2000

I Have Called You By Name

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I Have Called You By Name

2000 Summer Seminar
Center for Catholic Studies
Seton Hall University
Proceedings of the
Center for Catholic Studies

I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME:
SPIRITUALITY AND
THE ACADEMIC VOCATION

Summer Seminar 2000

Seton Hall University
South Orange, New Jersey
ANNOUNCEMENT FOR
SUMMER SEMINAR 2000

Center for Catholic Studies
Third Faculty Development Seminar

“I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME:
SPIRITUALITY AND THE ACADEMIC VOCATION”

May 30 – June 1, 2000  9 a.m. – 12 noon

Elizabeth Johns, chair, History of Art Department, University of Pennsylvania, author of numerous books, including the most recent New Worlds from Old: 19th Century Australian and American Landscapes (National Gallery of Australia/Thames and Hudson, 1998) facilitated this seminar. She is a member of the Ignatian Spirituality Committee at Old St. Joseph’s Church, Philadelphia.

“Isaiah proclaims God’s knowledge of each of us. With ‘I have called you by name,’ the prophet reveals God’s call to us to live and work with the richness of our individual gifts. This seminar will probe the relation between our identity in God’s sight — God’s bringing us into being as distinct individuals — and our academic vocation.

What is our sense of our uniqueness in mind and spirit? What led us into the intellectual life? What in our life as a scholar brings us the deepest satisfaction? How do we enact this as a teacher? The academic vocation at once demands solitude and service, excitement and clarity about our own work or field of study and commitment to reach out to students and fellow scholars. Participants in the seminar will reflect on the personal uniqueness that the call into their discipline brings to fruition, the freedom and the constraints experienced in acting on the call in the world of academic culture, and the opportunities for community that teaching and scholarship offer.”

Elizabeth Johns
For all our dear departed
in this year of 2000

Beloved students and colleagues
May they rest in peace
I wish to recommend for your reading these proceedings of the third annual summer seminar of the Center for Catholic Studies. The previous two seminars titled “Knowledge and Wisdom” and “Divine Madness: Exercises in Appreciation” dealt with human and religious questions at the intersection of the individual academic disciplines. The present proceedings, coming out of the faculty seminar, May 30 to June 1, 2000, continues the same general area of questioning. The seminar, “Spirituality and the Academic Vocation,” was facilitated by Professor Elizabeth Johns, chair of the Department of the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania. Professor Johns, well published in her own area of art history, has a long-standing interest in the relationship of her discipline to more general and religious interests. Her background and familiarity with the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola made her an ideal facilitator for our faculty seminar.

As you can see from the various contributions, the academic “vocation” of each participant arose in widely different circumstances. Some faculty members, through long and arduous searching, eventually stumbled on to their field of specialization. Others knew what they would do from the get-go. Others, after years of teaching, have discovered “a vocation within a vocation,” a specialization within their own specialization. All are vitally involved in the research and teaching involved in their own particular area.

Whatever has been our own personal route to research and teaching, these essays reveal how important it is to recover the sources of our own earliest inspiration — and the transformation of that earlier, sometimes immature, inspiration into what inspires us today. For we do need inspiration to continue to study, to research, to stand up in the classroom and teach.

What is that inspiration? Our love of our subject? Our desire to make this world a better place? A response to some sense of a “divine calling?”

Whatever our understanding of our own academic “calling,” these faculty seminars are extremely important for building community among ourselves, for fostering the sparks of teaching and research in one another, for a clearer understanding of the role we play in the lives of one another, our students’ lives and the life of the wider human community.

All of us were deeply touched by the tragic fire this past year that claimed the lives of three of our Seton Hall students, Frank Caltabilota, John Giunta and Aaron Karol, and wounded many more. I would hope that through faculty seminars and colloquia, like the present one, we can come to see our roles as faculty in the healing and human development of our community. I am particularly pleased by the ecumenical and inter-religious dimensions of these seminars.

I would encourage our faculty to look ahead to next year’s Center for Catholic Studies Summer Seminar which will be on the topic of “The University and the Core Curriculum,” Monday, June 4 through Thursday, June 7, 2001.
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Cover: Artwork by Dawn Williams

Unless otherwise indicated all participants are from Seton Hall University.
“As a professor of art history, for instance,
I have from time to time stood silent
before the image I’ve just flashed on the screen
and finally broken the silence with
‘Isn’t that magnificent?’”

Elizabeth Johns
I was intrigued by the title of our seminar, “I Have Called You by Name,” because for all these years as a university professor, I always believed that teaching was something that I fell into and, it turned out, I did well. Humph. After three days of reflection, meditation and intimate discussion, I’m beginning to wonder. Perhaps I have been called to this.

Of course, I’d much rather believe that I came to this vocation by chance. Why such a capricious decision takes away any sense of life-choosing, any responsibility for my ultimate involvement with and affection for my students. I had worked as a journalist after college and, after retiring to give birth, I decided to go back to grad school to keep my brain from turning to mush. I sent in my resume, my application and my $30 fee and was astounded when the dean’s secretary at the University of Maryland called to offer me a teaching assistantship. My first reaction was, “Nope. I have no interest in teaching,” but upon reflection I thought, “Why the heck not?” Hardly a bolt of lightning or the invisible push of a guardian angel. “Why the heck not?” Like Anne Tyler’s marvelously constructed character Macon Leary in The Accidental Tourist, I didn’t choose this profession, it chose me. I’m just a spectator to this profession of mine, and the good and the bad that happen are beyond my control.

But then I’m hit with the possibility that maybe, just maybe, I have been called to this life of mine. Sometimes I’m sitting in my basement office (chicly decorated with artwork by my own three children, some of it dating back more than a decade), when a distraught student feels comfortable enough to come to me to solve a problem. I keep a box of tissues nearby and have become adept at metaphorically drying the tears of both young men and women. It comes to me that I’m pretty good at this.

Sometimes in class I’m hit with the realization that there are students who are actually listening to what I say. And they’re learning. I have had the honor to both teach my craft — journalism — and work on our newspaper as faculty adviser to The Setonian. I’m always delighted when my students throw my words back to me: “But Dr. Gottlieb, in class you said that you never start a news story with a quote, and look “blah, blah, blah.” I’m awed that they’re not only learning, but they’re able to apply this new knowledge.

The facilitator of our seminar, Elizabeth Johns, taught us many things. First of all, she taught us to meditate. Before we began, we sat with our eyes closed and our minds blank. She taught us the power of the silence. Then, she also taught us to be open to the power of vocation. Together we explored the different paths we took to arrive at the academic life. She showed us there was no one “right way.” And probably most importantly, she encouraged us to embrace the spiritual life while at the same time we live in the more concrete world of the teacher. She told us we could bring the spiritual into the classroom and urged us to be bold enough to bring our spiritual lives out into the public sphere. Her essay in this publication reflects upon the inner journey each of us took to arrive ultimately in the classroom.

The spring 2000 semester was a challenge to all of us in the Seton Hall community. If we could, we’d all take it back. As a professor, I felt inspired by my own students who rallied around their jobs at The Setonian and worked together to put out a newspaper on deadline after the Boland Hall fire in January when all they really wanted to do was sit around the cafe and cry. They put out a great issue of The Setonian, and they learned how hard and personal journalism can be. And through all of this, I was with them. I talked to them, advised them, helped them and watched over them. And when it was finished and we had a whole week to worry about the next paper, I stopped to think that maybe it was more than just an accident that I was here at Seton Hall.

Reading through the essays that are the culmination of our Catholic Studies seminar I am struck by how many of us were so deeply affected by the fire and how our lives were changed by it. The Seton Hall community, through tragedy, grew. You will read about Professor Regina Blackburn, who had one of the young men who died in her English class and Dr. Dawn Williams, our dean for community development, who led the University in prayer as a way of bringing our community together. Their essays reflect upon how they came to the academic life and why they do what they do.

Professor Peter Reader’s essay specifically focuses on the weighty task of transferring the enthusiasm we as teachers feel for our subject matter to uninterested students who are in our classes because the time is right or because it is required. So, too, Johanna Nolan, who came to our seminar from the Seton Hall Law School library, compared her life with all its nuances to the order and
structure of the Library of Congress classifications for books. Sounds like a stretch? No, it makes perfect sense that behind the seemingly haphazard approach, there is a purpose and a design. There is room for everything and everything has a proper place where only it can be.

The essay by Professor Tom Sowa, from Graduate Medical Education, was informed not only by our seminar but by his reading of a book about the monks who teach at St. Benedict’s Prep. How apt that a book about the monks by whom he was taught sparked his own reflections on the academic life. And our soccer coach, Manny Schellscheidt, focused his reflections around a poem that says learning is more about the people who teach than about the books that teachers use or the words that they impart.

Several of our essayists spoke from the heart and revealed themselves to us in new ways. We know that Dean Williams was in her high school’s marching band, that Professor Nancy Enright of the English Department met her husband here at Seton Hall, that Professor Blackburn was a star gazer as a child and that Sister Anita’s sweatshirt predicts that heaven is a library! That so many of our essayists opened themselves up to our readers does not surprise me because that was the kind of magical seminar we participated in. We shared our deepest feelings — including childhood secrets — and then learned from each other.

And several of our authors considered their specific disciplines. Vivienne Baldini, in our provost’s office, describes the four functions of scholarship: discovery, integration, application and, finally, teaching. She reminds those of us in the academy that we sometimes get lost in the technological whirlwind that is evolving and forget to reflect on our true vocations. Meanwhile, librarian Alan Delozier, our group’s self-described “wide-eyed archivist” describes how his role in the University’s Special Collections Center provides a special opportunity to serve. The archives of the diocese pass through his hands and prompt him to reflect on the special mission of a Catholic university.

Our group was jam packed with librarians and Marta Mestrovic Deyrup, a reference librarian in Walsh Library, used her essay to ponder the ways that technology is changing the special vocation of teaching. Her essay comforts me because her description of the sanitized virtual classroom reminds me that there will always be a place in the academy for people like Marta who care deeply about their students.

The library quartet was rounded out by Sister Anita Talar, who glorifies her chosen vocation by reminding us that librarians give their students the keys to unlocking knowledge. She parallels her task with the adage “Give a man a fish and feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime.” From her childhood spent “playing librarian” to a career dedicated to “teaching students to fish!,” Sister Anita draws from her experiences to a lofty goal of facilitating lifelong learning for our students. The presence of Coach Manny Schellscheidt and Robin Cunningham, the academic adviser to the athletes, at our seminar served as a springboard for many a discussion that employed the metaphors of the playing field. Not only do I now believe that God is a soccer fan, but I’ve also come to a realization of just how spiritual athletics can be. Robin’s essay describes the ways and places we can find God — in the struggles, in the journey, in the silence, in our will, and most importantly, in our loving.

Last year, when I participated in the seminar I wrote an essay that considered why I write. This year, I am confronted with an even more complicated dilemma: why do I teach? After reading this collection of essays, I am more certain that I did not come to this task by accident. Monsignor Richard Liddy, the spiritual guide and force behind the Center for Catholic Studies, relates the anecdote of the man who translated the philosopher Plotinus, but earned his living as a waiter. He said that what he did was “worth a life.” I was floored by the power of that image. Forget fame, forget riches (although I do still play the lottery and call it my pension fund), the teaching is worth a life. Monsignor Liddy also invokes St. Augustine in his essay with the words “Late have I loved thee,” and this phrase, too, brings to mind why we have all been called to teach. Thus, it is with great pride that I bring you this collection of essays, a fine collection of some of our deepest thoughts, all reflecting our theme. I hope that they help you, the reader, to embrace your spirituality and that by doing so, you too will be open to the voice you hear when it is your turn to be called by name.
We are not the first generation to be both startled and consoled by Isaiah's proclamation that God calls each of us to live and work with gifts that are uniquely ours. Although his confidence is uplifting, we, like so many who went before us, are certain that ours are impossible times. This is especially the case today for many of us in the academy. Old standards fall, many of our students see values as relative, and we strain for continuity with even our own past. The meaning of our work as academics — as individuals precious in God's sight, as persons in relationship with others, and as teachers and scholars — is fraught with uncertainty.

What are the characteristics at work in the worlds that we call the "spiritual" and the "academic"? By spirituality most of us mean the quality of living in awareness of a transcendent reality, a reality that is mysterious but yet assures that our lives are treasured. Spirituality, part of our fundamental orientation as persons, is to be distinguished from religion, a subscription to specific tenets of belief. There are many emphases in spirituality, on nature, for instance, or finding the transcendent in everyday life, or looking for God beyond all sensory experience, but most would agree that it is a specific quality of being.

Similarly, in the academy there are two-year institutions, four-year, and those with graduate divisions and professional schools, public, church-related, and private, liberal arts and professional. When we say "the academy," however, we call to mind certain recent problems in higher education: the separation of much of its work from the understanding of the general public, pressure from students and parents for pre-professional curricula, and the legacy of the 19th-century separation of "knowledge" from "faith." Faculty have split identities: scholarship demands solitude, teaching demands social interaction; they offer a coherent curriculum, but they compete with each other for salaries, tenure, research funding and even office space. Many feel that instead of being enhanced by their vocation, they are diminished by the many tensions that accompany it.

Can people be explicitly spiritual and successful academics? Those of a cynical frame of mind might question the very possibility. Many faculty, following the self-consciously "intellectual" trends of their discipline, cast aspersions on all convictions not grounded in rationality. As a consequence, other colleagues maintain silence about the entire subject of spirituality and relegate their spiritual lives to private, even secret, spheres. And in our current careful obeisance to diversity, even those who do not insist that the intellect and the spirit exist in separate spheres doubt the propriety of talking about spiritual convictions to a population characterized by different religions.

This essay proposes that this unity of identity is indeed possible, and that in action it can be exhilarating. Achieving it is an ongoing undertaking, involving reclaiming what in our history has been lost and living in the present with deeper understanding of our identity as individuals. My suggestions for this process are informed by experience gained in many years of being an academic, by methods of reflection absorbed in making the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, and by much testing in my own life and those of others. Although Ignatius is identified with the Catholic tradition, his practices can enrich the lives of all, regardless of religious dogma or its absence. I pay attention here to three of them, which he identified with "contemplation." First, he urged that we develop our sensory imagination in envisioning or remembering a scene; second, that we attend to the emotions that flood our interior lives and underlie our discursive activity; and third, that we develop the habit of daily examination of our experience. All these practices can inform the most important task that we have as persons — to strive for clarity about what we are doing and why.

The undertaking, then, is to ponder: Who are we? Who were we in our early years, and what has emerged? What is our vocation — the work that we have felt impelled to do from the very center of our identity? What were the turns and surprises in the journey to where we are now? And where do we see that we can go? Such an ongoing examination is rooted in our need to know ourselves across the course of our lives, situated as we are with unique memories, sensory experiences, imaginations and emotional needs.

In reviewing our history, we can enhance what we learn in several ways.
First, following Ignatius, we can visit our memories with our sensory imagination, dwelling on the sights, sounds, smells, tastes or sensations of touch that we remember as accompanying each experience. For instance, what were the colors associated with a poignant memory (red? light green? blue?); the light (dazzling? dusky? full of shadows?); the sounds (birds singing? a radio in the background broadcasting Mozart? A voice raised in fury?); the fragrances (bread in the oven? freshly mowed grass? pine needles?); the heat or coldness of the moment (were you sweating? did you shiver?); the tactile qualities that your body remembers (a smooth shirt? rough hands?).

Second, we can recognize the emotions that accompany our memory of each event. Are we plunged into sadness? Do we feel a vague discomfort? Are we overcome by an inexplicable surge of joy? As we pay attention to both senses and emotions, we recreate vivid experiences instead of going over them with a long-entrenched analysis of their meaning. We are able to experience the events freshly. Because of this sharpness, one fully imagined scene leads to another that we have long forgotten. Sensory responseloosens us to the free flow of feelings; both regroup us in “who we were” and “who we are.” We begin to be created anew, in retrospect and in the present.

In addition to sensory imagination and attentiveness to the flow of emotions, we can read poetry, essays and fiction that stimulate our associations and help to unearth experiences. With a thoughtful, slow pondering of the words and images in a text, whether it is sacred or secular, we can see our own experience in a new light, explore with a striking metaphor what we have not considered earlier, and turn over the implications for our lives of these fresh understandings.

These reflections are not “accomplished” in one sitting. They are the work of long pondering, with each session informing the next. Depending on our current situation, different memories present themselves to be re-lived and sorted out. Each revisiting teaches us something new. And as we age, the reflections assume different patterns.

We start this reclamation by probing our earliest sense of ourselves and the world — our interior lives and our exterior lives. In our inner lives, what were early moments in which we were suddenly aware of God, or, if we prefer to think of it this way, moments in which we had a sharp apprehension of living in a mysterious universe? We might think back to our first memories of being in nature. Were we playing on a green lawn in the high point of a summer afternoon, the sun blazing and our body hot and sweaty? What was the emotion associated with this play? Why do we remember it? We can place ourselves back in early scenarios in which we had strong emotions — of awe, or fear or trust. On re-experiencing these events, can we identify moments at which we knew that we were unique? That God — that the universe — knew us by name?

We might next turn to our exterior history — our history “in the world” that led to our choice of vocation. What did we love from the beginning? Perhaps we had a childhood of reading, or making up and acting in dramas, or fascination with trees and animals and bugs, or collecting things that were old. We let moments surface in which we realize our gifts. Just who were we — quick with mathematics, or fascinated with words, or caught up in the ritual of theater? Intrigued with numbers or letters or costumes? Did we spend our childhood leisure in loud play with others, or in private retreat reading or playing with dolls or puppets?

We consider our developing character. Perhaps we were generous in heart, doggedly determined regardless of our task, or easily angered and quickly repentant. What cluster of virtues, contradictions and desires constituted our individuality? How did we see them then, and how can we see these clusters now?

Many texts could aid these ponderings, but a particular favorite of mine is Psalm 139 in the Hebrew Scriptures. The psalmist encourages — indeed demands — our emotional reactions. As we read and react to the psalm, we can be attentive to our emotions on envisioning God as lovingly engaged with our every thought and action. How do we see our lives in this perspective? We may find ourselves wrestling with regretted characteristics of our personality and history that loom large. Or we may feel comforted by God’s abiding presence. Do we indeed have the conviction that we are “fearfully, wonderfully made”?

When we turn to what developed after our earliest years, we can retrieve moments in our memory that point to our continuing — or languishing — awareness of God. What happened on that inner journey? And in our exploration of the world, we can recollect our earliest dreams about a life’s work. Did we fall in love with concrete phenomena or the great intellectual and ethical questions of the discipline? Perhaps we wanted to join a group of other scholars devoted to the discipline and become part of their community. Who were our models, and what did they teach us?
Perhaps we can begin to see the relation between our spiritual history and our early attractions to our field, or even our commitment to it later, after much trial and error. As we considered preparing for a work in the academy, was it the teaching that drew us — the excitement of sharing with students our knowledge of what we had always loved, whether field sports, or anatomy, or Shakespeare, or broadcasting, or psychology, or archeology? Was it the possibility of our own intellectual enlargement when we heard and read our students' assimilation of what we were teaching? Or was it perhaps that we might influence a generation of undergraduates, and perhaps, of graduate students, too? Perhaps we did not imagine ourselves in a classroom so much as in a laboratory, or a library, or a study, or in the field. Or maybe we simply “fell” into academia, and even became a specialist in a particular field “by accident.” What do these aspects of our unique experience mean for us now?

