

The Roman Catholic Identity of Loyola University Chicago

White Paper

Background

In recent years, university scholars and administrators in America have noted that “a Catholic university or college cannot take its Catholic identity for granted.”¹ Profound changes in higher education, influenced by broader transformations in American culture, politics, economics, and technology, require that Catholic institutions of higher education periodically revisit the meaning of their proclaimed *Catholic* identity. Since the 1970’s, Loyola University Chicago has more than once taken up this question. At this early stage of formulating the university’s next 5-year plan, it is time to do so again.

In August, 2007, Fr. Michael Garanzini, S.J., President of Loyola University Chicago, requested that a study group of administrators and faculty be formed to address the question of Loyola’s Roman Catholic identity. With the assistance of the Joan and Bill Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage, eleven Loyolans met six times during spring semester, 2008 and discussed a set of shared readings on Catholic identity at institutions of higher education in general and Loyola University in particular.² The group’s deliberations were summarized after each meeting and culminated in a final group statement on the university’s Catholic identity.

At the last group meeting, Fr. Garanzini proposed that the final statement be the springboard for a white paper on Catholic identity that could generate discussion at the President’s Leadership Retreat in July, 2008. Two group members (Dr. Michael Schuck

¹ Monica K. Hellwig, “The Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the Catholic University,” in Anthony J. Cernera and Oliver J. Morgan, eds., *Examining the Catholic Intellectual Tradition* (Fairfield, CT: Sacred Heart University Press, 2000), p. 3.

² The majority of the group members consisted of the Hank Center Advisory Board. The complete membership included Dr. Jeffrey Doering (Chair, Dept. of Biology), Fr. Michael Garanzini, S.J. (University President), Dr. John Hardt (Neiswanger Institute, Stritch School of Medicine), Dr. Jane Locke (School of Law), Dr. Arthur Lurigo (Dept. of Psychology, Associate Dean for Faculty), Dr. Lorraine Ozar (School of Education, Director of the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness), Lucien Roy, (Vice President, Mission and Ministry), Dr. Michael Schuck (Dept. of Theology, Director of the Joan and Bill Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage), Dr. Ann Solari-Twadell (Niehoff School of Nursing), Fr. Thomas Tobin, S.J. (Dept. of Theology), Dr. Christine Wiseman (University Provost). The group was assisted by Paul Voelker (PhD. Candidate, Department of Theology; Project Assistant, The Joan and Bill Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage).

and Dr. John Hardt) took up the task of composing the white paper which appears here.³ The text is not meant as a finished statement on Loyola's Catholic identity, but a catalyst for discussion.

Text

Introduction

We are Chicago's Jesuit Catholic University--
a diverse community seeking God in all things
and working to expand knowledge
in the service of humanity
through learning justice and faith.

As its mission statement suggests, Loyola University Chicago's institutional character is shaped by several factors. The university is located in a complex, world-class city. The rich menu of educational programs offered at Loyola range from college studies to the most advanced fields of professional training. Loyola University can celebrate its longstanding service as a university port-of-entry for diverse groups of first and second generation immigrants. As part of the educational mission of the Society of Jesus, Loyola's institutional culture is shaped by many of the distinguishing features of the Jesuit 'way of proceeding'. Central to all these characteristics is Loyola University's Roman Catholic identity.

Colleges and universities in North America are currently articulating their Catholic identities in a variety of ways.⁴ The approach taken here draws a distinction between the formal expression of Loyola's Catholic identity and its material expression in university programs and procedures. Whereas one can reasonably expect the formal expression of Loyola's Catholic identity to remain relatively constant over time, the material expression can be expected to change more frequently as the institution alters existing programs and procedures or experiments with new ones.⁵

³ Though drawn from the work of Fr. Garanzini's spring semester study group, the following white paper is the direct responsibility of Dr. Schuck and Dr. Hardt. The study group was not consulted in the composition of the text and, thus, bears no direct responsibility for its contents.

⁴ Michael J. Buckley, S.J. discusses several of these articulations in *The Catholic University as Promise and Project: Reflections in a Jesuit Idiom* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998), pp. 6-22. Another helpful resource on this question is at www.bc.edu/offices/mission/exploring/cathuniv.html.

