establishing Content. Two important sources for articulating the criteria of such a course are *Ex corde ecclesiae* and the Catholic social tradition broadly understood. In *Ex corde ecclesiae*, John Paul II explains that the criteria for teaching and research should include: “(a) the search for an *integration of knowledge*, (b) a *dialogue between faith and reason*, (c) an *ethical concern* and (d) a *theological perspective*.”¹⁰ As a course that attempts to serve as a capstone to the student's university experience, these criteria should guide the structure and content of such a course. Yet, because this course is directed to business students, an important source of content will be the Catholic social tradition. The Catholic social tradition speaks directly to the economic, managerial, and cultural issues that are the content and purpose of business education. It is a tradition that goes back 3000 years and engages the first principles of business such as human dignity and the common good in relation to rest, work, property, institution, contract, language, culture, etc. It would be odd for a student of business at a Catholic university to never encounter this tradition in relation to business, but would encounter utilitarianism, unless of course the mission of university has become thoroughly secularized.

These two sources of the Catholic tradition inform the basic criteria on which a capstone signature course should look like. Applying these broad criteria from *Ex corde ecclesiae* in light of the Catholic social tradition, I describe the criteria of this capstone course as theologically grounded, publicly argued, institutionally embodied, and interdisciplinarily engaged. If such a course can embody these criteria, it will serve as a *signature course* for a Catholic university, since there are few universities who could offer such a course. While business ethics, corporate social responsibility, service learning, etc., are important characteristics of a Catholic business education, they do not differentiate by themselves a Catholic business education. If a Catholic university does not engage business students with the specificity of its own tradition, it will fail to contribute what it specifically is, a Catholic institution.

Theologically Grounded: In an increasing secular and technological society, Benedict's recent encyclical *Caritas in veritate* has called for a theological renewal in the field of business. While secular business ethics can move us forward toward more responsible businesses, what is taking place in businesses today is not just the loss of will to do good, but the loss of meaning, and especially theological meaning, which ultimately demands more than what traditional business ethics has offered. He explains:

The great challenge before us, accentuated by the problems of development in this global era and made even more urgent by the economic and financial crisis, is to demonstrate, in

¹⁰ For further explanation on the meaning of these four criteria see John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae* (1990), 15-20. While the criteria or principles are explained in relationship to research, in paragraph 20 he explains the importance of these criteria to teaching.

thinking and behaviour, not only that traditional principles of social ethics like transparency, honesty and responsibility cannot be ignored or attenuated, but also that in *commercial relationships* the *principle of gratuitousness* and the logic of gift as an expression of fraternity can and must *find their place within normal economic activity*.

This great challenge raises significant anthropological questions in relationship not only to work, but also to leisure. At the heart of Benedict's logic of gift is the way he defines charity as love *received* and *given*. The human person is understood as *homo receptor* and *donator* (as receiver and giver), who receives love, grace, the earth, talents, gifts, etc., and who in return gives these things for the good of others. This is very different from the *homo economus* (as taker) who calculates his costs and benefits and maximizes his own particular utility.

The first part of this course engages work and leisure as a dynamism of receiving and giving. Utilizing Josef Pieper's *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, along with Joseph Soloveitchik's, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, the course describes the biblical, theological, and philosophical dimensions of the contemplative and active life and faith and work within the person as well as the nature of relationships that make up communities. Yet, this dynamic of receiving and giving is not merely contained within a private spiritual relationship, but rather it animates all human activity, including economic activity.

Catholic universities, as cultural institutions, must provide leadership in engaging their students in a profound quest for meaning that examines the contemporary organizational problems in relation to the *gift*, which is at its heart a theological reality. What does this "logic of gift" tell us about the first principles on which a firm is built, such as the nature of the person, the role of work, the function of property, and so forth? There is no better place than a Catholic university for these conversations to take place; yet in order to do this, the university has to draw upon the deepest resources it has, which will necessarily include theological resources.¹¹

Such a course can help model for students ways in which they can draw upon the deepest dimensions of their religious tradition. This integrating course is grounded primarily in Catholic theology, but engagement with other religious and philosophical traditions occurs depending upon who is teaching. In one section of the course I teach with Brian Shapiro, who is from the accounting department and who is Jewish. The interreligious conversations in the course model for students that people can speak from their deepest center, but do so in way that invites the other to do the same.

Publicly Argued: While the Catholic social tradition is deeply theological and spiritual, it is not sectarian. It claims no monopoly on the good, but honors and learns from what is true and good

¹¹ Benedict cautions that when the religious resources of ethical decision making are severed, it can have serious implications. "It would be advisable, however, to develop a sound criterion of discernment, since the adjective "ethical" can be abused. When the word is used generically, it can lend itself to any number of interpretations . . . Much in fact depends on the underlying system of morality. On this subject the Church's social doctrine can make a specific contribution, since it is based on man's creation "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27), a datum which gives rise to the inviolable dignity of the human person and the transcendent value of natural moral norms. When business ethics prescind from these two pillars, it inevitably risks losing its distinctive nature and it falls prey to forms of exploitation; more specifically, it risks becoming subservient to existing economic and financial systems rather than correcting their dysfunctional aspects" (*Caritas in veritate*, 45)

in all traditions. It is not interested in talking only to itself, nor is it interested in caring only for its own people. This is a tradition that desires to speak to all people of good will and lead, help, cure, care, and educate all of God's people.

