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The Identity and Mission of an American Catholic University, in Light of Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities, Ex Corde Ecclesiae

Irenaeus Otsemuno Ikhane
irenaeus.ikhane@student.shu.edu

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THE IDENTITY AND MISSION OF AN AMERICAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY, IN LIGHT OF POPE JOHN PAUL II’S APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION ON CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES, *EX CORDE ECCLESIAE*

BY

IRENAEUS OTSEMUNO IKHANE

Dissertation Committee

Joseph Stetar, Ph.D., Mentor
Martin Finkelstein, Ph.D.
Robert Kelchen, Ph.D.

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APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

Irenacus O. Ikhane, has successfully defended and made the required modifications to
the text of the doctoral dissertation for the Ph.D. during this Fall Semester 2016.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE
(please sign and date beside your name)

Mentor:
Dr. Joseph Stetar ___/___/17

Committee Member:
Dr. Martin Finkelstein 11/21/16

Committee Member:
Dr. Robert Kelchen 11/31/16

The mentor and any other committee members who wish to review revisions will sign
and date this document only when revisions have been completed. Please return this
form to the Office of Graduate Studies, where it will be placed in the candidate’s file and
submit a copy with your final dissertation to be bound as page number two.
ABSTRACT

Catholic colleges and universities in the United States started experiencing major identity crisis in the late 1960s when people started asking serious questions about the meaning of the Catholic identity of Catholic institutions of higher education. At the time, there were no satisfactory answers to the questions raised. As a result of the crisis, many Catholic colleges and universities lost their Catholic identity. To address the problem and set forth directions for a lasting solution, Pope John Paul II issued the Apostolic Constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* on August 15, 1990. In the document, the Supreme Pontiff defined Catholic identity, enumerated the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities, and outlined the principles and norms that Catholic institutions of higher education are to adopt and follow, to maintain Catholic identity. In compliance with the directives of the Holy Father that episcopal conferences of countries adopt and apply these principles and norms for the Catholic institutions in their countries, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops promulgated *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* on June 1, 2000, after it was approved by the Vatican on May 3, 2000. In the document, the bishops enumerated the principles and norms that Catholic institutions of higher education in the United States are to follow and abide by, to maintain Catholic identity.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain and understand the extent to which American Catholic University is fulfilling and applying the principles and norms in both documents to maintain Catholic identity. To achieve this, the researcher interviewed some members of faculty of the School of Theology of the institution, and consulted some recent documents containing the policies and programs of the institution.
The findings from the research revealed that, while the institution had undertaken many initiatives, and incorporated many of the principles and norms into its functions, policies and programs, not all the members of the university community are participating in institutional mission-centered programs and activities. Research participants stated that the active participation of all the members of the university community would require more effort on the part of the institution to encourage all the members to be actively involved by playing their parts to foster the Catholic identity and mission of the institution. The collaboration of all the members would put the university on the path of maintaining a strong and vibrant Catholic identity.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my father, Mr. Ignatius Ikhane, who supported and encouraged me till the end of his life on earth. It is also dedicated to my loving mother, Mrs. Agnes Ikhane, who continues to be a pillar of support and encouragement to me. To them, I am highly indebted and grateful.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is a saying that, “No man is an island.” Every human being depends on others for existence, survival, growth, development, success, achievement, and accomplishment. It is in recognition of this fact that I acknowledge and thank all who supported me, and contributed to the successful completion of this dissertation and my doctoral studies.

First and foremost, I thank the Almighty God with whom all things are possible, and without whom nothing is possible, for bringing me into being, and for endowing me with His blessing, grace, strength, and the intellect, will, and enablement to complete this dissertation. To God be the glory for the great things he has done and continues to do in my life.

I am immensely grateful to my father, Mr. Ignatius Ikhane of blessed memory, and my mother, Mrs. Agnes Ikhane. Words are not adequate to express my gratitude to them for their parental support and encouragement. As my first teachers, they instilled in me the love of God and Christian values. They also instilled in me the importance and value of education. As great parents, they provided for all my needs, including my academic and educational needs. May God grant my father eternal rest in His kingdom, and May God continue to bless, protect, strengthen, and sustain my mother. I am also immensely grateful to my brothers and sisters for all their support and encouragement. Their brotherly and sisterly love and support have been great sources of strength and encouragement to me. May God bless, protect, and grant them success in all their endeavors in life.
I am most grateful to my Bishop, Most Rev. Gabriel Dunia, for giving me the opportunity to pursue my doctoral studies, and for his fatherly support and encouragement. May God bless and strengthen him, and give him the grace to continue to shepherd the flock entrusted to his pastoral care.

I register a huge debt of gratitude to my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Joseph Stetar, and to the members of the dissertation committee, Dr. Martin Finkelstein, and Dr. Robert Kelchen, for their invaluable advice, guidance, support and encouragement. They were wonderful guiding me through the process and writing of the dissertation. I also acknowledge and thank the chair, faculty, and staff of the Department of Education Leadership, Management, and Policy, Seton Hall University, New Jersey, for their guidance and encouragement. I am especially indebted to the professors who taught me during my doctoral studies. I thank them immensely for all their wonderful and helpful guidance and advice. I wish them success in their profession and endeavors. I equally thank the dean, faculty, and staff of the College of Education and Human Services, and indeed, the President, administration, and faculty of Seton Hall University, New Jersey, for providing a great atmosphere for learning. I wish them success in all their professional and life endeavors.

I register my immense indebtedness to the members of faculty of the School of Theology at American Catholic University who participated in this research. I acknowledge and thank them for their invaluable contributions, which offered great insight into how the institution is maintaining Catholic identity. I am grateful to them for their time, and for the useful information they provided during the research. May God bless, strengthen and sustain them in their vocations and professions.
I thank the priests and the parishioners of St. Joachim-St. John Parish, Beacon, New York, for their prayers and encouragement. May God bless, protect, and reward them abundantly.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Background

One of the main features of higher education in the United States is diversity. This diversity is reflected in institution type, goals, populations served, governance or control, and funding. Regarding institution type, there are four-year institutions and two-year community colleges, research institutions, liberal arts institutions, public institutions, and private institutions (Bess and Dee, 2008). Public institutions are those established and sponsored by state governments, while private institutions are established and sponsored by non-governmental organizations, groups, and individuals. Among private institutions are religious institutions, which include Catholic institutions. Catholic institutions in the United States are the colleges and universities established and sponsored by either the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, diocesan bishops or Catholic dioceses, Catholic religious orders, or by other ecclesiastical or lay persons, with the consent and approval of the competent ecclesiastical authority. The bishops of the United States wrote about the diversity of these institutions. According to the bishops, among Catholic institutions, there are two-year colleges, four-year institutions and graduate program institutions; liberal arts colleges, and research universities; professional schools, and schools for technical education (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). The aim of Catholic institutions is to contribute to teaching, learning, research and service, with the incorporation of Catholic principles, ideals, and values into these functions.

Catholic colleges and universities in the United States have contributed
immensely to American higher education. Since their founding, they have been directly involved in the education of students, and in research. At present, there are 235 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States, about one-quarter of Catholic institutions of higher education in the world, about 13 percent of private colleges and universities in the United States (Carnegie Foundation, 2014), and the largest and most comprehensive religious or denominational institutions of higher education in the United States (O’Connell, 2000). The vast majority of these institutions, 203 institutions, representing ninety-three percent, were founded by various religious congregations, 14 institutions, representing six percent, were founded by diocesan bishops or dioceses, 11 institutions were founded by other ecclesiastical or lay persons, while one institution was founded and jointly owned by the bishops of the United States (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, 2014; Estanek, James, & Norton, 2013; Hellwig, 2003; Rausch, 2010). American Catholic University, which was the site of this research, is one of the diocesan Catholic Universities in the United States. Among these institutions, there are 11 doctoral/research universities, with 2 classified as very high research activity institutions, and 9 classified as high research activity institutions by the Carnegie Foundation (United States Department of Education’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System). These institutions have 5 medical schools, 28 law schools, 25 schools of engineering, 128 schools of nursing, 163 schools of education, 14 women’s colleges, and 2 aviation programs (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities). As of 2014, there were over 750,000 students enrolled in Catholic colleges and universities in the United States, about half of all the students enrolled in American religious institutions of higher education (Carnegie Foundation). According to the Association of Catholic Colleges and
Universities, as of 2016, the number of students enrolled in Catholic colleges and universities was “nearly 950,000” (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities). As religious and Catholic institutions, they have their peculiar and distinctive identity, which forms the bases of their functioning and operation.

From the founding of Georgetown University, the first Catholic university in the United States, in 1789, until 1960, there were no serious issues regarding the identity of Catholic institutions of higher education. According to Gleason (1994), the issue of Catholic identity did not exist even in the 1940s and 1950s, when Catholic institutions still fully maintained their identity. Even when Protestant institutions of higher education lost their identity in the 19th and 20th centuries, and were taken over by non-religious groups, Catholic institutions continued to maintain their identity by functioning according to Catholic principles and ideals. The Catholic character of the institutions was a given, and Catholicism reflected in everything they did, especially their curriculum, governance, and administration, with policies that conformed to the teachings of the Catholic Church (Dosen, 2012; Gleason, 1994; Hellwig, 2000, 2003; Sweazey & Ross, 2012).

A major factor responsible for this strong identity was the availability and presence of clergy and religious in large numbers on campus. Many of the members of the faculty, a vast majority of those who occupied leadership and administrative positions, and a vast majority of the trustees on the boards of Catholic institutions were priests and religious. The control, governance, and administration the priests and religious exercised in these institutions, largely ensured the Catholic identity the institutions maintained (O’Brien, 2013). According to Hellwig (2003), the link of these institutions with the Church was taken for granted because they were sponsored,
controlled, administered, and staffed by priests and vowed religious. Another reason for this strong identity was the great confidence many people had in the Catholic Church. According to O’Brien (1994), American Catholics had great optimism and enthusiasm about the Catholic Church and all it stood for. This optimism and enthusiasm was extended to Catholic institutions of higher education, since they were connected with the Catholic Church that largely controlled them through Catholic dioceses or religious orders.

The Research Problem

Catholic colleges and universities in the United States started having difficulty maintaining their identity in the 1960s. According to O’Brien (1994), identity was not a problem in Catholic colleges and universities until the 1960s when their mission and identity that was obvious, compelling, and a given, started disappearing. Since then, they have struggled and contended with the issue of their Catholic identity and mission (Buckley, 1998; Dosen, 2012). This identity crisis largely arose as a result of changes in Catholic higher education, such as the fast decline in the numbers of clergy and religious on Catholic campuses, changes in student populations, and pressure from governments on Catholic institutions to drop their Catholic identity and get government funding in return (Gallin, 2000; Gleason, 1993). According to Abelman (2012) and Heft (2010), the major issues people had regarding Catholic identity lied in the institutions’ characteristics of their Catholic identity, defining values, and guiding principles.

From the late 1960s, people started asking questions about the values and practices of the Catholic Church, and by extension, the Catholic identity of Catholic institutions of higher education. These questions about Catholic identity bordered on
what it means for a college or university to be an authentic Catholic institution of higher education (Curran, 1997; Morey & Piderit, 2006; Rausch, 2010; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006). According to Attridge (1994), some of these questions concerned the nature and function of Catholic universities: Do they have a distinctive character that differentiates them from other institutions of higher education; if they do, what specifically is that character, should it be fostered, and, if so, how is it to be fostered? Other authors, (Curran, 1997; Morey & Piderit, 2006; Rausch, 2010) noted that some of these questions were: What is Catholic identity? How are Catholic colleges and universities different from non-Catholic institutions of higher education? What does it mean for an institution to be an authentic Catholic institution of higher education? Is it possible for Catholic institutions of higher education to still maintain Catholic identity? What strategies should be applied to ensure Catholic identity in Catholic institutions of higher education?

For a long time, there were no satisfactory answers to these questions, and no consensus about the true meaning of Catholic identity. So the debate and discussion regarding the meaning of Catholic identity continued in Catholic higher education (Gardner, 2006; O’Brien, 2013). Based on this quandary, these authors (Baxter, 2011; Buckley, 1998; Dosen, 2000; Dutile, 1994; Estanek, James & Norton, 2013; Gallin, 2000; Garrett, 2006; George, 2013; Gleason, 1995; Henkin, Dee & Manzo, 2001; Morey & Piderit, 2006) argued that it is the most regularly debated, most contentious, most dominant, most prevalent, yet least conclusive issue in Catholic higher education. Also, Abelman & Dalessandro (2008) and Garrett (2006) noted that even though Catholic higher education in the United States has existed for more than 200 years, there is still
debate among Church and Catholic higher education leaders about Catholic identity, since the institutions are struggling with what it means to be Catholic institutions.

Catholic institutions of higher education are evaluating their positions and seeking a path for the future in order to stay relevant in American higher education, but they are faced with situations such as secularization, that are threatening their ability to continue living their identity and culture as Catholic and religious institutions (Abelman, 2012; Garrett, 2006; George, 2013; Morey & Piderit, 2006). With this crisis of identity facing Catholic institutions, Mixon, Lyon, and Beaty (2004) stated that religious colleges and universities are “on the horns of a dilemma,” and Morey and Piderit (2006) referred to Catholic higher education as “a culture in crisis.” With this reality, some education analysts believed that the end was near for Catholic institutions of higher education, since, for them, they were on the brink of collapse. They argued that due to their Catholic identity, they will not stand the test of time, and so will go into extinction like Protestant institutions in the past (Buckley, 1998; Wilcox, 2000). According to Attridge (1994), some critics have predicted that Catholic universities are on the verge of sliding down a slippery slope as many Protestant universities did in the past. One of such persons was John Cogley, who in his article, The Future of an Illusion states that, “I do not believe that the Catholic University as such has a future” (Gallin, 2000). According to Dutile (1994), these critics argued that once the Catholic university slides down the slope, it would be irretrievable.

In response to this crisis, Church and Catholic higher education leaders explored various and appropriate ways to define and explain in clear, unequivocal, and unambiguous terms, the values and principles peculiar to Catholic institutions of higher
education, the meaning of Catholic identity, and how Catholic institutions of higher education can maintain a vibrant identity, as they did in the past. There have been discussions and debates about the real meaning of Catholic identity, the reasons some Catholic institutions are losing their identity, and the way forward for these institutions regarding what can be done to remedy the situation (Garrett, 2006; O’Brien, 2013; Orji, 2013). There have been meetings and conferences to find a lasting solution to the problem (Estanek, James & Norton, 2013; Garrett, 2006; George, 2013). The discussions became necessary as they were geared towards defining and understanding Catholic identity, and finding a lasting solution to the problem. These discussions about Catholic identity started in 1967 when a group of 26 Church and Catholic institutions of higher education leaders met in Land O’ Lakes, Wisconsin, to discuss Catholic identity and the way forward for Catholic colleges and universities. At the end of the conference, the participants issued a crucial statement on the nature of Catholic higher education (Garrett, 2006; Gleason, 1995; Hendershoot, 2011; O’Brien, 2003). The statement emphasized that Catholicism must be “perceptibly present and effectively active” on the campuses of Catholic institutions of higher education (Burtchaell, 1998).

The Church leadership at the Vatican saw this identity crisis as a major concern, and was poised and determined to ensure that these institutions maintain their identity, and not lose sight of their Catholic origin and mission. This concern informed the convoking of the first International Congress of Catholic Universities (ICCU), held at the Vatican from April 25 through May 1, 1969. At the end of the congress, a document titled *The Catholic University and the Aggiornamento* was issued. In 1972, the second International Congress of Catholic Universities (ICCU) was held at the Vatican from
November 20 to 29. The congress issued a document titled *The Catholic University in the Modern World*. The congresses focused on Catholic identity, and the documents that were issued spoke directly to the identity and characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities.

On April 15 1979, Pope John Paul II issued the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties. The Supreme Pontiff addressed the document specifically to ecclesiastical universities and faculties. In the document, the Holy Father enumerated the principles and norms that ecclesiastical universities are to follow to maintain Catholic identity, and emphasized the need for pontifical degrees awarded by these institutions to carry universal value and worth. The Holy Father was inspired by his predecessor, Pope Pius XII, who, in order to stimulate collaboration and partnership among Catholic universities, and for them to have a presence and a voice in international matters, issued his Apostolic Brief of July 27, 1949, in which he formally established the International Federation of Catholic Universities. Its membership was limited to pontifical institutions, comprising all universities that the Holy See has erected canonically or will erect in future, or universities that have been recognized as explicitly following the teachings of the Church (John Paul II, 1979). But the association was later expanded to include all Catholic universities, pontifical and non-pontifical (Burtchaell, 1998).

Pope John Paul II felt obliged to issue a similar document for all Catholic higher education institutions. According to Janosik (1999), since the debate and discussion about true identity were ongoing, and since Catholic institutions and leaders were grappling with, and increasingly trying to arrive at a consensus about the nature of Catholic identity
and how to maintain it as was done in the past, there was need to have a consensus on the nature and meaning of Catholic identity. In 1986, the Vatican issued a draft of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, for study, discussion, and suggestions from bishops, clergy, religious, laity, and Catholic higher education leaders, to get their input for the final document. (Estanek, James & Norton, 2006). According to Gallin (2003), there was extensive work done before the final document was issued. She noted that from 1984 to 1990, there were several meetings, drafts, and revisions, which culminated in a meeting in Rome in April 1989, of elected delegates around the world, comprising 40 bishops and 90 university presidents. This shows that the Vatican involved the bishops and the academia in preparing the document. After wide and extensive review and consultation, Pope John Paul II issued *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* on August 15, 1990 (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006). In the document, the Supreme Pontiff gave a comprehensive definition of Catholic identity, enumerated the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities, and set forth the principles, guidelines, and norms that Catholic institutions are to abide by, to maintain Catholic identity. According to Rebore (2003), the document serves as a guide to Catholic institutions of higher education in understanding and living their identity.

**Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae***

The document *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, a term which literally translates “from the heart of the Church,” was issued by Pope John Paul II on August 15, 1990. The document was addressed to bishops, Catholic higher education leaders, religious congregations, Catholic institutions of higher education, all Catholics, and all who participate in and have interest in Catholic higher education (John Paul II, 1990). Stating the purpose of the
document, the Supreme Pontiff reaffirmed the purpose of Catholic higher education in the Second Vatican Council document which stated that “The Christian mind may achieve, as it were, a public, persistent and universal presence in the whole enterprise of advancing higher culture and that the students of these institutions become people outstanding in learning, ready to shoulder society’s heavier burdens and to witness the faith to the world” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 9). The Holy Father issued the document to direct Catholic colleges and universities to conform their mission, policies, teaching, research, programs, and activities to the teachings of the Church (Gallin, 2000; Hutchison, 2001).

The Apostolic Constitution is divided into two parts. The first part, titled *Identity and Mission*, articulates the special and indispensable relationship between the Church and Catholic institutions of higher education, and highlights the mission, identity, and the essential characteristics of Catholic institutions of higher education. It also contains a set of principles and guidelines to be followed by Catholic institutions of higher education, in order to maintain their identity. The second part, titled *General Norms*, contains the norms to be followed by Catholic institutions and maintained by bishops and Catholic higher education leaders, in order to maintain Catholic identity in Catholic institutions (Leibrecht, 2001). In the document, the Holy Father spelled out what Catholic colleges and universities are, and how they are to function and operate. The document came into effect on the first day of the 1991 academic year (John Paul II, 1990).

**The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States**

In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II acknowledged there are differences in local cultures. For this reason, the Supreme Pontiff directed national conferences of
Catholic Bishops to adopt and apply the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* for their respective Catholic colleges and universities, while maintaining the basic tenets in the document (John Paul II, 1990). In response to this directive, the Catholic bishops of the United States constituted a committee comprising seven bishops, with bishop John Leibrecht as chair, to propose to the conference, particular norms for the United States. Eight presidents of Catholic colleges and universities, two resource persons, and four staff members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, were chosen to assist the bishops on the committee (Leibrecht, 2001). The committee proposed three drafts to the conference during its eight years of work. The committee started work in February 1991, and produced a draft in 1993. In May 1993, the draft was distributed to bishops, presidents of Catholic colleges and universities, sponsoring religious congregations, and learned societies, which included the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, the Catholic Theological Society of America, the College Theology Society, the Canon Law Society of America, the Cardinal Newman Society, and the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, for their comments, suggestions, and recommendations to the committee. These groups were consulted for all the drafts and the final document (Leibrecht, 2001). The draft was largely opposed. This was because it focused more on the *mandatum* and did not go far enough to address, adopt, and apply the other norms. Three of the eight ordinances or norms in the draft were about the *mandatum*. Bishop John Leibrecht, the chair of the committee, noted that the *mandatum* was the most contentious issue in efforts to establish Particular Norms for the United States, as it was greatly opposed and severely criticized by many leaders and representatives of Catholic higher education (Leibrecht, 2001). Since the draft was considered unworkable by educators, the committee decided
during its meeting in March 1994 not to amend the draft, but to start afresh and produce a new draft (Leibrecht, 2001, George, 2013).

In August 1995, a new draft was presented for consultation with bishops, university presidents, sponsoring religious congregations, and learned societies. After extensive consultations, the proposal was presented to the bishops for final amendments. On November 13, 1996, the bishops voted 223-6 in favor of the draft. It was subsequently sent to the Vatican for recognition and approval. The Vatican did not approve the draft after its review, though it lauded the extensive consultation and work on the draft, and particularly praised the aspect that placed much emphasis on the mutual trust and relationship between bishops and Catholic institutions of higher education. The Vatican argued that, “The document, while having, in some places, a certain legal tone, lacks, in some other instances, the necessary juridical elements for an effective functioning institutionally of Catholic Universities as University and as Catholic” (Leibrecht, 2001, p.142). Consequently, on April 23, 1997, the Vatican’s Congregation for Catholic Education sent the draft back to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for some amendments. After the revision, with some amendments and consultations, the bishops approved the document on November 17, 1999, by a vote of 223-31. The bishops, through the president of the conference, bishop Joseph Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston, subsequently petitioned the Holy See to duly grant recognition and approval of the document. The document The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States was recognized and approved by the Vatican on May 3, 2000, and came into effect on May 3, 2001 (Leibrecht, 2001; Euart, 2003; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014).
The two-part document contains principles and norms that Catholic colleges and universities in the United States are to follow, abide by, and incorporate into their functions, policies and programs, in order to maintain their identity as Catholic institutions of higher education (Leibrecht, 2001). Part one, Theological and Pastoral Principles, highlights the Church’s concept of communion; the relationship of the Catholic university with the Church and society; the trust, close and consistent cooperation between university and Church authorities; the continuing dialogue among university and Church authorities; Catholic identity, and the essential characteristics of colleges and universities in the United States. Part two, Particular Norms, enumerates the particular norms; the nature of a Catholic university; the establishment of a Catholic university; the university community; the Catholic university in the Church; pastoral ministry in Catholic universities; the cooperation among Catholic universities, and among Catholic universities and other institutions, professional associations, and the larger society (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006, 2014). According to Euart (2003), these norms provide concrete steps to be taken to facilitate the implementation of the principles.

The Role of Bishops in Catholic Universities

A major highlight in Ex Corde Ecclesiae and The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States is the role of bishops in Catholic colleges and universities. Both documents spelled out the roles bishops should play in fostering Catholic identity and culture in the institutions. The first role of bishops is the establishment of Catholic universities, or their approval or consent before institutions can be called Catholic universities. Before the publication of Ex Corde Ecclesiae and The Application of Ex
Corde Ecclesiae for the United States, the 1983 revised Code of Canon Law gave authority to the competent ecclesiastical authority to establish or approve Catholic universities. According to Canon 808 of the Code of Canon Law, “Even if it really be Catholic, no university may bear the title or name Catholic university without the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority” (Coriden, 1985, p. 573). This canon unequivocally states that anyone can establish a Catholic university, but for such a university to bear the name ‘Catholic,’ it must be recognized and approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority. The competent ecclesiastical authority is the Holy See, episcopal conference, or the bishop of the diocese in which the university is located. The bishop must approve any university established within his diocesan territory by religious congregations, other groups, or individuals, before it can be designated a Catholic university. This canon gave particular authority to the bishop to approve a potential or intended Catholic university established in his diocese as ‘Catholic.’ Without the approval of the bishop, it cannot be termed a Catholic university. In line with this authority given in the Code of Canon Law to the competent ecclesiastical authority to establish or approve a university as ‘Catholic,’ His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, stated in Ex Corde Ecclesiae that, “A Catholic University may be established or approved by the Holy See, by an Episcopal Conference or another Assembly of Catholic Hierarchy, or by a diocesan Bishop” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 40). Specifically on the authority of the diocesan bishop, the Supreme Pontiff stated that, “With the consent of the diocesan Bishop, a Catholic University may also be established by a Religious institute or other public juridical person” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 40). The Holy Father also stated that, “A Catholic University may also be established by other ecclesiastical or lay persons; such a
University may refer to itself as a Catholic University only with the consent of the competent ecclesiastical Authority, in accordance with the conditions which both parties shall agree” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 40). The Supreme Pontiff clearly stated that any Catholic university established by a religious order, by any group, or by an individual must be recognized and approved by the bishop of the diocese in which the university is located before it can be regarded as a Catholic University. The local bishop as the local ordinary and leader of the Church in the diocese recognizes and approves such a university in the name of the Church as “Catholic.” The bishop is to have due observation and investigation, and determine if such a university qualifies as a Catholic institution, before giving recognition and approval.

Another responsibility of the diocesan bishop is to provide for the spiritual and liturgical needs of the students of the Catholic institutions in his diocese. The 1983 Code of Canon Law gave the diocesan bishop the responsibility of providing for the spiritual and pastoral needs of students of Catholic institutions of higher education. Canon 813 states that, “The diocesan bishop is to have serious pastoral concern for students by erecting a parish for them or by assigning priests for this purpose on a stable basis; he is also to provide for Catholic university centers at universities, even non-Catholic ones, to give assistance, especially spiritual to young people” (Coriden, 1985, p. 576). The bishop of the diocese where a Catholic university is located is to ensure that the students have the opportunity to participate in spiritual and liturgical activities and have their pastoral needs catered for.

*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* emphasized that bishops have a particular responsibility to promote Catholic institutions of higher education, especially in the areas of
strengthening, preserving, and protecting their Catholic identity in relation to civil authorities. This will be most ensured when there is close relationship, cooperation, mutual trust, and dialogue between the bishop and the university authorities (John Paul II, 1990). The document gave the bishops the authority to safeguard Catholic identity at Catholic colleges and universities. First, the document called on all Catholic institutions of higher education to maintain communion with the Holy See and the universal Church, and to be in close communion with the local Church, especially with the bishops of the country or region in which the institution is located (John Paul II, 1990). According to the Holy Father, since Catholic universities grew from, and are part of the Church, it is appropriate that they be in constant communion with the Church and refer pastoral and other salient matters to the Church, represented by the Holy See at the universal level, and the bishops at the national, provincial, and diocesan levels. As the leader of the Church and faith in the diocese, every diocesan bishop is charged with the responsibility of promoting the good of the Catholic colleges and universities located in his diocese. He has the rightful position and duty to ensure that the institutions preserve and strengthen their Catholic identity and character. If problems concerning Catholic identity occur, the diocesan bishop also has the responsibility to work with the competent institution authority to resolve such matters (John Paul II, 1990). The Supreme Pontiff emphasized that the university authorities are to report such problems to the bishop, and keep him informed of relevant matters and activities of the university in order for him to take action, where necessary, for the welfare of the university (John Paul II, 1990). The diocesan bishop is to take this responsibility seriously.
In addition to the authority given to bishops in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* defined a special role for bishops in American Catholic colleges and universities. The document stated clearly that bishops should be seen, not as external agents, but as major participants in the life of the Catholic university. Their role is to work to preserve and strengthen Catholic identity by developing close relationships with university authorities, relationships that are “characterized by mutual trust, close and consistent cooperation, and continuing dialogue” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014, p. 220). The bishops of the United States emphatically stated that diocesan bishops have a role to initiate or be committed to regular dialogue with university authorities, and ensure that the ideals, principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* are safeguarded, promoted, and preserved in the institutions. Bishops are also to have strong collaboration with the religious congregations that control or sponsor the universities located in their dioceses (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). The document also stated that bishops are to publicly acknowledge the service of Catholic institutions of higher education to the Church, support their Catholic identity, and work to defend it, if it is challenged unnecessarily and unjustifiably (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). The document gave the bishop of the diocese authority to intervene and provide leadership in resolving such matters.

**The Mandatum**

*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* were received by bishops and some Catholic higher education leaders and groups in the United States, as documents that clearly defined Catholic identity, and set forth
necessary principles and norms for Catholic institutions to maintain their identity. But the documents also generated some controversy and opposition. According to O’Connell (2000), most people will agree that there is much in the documents to inspire those involved in Catholic higher education, but many officials have resisted attempts by the bishops to apply and implement the vision in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. He maintains that the issues and bone of contention are multiple and complex: appropriate institutional autonomy versus hierarchical involvement and oversight; academic freedom versus doctrinal integrity; scholarly credibility versus promotion of Church teaching; competition with secular institutions versus distinctive Catholic identity. Cardinal Francis George, a former archbishop of Chicago, who was very much involved in discussions and the process of drafting, approval, and early implementation of *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*, noted that, although some institution presidents were opposed to the idea of including many of the elements, especially the *mandatum* in the document, there were background conversations and discussions between bishops and presidents in all the dioceses where Catholic colleges and universities are located in the United States. According to Cardinal George, there was not as much opposition as was reported at the time. He noted that when the bishops met for a vote on the final draft, they asked each other how the conversations with presidents of Catholic institutions in their dioceses went. He stated that the overwhelming majority of the bishops said, “Well, some of the presidents don’t really like it; they’d really rather not be bothered; others have said it shows great promise; but most of them said they can live with it” (George, 2013, p. 4). According to Cardinal George, there was definitely opposition, but there was more support among presidents of institutions for both the elements and the entire document.
According to Russo and Gregory (2001), the controversy generated by a possible implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* accelerated in the United States even before the committee constituted by the bishops started working on the first draft of *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*. They noted that critics, both inside and outside of the Catholic Church, voiced concerns, and raised some questions about the potential impact of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* on Catholic colleges and universities in the United States. They also stated that many administrators and professors at Catholic universities were against the adoption of the document the bishops of the United States were working on, a document that was aimed at adopting the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Bishop John Leibrecht, the chair of the implementation committee, noted that on October 28, 1999, Monika Hellwig, executive director of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU), wrote to the bishops of the United States, asking the bishops not to vote on the draft, or if they vote on it, that it be voted down. She raised legal, academic, and financial concerns, as reasons for the request (Leibrecht, 2001). But the bishops voted on, and overwhelmingly approved it by a 233 to 31 margin.