⁵ The formal expression draws directly from the Latin *identitas*, meaning "the same, repeatedly"; that is, an identity that holds together a continuous sense of self for a person, or a sense of community for a group.

The Formal Expression of Loyola University's Catholic Identity

For purposes of clarity, two dimensions of Loyola's formal Catholic identity can be differentiated. One dimension expresses the 'core affirmation' of this identity; the other highlights the 'historical legacy' provided to Loyola by its Catholic identity. Both dimensions are critical for understanding what it means to call Loyola a *Catholic* institution of higher education, as distinct from a Protestant, Jewish, Moslem, or secular university.

The Core Affirmation of Loyola University's Catholic Identity

The core affirmation of Loyola University's Catholic identity is the claim that "in the person of Jesus of Nazareth we have an utterly trustworthy interpretation of the meaning and destiny of human life, of human relationship with God, and of what constitutes a good life."⁶ This fundament of Loyola's identity has direct bearing on its institutional character; from it, Loyola derives its institutional commitments to:

- faith as a vital dimension of human life
- hope as a realistic human stance toward the world
- love as the supreme mission of human life in the world

Drawing on these commitments, Loyola University strives to infuse all its undertakings with openness toward God, optimism about the future, and an option for care of those most suffering in the world.⁷ During his recent visit to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI encapsulated these commitments by saying that in Catholic educational institutions, "the noble goals of scholarship and education, founded on the unity of truth and in service of the person and the community, become an especially powerful instrument of hope."⁸

⁶ Hellwig, "The Catholic Intellectual Tradition", pp. 6-7. The bedrock Christocentric basis of a Catholic college and university is discussed by many scholars. See Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Catholic University in the Church" in John P. Langan, S.J., ed., *Catholic Universities in Church and Society: A Dialogue on 'Ex corde Ecclesiae'* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1993), pp. 35-36; Michael J. Buckley, S.J., *The Catholic University as Promise and Project*, pp. 16-19; Mark W. Roche, *The Intellectual Appeal of Catholicism and the Idea of a Catholic University* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), p. 9; Brian E. Daley, "Christ and the Catholic University", *America*, September 11, 1993.

⁷ If Jesus Christ is the bedrock, the 'principle of sacramentality' (that "God is present to humankind and we respond to God's grace through the ordinary and everyday of life in the world") is certainly the subsoil of institutional identity at a Catholic college or university. See Thomas Groome, *What Makes Us Catholic: Eight Gifts for Life* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2002), p. 84. See also, Hellwig, "The Catholic Intellectual Tradition", pp. 9-10; Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), pp. 1180-1183.

⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to Catholic Educators*, The Catholic University of America, April 17, 2008. See www.zenit.org/article-22328?l=english for the full text of Pope Benedict's address (accessed June, 8,

Loyola University's Catholic Identity as an Historical Legacy

A further consequence of Loyola University's Catholicity is the institution's necessary involvement in a centuries-old, rich, and diverse dialogue over the meaning of its core affirmation--what it can mean to say that a God is at the origin of existence, that this God once entered the world as a human being, and that this God is yet alive to human experience. These explorations have relied in no small part on the accumulated wisdom of ancient, medieval, and modern philosophy, law, literature, history, art, architecture, science, as well as in the insights of non-Christian religious experience. This historical legacy has direct bearing on Loyola University's institutional character; from it, Loyola derives its commitments to:

- a mutually informing relationship between faith and reason⁹
- the integration of knowledge within persons and across disciplines¹⁰
- the social nature of human living and human learning¹¹

Drawing on these commitments, Loyola University strives to infuse its undertakings with respect for the spiritual and theoretical wisdom of the past, an openness to exploring connections between ostensibly diverse subjects, and a spirit of collegiality toward people of all faiths and convictions searching for truth.¹² In his 1990 Apostolic Constitution on

2008). In the tradition of St. Ignatius Loyola, a Jesuit Catholic university such as Loyola expresses these goals through the motto of the Society of Jesus: *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, "all for the glory of God."

⁹ "... a specific part of a Catholic University's task is to promote *dialogue between faith and reason*, so that it can be seen more profoundly how faith and reason bear harmonious witness to the unity of all truth." Pope John Paul II, *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, para. 17 (in Langan, *Catholic Universities*, p. 235).