This tradition believes in reason, which is why it has invested in educational institutions, and why it often speaks in terms of natural law, a moral law that is inscribed on the hearts of all persons. As Benedict explains, "The Church's social teaching argues on the basis of reason and natural law, namely, on the basis of what is in accord with the nature of every human being."¹² Precisely because of its belief in the natural law, the Catholic social tradition has confidence that its principles can be placed in dialogue with the world in a way that makes them intelligible and accessible to people of all backgrounds, religious or secular, because we are all human beings. This confidence is reflected in encyclicals and conciliar documents that are addressed to "all people of good will." It is this dialogue which can lead to mutual learning and clarity of common ground.¹³ The popes and bishops and the larger tradition not only think that they can enter into dialogue with Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, ethical humanists and atheists, but also believe that their discourse can lead to mutual collaboration in order to make a better world.

In one case study in the course we discuss how a managing director, Earl Stevens, hungered for greater integration of his own personal journey of Christian faith with his work, but felt that he needed to avoid two ditches. On the one side was a fundamentalism that failed to recognize the complex pluralistic situation of contemporary business and that had only one language with which to speak. On the other side was an aggressive secularism that cut faith out of the workplace completely. The company was predominately an engineering company that tended to focus on technical language, so Stevens began to introduce his employees to authors (Stephen Covey, Peter Senge, Robert Greenleaf and others) whose literature was becoming increasingly acceptable in business and whose work was also consistent with his desire to integrate faith, values, and business. While Stevens took the company and its people where they were at, as a leader, he also knew that he needed to take the company in a new direction if it was going to be able to see things whole. Their writings freed people to raise larger questions than a financial or operational dominant culture could. While there was no explicit religious language that would cause any kind of awkwardness or sense of exclusion among employees, the ideas and language of these writings opened up connections that strengthened rather than marginalized his faith. The writings from Covey, Senge, Greenleaf and others served as a bridge for him to create conditions for people to think about questions of value, meaning, relationships, and purpose in relation to their work. It could allow them to tap into and integrate the deeper dimensions of faith and ultimate meaning into their working lives as they faced an increasingly tough competitive environment.

Institutionally Embodied: The Catholic social tradition insists that virtues such as justice and practical wisdom be embodied in relationships that range from the family and the workplace to larger economic and political systems. Businesspeople are called by this tradition to implement its principles in the social structures in which they most immediately participate. One way in which we do this is introducing students to a Three-Fold Model of Organizational Life that help them to think institutionally and how the Catholic social principles are applicable to this model.

¹² *Deus caritas est*, 28.

¹³ Michael Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 221-237.

This model describes the institution in terms of three overlapping dimensions: (1) Identity—who are we as an organization?, (2) Mission—who do we serve and what do we make?, and (3) Stewardship—how do we sustain and grow our resources? In this three-fold framework, acquiring resources through profit-making is necessary to sustain and grow the organization (Stewardship), but it isn't the only important dimension. Other important dimensions include the organization's impact on the development and quality of life of those within the organization (Identity) and those outside the organization (Mission). In this institutional framework we address questions such as the theory of the firm, wealth distribution through capital and wages, product development and wealth creation, job design, layoffs and firings, externalities and the environment, customer relations, etc.¹⁴

Interdisciplinarily Engaged: John Paul II and Benedict have emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary studies both in relationship to Catholic universities and to Catholic social teachings. They are concerned about the “excessive segmentation of knowledge” and the failure of a university to have a vision of the “integral good” of the person. Alasdair MacIntyre has argued that universities too often educate students in “mere assemblages of assorted disciplines,” providing no way of integrating these disciplines and considering their moral or spiritual dimensions. This lack of interaction translates into a segmented curriculum that has lost a vision about ways to achieve an integration of disciplines that can lead to a deeper participation of a unity of knowledge.

Because many Catholic universities still have a strong core curriculum, they have the capability to incorporate an interdisciplinary perspective. While some students already take capstone courses within their major, the course proposed here would provide a capstone experience for students' whole education by relating their liberal education and, in particular theology, to their business major. It would seek to provide an interdisciplinary engagement of organizational thought and theological resources so students can begin to participate in a powerful integrating experience of liberal and business education. The course would also seek to apply philosophical and theological knowledge to business issues and problems by helping the student to think through first principles of human action in relation to organizational policies and practices.