If we characterize the journey that followed our decision to become part of the professoriate, we can scrutinize its highlights, its unexpected turns, its challenges. Looking at the inner journey over time, we might ask, what were our spiritual certainties in our best moments and the hopes that sustained us in our worst moments? Perhaps gradually, with the passing of years, we found ourselves falling more deeply into awareness of and reverence for God’s creation through our work. Maybe through our study of human behavior as a psychologist or sociologist or journalist we developed affection for even its eccentricities. Perhaps as a physicist we grew into new intuitions of God. Or as a humanist we came to be ever more mystified by creativity.

Exteriorly, did we subordinate spiritual or personal concerns to the demanding path of achievement in the academy (on a curriculum vitae, for instance, or with awards, or high enrollments and adulatory student evaluations)? Perhaps we dropped early sources of nourishment, or made “temporary” adjustments that turned out to be permanent. What disappointments caused us to push some possibilities out of the way? What were the most disorienting turns in our path? Bringing all this into today’s realm, we can examine present circumstances that complicate our work and commitment. Which ones can we ignore, and which ones can we work to change?

As we gather insights about where we have been, and look to see where we can go, a daily examination of the present is essential. We can set aside quiet moments at the end of a day and review the day’s events. We use the same methods that guided us in looking at our memories. We recreate the days’ events with our senses, noticing the emotions that particular events or conversations startled into action (or perhaps that have formed a constant undercurrent the rest of the day). Full attentiveness to the present and to our emotional flow enables us to assess our deepest identity and the direction we should take to live it. It is to see afresh, to hear what we had shut out, to touch with interest, to taste with new sharpness, to smell what is immediate — to be molded anew into moving forward.

Bringing our past into new relationship with the present forges a transformed sense of the continuity of our original gifts with the potential for our future.

As we move more and more deeply into appreciation for our unique name, fulfilling Isaiah’s promise that God has called each of us, we realize that we cannot stop at knowing ourselves, but we must move into calling our students and our colleagues by name, too.

Consider our students. Might we integrate our spiritual awareness into the very way we teach our subjects? Every discipline has its richness for students, especially in introductory courses where our generalizations can stimulate thought-provoking reflection. We can make explicit the spiritual questions or implications of the material — in the study of literature, for instance, Shakespeare’s and others’ questions about the meaning of life; in the study of anatomy the beauty and design of the human body and in astronomy the dazzling design of the universe; in the study of history the treasure of experience in archival holdings; in training on the athletic field the freedom of physical and mental mastery; in learning to write the self-knowledge and self-confidence that quietly becomes part of one’s being; in training students to use the resources of the library and the World Wide Web the excitement that comes from competence in investigating knowledge; in close study in any discipline the richness of revering the process rather than the outcomes of learning. Too, there is a place for sheer wonder. As a professor of art history, for instance, I have from time to time stood silent before the image I’ve just flashed on the screen and finally broken the silence with “Isn’t that magnificent?” Throughout all, we can emphasize the astonishing individuality of each one of us, and at the same time the journey that we share.

In addition to interjecting spiritual questions in various moments, we can alter our syllabi. We might be able to imagine a restructuring of a course that we’ve taught for years, a reordering that would emphasize for our students the differences and congruities between the universe that we see and the universe that we intuit and feel. We can teach our courses reflexively, stimulat-
ing students to think about the meaning of knowledge itself and the process of its acquisition. For example, we might call to students’ attention the changes in the discipline over the last decades or centuries, giving them an historiographic awareness that both deepens their attention to history and puts their own presence to this historical moment in perspective.

If our students need this kind of integration of our lives as spirits and our lives as physical beings, so do our colleagues. We may develop a reciprocal exchange with colleagues on research interests, ask to visit a colleague’s lecture on a particular topic, mentor younger faculty (making this a department process), volunteer to give lectures for a colleague who is ill. At faculty meetings we can point the direction of a discussion toward the common good; at troubled moments we can interject good-natured humor. At all times we can indicate our appreciation for each person’s unique contribution to the group. The parable of the sower in the New Testament Scriptures (Mark 4:1-8) may be the best guideline for assessing what works and what doesn’t — what soil is rocky, what soil is so shallow that sowing the seed there will not permit it to grow, and what soil is rich, so that our efforts may be fruitful?

As we root ourselves in our own uniqueness and appreciate that of our students and colleagues — as we participate in the ongoing work of creation — is there in fact any “secular” calling?

O Lord, you have probed me, you know me:
you know when I sit and when I stand;
you understand my thoughts from afar.

My travels and my ways you mark;
with all my ways you are familiar.

If I fly with the wings of dawn
and alight beyond the sea,
Even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand hold me fast.

Psalm 139
THEMES AND READINGS
FOR SUMMER SEMINAR 2000

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SPIRITUALITY AND THE ACADEMIC VOCATION  
by Richard M. Liddy

The language of “vocation” is generally associated — at least in Catholic circles — with being a priest or a religious brother or sister. This was certainly my experience. Some of my earliest memories center around wanting to be a priest. Kneeling in Our Lady of the Valley Church in Orange, New Jersey, I found myself wanting to be like Father Thomas Gillick, a young priest seriously serving people. Though I wrestled with this “vocation” through the years, I never really wanted to be or do anything else.

Nevertheless, my calling to be a priest involved a further calling to the academic life, to be a philosopher and a theologian. And, as things have turned out, I have realized that my vocation involved helping other people to realize that they too had a “vocation,” that they too had a calling. In the words of Cardinal Newman,

God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission; I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work.

I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it – if I do but keep His commandments.

Therefore I will trust Him. Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him: in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him; in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends; He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me - still He knows what He is about.

Nevertheless, pace Cardinal Newman, I am convinced that God’s knowing “what he is about” is also something he wishes to share with us human beings; and among the things he wishes to share with us are at least some “intimations” of our vocation in life, our concrete calling. In this article, I would like to reflect on this topic of “vocation” and link it to the topics of spirituality and the academic life.

1. Vocation

I don’t know Who — or what — put the question, I don’t know when it was put, I don’t even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer Yes to Someone — or Something — and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life in self-surrender had a goal.

Dag Hammerskjöld

Somewhere, at some time, Dag Hammerskjöld, the noted Secretary-General of the United Nations during the 1950s and early 60s, heard a “call.” Was it in adolescence? In young adulthood? He could not recall. But “that” he was called, he remembered. Somewhere, at some time, he realized that his life was being lived in dialogue, a dialogue with an “Other.”

The dialogue took the form of a question. What was the question about? It was about “existence,” that is, life in all its fullness. It was a question about the meaningfulness of existence — “the meaning of it all” — the meaningfulness of the universe, and within that “all” the meaningfulness of his own life. Especially the meaningfulness of his life as “self-surrender,” as being poured out in service.

In his Markings, Hammerskjöld remarks that at some time that question came home to him — the meaningfulness of it all and the meaningfulness of his own life of service — and he answered “Yes.”

Surely Hammerskjöld’s Lutheran Christian background played a role in his understanding of his experience. Surely from his earliest years he had been told that there was One who spoke to him in his conscience and who called him to do what was good and true. Surely his tradition told him of Some One mysterious and intimate who was profoundly interested in his life. Surely that tradition urged him to “listen” for a “call.”

But Hammerskjöld’s own experience was more than any tradition could provide for him. For that experience was actual and existential; it took place in the context of the talents and experiences that were uniquely his; and
in that context it was a call to live out his life in a very specific way — a way the world came to know as that of a very wise Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I am emphasizing the distinction between the general and the concrete, between the doctrines of a tradition and the concrete assumptions of one’s particular role in life, one’s “vocation.” Bernard Lonergan once called the latter “an ethics of achievement.”

One can conveniently distinguish between an ethics of law and an ethics of achievement. While an ethics of law regards rules of conduct — don’t do this, don’t do that — an ethics of achievement reveals that there is a world and that there is something for me to do in it. It includes the idea of vocation, not simply in the sense in which we use the word “priest” but also in a general sense, and of development in the apprehension of the good. An ethics of achievement is more positive than an ethics of law.

To live a life of authenticity, however, to find one’s vocation, one has to listen with one’s heart and discern the movement that calls us to life from the distractions that deaden our spirits. C.S. Lewis gives a wonderful description of such an inner discernment in his Screwtape Letters, the letters of the devil to his nephew Wormwood. In one of the letters the young devil tells his uncle that the person whose life he has been trying to pervert had “a close call” the day before. He was in the public library and he was thinking — and his thinking led him to think about God and about changing his life to lead a more God-like life. Suddenly a woman in a bright red dress passed by — a bus honked its horn in the street and “my client was totally distracted from his dangerous train of thought.” Then the man realized how “unreal” had been his reflections and he gathered up his books and left the library.

On the other hand, an ethics of achievement leads us to avoid distractions and to be obedient to the deep call we find within our selves. Is it to be a writer? A teacher? A public servant? An inventor? What is calling us? What has touched us so deeply that it is worth giving our lives for it? Stephen McKenna, the great translator of the philosopher, Plotinus, spent many years waiting on tables in a restaurant in order that he might be free to do his translations. Asking himself why he did it, he replied, “This is worth a life.”

It was worth a life. What was his initial inspiration? Did that inspiration develop? Did it deepen and widen in the course of his life?

Karl Rahner, noted theologian of the 20th century, often wrote that the acceptance of our own lives is the acceptance of God. To accept ourselves — our history and limitations, our weaknesses and sins, our “destiny” with all the particularity that entails — is a profound act that can only be accomplished with the grace of God. That incomprehensible mystery is so intimately entwined with our very selves — our history, our consciousness, our destiny — that we need the grace of God to be ourselves — to respond to our own history, to live authentically, to find our human fulfillment, to live out our calling.

For Rahner the utterly transcendent is also utterly immanent and in our surrender to our own deepest being we are surrendering to God. The Spirit of the living God completes and utterly fulfills our own being as open to this ultimate mysterious horizon.

To do this, however, we cannot be “extroverts” in the bad sense — totally taken up by the things in the world around us — so intent on “gaining the whole world” that we lose our own souls. We have to cultivate a “spirituality,” that is, we have to learn how to stay alive.

One Jesuit priest told me he remembered being sick for several months as a young adolescent — and during that time he began to listen every day to the radio. He listened and listened, and as he listened, he said, “I began to feel my own self, my own ‘interiority,’ my own ‘self,’ ebbing away.” Or, as St. Augustine put it,

> Late have I loved Thee, O Beauty so ancient and so new; late have I loved Thee! For behold Thou wert within me, and I outside; and I sought Thee outside and in my unloveliness fell upon those lovely things that Thou has made. Thou wert with me and I was not with Thee. I was kept from Thee by those things, yet had they not been in Thee, they would not have been at all. Thou didst call and cry to me and break open my deafness: and Thou didst send forth Thy beams and shine upon me and chase away my blindness: Thou didst breathe fragrance upon me, and I drew in my breath and do now pant for Thee: I tasted Thee, and now hunger and thirst for Thee: Thou didst touch me, and I have burned for Thy peace.

2. Spirituality

...Spirituality is not a matter of cultivating a
certain part of ourselves that we call “spirit,” or of achieving a state of psychic serenity untouched by the confusion and suffering inflicted by those “others” who surround us in the world. It is instead a matter of engaging with our freedom that which is very much “other” to us: God’s Holy Spirit.[6]

Spirituality, if it means anything, means getting in touch with or uncovering our authentic self, our true spirit, in the context of our concrete history. This can take place through conversation with others who help us in this process of uncovering or recovering our true self — or it can take place through silence and prayer in which we allow the capabilities of our true self to emerge. We allow our spirits to be touched by a deeper level, to be enlivened, to be led.

For, as great spiritual masters of many religious traditions have pointed out, there is a veil or a wall of unauthenticity that can hide our true selves from our selves. That veil or wall can be made up of many things: guilt, self-doubt, illusion, crippling addiction, total preoccupation with what does not count — the many ways in which we allow the unreal to overcome what is most real in ourselves.

What is terrible about being a “couch potato,” a TV addict, is that this addiction to fleeting images keeps us from the real world of real people. We are like the prisoners in Plato’s cave who become so good at the “game shows” of flickering images on the wall in front of them that they never consider escaping to the bigger world outside the cave. That real world is the world of real things and real people and real community.

What a tragedy if we never live in the real world of real people! Slices of life can substitute for life. Tragically, T.S. Eliot wrote that most people “live lives of quiet desperation.”

And that is why all the great religious traditions of the world encourage “conversion,” a movement out of the shadows into the light.

Are you a workaholic? Take time to smell the flowers. Talk to a wise person who, speaking to your truest self, can help you live in the real world — a world of community and of persons helping other persons.

Learn to “sit still and know that I am God” — however one conceives of God. Spiritual leaders have often encouraged this process of just “being” to emerge out of the frantic chase after illusions.

I remember reading of a psychologist who would often encourage his patients to just learn to “sit still” — to “center,” if only for a few minutes each day. People began with short periods of time — a few minutes, five minutes. Gradually they were able to sit still for longer periods of time, sometimes even a half hour. One patient, after doing this for some time, reported: “After centering for some time, I feel that I have uncovered ‘a hidden stream’ deep within me — a stream of life welling up within me — a stream I never knew existed.”

Such “spirituality,” moving us beyond our fearful, frightened, frantic, addicted selves, helps us to hear, to listen, to the words of our religious traditions. In the midst of the many words being spoken around us, the Spirit of God can help us to hear the Word. Such spirituality can also help us to hear “the call” that Dag Hammarskjöld heard, the “call” to the meaningfulness of life, the “call” to self-surrender in service, the “call” to one’s own vocation.

3. The Academic Vocation

A research project, in the arts at any rate, is a lifetime affair; and only those who put their whole lives into it get anywhere. The assumption behind tenure is that being an academic is a vocation. The assumption behind abolition is that there are no vocations for anyone any more.[7]

In opposition to Margaret Thatcher’s threat to abolish tenure in the English universities, Cambridge historian Nicholas Boyle contended that tenure was a direct contradiction to the principle of functional efficiency that so dominates modern life. Tenure witnesses to the power and validity of unfettered human intelligence in its search for meaning against the constraints of immediacy.

The roads to academe are manifold, but it would seem that “insight” is one common quality on that road: insight into a particular field, the pieces falling together in a coherent and perhaps even beautiful way. Perhaps this took place after a particularly long and difficult journey — for “learning makes a bloody entrance.” Jerome Miller writes of a young girl’s inspiration as she peers through a telescope:

One look through the eye of a telescope may be all it takes for a child to become an astronomer in her heart — if the glimpse of the stars it offers makes her feel like she has been given access to an inexhaustibly fascinating world in comparison with which her ordinary world suddenly seems not just uninteresting but insubstantial. [8]
Who knows where we are going when we are young? And yet, when we were young, invited by parents and teachers, we set out on paths of exploration. Some area of research beckoned us, attracted us, “called us.” Perhaps the origins of that attraction lay in the “gene pool,” the long and mysterious emergence of the universe and of ourselves within the universe. Perhaps the attraction lit up when we happened upon a particularly attractive mentor who opened up to us worlds we never knew existed. Certainly the culture of our parents and teachers influenced us. They “limned” the shape of the universe for us. But it was only by going beyond what we knew, that we could seek the prize that beckoned us.

This can be a very painful process. Jane Jacobs, marvelous researcher and writer on cities, once described her “method” of searching, of responding to vague inner questions.

Here is what I do. When I start exploring some subject, I hardly know what I think. I’m just trying to learn anything I can about it. Rather than reading systematically, which is possible only if you know what you want, I read as omnivorously as I can manage, in anything that interests me. I often don’t even know why I’m interested in some facet or other, and all I can say about this is that from experience I’ve learned to trust myself when I’m interested. (The experience from which I’ve learned that is being interested but saying to myself, “no, no, come off it, stop wasting time, this is beside the point,” and then learning much later, as I begin to put things together, that it wasn’t beside the point at all and my subconscious, or something, was trying to tell me something.)

As I read, and also notice things concretely, patterns from this information begin to form in my mind. Also, I learn that what I thought originally was “the subject” is not necessarily the subject, or is only an alley or side shoot of it — that there is a lot else to it, or underneath it. So I make outlines as I go along, but they keep changing, and what I end up with bears little relation — or relation only in small part — to what I was starting with, I thought. Very messy. This is also very uncomfortable. I don’t like all this confusion. I only keep at it because, hard and uncomfortable though it is, it is worse to stay in such confusion. I tend to think: I would never have gotten into this if I knew what I was getting into, but then it’s too late.

Back to the patterns. They begin to show up, of their own accord, just out of the material itself. I am very suspicious of them. I try to find stuff to disprove them, and when they don’t hold up, I discard them. Often in doing so, I learn something else, so the process, while disappointing — hey, it sounded like a great idea but it wasn’t — is not wasted…

If a pattern or an idea holds up, instead, and further exploration or examples, insofar as they appear, only reinforce and amplify it, then I begin to trust it, although I keep on the lookout for contradictions.

If I wanted, I could go on and on and on, but that would only be tiresome and repetitive and perhaps self-indulgent in displaying my industriousness and labor! I go in for a different type of self-indulgence. While I’m not an artist, I do feel bound to try, as far as I am able, to produce a work of art as well as a piece of truth — and one thing about a work of art is that it conceals, rather than parades, the laboriousness that went into it which was, after all, nothing but the work in its service.

But as you see, I’ve no magic or great enlightenment to explain, rather just messy, muddy work, which I’m inclined to think that thinking maybe usually is. If somebody could tell me how to go about it more neatly and quickly and efficiently, and still make it work, oh would I be grateful.

Jacobs highlights the long and often painful path to meaning and truth. It can at times be so painful and the temptations to give up are many. Bernard Lonergan wrote of following out the deep desire within us that is “the pure detached disinterested desire to know.”

But within this desire to know there is also a moment of passivity, of “waiting on truth,” as the French writer, Simone Weil, called it. In a wonderful essay, she wrote of the relationship between “school studies” and the love of God. Both demand attentiveness of spirit to “the other,” both demand an element of passivity, of “waiting on the truth” or “waiting on God.” Neither is attained by sheer willing or physical force.

So something happened to us when we were young
that led us to the academic life, that attracted us to search for meaning in this vocation. Is this not what happened to us when we were young? A vague invitation to explore a woods where something waits to be found? To be discovered? Many woods? A large forest? Many treasures?

Was the forest literature? Or a particular area of literature? Or a particular science? Or philosophy? Or history? Or a particular area of human work?

What drew us? Did we stumble upon something? The question is “How to recover our academic vocation?” How to recover the deep desire to know when it seems to have faded so much into the mists of time? How to recover that initial inspiration when this vocation held so much promise of “life”? How to recover our vocation from beneath the clouds and mists that veil it from us — even the “academic” distractions?

- of power politics and turf wars?
- of the “business” of academics?
- or “busy-ness?” — do we stop to smell the flowers?[11]?
- or the technology that threatens to separate us ever more from one another?
- or the ideologies that treat people as things?
- or the skepticism that deflates the desire to know and claims we can never really know anything?

How to recover the passion that led us to the academic vocation in the first place? How to learn to begin again to live within that passion or from that passion?

Spirituality is a way we can re-find that passion. Perhaps we can be guided by words that call us to find our true selves. Those words can come from others in our own community. Those words can come from the ancient Scriptures. That seems to have been Dag Hammerskjöld’s experience. Let me complete the quote I cited earlier.

I don’t know Who — or what — put the question, I don’t know when it was put, I don’t even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer Yes to Someone — or Something — and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life in self-surrender had a goal.

From that moment I have known what it means “not to look back,” and “to take no thought for the morrow.”