The major source of contention and controversy is the inclusion of the norm, *mandatum*, in both documents. As stated in the documents, all professors teaching the theological disciplines in Catholic colleges and universities, are required to obtain a *mandatum*, a certification from the local bishop that they are in full communion with the Catholic Church, and therefore, are qualified to teach Catholic Theology in the institutions. This provision is based on Canon 812 of the Code of Canon Law, which states that, “It is necessary that those who teach the theological disciplines in any institute of higher studies have a mandate from the competent ecclesiastical authority” (Coriden,
1985, p. 575). In line with this canon, Pope John Paul II stated in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* that, “Catholic theologians, aware that they fulfill a mandate received from the Church, are to be faithful to the Magisterium of the Church as the authentic interpreter of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 42). Adopting this component for the Catholic colleges and universities in the United States, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops directed that, “Catholics who teach the theological disciplines in a Catholic university are required to have a *mandatum* granted by competent ecclesiastical authority” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014, p. 228). The competent ecclesiastical authority is the bishop of the diocese in which the Catholic university is located. The bishop may grant the *mandatum* personally or through a delegate (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014).

After the publication of *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops constituted a committee comprising bishops, with the assistance of consultants representing professors of the theological disciplines, canonists, and Catholic institution presidents, to draft the guidelines and processes of requesting, granting, and withdrawing the *mandatum*. According to Euart (2003), in the spring of 2001, the bishops held meetings with professors who teach the theological disciplines, in regard to the document, the draft guidelines, and in particular, the requirement of the *mandatum*. In June 2001, the bishops accepted a final draft of the guidelines for requesting, granting, and withdrawing of the *mandatum*.

Some Catholic higher education leaders, faculty, Catholic higher education and theology groups in the United States, oppose this component in these documents. Their
argument for opposing the *mandatum* is that it is a threat to institutional autonomy and academic freedom, since, according to them, it could jeopardize the academic freedom that should be enjoyed by the theologians, and undermine the autonomy of the institutions. They also raised concerns that those who refuse to request or receive the *mandatum* will be considered heterodox (Rausch, 2010; Russo & Gregory, 2001). Also, Henkin, Dee and Manzo (2001) noted that many scholars and presidents of Catholic colleges and universities, have opposed some of the norms, especially the *mandatum*, since, in their view, they are contrary to the American higher education system and traditions, and also antithetical to academic freedom. These authors also noted that Catholic institution presidents may have been concerned about the juridical relationship between the Church and Catholic colleges and universities that could undermine institutional autonomy, and entrap Catholic institutions in lawsuits with great financial consequences.

The opponents voiced concerns that theology professors who fail to obtain the *mandatum* would be sanctioned or even asked to withdraw from the university, and this, they claimed, is against the principle of academic freedom. For example, Jon Nilson (2001), professor of contemporary Catholicism at Loyola University in Chicago, and former president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, opined that the Church should appreciate a system of Catholic higher education independent of the Church’s juridical control, for the control of the Church poses a threat to institutional autonomy and academic freedom, and this may result in the doom of Catholic higher education. But in a counter argument, Russo and Gregory (2001) pointed out that *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* does not impede academic freedom, but it promotes, strengthens, and is fully committed
to the principles of academic freedom. They based their argument on what Pope John Paul II said in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* that the Catholic University, “possesses that institutional autonomy necessary to perform its functions effectively, and guarantees its members academic freedom, so long as the rights of the individual person and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good” (John Paul II, 1990, p.12). The Supreme Pontiff also stated that, “The Church, accepting ‘the legitimate autonomy of human culture and especially of the sciences,’ recognizes the academic freedom of scholars in each discipline in accordance with its own principles and proper methods, and within the confines of the truth and the common good. Theology has its legitimate place in the University alongside other disciplines. It has proper principles and methods, which define it as a branch of knowledge. Theologians enjoy this same freedom so long as they are faithful to those principles and methods” (John Paul II, 1990, pp. 23 - 24). Based on these assertions by the Holy Father, Russo and Gregory concluded that *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* does not have any purpose of hindering academic freedom, but promotes it, while ensuring that all who teach Catholic Theology do so in accordance with the Church’s teaching and tradition.

The bishops of the United States agreed with the Holy Father that academic freedom should be promoted in Catholic colleges and universities, and that the *mandatum* does not impede academic freedom. In *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*, the bishops stated that academic freedom is an essential element of a Catholic university. They encouraged all Catholic institutions of higher education to take necessary steps to ensure that all members of faculty are given the lawful freedom of inquiry and of thought, and the freedom to express their minds on matters, especially
those pertaining to their disciplines. In particular, the bishops stated that all professors who teach the theological disciplines enjoy a lawful freedom of inquiry, and of expressing their opinions prudently on matters pertaining to their expertise, while doing so in conformity with the teachings of the Church on such matters. The bishops stated that the diocesan bishop has the responsibility of recognizing and promoting the rightful academic freedom of faculty members in their search for truth (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). The bishops made it clear that, “The mandatum should not be construed as an appointment, authorization, delegation, or approbation of one’s teaching by Church authorities. Those who have received a mandatum teach in their own name in virtue of their baptism and their academic and professional competence, not in the name of the Bishop or of the Church’s magisterium” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014, p. 229). From the foregoing, it is clear that the mandatum does not limit the academic freedom of those required to have it. It is also apparent that Pope John Paul II and the bishops of the United States did not require professors who teach the theological disciplines in Catholic colleges and universities to obtain a mandatum in order to impede their academic freedom, but to ensure that they exercise their freedom by teaching in conformity with the teachings of the Church. Since they teach sacred theology which originated from Jesus Christ, and which is propagated and perpetuated by the Church, and which involves the life, teachings, beliefs, and practices of the Church, they must teach it as it is, and not alter it in any way. More so, since they teach theology in Catholic colleges and universities, they must be mindful of Catholic identity, and promote it with their teaching and research.
The positions of Pope John Paul II and the bishops of the United States are in consonance with the position of the Second Vatican Council on academic freedom. The council stressed the importance of academic freedom in Catholic institutions, as long as the freedom is exercised in conformity with Catholic principles, beliefs and practices. The council stated that in scientific research, Catholic institutions and their faculties must strike a prudent balance between due regard for academic freedom and due consideration for the truths of the Catholic faith (Flannery, 1987; George, 2013).

Since the approval and publication of The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States, the requirement for professors who teach the theological disciplines to receive the mandatum has been negotiated and resolved at the diocesan level. According to Rausch (2010), while some bishops require and order all professors who teach the theological disciplines in the Catholic institutions in their dioceses to request and receive the mandatum with public announcement, other bishops have chosen to grant it quietly to those who request it, or to those who identify themselves as professors who teach the theological disciplines, making it a private matter between the theologian and the bishop.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which American Catholic University is conforming to the principles and norms in Ex Corde Ecclesiae, and The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States, and applying the principles and norms to maintain Catholic identity. To ascertain this, the study explored how the members of faculty of the School of Theology at American Catholic University understand the institution to be living its Catholic identity and fulfilling its mission. The
study examined the initiatives, policies, and programs that American Catholic University has adopted, and is presently implementing, to maintain Catholic identity.

In the research on the identity and mission of Catholic colleges and universities, there is a gap in literature. The existing literature focus on the nature of Catholic identity, the problem of identity, the cause of identity crisis, and the efforts being made by Catholic institutions to overcome the crisis and maintain their identity. There is also substantial research regarding the response of Catholic institutions to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*. But there is limited literature regarding how American Catholic University has responded to the documents. The evidence is mainly on the institution’s website. This research, which explored the response of the institution to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, based on the thoughts of the faculty of the School of Theology, will add to the existing literature of the institution regarding how the institution is fulfilling its mission and maintaining Catholic identity.

**Significance of the Study**

*In Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II stated the principles and norms that Catholic institutions of higher education are to adopt to maintain Catholic identity. This study explored the extent to which American Catholic University is incorporating these principles and norms into its functions, policies, and programs, to maintain Catholic identity.

In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II enumerated four essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities, and exhorted Catholic institutions of higher education to embrace these essential characteristics, and incorporate them into their functions, policies, programs, and activities, in order to maintain Catholic identity.
The main intent and rationale of this study was to explore and determine how American Catholic University has embraced these characteristics, and how it is applying them to maintain Catholic identity.

*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* was written and published to offer principles and norms to Catholic colleges and universities to live and maintain their Catholic identity. Pope John Paul II enjoined Church leaders, Catholic higher education leaders, and Catholic institutions, to make these principles and norms known to administrators, faculty, staff, students, and other members of Catholic institutions. This study examined how American Catholic University and its leaders are responding to the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, how they are explaining them to the faculty and staff of the university, and how they are making them understand their responsibilities to support and promote Catholic identity.

Ten years after the approval and adoption of *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in January 2011, asked individual bishops to hold conversations with presidents of Catholic colleges and universities in their dioceses regarding the progress made in the implementation of the principles and norms in the document. As stated in the final report for the ten year review, during the November 2011 General Assembly of the bishops, more than 100 bishops reported positive and good news, stating and acknowledging that definite and substantial progress has been made in advancing and fostering Catholic identity (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). This report helped the bishops determine the progress made regarding the implementation at the various institutions. This research will help leaders of American Catholic University determine
and understand the progress the institution has made regarding the implementation of the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*.

There is extant substantial and extensive qualitative research about the views, positions, and understanding of administrators of Catholic institutions of higher education regarding Catholic identity, and the strategies and policies their institutions are adopting and implementing to maintain Catholic identity. For example, in the book *Catholic Higher Education: A Culture in Crisis*, Morey and Piderit (2006) recorded interviews they did with administrators of Catholic institutions regarding their positions on Catholic identity, and the strategies being implemented by their institutions in their efforts to maintain Catholic identity. In contrast, there is little research regarding the views of faculty and their understanding of Catholic identity. Attention has, in the past, been focused much more on administrators, and much less on faculty. This is because of the notion that administrators are running the institutions, and therefore have adequate views needed to understand institutions’ performance regarding Catholic identity. But members of faculty at Catholic institutions are major participants that cannot be ignored or neglected. For this reason, this research focused on exploring the views of the faculty of the School of Theology at American Catholic University, regarding the extent to which the institution is maintaining Catholic identity. This study will add to the existing research regarding faculty understanding of Catholic identity and mission.

**Definition of Terms**

*American Catholic University* — A pseudonym for the Catholic university being studied.
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) – An organization of Catholic colleges and universities dedicated to the preservation and growth of Catholic higher education, and the fostering of collaboration among Catholic institutions. 218 of the 235 Catholic institutions of higher education in the United States are registered members of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities.

Catholic Colleges and Universities – Catholic institutions of higher education established by the Holy See, bishops, dioceses, Catholic religious congregations, and other ecclesiastical groups or individuals, to contribute to higher education and its functions. Currently, there are 235 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States.

Catholic Identity – The essential characteristics and features peculiar to Catholic higher education that make Catholic colleges and universities distinctive from non-Catholic colleges and universities.

Charism – In the Christian religious context, it means a gift of the Holy Spirit to be exercised for the common good of the community. In the context of religious orders, it refers to defining apostolates or particular gifts of religious congregations of the Catholic Church with which they are known, and with which they exercise their ministries. For example, some religious congregations have education, healthcare, or charity, as their charisms, and so, they establish schools, hospitals or health centers, and charity centers, to fulfill their charisms or apostolates.

Clergy and Religious – Clergy are ordained priests of the Catholic Church who are incardinated into either dioceses or religious congregations, with authority and mandate to perform certain functions and administer the sacraments. Religious are Catholic priests, brothers, or sisters who belong to religious congregations established to
fulfill certain charisms such as education and healthcare. Some Catholic religious congregations have education as their charism, hence, they establish schools at all levels to contribute to the education of people.

_Ecclesiastical Universities_ – Catholic universities established by the Holy See, or directly approved by the Holy See with pontifical and canonical status, and whose degrees are awarded with pontifical authority. The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., is one of the few, and a major ecclesiastical or pontifical university in the United States.

_Ex Corde Ecclesiae_ – An Apostolic Constitution issued and promulgated by Pope John Paul II on August 15, 1990, for use by Catholic colleges and universities all over the world. _Ex Corde Ecclesiae_ literally translates, “From the Heart of the Church.” The document contains basic principles, guidelines and norms to be incorporated by all Catholic institutions of higher education into their policies, programs, and functions, and to be applied to maintain Catholic identity and contribute to higher education.

_Gravissimum Educationis_ (Declaration on Christian Education) – A document of the Second Vatican Council containing the principles and guidelines for Catholic education.

_Laicization_- The transfer of governance of Catholic colleges and universities from boards that were composed entirely or predominantly of religious members, to boards that comprise both religious and lay members, predominantly lay members, or entirely lay members. It is the process of involving the laity in the governance of Catholic institutions of higher education. Laicization is sometimes confused with secularization, and both terms are wrongly used interchangeably and synonymously. Laicization is
different from secularization in the sense that it is the involvement of laypersons in direct
governance of Catholic colleges and universities.

**Lay Persons (Laity)** – All members of the Church who are not bishops, priests,
deacons, or vowed and consecrated religious brothers and sisters. For the purpose of this
study and research, laypersons refer to all non-clergy and non-religious brothers or sisters
who work in Catholic colleges and universities as trustees, administrators, faculty, and
staff.

**Magisterium** - The teaching authority of the Catholic Church, usually issued and
promulgated by the Holy See.

**Mandatum** – From the word ‘mandate,’ it is fundamentally an acknowledgement
by Church authority, usually the diocesan bishop of the diocese in which a Catholic
university is located, that a Catholic professor of a theological discipline is teaching in
accordance with, and within the full communion of the Catholic Church (United States
Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). All Catholic professors who teach the theological
disciplines in Catholic colleges and universities are required to have the *mandatum*

**Mission and Identity** – A term used to refer to Catholic colleges and universities
regarding their peculiar identity, and the maintaining of their character and purpose as
Catholic institutions of higher education. Identity refers to the way institutions state their
affiliation and how it relates practically to the Catholic faith and tradition. Mission refers
to the aims and objectives Catholic institutions intend to achieve in their teaching,
research, service, and general lives (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities).
Pluralism – A social organization or society in which diversity of religious, racial, ethnic or cultural groups are recognized and respected.

Secularization of Catholic Higher Education – The abandoning or loss of Catholic identity by Catholic colleges and universities, to embrace secular ways. Many Catholic institutions have lost or are losing their Catholic identity due to external influence and pressure to abandon their identity. Secularization is the abandoning of the identity of a religious or Catholic institution of higher education either unintentionally or purposely (Gallin, 1996).


The Code of Canon Law – A book containing the canonical laws governing the life, functions, and activities of the Catholic Church, meant for the Latin Church of the Catholic Church, promulgated by Pope John Paul II, on January 25, 1983, and went into effect on November 27, 1983. It is a revision and replacement of the 1917 Code of Canon Law, promulgated by Pope Benedict XV, on May 27, 1917.

The Second Vatican Council – The 21st ecumenical council of the Catholic Church, and the second to be held at the Vatican. The council opened during the pontificate of Pope John XXIII, on October 11, 1962, and closed during the pontificate of Pope Paul VI, on December 8, 1965. The document issued by the council, known as the
document of the Second Vatican Council, has sixteen documents and declarations that touch on various aspects of the Church’s life, teaching, beliefs, and practices.

*The Vatican or Holy See* - The central governing body and universal authority of the Catholic Church, and a sovereign state recognized by the United Nations and international law, with the Pope as the head, and the Roman Curia working in collaboration with the Pope.

*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)* - A conference and assembly of the Catholic bishops of the United States who work together to unify, approve, coordinate, promote and carry on Catholic functions and activities in the United States. It was formerly known as the National Conference of Catholic Bishops – United States Catholic Conference (NCCB-USCC), until the year 2001 when the name was changed to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

**Research Questions**

To achieve the purpose of this study, research questions were drawn to guide the study in order to understand the extent to which American Catholic University is fulfilling the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities to maintain Catholic identity. The questions were drawn to also help understand the extent to which the institution is incorporating, abiding by, and implementing the principles, guidelines and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* to maintain Catholic identity. Addressing these questions helped to understand the meaning of Catholic identity, and how American Catholic University is maintaining Catholic identity.
Primary Research Question

How is American Catholic University responding, in the view of the faculty members of the School of Theology, to the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*, to maintain Catholic identity?

Subsidiary Research Questions

1. How do the faculty members of the School of Theology at American Catholic University understand the Catholic identity and mission of the institution?

2. What attempts or efforts have been made by American Catholic University to incorporate the principles, directives, guidelines and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* into its functions, policies, programs and activities?

3. What efforts, according to the faculty members of the School of Theology, are being made by American Catholic University to explain Catholic identity and its mission to the members of faculty?

Limitation and Scope of Study

This research was a study of the Catholic identity and mission of American Catholic University, in light of Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ document, *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*. These two documents were used to understand the meaning of the Catholic identity and mission of American Catholic University. The identity and mission of American Catholic University was explored to determine how the institution is responding to the principles and norms in both documents to maintain Catholic identity. For the scope, this research did not include a
study of the identity and mission of all the Catholic institutions of higher education in the
United States. Only the identity and mission of American Catholic University was
explored and examined. The study focused on exploring the extent to which the
institution is incorporating the principles and norms in the documents into its functions,
policies, programs, and activities, to maintain Catholic identity. For the limitation of
study, the research did not involve conducting interviews with all the faculty members of
the institution, or professors drawn from all the departments of the institution. Only the
faculty members of the School of Theology were interviewed for the research. Interviews
were conducted with the faculty of the School of Theology at the institution, to ascertain
their understanding of how the institution is applying and incorporating the principles and
norms in the documents into its policies and programs, and the extent to which the
institution is fulfilling its mission to maintain Catholic identity.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

Chapter one is the introduction of the study. It includes the background, the
research problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the research
questions, and the limitation and scope of the study.

Chapter two is a review of the literature related to the study. This includes the
historical development of Catholic higher education in the United States, Pope John Paul
II’s definition and explanation of Catholic identity and enumeration of the essential
characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities, the factors responsible for identity
crisis in Catholic colleges and universities, the strategies to be adopted and implemented
by Catholic institutions to maintain Catholic identity, the response of Catholic colleges
and universities to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and the central hallmarks of Catholic higher education.

Chapter three provides the research methodology. The chapter examined the research site, the research method and design, the sample selection and research participants, the research setting, the research procedure, the collection of data, and the method of analysis.

Chapter four involves the collation of data, and the analysis of the findings.

Chapter five provides the summary of the study, the summary of the findings, the implications for Catholic higher education, recommendations for policy and practice, recommendations for future research, and the conclusion.
CHAPTER TWO
THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of the literature review is to discuss the literature that are related to, or had been written on similar topics as the topic under study. This is important because it discusses the views of past authors on the topic and provides a direction for the discussion of the topic under study. This section, which is a review of related literature, discussed past research on the identity of Catholic institutions of higher education. The section provided a direction, and served as the basis for understanding the meaning and importance of the Catholic identity and mission of Catholic institutions of higher education.

The literature review focused on the basic principles of Catholic identity and mission in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and on some of the studies that have been done on the Catholic identity and mission of Catholic institutions of higher education in the United States, especially since the publications of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and the *Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*. The first part traced the historical development of Catholic higher education in the United States. The second part focused on Pope John Paul II’s definition and explanation of Catholic identity, and his enumeration of the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities. The third part focused on the factors responsible for identity crisis in Catholic institutions of higher education. The fourth part involved the strategies Catholic institutions need to adopt to preserve Catholic identity. The fifth part explored the response of Catholic colleges and universities to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. The sixth part examined some of the central hallmarks of Catholic
higher education. The seventh part focused on the limitation of literature on the study of Catholic higher education.

**Historical Development of Catholic Higher Education in the United States**

Catholic higher education started formally in the United States when Georgetown University, the first American Catholic institution of higher education, was established in 1789. According to Heft (2003) and Power (2012), Georgetown University was founded more than a century after the first American institution, Harvard University, was founded in 1636, and almost a century after the second institution, William and Mary College, was founded in 1693, and the third institution, Yale College, was established in 1701, by Protestant religious groups and communities who first came and settled in the colonies of the United States. In all, seventeen colleges were founded in the United States before Georgetown was founded, and all seventeen, with the exception of the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Georgia, (although, the University of Pennsylvania was greatly influenced by Episcopal and Presbyterian Christian denominations, and the University of Georgia adopted and applied some Christian principles), were denominational institutions that were founded by protestant religious groups. According to Power (2012), these first seventeen colleges were almost exclusively religious in “content and purpose,” and may have influenced the founding of Georgetown University, and the subsequent founding of other Catholic colleges and universities in the United States. According to Burtchaell (1998), Catholic dioceses and religious congregations were slow to enter seriously into higher education, but once they entered, they established institutions of higher education at a fast pace, to the extent that they soon became the sponsors of the largest array of colleges and universities in the United States. To validate
this claim, he notes that between 1920 and 1970, the Catholic Church founded 76 institutions of higher education, institutions he claims, are all still in existence. This is against the 32 institutions the mainline Protestant denominations established within the same period.

According to Wall (2003), at first, it was difficult to establish Catholic schools, because Catholicism was illegal in some of the colonies, and because of the hostility, persecution, and discrimination against Catholics. Giving evidence to this claim, O’Connell (2000) states that before 1789 when Georgetown University was founded, there were fewer than 22,000 Catholics, and there was a strong anti-Catholic sentiment prevalent in the colonies at the time. Also giving credence to this claim, Burtchaell (1998) notes that in Massachusetts, for example, at the time the colonies claimed their independence, Catholics made up less than one percent of its inhabitants. This was the case because, Catholics were largely denied entry and residence in the State until 1780, they were not allowed to hold public office until 1821, and they were taxed for Protestant schools until 1833.

According to Power (2012), the first Catholic colleges and universities in the United States were founded when political, social, and economic conditions were favorable, and at a time when higher education became of vital importance to American Catholics. According to Wall (2003), these Catholic institutions were the product of many historical and cultural changes in the United States. Georgetown University was founded in 1789 by John Carroll, a Catholic priest who later became the first American Catholic bishop, as an institution for the formation of priests, and the education of the increasing number of Catholic immigrants (Dosen, 2009; Garrett, 2006; Heft, 2003).
Carroll was appointed and consecrated bishop of Baltimore, Maryland, in 1790, a year after he founded Georgetown University, with his territory covering all of what is now the eastern part of the United States. Although there were Catholic elementary schools and a few Catholic secondary schools in existence at the time Georgetown was founded, the Catholic immigrants were having difficulty giving adequate education to their children. In 1785, Father Carroll started thinking about the possibility of establishing a Catholic institution of higher learning for those preparing for the priesthood, and for others who were interested in studying other courses and disciplines. Carroll’s plan materialized, when, in 1789, he founded Georgetown University as a college. The institution was subsequently upgraded to the status of a university (Dosen, 2009; Power, 2012).

Following the founding of Georgetown College, there was great enthusiasm and expectation for the establishment of more Catholic colleges. Some bishops and religious congregations saw the need to, and assumed the responsibility of establishing Catholic institutions (Dosen, 2012). According to Dosen (2009), and Heft (2003), among the religious orders that established schools, starting from the beginning of the nineteenth century, were the Augustinians, the Jesuits, the Dominicans, the Vincentians, the Sulpicians, and the Holy Cross Congregation, who had all founded colleges by 1840. Their aim was to provide education to immigrants and inhabitants, and to also use these colleges as avenues to attract and recruit more members for their congregations (Morey & Holtschneider, 2003; Wall, 2003). It was for these reasons that Dosen (2009) maintains that the first Catholic colleges were “multi-functional” and “multi-leveled” institutions. They served as seminaries for those preparing for the priesthood, and educational
institutions for men going into other fields. This explains why most of the early Catholic institutions were seminaries (Dosen, 2012). During this time, the number of Catholic immigrants started increasing dramatically. Heft notes that from 1830 to 1850, the rate of growth and increase in the number of Catholic immigrants was three and a half times faster than that of the entire population. Although, at this time, Protestants still vastly outnumbered Catholics, the number of Catholics was fast increasing, with many Catholic immigrants entering the United States. For this reason, many Catholic colleges were established to provide Catholic education and formation to the children of the immigrants. Bishops encouraged the establishment of Catholic colleges, especially after 1850, to provide quality education to students. Many bishops invited, and gave financial support to religious congregations to establish schools in their dioceses (Gleason 2003; Power, 2012). This view is supported by Heft (2003) who notes that, although it took about one hundred years after Georgetown University was founded before the bishops of the United States established a joint Catholic university, which is the Catholic University of America, they early on encouraged and supported many male and female religious congregations to establish college-level boarding schools that were soon transformed into full colleges. Gleason (2003) and Heft (2003) note that it was in some of these colleges that the bishops first located seminaries for the training of future priests, before they started moving them to different locations by the middle of the nineteenth century.

Georgetown and the other early Catholic colleges were established mainly for the purpose of forming the clergy and religious, who in turn would minister to the increasing number of Catholics (Benne, 2001; Burkhardt & Detzel, 2003). In line with this assertion, Garrett (2006) and Power (2012) state that before 1850, the main reasons for establishing
Catholic institutions of higher education were: to provide a preliminary or preparatory education for boys aspiring to, and preparing for the priesthood, to have centers and institutions for missionary activities, to have places for moral development and character formation for young men, to inculcate moral values in boys and young men, and to encourage them to imbibe moral virtues, and as Wall (2003) also notes, to educate young men and women in a mature faith, in order for them to have a more reflective and self-critical understanding of their faith. For example, as stated in the archives of Georgetown University, the founders were persuaded that irreligion and immorality in youths, portended great danger to them and their future lives, and threatened to affect the peace and morality of society in negative ways. To forestall this, the directors of Georgetown professed openly and unequivocally, that their biggest priority was to implant virtue in their students, and destroy in them the seeds of vice. They stated that once the students attained high morality, the university would be achieving its primary aim and objective (O’Connell, 2000). This explains why Heft (2003) states that majority of these first Catholic institutions concentrated mainly on the moral and character formation of the students, with the faculty, who were mainly priests and religious, teaching the students the importance of virtue and morality in life. After 1850, an added reason for establishing Catholic institutions was to contribute to intellectual development. So, in the late nineteenth century, they shifted the focus to intellectual formation as well.

With regard to curriculum development, the curriculum of the first Catholic colleges initially reflected traditional classical studies. The subjects included Greek, Latin, literature, mathematics, and in addition, philosophy and ethics for final year students. Families of students became increasingly more interested in their children
receiving more than just a classical education. For this reason, they started asking for complete higher education for their children. In response, Catholic colleges expanded their curriculum to include practical education (Dosen, 2009; Dosen, 2012; Garrett, 2006). From 1850, Catholic institutions started embracing intellectual education and development, as the first reason for the establishment of a college. The purpose of Catholic colleges was no longer only to form good and well-behaved Catholics, but also to educate them intellectually and professionally. This explains why Catholic colleges gradually started modifying their curricula to include professional courses. The gradual inclusion of intellectual development equipped the students to face the political, social, and economic realities of the times (Garrett, 2006; Power, 2012).

As a consequence, 1850 marked the turning point at which Catholic institutions began organizing their curricula to conform, to a large extent, to the curricula of non-religious colleges who had four-year course of study. They separated secondary schools from colleges, and encouraged students to concentrate on studying majors and minors, with coursework concentrated in specific areas of knowledge or study. There was evolution of the curricula from general elementary formation through the secondary level, and ultimately, to full college character (Power, 2012). According to Garrett (2006), Saint Louis University was the first Catholic institution to embrace and adopt a four-year college program in 1887. Between 1870 and 1900, many Catholic colleges created graduate programs, but they were on a small scale. In 1877, Georgetown became the first Catholic institution of higher education to create and establish a formal and full-scale graduate program. These graduate programs operated only masters programs until the 1895-1896 academic year, when Georgetown established a doctoral program, becoming
the first Catholic institution to do so. Other Catholic colleges and universities eventually followed suit (Power, 2012).