Catholic universities are ideal places in which theology can have this rich dialogue with other disciplines, such as business. Actually, one is hard pressed to come up with another setting where this kind of dialogue can take place. What other institution has such a wide variety of disciplines under one roof? And what better place to foster such a dialogue than the classroom? For those in the modern academy who privatize faith and relegate religion and spirituality to the sphere of mere opinion, such a theological engagement may seem inappropriate, even tyrannical, in a business context; such absolute claims, they say, dip the meddling fingers of dogma into the efficient, open society of the free market. These academics tend to separate facts and values, to prefer descriptive to normative analysis, and to view business as business only, isolated from the personal, communal or moral dimensions of life. According to the Catholic social tradition,

¹⁴ For example, the problem of externalities in income reporting provides an example of how financial accounting's limitations can yield a fragmented understanding of business and its impact on other organizations and society. Many forms of environmental pollution and natural resource degradation are not reported as an expense on an entity's income statement. This not only overstates the entity's wealth creation during a period but also understates that entity's impact on society.

however, such forms of compartmentalization are themselves normative approaches that undermine the theological claim that business has an inherent moral and spiritual purpose.

3. Important Conditions and Challenges of a Capstone/Signature Course on Faith and Business: While the content of such a course, which I have begun to describe above, will be an important driver of its success, there are several necessary institutional conditions to consider. Critical to the course's success will be the university's institutional commitment to the mission integration of the curriculum. This commitment will entail several dimensions, but I want to highlight three of them: team teaching, creating conditions for faculty engagement, and meeting a general requirement.

Team-taught: One of the most important marks of a course integrating disciplines as diverse as theology and business is the dimension of it being team-taught. It is a powerful experience for a student to walk into a classroom and see a theology professor and a business professor in front of the room discussing, debating, and integrating components of Catholic social thought and business. This integrating experience is difficult for one professor to create since it requires mastery in more than one discipline. This makes the team-taught approach critically important for such a course, although not necessary in all cases. It is precisely this integration of disciplines that helps to move students to a "unity of knowledge" that helps them to see that they themselves can have lives of integrity.¹⁵

There are of course multiple challenges to maintain team-taught courses, not the least being coordination and expense. If faculty are compensated as a half-course, it will not be sustainable. Both faculty members have to be compensated as a full course. While team-taught courses are a difficult structure to sustain both in terms of costs and logistics, administrators should see it as a form of faculty formation, particularly in the areas of mission, building community, and identity, especially for the non-theological faculty members.

Creating the Conditions for Faculty to Teach such Courses: Hiring, Faculty Development and Rewards. As we noted in section one of this paper, the larger academy often does not foster the interdisciplinary relationship between theology and business. The university must create conditions to foster the success of such a course. This will entail hiring, faculty development, and incentives to participate in interdisciplinary research. Currently, the principal challenge we have at St. Thomas in implementing this course is not having enough interested faculty within theology who would want to teach it. There are plenty of faculty in business who are interested in teaching such a course, but because it is a theology course, it is mandatory to have someone with theological competency. One of the reasons for this lack of interest is that, in the past, theology has tended to hire according to specializations, not according to interdisciplinary interests or those who have interest and ability to teach capstone courses.

¹⁵ When universities were smaller, the president would often teach a course to seniors usually focusing upon a topic concerning morality. While difficult, such courses kept the top administrator connected to the core competency of the university—teaching. Mother Teresa had a general policy that all the sisters, no matter how much administration they had to do, would not lose touch with the poor. Presidents, Vice Presidents, Deans could team teach this kind of capstone course, where they could delegate the grading to the other faculty member, but they need to not lose touch with their core competence—teaching and research.

Mission-driven faculty development opportunities can create interest for faculty to teach such courses. At UST, we have created a mission-driven business education seminar for business faculty which emphasizes the Catholic intellectual and social tradition and its relationship to the integration of liberal and business education.¹⁶ This seminar, which the dean has asked all business faculty to participate in, has generated significant interest for faculty to participate in teaching a team-taught course.

When faculty begin to teach together, they tend to do research together. Faculty need a reward structure that encourages rather than penalizes interdisciplinary research as well as publications outside of their fields. Within business, A1 journals tend not to publish non-quantitative interdisciplinary work, especially if there is a theological character to it. If faculty are to move toward this kind of interdisciplinary research the university must adapt its reward system to foster this kind of work, rather than making it a guessing game for faculty as to whether they will be rewarded with tenure or not.

General Requirement: If a course such as this is to have any impact on the university, it has to meet a general requirement. If it is merely an elective, it will eventually, like most electives, fade away. Only if it is required will there be some structure to hire people to teach it. As mentioned above, at St. Thomas this course meets the third level Faith and Catholic Tradition requirement (theology). When I teach the course with John McVea from the entrepreneurship department, the course serves as a “twofer” by also meeting an elective in entrepreneurship. These sections are always oversubscribed.