Led by the Ariadne’s thread of my answer through the labyrinth of Life, I came to a time and place where I realized that the Way leads to a triumph which is a catastrophe, and to a catastrophe which is a triumph, that the price for committing one’s life would be reproach, and that the only elevation possible to man lies in the depths of humiliation. After that, the word “courage” lost its meaning, since nothing could be taken from me.

As I continued along the Way, I learned, step by step, word by word, that behind every saying in the Gospels stands one man and one man’s experience. Also behind the prayer that the cup might pass from him and his promise to drink it. Also behind each of the words from the cross,[12]

4. Conclusion

In an as-yet unpublished essay, John Haughey translates much of what I have been saying into the language of Christian theology.[13] Ultimately, every human vocation, every human “calling,” is rooted in the divine community, the divine three-in-one of interpersonal loving that is the life of the Father, the Word and their Holy Spirit. Every human community is a reflection of that community and is being invited into an ever deeper participation in that first community. That is the Word Jesus came to speak. That is the objective of the gift of the Spirit: to enliven human beings so that they live their lives out in response to the Spirit of God and eventually become fully and freely united with the Father. The gift of the Spirit changes human hearts so that they can actually love one another. The gift of the Spirit results in the self-sacrificing love for the sake of the world. It is for love of the world that Jesus came and died and rose again. It is for love of the world that the Spirit is given.

Such a gift of the Spirit results in particular “vocations” — to be a teacher, a doctor, a mechanic, a mother, a priest. Such a gift of the Spirit results in particular “charisms,” or gifts that are the lives and talents of particular persons but raised to a new register. Such charisms or “gifts” are ultimately the gifts of particular persons to the community — as Dag Hammerskjöld was to the community of the United Nations.

Such charisms have an “intensified particularity” about them. We might be “called” to be teachers, but we are each called in our own particular way.

Each of us contributes more to the common
good when we dare to undertake a journey into our own particularity… than when we attempt to homogenize all differences or [try to] root out all particularity.\[14\]

Or, as Karl Rahner put it, there is “an utterly individual imperative of the individual will of God, which is the basis of one’s uniqueness.”

Charism is the act where the kairos of God — the “right time — the fullness of time” — intersects with the kronos or cycle of human time. It is by paying attention to the movements of the Spirit, by developing a spirituality of “ears to hear and eyes to see,” by being obedient to our “call” that each of us lives out the vocation that is ours. As academics, when we enter a classroom, the kairos of God’s calling intersects the lives of each of our students. Hopefully, we are listening and responding — for the benefit of us all.

References

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13. Haughey, Sl, John, “Vatican II’s Call to Holiness and Public Life.” Address to the Catholic Theological Society of America, San Jose, California, June 8, 2000; to be published in the proceedings of the CTSA.
The Participants
Having gifts (faculties, talents, qualities) that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them: He whose gift is prophecy, let him prophesy according to the proportion of his faith; He whose gift is practical service, let him give himself to serving; he who teaches, to his teaching; He who exhorts, to his exhortation; he who contributes, let him do it in simplicity and liberality; he who gives aid and superintends, with zeal and singleness of mind; he who does acts of mercy, with genuine cheerfulness and joyful eagerness.

Romans 12:6-8

Engaging in the Catholic Studies Seminar, my first experience of this kind, provided an excellent opportunity for reflection, prayer, meditation and mostly self-study. It was indeed a unique opportunity to witness my own personal journey, as well as others in the group — all of whom provided remarkable reflections on spirituality in vocation. I found this time for reflection particularly helpful at a moment in my life that was hectic and fast-paced with piles of work to complete successfully. With a feeling of both privilege and deep appreciation to engage in the seminar, I discovered the need to take more time for myself to be self-reflective in my daily life and, most importantly, in my work. My work as an administrator in higher education is my chosen vocation. Like others in the seminar who are dedicated to their vocation, I recognize that my vocation is indeed an important part of my life and, hence, my spiritual life. Therefore, both professionally and spiritually, what makes me most content in my vocation is the key element of service as servant to students, faculty and administrators in the University community with a keen focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning.

It was apparent, after three days in the Catholic Studies Seminar, that each participant's vocation, closely intertwined and yet different, reflected one's character. The gifts of knowledge and passion were shared with a community of scholars in the ultimate form of service, which appeared to have a profound effect on the soul. At different levels, group members were able to reveal a part of their soul dedicated to vocation. Thomas Moore (1992), lecturer and writer, wrote that all work is vocation, a calling from a place that is the source of meaning and identity, the roots of which lie beyond human intention and interpretation. That examination of the deep imagery and myth that reside within ordinary language also offers some insight into work. Sometimes we refer to our work as an “occupation,” a word meaning “to be taken and seized,” which can be puzzling if we believe that we choose our work. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that our work has chosen us. Coincidentally, many of those engaged in the seminar spoke about how they just “happened” to fall into their work, that the occupation just took residence within them. Certainly, if we happen to fall into our occupation, work in this way is still a vocation. We can be called by it or to it, and we certainly can love our work.

Service and Teaching

The community of scholars in the Catholic Studies Seminar discussed vocation in light of service to the University. This service, interdisciplinary in nature, provided a great deal of focus on teaching and learning. Whether the discussion involved a classroom scenario, the relationship between faculty and student, a one-on-one coaching situation on the “soccer” playing field, at the library reference desk, or even in an administrative office, teaching and learning is at the heart of our roles in higher education. In many respects, the facilitation of teaching and learning is easier to discuss than to define. As an administrator in academic affairs, my role is to assist in facilitating process and policy procedures, but at the heart of my work — and the work of the University as a whole — is the focus on teaching and learning and the interdependence of instruction and scholarship. A desired goal in my vocation is to help strengthen our higher education community of professionals for service and scholarship. Moreover, to work more closely together as a community, to learn more by doing and to enhance teaching with creativity while, at the same time, valuing the impact of faculty teaching and research. Certainly, it can be witnessed that our professional preparation, (whether in or outside the classroom, especially preparation that emphasizes instruction on teaching skills, as well as the actual role of the faculty member) has been taking on different views within our current University environment.

Ernest Boyer (1990) provides an approach that encourages higher education professionals to recognize
scholarship as a professional activity. He believes that scholarship extends beyond teaching and research, that it is indeed a balance that includes service to the community both locally and internationally. Boyer looks at the diversity of faculty functions and looks to the integration of service, research and teaching: that is, to be able to perform service outside the classroom, scholarly research, establishing professional credentials to do original creative work, while also integrating and applying knowledge with “a mosaic of talent” through the scholarship of teaching. Boyer believes that if these dimensions are fully acknowledged and rewarded, there will be a “renewed vitality to higher learning and the nation” (p. 27).

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

In the past five years, the term “scholarship of teaching and learning” has undergone a transformation. No longer referring simply to the scholarly components of excellent teaching, it now highlights the way in which one can reflectively and systematically examine one’s own teaching practice. Lee Shulman (1993) explains that the scholarship of teaching is a kind of scholarship that faculty conduct on their own teaching. In order to produce a scholarship of teaching, there first needs to be a fundamental shift in how one defines teaching as an activity and thus as an object of investigation. The object of analysis may range from the acquisition of basic skills to the development of personal values or the transformation of whole knowledge paradigms. Moreover, that the development or transformation may also include a reconnection to disciplinary and professional communities where faculty can pursue their scholarly work. Shulman (1998) writes that for an activity to be designated as scholarship, it should include certain key characteristics: It should be a public account of some or all of the full act of teaching, susceptible to critical review and evaluation by professional peers, and available for exchange as well as use by other members of one’s scholarly community. These are the core components of all forms of scholarship and the features by which “scholarship properly communicated and critiqued serves as the building blocks for knowledge growth in the field” (p. 6). Shulman goes on to explain that too often teaching is identified only as the active interactions between teacher and students in the classroom and argues that teaching, like other forms of scholarship, is an extended process that unfolds over time. It includes a broad vision of disciplinary questions and methods, the capacity to plan and design activities that implement the vision, the interactions that require particular skills and outcomes from that complex process, which necessitates some kind of analysis. Both Shulman and Hutchings (1999) state that the scholarship of teaching is not synonymous with excellent teaching. It requires that faculty frame and focus on questions related to student learning, to focus on learning in certain conditions where it occurs, what it looks like and how to deepen it. Moreover they must accomplish this with an objective that not only improves the classroom, but advances practice beyond it.

Quality Scholarship and the Professoriate

The responsibility of the professoriate takes on four functions, ultimately the elements that create the model for scholarship presented by Ernest Boyer in his book Scholarship Reconsidered (1990). The first is the scholarship of discovery, also known as research, that contributes not only to human knowledge, but also to the “intellectual climate of a college or university.” Boyer believes that it is not only the product of research that is important, but the process by which it is conducted especially the passion put into it. The exhilaration that is born in discovery transcends departmental and disciplinary “silos” and begins to invigorate the life of the educational institution.

The second function is the scholarship of integration. Closely related to discovery, it is the interpretation of research across various disciplines, bringing together the knowledge gained by scholars in an interdisciplinary way. It provides a perspective to take isolated facts that are interpreted and brought together to reflect new insight on research.

The third function is the scholarship of application that goes beyond “discovery” and “integration” and moves toward engagement, seeking to apply knowledge to ameliorate the world’s problems. In fact, new knowledge can be developed out of application and both practice and theory can vitally interact in renewing each other with expanding research. The idea of service is also discussed whereby the view of scholarly service, that applies and contributes to human knowledge, is a professional activity that is demanding and has accountability traditionally associated with research activities.

The final function is that of the scholarship of teaching. Teaching, when viewed as scholarship, is not only a routine function, however; it is a means of both educating and enticing future scholars. The teacher must be
well informed and well versed in the field. Boyer points out that “teaching is a dynamic endeavor involving all analogies, metaphors, and images that build bridges between the teacher’s understanding and the students’ learning” (p. 23).

As a follow-up to Boyer’s book, the Carnegie Foundation published Scholarship Assessed offering six criteria to apply to all forms of scholarship, including teaching. They are: clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation and reflective critique. Here, these criteria can help to support the work of the faculty member in committing to teaching, and importantly, student learning. To be an excellent teacher is to create a common ground of intellectual commitment. It is the responsibility of the teacher to encourage students to be creative and critical thinkers stimulating active learning that will continue even after they have graduated from college.

The Role of the Professoriate

As Boyer addresses the scholarship of teaching, Donald Schön (1987) provides insights into the professoriate and attaches words such as “learnable” and “teachable” as being important. Schön’s use of the word “coachable” takes precedence because his book is mostly about coaching. I use this example since a significant portion of our discussion in the Catholic Studies Seminar revolved around teaching skills and coaching soccer. Schön examines in detail three models of coaching. The first is coaching as joint experimentation. The second is coaching as invitation to imitation. The last is coaching as play in a “hall of mirrors.” Schön illustrates each model in depth, using cases involving the coaching and learning not only of architectural design but also of musical performance, psychoanalytical practice and consulting psychology. Schön provides many examples of design students and their coaches as they struggle with and reflect upon the key dilemma of the coach and the coached. Schön reveals that the coach yearns for some more direct way of influencing the student. The student, on the other hand, yearns for a less vulnerable role. Schön argues that in order to cope with their respective stresses, both the coach and the student must learn to engage in “reciprocal reflection-in-action.” This would then involve a willingness to investigate the other’s frame of reference, descriptions of the work and the other’s reactions to those descriptions.

Reflecting on Schön’s idea of the need for artistry in education, he presents a concept that is related to his proposed new design for teaching and learning. This design is the “reflective practicum.” He states that this practicum will help students acquire artistry for competence in the practice of applying learned knowledge. The practicum is built on the premise that “the students cannot be taught what they need to know, but can be coached” (p. 17). Schön believes that the goal of professional education is to prepare a student to think like a professional.

The Impact of Scholarship on Higher Education

Both Boyer and Schön provide excellent views of teaching and learning and the impact of scholarship in higher education. Boyer broadens the debate concerning the definitions of scholarship and makes an important contribution to improving education while encouraging thought on methods for measuring successful careers among faculty. His perspective might help to initiate individual faculty members to critically examine their values and objectives concerning their place in the university. Boyer also accurately describes the dependence of faculty instruction on scholarship in a manner that appreciates the strengths of higher education and shows practitioners how to use these strengths to improve it. Schön identifies a crucial area for professional education where his basic concepts of reflection-in-action, professional artistry, and the reflective practicum seem to provide good descriptions on how professionals know and learn.

Ultimately, it is ambitious for me to discuss the role of the professional or professoriate in higher education especially from an administrative point of view because the scholarship of teaching and learning is a complex topic. Many researchers like Shulman and Hutchings are investing tremendous intellectual energy into both theory and practice of the teaching and learning relationship. Forums and seminars have also become more readily available wherein the exchange of ideas and information regarding teaching and learning take place. The Catholic Studies Seminar provides such a forum. The opportunity to discuss spirituality in vocation enhanced our greater understanding of individual roles, by providing individual examples with regard to service, teaching, learning and scholarship noting how integral spirituality is also a part of our work in higher education. Especially in a fast-moving age of information technology, whereby even technology infused classrooms and distance learning has challenged us to teach and communicate differently, we have a more critical need to
reflect professionally and spiritually on our vocation for service and scholarship whether administrator or teacher. A love for service in higher education with a focused goal to heighten the scholarship of teaching and learning ultimately transcends to the lives of our students who are the future leaders of our profession.

References


BLOODLINE DESTINY:
SPIRITUALITY AND AN ACADEMIC VOCATION
by Regina Naasirah Blackburn

While it is true that we moderns do not enjoy the spiritual security we see (or think we see) in the ages of faith that preceded our own, it is precisely our deep sense of not knowing that makes ours an age of great spiritual inquiry.

– Philip Zeleski

When I was a little girl, I lived on Saturn Street, which is a few blocks outside of the Miracle Mile in Los Angeles, California. The name Saturn was significant because it elevated my thoughts into outerspace. As an 8-year-old, I found myself gazing into the clear, crisp night skies as I wondered about my destiny. I searched the constellation. As a result, I was often accused of being too serious in my demeanor. But, there was an urgency as I gazed for long periods of time at the reflections of light that went on and on sparking my imagination and sense of wonderment. The nightly ritual filled the void in the life of a little girl whose parents had just gotten a divorce. For me, life was very serious.

I vividly remember speaking aloud to the sky one night. I asked, “Where am I going to be in 2000? What am I going to be doing?” I was intrigued by the complete change in digits. I never doubted I would be alive in 2000 for some reason, possibly because I wanted to unravel the mystery.

One evening I went inside the house and talked with my mother. I asked, “Why are we here?” My mother reminds me to this day how startled she was to hear such a question from such a little girl. She answered with Biblical references because that was her base of reasoning. Her father, Reverend Thomas Jefferson Townsend, was a Methodist minister from Alabama who traveled throughout the United States with his tribe of six children and Elizabeth, his devoted wife. My mother, a triplet at birth, has suffered a life-long loss because her birth brother and sister died in infancy. And, as the youngest child in the family, she was formed by the religiosity of her environment. The Townsend children were “spiritual,” “well behaved” and “well educated.” Period. Or else.

At 8-years-old, I did not realize the weight of all this. I simply wanted to know why I was on earth and not somewhere out there in a heavenly universe that comforted me.

My father identified my ability to love when I was a tiny infant. He said my love was so pure and free it frightened him. He has been and remains a pivotal person in my life with his no-nonsense deeds of courage and willpower. He beat odds and remains an organized, meticulous, thoughtful thinker. He struggled for selfhood in the segregated south and managed to prevail in a country that refused to change. I often think of his dream to be a surgeon and the system that deferred it.

I come from a family of educators: father, mother, brother, stepmother and three aunts. Everyone, nevertheless, was a teacher. It was a fact of life.

One thing was determined before my birth: I had a Bloodline Destiny of Spirituality and An Academic Vocation. As I grew older and began college at the University of Southern California, I learned that the bloodline destiny of spirituality and an academic vocation was rooted in a history that had layers and layers of people, facts, dates and places. One was a contemporary of Frederick Douglass, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Will Lloyd Garrison: Frances E. W. Harper (1825-1911), “a noble Christian woman” and “one of the most scholarly and well-read women of her day” (Gates).

Learning to Read

Our masters always tried to hide
Book learning from our eyes;
Knowledge didn’t agree with slavery—
’Twould make us all too wise.

But some of us would try to steal
A little from the book,
And put the words together,
And learn by hook or crook.

I remember Uncle Caldwell,
Who took pot-liquor fat
And greased the pages of his book,
And hid it in his hat.

And had his master ever seen
The leaves upon his head,
He’d have thought them greasy papers
But nothing to be read.
And, I longed to read my Bible,  
For precious words it said;  
But when I begun to learn it,  
Folks just shook their heads.  
And said there is no use trying,  
Oh! Chloe, you're too late;  
But as I was rising sixty  
I had no time to wait.  

1872 [Gates 418-19]

The Mystery System in Ancient KMT (Egypt), the libraries in Timbuktu, Mali, the training environment in Penn Center in St. Helena, South Carolina, and the halls and rooms in Harvard University in Massachusetts all had blood traces of this destiny. Even during the slave era when enslaved Africans dug, carried trillions of bricks, and built Ivy League Universities that forbade their thoughts in classrooms, the bloodstain destiny of spirituality and academic vocation became gases that vaporized the senses of these enslaved human beings and called their names to stand in line ... one day.

As I grew to understand this destiny, I found myself willing to fight for freedom to think on a college campus. In actuality, it was never an option for me. Regardless of the kinds of hurdles and unmistakable stabs at me, I knew my destiny was to reign tenured forever in a college atmosphere. Early in life I realized that to be a scholar is to have “the exceptional opportunity of designing a way of living which will encourage the habits of good workmanship,” for “scholarship is a choice of how to live, as well as a choice of a career” (Rice 11).

Just a few of the people in American history who gave and give me the will to go on are Harriet Tubman Ross, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, William Edward Burghart Du Bois, and Malcolm X. Each of these people’s life journeys serves as testament to this destiny of spirituality and academic vocation yet in very different ways. All were burning for justice. All were courageous and brave to confront the monster racism, many times alone and unsheltered. Listed chronologically, each represents an uncanny commitment to perseverance, standard and willpower. They all had an attuned, in-tuned spirituality that enabled them to bear witness to the will of higher order and shame in man’s failure to acknowledge it. I often find myself in a spirit dive into their lives, for it keeps me grounded. I am never allowed to give up with them surrounding me.

Eagle of Holy Light

Liberation is a major theme of Old Testament history. In fact, the highlight of God’s revelation under the Old Covenant was to deliver humanity from the oppression of sin, the devil, and oppressive and ungodly systems and nations. The liberation of God’s people from oppressive systems was one of the reasons that God anointed Moses, the judges, and prophets (Edwards 96).

Harriet Tubman Ross (1812-1913) could have been an Olympic star athlete. Instead of a charted path with cheering fans, Tubman ran for safety at night in the thick woods of the north and south, for in those days, as Malcolm X says, the south was beneath the Canadian border. Born in Dorchester County, Maryland, Tubman was taught by her father to read the sky like a map and to know the medicinal qualities of every plant in the woods. Although she never learned to read and write, she knew enough about strategy and survival theory to train and lead troops during the Civil War. She was a general in the war — many credited generals counseled with her in their tents and on the fields.

Tubman’s great grandniece told me that there was not an inch on Tubman’s body that had not been scarred by a whip. But nothing scarred her spirit to survive. Always in a prayerful moment, Tubman managed to outmaneuver bounty hunters that coveted the $40,000 reward for her, dead or alive.