In furtherance of the mission of the Church to provide education to people, the Catholic bishops of the United States decided at their Third Plenary Council in Baltimore in 1884 to establish the Catholic University of America. With the approval of the Holy See, the institution was established as an ecclesiastical university. The Catholic University of America admitted its first students in 1889. It differed from existing Catholic institutions at the time, because it was founded directly as a university for graduate studies. It served as a major center for scholarship, teaching, research, and integration of faith and science. Other Catholic institutions of higher education gradually followed in these directions (Dosen, 2009; Garrett, 2006; Gleason, 2003; Hutchison, 2001). From this time, the other Catholic colleges and universities started reviewing their graduate programs. By 1900, many of the Catholic colleges, especially those controlled by the Jesuits, started making moves to have their colleges upgraded to the status of universities. It was also a time when Americans were becoming more interested in professionalism, and when American Catholics became more desirous of embracing the American dream. In response to these yearnings, Catholic institutions of higher education added the study of law, business, medicine, dentistry, nursing, engineering, and education to their curricula (Dosen, 2009). They expanded their graduate programs, and by 1920, many of them had been upgraded from colleges to universities. The total enrollment grew from 32,000 in 1916, to 102,000 in 1930 (Burkhardt & Detzel, 2003), and from 1920 to 1960, Catholic institutions grew rapidly in number from 130 to 261, with the total enrollments increasing from 34,000 to over 300,000. As a result, there was need to
expand in other areas, such as hiring more lay people as faculty members, and the expansion of general academic programs (Heft, 2003). Ultimately, the curriculum of the graduate programs of Catholic institutions became similar to that of secular institutions (Heft, 2003). According to Power (2012), from 1920, Catholic institutions started creating separate colleges, such as arts and sciences, commerce, engineering, and law, within the institutions. This gave rise to professional schools, and formed the bedrock for their present curricular structure. Referring to this robust growth, Gleason (2003) notes that the years from 1920 to 1960 were a period of tremendous growth in terms of institutional and program expansion, student increase, and organizational growth in Catholic higher education.

With regard to administrative organization and development, Catholic institutions started having strong administrative organization and reorganization in 1890. On the administrative structure, except for institutions that were controlled by congregations of religious brothers, Catholic institutions had priests or religious sisters as presidents. This, according to Power (2012), was compulsory at the time. The priest-president or sister-president was required to be a capable, efficient and effective administrator, a seasoned, skilled, and successful fundraiser, and a great builder. The president was also hoped to be an effective teacher with intellectual capability (Dosen, 2009; Power, 2012). Catholic institution presidents were appointed. The diocesan bishop appointed a president for a diocesan institution, while the superior of a religious order that owned an institution appointed the president. The president possessed great authority, and was accountable to the bishop or superior who appointed him or her (Power, 2012). The presidents were
allowed to have consultors that were only advisory. The president could decide whether or not to act on their advice (Dosen, 2009; Power, 2012).

Regarding governance, up until the early 1960s, Catholic colleges and universities had Boards of Trustees, Directors, or Supervisors, that were composed mainly of priests and religious, who were responsible for making policies for the institutions (Gieger, 2003). In many cases, these boards were made up of either college administrators, or the bishop and a group of priests who were in charge of governance (Dosen, 2009; Gallin, 2003). But the institution presidents were vested with the responsibility of exercising control, working for the smooth running of the institutions, and raising funds for effective administration of the institutions (Power, 2012).

In late 1960s, lay faculty asserted claim to full academic freedom, and a greater role in campus governance. This resulted in conflicts in Catholic institutions. At this time, the clergy and religious, who were mainly in charge of governance, started decreasing dramatically in numbers (Power, 2012). During this time also, the Second Vatican Council, which was held from 1962 to 1965, and which had profound impact on Catholic colleges and universities, had called for greater lay participation and leadership (Geiger, 2003; Gleason, 2003). Due to these realities, many Catholic colleges and universities started having Boards of Trustees composed of both religious and laypersons, to contribute their expertise and competence to the development of the institutions (Geiger, 2003; Heft, 2003). The first Catholic universities to make this shift to laicization were the University of Notre Dame and St. Louis University. In January 1967, both institutions announced a change in the governance of their institutions from exclusively religious priests of their congregations, to mixed Boards of Trustees. Soon, other Catholic
institutions followed suit (Dosen, 2009; Garrett, 2006)). These changes, according to Gleason (2005), were adopted because of the emphasis placed on active lay participation by the Second Vatican Council, the accelerated expansion of universities, the dwindling and dramatic decline in number of clergy and religious, and the financial benefits the institutions would get from government funding with external lay Boards of Trustees. The percentage of laypersons on Boards of Trustees of Catholic institutions reached 62 by 1987, 72 percent by 1992 (Geiger, 2003), and continued to increase at a rapid rate, rising to 88 percent in 2014 (Carnegie Foundation 2014). It was during this period, in the mid-1960s, that Catholic colleges and universities started having identity crisis (Garrett, 2006; Gleason, 1995; Hendershoot, 2011).

With regard to funding, the earliest Catholic institutions of higher education experienced a lot of financial problems, since they were still in early stages of foundation. They relied on tuition, Church collections and donations from Catholics who believed it was their responsibility to fund Catholic institutions (Burkhardt & Detzel, 2003). From the beginning of Catholic higher education until 1850, Catholic colleges and universities did not get much financial assistance from organizations, large donors, or even the Church. Many of them struggled to survive due to inadequate funds to run the institutions. It was due to this lack of funds that only 12 out of the first 42 Catholic institutions that were founded before 1850 survived (Garrett, 2006). Foundations such as the Carnegie Foundation, and Rockefeller General Education fund, were not so supportive of Catholic higher education in the first half of the 20th century as they were supportive of non-religious institutions. The first major grant to Catholic higher education, according to Gallin (2000), came in 1956 from the Ford Foundation that gave
grants to 23 Catholic colleges and universities to help them give better salary packages to their faculty. Also, as Garrett (2006) notes, from 1850 to 1900, support for Catholic higher education increased, although slightly, due to the growing number of Catholics, and the greater attention paid to Catholic higher education.

At the beginning of the 20th century, professional programs such as law, medicine, engineering, and education, were created in Catholic institutions, and a lot of existing programs were expanded. This meant more expenses for the institutions. It was for the purpose of getting more financial support that alumni organizations were created in Catholic colleges and universities. The aim was to tap the financial support of alumni who were prosperous and successful in their various careers and professions. The donations from alumni would help in building new facilities for professional programs. According to Gleason (1995), during this period, some Catholic institutions, in addition to receiving donations from their alumni, also started getting support from private organizations and wealthy individuals. According to Burkhardt and Detzel (2003), in the 1930s, it was suggested that Catholic colleges and universities take some proactive steps in order to be financially solvent. These measures included operating balanced budgets, reaching out to organizations and benefactors to raise funds, employing the services of experts to invest their funds, organizing and reaching out to their alumni, and making effort to get funds from both Catholic and non-Catholic sources. According to these authors, many of these measures were adopted and implemented by many Catholic institutions. The measures yielded dividends, and helped them to be on sound financial footing. Burkhardt and Detzel (2003) also note that to ensure that Catholic colleges and universities were in full operation, met standards of accreditation, and continued on the
path of growth and expansion, in addition to tuition, they relied on other sources for funding. They solicited government funding, established endowment funds, and solicited and received donations from philanthropic groups and individuals. Also, by the beginning of the 20th century, Catholic colleges for women were established and flourished. This necessitated the expansion of academic programs and facilities, and led to increase in enrollment. The increasing enrollments brought in more funds to Catholic institutions (Burkhardt & Detzel, 2003).

The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, the GI Bill that was passed by Congress after the Second World War to give full college scholarship to returning veterans, led to an influx of students, and significantly increased enrollment by more than ten percent in American institutions, including Catholic institutions. This increased the revenues of Catholic institutions through tuition from enrollment and government funding (Garrett, 2006; Gleason, 1995). This also expanded Catholic higher education, with the founding of 61 Catholic colleges and universities between 1945 and 1967 (Garrett, 2006). Apart from the GI Bill, other government financial aid programs that increased enrollments and funding in Catholic institutions from the 1970s included the Pell Grants, Work-Study Program, and the National Direct Student Loans (Burthardt & Detzel, 2003; Gallin, 2000). Catholic colleges and universities also started receiving increased government funding for research and development, and other purposes (Dosen, 2009; Gallin, 2000). But, according to Burthardt and Detzel (2003), tuition continues to be the largest source of income for Catholic colleges and universities.

Since their founding, Catholic colleges and universities have experienced tremendous progress and development in terms of organization, administration,
governance, curriculum, funding, and populations served. These institutions continue to develop and expand in the areas of student populations, facilities, funding, curriculum, and organization.

**Pope John Paul II’s Explanation of the Identity of Catholic Universities**

In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II defined unequivocally, and unambiguously explained Catholic identity, and enumerated clearly the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities. In the Apostolic Constitution, the Supreme Pontiff also stated the principles and norms that Catholic institutions of higher education are to adopt and abide by, to maintain their identity.

Pope John Paul II defined a Catholic university as a Catholic institution of higher education, which consecrates itself, whole and entire, without reserve, to the cause of truth. According to the Holy Father, a Catholic university is distinguished by its free search for the whole truth about nature, man and God. It exists to proclaim the meaning of truth, which is a fundamental value without which freedom, justice, and human dignity are undermined. It is dedicated to the research of all aspects of truth in their essential connection with God who is the supreme truth (John Paul II, 1990). The Holy Father also stated that a Catholic university is to include moral, spiritual and religious dimensions in its research, and emphasized that in a Catholic university, Catholic ideals, attitudes and principles should penetrate and inform its activities (John Paul II, 1990). This means that Catholic universities are to incorporate Catholic ideals and values into their functions, policies, programs, and activities. Catholic identity, therefore, according to the Holy Father, is the search for, and the embrace of the truth by a Catholic university, bringing that truth to bear in all its functions, policies, programs, and activities.
In his address to American Catholic educators at the Catholic University of America, on April 17, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI, the immediate successor of Pope John Paul II, articulated the importance of this truth, stressing that God’s revelation offers every generation the opportunity to discover the ultimate truth about its own life, and the goal of human life. The Supreme Pontiff emphasized that the entire Christian community must be involved in this task, stressing that every generation of Christian educators should ensure that the power of God’s truth permeates and reflects in every dimension and aspect of the institutions they serve. In this way, teachers and students working and studying in Catholic institutions are guided towards the objective truth (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). In the same address, Pope Benedict XVI also spoke approvingly of Pope John Paul II’s definition of Catholic identity. He emphasized the importance of maintaining Catholic identity in Catholic institutions of higher education, articulating that the Catholic identity of a Catholic university is not dependent on statistics. He noted that it is not simply a question of the number of Catholic students in that institution, but a question of conviction and commitment to Catholic tradition, beliefs, and principles. It involves a readiness to commit the entire self, intellect, will, mind, and heart to God, accepting the truth revealed by Christ, living the faith strongly and enthusiastically in Catholic universities and schools, and expressing the faith liturgically, sacramentally, through prayer, acts of charity, promotion of justice, and respect for God’s creation. The Supreme Pontiff also stated that Catholic identity cannot be equated simply with the orthodoxy of courses offered by the institution, but must reflect the entire life of the institution. It is in these ways that Catholic institutions of higher education maintain their Catholic identity, contribute meaningfully and vitally to
the mission of the Church, and be of true service to society (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). The Holy Father encouraged the Catholic educators to dedicate themselves and their institutions anew to the promotion and defense of Catholic identity, and ensure that it is reflected in the entire lives and activities of the institutions.

Twenty-five years before the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the Second Vatican Council, in its document *Gravissimum Educationis* which is the Declaration on Christian Education, issued on October 28, 1965, emphasized the importance of Catholic identity, stating that Catholic colleges and universities are to ensure that the treatment of the individual disciplines are in consonance with the Church’s principles (Flannery, 1987). The council stated that Catholic colleges and universities have their own identity and principles, and these should reflect in the lives and activities of the institutions. Agreeing with these definitions of Catholic identity, Platt (2014) states that Catholic identity is the central, enduring, and distinctive character of Catholic institutions, with core values that shape the way members engage in institution mission, in order to foster the purpose and objectives of the institutions.

In giving the document the title, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II emphasized that Catholic colleges and universities are “born from the heart of the Church,” for they originated from the Church, and draw their character, culture, identity, and mission from the Church (John Paul II, 1990). Agreeing with the Holy Father on the title he gave to the document, LaCugna (1994) states that the Catholic university is truly born *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, from the heart of the Church, for the Catholic university owes its source and origin to the Catholic Church. Supporting this view, Carpenter (2006) notes that Catholic colleges and universities definitely grew from the heart of the Church,
and are part and parcel of the Catholic Church. On his part, O’Brien (2003) maintains
that Catholic colleges and universities “live at the heart of the Catholic Church.” Morey
and Piderit (2006) note that the way mission is understood and implemented is affected,
to a large extent, by the culture from which it originates, and the complete character of
that culture. For them, the identity and mission of Catholic colleges and universities grow
and flow from the Catholic culture. Based on this, they assert that to support, sustain,
enhance, and promote Catholic identity, Catholic culture and tradition from which they
originated must be maintained. They ought not to act contrary to the way and culture of
the Church, but must depend on, and conform their lives and activities to the life of the
Church. To act contrary to the Church’s ways will be a contradiction in terms, for they
cannot be Catholic and non-Catholic at the same time. They cannot be called Catholic,
and, at the same time, refrain from embracing the life of the Church. It is for this reason
that Murphy, (2001), Smith and Cavadini (2014), note that Catholic institutions must
draw their mission and identity from the Church. This means that Catholic colleges and
universities are part of the Church, and by that very fact, are to function and operate
according to the mind of the Church. Bird (1994) recognized this fact when he asked and
answered the question of what truly makes a Catholic university Catholic. He asks, “How
is a Catholic university in America different from other universities, and what difference
does it make?” He answered that the difference is the Church: the Roman Catholic
Church and its magisterium, its teaching authority, by which it conserves, teaches, and
promotes the understanding of the revelation entrusted to it by Jesus Christ, and passed
on through his apostles to the Pope and the Bishops. He concluded that the difference that
distinguishes a Catholic university lies in the very fact of the existence and presence of
the Church. According to O’Connell (2000), religious or Catholic institutions are not so, merely by the fact that they have religious origins, or because they were founded by priests and religious, or because the institutions have religious symbols and works of art like statues, or because they have chapels or other buildings of worship. Rather, to be Catholic or religious institutions, they must have the direct influence of their founding religion in their institutional identity, mission, governance, administration, faculty hiring criteria, curricula, student life, campus ministries, policies, operations, procedures, and the overall life and activities of the institutions.

Pope John Paul II articulated the relationship that exists between a Catholic university and the Church. According to the Holy Father, “Every Catholic University, without ceasing to be a University, has a relationship to the Church that is essential to its institutional identity” (Pope John Paul II, 1990, p. 22). The Supreme Pontiff maintained that every Catholic university must have a relationship with the Holy See, the bishops of the country and region in which it is situated, and the local Church that has ecclesiastical jurisdiction and territorial control of the place in which the university is located. The Catholic university’s relationship to the universal Church involves participating in and contributing to the life and the mission of the universal Church, “assuming consequently a special bond with the Holy See by reason of the service to unity which it is called to render to the whole Church” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 22). According to the Holy Father, “One consequence of its essential relationship to the Church is that the institutional fidelity of the University to the Christian message includes a recognition of and adherence to the teaching authority of the Church in matters of faith and morals” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 22). The Holy Father stated that every Catholic university is to show
fidelity to the Christian message by faithfully adhering to the teachings of the Church in all its functions, policies, programs, and activities (Pope John Paul II, 1990). Regarding its relationship to the local Church, the Supreme Pontiff maintained that a Catholic university is to participate directly in the life of the local Church in which it is located. A Catholic university is not to be distant or aloof, but must be fully involved in the life and activities of the local Church, and contribute to its mission of evangelization and salvation of souls.

Pope John Paul II articulated four essential characteristics that all Catholic colleges and universities must possess as Catholic institutions:

“1. A Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such;
2. A continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;
3. Fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church;
4. An institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life”

(John Paul II, 1990, pp. 13-14).

According to the Supreme Pontiff, in the light of these four essential characteristics, it is clear that added the functions of teaching, research and service that are common to all colleges and universities, Catholic institutions of higher education, by their very nature and purpose, incorporate into their functions and tasks, the inspiration and light of the Christian message. This means that Catholic teaching, beliefs, ideals, and principles, are to inform and be incorporated into the functions, policies, programs, and
activities of Catholic institutions (John Paul II, 1990). The Holy Father called on all Catholic institutions of higher education to incorporate these characteristics into their mission statements, vision statements, functions, policies, programs, and activities, in order to be truly Catholic institutions that originated from, and are part of the Church.

In addition to the four essential characteristics enumerated by Pope John Paul II, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted the following as essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities in the United States:

1. Commitment to be faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church;

2. Commitment to Catholic ideals, principles and attitudes in carrying out research, teaching and all other university activities, including activities of officially-recognized student and faculty organizations and associations, and with due regard for academic freedom and the conscience of every individual;

3. Commitment to serve others, particularly the poor, underprivileged and vulnerable members of society;

4. Commitment of witness of the Catholic faith by Catholic administrators and teachers, especially those teaching the theological disciplines, and acknowledgement and respect on the part of non-Catholic teachers and administrators of the university’s Catholic identity and mission;

5. Commitment to provide courses for students on Catholic moral and religious principles and their application to critical areas such as human life and other issues of social justice;

6. Commitment to care pastorally for the students, faculty, administration and staff;
7. Commitment to provide personal services (health care, counseling and guidance) to students, as well as administration and faculty, in conformity with the Church’s ethical and religious teaching and directives; and

8. Commitment to create a campus culture and environment that is expressive and supportive of a Catholic way of life” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006, pp. 81-82; 2014, p. 222).

The above essential characteristics of Catholic institutions of higher education, adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, are in conformity with the essential characteristics enumerated by Pope John Paul II in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. In adopting and applying the characteristics enumerated by the Supreme Pontiff, the Bishops of the United States fully incorporated and elaborated on the characteristics. For example, one of the characteristics of Catholic institutions enumerated by Pope John Paul II is an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and the human family. The Bishops elaborately spelled it out as a commitment to serve others, particularly the poor, underprivileged and vulnerable members of society, and commitment to provide personal services such as healthcare, counseling and guidance to students, faculty and administration. The Bishops of the United States maintained that these services and functions must be carried out, not in the secular way, but according to the teaching, beliefs, doctrines and practices of the Church. These essential characteristics of Catholic institutions listed by Pope John Paul II and the American Bishops are designed to help Catholic colleges and universities focus their mission statements, learning objectives, and strategic planning on Catholic identity (Abelman & Dallesandro, 2008; Garrett, 2006).
Pope John Paul II stated the importance of dialogue in the document. He maintained that in living their identity, Catholic colleges and universities must embrace dialogue, which the Catholic Church has upheld for a very long time. The Supreme Pontiff emphasized the importance of dialogue among the Holy See, the International Federation of Catholic Universities, and Bishops of various countries. More importantly, he encouraged dialogue between the Church and Catholic higher education, dialogue between Catholic higher education and cultures, dialogue among academic disciplines, and dialogue among religious traditions (John Paul II, 1990). According to Buckley (1992), this emphasis by the Holy Father on dialogue is evident of the Catholic Church’s respect for pluralism and diversity. Supporting this view, Carpenter (2006) states that the Catholic Church, a universal Church open to people all over the world, values and respects diversity. In response to the culture and teaching of the Church, Catholic higher education is to foster and give room for dialogue between the institutions and various disciplines (Carpenter, 2006; Duncan, 2011). According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic institutions of higher education are places where faith and culture intersect, and where dialogue and diversity are promoted (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014).

In his address to American Catholic educators at the Catholic University of America on April 17, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI spoke about the importance of dialogue, stating that Catholic higher education must serve faith and culture, and engage in a dialogue that reaches out to embrace the whole world, especially the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged in the world (Currie, 2011; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). The importance of dialogue between Catholic universities and all cultures of the
world was also emphasized by Pope Paul VI, who, in his address to the Jesuits on August 23, 1974, titled, *The Catholic Church and Catholic Universities*, stated that the Catholic university should be open to the world and to modern problems, and foster and sustain dialogue with all forms of culture. But he maintained that this should be done while fully maintaining the identity and character of Catholic universities. He stated that in their research, teaching, publications, in all aspects of their academic life, and in their dialogue with culture, Catholic institutions must make provision for complete orthodoxy of teaching, for obedience to the magisterium of the Church, and for fidelity to the hierarchy and the Holy See (O’Brien, 1994).

The mission and vision statements of Catholic colleges and universities vary, depending on the charisma and vision of the religious groups that founded them. But they have a common identity that they are to base their mission and vision statements on. They ought to follow the basic tenets of Catholic identity and characteristics of Catholic institutions of higher education enumerated by Pope John Paul II (Russo & Gregory, 2001). This means that the 235 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States have their different mission statements, but, since they are all Catholic institutions, they have the same identity, functions and purpose. So their mission and vision statements ought to be similar, have the same goal, and align with Catholic identity (Estanek, James & Norton, 2013; Rausch, 2010). In this same line, O’Connell (2000) states that the mission of Catholic institutions must reflect their Catholic identity. Mission, he says, must reinforce identity, or the identity falls flat and is worthless. He adds that mission must derive and flow from the distinctive identity in clear and substantial ways. In their study of the mission statements of Catholic colleges and universities, Abelman and
Dalessandro (2008) note that although the mission statements of Catholic colleges and universities are not crafted the same way, they ought to draw from Catholic identity, and have basically the same elements, which they identify as Catholic heritage, a sound education for all, service, truth, justice, freedom, equality, community, and the dignity of the human person. They also observe that service stands out as the dominant element in the mission statements of Catholic institutions of higher education. These elements, Gallin (2000) notes, conform to the essential characteristics of Catholic institutions enumerated by Pope John Paul II and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. According to Swezey and Ross (2012), religious institutions are directly influenced by the religion of the religious group that founded or are sponsoring them. This influence is seen in their identity, mission, administration, governance, policies, curricula, student life, activities, and campus ministries. They assert that the mission statements and entire lives of Catholic institutions must be based on the Catholic Church.

Pope John Paul II stated that Catholic universities are to be universities and Catholic (John Paul II, 1990). By this, the Holy Father meant that Catholic institutions must be true institutions and, at the same time, embrace Catholic values, principles, and ideals. The Holy Father maintained that Catholic institutions must exercise the functions of a university, which are teaching, research, and service. He added that they must perform these functions according to the teachings of the Church, and become academic institutions “in which Catholicism is vitally present and operative” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 14). It is when they exercise these functions according to the teachings of the Church that they can really be great Catholic universities (Attridge, 1994; Hesburgh, 1994; Hesburgh, 1999; Janosik, 1999; Lavelle, 2000; Williams, 1989). In line with this assertion, O’Brien,
(1994) notes that the Land O’ Lakes conference stated in its statement that Catholic universities must be committed to strong academic excellence, performing effectively the functions of research, teaching, and service according to the teachings of the Catholic Church, and ensuring that Catholicism is “perceptibly present and effectively operative” in all they do.

According to McCormick (2000), the greatness of a Catholic university should be measured and known by its product. By ‘product’ he means the students the university is educating and graduating. He states that for a Catholic university to be considered great, its products or students must possess certain qualities. He enumerates these qualities as: a Catholic vision, sensitivity to justice and injustice, appreciation of, and thirst for knowledge, facility in written and spoken word, open-mindedness, critical capacity, ability to listen, and willingness to serve. According to him, even if a Catholic university enrolls and graduates a large number of students, has stable funds, grants and endowments, has great teachers and researchers, has a great library, and enjoys high rating, if its past and present students do not possess these qualities, it is not a great Catholic university, and should not be regarded as such. This is because, the complete education of students is a major reason why universities are established and exist. In the same light, O’Brien (1994) refers to an address given by Monsignor George Higgins in a commencement speech to a Catholic University of America graduating class, in which Higgins said, “The real test of a university’s success in promoting justice for the poor and disadvantaged and for the minorities in our society is not what its professors say in the classroom and publish in learned tomes, but what its alumni and alumnae do as free and committed citizens directly involved in shaping the policies of the republic” (p. 87). Also,
stating what makes a Catholic university great, Provost (2000) identifies two dimensions of identity: outside and inside. Outside identity refers to what institutions describe themselves to be and what the public knows them to be. Catholic institutions of higher education describe themselves as Catholic, and for the public, this means they have affiliation and relationship with the Catholic Church. Inside identity is what institutions really are. The implication of this distinction is that Catholic colleges and universities may describe themselves as Catholic without really being Catholic in the real sense of the word. The greatness of Catholic universities lie, not on the fact that they refer to themselves as Catholic, but on the fact that they are living their identity, and the fact that the right ideas and programs that align with Catholic identity are put in place for the benefit of the students. According to Hutchison (2001), this was what the Land O’ Lakes statement of 1967 meant when it referred to the identity of Catholic colleges and universities as academic institutions, where truth is pursued and realized, and where people are taught to pursue and value the truth.

For Catholic identity to be supported and fostered, those who are expected to support and foster it must know about it. It is when they know about it and all it entails, that they can support it. This explains why Pope John Paul II stated that every institution of Catholic higher education must make it a point of duty to communicate and explain its Catholic identity and mission to members of the university community. The Supreme Pontiff charged every Catholic college and university to see this as its responsibility, and ensure that administration, faculty, staff, students, and other members of the university community, are fully informed about Catholic identity and institution mission, in order for them to be conversant with it and support it (John Paul II, 1990; Russo & Gregory,
2001; Wilcox, Lindholm, & Wilcox, 2013). According to the Holy Father, this information should be in the mission statement, and should also be disseminated through other public means (Abelman, 2012; Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008; Buckley, 1998; Dosen, 2000; Ferrari, Cowman, Milner, Gutierrez, & Drake, 2009; George, 2013; John Paul II, 1990). According to Buckley, the mission is a reflection of what the university thinks about itself, what it stands for, and what it intends to do. The mission is the public statement of the university’s identity. So, every Catholic university should make it a point of duty to make its identity known in its mission statement. This means that the word ‘Catholic’ and Catholic values and principles should reflect in the mission statement. The mission statement, which should be publicly proclaimed, spells out the institution’s goals and objectives, values, purpose, expectations, direction, future, guidelines for decision-making, and activities. The mission statement encourages and helps members of the university community to connect and identify with the institution (Ferrari, Cowman, Milner, Gutierrez, & Drake, 2009).

Pope John Paul II charged Catholic institution leadership to ensure that they express the Catholic identity in a free and consistent way. He called on them not to delay, but to ensure that at the time of their appointment, those in administration, all faculty and staff are clearly and unambiguously informed about the institution’s Catholic identity, and their responsibility to respect and abide by it (John Paul II, 1990). In line with this, the bishops of the United States maintained that the administration of Catholic institutions have the duty and responsibility to inform faculty and staff, at the time of their appointment, about the Catholic identity, mission and religious nature and practices of the institutions. The bishops called on those in administration to inform faculty and
staff about their responsibility to support the Catholic identity and mission, encourage them to participate in the life of the university, and encourage them to reflect Catholic identity in their positions (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014).

According to Wilcox, Wilcox, & Lindholm (2013), faculty members must be informed about Catholic identity. To concretize their assertion, they initiated a vision program for Catholic colleges and universities. The purpose is to teach faculty members about Catholic identity and their responsibility to support it. They stated that the first goal of the program is to educate and inform new faculty members about the mission and identity of Catholic institutions of higher education. According to them, the institutions are morally obliged, and have the responsibility to give a detailed explanation to new faculty members. They noted that some professors are confused about the identity of the institutions because they are not well informed about Catholic identity. For this reason, they stated that it is necessary that those in administration explain Catholic identity and institution mission to all faculty members.

Pope John Paul II stated that apart from informing new faculty and staff about the identity and mission, Catholic institutions must explain Catholic identity and mission to the students. According to the Holy Father, it is the responsibility of the leadership of the institutions to ensure that at the time of their acceptance and enrollment, students are adequately informed about Catholic identity and the mission of the institution. He added that the students should constantly be reminded of the Catholic identity and mission through the institution websites and other appropriate means. The administrations of Catholic institutions are not to shy away from this responsibility, for if an institution is Catholic and the administration believe in its identity, they have a duty to communicate it
to all the members of the university community, in order for them to be aware, and work to promote and foster it (Abelman, 2012; Heft, 1997; Carpenter, 2006; Dosen, 2000; Gambescia & Paolucci, 2011; Gardner, 2006; Henkin, Dee, & Manzo, 2001; O’Brien, 2013; Peck & Stick, 2008; Russo & Gregory, 2001). This is necessary, because there is high expectation for Catholic institutions of higher education to identify and communicate, unambiguously and unequivocally, their character and identity, to members of the institutions and the public (Abelman, 2012, Estanek, James, & Norton, 2006). This is also necessary because, according to Wilcox (2000) many in administration, many faculty members, staff, and students, still do not know much about Catholic identity, what it means, and why it is important.

**Factors Responsible for Identity Crisis in Catholic Colleges and Universities**

Catholic colleges and universities face many challenges that make it difficult for them to maintain Catholic identity. According to Morey and Piderit (2006), there is crisis of identity within Catholic higher education in the United States. Dosen (2012) notes that these problems and challenges make this a critical moment for Catholic higher education. According to O’Brien (2013), Catholic institutions are faced with these challenges that are posing a threat to them, mainly because they have a distinctive identity they are trying to maintain. These challenges which Catholic institutions face today were the same problems that triggered identity crisis in the 1960s.