Conclusion:

Let me emphasize again, that I don’t believe that integration of Catholic business education can occur in one class. It must be integrated throughout the whole curriculum; however, it does seem to me that a Catholic university should foster an experience of integration as students prepare to leave the university. *How should business students end their undergraduate academic career at a Catholic university? What kind of course should attempt to both integrate their academic experience as well as send them out into the world of work and humanize it?* If one takes the mission of a Catholic university seriously, one will always lean toward an answer that is theologically grounded, publicly argued, institutionally embodied and interdisciplinarily engaged. This kind of integration course will send the student into the world to engage the importance of vocation in one’s profession. While grounding students in a theological vision of their profession, these courses can also engage the concrete institutional issues of the professions. This mutual engagement of ends and means introduces students in an explicit way to the role of practical wisdom in professional life.¹⁷

¹⁶ For more information on this seminar see <http://www.stthomas.edu/CathStudies/cst/facdevelop/CITII/default.html>

¹⁷ “When man does not recognize in himself and in others the value and grandeur of the human person, he effectively deprives himself of the possibility of benefitting from his humanity and of entering into that relationship of solidarity and communion with others for which God created him. Indeed, 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”. Man cannot give himself to a purely human plan for reality, to an abstract ideal or to a false utopia. As a person, he can give himself to another person or to other persons, and ultimately to God, who is the author of his being and who alone can fully accept his gift. A man is alienated if he refuses to transcend himself and to live the experience of self-giving and of the formation of an authentic human community oriented towards his final destiny, which is God. A society is alienated if its forms of social organization, production and consumption make it more difficult to offer this gift of self and to establish this solidarity between people” (John Paul II, *Centesimus annus* 41).

Appendix: An Overall View of the Curriculum

The following appendix addresses the importance of integration throughout the whole curriculum. Ernest Boyer's categorization for research provides a helpful way to understand the curriculum of a Catholic university, and in particular Catholic business education. Courses at a college or university can fit within three broad categories: *discovery*, *application*, and *integration*. While all courses at a university should have all three characteristics, each course will have its own particular focus. These three categories can serve to organically support each other and thus strengthen the integration of the Catholic mission and in particular the Catholic intellectual and social tradition within the curriculum.¹⁸

*Discovery: Liberal Education Courses.*¹⁹ Because a Catholic business education should be based on good ends, and because liberal education explores the fundamental meaning of the person through a wondrous encounter with creation which informs our end, a liberal education should serve as an excellent foundation to a Catholic business education. A liberal education should cultivate the capacity (both natural and grace-given) of the student to wonder and understand herself as a person who is a free and intelligent subject with the capacity to know the true, the good, and the beautiful. Liberal education 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.

In many respects, this kind of vision of liberal education, which can serve as the soil in which business education can take root, is the most challenging curricular dimension of an authentic Catholic business education. Liberal education in too many Catholic universities has lost sight of an education that can provide an experience of wonder into the being of things, and instead it has become “a prescribed number of units in a prescribed distribution of disciplines” that provide a multicultural tourism of discrete and specialized forms of knowledge that are unconnected from each other.²⁰ Without an understanding of liberal education based on a unity of knowledge

¹⁸ See E.L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Princeton NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990). I am indebted to the insights of Ernest Pierucci for the following section.

¹⁹ Throughout this essay I use liberal education rather than liberal arts (grammar, logic, rhetoric, etc.), because it tends to be more accurate in today's universities and more congruent with a Catholic understanding of the unity of knowledge. In his essay, “The Study of Business as a Liberal Art? Toward an Aristotelian Reconstruction,” Wolfgang Grassl points out that the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching no longer uses the term “liberal arts” and instead uses the term “liberal education.” He argues that Catholic universities should do the same. He explains that “‘liberal arts’ as a historical term must be distinguished from liberal education as a model of education that is timeless.” See

<http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/conferences/becu/Finalpapers/Grasslfinalpaper.pdf>, 11.

²⁰ See Ernest Pierucci, “Restoring the Broken Image: The Centrality of the Subjective Dimension of Labor and Liberal Education in Catholic Business Education,”

<http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/conferences/becu/becu/SUMMARYBOOKcopywithM.pdf>. See also John Henry Newman's Discourse 6 “Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Learning” where he critiques the notion of liberal education “a place for acquiring a great deal of knowledge on a great many subjects.” He argues that a liberal education is the “enlargement of mind” not by quantity but “the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence” (John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), see Discourse 6). While Newman does not use the term, he is describing an interdisciplinary education that assumes a unity of knowledge in contrast to a multidisciplinary education that is seemingly agnostic to any transcendent ordering principle of knowledge.

and faith and reason, the reality of a moral and spiritual education within business becomes less hopeful.

A liberal education that can escape today's disciplinary fragmentation can open the student both to the truth expressed in the principles of the Catholic social tradition and to the possibility—the desirability—of a loving response to that truth.²¹ A liberal education, especially one in our highly technical and global economy, ought to pose to the student the significant human relationship of the priority of the human over the technical.²² Yves Simon explained that the person “is often dragged, by the sheer heaviness of his techniques, where he does not want to go,” where he becomes “crushed by the weight of his ideas, his systems, his experiences, his erudition, his constructs, his methods, and his postulations.”²³ A liberal or humanistic education within our technological, secular, and materialistic culture must have the capacity to develop within the student a moral rationality and spiritual imagination that resists and frees the person from the ever increasing instrumental rationality of our culture. A series of disconnected courses of disciplinary introductions will not aid the student in this task.