She ushered more than 3,000 Africans out of slavery by the grace of God. She never hesitated to be a conductor on the Underground Railroad because her perpetual prayers rendered her the guidance and belief she needed. As a skilled webmaster, she never got caught in the traps set up for her — and they were everywhere in America.

Of her, Frederick Douglass wrote the following letter to Harriet Tubman on August 29, 1868:

The difference between us is very marked. Most that I have done and suffered in the service of our cause has been in public, and I have received much encouragement at every step of the way. You, on the other hand, have labored in a private way. I have wrought in the day — you in the night. I have had the applause of the crowd and the satisfaction that comes of being approved by the multitude, while the most that you have done has been witnessed by a few trembling, scarred, and foot-sore bondmen and
women, whom you have led out of the house of bondage, and whose heartfelt “God bless you” has been your only reward. The midnight sky and the silent stars have been the witnesses of your devotion to freedom and of your heroism. Excepting John Brown—of sacred memory—I know of no one who has willingly encountered more perils and hardships to serve our enslaved people than you have. Much that you have done would seem improbable to those who do not know you as I know you. It is to me a great pleasure and a great privilege to bear testimony to your character and your works, and to say to those to whom you may come, that I regard you in every way truthful and trustworthy (Google).

Tubman was a spiritualist, a teacher and a great American hero.

Raven of Undying Right

With the birth of my second son, all this public work was given up and I retired to the privacy of my home to give my attention to the training of my children. I fully agreed with the Catholic priest who declared that if he had the training of a child for the first seven years of its life, it would be a Catholic all the rest of its days. I felt then, and still feel, that if the mother does not have the training and control of her child’s early and most plastic years, she will never gain that control.

In other words, I had already found that motherhood was a profession by itself, just like schoolteaching [sic] and lecturing, and that once one was launched on such a career, she owed it to herself to become as expert as possible in the practice of her profession (Wells 250-251).

Long before Rosa Parks’ spark, Ida B. Wells-Barnett (1862-1931) was arrested on the Chesapeake, Ohio, and Southern Railroad when she refused to get out of the ladies car because she was Black. Wells-Barnett “is best known as an investigative journalist who delivered factual reporting and scholarly analyses on lynching in a courageous, tenacious, consciousness-rising style” (Gates 595). As a literary activist, she influenced the minds of Americans through her stirring essays. She says,

I had already secured my appointment as a teacher in Memphis before the railroad case was finally settled; so I had my salary to fall back on to help pay the costs against me. None of my people had ever seemed to feel that it was a race matter and that they should help me with the fight. So I trod the wine-press alone. I had always been a voracious reader. I had read all the fiction in the Sunday school library and in Rust College. In the country schools where I had taught many times there was no oil for lamps and there were no candles to spare. My only diversion was reading and I could forget my troubles in no other way. I used to sit before the blazing wood fire with a book in my lap during the long winter evenings and read by firelight. I had formed my ideals on the best of Dickens’s stories, Louisa Mary Alcott’s, Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney’s, and Charlotte Bronte’s books, and Oliver Optic’s stories for boys. I had read the Bible and Shakespeare through, but I had never read a Negro book or anything about Negroes (Wells 21-22).

That she had not read anything about African Americans and said so was the same spirit that ignited the demand for Black Studies programs three decades later.

Falcon of Truth

Although he was educated as a scholar and his manner of writing was often professional, he repeatedly turned to traditional literary forms, such as poetry, fiction, and an introspective, impressionistic prose when impelled by the need to express his most deeply felt emotions (Gates 606).

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1968-1963) was the first African American to graduate from Harvard University in 1896. He claimed freedom to think on a college campus, just as he had claimed it in Tennessee at Fisk University, and in Germany. Multitalented genius, Du Bois was an all around scholar, historian, linguist, sociologist, writer and teacher.

In the Forethought to his classic writing, The Souls of Black Folk, Du Bois states:

Herein lie buried many things which if read
with patience may show the strange meaning of being black here in the dawning of the Twentieth Century. This meaning is not without interest to you, Gentle Reader; for the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.” . . .

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, —a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, the double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife (Gates 613).

Du Bois says, “Training for life teaches living” (Gates 657). Furthermore he says, “Today we have climbed to heights where we would open at least the outer courts of knowledge to all, display its treasure to many, and select the few to whom its mystery of Truth is revealed, not wholly by birth or the accidents of the stock market, but at least in part according to deftness and aim, talent and character. Du Bois was greatly concerned about education, especially for the youth. He studied the educational system in segregated America.

The function of the Negro college, then, is clear; it must maintain the standards of popular education, it must seek the social regeneration of the Negro, and it must help in the solution of problems of race contact and co-operation. And finally, beyond all this, it must develop men. Above our modern socialism, and out of the worship of the mass, must persist and evolve that highest individualism which the centres of culture protect; there must come a loftier respect for the sovereign human soul that seeks to know itself and the world about it; that seeks a freedom for expansion and self-development (Gates 665).

Without a doubt, for Du Bois, education was good for the soul.

Anthony de Mello, S.J. in Sadhana: A Way to God acknowledges that some people have difficulty in their quest for spirituality. He says:

I hear dozens of people complain that they do not know how to pray; that, in spite of all their efforts, they seem to make no progress in prayer; that they find prayer dull and frustrating. I hear many spiritual directors confess helplessness when it comes to teaching people how to pray or, to put it more exactly, how to get satisfaction and fulfillment from prayer. … one theory is that prayer is an exercise that brings fulfillment and satisfaction and it is perfectly legitimate to seek these from prayer. Another is that prayer is to be made less with the head than with the heart. In fact, the sooner it gets away from the head and from thinking the more enjoyable and the more profitable it is likely to become. Most priests and religious [sic] equate prayer with thinking. That is their downfall (de Mello, S. J. 3).

Hawk of Transformational Might

Like a seed growing into a tree, life unfolds stage by stage. Triumphant ascent, collapse, crises, failures, and new beginnings strew the way. It is the path trodden by the great majority of humankind, as a rule unreflectingly, unconsciously, unsuspectingly. Following its labyrinthine windings from birth to death in hope and longing. It is hedged about with struggle and suffering, joy and sorrow, guilt and error, and nowhere is there security from catastrophe (Jacobi).

Malcolm X (1925-1965) recreated himself over and over again as he became spiritually in-tuned. Each fine-tuning changed his heart and made him appreciate the quality of humanity and enabled him to focus on Human Rights. From street hustler he became a prince of men, a stamped and approved product of God. “Malcolm became legendary, and he was revered by African Americans who believed that their destiny in America depended largely on a profound education in and commitment to the roots of their culture” (Gates 1816).

In the chapter “Saved” from The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Malcolm admits difficulty in two crucial areas.
First, he says he had to learn to pray. Malcolm admits: “The hardest test I ever faced in my life was praying” (Gates 1817). He confesses that the way his life had been lived — picking a lock to rob someone’s house — led to waves of shame and embarrassment. Malcolm confronts the self-embarrassment and says it was, “Of evil to bend its knees, admitting its guilt, to implore the forgiveness of God” (Gates 1817). Next, he had to figure out what to say to God. This led him into a new level of solitude. He acknowledges: “I still marvel at how swiftly my previous life’s thinking pattern slid away from me, like snow off a roof” (Gates 1817). In addition, he had to learn to study. As a child, Malcolm had confined in one of his white teachers his desire to become a lawyer. This dream was dashed when his teacher told him he should aspire to a Negro vocation like carpentry. His desire for education lay dormant for decades, but he admits his “envy of [someone’s] stock of knowledge” (Gates) while he was in prison and a dictionary motivated Malcolm.

I spent two days just rifling uncertainly through the dictionary’s pages. I’d never realized so many words existed! I didn’t know which words I needed to learn. Finally, just to start some kind of action, I began copying. In my slow, painstaking, ragged handwriting, I copied into my tablet everything printed on that first page down to the punctuation marks. I woke up the next morning, thinking about those words (Gates 1819).

With God and education, Malcolm began to transform his mind to openness, for a closed mind receives nothing. It was this exercise with the dictionary, which led to his copying the entire dictionary and his realizing there was so much in the world.

Just as difficult for Malcolm was his embankment on spirituality. Intuitively he knew, “Prayer that deals with the full contents of your consciousness lets you cast your net much more broadly than prayer that limits itself to the contents of conscience, or moral awareness” (Hamm 22). “Malcolm found new purpose for his life” (Doctor 65).

I characterize these human beings as birds because their flight of spiritual awareness was a requirement in their struggle for freedom and self-hood. With wings spread they swooped down into their goals and floated away with their treasures safely, for there was always something lurking amongst these treasures. They became so keen that they could swoop into the openings within the webs and not get caught.

These giants in Civil Rights and liberation of African people in the United States sacrificed so much of their lives to right the wrongs of American racism and discrimination. I cannot help but wonder how differently they could have advanced in a truly just, spiritually correct America with unsanctioned skills. But the America that chased them on horseback with bloodthirsty hounds, the America that threw them off public transportation because they paid and sat down for a ride, the America that educated them to hate and doubt themselves did not want to recognize a different type of talent or skill. What more could they have done with their time? My, oh my, what wealth America threw away. The loss is too great to fathom.

The final months of 2000, the year I relished as a little girl, ring true with the warning I heard Lerone Bennett, senior editor of Ebony magazine give a few years ago. He spoke at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, at my invitation. In addition to my teaching duties, I was the director of ethnic and minority studies. He spoke about the creative genius of George Washington Carver. Carver had been an art student at Simpson College for one year around 1896. To support himself he washed clothing for the white students on campus while living in segregated housing off campus. He drew plant life with such detail and intricacy that his teacher showed them to her father who taught botany at Iowa State University. Carver was recruited to pursue a science degree and, subsequently, a graduate degree in botany. Upon graduation, Booker T. Washington hired him to teach at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

The biographical analysis of George Washington Carver was interesting, but it was the warning that Bennett gave that strikes a cord in my spirit to this day. He said if America refused to acknowledge and give opportunity to its youth, in the year 2000 and beyond we would see them spill blood in the street and in the schools. If America managed to continue the discriminatory attitude that locked a segment of the youth out while locking a segment in, then no one would be safe. To stifle the future George Washington Carvers of the world would lead to our own spiritual and physical demise. It is eerie to acknowledge Columbine and others.

My life changed forever when Frank Caltabilota, John Guinta and Aaron Karol died in the Seton Hall University dorm fire on January 19, 2000. Frank was in my English 1201 class. I had his final college writing in my hands when he, John and Aaron perished in that early morning dorm fire. I learned I was truly and spiritually connected to my students from day one when I woke
up in the middle of the night screaming Frank’s name, and longing to have the opportunity to tell him he was a wonderful writer. I told his family I felt so cheated out of this opportunity. I learned it was all right to open up and confess my inner love to and for my students. After that tragedy, I looked around the classrooms into each face. I could see the need for all to hear my words: “I love my students. Regardless of what else I might say about you this semester, remember that I love you. I truly care about your future and your success. Be the best student you can be and you will be rewarded.”

Working with the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) on SHU’s campus is a fulfillment of this spiritual, academic vocation journey for me as well. EOP calls the names of those who otherwise might not be called and gives them the structured route to success through a college educatum.

As I read Dennis Hamm’s “Rummaging for God: Praying Backward Through Your Day,” Step 1 — Pray for light, in his five step method, I dived into deep thought. When Ivan Van Sertima, author of They Came Before Columbus, told a Seton Hall University audience that when he was a boy in Guyana, he routinely traveled into the woods where silence was a live entity. He said he could hear light. Van Sertima made light an animate object filled with life. The light at the end of the tunnel, for instance, is life giving and, perhaps, life saving.

I have gained selfhood through teaching and studying. My soul is spiritually grounded in the classroom, library and computer lab. My childhood dreams and quests for answers took form as I learned to love learning. Learning history, traveling throughout the United States, Africa, Europe and the Caribbean, loving literature and the written word are all blessing from and through God.

The Center for Catholic Studies

It is very important to remember that “a university is constituted by the minds and hearts of its faculty.”

Liddy

This summer seminar with the Center for Catholic Studies meant so much to me. Discussing Ignatius of Loyola and his views on the roles of imagination, the emotions in spiritual awareness, and the daily review of our interior life helped me focus on my own spiritual development. For the first time on campus I felt truly authorized to feel spiritual, and I received an acceptance I had not experienced before the meetings. During the discussions as each person spoke about his or her past, present, and future, I found and validated a little bit of my own past, present, and future. Sincerely, I admitted to the group that I am in a perpetual prayerful moment. “Prayer is a way of thinking; indeed, the most immediate and nuanced way of thinking” (Hampl xxi). After all, life is prayer and prayer is life.

References


Doctor, Bernard Aquina. Malcolm X for Beginners.


GOD IS PRESENT IN THE STRUGGLE
by Robin L. Cunningham

On our three-day endeavor to explore Spirituality and the Academic Vocation, we were presented with many different questions to explore. The questions required us to be introspective and mindful of who we are as individuals but particularly who we are as teachers. So the three mornings provided an opportunity for us to take the time to pay attention to where we've been, where we are, and whom we hope to be for our students ... the endless task of trying to pay attention ...

We were asked, “What does it mean to teach?” It was interesting that many of us originally had no intention to actually be teachers, but somehow we ended up here. I think at least half of us never planned on teaching. It hit me hard that the name of the seminar was I Have Called You By Name: Spirituality and the Academic Vocation. It was clear that many of us had ended up in teaching really through no efforts of our own. Somehow it had become our destiny. The universe had directed us on its own ... we really had been called by name.

We identified teaching as a service, a gift that we wanted to offer our students. We were honest about how frustrating it is to want to share so much with students who are often not the least bit interested. We talked about how students are obsessed with utility, their wanting everything to be “easy,” and their obsession with grades. It is difficult to nudge students to ponder the ultimate questions of the universe when all they want to know is how long the essay has to be or what’s going to be on the exam.

We were asked, “Where do we find God’s presence the most?” I am in a place right now where I know I find God most in the struggles that go on in life. Although as a teacher providing a service, I do sometimes feel compelled to offer answers and solutions, but this workshop reminded me that God is probably most present when I am stuck, when I cannot find an effective way to reach my students. We are certainly most challenged by our most indifferent students. I think our best students keep our heads awake, but our least interested students keep our hearts awake. We drive home at night thinking of ways to reach our most distant students. They’re the ones who require us to do more research, to consult our colleagues, to find a better way. They are the ones who keep us “rummaging” for the presence of God in our teaching. I really believe that. “People have oriented all their solutions toward the easy and toward the easiest side of the easy, but it is clear that we must hold to what is difficult; everything alive holds to it. We know little, but that we must hold to what is difficult is a certainty that will not forsake us ... almost everything serious is difficult, and everything is serious” (Rilke, p. 35). God is present in the struggle.

We were asked to think about this poem by Wendell Berry: “There is a day when the road neither comes nor goes, and the way is not a way but a place.” This reminded me of so many conversations I have had over the years about process versus outcome, about the journey versus the destination. As an academic adviser for student-athletes, I am always struggling with the question, “Am I doing a good job because the student-athletes are eligible?” What about how they got there? Isn’t the journey more important than the destination? Don’t the ultimate questions of the universe present themselves along the way ... not at the end?

This idea struck me again this past weekend when I was on a boat with some friends in upstate New York riding along the St. Lawrence River. It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining, the water felt great as it splashed in my face as we made our bumpy way from one place to another. Yet, after awhile, I looked at my watch, and I caught myself thinking about how long it was taking us to get to where we were going. I realized at that moment that while I was thinking of our next stop, I was missing the moment at hand. I had let myself become too intent on where I was going that I was missing the place I was in. Sometimes it is so difficult to just “be where you’re at” ... to “love what you have.” But Berry’s poem suggests that there are times when “the road neither comes nor goes — and the way is not a way but a place.” Being on your way really is already being there. In the moment that you can be 100 percent where you’re at — then you have most certainly arrived!! The journey is the thing. “Nowadays to be on your way is to be home” (Pintauro, p. 15). The process is what counts ... getting anywhere in particular is a bonus. God is present along the way.

We were asked what we heard in the stillness that we created each morning just before we began the sessions. What did we hear? What were we thinking? “Sometimes I think that it is enough to say that if we don’t sit down and shut up once in a while we’ll lose our minds even earlier than we had expected. Noise is an imposition on sanity, and we live in very noisy times” (Baez, p. 140).
Trying to pay attention ... learning to pay attention ... being comfortable in silence. In one of my first tutoring jobs as an English tutor, I remember the director (Chrys Grieco, right here at Seton Hall) telling me not to feel the need to always talk, to always instruct. She said I should leave space for the student to think, to write, to ask questions. Very simply, she told me “not to be afraid of the silence.” I have never forgotten that. Perhaps our most teachable moments arrive in silence. “Ghandi said that meditation is as essential to the nonviolent soldier as drill practice is to a conventional soldier. Christ said, ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ Buddha once stood up to give a sermon and said nothing” (Baez, p.141). God is present in the silence.

Perhaps one of the most powerful moments for me during the seminar was on the third day when our facilitator, Beth Johns, asked “Can you imagine being 18 or 19 years old and having no one bring up to you the ultimate meaning of the universe?” Wow ... did that stop me in my tracks. That really is why we teach, isn’t it? It doesn’t have to be — probably shouldn’t be — about answers, about solutions. It is about probing and questioning and wondering. It’s about leading our students back to themselves. We must help them find a way to help themselves.

Of course before we can do that we must help ourselves and know ourselves. Recently I heard the perfect analogy for this. Everyone has been on an airplane trip where the first thing the flight attendants do is review the safety instructions. They tell us that in the “unlikely event” that we will need oxygen, we should put our own masks on first and then assist those who are with us. How perfect is that? Before we can take care of others, we must take care of ourselves. Being healthy and spiritually at peace will give us the insights and the courage to nudge our students to think about the ultimate questions of the universe. Who we are, what meaning our life will have for us, what the quality of our teaching will be is really up to us.

Aristotle believed that courage is the first of human virtues because it makes the others possible. Courage begins with the decision to face the ultimate truth about existence: the dirty little secret that we are free. We are not what society and randomness have made us; we are what we have chosen from the depth of our being. We are a product of our will. We are self-made in the deepest sense. One of the gravest problems in life is self-limitation: We create defense mechanisms to protect us from the anxiety that comes with freedom. We refuse to fulfill our potential. We live only marginally ... That’s what we mean by transformation. You can’t just change how you think or the way you act — you must change the way that you will. You must gain control over the patterns that govern your mind: your worldview, your beliefs about what you deserve and about what’s possible. That’s the zone of fundamental change, strength, and energy — and the true meaning of courage. (Labarre, p.230)

God is present in our will. We were asked, “Do we love our students?”

To love is good: love being difficult. For one human being to love another: that is perhaps the most difficult of our tasks, the ultimate, the last test and proof, the work for which all other work is but preparation. For this reason young people, who are beginners in everything, cannot yet know love: they have to learn it. (Rilke, p. 54)

This thought sparked much introspection and thoughtfulness. It can be a stretch, I suppose, for some of us to realize that who we are to our students means so much more than what we say. But for me there is no question that this is so. We love our students by paying attention to them, by being present with them when they come to see us. I often disconnect my phone when students come into my office, and that makes a big impression. At that moment, they know that I am theirs, 100 percent. We love our students by letting them sit in silence sometimes, by giving them the space to think, to feel, to cry sometimes, and yes, to pout sometimes. It always amazes me how many students come up with their own solutions after a few minutes of silence. I really think they’re not usually looking for answers all the time anyway; they just need a safe place to sit and be. Young people who “have to learn love” learn it from our example. We may not put it on the syllabus, but we better plan on it !! God is present in our loving.