The first sign of identity crisis emerged after the Second World War, when war veterans returned and started going back to school (Dosen, 2009, 2012; Garrett, 2006; O’Brien, 1994). Many college-age persons were drafted during the war. This conscription affected higher education, especially enrollment, which dropped by 14 percent in 1942,
and in 1943 fell by 22 percent from the enrollment statistics of 1940 (Gleason, 1995). The drop in enrollment was so drastic and high that in the last year of the war, only 92,000 students were enrolled in Catholic colleges and universities, compared to more than 180,000 student enrollment just before the war (O’Brien, 2013). But in a dramatic turn, enrollment increased tremendously after the war, due largely to the enrollment of veterans in higher education. The G.I. bill that was passed by congress after the war made provision for returning veterans to go to college free of charge. This resulted in an influx of veterans enrolling in institutions of higher education, including Catholic institutions of higher education (Gleason, 1995; Gleason, 1997). Enrollment increased dramatically from the end of the war through 1960. By 1958, enrollment had more than doubled from the enrollment numbers of 1940, and continued to increase (Dosen, 2009, Gleason, 1995). During this period, Catholic colleges and universities experienced rapid increases in their education, law, nursing, medicine, business, and engineering programs, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. According to O’Brien (1994), these were boom years for Catholic higher education.

The G.I. bill and the National Defense Education Act of 1958 did not exclude any institution of higher education from benefiting from the scholarship funds for the veterans. According to Gallin, (2000), the government did not distinguish between public and private institutions, nor did they differentiate religious institutions from other private institutions in determining eligibility for the funds. All institutions of higher education were eligible for the funds, and so, Catholic institutions that were not solely for theology and divinity, benefitted immensely. This led to a 10 percent increase in the number of colleges and universities, including Catholic institutions, with the establishment of 61
Catholic colleges and universities between 1945 and 1967. Between 1945 and 1960, Catholic institutions increased from 193 to 231 (Gleason, 1995). There was also growth in enrollments, which went up in Catholic institutions from 162,000 in 1940 to 426,000 in 1960 (Garrett, 2006; Gleason, 1995; O’Brien, 2003). The enrollment figure which was 34,000 in 1920, and in the last year of the war, was 92,000, increased to 220,000 in the fall of 1948, and this number more than doubled to 450,000 by 1970 (Heft, 2003; O’Brien, 1994; Rausch, 2010). According to Gallin (2000), by 1960, there were about 300,000 students enrolled in Catholic colleges and universities. That number went up to 450,000 in 1970, and 609,000 in 1980. Full-time student enrollment increased from 363,029 in 1970-71 to 407,135 in 1977-78. This full-time enrollment went up by 16 percent, while part-time enrollment increased by 51 percent, between 1970 and 1980. From 1988 to 1992, full-time enrollment increased by 1 percent, while part-time enrollment went up by 17 percent. Although Gallin notes that the tremendous growth in student population from 1960 to 1980 was also due to increase in populations of minority groups, adults, and women, these figures show the tremendous increases in enrollment in higher education predominantly as a result of the G.I. bill and the National Defense Education Act. The growth was also in the employment of faculty. The number of faculty also increased during this period. According to Gleason (1995), from 1940 to 1960, the number of faculty members increased from 13,142 to 24,255.

The large enrollment increase was a blessing for Catholic institutions, but it also posed a challenge. This challenge arose because, although the number of faculty increased during this period of tremendous increase in student enrollments, there still were not enough professors to cater to the needs of the large number of students. There
were also not enough priests and religious among the faculty to meet the needs of the large body of students (Dosen, 2009, 2012). In order to get more professors to teach the large and increasing number of students, many Catholic institutions, such as St. John’s University in New York, in addition to hiring doctoral recipients, resorted to enlisting the services of many doctoral students from different types of universities, private and public, Catholic and non-Catholic. This development led to the hiring of faculty who knew little or nothing about the culture or identity of Catholic higher education (Dosen, 2009, 12; Garrett, 2006). These doctoral students were hurriedly hired due to the urgency. The fact that they did not know much about Catholic identity, and the fact that many of them were not fully prepared to take on that task, affected Catholic identity.

A second factor that led to identity crisis in Catholic colleges and universities was the reality of inadequate resources to meet their needs, especially to construct more buildings on their campuses. According to Currie (2011), even though the large influx of students brought in more money to Catholic institutions through tuition, they needed even more money for the construction of more buildings, since the classrooms could not adequately accommodate the large numbers of students. Thus the post-war influx of students resulting in enrollment increase was a mixed blessing for Catholic colleges and universities.

At the time, apart from tuition from students, the other sources of income for Catholic colleges and universities were endowments that were not as strong as they are today (O’Brien, 2013), and contributed services from clergy and religious college administrators and faculty. Many of the administrators and faculty, who were members of the religious congregations that founded the institutions, offered these professional
services without salary (Morey & Holtschneider, 2003; Wall, 2003). For others who were given salaries, they submitted the money to their religious communities, who used only what was absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the sisters, priests and brothers, and at the end of the budget year, returned the balance, which were large sums, to the institutions. The Catholic colleges and universities were basically eleemosynary institutions in which the clergy and religious offered services without pay. But with many of the priests and religious leaving their congregations in large numbers from the late 1960s, these unexpended funds reduced drastically. Many of the former priests and religious who were members of faculty when they were members of the congregations, were still allowed to teach in these institutions, even after they left the priesthood and religious life. Since they were no longer members of their congregations, they took full salary and kept all, giving no money to the congregations. So the congregations had little unexpended funds from the salaries, in comparison to the large funds they initially had, to return to the institutions at the end of the year (Burtchaell, 1998; Gallin, 2000). For example, Burtchaell notes that after the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the Ursuline Sisters who sponsored and controlled the College of New Rochelle started facing serious recruitment and retention problems. A lot of the sisters left the congregation and only few new members were joining the order. As a result, their numbers shrank rapidly and tremendously, and a lot of their personnel, both administrators and faculty at the college, who submitted their salaries to the congregation, left the order. So they hired laypersons, who received full salary, and returned nothing to the order. This negatively affected their finances, and as a result, they went into serious
deficits, starting in 1965. By 1971, their deficit was so large that it wiped out their small endowment, and the college consequently faced bankruptcy.

Seeking to restore the needed funding, Catholic institutions of higher education resorted to the federal and state governments (Currie, 2011; Gallin, 2000). Although they did not get direct appropriations from the government, since they are private institutions, they opted into financial aid assistance and the rules that go with them. In addition, the large Catholic institutions were also involved in competing for and receiving grants for research in order to remain relevant (Dosen, 2009; Gallin, 2000; Gleason, 1995). In most cases, they had to give up or weaken their religious identity to get this financial assistance. The funds were available to them, but they could get them only on the condition that they loosen their stance on a strict Catholic identity, and on the condition that they were not fully tied to a religious congregation. (Gallin, 2000). So to avoid being seen as sectarian, to get financial support from government, and to attract a more diverse student body, some of the institutions eliminated the word ‘Catholic’ from their mission statements and other institution descriptions (Rausch, 2010; William, 1989). According to Heft (2003), administrations of some Catholic colleges and universities declared that their institutions were not strictly sectarian, for the purpose of getting government funds as financial aid for their institutions. This desire to deny or abandon their identity in order to get funds led to undue government interference, and hence an identity crisis (Williams, 1989). According to Gallin (2000), during this time, they started negotiating their identity with the government. For example, in New York State, government funds were available to Catholic institutions, but they could get them only on the condition that they not refer to themselves as Catholic institutions in their printed materials. Many Catholic
institutions acquiesced to the conditions given by government, and abandoned their identity and religious affiliation in order to get government funding. By 1995, St. John University was the only Catholic institution of higher education in New York State that was not eligible for, and did not get state funds, because the leadership refused to give up the right to print its name as a Catholic institution in its publications and materials (Gallin, 2000).

In 1967, Governor Nelson Rockefeller appointed a Select Committee on the Future of Private and Independent Higher Education in New York State. The task of the committee was to assist private universities that were facing financial pressures. The committee was headed by McGeorge Bundy, whose name became synonymous with the commission: “Bundy Committee,” and with the funds: “Bundy Money.” The Bundy Committee recommended funding for all colleges and universities, excluding only theological schools that were solely for the training of the clergy. But the recommendation of the committee to grant “Bundy Money” to all accredited institutions on the bases of the number of degrees awarded yearly was opposed by a majority of the State legislators, who argued that the inclusion of religious-affiliated institutions violated the Blaine Amendment to the New York State Constitution, which forbade State funding of sectarian institutions or purposes. They interpreted this amendment to mean that to be eligible for public funding, institutions would have to be nonsectarian or secular. By the mid 1970s when major litigations and lawsuits had resolved the issue mostly in favor of Catholic institutions, many of these institutions had either closed or forfeited their Catholic identity. To get state funding, many Catholic institutions of higher education, such as Manhattanville College, Iona College, and the College of New Rochelle,
identified themselves as nonsectarian, dropped their Catholic identity, and even identified themselves as secular and non-Catholic, in order to get State funding. (Benne, 2001; Burtchaell, 1998; Gallin, 2000). According to Hellwig (2000), some other institutions revised their identity and referred to themselves as nonsectarian or just private.

Catholic institutions faced this pressure. Many saw the funds as necessary for growth, progress, and development. They therefore yielded to pressure, and opted for the funds, thereby undermining their identity. Many institutions dropped some rules and regulations pertaining to Catholic identity. According to Gallin (2000), some of the rules and regulations that were eliminated or repealed included daily Mass attendance, strict behavior codes for both faculty and students, acceptable decorum in speech and dress, and denial of tenure to faculty who publicly denounced the teachings of the Church. Some Catholic institution leaders went so far as being reluctant to refer to their institutions as Catholic, made efforts to cut ties with their religious sponsors, and refused to practice the basic tenets of their founding mission in order to get these funds. Some even went so far as saying that they were not controlled or guided by the beliefs of the Catholic Church, others referred to themselves as independent institutions and relinquished Catholic identity (e.g., Webster University of St. Louis, Missouri, and Manhattanville College in New York), just to be eligible for government funds (Curran, 1997; Gambescia & Paolucci, 2011; Hutchison, 2001; Morey & Piderit, 2006; O’Brien, 1994). According to Burtchaell (1998), these Catholic institutions secured more from the government in terms of funding, but they were obliged to, and in fact surrendered far more to the government in terms of relinquishing and forfeiting their Catholic identity. As soon as they started accepting governmental aid, they were obliged to abide by
governmental regulations. In doing this, the Catholic character of the institutions was greatly compromised.

According to Hendershoot (2011), some of the institutions are involved in a double standard and oftentimes contradict themselves in their determination to get more funds and attract more students. He explained that some of these institutions are proud to describe themselves as Catholic, and proclaim their Catholic identity when it is convenient, and when it works for their own benefit. They do this when they are recruiting Catholic students, when they are asking for funds from Catholic donors and other donors sympathetic to Catholic identity, or when they are using it as a strategy to discourage collective bargaining in their institutions. However, when government funding is available, and the only way to be eligible is by emulating secular institutions that are free of religious control and identity, these same institutions downplay their Catholic identity.

According to Garrett (2006), some Catholic institutions of higher education employed this strategy to obtain funds from foundations, benefactors, and donor groups. Some of these donors, such as the Carnegie Foundation and the Rockefeller General Education Fund, were unfriendly to Catholic higher education, and were wary of religious or Catholic identity in institutions. For example, before World War I, the Carnegie Foundation refused grants to Christian schools because they felt that by identifying as religious schools, they were limiting intellectual freedom, and so did not qualify to be higher education institutions. In 1905, the foundation decided to undertake funding of pensions for faculty, but made it clear that only nonsectarian institutions would be eligible for the funds. Because they wanted to be eligible as beneficiaries, some
Protestant institutions cut ties with their denominations, and referred to themselves as nonreligious and nonsectarian (Benne, 2001; Buckley, 1998). Some Catholic institutions cut ties with their denominations for this same reason in the 1960s and 1970s. One of such Catholic institutions is Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York. The institution was founded by the Society of the Sacred Heart, a Catholic religious order, and was known as the ‘Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart.’ In 1966, the Board of Trustees voted to amend the college charter and renamed it ‘Manhattanville College,’ eliminating the words, ‘of the Sacred Heart,’ and proclaiming it nonreligious (Morey & Piderit, 2006; O’Brien, 1994).

Catholic colleges and universities recorded, and still record immense growth with the funds from governments and other donors. They would not be as strong as they are today without the funds, but the funding from governments and corporations continues as a major cause of identity crisis for them (Curran, 1997; Currie, 2011; Dosen, 2012). Some authors have argued that it is better for Catholic institutions to reject the funds and maintain their identity, rather than accept the funds at the expense of their identity. They argued that it would be in their best interest to be mission-driven, rather than market-driven. One of such authors is Williams (1989) who cautions that as Catholic colleges and universities make their choices in the area of funding, they should keep in mind that there are worse things that can happen than the loss of funding from government. The myriad regulations accompanying these funds can be seen as undue and indiscriminate interference and intrusion by government into the affairs of Catholic institutions of higher education, and may undermine their ability to preserve and maintain their Catholic identity. Also, Dosen (2012) asserts that for Catholic institutions of higher education to
survive and make viable progress in the 21st century, they must maintain academic credibility, financial viability, and have a full commitment to their Catholic beliefs and practices. He adds that at present, they are more interested in financial viability than full commitment to their identity, and so they resort to accepting funding from the government. He encourages them to jettison government funding and revert fully to their Catholic identity, mission, beliefs, and practices, for this will bode well for them as Catholic institutions. According to Gallin (2000), the contradiction in their dealings is that, in following the path of being more interested in financial viability, rather than full commitment to their Catholic identity, they are made to water down their religious identity. This situation threatened, and continues to threaten their institutional autonomy and academic freedom. Also, O’Connell (2000) maintains that it is by having direct influence from their religious founders, by having a distinctive identity, and by sticking to their Catholic identity, that they can be considered truly Catholic institutions. He notes that these will strengthen them and guarantee a strong future for them. On his part, Noll (2000) proposes a solution to the problem, a solution that will result in them rejecting government funding and undue interference from government, while at the same time getting enough funds to run their institutions. He encourages Catholic colleges and universities to raise as much money as possible from private organizations and individuals to run their institutions. In this way, they will avoid government funds and undue interference, and at the same time, maintain their identity. Also, Dockery (2008) encourages Christian institutions in general to think wisely, carefully, strategically, and creatively, to strive to be more thoroughly mission driven, and to be firm in their
commitment to provide education that is academically rigorous and unapologetically Christian.

The dramatic decline in the number of priests and religious also resulted in identity crisis. From the founding of the first Catholic institutions up until the early 1960s, there were a lot of priests and religious involved in governance, administration, and teaching. The numbers of trustees, administrators, and faculty were overwhelmingly priests and religious, who were seen in large numbers on Catholic campuses. All started changing in the late 1960s when many priests and religious left the priesthood and religious life. Many priests and religious, who were involved in Catholic institutions as trustees, administrators, and faculty, left the priesthood and religious life. They consequently resigned their positions in the institutions, although some who were professors among them and who wanted to continue teaching at the institutions were allowed to continue as lay professors. The rapid decrease in the presence of priests and religious, which was visibly noticed in the classrooms and the campuses in general, affected Catholic identity (Wall, 2003; Wilcox, 2000). Many of the priests and religious who were administrators and faculty members, left their positions vacant. These positions were unfilled for sometime. It was a challenge for Catholic institutions to fill these positions immediately, since their withdrawals were abrupt and immediate. More so, there were not enough personnel among priests and religious to immediately fill these positions, since many left the priesthood and religious life. This had a negative impact on Catholic institutions in the areas of administration and faculty duties.

This decline also resulted in the dwindling in the numbers of priests and religious on the boards of Catholic institutions. The main functions of governing Boards of
Trustees of Catholic colleges and universities are: working to maintain the Catholic identity and mission of the institutions they govern, fiduciary responsibilities, making, approving and ratifying major policies, and appointing and evaluating the institution presidents (Gallin, 2003; Geiger, 2003; Ingram, 2003). Originally, Catholic colleges and universities in the United States were under the control of boards whose members were entirely priests and religious. According to Dosen (2009), they governed the institutions at a time when there were many members of the clergy and religious.

Beginning in the 1960s, the dwindling in the number of clergy and religious led directly to a drastic change in the nature of the Boards of Trustees. These institutions progressively experienced a shortage of personnel among priests and religious to govern them (Benne, 2001; Curran, 1997; Gardner, 2006; Hellwig, 2000; Hutchison, 2001). This resulted in gradual laicization, with some of the boards ultimately being composed mainly of lay people (Curran, 1997; Dosen, 2012; Gallin, 1996; Gardner, 2006; Heft, 2003; Hellwig, 2000; Henkin, Dee & Manzo, 2001; Hutchison, 2001; Morey & Piderit, 2006; O’Brien, 2013; Rausch, 2010). For example, in 1967, Seton Hall University’s Board of Trustees was composed of thirteen laypersons and seven clergy, and the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, had fourteen laypersons and five clergy as its trustees (Gallin, 2000). By 1992, a mere 2 percent of the Boards of Trustees of Catholic institutions of higher education were part of the systems of a founding or sponsoring religious congregation, 2 percent were partly independent, and 96 percent were totally independent organizations. By 1987, the percentage of laypersons on the Boards of Trustees of Catholic institutions was 62, rising to 72 percent in 1992. The numbers have continued to increase since 1992 (Gallin, 2003; Geiger, 2003). As of 2014,
about 84 percent of those on the Boards of Trustees of Catholic institutions were laypersons (U.S. Department of Education 2014; Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, 2014). With the decline in the number of priests and religious on the boards, many Catholic institutions separated from their sponsoring religious congregations. In 1967, Notre Dame University and St. Louis University became the first Catholic institutions to formally separate themselves from their sponsoring religious communities, with the institutions and their sponsoring groups incorporating separately from one another. Independent Boards of Trustees, a majority of which were composed of laypersons and a minority of the members of sponsoring religious congregations, took over the governance of the institutions. By the early 1970s, majority of Catholic institutions founded by religious congregations had followed suit (Gallin, 2003; Morey & Holtschneider, 2003; O’Brien, 2003). According to O’Brien (2003), this trend of the takeover of governance is part of a revolution sweeping across Catholic institutions of higher education in the United States.

According to Geiger (2003), the reasons that led to the transition from religious to lay Boards of Trustees include: the great emphasis placed by the Second Vatican Council on greater lay leadership and expanded lay participation; the use of laypeople by Presidents of Catholic colleges and universities as advisers for many years even before involving the laypeople on Boards of Trustees; the increasing administrative, financial and legal complexity of Catholic colleges and universities that followed the burgeoning enrollments after the Second World War; the recommendation by higher education leaders for increased intellectual rigor in Catholic institutions; the need to have lay members in Boards of Trustees to demonstrate that the institutions are not sectarian, and...
so be eligible for funding by federal and state governments; and the belief that separate boards would curtail the ability of the religious congregations from entirely subjecting the objectives of the institutions to those of their congregations; the decrease in the number of priests and religious, especially those committed to the work of higher education; the thinking that since faculty in Catholic institutions are predominantly laypeople, lay boards would be better equipped to deal with their issues such as compensation, promotion, and tenure; the belief that lay trustees would offer great help in fundraising and reaching out to donors; and the decisions taken by Presidents of Catholic colleges and universities under the National Catholic Education Association and other forums supporting the creation of separate Boards of Trustees. As a result of the call of the Second Vatican Council for expanded lay participation, coupled with the dwindling of the numbers of priests and religious, and these other reasons, the responsibility of governance of the institutions evolved to lay dominance.

According to Ingram (2003), the work of governance regarding institutional mission and identity assumed a new urgency with the decline in the numbers of priests and religious, and the taking of greater roles by laypersons. Many people were opposed to the idea of lay governance, while others were in support. Many people were concerned about potential problems resulting from the reduced influence of the clergy and religious congregations, who could neither be in control nor be responsible for making the decisions affecting the policies and activities of the Catholic institutions. They stood in opposition to the transition from religious to lay Boards of Trustees, arguing that there would be a high probability that Catholic identity and mission would be challenged and watered down. For them, lay leaders would not have the zeal to promote, champion, or
carry on the Catholic values and practices at these institutions. They believed the involvement of the clergy and religious is critical for preserving the Catholic identity of these institutions. They felt that the laity are more concerned about the governance and educational progress, and have little or no interest in the Catholic identity and mission of the institutions (Dosen, 2012; Gardner, 2006; O’Brien, 2013). The fear of such people was based on their belief that mixed or entirely lay boards would eventually undermine the Catholic identity of these institutions, and turn them into secular institutions.

By contrast, supporters of laicization felt that although laypeople may not bring the same religious expertise to the table as the clergy and religious, they bring great and robust strength to Catholic higher education with their knowledge, skills, expertise, and experience. This puts them in better positions to excel, and work for the progress of the institutions (Dosen, 2009; Gallin, 2000, 2003). Supporters hailed the change as a positive move that opened access to sources of expertise, finances, and human resources to the Catholic institutions, without diminishing their Catholic identity and mission (Gleason, 1993).

Some authors have made an assessment of the performance of laypeople on Boards of Trustees of Catholic institutions. According to Gleason (1993), having laypeople as members of the Boards of Trustees has had a positive impact on Catholic higher education. This is as a result of the knowledge, experience, and expertise they possess, and bring to the table. Also, Dosen (2009) believes that the laicization of boards has not been the cause of loss of identity and secularization, arguing that on the contrary, it has had a positive effect on Catholic colleges and universities. Also in line with this, Ingram (2003) notes that the health and welfare, assets and liabilities, the mission and
identity, and indeed, the future of Catholic colleges and universities, have been entrusted to the Catholic laity. According to him, this was a positive move, because it has led to growth at the institutions. He notes that some Catholics want a situation where the trend is reverted to clergy and religious governance, but according to him, this is not likely, and not desirable. These authors who made the assessment believe that despite the fear that lay control and governance would diminish, and even lead to loss of Catholic identity, the presence of laypeople, their work, expertise, knowledge, and experience, have brought about growth, development, and progress in Catholic higher education. However, those who oppose lay control or governance of Catholic institutions argue that lay membership, lay dominance on the boards, or total lay control of the institutions have resulted in identity decline.

Another factor that led to a diminution of Catholic identity is secularization. According to Gallin (1996), secularization has a negative connotation. It means a situation in which the values of the world, which are opposed to religion, have triumphed and are victorious over religion and faith. Dosen (2009) defines secularization as the situation whereby the religious identity of religious colleges and universities is abandoned, either intentionally or unintentionally. According to Sommerville (2009), secularization is the change or transformation of an institution that is religious in character, into an institution with little or no religious character. Marsden (1994) defines secularization as the movement from a period when Christianity and its ideals had a major influence in Christian institutions, to a period when they have little or no influence. On his part, Arthur (2006) sees secularization as the reduction of religious influence in Christian higher education, and the moving away from or abandoning of religious norms,
beliefs and practices. The increasingly secular and materialistic worldview is adversely affecting Catholic colleges and universities.

Morey and Piderit (2006) identify two types of forces that result in secularization: internal and external forces. Internal forces refer to the disposition and attitude of the institutions themselves, the inability to craft, explain, articulate and stand by their mission and identity, weak internal support from trustees and administrators, and the tendency to be exactly like secular institutions to move with the signs of the times and remain relevant. External forces that lead to secularization are forces that are from outside the institution, e.g. market forces, and external bodies such as government and other bodies mounting pressure on religious institutions to abandon their identity in order to get funding and other incentives. Also, Benne (2001) distinguishes between internal and external forces that lead to secularization. Internal forces are those that happen within the institution, for example, the inability to articulate mission and identity and weak accountability and support, whereas external forces are outside influences, for example, market forces. He asserts that even with external secularization, the institutions themselves are ultimately responsible for their secularization. According to him, while it is the case that Catholic colleges and universities have faced serious external challenges, it is the case that secularization has been, at least partially, the making of the institutions themselves. According to him, they were not destined to submit to secularization. They had the option to submit to external pressure or not to submit to it. But they chose to be secularized and so were fully responsible for the making of their own destiny. Marsden (1994) distinguishes between two types of secularization: methodological and ideological. Methodological secularization is the same as internal forces of secularization.
that result from within the institution when religious institutions decide to suspend their
religious beliefs and practices in order to perform scientific or technical activities.
Ideological secularization is essentially external forces influencing religious institutions
to embrace their ideology. Swezey and Ross (2012) identify various factors leading to
secularization of religious institutions of higher education: a craving for increased
funding, plurality and diversity in the institutions, conscious and deliberate efforts by
these institutions to no longer be under the authority and influence of Church authorities,
a decline in the number and role of clergy and religious, and a desire to gain acceptance
and recognition by secular authorities in higher education as authentic institutions in
order to appear relevant. Catholic institutions have often succumbed to internal and
external forces of secularization, and have become secular as a result. Benne (2001)
distinguishes between partial secularization and radical secularization. He notes that
some institutions are partially secularized, while others are radically secularized.
According to him, institutions that are partially secularized still maintain some degree of
their religious identity, while the radically secularized institutions have lost their religious
identity completely. Some institutions loosened their ties with their religious founders
and Catholic identity, becoming partially secularized, while others severed their ties with
them completely, and became radically of completely secularized.

According to Swezey and Ross (2012), secularization is real and is a major threat
to religious identity in Catholic institutions. Also, Williams (1989) observes that
secularism is a reality in Catholic higher education, and asserts that it is very evident in
Catholic colleges and universities. According to him, their label and heritage are still
Catholic, but the reality on many campuses shows secularized institutions. According to
Hellwig (2000), due to the reality of secularization, few among Catholic higher education leaders have come to the conclusion that the era of Catholic institutions of higher education has passed, and so, there is no need to make effort to preserve them because the secularizing forces are multiple and strong. Commenting on what led to secularization, Dutile (1994) notes that the movement from religious identity and commitment to secularism was as a result of the critical steps that were initiated by administrators. He argues that in taking these initiatives, they did not intend secularism but intended the growth and progress of the institutions. However, these steps led them down the slippery slope, led to unintended consequences, and made them lose their identity. Heft (2003) notes that in the 1960s, the bishops had cautioned against secularism, and argued that if secularism was allowed to prevail, the mission and identity of Catholic colleges and universities would be destroyed. Morey and Piderit (2006) argue that historically, Catholic colleges and universities have roots that are deeply Catholic. They argue that, although, Catholic values shaped Catholic institutions of higher education, these institutions are also shaped and influenced by values of secular university culture that are often imposed on them. When both Catholic and secular values are in conflict, these institutions are under intense pressure to embrace secular values which water down Catholic culture and values. In interviews they conducted on the secularization of Catholic institutions, Morey and Piderit reported that administrators of Catholic colleges and universities raised some fears that the society is increasingly more secularized. This, they contended, posed a real danger to Catholic institutions becoming secularized. The administrators affirmed that there is need to fight the influence of secularism and uphold the mission and identity of Catholic institutions. Rodden (2013) agrees with this, stating
that there is a need for Catholic colleges and universities not to yield to secularism, but to move beyond it and stick to their identity. This, according to Swezey and Ross (2012), is the strategy they must adopt if they are to be vibrant and relevant.

Some authors (Benders, 2007; Dosen, 2009; Gleason, 1995; Hendershoot, 2011; Henkin, Dee and Manzo, 2001; Hollerich, 2000; Morey and Piderit, 2006; O’Brien, 2013; Rausch, 2010; Smith and Cavadini, 2014) argue that presently we live in a secularized and materialistic world that undermines religious and faith values. There is less and less value for religion and all it embodies, including its institutions and principles. They came to the conclusion, based on recent trends on campuses and the general attitude towards religion, that Catholic colleges and universities are slowly sliding towards full secularization, a trend they argue, can no longer be reversed due to the prevailing circumstances in the world. However, Ream (2006) observes that this threat of secularism has reawakened a high interest for the Catholic Church and Catholic institutions of higher education. He believes this trend can still be reversed if leaders of Catholic institutions plan new strategies and take proactive action. Their bold planning and action, he believes, would remedy the situation and enable them to revert to complete religious and Catholic institutions.

Another reason that led to identity decline in Catholic institutions was the abandoning of Catholic identity and culture, for the purpose of enjoying high ratings. Some Catholic institutions of higher education have often denied their identity and distanced themselves from their Catholic traditions in an attempt to be like the top-tier and Ivy League secular universities, and for the purpose of attracting more students. These Catholic institutions want to be rated like the institutions with the highest ratings.
To achieve this, they deliberately deny their Catholic identity. According to Dosen (2012), some Catholic colleges and universities want to be like the top-tier secular universities and enjoy high ratings. For this reason, they abandon their identity and embrace secular culture. According to O’Brien (1994), Catholic institutions of higher education want to achieve excellence. For these institutions, the way to achieve excellence is to be like the top-tier institutions. Some Catholic institutions look at the Ivy League institutions and their academic success, and want to be like them. To attain this, they make changes in their curriculum, confessing and professing to be nonsectarian, and hiring Catholics and non-Catholics who are graduates of Ivy League secular institutions. Also, Benne (2001) notes that Catholic institutions of higher education that once had strong and formidable Catholic intellectual tradition up until the 1960s, jettisoned their Catholic intellectual tradition in order to survive and be successful like the Ivy League institutions.

Morey and Piderit, (2006) point to the reluctance and hesitancy of some Catholic institutions of higher education to embrace a strong Catholic identity in their mission statements, and instead, openly declare themselves as independent institutions. They interviewed some administrators of Catholic institutions about Catholic identity. Many of the administrators said their institutions had in the past distanced themselves from their identity as Catholic institutions in order to attract students to their institutions. This was in the sixties and seventies when the Catholic brand was not popular. Morey and Piderit explain that religious conservatives are opposed to this attitude and have consistently accused Catholic higher education leaders of abandoning Catholic identity, compromising the core Catholic values and principles for which the institutions were
established, and embracing secularism in order to be like the top-tier secular institutions. This trend, for them, is dangerous and will spell doom for Catholic higher education.

According to Dosen (2012), this pressure was also from external forces that want Catholic institutions to abandon their identity for the purpose of enjoying high ratings like the Ivy League institutions. Dosen (2009) argues that by yielding to this pressure, Catholic institutions are emphasizing the values of the university, institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and the public service character of the university, over Catholic identity. He argues that with this action, Catholic institutions are relegating Catholic identity to the background.