While there is no one form of liberal education, Catholic universities must maintain a strong core curriculum that integrates theology, philosophy, literature, and history.²⁴ Without a strong commitment to the humanities, it will be extremely difficult for a Catholic university to foster its mission and identity in relation to business education. At St. Thomas, students must satisfy extensive general requirements that include four credits of history, eight credits of literature, eight credits of philosophy and twelve credits of theology. Philosophy requirements, for example, are very helpful to the business student. The first philosophy course focuses on the nature of the human person and the second course focuses on ethics. While such material is not always absorbed by the student, such a philosophical orientation on anthropology and ethics creates helpful conditions in which business faculty can build upon.

Applied: Business Courses. The primary focus of business courses, unlike liberal education courses, will be on the practical and technical matters of a particular field of study; yet it is precisely in the study of the practice of business that opportunities to explore the ethical and spiritual implications of business will open to faculty and students. John Henry Newman was concerned that if professional education became severed from liberal education within the university context, its inclination would

²¹ See Wolfgang Grassl's insightful essay, where he explains that the unity of knowledge is deeply entrenched in the Catholic intellectual tradition. “However, differently from the neopositivist variant, unity is not grounded in a common methodology of research but in a common ontology, i.e. in seeing reality as a structured and emergent whole that is in principle accessible to the human mind. No consilience needs to be brought about, contrary to recent suggestions (Wilson 1999), where there is a natural continuity within a hierarchical order (*ordo rerum* and *integritas*). Not only are the functional disciplines of business unified in their material object; they are continuous with, and emergent from, other sciences. The style of thought of the CIT applies equally to all fields of knowledge (*integratio*). In this perspective, then, management studies are naturally integrated into a university”

<http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/conferences/becu/Finalpapers/Grasslfinalpaper.pdf>, 5.

²² Yves Simon, *Practical Knowledge* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1991), 155.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ This does not mean that the sciences, social sciences, and the fine arts do not have a role in liberal education, they do, and a very important role, but these disciplines will have greater difficulty conveying the relationship of faith and reason and the unity of knowledge that is at the heart of a Catholic understanding of liberal education. Theology, philosophy, history, and literature have both the intellectual capacity in which to engage the pressing concerns of our larger culture, as well as the emotional imagination of seeing and experiencing with depth the human condition in both its glory and its corruption.

always tend to focus on the particular and instrumental at the expense of the universal and moral, and as a result would “undermine the broader pursuit of the unity of knowledge at the heart of the university’s mission.” A central theme for Newman “was that professional schools, whether medicine or law, or in our own day, business, must participate in the university’s principal end, which is the teaching of universal knowledge as its own end, and so Newman contrasts the educational philosophy of autonomous professional schools existing independently of a university and those schools which are integrated into the university’s broader curriculum and mission.”²⁵

While most business faculty will not see themselves as experts in philosophical and theological matters, they need not see themselves as mere technicians freed from introducing ethical, social, and spiritual ideas of their field into their courses. A student last semester told me of an ethical issue that arose in a marketing course and the business professor responded to her that she should deal with that question in her philosophy course, not his.

The engagement of ethical and spiritual matters with business will often be dealt with in applied courses in more subtle, inductive, and experiential ways. A full-blown theoretical discussion on the difference between a Thomistic and utilitarian understanding of the common good taking place in a marketing or finance course is not expected, yet failing to bring up the common good at the point in the class when 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 businesspeople ask themselves: “What is the social meaning capital?” “What is the purpose of the firm?” etc. 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 also the opportunity to educate the whole person.

All disciplines within business raise opportunities to engage the specific concerns within the Catholic social tradition. While a comprehensive list cannot be explored here, the following disciplines and issues provide a partial list of questions that business students at Catholic universities should encounter in their business courses.

- **Finance:** In light of the financial theory of the firm, what are the tensions between property, understood only privately, versus property understood socially? Is the financial theory of the firm the legal standard for proper operation of a corporation, and if not, how can managers think of different theories of the firm, especially one informed by the Catholic social tradition?²⁶ Another important topic in finance is investments. In light of the claim in the Catholic social tradition that investing is a moral act, what investment strategies would have a moral quality to them, e.g., social investing, diversification, or the like?²⁷

²⁵ Don Briel, <http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/facdevelop/mecu/papers/briel.pdf>

²⁶ For further resources on these questions see <http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/curriculum/finance.html>. See also S.A. Cortright and Michael Naughton, eds., *Rethinking the Business of Business: Interdisciplinary Essays from the Catholic Social Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002).

²⁷ For creative curricular projects on this question, see Adrian Cowan, “Student Managed Portfolios in an Environment of Faith,” <http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/conferences/becu/becu/SUMMARYBOOKcopywithM.pdf>.

- **Marketing:** How does one understand the purpose of marketing in light of the Catholic social tradition, especially in light of the meaning of language and truth telling?²⁸ How does one teach consumer behavior without falling into consumerism?
- **Accounting:** With the near total focus on the information needs of capital providers that constrains accounting's potential to serve other affected parties (such as employees and the broader social community), how does accounting keep its professional stature? With the capital decision making focus and the related utilitarian values that are deeply embedded in accounting's self-image, how can accounting render visible the legitimate claims of marginalized parties?²⁹
- **Human Resources:** What constitutes a just wage in a modern market economy and how can human resource professionals design compensation systems that both meet principles within the Catholic social tradition and compete within the current market system? How does one fire or layoff someone in a humane and ethical way?