This seminar certainly made me reconsider the ultimate meaning of my universe. I was reminded of the presence of God in my students and myself and the importance of stillness and will and courage and love ... and of course, that endless task of trying to pay attention ...

References


PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS
BY A WIDE-EYED ARCHIVIST ON A SPIRITUAL QUEST
IN THE WONDROUS WORLD OF ACADEMIA
by Alan Delozier

When learning about Seton Hall University during my first days on campus, the oft-quoted school motto “Hazard Zet Forward” gave me serious pause. Upon quick glance this legend looked like the Dutch translation for “Perils Lie Ahead!” However, I soon shook this image off as a byproduct of my own nervous tendency to expect the worst when embarking upon a new adventure. Initial feelings of uncertainty passed as I learned more about the familiar Catholic mission and unique historical significance associated with this institution of higher education. Now that I count myself as a member of this community, the emotional “peril” formerly feared has become a distant memory, but the true meaning of the aforementioned motto “No Matter What The Hazard, Yet Forward” is still a subject of serious self-reflection.

Despite losing my early trepidation, the search goes on and reaches ever deeper in terms of how I have grown intellectually and spiritually over the past year.

I arrived at the Center for Catholic Studies faculty development seminar in a curious frame of mind, both in anticipation of learning how my colleagues saw their respective place within the academic vocation and how it compared to my own burgeoning viewpoint. The ability to learn how others think, feel, and act was nothing short of a rewarding experience. This took on added significance because I differed from a majority of those in attendance from a credential standpoint in that I do not possess a doctorate, I have no previous teaching experience, and a majority of my time is spent apart from a traditional classroom in the confines of the Special Collections Center or Library proper. On the surface it might seem that such a lack of traditional pedagogical attributes would spell disadvantage, yet in a distinctive way my work has helped bring professional and personal enlightenment. Far from feeling self-conscious, the warm vibe of welcome and wonder found at the seminar also provided me with a valuable opportunity to share my own specialization as an archivist, which often-times remains a mystery to those without an interest in historical scholarship. Even with these differences intact, the reciprocal feeling of acceptance and respect exhibited brought a positive dimension to the educational mission as a whole.

It is my understanding that the development of an individual’s intellectual outlook and spiritual compass is conditioned in large measure by environment. With this in mind, my professional association with a religious-affiliated university has definitely led to a keen understanding of how personal faith reflects that of the institution at-large. I am a devout Catholic, but I have difficulty when it comes to externally expressing my value system in a strictly religious context. To me, religion, from an institutional and ceremonial sense, is in many ways a far cry from the quiet, introspective spiritual side of one’s faith. The term that appears on the episcopal arms of James Roosevelt Bayley, first bishop of Newark – Per Fidem non per Speciem (Latin: “Through Faith and Not Through Sight” is an apt parallel. Because I see spirituality as a deeply personal matter, the intellectual ideal of teaching comes not in trying to influence or convert a student in a self-serving way, but in helping promote individual thought. This is a difficult proposition because while total personal neutrality is hard to attain, it still remains the hope and dream. In my professional capacity the rare ability to present facts without passion or preaching is not only accepted, but expected.

Along with direct interaction, I also look at printed works, practical application, and inspiring examples to broaden my outlook. Counted among the most telling texts I read, which touches upon each of these factors in a timeless manner, came from the pen of Robert I. Gonzalez, S.J., a Jesuit priest, and former college president whose book, The Poor Old Liberal Arts, articulates what is means to be a part of academic life. The following passage has tremendous appeal to a budding educator such as myself, who is finding out what the word “professor” really means. “Cynics may derive what conclusion they will. But to us simpler folk, this wistful glancing backward is a heartening sign. It means that more people than we realize are still aware that education, especially higher education, has a two-fold function; that its aim is not only to increase knowledge, but to preserve it; that it must, therefore, always be not only progressive but conservative, in the original meaning of the words
The thought-pattern of Gannon has echoed mine in how one can look, find and keep scholarship alive in an everyday approach to intellectual attainment. Such a viewpoint has additional bearing on my spiritual outlook, especially when thinking about the need to preserve the ideals of higher education for the ages.

Even though I have been educated at various secular and religious-affiliated institutions, my core academic and spiritual devotion has been influenced in large measure by Bonaventure, the patron saint of Franciscan education who spawned a humanistic brand of knowledge-building based on the model of St. Francis of Assisi. As an undergraduate, I was exposed to a steady diet of theology, philosophy and healthy doses of discourse and homework in the liberal arts. Such was the reality for a book-crazy pupil from a public school background who found a revelation in the Franciscan manner of mental conditioning. The value of such an experience has remained with me to this day. Franciscan scholars such as John Duns Scotus have placed a premium on the philosophical nature of a well-rounded education, known in religious circles as “Primacy of the Will.” The beauty of this ideal is evidenced in the words of Scotus. “The formation of the intellect leads us to ponder truth, goodness, beauty, life. The will... moves one to greater love. Hence, learning must be an affective process whereby the person not only ponders the mystery of life, but is moved to embrace and love that mystery.”

Having the choice of vocation is a rare gift and part of “shooting” for the proverbial moon and stars when it comes to making your own personal mark upon the world. Granted, the reality of economic considerations and happiness in what you do are key components when it comes to achieving an archetypal existence, but the search for self-improvement in sharing your gifts with colleagues and others are important characteristics within the realm of service-oriented work. This is part of the reason higher education in general and archival science in particular have become my vocational destination by choice and conviction. I am an archivist, which is a profession seldom understood by anyone outside of the field. We are responsible for the conservation and maintenance of written intellectual thought. Additionally, an archivist’s primary duty is to preserve, protect and defend the integrity of the institutional records he or she represents, along with those who utilize them.

Even though the typical life of an archivist is one of solitude and contemplation, those times when interaction with the public is required can be an utter joy! Consequently, my greatest satisfaction is the ability to correctly answer a question or direct a patron in the appropriate direction. Even though it is an implied obligation, I still derive self-satisfaction out of helping others. It may seem a stretch, but an archivist is like a doctor, lawyer, paramedic or other service-oriented professional. Granted, a rare manuscript is not a life-saving mechanism, but it can seem that way to a user who is looking for that necessary piece of data to bring mental satisfaction, cheer and closure to a personal assignment. Such is the “dream wish fulfilled” for the idealistic archivist in its most selfless and purest form.

When it comes to inspirational interpretation from a more eloquent representative of archival endeavor, the eminent British archivist Hilary Jenkinson noted that it is a labor not only of love, but of genuine faith. “Finally, I would stress the universality of Archives - the way in which, once writing has become general in use, they include potentially everybody in the world, and, in consequence, every conceivable human interest. It is literally impossible in a modern state to be born or die, and practically impossible to go through a large number of other experiences almost equally common, without becoming a figure in Archives of some kind...”

He went on to write that a “... good Archivist must [pursue] ... the cause of Truth[,] the good Archivist is the most absolute, the most complete, the most selfless devotee. It is his duty and privilege not merely to be as truthful as he can himself, but to be the guardian for the benefit of others of countless truths of all kinds ...” This is the highest ideal for an archivist, which is something often attempted but not always attained. By conserving the written word in its many forms, I feel the obligation of helping not only potential scholars, but all members of the human community whenever and wherever possible.

Ironically, being a member of the Special Collections Center team at Seton Hall University provides the rare opportunity for hands-on involvement not only with academic manuscripts, but also with religious texts, thus making Seton Hall one of the few repositories in the United States to concurrently house both diocesan and university records. This particular circumstance appeals to my sense and sensibility as a spiritual being, but the deeper meaning of piety rarely carries over into the personal text of manuscripts within our collection. To a university archivist, religious life on campus is typically found documented via institutional examples such as church bulletins, campus ministry notices, and the like, but these materials rarely reveal true independently-
expressed spiritual thought. This paradox is not lost on me even though the written beliefs of clerics, professors, administrators and other prominent people provide glimpses into the soul, whether intentional or not. The freedom of looking at a stranger’s words in print allows the reader to bring a personal view to the subject at hand, but my role as a neutral intermediary precludes me from casting any judgment on another’s work.

As noted previously, I do not teach in the traditional sense of the term. My classroom is not the lecture hall, but the research desk; my soapbox is not the debating hall, but a quiet listening post; my proverbial scripture is not the required text, but the primary source document. I do not speak to the masses, but to one person at a time. Personalized attention is my creed, understanding my goal, and unbiased service my own small gift in the spread of enlightenment. When it comes to my own personal brand of intellectual fulfillment in both an archival science and religious sense, I will present the words of Bonaventure. He used the analogy of text, or scripture in his *Tree of Life* to show how belief in God is found in the search for truth.

O, if only I could find this book whose origin is eternal, whose essence is incorruptible, whose knowledge is life, whose script is indelible, whose study is desirable whose teaching is easy, whose knowledge is sweet, whose depth is inscrutable, whose words are ineffable; yet are a single Word! Truly, whoever finds this book will find life and will draw salvation from the Lord.

So goes my journey of self-discovery, and over time, through these divine forces I have been able to understand my calling in a clearer way and come in touch with my spiritual being, as it relates to my professional and academic life through friendships made among co-workers, students and information seekers of all kinds. Over my past year at Seton Hall, I have come to learn, appreciate and absorb the practical components of life in higher education. I have also found relevance in how one’s moral values relate to his or her own outward conduct in the face of a challenge no matter if the person is a student, professor, or administrator. My own personal satisfaction constitutes a deep pride and obligation to maintaining historical tradition, while keeping in mind the present is something to be happily embraced as well. The future, however is filled with a sense of mystery, but I am assured that I will learn more about myself as time marches forward. My work as an archivist has provided me with the means to understand academic and spiritual realms, both through personal growth and helping others. I am privileged to have been “called by name.” Therefore, I am blessed to continue my odyssey as part of this academic vocation, in which I hope to learn and swell ever more with an abundance of contentment, selflessness and faith.
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Two very different models of education are currently being debated in the forums of the popular and academic press and within the educational community at large. One proposes a radical restructuring, one might even say “deconstruction,” of the university; the other relies on the traditional concept of the academy as a community of scholars. While it is unlikely that the university, as a physical entity, will disappear entirely, it is now possible to imagine a curriculum that consists entirely of prepackaged, online coursework. This is, in fact, being done today in countries like India, which has been experimenting for some time with distance education, and has been successful to a degree in the United States. To those of us who are educators in our 30s and 40s, this vision of a disembodied university is not liberating. It feels profoundly anti-intellectual and anti-social. We remember college as a time when we encountered, often for the first time, genuine scholarship and engaged in campus life. We participated in a joint, often exhilarating, intellectual endeavor, in which current events — Watergate, the rise of feminism, and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa — roiled our discussions and debates. It was in the arena of this academic community that we first tested our ideas and made the transition into adulthood.

This kind of education seems a luxury now to some, largely because of the profound technological change that has taken place in American society over the past 10 years. Video-conferencing, satellite communication, and the Internet — to name only a few developments — can enable students to receive a university degree without ever coming on campus. Indeed, this is the case at our own university, which has just awarded its first distance-education master’s level degrees. The inroads private enterprise have made in the traditionally sacrosanct area of public schooling have encouraged businesses to enter the arena of post-secondary education. The for-profit University of Phoenix, for example, claims to have made over $500 million in revenue from its distance education courses. Arthur Levine, the president of Teachers College, Columbia University, has called academia a “mature industry” and proposed that it function as a set of vocational schools, mainly useful for updating students’ occupational skills, rather than existing as self-contained intellectual communities (The New York Times, Op. Ed., March 13, 2000). He has predicted that in the future private industry will hire the best faculty away from the best universities, in order to offer “all-star degrees” over the Internet at a cost that could not be matched by universities. In this brave new world, there would no longer be a need for university libraries — the University of Phoenix, for example, has no library collection and advises students to check out materials on a public library card — no need for printed books, since online materials would suffice, and, I suspect, a sharply curtailed market for scholars with advanced degrees. If a “superstar” can market courses online, teaching faculties might seem to be redundant.

Ominous as it may seem, this scenario is unlikely to occur if history is any predictor. In the early 20th century, there was a similar debate about the need for universities to support a vocational curriculum. This resulted in the creation of business and other technically oriented schools, without diminishing the quality of faculties in the arts and sciences. Today, U.S. universities are considered among the best in the world. Would students continue to enroll in institutions where teachers no longer gave face-to-face instruction and pre-packaged information was provided solely over the Internet? The answer is unclear, but probably it is no, they would not. The reason: The exclusivity of a university degree makes it desirable.

Clearly, however, educators must respond to the impact of technology on the profession. I believe that while most faculty would defend those things that brought them into the field — scholarship, personal contact with students and other faculty, intellectual integrity and academic independence — they are not adverse to using technology as a tool to better serve their students. Possibly, educators can benefit from the experience of academic librarians, who have seen their role change over the course of nearly a millennium of service. In early medieval Western European monasteries, librarians were essentially curators, a role that expanded with the rise of the great university libraries to include the fields of cataloging and classification and what we now call reference service, and, finally, electronic information creation, delivery and systems maintenance. Although the physical space in which librarians work has changed, as have their job titles, their essential function — orga-
nizing knowledge — and their central mission — the provision of service to the academic community — has remained the same.

This debate as to what should constitute a modern university is especially relevant to faculty at Catholic institutions. We often find ourselves poised between two conflicting realities — the demands of the secular community and the underlying philosophy of Catholic education, which emphasizes vocation, service and one might also add, intellectual rigor. Catholic institutions have particular burdens. We are called to be a community of faith, and as such must relate to each other in a way which may not consort well with the “customer-driven” approach which defines so many of the new models of higher education. It is therefore interesting to see how our university has chosen to invest in educational technology. It has deployed simple tools like Web-based course notes, syllabi, study guides and e-mail, and complex tools, such as bibliographic and journal databases and Web-based searchable catalogs. It is investigating different forms of distributed learning. These tools are excellent and perhaps, now that we have them, indispensable.

But how are they to be used by the educational enterprise? Asking the question raises a larger one: what do we want from education? Do we have in mind the production of trained experts in a discipline, or do we have some larger hope for education? If the former, then these tools seem very adept for the purpose; and in fact you could really begin to believe, with Arthur Levine, that the universities are ripe for replacement by private industry and a system of mass instruction by “stars.” Many Americans might applaud that. As the historian Richard Hofstadter, an indisputable academic star, pointed out years ago: “The truth is that much of American education aims, simply and brazenly, to turn out experts who are not intellectuals or men of culture at all” (“The Intellectual” in Anti-Intellectualism in American Life, pp. 398-434). But what if we had some larger expectation for education? What if we were to state something like the following:

“The unargued assumption of most curriculums is that the real subject of all study is the modern world; and that the true purpose of all study is to lead the young person to be at home in, and in control of, the modern world.” The author of these statements was Lionel Trilling, another undisputed “star” of academia, and public intellectual of the first rank. Trilling shows us that the only way to go about this kind of education is up close and personal. Here is his account of his students’ reaction to Thomas Mann’s The Magic Mountain at a lecture that he gave in his famous course on modern literature at Columbia College:

One student asked, ‘How would you generalize the idea of the educative value of illness, so that it would be applicable not only to a particular individual, Hans Castorp, but to young people at large?’ It makes us smile, but it was asked in all seriousness, and… it had to be answered seriously, in part by the reflection that this idea, like so many of the ideas encountered in the books of the course had to be thought of as having reference only to the private life; that it touched the public life only in some indirect or tangential way; that it really ought to be encountered in solitude, even in secrecy, since to talk about it publicly and in our academic setting was to seem to propose for it a public practicality and thus to distort its meaning. To this another student replied; he said that, despite the public ritual of the classroom, each student inevitably experienced the books in privacy and found their meaning in references to his own life. True enough, but the teacher sees the several privacies coming together to make a group, and they propose—no doubt the more because they come together every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at a particular hour—the idea of a community (“On the Teaching of Modern Literature,” reprinted in The Obligation to Be Intelligent, L. Wieseltier, ed. pp. 381-401).

This idea of community has always been central to academia and it is particularly central to scholarship: scholars need libraries and laboratories, and perhaps even students, as Hofstadter points out, only half ironically (Hofstadter, loc. cit.). That is why they form institutes for the study of some definite field — either within existing institutions or independently of them. And that is why they have long known that the material and spiritual cost of living without institutional support is intolerable. Nothing in the electronic revolution of the last few years has changed any of this.
REFLECTIONS ON “SPIRITUALITY AND THE ACADEMIC VOCATION”  
by Nancy Enright

In the Confessions, Saint Augustine prays for some of the “professors” of his time:

Looking down, my Lord God, and, as You always do, look down with patience on how the sons of men most carefully observe the agreed rules of letters and syllables which they received from those who spoke before them and yet pay no attention to the eternal covenant of everlasting salvation which they received from You. Indeed it is true that a teacher and learner of these traditional rules of pronunciation would cause more offense if he were to break the grammarians’ laws and say “‘uman being,” without the aspirate, than if, being a human being himself, he were to break your laws and hate another human being. (Book I, 18, Warner trans.)

Augustine is talking here about perspective, the wrong perspective, and warning us academics of today against an inherent danger in our vocation: a concentration on “our subject” (whatever it may happen to be) and, by extension, our own ambition and pride, as opposed to an attitude of service to our fellow humans. Our seminar, Spirituality and the Academic Vocation, was a wonderful antidote to this kind of misdirected focus in the academic life.

As I gathered with the group, led by our wonderful guide, Beth, I was impressed by the intensity, the depth of serious interest in serving our students (as well as colleagues) evidenced by the participants. As each person spoke of his or her struggles and goals, themes recurred: a desire to help students as people, not just pupils; a sense of meaning beyond mere ambition or the traditional definitions of success; an honesty about our own feelings of inadequacy (at times), our own self-doubt.

When I began teaching at the college level, some 20 years ago, I felt overwhelmed by a sense of awe at the privilege I was afforded to teach young people (at that time, not much younger than myself) about writing and literature. These were two things I loved and continue to love, and I felt (and feel) blessed by God to be given the opportunity of sharing this love with others. I also felt frightened of the enormous responsibility it is to be a teacher. I wasn’t sure that I could do it, but I was trusting in God to provide the strength and wisdom that I knew I lacked in myself. Having come almost directly out of college, I was in awe of college professors. I imagined they would have to be wiser than most people. I knew I looked like a student, and I tried to dress in a mature way, with my hair pulled back, trying to “look the part.” I walked into the classroom on my first day and was horrified to see that the room had been changed. I had to walk all the way from Corrigan back to Fahy, and, of course, I was late. I walked in feeling frazzled and awkward. Despite this inauspicious start, I knew that teaching college students was what I wanted to do for the rest of my working life.

Working with students, we are privileged to share in their youthful and (in many ways) innocent way of looking at the world. Though our students are more sophisticated about pop culture, more streetwise, and more at ease with technology than most of us are, they are relative newcomers to many of the ideas we are introducing to them. Sometimes I am struck by the ways traditional works of literature reach students who have never read them before. For instance, I will never forget the young man who told me, upon reading John Donne’s “Valediction Forbidding Mourning,” that he was going to send a copy to his girlfriend, separated from him because of college. It was touching that this 17th century poem could seem so relevant to him that he wanted to share its message with someone he cared about. I’m sure most of us could think of other examples. And, as many of us shared at the seminar, we have all been involved in students’ lives as they share troubles and concerns with us, sometimes amazing me with what they are able to bear and still be able to function in class. I think of the young woman with an alcoholic father whose essay on compassion (toward this father, who had hurt her) was unforgettable. I think of a young man who struggled with suicidal thoughts and found that writing music was a saving grace for him. I try to remember to pray for my students; I try to be approachable to them, but I know my own limitations. This awareness is something I found we all shared, as we talked at the seminar. We try to do something, but we know we can only do so much. And, speaking for myself, sometimes I wonder if I am even doing all I can do.
One thing that struck me also about the seminar was the honesty of my colleagues. I recall one person's wonderful comment about how the expectations to be "good" can sometimes get in the way of really being good. I found that comment to be profound and very relevant to myself. There are times when I try, as teacher, wife, mother, to be the "perfect" model of each role, yet I know I never perfectly succeed at any of them. However, in the grace and love of Christ, in the awareness of His grace, I find the strength and love somehow to do what's necessary. I know I couldn't balance the various roles of my life without Him. Knowing that my colleagues share in these struggles (a word that recurred throughout the seminar) is encouraging and comforting.