Giving advice to leaders of Catholic institutions on how to overcome this pressure and maintain their identity, Morey and Piderit (2006) encourage leaders of Catholic institutions not to yield to pressure, but stick to their identity as Catholic institutions. The stronger advice is from Abelman (2012), who advises Catholic institutions and their leaders not to have the feeling that they are under intense pressure to be like the secular institutions, but to embrace, uphold, and defend their character and identity with pride, and make an effort to strengthen it, rather than weaken it. According to him, it is not by denying their identity and core values, and not by emulating the top-tier secular institutions, but by sticking to their Catholic identity, that they will receive high ratings and have their institutions preserved.

Another problem militating against Catholic identity is the argument that most faculty and professional staff are very much indifferent to the discussion of Catholic identity. According to Wilcox (2000), some trustees, administrators, and especially faculty, staff, and students, are still not sure what Catholic identity means and why it is
one of the most important topics of discussion in Catholic higher education. This is because they are not carried along in these discussions, which are still very abstract. He notes that the discussions rarely and seldom center on teaching, research, advising, counseling, and service, which are the very functions of institutions of higher education, functions which faculty are very much involved in, and functions which directly affect students. It is for this reason that O’Brien (2013) argues that conversations of the identity of Catholic institutions of higher education would be more productive and fruitful, if all who are part of the institutions were involved in the discussions. This fact of not fully involving faculty poses a major challenge to identity, for faculty members would be key elements in the strengthening and preservation of the mission and identity of Catholic institutions if they are part of the discussions, and if they embrace it (Wilcox, Wilcox & Lindholm, 2013). In agreement with this assertion, O’Brien (1994) notes that problems and challenges abound, not because there are too many non-Catholic faculty or professors, as some argue, but because faculty members do not understand what Catholic identity and their responsibility to support it mean. A key to success for Catholic institutions would be the full involvement of faculty. This is necessary because they are major participants who deal directly with students in the classrooms. Involving faculty in discussions regarding Catholic identity will help to sensitize and encourage them to promote or respect Catholic identity.

These factors posed, and continue to pose challenges to Catholic institutions. With these challenges, many lost their Catholic identity, and some who still retain it are struggling to survive as Catholic institutions. According to Burtchaell (1998) who commented on the severe impact of identity crisis on Catholic Institutions, many Catholic
institutions became different with the crisis, for many lost their identity, and those that
didn’t lose it completely, became less Catholic. He contends that the institutions that
emerged from the crisis were not the institutions that entered the crisis. In other words,
they emerged different from what they were before the crisis, becoming less Catholic,
and in some cases, no longer Catholic.

**Strategies Needed to Preserve Catholic Identity**

Despite the identity crisis Catholic colleges and universities face, many of these
institutions are still making effort to strengthen and preserve their identity. Some authors
have argued that there is the high possibility that these institutions can still fully embrace
and maintain a vibrant Catholic identity. These authors offer some solutions and propose
some strategies that Catholic institutions of higher education can adopt to maintain
Catholic identity.

Members of Catholic institutions of higher education play special roles in
advancing Catholic identity in these institutions. According to McBrien (1994), to
maintain Catholic identity, Catholic institutions ought to ensure that the trustees,
administrators, faculty, staff, and students make effort to uphold and respect Catholic
identity (McBrien, 1994). According to Morey and Piderit (2006), the members of the
university communities don’t necessarily have to be Catholic to promote Catholic
identity. Since they work and study at the institutions, they ought to work, in their various
capacities and positions, to promote the mission, identity and goals of the institutions.
This is in line with the directive of Pope John Paul II in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* that all the
members of the university communities have the responsibility of working to strengthen
and maintain Catholic identity in the institutions. This responsibility is entrusted
principally to university authorities, but also to the other members of the university communities, including teachers. Catholic teachers ought to be faithful to and promote, and all other teachers ought to recognize and respect Catholic identity, doctrine and morals in their research and teaching (John Paul II, 1990). Agreeing with the Holy Father, Lavalle (2000) asserts that in order to strengthen Catholic identity, presidents of the institutions have the responsibility of ensuring that all members agree with them in upholding Catholic identity and the mission of their institutions. The presidents can do this in various ways. For example, Lavelle suggests that an institution president can have someone on the staff, saddled with the daily responsibility of asking the question, “What is our mission as a Catholic institution?” This strategy will help to constantly remind the institution of its identity and mission, and to foster adherence to that mission. Pope John Paul II stated that in reminding and requiring members of institutions to uphold, promote and respect Catholic identity, the institutions, on their part, are required to respect the religious freedom and liberty of those who are members of other Churches and religions (John Paul II, 1990; Dosen, 2000). This means that non-Catholics should not be forced to practice the Catholic religion, but be encouraged to respect and support Catholic identity, since they work and study at Catholic institutions.

According to Pope John Paul II, “The future of Catholic Universities depends to a large extent on the competent and dedicated service of lay Catholics” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 21). Since a vast majority of the trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and students, are laypersons, attention and discussion on Catholic identity should be centered on the laity, for maximum input and productivity. To preserve Catholic identity in their institutions therefore, effort must be made to fashion clear mission statements that reflect
the values and priorities of the institutions, identify with the Catholic tradition, state the Catholic values of the institutions, and encourage all members to respect and be committed to the mission and identity (O’Brien, 2013; Smith & Cavadini, 2014).

According to Gleason, (1995), Catholic institutions ought to forge reasons and rationale for their existence, purpose, and significance, as important and unique institutions of higher education in the United States. It is by fully explaining the vision, mission and identity to members of the institutions that the members would understand and support them. Also, Catholic higher education leaders and the bishops who are very influential in their dioceses and the Church ought to take active steps to defend, uphold and promote Catholic identity (Russo & Gregory, 2001). Their efforts would go a long way to encourage others to understand, uphold and promote Catholic identity in Catholic colleges and universities.

The Response of Catholic Colleges and Universities to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*

One of the ways in which Catholic colleges and universities have responded to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is by revising their mission statements. Since the publication of the document, some Catholic institutions of higher education in the United States have responded to the Holy Father’s call by reexamining their mission and vision statements and ensuring they are in line with Catholic identity and the essential characteristics of Catholic institutions of higher education. Some institutions have responded by reexamining the academic outcomes of their students, the campus activities of their students, co-curricular activities on their campuses, the processes and procedures of hiring faculty and other members of staff, and how to better publicize and articulate the identity and mission statements of the institutions in order to reach a wider audience.
(Gambescia & Paolucci, 2011). These institutions have explored various ways with which to uphold the distinct values and principles that bind them together as Catholic institutions. This renewed discussion and dialogue on the meaning of Catholic identity started after the publication of the document in 1990 (Estanek, James & Norton, 2006).

In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II requested every Catholic institution of higher education to publicize and make known its Catholic identity, either in a mission statement, or in some other public documents and statements. The Supreme Pontiff also enjoined leaders of institutions to freely and consistently express and explain their Catholic identity. He urged them to ensure that the identity and mission are fully communicated and explained to administrators, faculty and staff, at the time of their hiring, and to students, at the time of their enrollment, and to explain to them their responsibilities to uphold, promote and respect it (John Paul II, 1990; Gambescia & Paolucci, 2011). Since the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, some Catholic institutions of higher education have made efforts to insert Catholic identity and values into their mission and vision statements. These efforts are geared towards helping them maintain their identity, and helping them create awareness among members in better understanding the identity, vision and mission of these institutions (Buckley, 1998; Dosen, 2000; George, 2013). In a nationwide study on Catholic colleges and universities, to ascertain the level at which Catholic identity is embedded in their mission and vision statements, Abelman (2012) found that most institutions articulated the core principles of Catholic identity in their mission and vision statements, with only few excluding these core principles. This shows the extent to which *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* has stimulated some
Catholic institutions of higher education in upholding the basic tenets contained in the document.

*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* has generated discussions among some members of Catholic higher education. Since the publication of the document, some trustees, administrators, and faculty teaching theology and religion, have discussed the implications of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and specifically, what Catholic identity means for their institutions, and the strategies needed to respond to it. After the publication of the document, some Catholic higher education leaders became more interested and engaged in discussions and exploration of Catholic identity. These discussions focused mainly on the resources, structures, and processes necessary to implement the basic tenets of Catholic identity (Estanek, James & Norton, 2006).

The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) is an assemblage and umbrella of Catholic institutions mainly in the United States, who come together to discuss and foster issues of mutual interest, such as Catholic identity and mission. Although the association was formed in 1899, and had done a lot of work regarding the preservation, promotion and fostering of Catholic identity since its inception, it has been more focused on matters of Catholic identity and mission since the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. The document has served as a springboard for these institutions and the association to focus more on how to maintain Catholic identity in the institutions. The goal of the association is the promotion and strengthening of the Catholic mission and identity of the member institutions. The association fulfills this mission and goal by working as the collective voice of these institutions, and by the provision of timely, targeted programs and services that help foster Catholic identity, support cooperation
among member institutions, and respond to the emerging needs of members (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities).

The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities organizes a program called Catholic Mission Institute every year for new Presidents of Catholic institutions. Catholic institution Presidents in their first or second year of presidency are offered this valuable program on Catholic identity and mission, and what is involved in Catholic institution leadership. Some of these new Presidents had not worked in Catholic institutions prior to their new positions as Presidents of Catholic institutions. So it is a great program designed to help them understand their roles as leaders of Catholic institutions (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities). Also, the association organizes an annual conference for mission officers of Catholic institutions. These mission officers have the responsibility of organizing mission seminars for faculty, administrators, and trustees of their institutions, assisting in searches and hiring of faculty, facilitating relations among members of the university community, and helping to resolve issues and controversies especially pertaining to Catholic identity and mission. The aim of the conference is to discuss the meaning of mission and how to foster and facilitate Catholic identity and mission in their institutions. Another responsibility of the mission officers is to ensure that the institutions are keeping to their Catholic identity and mission, and devoting special attention and care to the mission of the institutions. There are presently 159 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States with a mission officer (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities). Also, the association hosts annual meetings for campus ministry directors at Catholic institutions of higher education. The aim is for the directors to engage one another on current issues related to campus
ministry, and keep them abreast of their duties and responsibilities. During the meetings, the directors also share their best practices with each other. As part of the preparations for the meetings, all directors of Catholic campus ministries are asked to suggest topics they would want to be discussed during the meetings. This is to make them fully involved in the meetings and discussions. These meetings are both at the national and regional levels (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities).

Some Catholic colleges and universities have also responded to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and addressed a diminished Catholic identity by organizing seminars on Catholic identity and culture for new faculty who, in most cases, need to adjust to the culture and practices of Catholic institutions (Rausch, 2010; Wilcox, Wilcox & Lindholm, 2013). In their book, *Revisioning Mission: The Future of Catholic Higher Education*, Wilcox, Wilcox & Lindholm outline a program called *Revisioning Mission Program*. It is a development initiative for new faculty of Catholic institutions geared towards assisting them in settling in and adjusting to institutions of friendship, hospitality, and cordiality, and helping them have a sense of belonging in the Catholic institution in which they have been hired to work. The goals of the program are, educating the new faculty on the life, mission and identity of Catholic institutions, and helping them freely respond and commit to working to preserve and enhance this Catholic mission and identity. Also, Estanek, James and Norton (2013), Hellwig (2000), and Rausch (2010), assert that there are various professional development courses that are organized for lay faculty and administrators of some Catholic colleges and universities, with great emphasis on institutional mission. These initiatives are sponsored and supported by major national Catholic higher education organizations. Some of these
initiatives are *Collegium*, a summer lecture and discussion program on Catholic identity and intellectual life for faculty, which was established in 1995, following a general meeting of Presidents, faculty, and staff of Catholic institutions of higher education, at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. There is also the creation of the Institute for Student Affairs at Catholic Colleges and Universities (ISACCU) (now the Association for Student Affairs at Catholic Colleges and Universities) (ASACCU), in 1995, which also conducts an annual summer program. Also, there exists the Institute for Administrators in Catholic Higher Education, founded in 2000 and first hosted by Boston College with the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities as co-sponsor. Also, since 2003, there have been seminars on Catholic mission, which are developed and facilitated through the collaboration of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, and the Association of Governing Boards, for trustees of Catholic colleges and universities. There have also been regional meetings of faculty and staff, in order for faculty of Catholic institutions to be engaged with faculty of other Catholic institutions. This gives them the opportunity to know themselves, and work together to foster Catholic mission and identity in Catholic institutions.

In addition, there have been discussions about assessing the mission of Catholic institutions. These efforts have been geared towards exploring the outcomes regarding Catholic identity and institutional capacity. The idea behind this initiative is to assess the performance of Catholic institutions in relation to Catholic identity, and encourage them to make amends and improvements where necessary. These discussions have taken place between officials of the Vatican and Catholic higher education leaders, between Catholic
higher education leaders and various professional associations within Catholic higher education (Estanek, James & Norton, 2013), and between Catholic higher education leaders, researchers, and observers of Catholic higher education (Morey & Piderit, 2006). These discussions have taken place through presentation of programs and dialogue at national and international meetings of Catholic higher education leaders, and the formation of Catholic Higher Education Research Cooperative, an association of Catholic higher education institution researchers, who collaborate in developing initiatives to address assessment and collection of data on Catholic mission and identity (Estanek, James & Norton, 2013). These authors also stated that in determining what should be assessed to ascertain the effectiveness of Catholic institutions regarding Catholic identity, there have been suggestions on what can easily be counted and easy to assess, such as the statistics of weekly attendance at Masses on campuses, and the number of students in Catholic institutions who are aspiring or thinking of aspiring to the priesthood and religious life. But the main things Catholic institutions intend to accomplish with this initiative is determining the extent to which Catholic institutions are following their mission and maintaining their identity, and the dimensions of student learning and development.

At the institutional level, many Catholic colleges and universities have established Offices of Mission and Identity, and appointed Vice Presidents for Mission and Ministry in their institutions (Estanek, James & Norton, 2013; Gallin, 2003; Rausch, 2010; Wall, 2003). One of such institutions is Seton Hall University, New Jersey. Also at the institutional level, there have been establishment of Departments of Catholic Studies, and Catholic studies programs have developed in some institutions, with strong emphasis
on the intellectual tradition of Catholic social teaching and Catholic traditions (Estanek, James & Norton, 2013; Rausch, 2010). For example, Seton Hall University, New Jersey, created the Department of Catholic Studies in 2012 to reach out to, and teach students who are interested in learning the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. A total of 37 Catholic institutions in the United States have so far established a Department of Catholic Studies and created Catholic studies programs (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities). Also, 16 Catholic institutions offer doctoral programs in theology, religion, or ministry, and 42 institutions offer degrees, mainly bachelors and masters, in lay ministry, including youth ministry, pastoral counseling, pastoral studies, and other such programs. These programs offer students the opportunity to develop the skills and competencies necessary to function as laypersons in Church ministry (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities). These initiatives and strategies are geared towards promoting and fostering Catholic identity in Catholic institutions of higher education.

In a study done on Catholic colleges and universities, to ascertain the steps these institutions are taking to address the crisis of Catholic identity, Morey and Piderit (2006) found that some institutions are organizing seminars for new faculty, reflecting Catholic identity in their mission statements, and making policies that reflect Catholic identity. But they concluded that despite the fact that these institutions are taking these basic steps which have helped to some extent to address the crisis of identity, these institutions are still experiencing identity crisis, and so, more work needs to be done by Catholic institutions in order for them to maintain strong Catholic identity.
Major Hallmarks of Catholic Higher Education

Catholic institutions of higher education are founded mainly to provide educational opportunities and sound education to students. In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II stated some of the hallmarks of Catholic higher education: providing equal education opportunities, providing complete education, encouraging institutional autonomy and academic freedom that are according to the mind of the Church, and providing the functions of teaching, research, and service that lead to both the good of individuals and the common good. The Supreme Pontiff stated that it is by maintaining their identity that Catholic institutions of higher education become fully equipped to fulfill these hallmarks and reach their goals. This was why the Holy Father called on all Catholic institutions of higher education to perform their functions according to the teachings and beliefs of the Church. It is only in this way that they can maintain Catholic identity. Supporting this view of the Supreme Pontiff, Hellwig (1997) strongly affirms that if the principles and norms contained in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* were followed and implemented by Catholic institutions, they would significantly advance a characteristically Catholic presence in their institutions, contribute meaningfully to higher education, and maintain Catholic identity.

There is the notion in the contemporary academic world and some secular quarters that the words, ‘Catholic’ and ‘intellectual’ are incompatible terms. Catholicism and intellectual life are viewed by some as totally opposed to each other, and so, cannot go together. According to LaCugna (1994) and Rodden (2013), this view connotes that one who is Catholic in the true sense of the word cannot be a real intellectual, and the Catholic Church cannot contribute to the intellectual life of individuals and the society.
According to Dockery (2008), some in the academic world even argue that the Christian religious faith is irrelevant to, and incompatible with serious intellectual inquiry and the transmission of knowledge to students. According to Hellwig (1997), people who hold this view see the existence of Catholic institutions of higher education as a paradox. For them, the Catholic Church should be concerned purely and exclusively with religious matters, and not delve into intellectual or academic matters. They are of the opinion that Catholic institutions of higher education will disappear completely, due to what they refer to as the incompatibility of the religious with the intellectual. Buckley (1998) explains that the belief of people who hold this view is that as these institutions become more academically distinguished, their Catholic character will become more irrelevant and will ultimately disappear, because they cannot be Catholic and academic institutions at the same time. For such people, Catholic institutions should shelve their Catholic identity and character if they are to survive as academic institutions, or else, they will not survive but go into extinction.

But this argument is fallacious, untenable, and false. This is because, in actual fact, the Catholic Church has, over the centuries, contributed immensely to academic and intellectual life. This is evident in the number of schools established and sponsored by the Catholic Church at all levels, including at the higher education level, to contribute to the education of individuals, for their good and the good of the society. The Catholic Church is contributing to education and intellectual life with the establishment of education and academic institutions at all levels across the globe for the education of students, for research, and for service. The Catholic Church has always championed and spearheaded intellectual life, and Catholic higher education has contributed immensely, and continues
to contribute to higher education in the United States and other parts of the world (Benders, 2007; Dosen, 2009; Orji, 2013).

Apart from contributing to academic and intellectual life, the Catholic Church actually started the university system. According to Benne (2001), and Smith and Cavadini (2014), the Catholic Church actually invented and started the university system and institutions for higher learning. They noted that the Catholic Church is not an outsider or a new comer to higher education, but actually founded the first European universities, which flourished for many centuries before they were taken over by secular interests. Supporting this fact, Hellwig (2003) notes that these universities started in Cathedral and Monastic schools and later developed into great universities. It is for this reason that Rodden (2012) contends that the words ‘Catholic’ and ‘intellectual’ are not incompatible, but compatible terms.

The Second Vatican Council affirmed that in fulfillment of the mandate she received from Christ her divine founder, to announce the mystery of salvation to all people, and to renew all things in Christ, the Catholic Church is obliged to promote the welfare of all aspects of human life. To this end, the Church, therefore, believes in the paramount importance of education, and has a big part to play in the development and extension of education (Flannery, 1987). To this goal, the council promulgated some fundamental principles regarding Christian education. First, all people, regardless of age, race or condition, by virtue of being human beings, have an inalienable right to education. This education should suit the particular destiny of the individuals, and adapted to their ability and cultural traditions. They should be educated for their own good and the good of the society. Second, parents and the family have the obligation to
ensure the education of their children, for they are primarily and principally responsible for their education. But the society as a whole has the responsibility to ensure that all people have access to education by creating opportunities and ensuring that education is within their reach. Third, the Church has the right, obligation and responsibility to contribute to education by establishing its own schools, and doing all in its power to contribute to the education of people. The Church makes serious effort to provide a complete and holistic education that will lead to their overall development, for their own good and the common good. Fourth, the state has the duty to ensure that all its citizens have access to education and have great education opportunities, guaranteeing and safeguarding their rights to adequate education. Fifth, the council believed that education is specially the concern of the Church. It affirmed that the Catholic Church, which has promoted education right from its inception, has the right to freely establish schools at all levels, and must do so in order to contribute to creating access and opportunities for students, and educate them for their own benefit, and the good of the society and the world (Flannery, 1987). This right of the Church to establish universities is stated in canon 807 of the Code of Canon Law, which states that, “The Church has the right to erect and to supervise universities which contribute to a higher level of human culture, to a fuller advancement of the human person and also to the fulfillment of the Church’s teaching office” (Coriden, 1985, p. 572). This canon emphasized that the Catholic Church has the right to establish universities, and noted that the Church is not to establish universities for the sake of it, but has the responsibility to establish standard universities that will provide full and complete education to students, who in turn are to, with their knowledge, contribute to the good of the society. In Ex Corde Ecclesiae, Pope John Paul
II corroborated and reiterated this fact, charging Catholic colleges and universities to be alive to their responsibilities of contributing immensely to the treasury of human knowledge (John Paul II, 1990).

One of the central hallmarks of Catholic higher education is the provision of complete education to students. The Second Vatican Council affirmed that the education that Catholic institutions are to give to students is one that develops them intellectually, morally and socially. The council emphasized that students should not be given just intellectual education, for that will only be a part, and will be incomplete, but they should be given an education that is complete and encompasses all aspects of development. This complete education will prepare them to face the challenges in their fields and the world, and also equip them to participate fully in the life of the society, and contribute to the common good (Flannery, 1987). In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II affirmed that the aim of Catholic higher education is the complete education of the human person. The Holy Father exhorted leaders of Catholic colleges and universities to ensure that the institutions are places that are guided by the values of faith, committed and dedicated to exploring the truth by providing and championing a host of academic disciplines, committed to serving people by giving them a sound education, and also working to contribute to human knowledge in a meaningful way (John Paul II, 1990). This charge to Catholic institutions urged them to provide and offer progressive and meaningful courses that will prepare the students to be academically sound, morally stable, and socially competent and balanced to face the challenges in a contemporary world, and contribute to the good of society (Gleason, 1995). The position of the Holy Father and the Catholic Church is that Catholic higher education provides a great legacy for the education that the
world needs, an education that develops and delivers progressive course of study which shapes students morally, socially, and personally to face the challenges of the world and to contribute to its development (Hellwig, 1997; Benders, 2007). Supporting this fact, Gardner (2006) states that a significant component of Catholic higher education is the provision of education of the whole person, with a commitment to the academic development of students, and their emotional, social, moral, and cultural development. This, according to Roche (2008), and Wilcox, Lindholm & Wilcox (2013), means the education of the mind and formation of the heart, which is tantamount to the education of the whole human person.

According to King (2000), in fulfilling their purpose of providing complete education to students, Catholic colleges and universities do not just present data, facts, or information to the students in their institutions, but also provide the students with a conducive environment in which all the components of their personalities: intellect, will, soul, and body, are developed. King notes that to achieve this complete education, Catholic institutions must continue to inspire students to meet three outcomes, which he refers to as competence, conscience, and compassion. Students must have the competence to attain, at the time of their graduation, the knowledge and critical thinking skills that are needed for their field of study. They must have a good conscience that would inspire and stimulate them to seek ways in which they can make good use of the knowledge acquired to promote the common good. They must have the compassion to reach out to others and offer support, and see their knowledge and competence as means to enrich others and the world. Supporting this view, Morey and Piderit (2006) note that this task of forming the consciences of students is a great responsibility and part of the mission of Catholic
colleges and universities, which strive to educate students to have good and strong character. Also, Dockery (2008) notes that the purpose of Christian higher education is more than imparting information or transmitting knowledge. It also involves the development of the character and competence of students with moral and spiritual formation for effective service. In the same light, Wilcox, Lindholm and Wilcox (2013) posit that the two requirements that are essential in education are the complete education of the mind, which is knowledge and understanding, and the formation of the heart, which helps in critical thinking. These are very important in the lives of the students who with this approach are fully formed to face the challenges in life. Laying credence to this position, Peck and Stick (2008) observe that Catholic higher education offers students the opportunity to be educated academically, morally, and socially, in order for them to be complete human beings who will excel in their various fields of endeavor in the future. Supporting this position, Roche (2008) notes that by their very nature, Catholic institutions of higher education exist to offer this holistic and complete education.

Morey and Piderit (2006) did a study to ascertain the level and quality of education Catholic institutions are offering and providing for their students. Leaders of Catholic institutions who participated in the study generally agreed that Catholic colleges and universities are providing a rich education and intellectual experience to students. They enthusiastically noted that Catholic institutions offer a complete education that encompasses the education of the whole human person by helping them form their consciences toward the common good, preparing them for the future, and equipping them to contribute meaningfully to the development of the society. Also, some authors (Brackley, 2012; Benders, 2007; Boyle, 2010; Murphy, 2001; and Weitzel-O’Neill &
Torres, 2011) note that Catholic higher education is offering an excellent education that helps in the formation of the whole human person, intellectually, morally, socially and otherwise, and also prepares graduates of Catholic higher education institutions to excel in their various fields and professions.

A second major hallmark of Catholic higher education is its belief in, and the promotion of the education of all people. A major goal of Catholic higher education, which is at the service of all people, is to work to provide education for all people in need of complete education. Catholic institutions of higher education exist to serve both Catholics and non-Catholics. They offer equal opportunity and quality education to all their students, regardless of their cultures, races, gender, religions, nationalities, and socio-economic status. This practice of opening their doors to all people was highly emphasized during the Second Vatican Council. First, the council stated that all people have an inalienable right to education, a fundamental right that should not be infringed on or denied them by any individual, organization or State (Flannery, 1987). With its characteristic openness, the Council reaffirmed and reinforced the position of the Catholic Church that Catholic institutions of higher education are not established, and do not exist for only Catholics. In this direction, the Council encouraged Catholic institutions to hire faculty and admit students from all persuasions, and not discriminate against them but welcome all equally, Catholics and non-Catholics alike (Murphy, 2001). This accommodation of Catholic and non-Catholic faculty and students, according to Murphy, does not, in itself, challenge or diminish Catholic identity. The Council also emphasized that access to the institutions should be a major priority, and entry to these institutions should be made easy for students, irrespective of their social status, gender,
and nationality. But especially, the Council emphasized that those who historically do not have easy access, such as the economically disadvantaged, should be encouraged and given easy access (Flannery, 1987). According to Hellwig (1997), since the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, faculty and administrators of Catholic colleges and universities have reflected seriously on the implications of inclusivity of all people. She contends that the founders of the major religious congregations involved in higher education had the opening of educational opportunities to needy and economically disadvantaged students as an objective. She however notes that the endeavor to keep the institutions financially sound had taken their focus away from this objective. Some institutions, she notes, actually began by educating needy students with the contributed services of the clergy and religious, but they could not build up strong endowments for the institutions, and so failed to focus more on this ideal of educating the poor in the society. But she notes that by and large, Catholic institutions of higher education have done considerable work of educating students from economically disadvantaged families.

In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II stated that the ideal nature of Catholic colleges and universities is universal, for they exist for the benefit of all (John Paul II, 1990; Komonchak, 1997). The Supreme Pontiff called on Catholic institutions to increase diversity on their campuses by opening their doors to all people who seek knowledge and education. He noted that following the mission of the Church, no one should be excluded from Catholic institutions of higher education, but that all are to be included in their mission to reach out to all and offer complete and sound education. Supporting the Holy Father’s call, Carpenter (2006), and Komonchak (1997), noted that the Catholic Church is a universal Church, for the word ‘Catholic’ means ‘universal.’ By that very fact, the
Catholic Church is open to all people, and since Catholic institutions are part of the Catholic Church, they are to open their doors to all and be institutions for all people.

In his address to Catholic educators at the Catholic University of America in April 2008, Pope Benedict XVI stated that education is an integral part of the mission of the Church (Rausch, 2010). The Holy Father emphasized that the Catholic Church, which has the education of individuals as a basic mission, is at the service of all people. Also, Morey and Piderit (2006) noted, based on interviews with senior administrators of Catholic institutions, and extant publications, that administrators and researchers basically agree that diversity and inclusion are some of the hallmarks of Catholic higher education. This explains why all the Catholic colleges and universities in the United States have diverse student populations enrolled in the institutions (Dosen, 2012; Hutchison, 2001; O’Brien, 2013; Rausch, 2010). This diversity is seen in student demographics. In 2014, about 611,000 students, representing 65 percent of students enrolled in Catholic colleges and universities self-identified as Catholic, while 329,000 students, representing 35 percent of students, identified as non-Catholic. Also, during the 2012-2013 academic year, 62.4 percent of students enrolled in Catholic institutions of higher education were female, while 37.6 percent were male (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities; U.S. Department of Education, IPEDS Data Analysis System).

The first Catholic colleges and universities in the United States were established to cater for the education of the clergy, and for the protection, preservation, and propagation of the Catholic faith (Garrett, 2006; Hutchison, 2001; Janosik, 1999; O’Brien, 2013). But these institutions were not founded solely for the benefit of the clergy and for religious purposes. They were also founded for the benefit of the entire
citizenry, to promote and foster unity among people, to tackle ignorance by educating members of the society, to educate citizens to be fully informed and knowledgeable, to encourage students to imbibe virtue and moral values, to equip people to go into various professions and fields of their choice, and to educate teachers to in turn staff schools to teach people, especially the younger generation (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008; Boyle, 2010; Dallavis & Johnstone, 2009; Dosen, 2009; Hutchison, 2001; Janosik, 1999; O’Brien, 2013; Ryan, 2006). All these reasons attest to the fact that Catholic institutions of higher education were founded, and exist to provide education to all people who seek education in the institutions, regardless of their religious affiliation.