¹⁰ As to the integration of knowledge within persons, Pope Benedict XVI recently discussed the "intellectual charity" that should characterize a teacher in a Catholic educational institution. Here, teaching is an "act of love" whereby the "essential unity of knowledge" is upheld "against the fragmentation which ensues when reason is detached from the pursuit of truth." *Address to Catholic Educators*. On this point, see also Pope John Paul II, *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, para. 22 (in Langan, *Catholic Universities*, p. 237). In a Jesuit educational setting, such interpersonal concerns are one manifestation of the *cura personalis*, "care for the person". As to integration of knowledge across disciplines, Pope John Paul II writes in para. 20 of *Ex corde Ecclesiae* that "*interdisciplinary studies*, assisted by a careful and thorough study of philosophy and theology, enable students to acquire an organic vision of reality" (in Langan, *Catholic Universities*, p. 236).

¹¹ Human sociality not only informs openness in the search for truth, but also the awareness that "there cannot be the pursuit of any and all kinds of research or teaching simply out of the intrinsic interest of the subject, as though it were all a game without consequences." Hellwig, "The Catholic Intellectual Tradition", p. 8.

¹² In *What Makes Us Catholic*, p. xvii, Thomas Groome notes that when Ignatius of Antioch first called the church 'catholic' (circa 107), he "had *inclusion* in mind more than universal. Inclusion, in fact, is closer to the roots of *catholic*; *katha holos* literally means 'gathering in the whole,' or, more colloquially, 'all are welcome.'"

Catholic Universities, *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II reflected these commitments by observing that while it is the responsibility of every university to search for meaning,

. . . a Catholic University is called in a particular way to respond to this need: its Christian inspiration enables it to include the moral, spiritual, and religious dimension in its research, and to evaluate the attainments of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the person.¹³

The Material Expression of Roman Catholic Identity

In the material expression of Catholic identity, an institution embodies its formal commitments in tangible programs and procedures. As noted above, one can expect an institution's material Catholicity to shift more frequently than its formal commitments.

The tangible programs and procedures of material Catholicity at Loyola University are numerous and can be differentiated in a variety of ways. The approach taken here is not exhaustive, but highlights a few important examples from four areas: academics, administration, campus life, and service.¹⁴ In what follows, programs and procedures are cited, but not evaluated for how well they are actually expressing Loyola University's Catholic identity.

Academics

All credible universities strive for academic excellence by encouraging good teaching and solid research in a pluralistic environment committed to academic freedom. Loyola University does the same, and more. As an expression of its Roman Catholic identity, Loyola University also emphasizes

- an undergraduate core curriculum which encourages the integration of knowledge and requires courses in (among other areas) philosophy, theology and ethics.
- an undergraduate minor in Catholic Studies with courses on Catholic thought and history from departments such as Political Science, Fine Arts, Philosophy, History, Theology, English, and Modern Languages.
- attention to education of 'the whole person' in select graduate programs, such as the Stritch School of Medicine's 'Patient Centered Medicine Program'.

¹³ Pope John Paul II, *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, para. 7 (in Langan, *Catholic Universities*, p. 232).

¹⁴ The responsibility for materially expressing a university's Catholic identity cannot be narrowly assigned to the department of theology or the office of campus ministry. This is a university-wide responsibility. Nor is it the responsibility of the local Roman Catholic Bishop to define how that identity is to be materially expressed at a Catholic college or university. In *Ex corde Ecclesiae* (art. 4, para. 1), Pope John Paul II states that "[t]he responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic identity of the University rests primarily with the University itself" (in Langan, *Catholic Universities*, p. 246).

- support for faculty research and the offering of numerous programs on topics concerning Catholic thought and practice through The Joan and Bill Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage.

Administration

All credible universities aspire to administrative practices that are fair, just, and consistent with the institution's mission. Loyola University does the same, and more. As an expression of its Roman Catholic identity, Loyola University also emphasizes

- continuing education of administrators and staff in the principles of Roman Catholic social thought through President's Leadership Retreats
- familiarization of faculty with Loyola's Catholic identity at new faculty orientation
- encouragement of institutional developments on Catholic identity by the University Board of Trustee's Jesuit and Catholic Identity Committee
- hiring practices that consider the prospective employee's positive contribution to Loyola's Catholic identity¹⁵