Courses such as these as well as economics, strategy, organizational behavior, and information technology offer additional possibilities for raising important philosophical and theological dimensions of their disciplines in which the Catholic social tradition can be explicitly or implicitly incorporated. At UST, undergraduate business students take a course in business ethics early in their business degree program, which helps to further connect them to the vision of our business school, which is to “educate highly principled global business leaders.”

Integration: Capstone Course. Exposed to a substantial liberal education core as well as to business courses that entertain moral and spiritual questions and a standalone business ethic course, students are well-disposed to the kind of integration that takes place in the capstone course I have described in this paper. Without these conditions, such a capstone course will struggle to forge the explicit links between theory and practice, contemplation and practice, and faith and work by synthesizing philosophical/theological insights and business theory and practice. While these integrating elements ought to pervade the whole curriculum, a certain number of courses ought to have these integrating experiences as their prime concern. Liberal arts courses are more explicitly exploratory and theoretical and professional courses are more explicitly practical and technical. A capstone course deliberately seeks to integrate the two on a sustained basis.

What I have proposed in this paper is a “capstone signature course” as key in fostering an integration that explicitly demonstrates the role of prudence and charity in synthesizing the wonder-inspiring insights of the liberal arts with the practices learned in business theory and practice. Again, while these integrating elements ought to pervade the whole curriculum, a capstone course will have as its prime directive the multifaceted dimensions of integration throughout the whole of a student's university experience.

²⁸ See Ray MacKenzie's discussion between Augustine's notion of language and advertising “Selling Dreams: Catholicism and the Business Communicator,”

<http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/facdevelop/mecu/papers/mackenzie.pdf>.

²⁹ See Brian Shapiro, “Theological Perspectives on the Objective and Subjective Dimensions of the Good Accountant,” <http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/conferences/becu/becu/SUMMARYBOOKcopywithM.pdf>.

Response to Michael Naughton's paper
Seeing Things Whole
**The Theological Importance to Business Education:
University Capstone Signature Course for Business Students**

and Brother Raymond Fitz's paper
**Integrating Learning in a Catholic University:
An Ongoing Conversation**

Msgr. Richard M. Liddy
Seton Hall University

I am very grateful to Mike Naughton and his collaborators for all their work on the “Mission-driven Business Education” project. Seton Hall University has been a proud supporter of this project from the beginning when our Bill Toth – of happy memory – joyfully collaborated with Mike Naughton on this important project. In particular, I am grateful to Mike and Brother Ray Fitz for their respective background papers: “Integrating Learning in a Catholic University: An Ongoing Conversation” and “Seeing Things Whole: The Theological Importance to Business Education: University Capstone Signature Course for Business Students.” In ten minutes I cannot highlight all the excellent dimensions of their papers, so I will limit myself to commenting on Mike Naughton's reference to *intellectus* as distinct from *ratio* in the writings of Joseph Pieper and to Brother Fitz's reflections on “practical reasoning” as the exercise of intelligence in the various professions, each with its own retinue of assumptions, presumptions, presuppositions, necessary skills, etc. For I believe that both of Mike and Brother Fitz are referring to one complex fact, that is, the exercise of human intelligence, the *intellectus* at the basis of *ratio*, human intelligence as it unfolds discursively in the various areas of human endeavor.

In higher education one often hears references to “critical thinking.” To cite my own experience in the creation of our new core curriculum at Seton Hall University, the development of such critical thinking is seen as one of the central objectives. So much so in fact that I have been led to remark to my colleagues,

Let's have some critical thinking about critical thinking! Are there not other kinds of thinking besides critical thinking? artistic, evaluative, meditative? How are they related to critical thinking? Should not critical thinking about critical thinking show how it is related to these other types of thinking and other proficiencies? Is there not an underlying unity to all the intellectual proficiencies that leads at various times to symbolic thinking, evaluative thinking, etc. and eventually to critical thinking?

In fact, an excellent book on critical thinking, Jennifer Moon's 2008 *Critical Thinking: An Exploration of Theory and Practice* acknowledges the many and various descriptions of critical thinking as well as the confusion over the meaning of critical thinking.

Not only do we behave as if “critical thinking” and other terms have agreed definitions, but we use them with learners in this way. In one staff development workshop, there were, by agreement, some postgraduate students present. There was horror in their faces as it dawned on them that there was not an agreed definition for critical thinking among those who were their tutors. There was some embarrassment among the tutors too. (Moon, 2008, 23)

What then IS critical thinking? Is it “just thinking?” or “thinking well?” What does that mean? Obviously the use of the modifier “critical” refers to a certain “normativity” in thinking. Sometimes we do it better than at other times. What’s the difference? And is all non-critical thinking just “sloppy thinking?”

Moon raises further questions. For example, she asks, does critical thinking differ according to the methodologies of the different disciplines? Is it just following the particular method of a particular discipline? For example, the scientific method in doing physics, the historical method in answering questions about 16th century Ireland? And what about what is generally called “problem solving” in various practical areas? Is this critical thinking? For example, in managing a business? Or in the development of a particular product? Moon asks whether there is a *general form of critical thinking* that would hold even in what she refers to as “the swamps of professional practice?” In the development of a new technology? In managing a business? In marketing? What are the competencies or proficiencies to be exercised in business leadership? Do these have any family resemblance to the sets of competencies needed in the scientific method or in the scholarly process of historical research?