It was also very interesting to note the variety of ways people came into the "academic vocation." Some were apparently called to it from a very early age. I think of three who shared memories (teacher, scientist and librarian) about acting out these roles in childhood. Their stories were funny, as well as revealing. But equally interesting were those stories from colleagues who, more or less, fell into their careers. In both cases and those in between, God's guiding hand can be seen. My own case can fall in the "in between" category. As a little girl, I did play teacher, as well as nurse, religious sister, mommy, princess and other things. However, in high school I was not the model student, though I always loved English. By college, I knew I wanted to major in English, but I was thinking mostly of a career in writing, rather than teaching. However, working as a tutor in an English Department writing lab and serving as a teaching assistant in the classroom convinced me that this was the career for me. I also was influenced strongly by positive faculty role models. I particularly recall Professor Mary Scotto, an English professor at Kean College (now Kean University), who made teaching literature seem exciting and rewarding to me. I feel God has led me in this path, even as regards the university where I am teaching.

My first real job at a university was at Rutgers. When I told a friend about it, she said she had always felt I would end up at Seton Hall. At that time, this prospect looked unlikely, as Seton Hall's English department was not hiring. However, the next year, a job opened up in the English department, and I applied for it. When I got it, I felt very happy to be back here (where I had taken my master's degree and taught for several years as an adjunct). I was also happy to be at a Catholic campus where I could bring my faith more fully into my work. Personally, Seton Hall has also played a huge role in my life, as I met my husband here, Owen Schur also of the English department. Our little girl, Rebecca, 4, may even attend school here in the future. She already has attended classes and meetings (when she is not feeling well and can't go to pre-school). She loves coming to school and visiting where Mommy and Daddy work and has some special friends here (in the English Department, especially Chrys Greico and Rebecca Warren) and other departments (especially dear Sister Rose Thering, who is loved by my daughter in a very special way). We have many personal ties here.

Reflecting on such things is a natural outgrowth of a seminar like this one. However, the heart of the search is individual. What is my calling? What does my career as an academic call me to do? The fire, as we discussed at the seminar, was a tragic reminder of the seriousness of what we do. After the fire, I found myself more aware than usual of the high obligation to my students. Whenever I might feel tempted to be false in any way, the fire would remind me of the need to be better, more real, more genuine. I don't mean that I normally lie to my students, but I'm talking about the way I sometimes like to appear a bit better (smarter, more prepared, whatever) than I really am. For example, when a student asks a question that catches me off guard, do I try to attempt an answer that is probably true and will certainly sound good enough to satisfy the student, or do I say, honestly, "I don't know, but I'll find out" (or, better, encourage the student to find out)? Even before the fire, I would try to choose the latter option (more honest, more humble) rather than the falsehood of the first, but the fire reminds me of the high seriousness of what we are about so that I would choose it more consistently.

Besides our responsibility to our students, we academics are also called to treat each other with charity and courtesy, a duty that is sometimes neglected. Thankfully, in our seminar the atmosphere was charged with these virtues. Everyone's ideas were heard with attention and respect. There was ready identification and agreement with various comments. We felt safe sharing personal details about ourselves and our careers. However, this atmosphere, as we all know, is not always present in the academic world. Sometimes bitterness and rivalry can hinder the common bond we all should be sharing. I recall the first time, as an idealistic and very young instructor (either a teaching assistant or an adjunct), I observed pettiness displayed at a faculty meeting. I remember feeling a real sense of surprise and disappointment that professors (of English, no less, my favorite subject) could be arguing about some issue that seemed to me to be more about guarding one's turf...
than anything really important. Certainly, this kind of thing is not unique to the English department; in fact, I can honestly say I feel lucky to work in such an affable department. However, we all know the kind of thing I am talking about. Colleagues can so easily see each other as enemies; old grudges breed years of bitterness.

How does faith respond to this sort of challenge? One thing that I have found to be important is learning to be silent. It is all too easy to join in at the gossip table, to add one’s bit of negative information against the person being “talked about.” Doing this can make the group feel, temporarily that is, more connected, joined against the “common enemy,” whomever that may be. I admit I have indulged at times in this sort of thing. It is tempting because not doing it can make one seem insipid, self-righteous. However, I have felt my own tongue checked by the Holy Spirit at such moments. For guidance on how to deal with these temptations, I turn to Augustine again and his account of the life of his mother, Monica:

Whenever she could, she used to act the part of the peacemaker between souls in conflict over some quarrel. When the misunderstanding is rife and hatred raw and undigested, it often gives vent, in the presence of a friend, to spite against an absent enemy. But if one woman launched a bitter tirade against another in my mother’s hearing, she never repeated to either what the other had said, except for such things as were likely to reconcile them. I should not regard this as especially virtuous, were it not for the fact that I know from bitter experience that a great many people, infected by this sin as though it were some horrible widespread contagion, not only report to one disputant what the other has said, but even add words that were never spoken. And yet a man who loves his own kind ought not to be satisfied merely to refrain from exciting or increasing enmity between other men by the evil that he speaks: he should do his best to put an end to their quarrels by kind words. This was my mother’s way, learned in the school of her heart, where you were her secret teacher. (Confessions, IX, 11)

How much strife in the academic world could be avoided if we all simply followed the example of St. Monica! Doing this would be a very simple, though at times difficult, way of bringing our faith into our vocation.

As we struggle to bring our faith into our work, we should not be afraid that a strong Catholic/Christian identity will somehow hinder our sense of acceptance of others of different faiths or take away from our appreciation of diversity. A real and deep faith will only increase our love and respect for others. I have learned this experientially in my own marriage to a non-Catholic. My husband, Owen, is the son of a Jewish father and gentle mother, neither of whom practice any type of religion. (They did send him to a Quaker school for a year or two.) I’m a devout Catholic Christian, and we are raising our daughter in that faith. Owen and I share many values, and our love and respect for each other have only grown over the years. My Catholic/Christian faith increases my love for him. I’m sharing something very personal here because I feel it is important. So often, I sense among academics a fear of religion because of the divisions it can cause. And, of course, we know that it can. Christ Himself has said that He came to divide people (Luke 12:49-53), meaning that there will come times when we must choose our faith and its values against certain evils of society, and we may be asked to suffer even martyrdom or other persecution for it. However, many of the so-called religious divisions have been caused by simple human hatred and have nothing to do with standing up for one’s values. We all, in our hearts, know the difference here. Our Seton Hall community can be both strongly Catholic and open to diversity at the same time. In fact, the two things should go together. Not everyone at the seminar was Catholic, but I sensed a deep oneness in spirit and appreciation of each other’s morality and spirituality among all participants.

This seminar was a sharing among colleagues who joined together to explore the connection between the academic vocation and spirituality. In all careers, for believers, there must be an awareness of how our faith, our sense of spirituality, affects our work place. Beth, our coordinator, was wonderful at helping us look at our vocations as precisely what they are, vocations, callings from God to us, for some purpose in His divine plan. This purpose may not always be clear to us, but it was worth while to reflect on these issues. Even writing this essay has been a wonderful experience for me, and I’m very grateful for the opportunity of sharing these thoughts with others, especially with those who participated in the seminar.

As academics we are given the privilege of serving
Wisdom, of acting in its service and cultivating it in others. As the Apostle James wrote, let it be the kind that comes from heaven and leads to peace:

Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:13-18)
Everything requires work. Developing a classification system with which to organize and arrange library books is no exception. Here at the Rodino Law Library at Seton Hall Law School, the Library of Congress Classification scheme is used. This classification system involves using a complex combination of letters and numbers to alphanumerically assign books into a specific order. According to authors Dittmann and Hardy, “The basic principle of library classification is to group items on the shelves according to broad fields of knowledge and specific subjects within each field, so that users can find items as easily as possible.”

Library of Congress Classification, or LC as it is commonly referred, was first developed in 1897, and based on the actual books housed at that time in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. There were actually several other classification systems considered for the Library of Congress, including the Dewey Decimal Classification, Cutter’s Expansive Classification and the German Halle Schema. The resulting classification system, LC, was most similar to Cutter’s Expansive Classification in the outline and notation of its main classes. Naturally, LC’s present intricate system of organization did not come about overnight. It has taken years to develop into its current state.

As the Library of Congress collection expanded, so too did the need for a more complex LC structure. This structure is made up of specific schedules, which further lead to specific call numbers and subject headings. A schedule is defined as a printed, enumerative class, division, and so forth of a scheme, arranged in numeric or alphanumeric order. The first schedule, E-F History: America (Western Hemisphere) was published in 1901. There are currently 43 LC schedules, all of which have a preface, an outline, a body of the schedule, tables after the body, and an index. The length and breadth of these schedules is dependent upon the enumeration contained within each schedule — the more enumerative the scheme, the more detailed the schedule.

I am a cataloger at the Rodino Law Library. I work with all 43 of these schedules, but the nature of a Law School library requires extensive use of the LC Law schedules, in particular. There are 10 Law schedules to choose from, each designated by broad, geographical topics. The breakdown of the topics is both similar within each schedule and specific to the location represented. The first Law schedule to be developed — the Law of the United States (KF) — didn’t make its debut until 1969. With much revision, additions of new schemes, and new developments in the world, there are now the following 10 Law schedules: K; KD; KDZ, KGH; KE; KE; KJ; KJZ; KJW; KK; KKC; KL; KWZ; KZ. These represent the study of law around the globe, and have been developed in just 30 short years.

While LC continues to be revised, developed and expanded, there remains an element of foundation present. I call it “purpose.” LC is here to provide classification and order within a collection of books and materials in a library. That is its purpose. Its purpose does not change.

Interestingly, as is the pattern of the Library of Congress Classification scheme, so too is my life — complex, detailed and ever changing. My life is always under revision and being fine tuned, so to speak, with new developments and areas of interest (particularly in academic and intellectual pursuits, and spiritual understanding). LC has its purpose, so do I. In the midst of my own revisions and growth, the purpose for my life remains the same: to be a reflection of Christ’s love. My purpose does not change. Where I live, what I do, with whom I am involved may change, as these things often do in life, but always, always, my purpose is the same.

Perhaps, on the surface, it may seem that paralleling my life’s path to the development of LC is far-fetched. It is not. The similarities between my journey and the process LC has gone through and continues to go through, are remarkably similar. Both began with a need. My “need” was to find out the purpose for my life, the WHY of my existence. I became aware of that purpose when I was a teenager. How I’ve come to live out that purpose has evolved over the past 15 years and has permeated who I am today — as a Christian, as a woman, as a professional librarian. I’ve not remained exactly as I was as a teenager, that would have been foolish. Instead, as I grew, matured, and moved into new areas of life, I developed (changed, adjusted, readjusted and readjusted again!) while never perfectly, always with the foundation of my purpose. So too, LC.
LC has not remained exactly as it was when it was first conceived. There is nothing static about LC classification. LC began with an idea — the books in the Library of Congress needed to be ordered and arranged, logically and practically — a system of organization was needed. The main reason for the development of LC remains the same, even while the how (as well as the where, when, who and what) has changed and expanded, etc. The WHY of LC has not changed. Its foundation is in ordered arrangement. Everything that takes place within the LC system is filtered, as it were, through the WHY of its existence, its purpose. Everything that takes place within my life is filtered throughout the WHY of my existence, too.

My library experiences had always been in public libraries, particularly children's departments. I found in my children's work a natural ability, a comfortable place of knowing that the work I did was done well, and that I had an effect and influence in the lives of the children and parents I served. I also knew that my satisfaction was most strongly realized when I did my work in accordance with my purpose. Another Christian librarian has expressed what I've found to be true, that, “Faith in God gives delight in our work and enjoyment of the meaning we find in it. Our achievements at work frequently contribute to our self-respect. Work enables us to find a niche in which we contribute, use, and develop our abilities.”

After several years of children's work, I began to sense that it was time to move on, to “spread my wings,” and to begin to challenge myself intellectually and academically. My decision to veer from my children's path did not come easily; there were several “revisions” along the way. As with LC, much was taking place around me and with this comes the need to adapt, expand and grow. Ultimately, after much prayer, soul searching and professional development, I finally pursued a switch into an academic library setting.

In fact, when I first came to the Rodino Law Library in early 2000, my thoughts were of having arrived, having made it, having (finally) gotten to the finish line. Shortly after joining the Law Library faculty, however, even in the midst of tremendous professional recognition shown me by my colleagues, something was amiss within me. While praying I found myself constantly reminded of what my purpose is — to be a reflection of Christ's love to others. There I was, in the middle of a strong, committed Catholic university whose very foundation is Christ, yet around me were people that weren't recognizing and experiencing this love of Christ.

With that realization I began to contemplate my professional position at Seton Hall. I've heard others say that they approach their jobs not just as a “job,” (the old punch in, punch out, we've put our time in for the day routine) but instead as their “vocation.” I find it enlightening that the word vocation is defined as “the action on the part of God of calling a person to exercise some special function, especially of a religious nature, or to fill a certain position; divine influence or guidance toward a definite (esp. religious) career; the fact of being so called or directed towards a special work in life.” Roget most frequently aligns “vocation” with the following close associations: occupation, walk of life, profession, trade, career, and the ministry.

So I thought about my place here at Seton Hall and began to seriously consider if I was just here to do my “job” or if I had finally been called to a place that would demand, and expected, a willingness of “vocation” from me. Thankfully, though not at all surprisingly, just days later I received the notice of a Seton Hall faculty seminar that would delve into precisely that question. The seminar was titled I Have Called You By Name: Spirituality and the Academic Vocation. My prayer was about to be answered. I attended that seminar and spent my time there listening, sharing, contemplating and reflecting.

As a result I have now added another “schedule” to my life. Developments demand it. (I don't know if I've got 43 yet, but its getting close!) I call this schedule WHY, release date, 2000. Contained within it are so many aspects of my professional life — work ethic, treatment of colleagues, dedication to my profession and the organization I represent, and professional development, to name several. The preface to this newly developed and recently released schedule begins with the foundation, the purpose of my being alive — to be a reflection of Christ's love, specifically to my library colleagues, the Law School faculty, students, and other employees, the whole of the Seton Hall Law School community.

I will worship and praise my God, our God, with my Catholic brothers and sisters, at this place whose very foundation is Christ. I began with a need, which leads me to realize my purpose. I've striven to intertwine my purpose in all that I do. I clearly understand that rather than being at the finish line, I am instead embarking on another part of the journey: my vocation. Yes, I have truly been called, to this place at this time, and for that I am eternally grateful.
References


3. Ibid., p. 11.

4. Ibid., p. 8.

5. Ibid., p. 11.

6. Ibid., p. 8.

7. Ibid., p. 11.

8. Actual schedules located in Cataloger’s office, Seton Hall Law Library, Rm. 436.


To teach is to take responsibility for the imparting of knowledge. After years of studying, reading, discussing, we scholars build up a body of knowledge. Information, facts, data describe the truth. Finding the truth fuels our passion and joy for knowledge. As scholars, we understand the preciousness of knowledge. Knowledge provides insight and understanding to the world around us. Like a family heirloom that has been handed down, we guard and defend it. We shine to our subjects and show others our pride in our possession. We research its history and its lineage. In lecture we share it with others so that they may also understand what we perceive as truth. The driving force behind many teachers is the need to share their enlightenment and passion for a subject. In the proper setting, truth sparkles in its brilliance. However, teaching in Higher Education, students may see one person's treasure as just ugly jewelry unless the significance can be explained in their terms.

We wouldn't be teaching unless we thought our work important and valuable. What lecturers often miss is that students may not share their enthusiasm for the subject. Students register for a class because it is required. They must take a certain number of credits. The choice of class may have a variety of criteria, but not what one hopes. Students chose classes based on convenience to personal schedules, apparent difficulty (tests and papers), friends also taking the class, and finally interest in the subject. They arrive in class with many expectations, none of which may involve learning. They may look like sheep or cattle waiting to be led to the fields, but their response to lecture material can be as subtle as any bovine. Glassy-eyed stares often greet the most dynamic lectures. Can't they see that we are only trying to save them from their ignorance!

Knowledge needs to be shared and teaching is sharing. How else do we learn? It is not just the dictating of information. In the prehistory of oral traditions, storytellers were the keepers of knowledge and culture. They held an honored place among the tribe because they remembered the past and saw the present at the same time. They could tell a story, and through this communication, give relevance and meaning to contemporary events for their audience. The storyteller made sense of the universe through myths. Handed down from storyteller to storyteller, a myth weaves its significance into the lives of its audience. As we see from Greek myths, Atlas holds up the earth in the sky as Apollo races the sun across the heavens. This story sets the world in its place within the universe. Like a storyteller before the tribe, we stand in front of our students with notes in hand ready to describe the world. And like the storyteller, our ability to explain the truth depends on our ability to communicate.

Where does our knowledge fit in with their experience? Students need to have relevance. The lecture material must touch on the contemporary world no matter how arcane the subject. Teaching Theatre History, for instance, can be challenging. How do you explain Greek Tragedy written 2,000 years ago to the contemporary student? The Greeks had a universal theme of suffering. From suffering comes knowledge. Therefore, what did Oedipus learn or Medea? Oedipus is willing to sacrifice himself for the truth and by finding truth, save the City of Thebes. Medea is a particularly good example because she is a spurned woman going through a bad divorce. Most students can relate to that story. It’s the language and the ritual of it that confounds them.

As lecturers we must break down and define the language as well as relate its significance to those who wrote it in terms that students comprehend. In theater Shakespeare has great literary importance, but students find his language and allusions hard to fathom. It appears to them as some ancient form of English. Shakespeare wrote his plays on many levels because his audience reflected the social strata of Elizabethan society. From the peasants in the pit to the nobles onstage, he wrote for everyone. To understand Shakespeare, we must know his audience and how they communicated with each other. By understanding Elizabethan society, we can build a bridge for the students to understand Shakespeare. He knew his audience just as we must know ours.

How do students relate to information? We don't know unless we ask them. Through our questions and their answers, we can see the shape of their knowledge. The give and take of questions allows the information to become experiential. Most are terrified that they will be embarrassed by their ignorance. They hide behind silence. By the persistent questioning, students make connections. At some point they must answer with what they think, either in class or on tests. The greatest, re-
sounding answer to any question is “Oh, I get it!” Eureka! Followed by a tumbling of information.

Communication in common terms is essential; but beyond that is the caring. We care about the information and we care about the students. By expressing our enthusiasm and sincerity for both, we build a connection between students and the information using our communication skills as a conduit for knowledge and experience. This relationship has a special bond. They learn because we listen and help them to relate the subject to their lives. Once they are able to “own” a subject, the students can move on and continue to learn.