Pope John Paul II enjoined Catholic institutions to make university education accessible to all, especially the poor and minority groups who have been deprived of access and education, in order for them to benefit from the rich education they offer (John Paul II, 1990). According to Gallin (2000), in their efforts to offer education to all, Catholic colleges and universities enroll students from poor socioeconomic and from economically disadvantaged and less privileged families, and award them scholarships for easy access and quality education. Just like most other institutions, Catholic institutions of higher education offer need-based aid to students to assist them in getting education. The reason for this is to avail them the opportunity to get an education that they would otherwise not get if they have to bear the tuition burden alone. This is a deliberate practice by Catholic colleges and universities not to shut people out, but to avail as many people as possible, great education opportunities. This practice is in line with the call of Pope John Paul II to all Catholic colleges and universities to see it as their responsibility to contribute to the progress of the society, searching for ways to make
higher education accessible to all who are able to benefit from it, especially the socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority groups who have not had easy access and have been deprived of higher education (John Paul II, 1990). In doing this, Catholic institutions of higher education, to a great extent, address the needs of the less privileged, and help to reduce the problems of accessibility and affordability in higher education. Catholic colleges and universities also give merit-based financial aid to students like other colleges and universities, to emphasize, reward, and encourage academic excellence.

A third hallmark of Catholic higher education is its belief in academic freedom. The Catholic Church has continually encouraged and promoted institutional autonomy and academic freedom in its higher education institutions. The Church has continually emphasized that institutional autonomy and academic freedom in Catholic institutions should be in conformity with the teachings of the Church. The Second Vatican Council supported and stressed the importance of academic freedom in Catholic institutions, maintaining that Catholic institutions should encourage and adopt academic freedom that is exercised in conformity with the teachings, beliefs and practices of the Church (Flannery, 1987).

The Code of Canon Law supports academic freedom in Catholic institutions of higher education. Canon 809 states that, “If it is possible and advantageous the conferences of bishops are to see to it that universities or at least faculties are established, suitably distributed throughout their territory, in which the various disciplines are to be investigated and taught with due regard for their academic autonomy, and with due consideration for Catholic doctrine” (Coriden, 1985, p. 573). In addition, Canon 810,
paragraph 2 states that, “The conference of bishops and the diocesan bishops concerned have the duty and right of being vigilant that in these universities the principles of Catholic doctrine are faithfully observed” (Coriden, 1985, p. 574). Just like the Second Vatican Council document, these canons support academic freedom, as long as it does not infringe on the rights of others, and as long as it is exercised according to the doctrine, teachings, beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church. Both canons give conferences of bishops and diocesan bishops the responsibility of ensuring that academic freedom is exercised in the Catholic institutions in their territories, in conformity with the teachings of the Church.

According to Pope John Paul II, every Catholic university “possesses that institutional autonomy necessary to perform its functions effectively and guarantees its members academic freedom, so long as the rights of the individual person and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good” (John Paul II, 1990, p.12). The Holy Father stated that institutional autonomy and academic freedom must be maintained in accordance with the teachings of the Church. The Pope also maintained that institutional autonomy and academic freedom should be exercised to preserve the rights of the individual and the common good. The Supreme Pontiff noted that academic freedom is essential and critically important for the proper functioning of Catholic institutions of higher education, and that Catholic institutions of higher education have the institutional autonomy that is vitally important for them to be effective in performing their functions of teaching, research, and service, and also guarantee and safeguard the academic freedom of their members. The Supreme Pontiff noted that freedom and autonomy cannot stand when the rights of individuals are not
respected and upheld. This means that in exercising academic freedom, the rights of the individual and the community must be respected and the common good upheld (Curran, 1997; Heft, 2003; McInerny, 1994). Also in the document, the Holy Father stated that Catholic higher education must work to enhance human dignity and promote justice, peace, and the common good (Murphy, 2001). This means that in the exercise of freedom, the individuals who possess freedom should not infringe on the rights and freedom of others, but should exercise it in a way that they advance the rights and freedom of others, since academic freedom exists for the good of the individual and the common good. The Church supports academic freedom in its institutions in order to guarantee a free environment for teaching, research, service, and learning. But this freedom must be exercised in conformity with the teachings and beliefs of the Church. The Church maintains that Catholic institutions should have autonomy that frees them from undue interference from governments and organizations, and that the faculty members of Catholic institutions have freedom that protects them from abiding by anti-Catholic and anti-Christian laws.

A fourth hallmark of Catholic higher education is its provision of the functions of teaching, research, and service as the main functions of Catholic institutions. According to Johnson (2007), nearly all colleges and universities support and perform the three functions of teaching, research and service, which have historically been the functions of higher education. Catholic colleges and universities exist to serve as institutions of scholarship, and to contribute to teaching, research, and service, which are the three functions of institutions of higher education (Brackley, 2012; Buckley, 1992; Buckley, 1998; Duncan, 2011; Gallin, 2000). The Church has always emphasized teaching,
research and service as the functions of its higher education institutions, and has continually called on and encouraged its institutions of higher education to ensure that these functions are carried out effectively at the institutions. According to Buckley (1998), a Catholic university is really Catholic when it is an intellectual community in which teaching and learning take place, where meaningful research is conducted, and where service of people is given great priority.

In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II stated the importance of teaching, research and service as the functions of Catholic institutions of higher education. The Holy Father maintained that these functions are common to Catholic institutions (John Paul II, 1990). The Supreme Pontiff emphasized that these functions must be performed in conformity with the teachings, beliefs, and practices of the Church, and that Catholic teaching and practices should penetrate and influence all Catholic university functions and activities (John Paul II, 1990). Also, the Holy Father stated that, “Every Catholic University, as a university, is an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching and various services offered to the local, national and international communities” (John Paul II, 1990, p.12). The Holy Father also stated that, “A Catholic University is without any doubt one of the best instruments that the Church offers to our age which is searching for certainty and wisdom. Having the mission of bringing the Good News to everyone, the Church should never fail to interest herself in this Institution. By research and teaching, Catholic Universities assist the Church in the manner most appropriate to modern times to find cultural treasures both old and new, according to the words of Jesus” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 10). The Holy Father maintained
that these functions must be aimed towards the good of the individual and the common
good. This means that these functions should not be performed for self-aggrandizement
or for selfish interest, but must be performed with the aim of impacting the individual and
the entire society. The Catholic Church has always maintained that the teaching, research
and service advanced and performed by Catholic institutions should be ones that lead to
the protection and advancement of cultures at the local, national and international levels
(Wilcox, Lindholm & Wilcox, 2013), and those that support human development, bring
about peace and justice in the society, and ensure service for the common good (Murphy,
2001).

Regarding the function of teaching, Pope John Paul II stated that there is a close
connection between research and teaching. He maintained that teaching should be carried
out in a way that advances human knowledge, and in a way that leads to ethical and
moral growth and development. Through research and teaching, the students are educated
in various disciplines in order to be competent in their various fields, and be fully devoted
to service (John Paul II, 1990). The Holy Father also maintained that the continuous quest
for truth through research, and the preservation and communication of knowledge for the
common good and the good of the society should become the basic mission of Catholic
higher education institutions (John Paul II, 1990). According to Heft (2003), Pope John
Paul II insisted that Catholic institutions must teach what leads to human dignity and the
good of people. Supporting the position of the Holy Father, Attridge (1994), and Garrett,
(2006) urge Catholic institutions to be involved in teaching that helps the students gain
knowledge that benefits them and the society. To achieve this, in their exercise of the
function of teaching, Catholic institutions are to ensure that their curricula are detailed
and comprehensive, for the maximum benefit of students (Dosen, 2000; Hutchison, 2001; O’Brien, 2013).

Regarding the function of research, Pope John Paul II affirmed that since the purpose of knowledge is the service of the human person, research in Catholic colleges and universities is to be carried out with a concern for the ethical and moral implications of such research (John Paul II, 1990). The Supreme Pontiff insisted that this research is to include a study of serious contemporary and societal problems, such as the dignity of the human person, the promotion of justice for all people, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, equitable distribution of the resources in the world, and an economic and political plan that will serve people at the national and international levels. The Holy Father maintained that this research would seek to discover the root causes of the problems in the world and how to eliminate them (John Paul II, 1990). Supporting the position of the Holy Father, Haughey (1997, 2000) argues that following the mind of the Church, it is the responsibility of Catholic colleges and universities to continually encourage their faculty to produce quality and meaningful research that would serve the needs of people and the society at large. The Church continues to emphasize that the research done in Catholic institutions should not go against, but must be in accordance with the teachings and beliefs of the Church.

Regarding the function of service, Pope John Paul II maintained that the service that Catholic colleges and universities undertake, include, first, service to the Church and society (John Paul II, 1990; Heft, 2003). This service, according to the Holy Father, is a response to the scriptural mandate that all should love God and love their neighbor. In
response to this mandate, Catholic universities must express their Catholic mission by involving themselves in direct service to the poor and economically disadvantaged (Brackley, 1999; Ferrari, Cowman, Milner, Gutierrez & Drake, 2009; Murphy, 2001), and also service to all their students, other members of the university community, and the local community (Peck and Stick, 2008; Rausch, 2010). According to Dockery (2008), the services that Catholic institutions render include student services, campus ministries, computing services, library and academic services, enrollment services, and services outside the university.

Even as they render services, Catholic institutions are to actively engage their students, academic and administrative staff, to be involved in volunteer and community service. Pope John Paul II maintained that teachers have a responsibility to teach and develop a sense of justice and love in their students, teaching them to embrace lives of service as students, and in their future endeavors (John Paul II, 1990). Supporting the position of the Holy Father, Dockery (2008) notes that service is the work of the entire university community. He asserts that what the members of faculty do in the classroom is primary, but that the work of a Catholic university is more than what happens in the classroom. It also involves character development for a positive impact in society. For this reason, he concludes that the activities and services that take place on campus to support classroom instruction, such as campus ministry, and services outside the university community, are important and should be encouraged in the students.

Gallin (2000) underscores the importance of teaching, research and service undertaken by Catholic institutions of higher education. She asserts that Catholic colleges and universities are involved in teaching, research and service that lead to the common
good. She maintains that these Catholic institutions are involved in teaching and service on their campuses, while the Catholic research universities, are, in addition, involved in research, and are competing for and getting federal funding for research, just like other research institutions.

**Limitation on Literature**

This chapter on literature review aimed to show the published literature on the Catholic identity and mission of Catholic colleges and universities, and what these institutions are doing, and need to do, to maintain Catholic identity. This literature review section also investigated how Catholic institutions of higher education are responding to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* and complying with the directives and norms set forth in these documents. There is abundant existing published research on the identity of Catholic colleges and universities. A lot of literatures have been published since the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*. These literatures are still extant and very relevant for understanding Catholic identity and mission.

Substantial research regarding the general response of Catholic colleges and universities to these Papal and American bishops documents on Catholic identity exist. Abundant extant research explored the efforts being made by Catholic institutions to maintain Catholic identity, especially since the publication of both documents. But there is dearth of literature on the response of individual Catholic institutions of higher education to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and Catholic identity. Apart from the websites of individual institutions that point to their response, no substantial response of individual institutions is found in existing research. Also, there is little research on the
understanding of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and Catholic identity by some major groups in Catholic higher education, such as faculty and students. This lack of research on these important groups in Catholic higher education has made it difficult to understand their positions on Catholic identity. Focus has been mainly on administration, while these other groups have been mostly neglected. The fourth chapter of this study aims to explicate the response of American Catholic University to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*, and also aims to explore the understanding of its faculty regarding Catholic identity.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research explored the extent to which American Catholic University is applying the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* to maintain Catholic identity. The qualitative research method, which entails interviews with research participants on the topic of study, was used to understand and determine the extent to which the institution is incorporating the principles and norms in both documents to maintain Catholic identity. The purpose of this chapter was to describe the methodology, procedure, and process used in the research to arrive at the findings. The chapter contains the research site, the research design, the research method, the sample selection and participants, the research setting, the role of the researcher, the research procedure and data collection, and the method used in data analysis.

Research Site

The site for this qualitative research was American Catholic University, a diocesan Catholic university founded in the middle of the 19th century, and located in the United States. In establishing the university, the founder, who, at the time, was the bishop of the diocese that sponsors the institution, acted in accordance with the mission of the Church regarding education, which is providing education to people. The Church believes in equal right to education, and the right to equal educational opportunities. This means that the Church upholds and fosters a situation where all have equal access and have the same educational opportunities. This was what informed the decision of
establishing American Catholic University. The founder believed that everyone has a right to education, and believed that equal opportunities should be created for all to have quality education. In articulating his vision for the institution, he envisioned an institution that would provide a complete education to students, and develop mature leaders who would serve the society, and, with their knowledge and skills, contribute to its progress and development (American Catholic University website).

American Catholic University is open to all who qualify and meet its admission criteria. It promotes diversity, which is reflected in its diverse students, who come from various parts of the nation, and from different parts of the world. The students are of different races, cultures, and religions. Also, its faculty and staff are from various countries of the world, and represent a great diversity in terms of race, nationality, culture, and religion. In its admissions and hiring, American Catholic University fulfills the call in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* to Catholic colleges and universities to open their doors to all people and embrace people of all races and cultures who are willing to learn, and those interested in teaching, by offering them access and opportunity without discrimination (Pope John Paul II, 1990).

The mission of American Catholic University, as amended and approved by the Board of Regents in 1996, describes the institution as a major Catholic university that focuses on academic and ethical development in a diverse and collaborative environment. It also states that the students of the university are prepared by an outstanding faculty, a technologically advanced environment, and curricula centered on values that would equip the students to be leaders in their professional lives, communities, and the global society (American Catholic University website).
The mission statement of American Catholic University shows three major hallmarks of the institution. First, there is reference to the institution as a major Catholic university. Second, the statement refers to the institution as one that provides a complete education that focuses on the intellectual, moral, and social development of the students. Third, the statement refers to the curricula of the institution as one that is centered on teaching the students values that would equip them to contribute to the common good and development of the society.

The vision of American Catholic University, as approved by the Board of Regents in 2003, is to realize the ranking of the institution among the top-tier Catholic universities in the United States. Also, the statement envisions the institution’s involvement in the overall development of students who are taught by outstanding faculty, who learn with experience centered on values, and who are supported with technologically driven curricula. The university also envisions an institution where all the academic efforts of the university will flow from its commitment to faith and justice. The students, who are prepared ethically, professionally, and sustained by a rich Catholic intellectual heritage, will be formed to be servant leaders in their professional settings, their immediate environments, and the global society (American Catholic University website).

The above vision statement of American Catholic University reveals the commitment of the institution to ensure that its students are well educated by an excellent and outstanding faculty, in order for them to possess the skills necessary to be capable leaders in the future, excelling in their various fields and professions, and contributing their knowledge to the development of the society and the world. In line with this vision, the current President of the institution has stated that his vision for the institution is to
work for the institution’s ranking among the top five Catholic universities in the United States, and among the top 75 universities nationally, by the year 2020. He noted that the realization of this vision would require significant improvement in academic excellence, student services, and facilities. He added that to achieve this, there would be need for cooperation, collaboration, and involvement of all the members of the university community (Strategic Plan, December 2011).

According to the 2014 accreditation self-study report of American Catholic University, the institution has always been committed to supporting and maintaining the vision of the founder, to make the institution a place where students are given excellent and complete education. In its effort to abide by the tradition of Catholic higher education, the institution accomplishes its mission by fostering and promoting “the intellectual pursuit of all that is good and right and true.” This is in line with the statement of Pope John Paul II that Catholic universities are to be dedicated to the search for truth and work towards arriving at truth (John Paul II, 1990). In line with the mission of the Church to embrace people of all faith and culture, the institution is open to all people who meet its admission criteria and employment requirements, irrespective of their religion, culture, race, and status. The institution has made diversity one of its hallmarks in hiring and admission. This is in conformity with the statement of Pope John Paul II that the Catholic university is to ensure that all people who are yearning for an education, and all those who are yearning to contribute to knowledge by way of teaching, research and other means, are properly accommodated and encouraged (John Paul II, 1990).
American Catholic University currently has offices, schools, and departments where it promotes and advances its Catholic mission. Some of these are: the Office of Mission and Ministry, the School of Theology, and the Department of Catholic Studies.

The Office of Mission and Ministry in American Catholic University coordinates spiritual, liturgical and pastoral activities, and works of service on campus. The Second Vatican Council and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* urged Catholic institutions of higher education to establish spiritual and pastoral offices and centers in order to adequately cater for the spiritual, liturgical and pastoral needs of the students, faculty and staff (Flannery, 1987; John Paul II, 1990). The 1983 Code of Canon Law gave the diocesan bishop the responsibility of providing for the spiritual and pastoral needs of students of Catholic institutions of higher education. Canon 813 states that, “The diocesan bishop is to have serious pastoral concern for students by erecting a parish for them or by assigning priests for this purpose on a stable basis; he is also to provide for Catholic university centers at universities, even non-Catholic ones, to give assistance, especially spiritual to young people” (Coriden, 1985, p. 576). These documents urged the bishop of the diocese in which the Catholic university is located and the leaders of the institution to ensure that the spiritual, liturgical and pastoral needs of the students and the other members of the university community are provided for, and also ensure that the venue for spiritual and liturgical activities are made available at the institution.

The Office of Mission and Ministry was established to organize and coordinate spiritual, pastoral, and liturgical activities on campus. Catholic values and activities, which it lives and engages in, shape American Catholic University as a Catholic institution of higher education. First, the presence of priests in large numbers on campus
shows a Catholic presence. At present, there are 46 priests residing and working on campus in administration or as professors. All the priests are involved in spiritual and pastoral ministry on campus. Catholic Masses are held three times daily. There is also the Sacrament of Reconciliation, daily Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and other spiritual and liturgical activities on campus. There is a chapel on campus where these Masses and spiritual activities take place. This is in accordance with the directive in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, that as an expression of the Catholic identity of the university, the university community should practically and openly demonstrate its faith in its daily activities, with true devotion to reflection and prayer. The document directed that Catholic members of the university community be afforded the opportunity to inculcate Catholic teaching, beliefs and practices into their lives, and be encouraged to participate actively in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, which is the center and summit of Christian life and worship (John Paul II, 1990). The Supreme Pontiff also stated that pastoral ministry is to be available to Catholic students in Catholic universities, since it is an indispensable means by which they can, in fulfillment of their baptism, “be prepared for active participation in the life of the Church” (John Paul II, 1990, pp. 30-31). The priests help to create a Catholic presence on campus, and celebrate spiritual and liturgical activities.

The Office of Mission and Ministry has centers and institutes where it fulfills the Catholic mission and values of the university. At these centers, the office coordinates activities of faith and intellectual heritage, and fosters the efforts of the university to develop servant leaders. These centers and institutes are: the campus ministry, the Catholic center for family spirituality, the center for vocation and servant leadership, the
Campus Ministry initiates and coordinates spiritual programs and activities for students, for the purpose of spreading the gospel message. It also helps create an atmosphere on campus that promotes spiritual, moral, and liturgical interests in students. The Catholic Center for Family Spirituality works to promote the spiritual, theological, and pastoral activities of family life. The center reaches out to families and offers them advice on how to overcome challenges of family life, encouraging them to work to keep their families together. The Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership encourages students to be open to the call of God, both in academic life and common life of the university, and also instructs students on how to be servant leaders. The Center for Catholic Studies fosters a dialogue and relationship between Catholic tradition and contemporary culture. The center does this through research, publications, and programs for faculty, students, and the entire university community. The Institute for Faith and Culture promotes the values of social and moral life through conferences, lectures, research, writings, and publications. The Institute for Christian Spirituality provides support for those in ministry and those intending to go into ministry, by helping them have a strong foundation in their faith, and also helping them learn necessary skills in pastoral ministry and leadership, discernment and spiritual growth. The Volunteer Initiative helps to create awareness of social injustice, and provides various services to people. Through the volunteer program, the Office of Mission and Ministry reaches out to groups, such as those in the nursing homes, disabled children, and the poor in the society that need constant help (American Catholic University website).
In its volunteer efforts, American Catholic University does a lot of work of service in and outside campus. In living its Catholic mission, the university is involved in service to the university community and to people outside the university. Through this office, the institution reaches out to and serves the local community. As part of its commitment to fulfill its mission and the mission of service stated by Pope John Paul II in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the institution has a policy that mandates all students to complete a minimum of ten hours of community service during their first semester as students of the institution. This service is done in different areas of the life of the community, with the aim of impacting the lives of the inhabitants (American Catholic University website).

American Catholic University has a School of Theology called the Seminary School of Theology. It is so called because it also serves as the seminary of the archdiocese that sponsors American Catholic University. The seminary was founded in 1860 and located in the university. It was part of the university until 1927 when it moved to a separate location. In 1984, the seminary was relocated to the university grounds to also serve as the School of Theology of the university (American Catholic University website). The timing of its relocation to the university in 1984 was in response to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* that was already being discussed at the time, a document that calls on all Catholic colleges and universities to each establish a School of Theology, with a dean or chair, and faculty of theology (John Paul II, 1990). The relocation was also in response to the Second Vatican Council, which in its document, *Gravissimum Educationis*, the Declaration on Christian Education, issued on October 28, 1965, stated that each Catholic institution of higher education is to have a School or Department of Theology, where students are given the opportunity to study theology, and a theology faculty who would
teach students the basic truths and beliefs of the Church (Flannery, 1987). It was also in response to the 1983 Code of Canon Law, which states in canon 811, paragraph 1, that, “The competent ecclesiastical authority is to provide that at Catholic universities there be erected a faculty of theology, an institute of theology, or at least a chair of theology so that classes may be given for lay students” (Coriden, 1985, pp. 574-575). Paragraph 2 states that, “In the individual Catholic universities classes should be given which treat in a special way those theological questions which are connected with the disciplines of their faculties” (Coriden, 1985, p. 575). A later document, The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States, issued in the year 2000, stated that Catholic theology should be taught in every Catholic university in the United States, that a department or chair of Catholic theology be established, if possible, and that academic events that address theological issues be organized on a regular basis (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). In line with this, Newman (2014) sees theology as a necessary discipline in a Catholic university. He argues that it will be a contradiction for a Catholic university not to have theology in its curriculum, stating that a Catholic university will not be complete without the inclusion of theological studies, and that the idea of a Catholic university implies the teaching of theology to students. He further argues that all universities, Catholic and non-Catholic, should, in fact, include theology in their curriculum, since theology is a discipline, like other disciplines that are taught at the university. He contends that since all universities are to include theology in their curricula as a discipline, the more reason why Catholic universities must teach theology as a major discipline. The School of Theology was established at American Catholic University to
fulfill the mission of the Church, which is to teach students, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, sacred theology, and the beliefs and practices of the Church.

The School of Theology at American Catholic University advances and fosters the Church’s mission of teaching sacred theology, the Catholic faith, tradition, beliefs, and practices. The School of Theology offers Philosophy and Theology courses that help to provide philosophical and theological foundations for undergraduates, in order for them to be conversant with the Catholic faith, and also in fulfillment of the requirements for some undergraduate degrees. Special Undergraduate Theology courses, which introduce students to the various ways the Catholic Church reads and interprets Sacred Scripture, are offered. The School of Theology is open to those who pursue studies in theology for theology degrees, providing a theological foundation and spiritual and pastoral studies for those preparing for various ministries of the Church. Lay people also study theology in the School and are awarded theology degrees, which qualify them to teach theology or be involved in lay ministries in the Church. The School of Theology also provides theological foundation for those who wish to study for doctoral degrees. The graduate courses offered include Biblical Studies, Christian Ethics, Church History, Pastoral Theology, Systematic Theology, and Canon Law. The School of Theology offers and awards three different degree programs. They are Master of Arts in Theology, Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry, and Master of Divinity. The School of Theology also offers certificate programs in Catholic Evangelization and Theological Education for Parish Ministries and Services.

The Department of Catholic Studies was established at American Catholic University in 2012 (American Catholic University website). The purpose of this
department is to foster and promote the Catholic identity and mission of the institution, by teaching students the Catholic faith, culture and tradition. The department studies the ways in which Catholicism is related to various cultures and academic disciplines, studies the Church’s relations and dialogue with society, and offers courses to students who are interested in studying the Catholic faith. Some students studying various courses and disciplines take some elective courses among the courses offered by the department. Some students are awarded bachelors degrees in Catholic Studies as an interdisciplinary, liberal arts degree. The courses offered in the department afford students the opportunity to learn about the Catholic faith, tradition, and the relationship of the Catholic Church with other religions and cultures.

**Research Design**

**Qualitative Research: Case Study**

The qualitative research method was utilized for this research. It was a case study of American Catholic University, explored to better understand the Catholic identity and mission of the institution. The qualitative approach was useful in understanding how the faculty of the School of Theology at American Catholic University, understand the Catholic identity and mission of the institution. The qualitative research offered insight into how the members of faculty of the School of Theology understand the situation in their environment, their position, and the institution where they work (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative research method was used in order to have detailed information from the views of the research participants, to arrive at detailed findings and analysis. The participants were asked to give their views and opinions about Catholic identity and mission. A qualitative approach was useful in providing information, and determining the
extent to which the members of faculty of the School of Theology at American Catholic University understand the Catholic identity and mission of the university.

**Sample Selection and Participants**

In the course of the research, interviews were conducted with twenty members of faculty of the School of Theology, to ascertain their understanding of the Catholic identity and mission of American Catholic University. The interviews with faculty filled a gap in existing qualitative research regarding Catholic identity, which in the past had focused mainly on interviews with Catholic institution presidents and deans. For example, in their book, *Catholic Higher Education: A Culture in Crisis*, Morey and Piderit (2006) published their interviews with more than 125 presidents, executive vice presidents, deans, senior academic officers, and senior student life officers at 33 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States, regarding their understanding of Catholic identity, institutional mission statements and culture, leadership and governance, and the strategies they are adopting and applying in their institutions to maintain Catholic identity. Also, Dosen (2009), in his book, *Catholic Higher education in the 1960s: Issues of Identity, Issues of Governance*, recorded and analyzed interviews with administrators of Catholic colleges and universities. The interviews were about their understanding and views regarding Catholic identity, the level of effectiveness of Catholic identity in their institutions, and the strategies they are utilizing to maintain Catholic identity in their institutions. The literature also shows the various interviews with Catholic institution presidents and deans, regarding the mission statements of their institutions, and the extent to which the mission statements conform to Catholic identity. But the existing qualitative research interviews show only scant and meager interviews with faculty regarding
Catholic identity and the mission statements of their institutions. Administrators of Catholic institutions, especially presidents, play critical and vital roles in promoting Catholic identity in their institutions. By virtue of their positions as leaders in their institutions, presidents can influence and determine how Catholic identity is maintained. But faculty members also play critical and pivotal roles in fostering Catholic identity.

Members of faculty are very much involved in the three functions of colleges and universities, which are teaching, research and service. It is important to interview presidents of Catholic institutions, deans and chairs of departments at Catholic institutions, since they are very much involved in administration. But it is also of great importance to interview faculty members about the Catholic identity and mission of their institutions, since they also play vitally important roles at their institutions. Members of faculty, just like administrators, can, and do in fact contribute to promoting and fostering Catholic identity in their institutions.

In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II stated the importance of the roles played by all members of Catholic institutions, and encouraged all to play their parts to promote Catholic identity and mission in Catholic institutions. The Holy Father maintained that presidents, vice presidents, deans of schools and colleges, chairs of departments, faculty, staff, and students of Catholic universities have roles to play and duties to perform, to ensure that Catholic identity is promoted and maintained in their institutions. The Supreme Pontiff also maintained that Catholic identity be explained to all the members of the university community. At the time of their appointment, the Catholic identity and their role in fostering it are to be explained to faculty members. At the time of their enrollment, the Catholic identity and their role in promoting it are to be
explained to students. This directive shows that they all have roles to play in promoting and upholding Catholic identity in their institutions. For these reasons, qualitative research and interviews should not be conducted with administrators of Catholic institutions only, but also with faculty, in order to understand their views about Catholic identity, and to explore the extent to which they are playing their parts to promote Catholic identity in their institutions. It is for this reason that this qualitative research focused on interviewing faculty members of the School of Theology at American Catholic University.

The rationale for interviewing the faculty of the School of Theology was based on the fact that the professors who teach the theological disciplines are the only members of faculty that are required to have the mandatum to teach Sacred Theology at Catholic institutions of higher education. The researcher wanted to understand the disposition of the professors who teach the theological disciplines at the institution to the mandatum. Only the members of faculty who teach the theological disciplines can be asked questions about the mandatum, since they are the only ones required to have it. This made them most suited for the research.

The interviews were designed to explore their understanding of Catholic identity, the mission of the institution, and their views regarding the extent to which the principles and norms in Ex Corde Ecclesiae and The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States are being fulfilled at the institution. The researcher contacted thirty members of faculty, comprising twenty-two full-time and eight adjunct professors, for the interviews. Fifteen of the full-time professors, and five of the adjunct professors contacted agreed to participate. Among the twenty research participants were fourteen
Catholic priests and six lay people. Eleven of the priests were full-time professors, while three were adjunct professors. Four of the laypersons were full-time professors, while two were adjunct professors. The researcher interviewed the twenty faculty members of the School of Theology who agreed to participate, asking them a host of questions about Catholic identity and mission. The interviews helped to get a better perspective and understanding of their views regarding the Catholic identity and mission of the institution. They provided answers based on their knowledge and experiences as professors at the institution. The responses from the participants provided a better understanding of how the institution is maintaining Catholic identity and mission. This was documented in the findings and results.