And what about the areas people refer to as the “deeply personal,” the emotional, the areas where people trust their “gut feelings?” Is there any role for “feelings” in relation to critical thinking? What about the aesthetic, what some regard as “the feminine” side of life? Or does critical thinking only have to do with the strictly “logical?” What is the role of “logic” in critical thinking?

The general question is: Is there a relationship between critical thinking in one area and critical thinking in other areas? Is there, as Bernard Lonergan maintained, a “general empirical method,” a dynamic structure of the human mind, that leads to one method in one area and another in another area – both reflections of the general structure of the human mind when it is “thinking well?” What is this general structure of “thinking well?” Can critical thinking be taught apart from the particular disciplines in which it gets exercised?

Several times Moon highlights the role of “epistemological awareness” – that is, an explicit idea of “what counts for knowledge.” For what we consider counts for knowing will in fact influence what we count as knowing. Epistemological beliefs about what constitutes knowledge influence what one considers to be the outcome of knowledge. And here we should point out one of Moon’s central conclusions, and that is that critical thinking has to do with assessing the evidence necessary for correct judgment. “The central activity of critical thinking is the assessment of what be called evidence – in order to make a judgment.” (93) According to Moon, critical thinking involves many activities, but she stresses that it especially involves making

judgments based on assessing evidence from different kinds of sources. For her the central activity of critical thinking is “the habit of engagement” in making judgments. She says:

The central activity of critical thinking is the assessment of what might be called evidence, in order to make a judgment. ...Critical thinking is an aspect of the activity of thinking. It is a form of learning in that it is a means of generating new knowledge by processing existing knowledge and ideas using what we have called the “tools for the manipulation of knowledge” (e.g. analysis, understanding, synthesis).

...There is a sense of precision and skill in the use of critical thinking. When we engage in critical thinking, we are usually working towards an anticipated form of outcome, which is likely to be a “judgment.” Critical thinking would usually relate to subject matter that is complex and about which there might be some alternative viewpoints, and it involves deep engagement with the subject matter. Reflexivity is usually implied in the process. (33-34)

And it is here that I would hazard to remark that the Catholic intellectual tradition can make a definite contribution. For the Catholic intellectual tradition through the centuries has had to deal with philosophical issues, issues about “what counts for knowing” in a particular culture. (Cf. Lonergan quote on Cath theology’s contribution to contemporary culture. For example, John Henry Newman’s classic *Grammar of Assent* stresses the central role of judgment in human knowing.

Without this philosophical element there can be no viewpoint or fulcrum from which to critique the normal presuppositions and assumptions of the disciplines or professions. All week long we have been critiquing various assumptions about business and business education. In the light of what? Here I would say that the philosophical fact at the core of the Catholic intellectual tradition is the self-luminousness of the human subject to himself or herself - the fact that you can “know that you know.” You can be aware of yourself understanding, having the “aha!” experience. It might take years to come to terms with this implicit self-knowledge, but it is that core fact of *intellectus* that is witnessed to by such writers in the Catholic intellectual tradition as Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, John Henry Newman and – in the twentieth century – Bernard Lonergan.

Just to call attention, for a moment, to Augustine: his journey, marked by so many twists and turns, took a particularly positive turn at the age of 19 when he read Cicero’s *Hortensius*, an exhortation to philosophy in which he read that he should seek wisdom, not in this or that philosophy but in the truth itself. But the major moment in his intellectual journey is when he read “a few books of the Platonists” and came to a knowledge of his own mind. Previously, as he puts it in the *Confessions*, he had been hampered by the philosophical assumption that “the real” is what you can see and touch and feel. In the words of Bernard Lonergan, Augustine came to a knowledge of his own mind – after years of quite critical thinking, his focus became his own ability to think critically, his own ability to appropriate *veritas*, the truth. He moved from being a very bright and intelligent materialist to realizing that there was more to his spirit than that – and that he was on the brink of acknowledging God as spirit. Let me quote Bernard Lonergan on what such an acknowledgement means.

The problem in philosophy is to start off from the average naïve realist and bring him on to something that involves a fuller grasp of all the issues and a more profound understanding of what his real basis is. The problem is not having people repeat with Augustine that ‘The real is not a body, it is what you know when you know something true.’ The problem is to get people to *mean* as much as Augustine meant when Augustine spoke about truth. And that is a transformation of the subject. (Bernard Lonergan, 2001, 132)

No wonder Aquinas called the human intellect “a created participation in uncreated light,” an intellectual procession reflecting the procession of the Word from the Father within the Trinity. Our coming to understand our own understanding – for example, appreciating the judgment of truth from the grasp of sufficient evidence – or the procession of love from recognized value - can give us a glimmer of what goes on within the very life of God.