Students take learning very personally. They often feel that the grading process is an expression of how we feel about them. An F means that they are not well liked or welcomed in the classroom whereas an A means they are specially favored. It is not unusual to see the A students upfront taking notes while the F students gradually disappear from the class. It is important for a lecturer to break the back of the room silence. As each student has different life experiences, you need the student’s help in establishing relevance of a subject. Through the discussion in the classroom a student must be taught to communicate and question. One of the most difficult jobs a teacher has is to convince the Fs in the back of the room to try to relate. They must be continually drawn out through dialogue, trying to find the common ground of experience and knowledge. Only by continuing to learn from and question the students is it possible for professors to personalize their subject and knowledge with integrity.

Teaching in Higher Education today forces the professors to walk a fine line between bringing their knowledge down to a student’s everyday experience and pushing the student to experience learning and knowledge at a higher level. While it is vitally important for teachers to show students how to relate to a subject, it is equally important for teachers to bring the students to a new level and continue the process of learning. Knowledge is a precious jewel. What must be taught is the ability to see it.
I decided I would join the seminar because the title I Have Called You By Name: Spirituality and the Academic Vocation appealed to me. I thought it had something to do with me being a Seton Haller.

I was a little nervous about putting myself in the company of the school’s brightest scholars, teachers and professors. However, when Robin Cunningham appeared, I felt at ease. Her kind and easy-going personality does that to me.

The second person I was immediately comfortable with was Monsignor Liddy. He is just such a loving, caring person with a brilliant mind and a wonderful voice that makes you feel like God himself is speaking. And so the session began.

After some opening remarks by Beth, our leader, Tracy and Monsignor, we took turns expressing our feelings about the meditation exercise and writings that were sent to us for reading.

I do not know what started it, the power of the written word or the people in the room themselves, but things just started to flow. Hearts and minds simply opened up. Feelings were expressed, ideas shared. Maybe it was the Holy Spirit at work. It was just an incredible atmosphere in which words of struggle, pain, fear, faith, joy, love and kindness were spoken in such a truthful way. It was quite refreshing. All members of the group seemed to be feeding off each other. One could feel the energy. Everybody became more and more comfortable to share personal stories in their own unique way. All expressed an incredible amount of humor, humility, sincerity and respect.

When commenting, everyone’s vocation seemed to come to life in an appealing, charming way, even when Tom Sowa spoke of his Biology class and dead bodies. John Sowa made his Chemistry class sound like the ultimate magic show where he himself seemed to be floating among the molecules that can cure all the ailments this planet has to offer. There were stories of courage, honor, respect, faith, hope, love and human struggle that come from being just a plain human.

There seems to be a real compassion and love to work with young people helping them to grow up, learn about the subject, but most of all, to make fine and noble human beings.

I believe good teachers “are” what they teach. At this point let me borrow a poem from a John Wooden book that caught my attention.

GOD IS ON THE PLAYING FIELD

by Manny Schellscheidt

I have called you by name: Spirituality and the Academic Vocation

No written word
Nor spoken plea
Can teach our youth
What they should be

Anonymous

When I first came to this country, I knew little or nothing about basketball, but by watching players like Elgin Baylor, Jerry West, Larry Bird and Michael Jordan play the game, I could see and feel its beauty.

As the sessions went on (three days total) it became clear to me that nobody came empty handed. All had brought a gift: The gift and wonder of themselves.

As stories were told about highlights or roadblocks in the journeys of our personal lives, I sensed that we are all a work in progress and God was working overtime. The thought occurred that it might be quite possible that God had made us perfect all along, except it may take us a lifetime to realize it.

At this point in my life, I feel the art of living is to live the moment, to take in the magic and the beauty as well as the challenge that comes when interacting with each other.

The more I empty myself out each day, the better I sleep and have new energy to try again. Yes, we don't always win the race, but if feels good to be in it.

I have to credit my parents who helped me see God in others. All my life I thought I was their favorite child only to find out, not too long ago, that my brother and two sisters felt that way too.

It was I who said that working at Seton Hall feels like being in the Indy 500 driving a Volkswagen Beetle. Yet, it is the challenge that comes from the shortcomings that makes it interesting and appealing to me. We develop special qualities by responding to each other’s needs because we care.

In the early days of our lives we are the ultimate takers only to find out later that giving is a lot sweeter and rewarding.

I enjoy looking back at the seminar and the wonderful people I met. Each one of you have given me so much and I thank you for that.
Many thanks to the Center for Catholic Studies for inviting me to join a small group from the Seton Hall community to set aside three days for a retreat. The meetings were a big shift in gears, stepping outside the whirlwind of business and politics that is often typical in many educational institutions. We were given a unique opportunity to take time off not to travel to some distant place for rest and recreation but to gather in a quiet meeting room in the Immaculate Conception Seminary to reflect on the significance of our academic vocation. The group was composed of a good cross-cut representation of faculty and staff. This was an asset for bringing to the surface the variety of individual views on spirituality and academic vocation.

The following is a personal reflection on academic vocation and spirituality that surfaced during our discussions in the retreat and from my reflective reading of a book recently published by Albert Holtz, O.S.B., Downtown Monks, Sketches of God in the City (Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame Ind., 2000). This book served for me as a living example of the meaning of academic vocation. The setting is in an educational institution, St. Benedict’s Prep centered in the heart of downtown Newark. Actually, this is the site of my early academic development as a high school student.

The concept of academic vocation is fundamentally the same at St. Benedict’s, Seton Hall, and other institutes of education. These institutions are more than schools, classrooms, places for instruction, examinations, research and publications. The academic vocation encompasses even more. The university is a place where we explore the depths of knowledge so that we can better understand what life is about, who we are, what is this world that we live in. It is a place where we can share this information and contribute through our specialties to the betterment of society.

Holtz describes real incidences of how members of his community met these realizations each day in the classroom, in the hallway, on the athletic field or court, outside the school door, down the street, in the neighborhood, etc. One of many insights that caught my attention was that though we are the “expert communicators” of knowledge, academicians must also be open to learn from students and neighbors who can more effectively teach us to develop an even greater knowledge and trust in God, to be understanding, and to enthusiastically respond to His call.

We experience many blockades and stumbling blocks in our academic pursuits. Before I had a chance to let discouragement change the course of my path, the Spirit commissioned fellow human beings (parent, brother, teacher, adviser, friend) to listen, observe and carry (haul) me over the obstacles.

It is very difficult to filter out the distracting pressures, for example, Promotion and Tenure (faculty), office personnel communications (staff and administration), anxieties (student). These activities tend to overshadow our basic purpose and desire to seek God. My students have taught me a few big lessons, especially about the notion of interdependence. Thank you, Lord, for sending them as your instruments so that I could continue to seek and serve you.

Yet it is difficult to accept God’s commission (call) to listen, observe and carry my colleagues and students over hurdles so that they may attain their spiritual calling, their aspirations, their vocation. Many times I have turned my ears away from them. I conveniently let “busyness” take preference. It can be a lot easier but haunting afterwards. Holtz’s stories bring out two insights of St. Benedict (Holy Rule) that makes our academic vocation something of a reality: “God is present everywhere, and you meet Christ in everyone.” Like the “downtown” monks, we have the inner call to seek God while He is seeking us. Noise and racket of the modern world hinders ones ability to hear, listen and observe. Through the discussions in the retreat and reading Holtz’s “downtown” experiences, the Spirit has shown me how to occasionally close the door to the busy corridors and open a window to the outside to realize that there is a voice saying, “I have called you by Name” (Isaiah). I now realize that God through students, colleagues, and the community outside the gates of the university is waiting for me to respond by enthusiastically going out “to meet Christ in everyone.”
Sapientia Pax Deus

Wisdom, Peace, God. It was not until I came across these words at the beginning of a chapter in a novel that my thoughts and ideas for this essay came together with the concept of librarianship as a vocation or a calling to a life of service or, as we have come to know, servant leadership.

The concept of servant leader is not new. It emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s in response to the turmoil experienced on many college and university campuses (Greenleaf, 1977). Greenleaf postures that the messages of the prophet only grow when there is responsiveness and a sense of seeking in the minds and hearts of those who are in earshot. He further challenges institutions to make of themselves “an institution in which the conditions of life in that institution raise all of those involved in it to a higher achievement as fulfilled persons than if they did their own thing without benefit of those conditions.” The very idea of improving conditions of life speaks to the goals of education, the goals of libraries to facilitate lifelong learning, and the goals of information literacy, to access and use information effectively.

The words on my first post-baccalaureate degree from the School of Library and Information Service at Rutgers University read “Master of Library Service.” Why does Rutgers use “service” instead of “science,” as many other institutions do? Little did I know at the time, but librarianship is not an exact science (though catalogers might argue this point!). And librarianship involves helping people to gather and use information effectively, which aligns it to servant leadership. How does technology enter this equation? Technology is that all-pervasive entity that has changed how we live today. To talk about libraries or information or education without technology is to talk about life without breath! But the introduction of technology into all of these components has made the concept of service so much more necessary. A strong, stable, service-oriented infrastructure is the most important contribution to a campus that academic information technology units can provide (Engeldinger, 2000). Since one of the goals of higher education is to develop information literate and computer savvy graduates, it is imperative that we who work in information and instructional technology units accept this as our special calling or vocation, to provide that enabling service.

As an academic librarian, I am a card-carrying member of a special profession, one that I have aspired to since I was 5 years old! Combining a love of books with a constant challenge to seek out the best resources and information, library work provides an intellectual stimulus and a variety of activities that serve as a constant challenge. Unlike the majority of faculty who follow a required syllabus in teaching their respective courses, the librarian’s typical day is anything but typical. Hours spent staffing the Reference Desk are a constant test or challenge. Going from tracking down a little-known author or a 1987 theater review to pulling up the census figures for someone’s hometown or selecting the best database or search engine for a particular topic — and who could possibly anticipate the next question! I can honestly say that I have never been bored!

Librarianship is a unique profession — all stereotypes aside! Library literature over the years has tried to identify its characteristics, concluding that a wide interpretation is better. As managers of information, librarians have had to acknowledge and accept that the storehouse of information is changing, as are the ways in which we access information. Libraries are important as repositories of knowledge, and knowledge of libraries gives or empowers an individual with a key to that knowledge or information, thus providing tools for lifelong learning. The old adage “Give a man a fish and feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime” can be applied to teaching information literacy: teach someone to use a library and you give that person the ability to find the information materials he or she might need for a lifetime. What could be more rewarding?

A couple of years ago, I received two Christmas presents that were reflective and significant, a sweatshirt and a book. What connected them and made them special was something both had in common: they both quoted Jorge Luis Borges, a notable and prolific South American writer who was passionate about books and libraries. My sweatshirt read: “I have always imagined that paradise will be a kind of library.” The book, A History of Reading, was written by Alberto Manguel, and describes in detail how he (also a native Argentinian) met Borges in a bookstore. Borges was nearly blind
then, and Manguel became his reader, a meeting that was to have a large influence on both authors. Though I looked through countless quotation dictionaries and other works authored by Borges, I was unable to come up with the exact source of the quote above — other than my sweatshirt! However, in the course of my research, I learned more about the author Borges and his vocation and love of books and reading, which in turn has given new direction and inspiration to my academic vocation.

One of Borges’ most famous short stories, “The Library of Babel,” was the inspiration for the library in Umberto Eco’s “The Name of the Rose.” This story has also been suggested as required reading for anyone in the field of information technology, especially unusual since Borges wrote it in 1956! What makes the story unusual is that Borges’ library is described as a “potentially infinite library in which all knowledge is believed to reside, yet it is disorganized, labyrinthine …” (Harris, 1999). Harris continues on to compare Borges’ [virtual] library with the World Wide Web, a place where people can be lost forever! Only a lover of books can conceive of being “lost forever!” One who is a lover of books as well as a librarian would feel called, even obliged, to administer order to the collection and service to the users, and that is my academic vocation.

I would suggest that the library profession itself is one of the most changed or adaptive professions in existence today, and also one of the most exciting! From the card catalog to the online catalog, from papyrus to paper, from the early manuscript to the e-book, from an index to the Internet — all are the jurisdiction or arena of the librarian, whose job it is to connect people to information so that they can complete their research or live their lives better. And still libraries and librarians continue to revise and define themselves.

The organization of knowledge and its presentation is done using a variety of techniques and procedures, with the end result that the user can access information in a relatively easy way. How this is done has also changed drastically over the years, with an emphasis on the “connection” aspect.

To be a librarian in today’s academic library is to be positioned between the information universe and the research needs of students and faculty. Melvil Dewey once likened the libraries of the past to a museum, with the librarian as a mouser in musty books, then said that the “library is a school and the librarian in the highest sense a teacher …” Unlike the librarian in a public library with a philosophy of providing information, librarians in academic libraries teach how to find that information, training lifelong information users. The many technologies and electronic databases available in today’s wired library increase the time, effort, and workload of librarians. It is a constant stretch to keep up with the latest databases and products available to expand the scope and ability of the library to provide adequately for the research needs of faculty and students. True, more information is available, and faster, but not always easier to access, evaluate or teach. Indeed, all of us (librarians) have faced the desperation of students who put off a term paper or research project, only to find out at the last minute that all books and all journal articles are NOT available electronically (i.e., can be downloaded from their laptops). Librarians open the doors to knowledge when they help to organize information and teach its retrieval. Their primary service is to provide the path to knowledge within that climate of learning called the university. Who can but delight in a calling or vocation to this?

Thought this would be the final line, the last word, but then a book review in the newspaper caught my eye — and it was right on target! The reader in me would love to read it, the librarian in me wants to catalog it and put it out on the shelves for everyone to read — especially the group from our seminar! The title is Loving your job, finding your passion: work and the spiritual life by Joseph Allegretti. A couple of thoughts quoted in the review seem appropriate here. Allegretti writes that “Work distracts us from our real purpose in life — to deepen our relationship with God.” Then he continues to acknowledge the value of work, that the work must be good in itself, and the employee must feel that he is making use of his unique talents, as described by St. Paul in his letters to the Corinthians. Finally, he states that “Time spent at work is no less important and no less spiritual than time spent in prayer or meditation.”

Truly the academic life can be a real calling, given the value of the work and the importance of God’s people. What we do with our calling, our vocation, is what determines its ultimate value.

References


How did I come to be who I am today? How did I come to be in the profession of higher education? Many times I have asked myself these questions and each time I am reminded of remarkable stories about my life journey. I say remarkable not in relation to who I am but in relation to the forces of life that have come together to create my life.

I was grateful to have the opportunity to ponder these questions at the 3rd Catholic Studies Faculty Institute, I Have Called You By Name: Spirituality and the Academic Vocation. The Institute gave me the opportunity to engage in discussions with fellow members of the University community about these important questions.

As I begin to write this I am a bit skeptical of this spirit and lightness that is within me as I tell this story. But I am aware that it is this same spirit and lightness that allows me to be more fully the person I have been called to be. Parker Palmer (2000) challenges us to let our life speak about who we are. He asserts that the messages about our direction in life come from within. This requires time for meditation and reflection.

At times I take both my spirituality and my vocation for granted. By “for granted,” I mean that they are both so much a part of my life that I do not always take the time to examine them. It is like living with a beautiful painting on a day-to-day basis. Unless you stop to examine it from time to time, you forget its true beauty. On a regular basis we must stop to appreciate that beauty so that we may more fully integrate it in our lives.

There are many ways one can describe the process of going through one’s life. I liken it to walking along a path. I am a walker. I will walk anywhere. The curiosity and excitement of where the next step will bring me draw me forward. My favorite times have been on the mountain paths, the streets of New York or the streets of any town that I have visited. Friends and acquaintances within my community are continually recalling where they have seen me walking and wondering its distance from where I live. I prefer walking to almost any other mode of transportation for it is during these walks that I meditate my life and find out about others.

One morning as I was taking my morning walk, I came up with the mnemonic ERM — exercise, relaxation, meditation. This describes the process that evolves during the course of a walk. Movement allows me to think through the many thoughts that are in my head. It allows me to sort through the things that are important and throw away those that are stumbling blocks. When I am able to do that, I relax and then am able to meditate. It is not only the movement that is important in this process. It is the pause that comes afterwards; the pause that comes at the end of a walk. This is actually when I catch the thoughts that have sifted themselves out.

In a sense it is also how I live my life. Movement and pause. Acting and reflecting. Practice and theory. When I fail to do one or the other, my balance and equilibrium are gone. This equilibrium is a place in both the figurative and literal sense. A place that I go to or come to remember who I am and what I have been called to do. This is the place that in its comfort I am able to feel the spirit and lightness that I spoke of before. While this place is not one where I want to stay permanently, the knowledge that it exists is what allows me to go out into the uncertainty and explore. Knowing that I can find my way back on the path allows me to go out and explore.

Since I was young I have always loved to travel; to explore. If someone said “Dawn, come visit us,” I would go. I have traveled and lived throughout the United States and have begun to explore the rest of the world. People have mistaken my movement as “running away” but I look at it as “going to.” People have asked how I could leave my family, my parents and siblings when I was young. I explain to them that it is because of my family and the love they have given me that I have been able to go out and explore. I have known that they are with me in spirit and are no more than a phone call away. I also know that every so often I must circle around and come back to the home base to experience that place of equilibrium with my family. It is for this reason that I now live near my brother and sisters.

The Institute and the writing of this paper have caused me to continue to ponder concepts. The concepts of life path, spirituality and community are what have fallen out while sifting through my thoughts. So it is with this in mind that I share with you the reader experiences on my life’s path as they relate to spirituality and community.

I Have Called You By Name
These are powerful words. Particularly when one thinks of who the I is. God has called you — me by name. It was not someone else who was called, but, in fact, ME. “Why have I been called? What is it that you have called me to? Perhaps I am not prepared for this service which you have presented me with Lord?” This is the conversation I have found myself having with God at times.

When I was a teen one of my greatest fears was that if I truly committed to a life in Christ I would be called upon to carry out some huge task I was not prepared for. It was something I stayed awake nights worrying about. I am not certain when the transition in my life occurred, but there was a point that I realized my calling was simply to be me; that I had been given certain gifts that I was to share with the world.

Perhaps some of my hesitancy to embrace my calling has been based in modesty. However, when I am able to focus on the fact that it is my obligation to act if I am to live the life God has given me, I am freed to be who I am. This is the ideal.

Upon first hearing this phrase, “I have called you by name,” I began to think about my given name, Dawn. As I began to meditate further, I realized that beyond my given name there are other names that I have been given. Some of them I have embraced and taken for my own, others I have been reluctant. Let me share some of the names.

Scholar/Practitioner. It has taken some time for me to feel comfortable with the title of scholar. I am more comfortable with the role of scholar/practitioner. This is my ideal; that I may both study and practice the theories of my field and life. If I am not able to explore both the life of my mind and take action, I do not feel fulfilled. There is something so exciting about reading and researching and then applying what I have learned to the world around me.

Educator/Coach. My primary environment has not been the physical classroom. Currently it is the physical space of a University campus. For over 20 years it has been in the University setting that I have worked. I believe I have been called to help people learn through life; to help them learn from their experiences and their interactions with others. My teaching has occurred through late night talks at the front desk of a residence hall, in staff meetings around a table and across the desk with a student who has come before me for a disciplinary matter. I have taught as I have walked around the campus with both students and colleagues. I have also learned as I have listened to what they have had to say.

When I am most fully present, I listen and help others to hear what is in their heart. I believe that we each have the answers within us. This has sometimes frustrated students and staff that have worked with me. Many times I have not given them answers but have asked them what they believe to be true. What I have learned from my own life I know that I must be able to apply to my work with students. I want all individuals to be able to learn in an environment that is comfortable; one that embraces who they are and what they have experienced in life. No matter how different it may be from the next person.