Campus Life

All credible universities strive for a vital campus life that further educates and shapes students beyond the classroom. Loyola University does the same, and more. As an expression of its Roman Catholic identity, Loyola University also emphasizes

- the Jesuit tradition of beginning each school year with a Mass of the Holy Spirit at each Loyola University campus
- opportunities for worship, spiritual guidance, and retreats in multiple religious traditions through the University Ministry Office¹⁶
- an Annual Student Leadership Institute focusing on the development of Roman Catholic leadership
- an open line of communication on Roman Catholic church teachings between the Archdiocese of Chicago and the University Wellness Center

¹⁵ According to Michael Buckley, S.J., "If the university is to be Catholic, one must repeatedly insist upon the strong presence of Catholic intellectuals and of the Catholic intellectual tradition in the university. . . [T]he hiring of the university must be conducted in terms of its mission, otherwise that mission will cease to exist." "The Catholic University as Pluralistic Forum" in *The Catholic University*, pp. 136-137. At the same time, Buckley insists that "the presence of faculty of other traditions both religious and humanist" is "essential". *The Catholic University*, p. 143. In *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, art. 4, para. 1, Pope John Paul II cites the importance of "recruitment of adequate university personnel, especially teachers and administrators, who are both willing and able to promote [the Catholic] identity" (in Langan, *Catholic Universities*, p. 246).

¹⁶ "As a natural expression of the Catholic identity of the University, the university community *should give a practical demonstration of its faith in its daily activity*, with important moments of reflection and of prayer." *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, para. 39 (in Langan, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 241-242).

- a major Lake Shore Campus construction and redesign project that situates the University's Madonna della Strada Chapel at the visible heart of campus¹⁷

Service

All credible universities seek to serve the wider public through scholarship, research, and hands-on service the benefits civil society. Loyola University does the same, and more. As an expression of its Roman Catholic identity, Loyola University also emphasizes

- service-learning experiences for students and faculty coordinated through the University's Center for Experiential Learning¹⁸
- domestic and foreign immersion experiences for students and faculty coordinated by several units of the University, from the Office of Mission and Ministry to the Stritch School of Medicine
- numerous hands-on service projects coordinated by units of the University from the Division of Student Affairs to Human Resources
- community organizing and research through the University's Center for Urban Research and Learning

Conclusion

Through these formal and material expressions, Loyola University Chicago manifests its Roman Catholic identity. By this means,

. . . Catholic ideals, attitudes, and principles penetrate and inform university activities in accordance with the proper nature and autonomy of these activities. In a word, being both a University and Catholic, it must be both a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge, and an academic institution in which Catholicism is vitally present and operative.¹⁹

¹⁷ “. . . at any opportunity to reshape the campus, the principle might be kept in mind that the very layout of the buildings ought to express the priorities and the relationship among the various activities on campus . . . of particular interest, of course, is the placing and design of the university's main chapel . . . “ Hellwig, “The Catholic Intellectual Tradition”, p. 11.

¹⁸ “The Christian spirit of service to others for the *promotion of social justice* is of particular importance for each Catholic University, to be shared by its teachers and developed in its students.” *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, para. 34 (in Langan, *Catholic Universities*, p. 240). In the well-know words of Pedro Arrupe, S.J., former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, students of Jesuit education should be inspired to become “men and women for others”.

¹⁹ “The Catholic University in the Modern World,” final document of the Second International Congress of Delegates of Catholic Universities, Rome, November 20-29, 1972, Section 1. Quoted in *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, para.14 (in Langan, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 234-235).

For Loyola University's internal coherence, much is at stake in bringing its Roman Catholic identity into intentional focus. But as Louis Dupré adds, there is much at stake for the world as well.

The most fundamental task of the Catholic university, to which all others must remain subservient, is that of preserving, nurturing, and developing the *spirit* . . . [a]t the core of all spiritual activity, however, lies the mysterious desire to respond to a transcendent summons that calls us humans to move beyond its present limits. . . . [t]he vocation of the Catholic university in our time is, against all odds, to keep the disparate elements of our culture together within an integrating transcendent perspective.²⁰

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²⁰ Louis Dupré, "On the Task and Vocation of the Catholic College" in Cernera, *Examining the Catholic Intellectual Tradition*, p. 31. See also, *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, para. 49 (in Langan, *Catholic Universities*, p. 244).