In addition to interviewing the twenty members of faculty of the School of Theology, the researcher interviewed the current archbishop of the archdiocese that sponsors the institution. During the interview with the archbishop, the researcher asked questions about the relationship that exists between the archdiocese and the university, and questions about governance, since the archbishop is the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and the President of the Board of Regents. The interview with the archbishop helped to understand the nature and the extent of the relationship between the archdiocese and the university, and the extent to which the institution is governed in accordance with Catholic identity and mission.

**Research Setting**

The researcher followed a procedure and process in setting up the interviews. First, the researcher contacted the Associate Dean of the School of Theology by email, stated his intention, and requested his permission to interview some faculty members of
the school. The Associate Dean gave the researcher permission and approval to conduct interviews with the faculty of the School of Theology. The researcher subsequently contacted twenty-two full-time professors and eight adjunct professors by email, and requested interviews with them. The researcher explained the reasons for the interviews, stated the research topic, and requested their consent. Fifteen full-time and five adjunct professors agreed to participate in the research. The researcher subsequently mailed the Informed Consent Form and the Letter of Solicitation that were approved by the Institutional Review Board of Seton Hall University to the professors who agreed to participate in the research.

The Informed Consent form contained a proof of the researcher’s affiliation with Seton Hall University as a student, the purpose of the research, the research procedure, which included the intended duration of the interviews, the interview questions, the voluntary nature of participation, the confidentiality and security to be given to the data, the contact information of the researcher, the mentor, and the Institutional Review Board office, the request for permission from the participants to use audio recording for the interviews, and a space for signature and date for the participants. The Letter of Solicitation contained the name and affiliation of the researcher to Seton Hall University as a student, the request for interview, the purpose and intended duration of the interviews, the interview questions, the procedure for the interviews, the voluntary nature of participation, the confidentiality and security of the data, and the due date for the Letter of Solicitation and Informed Consent Form to be returned to the researcher. After the Informed Consent Forms and Letters of Solicitation were returned, the dates and times for the interviews were set by the researcher with each professor, by email. The
researcher then embarked on conducting interviews with the participants on the date and time set by the researcher and each participant. The qualitative research interviews were conducted in the offices of the participants, which are located in the School of Theology at American Catholic University.

**Role of the Researcher**

The researcher attended a Catholic university that prides itself as a Catholic institution that maintains Catholic identity, and with a mission statement that conforms to Catholic identity. There is a Catholic presence on campus, with priests who celebrate spiritual and liturgical activities, and are readily available to provide pastoral services to administrators, faculty, staff and students in need of such services. In the course of his studies, the researcher experienced how the university is making effort to maintain Catholic identity. The researcher’s participation in some of the university programs and activities offered insight into how the university is fostering Catholic identity.

The researcher has great interest in Catholic higher education. Part of the program plan for the researcher for his doctoral studies was internship for two semesters in a higher education setting. The researcher decided to do his internship at a Catholic university, in order to have administrative experience, and to also experience how Catholic identity is being maintained at the institution. The researcher did his internship in the Department of Catholic Studies at Seton Hall University. The department studies the relationship of Catholicism to societal culture and various aspects of learning, and offers courses to students on Catholic religion, tradition, beliefs, and practices. Part of his internship assignment in the department was classroom observation of the professors and the students during lectures. Some professors assigned topics to the researcher to teach.
During his internship, the researcher interacted with the members of faculty of the department, and discussed the nature of Catholic identity and the mission of the institution with them. He asked them questions about why they teach courses related to Catholic studies, culture, and tradition, and about the impact of the courses on the students. The researcher’s experience in the department strengthened his decision to research the identity and mission of a Catholic university for his dissertation. His interaction with the members of faculty also made him take a decision to interview professors who teach the theological disciplines at a Catholic university.

**Research Procedure and Data Collection**

The purpose of this qualitative research, which is a case study of American Catholic University, was to explore how the institution is viewed by the members of faculty of the School of Theology to be responding to the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. It was designed to understand how American Catholic University is maintaining its identity as a Catholic institution. This was done by gathering data from the participants through interviews.

The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended in nature, giving room and opportunity to the participants to answer the questions comprehensively and in detail. During the interviews, there were follow-up questions, which were based on the answers and explanations by the participants. This allowed for clarification and expatiation. Probes were also applied to obtain detailed explanation, and for clearer understanding of their views on Catholic identity and mission.

The duration for each interview was about forty minutes. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with the participants. They were sit-down interviews in which the
participants were present and were asked questions directly. The interviews were not conducted in a group, but one-on-one, with one participant at a time. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed after all the interviews were completed.

The confidentiality of the participants was guaranteed. The real names of the participants were not revealed, but pseudonyms were used during the interviews, and also for the recording and analysis of the interviews. Also, the researcher ensured that the interview audiotapes and transcripts were kept in a secure location where unauthorized persons would not have access to the tapes.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts and other materials gathered, for the purpose of arriving at findings. It involves working with the data, organizing the data, breaking the data into manageable units, coding the data, synthesizing the data, and searching for patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). Similarly, Creswell (2009) notes that data analysis involves organizing and preparing the data for analysis, reading through the data, having a deeper understanding of the data, coding the data, advancing how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative, and interpreting the larger meaning of the data. The data analysis in this research followed this pattern.

For the process of data analysis, Bogdam & Biklen (2011) note that there are two main modes and styles of analyzing data. The first approach involves collecting data and analyzing them simultaneously, in a way that the analysis is more or less completed at the conclusion of data collection. This approach is mostly applied in field observation. The second approach involves first collecting the data before the analysis. This approach is
mainly used for recorded interviews. The second approach was applied in this research.

The analysis of data took place after the collection of data, which involved the interviewing of participants, the recording of the interviews, and the collection of related institutional documents. The researcher completed the interviews within three months of obtaining research approval from the Institutional Review Board of Seton Hall University. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed after all the interviews were completed, and then analyzed. The researcher organized and prepared the data for analysis, read through the data for a deeper understanding of the views expressed by the participants, and embarked on coding the data.

Coding of materials is critical in data analysis. Bogdan and Biklen (2011) note that coding is a vitally important step in data analysis, since developing a list of coding categories after the collection of data helps in data analysis. Creswell (2009) notes that the process of coding involves organizing the materials into segments of texts before bringing meaning to information. It involves taking data gathered, arranging sentences or paragraphs, and labeling the categories with terms or words. The process of coding involves reading through the transcripts and identifying the salient meanings of the views expressed. The coding in this qualitative study, which was based on the information gathered, involved reading all the transcribed interviews and writing down important ideas that were eventually useful in analyzing the data. After the coding, the researcher determined how the description and themes were represented in the qualitative narrative. The next stage was to search for patterns in the answers given by participants. For example, one of the questions the researcher asked the participants was whether Catholic identity and the mission statement were explained to them when they were hired. To get
the pattern, the researcher searched for how many of the participants said the Catholic identity and mission statements were explained to them when they were hired, and the number of participants who said they were not explained to them. The last stage of the analysis was the interpretation of the larger meaning of the data.

The transcribed interviews were transferred into the qualitative software program ‘Dedoose,’ which was used for the analysis and coding. Memos regarding the thoughts and expressions of the participants were written after the interviews. The materials analyzed were based on the questions asked and the answers given, regarding how the institution is fulfilling its Catholic identity and mission as a Catholic institution. The findings were presented and analyzed in chapter four.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter contains the findings from the study carried out to determine how American Catholic University is responding to the principles, guidelines, and norms in the Apostolic Constitution of Pope John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and the document of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*. To arrive at the findings, twenty members of faculty of the School of Theology were interviewed, and relevant institution documents containing the policies and programs that were adopted after the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* were reviewed for information gathering and data collection. The interviews and the information from the institution’s documents, helped to determine the extent to which American Catholic University is maintaining Catholic identity.

To give clarity to the primary research question, the following three subsidiary research questions guided the research.

1. How do the faculty members of the School of Theology at American Catholic University understand the Catholic identity and mission of the institution?

2. What attempts have been made by American Catholic University to incorporate the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* into its functions, policies, programs, and activities?
3. What efforts, according to the faculty members of the School of Theology, are being made by American Catholic University to explain Catholic identity and the mission of the institution to the members of faculty?

These subsidiary questions were addressed by generating twelve semi-structured questions for the interviews with research participants. The findings from the interviews, and the analysis of institutional documents, helped to understand how the institution is fulfilling the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* to maintain Catholic identity.

**Subsidiary Question 1**

The first subsidiary question explored the understanding of the faculty of the School of Theology regarding the extent to which American Catholic University is maintaining Catholic identity, fulfilling the essential characteristics of Catholic institutions of higher education, and fulfilling its mission.

**Catholic Identity**

In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* Pope John Paul II defined Catholic identity, enumerated the essential characteristic of Catholic institutions of higher education, and set a vision for Catholic higher education. The Holy Father enjoined Catholic colleges and universities to follow this vision to maintain Catholic identity. The research participants discussed the progress American Catholic University has made in the area of maintaining Catholic identity since the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*. Fifteen participants, comprising eleven priests and four lay people, believed that the institution has made a lot of progress in the area of strengthening Catholic identity. They stated that although the institution fell short in the
past to maintain Catholic identity, it is presently moving in the right direction. One of the
participants said,

I think that the present administration that we have are people who are very
intentionally Catholic, and people who are mission-driven and have Catholic
identity as a primary motivator for them. They have done a lot to promote
Catholic identity, and to encourage members of the university community to
support and foster it. There were some issues regarding Catholic identity in the
past, but right now, there are no serious issues and controversies about Catholic
identity. The university has had its ups and downs, but it is presently moving in
the right direction in terms of maintaining Catholic identity.

Another participant stated,

In the past, American Catholic University had a weak Catholic identity. Some
people believed then that to be a good university, religious and Catholic identity
must be pushed aside. But at present, things have changed at the institution. The
current President was the one who really turned things around by emphasizing
that the university must project itself in all its publicity as a Catholic institution,
including in the recruiting of students. At the time, some people said this was
bound to hurt the university. On the contrary, it has not hurt but strengthened the
university and increased enrollments. I think that right now, this university is
maintaining Catholic identity, in a way that a Catholic university should.

The fifteen participants believed that American Catholic University has made
much progress in the area of strengthening Catholic identity mainly because of its
response to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the
United States*. They stated that the university embraced both documents, and is acting
according to the principles, guidelines and norms. One participant said,

The publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde
Ecclesiae for the United States* motivated this university to seek ways to maintain
its identity as a Catholic institution. It embraced both documents, and adopted
new policies and programs that are based on the principles and norms in the
documents, in order to maintain Catholic identity. I think the documents were
critical in motivating the university to spring into action regarding its identity.
Another participant stated,

The documents *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* are very clear on what Catholic identity is, and what institutions are to do to maintain Catholic identity. American Catholic University wasted no time in embracing and following the principles, guidelines and norms in the documents. The positive disposition of the university trustees and administrators towards the documents has led the institution to where it is today in terms of strengthening its Catholic identity.

But five participants, composed of three priests and two lay people, argued that, although the institution has made some progress in the area of strengthening Catholic identity by adopting mission-centered policies and programs, it still has much work to do. They believed that not all in the university community are participating in mission-centered programs. They maintained that the university should do more to encourage faculty, staff, and students to support the Catholic identity and mission of the institution, by participating in mission-centered programs. One of these participants said,

This university has made some progress in terms of strengthening Catholic identity. This university should be commended for having a strong Catholic mission statement, and for its mission-centered programs. But, only little is explained to faculty and students, and only few faculty members and students are participating in the programs. For example, only little about the Catholic identity and mission of the university is mentioned during job interviews and orientation programs, and only few faculty members are attending the mission seminars and retreats. A Catholic university cannot claim to be maintaining Catholic identity when many of its members are not supporting the identity and not participating in mission-centered programs. I think the university should do more to carry all along, and encourage them to support the identity, and participate in university mission-centered programs and activities.

One of the ways a Catholic university lives its identity is by having a relationship with the Church. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* states that, “Every Catholic University, without ceasing to be a University, has a relationship to the Church that is essential to its
institutional identity. As such, it participates most directly in the life of the local Church in which it is situated” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 22).

American Catholic University has a relationship with the Church. It is a diocesan university, established and being sponsored by one of the archdioceses in the United States. The archbishop of the archdiocese has the responsibility to protect, maintain, and safeguard the integrity of the Catholic Church, and to ensure that the teachings and doctrines of the Church are maintained at the institution. The archbishop is the Chairman of the 16-member Board of Trustees, and the President of the 42-member Board of Regents. So, he plays a major and active role in its governance, exercising great power and authority over matters discussed, and decisions taken at board meetings. Apart from the archbishop, there is a diocesan bishop of one of the dioceses in the ecclesiastical province, and five priests of the archdiocese, who are members of the Board of Trustees. The priest-members are the Vicar General and Chancellor of the Archdiocese, the Moderator of the Curia of the Archdiocese, the Minister of the Priest Community at American Catholic University, the Rector and Dean of the Seminary School of Theology, and another priest who is a member of faculty of the School of Theology at the institution. On the Board of Regents are the archbishop, all the diocesan bishops of the dioceses in the ecclesiastical province, the priest who is the minister of the priest community at the institution, the Vicar General, and the Moderator of the Curia of the Archdiocese (American Catholic University By-laws).

The researcher interviewed the current archbishop of the archdiocese that sponsors American Catholic University. The archbishop stated his role in fostering the relationship between the archdiocese and the university. He said,
The relationship that exists between the archdiocese and the university is very strong. First of all, I chair the Board of Trustees, and I appoint the members of that board, some of them with the advice of the Board of Regents. I am the President of the Board of Regents, and I approve the appointment of the members of the board. I fulfill my role of ensuring good governance and policy formulation. I work to ensure that the university does not deviate from, but maintains its Catholic identity. I don’t shy away from this commitment and responsibility, but I spend time on it. To strengthen the Catholic identity of the university, we revised the university by-laws to reflect Catholic identity and mission. The university has come a long way in the years that I have been the archbishop of this archdiocese. The priests of the archdiocese are also involved. The head of the priest community at the university is now a member of both the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents. This was done to ensure that the priests are well represented. There are forty-seven priests of the archdiocese working at the university, some as faculty, and others in administration. They are a true witness and great representation of the archdiocese on the university campus. We have expanded the boards to have a broader representation. The head of the priest community at American Catholic University is now both a member of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents so that the priests would be well represented. Also the diocesan bishops of this ecclesiastical province are all members of the Board of Regents. This was done so that it would not just be the local archdiocese but a joint effort of all the dioceses in the ecclesiastical province. So, the relationship is cordial and strong.

The archbishop also explained his relationship and collaboration with the administration of the university. He said,

The current President and Provost are wonderful Catholic laymen who have been very sensitive to Catholic Mission and Identity. I meet regularly with the President and the Provost. They keep me up to date on the things that are going on at the university, and I give suggestions and ideas. I do not believe I should interfere with the day to day running of the university. I leave that to the President, the Provost, the Deans and others in administration. They are doing a great job of maintaining that connection with the archdiocese.

The researcher asked the participants about the relationship that exists between American Catholic University and the archdiocese that sponsors it. They stated that there is a cordial and strong relationship between the archdiocese and the university. They maintained that this relationship has helped the university to stay true to its Catholic identity and mission. One participant said, “A Catholic university, especially a diocesan
Catholic university, has to be rooted in the local Church, for it is from the heart of the Church. The archdiocese and this university have a robust relationship.” Another participant stated,

All Catholic universities are born from the heart of the Church, and exist as part of the Church. As such, they must have a strong relationship with the Church, operating in strong fidelity to the teachings of the Church. I think this university has demonstrated that. The administration works in collaboration with the archbishop who is the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the President of the Board of Regents.

Another participant said,

The composition of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents shows the strong relationship that exists between the institution and the local Church. The governing structure, with the role that the archbishop and other bishops of the province play in relation to the university, is essential to fostering Catholic identity. This is an expression of the robust and continuing commitment of the archdiocese to American Catholic University.

Another participant said,

The archdiocese and the university are in constant communication. The archdiocese is committed to working with university administration to preserve Catholic identity and ideals at the institution. This is a real glory, which the archdiocese should be extremely proud of. As part of this relationship, there are over forty priests of the archdiocese assigned to work on campus. This has been a consistent commitment on the part of the archbishops of this archdiocese. Someone told me it is the biggest assignment of diocesan priests in the entire western hemisphere. This strong relationship has served the university well, and has put it on a path of maintaining Catholic identity.

Another way through which a Catholic university lives its identity is by fulfilling the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities. Research participants discussed the extent to which American Catholic University is fulfilling the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities that are enumerated in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States.*
The first essential characteristic of Catholic colleges and universities is, “A Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the entire university community as such” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 13).

The researcher asked the participants to explain their understanding of how the institution is fulfilling this essential characteristic. The participants stated that the university is inspiring individuals and the members of the university community with the Catholic presence on campus. One of the participants said,

The document talks about the fact that the Catholic university is an inspiration, not only of individuals, but also of the entire institution. There are things that we have in place in this university that show that the institution is inspiring individuals and the university community. We have a Catholic chapel, not an interdenominational or interreligious chapel. We also have a Catholic School of Theology. We have hiring for mission of staff, faculty and administrators. We have the seminars on mission. That is an institutional inspiration as opposed to just a personal inspiration. I like to tell people that even if everybody here were Catholic, that would not make this university Catholic if the people here were not interested in having institutional programs and activities. Christian inspiration means the institution is making effort to reach out to all in the community, and encouraging them to support the Catholic principles, values and ideals. I think this university is inspiring the members of the community through Christian values, beliefs and practices.

Another participant said,

Sometime ago, it was not possible really for students to study much Catholic Theology here because the Department of Religion taught very little Catholicism. Now, we have a whole Bachelor in Catholicism, Catholic Theology being taught in the Seminary School of Theology. That is a recent development, and that means any student who comes here can study Catholic Theology. Also, the Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership developed also into a Department of Catholic Studies. This department teaches students about the history, tradition, beliefs and practices of the Church, and also the relationship between Catholicism and various academic disciplines. It teaches about how Catholicism has had an influence and made positive impacts on various disciplines. So, the department is affecting the curriculum itself. This is one of the ways the university is inspiring individuals and the university community.
Another participant stated that, “Christian inspiration means that the leadership of a Catholic university is Catholic, Christian, and rooted in the Catholic vision of the human person. The leadership of this institution is definitely involved in all these, and is fully committed to inspiring all the members of the university community.”

Participants also pointed out the policies and programs of the university as sources of inspiration on campus. One participant stated,

The core curriculum, which is one of the ways through which the institution reaches out to students and teaches them about the Catholic faith, the campus ministry through which the institution reaches out to members of the university community in matters of the Christian faith, and the hiring for mission of administrators, faculty, and staff, are major ways the institution is inspiring individuals and the university community.

The second essential characteristic of Catholic colleges and universities is, “A continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research” (John Paul II, 1990, p.13).

Participants discussed American Catholic University’s commitment to a continuing reflection of the Catholic faith on human knowledge. Sixteen of the participants strongly asserted that the university has a strong reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the treasury of human knowledge. One of the participants said, “For the years that I have been here, there has been a strong effort to ensure that Christian values are upheld, and there has been a strong reflection of the Catholic faith.” Some of these participants believed that this reflection of the Catholic faith upon human knowledge is evident in the seminars on mission for faculty. One of the participants said,

We try to develop our faculty in terms of understanding what the Catholic faith is, and what it brings to their work. We have the things we do for our faculty, like the
university seminars on mission, which develop our faculty on Catholic identity. In the Center for Catholic studies, we have faculty development every year. For example, this year, I will be doing a course on Saint Paul and the relevance of Saint Paul for Western Intellectual History. Faculty will be from all departments, they will be from Mathematics, they will be from Physics, they will be from Political Science, they will be from English, all talking about Saint Paul. This is something they would not have in another place. This reflection of the Catholic faith is an important characteristic of our university.

Some participants discussed the continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith in the areas of teaching and research. According to them, it is through these university functions that the university reflects the Catholic faith. One of these participants stated,

A reflection of the Catholic faith means that all intellectual activities of the university reflect the faith of the Church. For example, if a faculty member is teaching psychology, the psychology they teach should not be against faith, but should reflect the faith, and taught in line with the faith of the Church. Faith must illuminate all teaching and research at a Catholic university. To a large extent, this university has made a lot of progress in this regard. Teaching and research activities at this institution are not against the doctrines of the Church, but they reflect Catholic faith and teachings.

Another participant said, “American Catholic University is fulfilling the fundamental mission of the Catholic university, which is to teach in accordance with the Gospel, and in ways consistent with the teachings of the Church.”

Four participants stated that, although American Catholic University is reflecting the Catholic faith in its functions, policies, programs, and activities, not all the members of the university community are being taught this faith, and not all are reflecting this faith in their positions at the university. They asserted that the university should do more for a complete reflection of the faith in all areas of its life, and on all the members of the university community. One of the participants said,
This university is making effort to reflect the Catholic faith in its functions and programs. But the situation we face here is that not many in the university are interested in programs and activities that reflect the faith. There are professors who don’t attend the mission seminars. A Catholic university cannot claim to be maintaining Catholic identity when the members are not participating in mission programs and activities. As I said, the university has a lot of mission-centered programs, and it is making effort to reflect the Catholic faith, but when many of the members don’t show interest in this area, that adversely affects the Catholic identity of the institution.

The third essential characteristic of Catholic colleges and universities is, “Fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 13). A research participant stated that fidelity to the message of the Church is an indispensable characteristic of a Catholic university, one that distinguishes it from non-Catholic institutions. He asserted that no university can be referred to as Catholic, if it is not faithful to the teachings of the Church.

American Catholic University prides itself as a Catholic institution with strong fidelity to the teachings of the Church. On the webpage of the Office of Mission and Ministry, the institution stated its fidelity to the Catholic message,

We are Catholic in many ways: by the instruction we offer in our classrooms, by the creative faith and love of our members, by the public proclamation of our beliefs, and by our grace-filled search for the truth. We include in our priorities a mission of service to the Catholic Church of the local diocese and our neighboring dioceses, working in a frank and confident collaboration with fellow Christians and others to promote the spiritual, human, and social development of all people. We are aware of our own need for continuing moral formation, constant self-examination, improvement, and correction. We recognize and cherish in an especial way our institutional fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church. In our relations with ecclesiastical authority, we respect the responsibility of the Magisterium while affirming our own autonomy and academic freedom (American Catholic University website).

Participants discussed the extent to which American Catholic University is fulfilling the characteristic of fidelity to the Christian message. Sixteen participants
believed American Catholic University is faithful to the teachings of the Church. They stated that the institution is showing strong fidelity to the Christian message by reflecting the Catholic faith in its entire life. A research participant said,

Fidelity to the teachings of the Church means that wherever Catholic Theology is taught, it should be pure Catholic Theology. It doesn’t mean that we have to teach Catholicism in a course on Buddhism or Hinduism, or that we can’t have courses on Hinduism and Buddhism. It means that where Catholic Theology is taught, like, for example, in the School of Theology, which has the Catholic Theology program, the institution should ensure that Catholic Theology is taught there. So this is fidelity to the Church’s message. American Catholic University shows fidelity to the Church’s message.

Another participant said, “This University is carrying out the functions of teaching, research, and service, according to the teachings, beliefs and practices of the Church.” Another participants said, “There has been a strong fidelity to the Christian faith in this institution. My experience is that everything has been according to the doctrines of the Church. This is seen in the areas of campus ministry, the core curriculum, and hiring for mission. This fidelity to the Christian message is what makes this institution a great Catholic university.”

The four participants who stated that the university is not fully reflecting the Catholic faith because many members of the university are not participating in mission programs, also asserted that, although, the university has made some progress in fulfilling this characteristic of fidelity to the Christian message through its policies and programs, the institution needs to do more to show full fidelity to the Christian message. According to them, the students are not being taught enough, and they are not learning much about the Catholic faith. They maintained that the university should show strong fidelity to the Christian message by ensuring that professors are teaching and doing research in line
with Church teachings, and by ensuring that students are learning more about the Catholic Faith. One of the participants said,

The university must show fidelity to the Christian message in all its policies, programs and activities, and all the members of the university must be actively involved in the programs of the university. Without the active participation of the majority of the members, the university cannot boast of showing fidelity to the teachings of the Church. I think the university should encourage all the members to support the mission by participating in university activities and programs. The professors and students should be encouraged to participate in mission centered activities and programs.

Another participant said,

Fidelity to the Christian message means adhering fully to the teachings and beliefs of the Church. All the professors must teach and do research in accordance with Church teaching and practices. The university should encourage this if it is to maintain strong fidelity to the Christian message.

The fourth essential characteristic of Catholic colleges and universities is, “An institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life” (John Paul II, 1990, pp.13-14). The Holy Father maintained that Service is at the heart of the Catholic university, for everything the university does should be geared towards the service of people, and for the common good.

The researcher asked participants whether American Catholic University is fulfilling this essential characteristic of service. They all stated that the institution is actively involved in service. Many participants made reference to the model of the university, which is servant leadership. One of the participants said, “Our whole model here is servant leadership. That is the model and ideal that we follow at this university, and it is uppermost in our minds.” Another participant stated, “The model adopted by the university is servant leadership for a global society.” Another participant said, “This
University is known for service. There is great emphasis on servant leadership at this institution.”

Three participants described the type of service that is rendered by American Catholic University. They distinguished between the service rendered by Catholic institutions, which is Christ-like service, and the service engaged in by not-for-profit organizations. They asserted that American Catholic University is rendering Christ-like service. One of them said,

The service of a Catholic university must flow from Catholic identity. Many groups and individuals do a lot of social work, but the service of a Catholic university must be different. It must be done in a Catholic way, done for Christ, and done according to the mind of Christ. A Catholic university must be involved in Christ-like service. This it should do by imitating Christ who came, not to be served, but to serve. If a Catholic university does service without doing it for Christ, and without doing it according to the mind of Christ, it runs the risk of becoming a mere not-for-profit organization, and Catholic universities are not merely not-for-profit organizations. So what makes the service of a Catholic university different from the service of a not-for-profit organization is that the Catholic university renders service because it sees Christ in others. A Catholic university must serve people because it sees Christ in them, and serve them according to the mind of Christ. Christ must be at the center of the service rendered to people by a Catholic university, or else, their service will be merely like that of not-for-profit organizations whose services are not really centered on Christ. It is this Christ-like service they render that distinguished Catholic universities from not-for-profit organizations. In my view, American Catholic University, to a large extent, is rendering this Christ-centered service.

Another participant said,

The service of a Catholic university, especially to the outside communities and world has to flow from Catholic identity. Everybody – pagans, atheists, and other people do good social work and help the poor. But it is a different kind of service and it is for a different reason. The Catholic university and Catholics have to render service in accordance with what Christ has commanded us to do. It has to be very direct. It should not just be doing something good for the sake of it, but doing it according to the mind of Christ. It has to be Christ-like service. This university is involved in this Christ-like service.
Another participant said,

The service of a Catholic university has to do with the fact that while public universities serve only two publics – they serve the society and they serve the academy – Catholic universities serve three publics – the society, the academy, and the Church. So a good deal of what Catholic universities do should be in service to the Church and the Church’s mission. When we talk about the service of a Catholic university, we think of Jesus kneeling down in front of the disciples at the last supper, washing their feet, and saying to them after washing their feet, ‘what you have seen me do, you should do for others.’ At this university, we certainly try to emphasize and put that into practice, both in our curricular and extra-curricular programs and activities.

Participants also discussed the extent to which American Catholic University is involved in works of service. They observed that the institution sees service as a major component of its life. They asserted that the institution sees service as its responsibility, and that it does not shy away from rendering service, but shows full commitment to it. One participant said, “This university places great emphasis on service, which it sees as its integral part. It recognizes that there is something great in serving people, and it does a great job of highlighting this major component of our existence as a Catholic university.”

Regarding the specific ways in which Catholic universities are to be involved in service, and the type of services they are to render, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* encouraged Catholic institutions to render service to all people, especially the poor and underprivileged. The document stated, “Every Catholic University feels responsible to contribute concretely to the progress of the society within which it works: for example, it will be capable of searching for ways to make university education accessible to all those who are able to benefit from it, especially the poor or members of minority groups who customarily have been deprived of it” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 27). In the same vein, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stated that one of the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities in the United States is, “Commitment
to serve others, particularly the poor, underprivileged and vulnerable members of society” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014, p. 222). One of the ways American Catholic University fulfills this call to the service of the poor and underprivileged is by providing need-based financial aid to students from economically disadvantaged homes. The institution helps these students who usually do not have easy access, and who, on their own, cannot afford a college education. The university gives scholarships to eligible students who have demonstrated a need. This it does by supplementing what their parents can afford, based on their income. Students who qualify for need-based aid are required to submit a fresh application every year to determine their eligibility (American Catholic University website). One research participant said, “This University gives need-based aid to students. It does this to concretize, and make practical, its commitment to help the poor, the needy, and the disadvantaged in the society.” Another participant said, “The administration of this university is very committed to serving the less privileged populations, especially those from the local community who cannot, on their own, afford a college education. The leadership has really made this university an institution of service by emphasizing service to the poor and economically disadvantaged. I think we are doing a pretty good job of reaching out to the community and serving the less privileged.”