Now to jump to the modern Catholic intellectual tradition. Such a view of the self-luminous character of human intelligence is at the basis of Bernard Lonergan’s reflections on methodology, the basic methodology of the human spirit as that basic methodology is exercised in the various disciplines and professions. Always there is an sensitive, imaginable, empirical element; just open and shut your eyes and you are aware of it. But another significantly different element emerges when we ask questions and have insights; and paying attention to that difference provides the evidence for not being a materialist. Another level of consciousness emerges when we check to see if our insights are accurate and we make judgments; paying attention to that difference opens one up to a critically realist philosophy. Finally, another whole level emerges when we evaluate, decide, act and love. This fourfold dynamic and unfolding structure is more differentiated than the JOCist “See...Judge...Act” referred to by Brother Fitz, for it highlights the element of emerging insight and our own ability to catch ourselves having insights – whether in engineering or in any other area of human endeavor.

Such was Augustine’s desire for *veritas* and that drive is cut short by any form of anti-intellectualism that refuses to check its own presuppositions but only asks questions that support one’s own interests, prejudices and biases. We have spent this week checking out the presuppositions and practices of business and business education and letting the light of intelligence – Augustine’s *veritas* – shine on them. Lonergan’s differentiated account of human intelligence and reasoning can be employed to illuminate all the professions. It is the basic method of the human spirit as it unfolds in the various methods used in the various disciplines or professions. It is operative in the sciences – data collection/hypothesis formation/verification/experimentation – followed by feed-back – as well as in the professions.

At this point let me just allude to the application of these reflections on methodology to illuminating the practical reasoning operative in business education. In the following schema on the unfolding of the “functional specialties” operative in the human sciences, the study of history prepares the way for highlighting the basic underlying issues. We have been in one way or another highlighting these basic conflicts in business education all week. Are we to educate our students as if “profit” is all that matters? Or are there other issues that give various meanings to the term “profit” and its role in the unfolding of an economy? Similarly with regard to other

conflicts we have highlighted. Such study, coming out of historical research, gives rise to the specialty of “dialectic” that highlights such basic conflicts. Let us highlight these methodical relationships in the study of historical conflicts by the following diagram that illustrates their functional relationships;

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| On the level of decision | = dialectic | (concerns historical conflicts) |
| On the level of judgment | = history | (“what was going forward) |
| On the level of understanding | = interpretation | (regards particular persons/writings) |
| On the level of experience | = research | (the basic data) |

But we not only highlight basic conflicts. Most of us here this week are convinced we should also take a stand. Such “taking a stand” involves basic philosophical, moral and religious issues. Are we to look at the world through materialist eyes? Hedonistic eyes? Reductionist eyes that do not highlight what we call “the dignity of the human person?” Or is there “something more?” Such are the foundational issues witnessed to in Augustine’s *Confessions* and, in my view, in such a work as Bernard Lonergan’s *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, as well as in other basic existential and philosophical works. Such foundational works reflects the level of our basic “conversion” – where “we’re at” intellectual, morally, religiously. And from such foundations flow our basic judgments – our doctrines – for example “the principles of Catholic social teaching” (CST), our systematic account of what these doctrines “mean” (systematics) and our communications of these to others. Such are the “functional specializations” as we try to fully understand business in history – even allowing theological perspectives enter into such understanding.

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Out of the past</i> | <i>Conversion</i> | <i>Towards the future</i> |
| Dialectic | [decision] | Foundations - conversion |
| History | [judgment] | Doctrines |
| Interpretation | [understanding] | Systematics |
| Research | [experience] | Communications and |
| Feedback | | |

All such efforts at communications and implementation of practical knowing involves feed-back. The unfolding of the cycle of human knowing and doing involves new questions for our both our theologies and our understanding of business in the light of our own personal development and conversion. Such could be further illustrated as the unfolding of this dynamic wheel of human thought developing according to enlightened feedback. (For a fuller explanation of how these functional specializations are related and operative in both theology and in the human science of business, see Lonergan’s *Method in theology*, and especially his last chapter on communications.)

In other words – to be brief – our way of looking at business in its various dimensions involves our own level of development and conversion: intellectual, moral and religious. For what Brother Fitz referred to in his paper as the basic assumptions and presumptions of doing business and doing business education need not be correct. In fact, a great deal of what we talked about these days has been a feed-back process of highlighting basic misconceptions in order that we

may do business education – and business – in a better way. In one way or another we have called for a basic foundational element of conversion from an inadequate view of what business and what business education is. We have highlighted the “truth” – in Augustine’s full sense - of what business is, as well as the importance of a moral conversion to “the common good,” and a religious openness to “grace,” that is, for us as Christians, the Spirit of Jesus leading us through all the challenges we face.

Works Cited:

Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (hereafter, *CWL*). Vol. 3, *Insight*. Edited by Frederick Crowe and Robert Doran. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.

CWL, Vol. 18, *Phenomenology and Logic: The Boston College Lectures on Mathematical Logic*. Edited by Philip McShane. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

Method in Theology. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972 (reprinted by University of Toronto Press, 1990).

Jennifer Moon, 2008 *Critical Thinking: An Exploration of Theory and Practice*. Abingdon, Oxon, and New York: Routledge, 2008.