Artist. This too is a name that it has taken me many years to call myself publicly. Art and creativity have always been a part of my life. I can not remember a time when I was not doodling, drawing or working on some craft project. Outside of my family and close friends I have not called myself an artist. Perhaps because I believed that if one is to call oneself an artist there is some public display that is involved. With public display there is judgement about whether a piece is truly art. This is a realm that I have not wanted to enter.

Several things in my life have happened to make me be more public about my art. A year or so ago I got the courage to show my most recent work to a colleague who is an art professor. She said that my work was very spiritual. She helped me see my work in a different light. She helped me name what my art meant to me. My art reflects my soul, my spirit. The process of painting is one of the ways that I meditate. My drawings and paintings have helped me figure out problems and dilemmas in my life. There are themes that make there way know through the images that I draw. They have a life of their own. These images speak to me as I revisit them. As I have gained the courage to show them to others, I have seen that they also speak to others. The piece on the cover of these proceedings reflects my effort to move beyond my place of comfort and share with others in a way that is meaningful.

To my niece and two nephews I have become known as the art aunt. This is a name that I have come to cherish. It has come from the fact that I have spent a large amount of my time with them on the floor creating pictures with nothing more than paper, crayons and markers. At times we have moved on to other projects. There was once the episode with beads. Beads that found their way throughout the house. The beads have not been banned from my sister and brother’s homes but they are saved for when I come so that I may also help
clean. I will never be able to measure the importance of this time spent with my niece and nephews around pieces of paper. We have talked about life and learned to be creative without judgement.

I have been without art at times because of other demands in my life. I have been working to bring it back to my life more consistently. For I see the beauty and the wonder that it brings to my life. I am coming to see what it brings to those around me. I see its place in my sense of equilibrium.

Community Member. My parents taught me about my responsibility to my community, the many communities that I am a part. They taught by example. My parents, who both grew up in South Carolina, started their lives together as a family on a Native American Indian reservation in Montana. My father began his career with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. When he retired he was working with the community of East St. Louis, Illinois. My mother was an educator who served as a teacher and principal through the course of her career. My parents continue to work with the East St. Louis community through helping to train people in the facilitation of public forums on critical issues. My father and I sometimes have arguments that I have taken this responsibility to the extreme in my work with my community in addition to my professional life. But I simply remind him that it is his fault, it is from him and my mother that I have learned.

Why I'm the Dean for Community Development

My journey into the student affairs profession was both about places of encouragement and roadblocks. Towards the end of a two-year experience as a peer adviser in the counseling center of my undergraduate university, I began to examine what I would do after I graduated. As a psychology major I had originally intended to go into clinical or counseling psychology but I was profoundly impacted by the experience I had had and the training I received in my position and found that I wanted to help create that type of experience for other students. I came to see that a student in his or her everyday life journey could need as much guidance as a person in a clinical setting. Thus started my career in student affairs.

What does the dean for community development do? Shouldn't you stick with the title of dean of students? These are questions I am asked on a regular basis. Periodically I wonder whether we should change the title back. I come to the same conclusion, no. I will continue to use the opportunity to explain to individuals what it is that I do and why the concept of community continues to use the opportunity to explain to individuals the title back. I come to the same conclusion, no. I will...
it was fairly clear was responsible. I explained the evidence that I had regarding his case and that I would have to suspend him from the University pending a community standards hearing. He explained that he did not knock the smoke detector head off. He knew who did it but was not willing to divulge the name of the individual without first speaking with the person. I explained that given the information I had, I would still have to suspend him. If he were able to convince the other individual to come forward, we would discuss his situation. He said he understood my position. He left my office stating that he would talk to his friend. As the student left, I hoped that he was telling the truth and would indeed produce the person truly responsible.

Later in the day a student whom we had seen in the office before came to take responsibility. He explained what happened and he understood that he would have to be suspended. I felt a sense of relief that the first student had indeed been telling the truth. I was proud of his respect for his friend and his courage to speak to the friend and hold him accountable. I was proud of the second student for coming forward but sad that he had not seen the connection between his actions and the impact on the community.

As an administrator at Seton Hall, I have found my self at the end of some days wondering where my time went and why there was not more student contact. Only a handful of students will venture to my office simply to talk. Most only find their way to my office if they have a concern they feel I can address or if they have been called to my office regarding some issue. I have to meet them where they are, where they live. I have on days had to intentionally walk through the student cafeteria or make certain that I attend a student program in order to interact with students. Being about the business of developing students and creating community does not always mean that one will interact with students unless one takes specific action. I must continually remind myself that I must not get so caught up in the business of creating community that I do not forget to be a part of the community.

The act of building a positive community must be an intentional one. It is important to all members of the University community — administrators, faculty, staff and students alike. Spitzberg and Thorndike reflected on the “values, goals, and practices that individuals share and that constitute the basis of coming together and staying together, the basis for a sense of belonging.” (pp. 7-8)

Rice suggested that we need to redefine the academic community so that faculty members are able to grow throughout the length of their career. He suggested an environment that does not force the faculty members to choose between scholarship, teaching and service. Each important in its own right. Kuh, et. al. (1991) and Astin (1993) demonstrate the importance of involvement and sense of belonging to the positive develop and retention of students.

The Catholic Studies Seminar was a rich experience for me. It was one in which I was able to share with other members of the campus community on a different level. How good it was to be able to come together to discuss what is in our hearts and minds. During the course of the institute different individuals voiced the sentiment that this interaction was something that did not happen often enough. The same sentiment has been expressed with each group that participated to be trained as facilitators of the National Coalition Building Institute prejudice reduction training. Experiences such as these have allowed people to interact on a more personal level. They have bought cross sections of individuals together allowing them to feel connected to people across the campus.

A Serious Night of Fun was a night in the Pirate’s Cove of the University Center where the goal was to have students, faculty, administrators and staff come together to share their talents; serious and not so serious. In effect to have people see each other in a different light. The first Serious Night we had was a small success. Those who attended enjoyed themselves as well as those who performed both serious and comedy routines. I tried to recruit professors who I knew had hidden talents. I was surprised at how reluctant people were to share these talents in this venue. I suppose I should not be so surprised for it has taken me years to openly share my art with anyone other than those close to me. It is a reminder to be gentle with our students as they are entering a realm that may not be so familiar.
The Petersheim Academic Exposition was the creative innovation of the late Professor Matthew Petersheim, a professor of chemistry, some four years ago. The first was held in 1997 with the intent to bring the University community together to celebrate the life of the mind. Students have presented their academic research through poster sessions, talks, plays and recitals. Each year the exposition has grown as additional departments have encouraged their students to be involved.

I have had the opportunity to help coordinate this project from the conception. The first two years Professor Petersheim and I were the steering committee. During the third year we were able to recruit faculty and administrators to expand the committee. This has become a group that has continued Professor Petersheim’s commitment to the exposition.

There is a story that is a part of the history of the Academic Exposition. We were in the process of developing a logo for the Exposition during the second year. There were several ideas that were presented before we decided on the final image that was a head with all kinds of squiggles and marks coming out of it as if to infer that the head was thinking. The phrase the life of the mind was written across the image. The decision about the logo was being made while Professor Petersheim was receiving the first treatment for an illness he came to learn was a brain tumor. Upon seeing the logo, he stated that the image was the first thing he had seen that helped explain how his head felt. It was bittersweet at first, but in ways gave significant meaning to the logo.

I have shared these stories because they are a part of my experience in this learning community called Seton Hall. They are not perfect stories. They are however real. I shared them because in each there is a seed of hope. They symbolize the struggle that is involved in working toward that which we believe. They are in part what helps me to continue to work toward an improved community in this space.

The Importance of a Faith-Based Community

Seton Hall University is a faith-based learning community. Being a member of such a community has been important to me. As is apparent through my discussion thus far, I am a spiritual person. While I am not Catholic, I find solace in many of the tenants of the University. In my role as dean for community development, I find an immediate sense of direction in the section of the Seton Hall Catholicity Statement, highlighting community. The statement provides an overview of the standards expected by members of the Seton Hall University community. It calls us to move beyond bringing people together in ways that intensify individualism and includes “compassion for each other, coordination of leadership, painstaking development of communication and dialogue, the creative use of common facilities, and the promotion of many opportunities for formal and informal gatherings, embracing every sector; administration, staff, students and faculty.” The statement goes on to call for the human virtues of congeniality; civility, humor, balance and trust as well as the dedication to addressing the “complex problems of Church and society: hunger, war, poverty, racism, sexism, all forms of injustice and environment degradation.”

While the tragedy of the Boland Hall fire in January is one that we do not want to repeat, there were moments during the experience that illustrated what it means to be a community. People expanded the scope of their roles to make things easier for students. People moved beyond their formal roles and worked together. People used their natural gifts to help others. We told people we cared about them. We hugged each other and we cried together.

During the first 48 hours following the fire, Dr. King Mott, dean of Freshman Studies, and I were responsible for updating the student and University communities on what we knew. The University Center Main Lounge was the place that we gathered as a community. We shared the facts and the procedural steps that students needed to take. The updates were given on a scheduled basis.

I believe the true power of that time was the inclusion of prayer. We began and ended each update with prayer. So the time became prayer, facts, procedure and prayer. Without the event of prayer, it would have
been a very different experience. It was the prayer that allowed me to go before the group each time and convey the information I had to communicate. It was the prayer that helped us remember that we were a community and that this was not a matter of students against administrators. It reminded us that we were human and that there was a greater being guiding us.

There are many examples of the power of being in a faith community during that time. I do not take for granted the power of having experienced this tragedy in a faith community. There were actions that we took that I do not believe would have happened had we been in a secular community.

The fact is that our mission is to prepare students to be servant leaders. This is the core of what my office is responsible for. While it is important to be an ethical leader in your field; it is also important to be an ethical and engaged member of your community. It is important that we teach and model this for our students. The time during the Boland Hall tragedy was one that I believe we as a University community modeled how we want our students to behave.

**Developing the Connected Community**

Individuals thrive in environments where they feel connected and are able to grow. We make a mistake if we believe this is only true for students. Each of us in this learning community whether we are student, faculty, staff or administrator need to feel connected to the whole. Monsignor Sheeran, president of the University, instructs new students to open doors and say hello to others when they pass. Personal acknowledgement — this is one basis of a connected-community. The components of the community section of the University’s Catholicity Statement discussed earlier provide examples of other components.

Components of community are readily available to implement within a learning community. The Carnegie Foundation in the 1990 monograph Campus life: In search of community suggests six components of community. Spitzberg & Thorndike (1993) in their follow up to the monograph suggested a compact for a pluralistic community that includes four major principles: (1) the centrality of learning; (2) the importance of freedom of thought and expression; (3) the standard of justice in assessing all individual and community actions; and (4) respect for difference in the diverse campus communities manifested in civility of action. (p. 9)” The key is to take these components beyond the paper and to make them real.

We must make an effort to see people in our community beyond the boundaries of their most visible role. We must take time to imagine that the dean sitting across from us at a meeting may also be an artist who grows plants. Or to image that the priest walking through the green also loves to play golf. Imagine that the student sitting so disinterested in the corner of the classroom writes poetry that a friend has put to music.

On the other side of the picture we must take the time to present different aspects of our life where appropriate. One of my personal missions has been to encourage faculty, staff and administrators to share with students things about themselves outside the realm of their role with the students. For instance, during my talk with students during orientation, I sometimes share that I was the drum major of my marching band in high school or that I ran track for many years. I have encouraged a nurse in the health center to share that he is also a dixieland jazz musician as part of his introduction to the Health/Counseling Services presentation. The Serious Night of Fun is another example.

There is risk involved in being a whole person. People see both your strengths and weaknesses. There is also something lost in not taking the risk: humanness.

As I look back at what I have shared I am realizing that what I am hoping for is a community where people are able to grow personally and connect with others at the same time. None of us, administrators, faculty, staff or students should be the same at the end of a semester. We should have learned from the experiences along our life path, including interaction with each other.

In sharing part of my life journey you have seen some of who I am and how I came to be at this place called Seton Hall at this stage of my life. I have shared that being in an environment that allows me to be more fully myself helps me better serve as an example for the students who join us in this experience of community. While every interaction and moment may not be the ideal I hope that the goal is still the ideal; that we may each grow in the spirit of who we are called to be and serve as examples to each other in this learning community called Seton Hall University.

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VIVIENNE BALDINI serves as Manager of Academic Projects to the Provost. She received a master’s degree in Education and a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration at Seton Hall University. Her research focused on the perceived impact of instructional technology within synchronous and asynchronous learning environments in higher education. She has been at Seton Hall University as both an administrator and student since 1984. In the Provost’s Office, she is responsible for organizing various academic programs such as Commencement, Charter Day, Faculty and Freshman Convocation, and academic honorary degree ceremonies. She conducts the annual revision of both the University Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogues, manages the Small College Consortium, assists the provost on various academic governance issues and works closely with the Division of Information Technology on various initiatives that involve teaching and learning with technology. She is also a member of the St. Vincent the Martyr Church Choir in Madison.

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ROBIN L. CUNNINGHAM has been the Director of Academic Support Services for Student-Athletes since 1984 and is responsible for overseeing the academic progress of all student-athletes to insure compliance with University and NCAA rules. She graduated from Seton Hall in 1978 with a degree in English, received her master’s degree in counseling from the University and an Ed.S. in Secondary Education in 1984. From 1996 to 2000, she served as chair of the Selection Committee for the NCAA Foundation Leadership Conference held in Florida each May for 400 student-athletes from across the country. The purpose of the conference is to bring student-athletes together to share experiences and learn strategies to create change on their campuses. She was the 1996 recipient of Seton Hall’s President’s Award for Student Services. She also has the distinction of being the first woman to receive an athletic scholarship to Seton Hall in 1974. She played basketball, tennis and softball while here and her basketball number was retired in 1981. She was inducted into the University’s Hall of Fame in 1984.

ALAN DELOZIER is Librarian-Archivist/Assistant Professor at Seton Hall University. He started as a member of the Walsh Library and Special Collections Center staff in 1999, and since that time has engaged in a number of functions including service as a reference librarian, subject specialist in History, Philosophy and Religious Studies, along with various library and University-wide committee task teams. Within the area of Special Collections he functions as the Associate Director and Records Manager where duties such as processing new collections, facilitating research requests, producing finding aids, and supervising office staff are a few of the tasks performed on an everyday basis. He received an A.A.S. in Radio/Telecommunications from Mercer County College (1989), B.A. in Mass Communication with a minor in Theology from St. Bonaventure University (1991), M.A. in History from Villanova University (1998), and M.L.S. in Library Science from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey (1999). Formerly, he served as College Archivist at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey (1994-1995), St. Peter’s College (1995-1999), and Archival Technician for the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center (1998-1999). He has recent articles on Catholic Tradition and Education published in New Jersey History and Catholic Education, A Journal of Inquiry and Practice.

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NANCY ENRIGHT received her B.A. in English from Kean College (now University) in 1979, M.A. in English from Seton Hall in 1981, and Ph.D. in English from Drew University in 1986. After working a year at Rutgers, she was hired by Seton Hall as a full-time Faculty Associate in English in 1988 and promoted to Senior Faculty Associate in English in 1997. Her areas of specialization are computers in writing and ESL (for the latter, just getting involved). As of Spring 2001, her work is with mostly ESL students, including the international seminary students. She is especially interested in the connection between literature and religion, teaching Contemporary Literature and Religion in Spring 2001. This course is one of the requirements for the Catholic Studies Minor. She also serves on the Catholic Studies Committee and is a Partner in the Small College Consortium, where Seton Hall faculty meet regularly with colleagues from other local colleges to discuss the use of technology. In 1992, she married Owen Schur, now an Associate Professor in the English Department. They have a little girl, Rebecca Jeanne, aged four and a half, and live in Hoboken, NJ.
AGNES (TRACY) HOOPER GOTTLIEB is an Associate Professor of Communication and the Director of the Elizabeth Ann Seton Center for Women's Studies at Seton Hall. She is also one of the founders of the University’s Women’s Studies Program. She went to Seton Hall as an undergraduate and returned 13 years later after working as a journalist here and in Europe and pursuing her graduate studies at the University of Maryland. She is co-author of the book, 1,000 Years, 1,000 People: Ranking the Men and Women Who Shaped the Millennium, and has written many articles in academic publications, magazines and newspapers.

RICHARD M. LIDDLE is the University Professor Catholic Thought and Culture and Director of the Center for Catholic Studies at Seton Hall University. He is also a senior fellow of the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University. His doctoral dissertation was on the work of the American philosopher, Susanne K. Lander. In 1993 he published a work on Bernard Lonergan titled Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan. He is presently writing another book on his own personal appropriation of Lonergan’s work. He has also written on the thought of John Henry Newman. He is interested in the topics of art, education, formation and church leadership.

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PETER M. READER is an Associate Professor of Communication. He has his undergraduate degree in Communications and M.F.A. in Theatre from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Before teaching at Seton Hall, he designed lighting for regional and professional theatre in such places as The Delaware Theatre Company and The Players Theatre in Columbus, Ohio. He has taught Mass Communications and Theatre History in the Department of Communications at Seton Hall for 15 years. In addition, he is the Designer and Managing Director for the Theatre-in-the-Round. He has been involved in over 150 productions at Seton Hall alone.

MANFRED SCHELLSCHEIDT is in his 13th season as head coach of the Men's Soccer team. He guided the team to two Big East Championships, four NCAA tournament berths and five conference title game appearances. He has coached the U.S. Olympic teams and the U.S. teams at the Pan American Games. He was inducted into the College Soccer Association of New Jersey's Wall of Fame in 1995. He came to the United States in 1964 from his native Solinger, Germany, where he had learned soccer. He joined a semi-pro team in New Jersey and helped the team win U.S. Open Cup titles in 1970 and 1972. He and his wife Annette live in Union and are the parents of three children.

SISTER ANITA TALAR is a Professor on the faculty of the University Libraries and has been at Seton Hall for 18 years. Prior academic vocations include administration of a college library and two different high school libraries, as well as a short career teaching high school English, French, religion, and various other subjects. She has her M.L.S. and a Sixth-Year Specialist Certificate from Rutgers, M.A. in Educational Administration from Georgian Court College, and is completing a doctorate in Higher Education Administration and Supervision at Seton Hall. Her publications included several articles in library journals, and most recently a book chapter on the planning and design of Walsh Library. Other interests include working with library-related teaching and technology issues and supporting Seton Hall’s basketball teams. This interest in athletics will extend to baseball this year, as her nephew will (hopefully) be on the team. In addition to her academic vocation, Sister Anita is celebrating her 40th year as a Sister of Mercy, her primary vocation in life.

THOMAS SOWA is an Associate Professor in Seton Hall University’s School of Graduate Medical Education. He received a bachelor of arts in philosophy from the University of Notre Dame, a bachelor of science in general science from the University of Portland, a master's in general biology from Seton Hall University and a Ph. D. in Anatomy from the Medical College of Wisconsin. He teaches students in the physical therapy, occupational therapy, physician assistant and athletic training programs. His courses include human gross anatomy, neuroscience and clinical medicine. His work has appeared in numerous publications including the Journal of Applied Physiology, the Journal of Occupational Therapy and Neuroscience Letters.

DAWN WILLIAMS is currently the Dean for Community Development at Seton Hall University. She received her Ed. D. from Teachers College, Columbia University in Higher and Adult Education. She is a member of the editorial board for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Journal. In addition, she serves on the Board of Trustees for the South Orange/Maplewood Coalition on Race. Her areas of interest include creativity, human potential development and ethical servant leadership. Art is a spiritual process for her.