Apart from providing need-based aid, the institution gives merit-based aid to students who have demonstrated academic competence and achieved academic excellence. The institution has a policy and program called, ‘Private Education at Public School Price,’ or ‘Public Tuition Rate Program.’ It is a policy designed to help students get an education at the institution, which is a private institution, at the same price that
students in public institutions in the State where American Catholic University is located, are educated. On its website, the institution states, “American Catholic University is pleased to announce that students enrolling directly from high school can enroll at American Catholic University, one of the nation’s leading Catholic universities, with a $22,500 tuition reduction – making an American Catholic University education as affordable as a public university” (American Catholic University website). To qualify for this rate, students must have a minimum of a 28 American College Testing (ACT) composite score, and be in the top 10 percent of their high school class. It is open to first-time, full-time freshmen entering directly from high school, with a tuition reduction of $22,500 per year. For this rate to remain in effect for four years, the student must maintain a 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA), earn required credits annually, and maintain continuous full-time enrollment (American Catholic University website). The aim of this tuition reduction is to encourage academic excellence among students. Regardless of their socioeconomic status, students, including those from economically disadvantaged families, who meet these requirements, would benefit from this tuition reduction program. So, apart from benefitting from need-based aid, students from economically disadvantaged homes can also benefit from the merit-based aid, if they meet the requirements and qualify. Commenting on the usefulness and benefits of this program, the current President of American Catholic University said,

We are committed to making American Catholic University attainable for hard-working, accomplished students of any means. This initiative reflects the American Catholic University’s commitment to serving our community and putting a high quality, personalized education within reach of more students and their families. In this way, we make a first-class, private Catholic college experience as affordable and accessible to students as a public university, with the added benefits of smaller classes, close mentoring faculty relationships and a 14:1 student-to-teacher ratio (American Catholic University website).
The Vice President of enrollment services at American Catholic University also lauded the program as one that is designed to reward and benefit high-achieving students. The Vice President said,

This program rewards the efforts of high-achieving students, allowing them to attend one of the nation’s leading Catholic universities without the added burden or worry about financing their education. This program eliminates the worry for parents and allows them to know the bottom line cost up front. The program assures parents that their son or daughter will receive a quality private education from a prestigious university in a smaller, more nurturing environment where they can thrive and build a foundation for a successful future without an extensive loan burden (American Catholic University website).

One of the ways through which American Catholic University renders service is by providing healthcare to the members of the university community. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops asserted that a component of service in Catholic colleges and universities in the United States is, “Commitment to provide personal services (health care, counseling and guidance) to students, as well as administration and faculty, in conformity with the Church’s ethical and religious teaching and directives” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014, p. 222). American Catholic University fulfills this core component of service by providing healthcare services to administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The university has a health services clinic where health services are provided to the members of the university community. It stated on its webpage,

The Health Services staff supports American Catholic University’s mission by being of service, treating each individual with respect and dignity, providing a caring, accepting atmosphere for a diverse population, and contributing to the development of students and community. We are dedicated to providing accessible and high quality healthcare (American Catholic University website).
One participant corroborated this statement, which is on the clinic’s webpage. The participant said, “The University provides health insurance and healthcare for its faculty, staff and students. As a faculty member, I have benefitted from that.”

In the area of counseling and guidance, American Catholic University has guidance counselors that provide these services to students. The university has a Counseling and Psychological Services Center, which caters for the needs of students. The Counseling and Guidance Services Center provides counseling, consultative, and referral services to the university community. There are counseling services for individuals and groups. Some guidance counselors are also on call to handle emergency situations (American Catholic University website). Regarding guidance and counseling services, one research participant said, “There are guidance counselors on campus who attend to students and respond to their needs and concerns. Regarding spiritual direction and counseling, the priests on campus are available to provide spiritual and pastoral counseling and services to students at all times. Priests are assigned on duty to respond immediately when they are needed to provide spiritual services and pastoral counseling to students and others in need.”

The researcher asked participants to explain the specific ways in which American Catholic University is involved in works of service on campus. Participants pointed out that the institution carries out various services through avenues such as campus ministry, center for Catholic studies, and volunteer initiative. They mentioned the works of service of the institution, such as student services, scholarships and need-based aids, provision of healthcare, and various spiritual and pastoral services.
Participants asserted that, apart from rendering services to members of the university community, American Catholic University serves people outside the university community, particularly the local community. Twelve of the participants referred to the works of the Division of Volunteer Effort. They pointed out that many students volunteer in the local community, at hospitals and nursing homes. One participant said, “In terms of service to the human family, we do plenty of that. In our community service, our students volunteer in the local community.” Another participant said, “I teach a course once a year titled, ‘The Journey of Transformation.’ Part of the course is about service. In addition to learning about service in the classroom, the students go out weekly for various service projects, assisting children in schools, and helping the sick and elderly at nursing homes.” One participant noted that the university provides free legal services to people of the local community who have legal cases but cannot afford legal fees. He said, “The law school of this university provides pro bono services to the poor. It gives free legal advice and services to the poor who live in the local community. Also, Catholic lawyers from the Catholic law school provide free services to new immigrants who have immigration issues.”

Apart from providing service, American Catholic University teaches the students the importance and value of service. The institution also teaches its students how to be involved in service. The university fulfills the call in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* which states that, “The Christian spirit of service to others for the promotion of social justice is of particular importance for each Catholic University, to be shared by its teachers and developed in its students” (John Paul II, p. 26). In fulfillment of its commitment to teach
students practical ways of service, American Catholic University stated in its handbook

*American Catholic University: A Catholic University*, that,

Since American Catholic University graduates are expected to translate their education into creating a better world, they must be offered opportunities to discover and experience that potential while they are here. The university community is responsible for creating the appropriate environment for meaningful service and personal commitment (*American Catholic University: A Catholic University*).

American Catholic University has a policy that requires all first-year students to complete a minimum of ten hours of community service during their first semester. This policy was adopted to teach students practical ways of service, and to encourage them to be involved in service. Participants discussed this aspect of service that involves teaching and encouraging students to be servant-leaders. They noted that American Catholic University does not just render service to students, but teaches students the value of service, and trains them on how to be involved in service as students and in their future and professional lives. They observed that the students are taught in the classroom to be actively involved in service. Many of the participants noted that the university takes this aspect of the student education very seriously, and students on their part, learn about the importance of service, and how to put it into practice. One participant said, “We do have service to the people of God and the human family. We do plenty of that. For example, we have community service. Our students volunteer in the local community. Even in our professional schools, we are training people to go into the different sectors of society and serve the human family.” Another participant stated, “The students of the university hear the words ‘servant leader’ or ‘servant leadership’ a lot on campus. They embrace these words and work to render service to others.” Another participant said,
American Catholic University focuses the attention of the students on service. The vision of the university is to form servant leaders for a global society. The university teaches students the importance and value of service, that there is something defining about giving service, and not just rooting for yourself, but rather, serving and helping other people in need, and seeing that as an integral part of who the individuals are as students, and an integral part of the whole university. American Catholic University does a wonderful and excellent job of highlighting this major component of a Catholic university to the students.

Another participant said,

When we look to the service to the Church and reflect on how this university is teaching its students practical ways of service, what are some of the claims we can make at American Catholic University? Do our graduates typically add value to what graduates of non-Catholic colleges and universities bring to the Church in terms of vocations, leadership, volunteerism, generosity, sacramental participation, lay ministry? I think we do a marvelous job with that. We send out graduates from both our undergraduate and graduate programs who do exactly that. More that public universities, we help to focus our students’ attention on service, following the vision and model of the university, which is to form servant leaders for a global society.

As a display of its commitment to teach and encourage its students to be involved in practical ways of service, American Catholic University recognizes, honors and presents awards to students who have been outstanding and have distinguished themselves in the area of rendering servant leadership. The university holds a public session annually where the selected students for the awards are recognized and rewarded. It is called ‘Student Servant Leader Awards.’ All the members of the university community are invited to attend the awards ceremony.

For the awards each year, the Student Servant Leader Awards Selection Committee, which is the committee that plans the awards, sends the information, by email, to all the members of the university community, announcing the awards for that year. Faculty, staff and students are asked to nominate qualified students by sending letters to the committee. The person nominating or recommending a student for the
awards is to include in the letter how long and in what capacity they have known the student, their knowledge of the student’s commitment to service, and examples of specific service experiences where the student took a leadership role. (American Catholic University website). The purpose of the awards is to honor students who have demonstrated and exemplified the ideals of servant leadership, both on campus and off campus. For the nomination and selection process, the criteria for selection are listed. They include those whose leadership consists of serving the needs of others, continuous commitment to service, call to service; inspiration to lead through service, significance of a selected service experience, application of intellectual skills during the experience, and demonstrated learning from the service experience (American Catholic University website). The nominated students are asked to submit a short essay of their philosophy of service. The Student Servant Leader Awards Selection Committee then reviews the nomination and recommendation letters and essays, and then invites selected students for an interview. During the interview, nominated students are asked to elaborate on their philosophy of service, to state their commitment to service, their calling to service, and their growth from service experiences. They are also asked to submit their resume. After this final stage in the nominating process, the selected students are then publicly recognized and presented with awards for their service leadership (American Catholic University website). Some research participants discussed the Student Servant Leader Awards. One participant said, “I know the students are encouraged to give service to the community. They are given time off, and I think they are given credit, and somehow, recognized in their curriculum that they have given service to the community. Students who have demonstrated servant leadership are also recognized at a public award giving
ceremony.” Another participant said, “The students who have displayed service leadership in and outside the university are recognized publicly and given awards for their outstanding service. The university does this to emphasize the importance of service to the students, and to encourage them to be involved in service.”

The participants generally gave high marks to the institution regarding the services it provides for those in and outside the university community. They agreed that the university is rendering service according to the mind of the Church, and impacting the lives of people through its acts of service.

Institutional Mission

The mission statement of a Catholic university is vitally important because it shows the direction of the institution in relation to maintaining Catholic identity. The mission statement of a Catholic university is to reflect its Catholic identity, and be made public. This is important because, it informs or reminds people of the fact that it is a Catholic institution. Pope John Paul II urged Catholic institutions of higher education to make their Catholic identity known, either in a mission statement, or some other public document deemed appropriate (John Paul II, 1990).

The mission statement of American Catholic University states that the institution “is a major Catholic University” which in a diverse and collaborative environment focuses on academic and ethical development. The goal of the institution, the statement continues, is to prepare students to be great leaders in their professional and community lives in a global society. The statement also states that the students are challenged by outstanding faculty, by an evolving technologically advanced setting, and by curricula centered on values (American Catholic University website). The beginning of the mission
statement that “American Catholic University is a major Catholic university,”
underscores the commitment of the institution to display its identity as a Catholic
institution. A research participant stated, “American Catholic University fulfills the call
of Pope John Paul II by having Catholic identity in its mission statement.”

American Catholic University has its mission statement on its website and on
major documents. It is in the Administrator and Staff Employee Handbook for job
applicants, prospective employees, and the new employees of the institution to read and
know about its Catholic identity. It is also in the Student handbook to remind students of
the school’s Catholic identity, and to encourage them to respect and support it, while
fully complying with the rules and regulations of the institution. One participant said,
“On the university website, the webpages of departments, and other written materials of
American Catholic University, the mission of the institution, which contains its Catholic
identity, is clearly displayed in order for the faculty, staff, students, and the public to
know, or be reminded, that it is a Catholic institution.” Another participant said, “In this
Catholic university, mission drives everything, from admission to curriculum and all its
activities. We articulate in our mission statement and other university documents that we
are a Catholic university. This is there for everybody to see. It is not hidden, and there is
no secret.” Another participant said, “We always reference the Catholic mission in all or
most of our policies. If you go to the Human Resources website, and then go to policies
and procedures, many of the policies in the first paragraph reference Catholicism, that we
uphold Catholicism and also the social teachings of Catholicism. So Catholic identity and
the mission of the university are referenced in most of the policies.”
Regarding the focus of the mission statement of the university on the academic and ethical development of the students, the university considers itself as an institution that prioritizes not just the intellectual development of the students, but also a Catholic university that provides a clear foundation in morality to students. The university teaches students to value and epitomize morality, ethical conduct, social and economic justice, love, and service, in their lives as students, and in their future professional lives. (American Catholic University website). One participant said,

Education does not only involve intellectual development, but moral formation as well. This is more so in the education provided by Catholic universities. Students who attend Catholic institutions are to be formed in moral behavior. Our university fulfills this task by teaching the students in the classroom about moral behavior. This ensures that our students have a complete education that helps them live moral lives as students, and moral lives in the future.

The mission statement also states that the curricula of the institution are centered on values. The institution teaches students to learn how to use intelligence creatively and critically, and to acquire some measure of competence as educated persons. Students are taught to acquire knowledge and the virtues of charity, honesty, patience, humility, perseverance, and integrity that support the intellect. The knowledge gained, and the virtues acquired, equip the students to face future challenges. It also helps them to contribute to the growth and development of society. The university encourages administrators, faculty, and staff, to play their various roles, and to perform their duties in the university for the overall and holistic education of the students (American Catholic University website).

The researcher asked the participants about the values that American Catholic University is teaching its students to embrace. Sixteen participants stated that the institution is teaching students the values they would need to live good lives as students,
and good lives in the future. One participant said, “I give American Catholic University credit, and I am very proud of what it is doing to maintain a Catholic culture and presence in the university. It teaches the students to imbibe virtues and great values that will help them to be of good behavior as students and in their later lives.” But four participants argued that, although the university has the inculcating of values in the students as a priority in student formation, the students are not adequately and sufficiently taught Catholic values. One of the participants said, “The University is making effort in terms of inculcating values in the students, but this effort should be intensified. The university should encourage the professors to teach students Catholic values in the classroom, and the students should also be encouraged to attend spiritual and faith-based activities where they can also learn about Catholic values.” Another participant observed that the word ‘values’ in the mission statement is not defined. According to him, this confuses people because they are not sure of the values the university is promoting and teaching the students to embrace. This participant said,

In the mission statement, there is a mention of values, but it is not clear what these values are, because the statement does not articulate the nature of these values. There are good and bad values. Everybody has values. Good organizations have values, and groups that were formed to perpetuate crime and evil, also have values. So just saying the university has values is not enough. It is ambiguous and confusing. The university should clearly and unambiguously state in its mission statement, what the values of the institution are, so that people would know and understand the nature of its values. I think before you start talking about teaching students values, you have to articulate what your values are, so that people would know the values you are promoting, and the values you are teaching the students to embrace.

American Catholic University has a Mission and Identity Committee at the governance level, introduced as part of the revised by-laws of the university. According to the 2006 revised by-laws, the committee shall consist of seven or more members of the
Board of Regents, and shall be appointed from the members of the Board of Regents by the President of the Board of Regents. The committee was formed to “consider matters referred to the Board of Regents by the Board of Trustees arising from the University’s Catholic mission and identity, giving due consideration to the identity of Catholic institutions of higher education that is described in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae.*” The President of the Board of Regents shall also assign responsibilities to the committee as necessary. The Mission and Identity Committee is to report its recommendations to the Board of Regents (American Catholic University By-Laws). With regard to the forming of the committee and its mandate, the archbishop of the local archdiocese said, “The Board of Trustees created a committee of the Board of Regents called the Mission and Identity Committee. The work of the committee is to focus on the mission and identity and report regularly to the Board of Trustees.” According to the archbishop, the Mission and Identity Committee was formed to assist the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents in matters of Catholic identity and mission. The archbishop noted that the committee is doing a lot to assist the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents in dealing with matters related to Catholic identity and mission. He stated that the committee makes recommendations to the boards, and the boards make policies based on the recommendations of the committee. According to a research participant, “The forming of the Mission and Identity Committee underscores the commitment of the Board of Trustees, the Board of Regents, and the entire university, to maintain Catholic ideals, principles, and culture at this institution.” According to five other participants, the Mission and Identity Committee is an initiative of the Boards of Trustees and Regents to help the boards make policies in line with Catholic identity and mission. These participants praised the boards for this
initiative, and also stated that the committee has been instrumental in the mission-centered policies that the boards have made since the constitution of the committee.

**Synopsis of Findings for Subsidiary Question 1**

The participants discussed the extent to which American Catholic University is maintaining Catholic identity. Fifteen of the participants stated that, although the institution had an identity crisis in the past, it is presently maintaining Catholic identity as expected of a Catholic university. They stated that the present policies and programs, such as campus ministry, core curriculum, hiring for mission, orientation for faculty, and mission seminars for faculty, are all evidence of how the institution is maintaining Catholic identity. They also stated that the functions of research, teaching, and service, are all carried out in accordance with the teachings of the Church. But five participants stated that although the institution has made some progress in terms of maintaining Catholic identity by adopting mission-centered policies and programs, it still has more work to do in this regard. They noted that some members of the university community are not participating in the mission-centered programs. For example, these participants noted that in the hiring for mission initiative, prospective employees are not told much about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution during job interviews and orientation seminars. They also noted that only few faculty and staff attend the seminars on mission. As one participant said, “The University cannot say it is maintaining Catholic identity when many members of the university community are not participating in mission-centered programs, and when some are not showing support for its Catholic identity and mission.”
Regarding the emphasis in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* that every Catholic university should have a relationship with the Church, participants stated that American Catholic University has a relationship with the universal Church and the local Church. They noted that its relationship with the universal Church is reflected in its policies, programs and activities, which align with Catholic teachings, principles, beliefs and practices. In terms of its relationship with the local Church, participants stated that the institution has a strong relationship with the archdiocese that established and sponsors it. They noted that the archbishop of the archdiocese is the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the President of the Board of Regents. The archbishop sets the agenda, presides at board meetings, and spearheads the formulation of policies. The archbishop meets regularly with the President and Provost of the university and coordinates with them on how to implement the policies approved and decisions taken by the boards to strengthen the identity of the institution. The diocesan bishops of the dioceses in the ecclesiastical province are all members of the Board of Regents and are involved in the governance of the university. Also, many of the priests of the archdiocese are involved in the university, with some in administration and others as faculty members. There are about forty-five of the priests of the archdiocese living on campus and involved in academic, pastoral, spiritual and liturgical activities. The participants described that relationship that exists between the university and the archdiocese as very strong.

The participants discussed the extent to which American Catholic University is fulfilling the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities. A majority of the participants stated that the institution is fulfilling these characteristics through its policies, programs, and activities. They believed the institution provides a Christian
inspiration to individuals and the university community, epitomizes a continuing
reflection of the Catholic Faith on human knowledge, typifies a strong fidelity to the
Christian message, and embodies a great commitment to service. They noted that these
characteristics are reflected in the policies, programs, and activities of the institution.
Regarding service, for example, the participants referred to the model of the university,
which is “servant leadership for a global society.” They maintained that the university is
involved in serving the entire university community, and those outside the university
community, especially those in the local community. Some of the practical ways in which
the university provides service are by providing health care to the members of the
university community, and providing need-based financial aid to students from
economically disadvantaged homes. Apart from providing service, the participants also
asserted that American Catholic University teaches its students practical ways of service.
They maintained that the institution educates the students to be servant leaders, and to put
service into action in their personal and professional lives. They noted that the students
are involved in community service, and also volunteer in various ways and areas inside
and outside of the university, for the benefit of others. As one participant said, “Students
are not just taught service, they are encouraged, through projects, to put service into
practice, and also encouraged to be involved in service in their future lives.”

The participants discussed the mission statement of American Catholic
University. They pointed out that the words ‘Catholic university’ are in the mission
statement, and that the institution makes its mission statement known by displaying it on
its website and in major documents of the institution. A majority of the participants noted
that the university is following through on its mission statement by portraying a Catholic
presence on campus, and by encouraging the members of the university community to abide by its Catholic identity and mission. But some other participants argued that, although the university is making progress with regard to portraying a Catholic presence on campus, many members of the university community are still not participating in the programs and activities. They suggested to the university to do more by ensuring that the members of the university community are working to support and promote the Catholic identity and mission of the institution. These participants also stated that the university should clearly articulate its values, and encourage the students to embrace and imbibe these values. One of the participants noted that the word “values” in the mission statement is ambiguous. He stated that the mission statement does not state clearly what these values are, and said that this ambiguity leaves many people guessing about the values the university upholds and promotes. He noted that there are good and bad values, and that everyone has values. He said the university should clarify what these values are, so that people would understand the kinds of values it believes in, and the nature of the values it is promoting and inculcating in the students.

**Subsidiary Question 2**

The second subsidiary question examined how American Catholic University is incorporating the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* into its policies and programs. The researcher discussed with participants institutional policies, programs, and initiatives such as campus ministry, core curriculum, academic freedom, and the *mandatum*. The purpose was to ascertain whether the way these policies and initiatives are currently implemented and enforced are in line with Catholic identity.
Campus Ministry

American Catholic University has a campus ministry that coordinates and facilitates spiritual, liturgical, and pastoral activities on campus. The institution recognizes the importance of spiritual and liturgical activities in its life as a Catholic university. Campus ministry has its mission on its webpage. It states,

American Catholic University is a Catholic University committed to providing a Christian education and developing community. Campus ministry’s mission is to be a pastoral presence of the Catholic Church on campus. As such, we seek to:
1. Evangelize and empower all, by the prompting of the Spirit, to become dedicated members of God’s family.
2. Bring to higher education the Church’s general mission, namely, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. Create an environment which allows for the spiritual, moral, liturgical and sacramental development, as well as intellectual, social, and physical growth.

As a testament to its commitment to campus ministry, American Catholic University established the Office of Mission and Ministry to coordinate spiritual, liturgical, and pastoral activities on campus. The institution also created the Office of Vice President for Mission and Ministry. Through campus ministry, administrators, faculty, staff, and students, especially those that are Catholic, are given the opportunity to participate in spiritual and liturgical activities. The webpage of the Office of Mission and Ministry states, “American Catholic University is a Catholic, diocesan university, serving a predominantly Catholic student body but open to people of all faiths” (American Catholic University website). American Catholic University has many spiritual and liturgical activities on campus.

One of the spiritual and liturgical activities on campus is the Holy Mass. The Holy Eucharist is the summit and center of Catholic worship. The Holy sacrifice of the
Mass is the foremost of the spiritual activities of Catholics. According to Pope John Paul II, “Catholic members of the Catholic university community will be offered opportunities to assimilate Catholic teaching and practice into their lives and will be encouraged to participate in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist as the most perfect act of community worship” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 30). As stated on the webpage of campus ministry, the Catholic Mass is held four times on Sundays, and three times on weekdays in the main chapel on campus. The participants discussed the Masses that are held on campus, and praised the university for availing administrators, faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to attend Mass, and for creating a Catholic culture on campus. One participant said,

Catholic Masses are held three times a day. The Masses are held in the morning, at noon, and in the evening, to allow administrators, faculty, staff, and students who wish to attend Mass do so at a time most convenient for them. I applaud the university administration for the opportunity to celebrate this important part of our life as a Catholic university.

Apart from the daily Masses, American Catholic University begins every academic year with the inaugural Mass of the Holy Spirit. During the Mass, prayers are offered to God to send down the Holy Spirit on the members of the university community, to strengthen them, and to grant them success in their work and studies. The Mass is usually at 12 p.m., and classes are cancelled from 12 to 1:00 p.m. This is to encourage all the members of the university community to attend. Classes are also cancelled from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Holy Days of Obligation, such as the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, the Solemnity of All Saints, and the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in order that members of the university community would have the free time to attend the special Mass of Solemnity
which begins at noon. Classes are also cancelled from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Ash Wednesday, in order that those who wish to attend the Ash Wednesday Mass at noon and receive ashes can do so.

Participants generally applauded the university for having the Mass of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of every academic year, and for encouraging members of the university community to attend. They also lauded the university for making daily Masses available on campus. However, some participants expressed disappointment at the poor Mass attendance. One participant who is a layperson said, “I attend the Mass of the Holy Spirit every year, and I also attend the daily Masses. I am disappointed that only very few people attend these Masses. There are a lot of Catholics in this university, but not many attend the Masses. I think the university should do more to encourage people in the university community, Catholics and non-Catholics, to attend and participate.”

Another spiritual activity on campus is the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which takes place in the chapel. On weekdays, confessions are held from 11:30 a.m. till 12:00 p.m. It is an opportunity for practicing Catholics to confess their sins and reconcile with God. One participant who is a priest, said, “When I first came to the university as a professor twenty-seven years ago, there was daily Sacrament of Reconciliation for thirty minutes before Mass, just as it is still the practice today. Back then, only very few people came to confession. We had an average of two persons coming to the confessional for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. But now, we have about eight to ten persons for confessions on a daily basis. There are more people going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation now than in the past.” Apart from the regular weekday confession schedule, there are special confession schedules for special seasons of the Church’s year. American Catholic
University schedules special Advent and Lenten confessions every year during those holy seasons. The schedules are usually on designated days during the holy seasons, for twelve hours, from 12:00 noon to 12:00 midnight. During each holy season, a notice containing the date, time and venue for confessions is sent out for the information of practicing Catholics who wish to go to confession and reconcile with the Lord as they prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas, or the resurrection of Christ at Easter. In addition to the daily Masses and Sacrament of Reconciliation, there is daily Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. As stated on the webpage of campus ministry, Eucharistic Adoration takes place from 12:30 to 4:45 p.m. daily. The Blessed Sacrament is exposed during this time in order that those who wish to visit Jesus physically present in the Holy Eucharist and have a conversation with him in prayer, would have the opportunity to do so.

The spiritual and liturgical activities are celebrated and led by the forty-six priests living and working on campus. One participant said, “The presence of large number of priests on campus is certainly an unashamed affirmation of its Catholic identity. These priests lead spiritual activities, and are a true witness of faith to the faculty, staff, and students.” Another participant said, “There are over forty priests of the archdiocese assigned to work on campus. These priests are very dedicated to sharing their ministry with the university community.” Another participant said, “There are about forty-five priests that live here on campus. The Eucharist, the sacramental life is at the heart of our faith as Catholics. So, having this large community of priests on campus is a great thing.”

As a testament to its commitment to Catholic identity, American Catholic University observes major Catholic celebrations. One of these celebrations is the Easter
Triduum, which comprises Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. The university is closed, and classes are not held during the Easter Triduum, through Easter Monday, in order to emphasize the importance of those Holy Days when Catholics commemorate the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are other Catholic practices that are observed in the university. One of such practices is the observance of abstinence during Lent. On Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays during Lent, meat is not served at any cafeteria or anywhere on campus. One of the participants said, “On this campus, nowhere is meat served on Fridays during Lent. The current President of the university made this rule of total abstinence from meat on campus on all Fridays during Lent.” This practice is in keeping with the Church’s practice and observance of abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent.

Also, as part of its activities, campus ministry sponsors spiritual retreats every semester, provides spiritual direction, and creates vocation awareness for those who might be interested in going into the priesthood and religious life. Campus ministry also organizes and facilitates small Christian communities in which students meet in small groups for discussion about the Catholic Faith, and for prayer. In addition, campus ministry provides the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), an adult catechism program, for those who wish to be baptized or received into the Catholic Church. It also organizes catechism classes for those preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, organizes adult catechesis for Catholics interested in learning more about the Catholic Faith, and organizes weekly Bible study. (American Catholic University website).
The campus ministry of American Catholic University is also involved in the work of evangelization. One of the aims of campus ministry is to “evangelize and empower all, by the prompting of the Spirit, to become dedicated members of God’s family” (American Catholic University website). One of the initiatives of campus ministry is the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), which started at American Catholic University in 2003. Since then, the institution has had volunteers who are students of American Catholic University, and also, students who graduated from other universities, doing FOCUS volunteer work at American Catholic University. As stated on the webpage of campus ministry, the mission of FOCUS is, “To know Christ Jesus, and to fulfill His Great Commission by first living and then communicating the fullness of life within the family of God, the Church, to share the story of Jesus Christ, by the sharing of our lives, in the hope of bringing others to his love.” The vision of FOCUS is to fulfill the mandate of Christ to his disciples, and indeed, all Christians, to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20). FOCUS’ volunteers and members help students learn more about the faith by organizing Bible studies, and by teaching the basic tenets of the faith. The FOCUS missionaries, as they are called, help students learn about and live the faith. They do this through weekly Bible studies, group fellowships, large group leadership training, and by participating in an annual conference. The group also evangelizes and encourages non-Catholic students to embrace the faith. Regarding the work of FOCUS, a research participant stated, “The Fellowship of Catholic University Students does evangelization among the students. The group has four missionaries that help in the work
of evangelization on campus. The group is doing a lot to assist the university to contribute to the work of evangelization of the Church.” Another participant said, “The support that is given to campus ministry and pastoral care by FOCUS is an important thing, particularly to the students. It is a peer-level ministry, where students minister to fellow students, and encourage them in matters of faith and good moral behavior.”

Another initiative of campus ministry is Saint Paul Outreach (SPO). The group was named after St. Paul who was a missionary, an evangelizer, and a zealous preacher of the faith. The group creates a vibrant faith culture on campus, and brings the message of Christ to students, encouraging them to embrace Christ, or deepen their relationship with Him. Saint Paul Outreach conducts weekly prayer meetings and a retreat each semester for students. Regarding the work of Saint Paul Outreach, a research participant who works in the Office of Mission and Ministry stated, “Saint Paul Outreach is involved in evangelization among the students. There are eight missionaries on campus that coordinate and facilitate the Saint Paul Outreach programs.”

The archbishop of the archdiocese lauded the work of campus ministry and the various groups that work under campus ministry. He said,

We have done many things to enrich the Catholic presence. We have dramatically expanded the campus ministry. We have three priests associated with it. We also have the Brothers and Sisters of Saint John, and about ten or eleven other employees of the university who are committed to caring for the students from the point of view of human need, but also of their call to faith. Not all the students are Catholic. Certainly we respect their own faith, but we want them to also understand the Catholic faith and religious practice.

Participants discussed the importance of FOCUS, Saint Paul Outreach, and other groups under campus ministry. They stated that the work of these groups has enhanced the work of evangelization at the university. One participant said, “Twenty years ago,
these groups were not in existence. But today, these groups, such as the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, and Saint Paul Outreach, which were founded in the past fifteen years, are alive and active on campus.” Another participant said,

The support that is given to campus ministry and pastoral care is an important thing, particularly to the students who experience peer-level ministry through Saint Paul Outreach and the Fellowship of Catholic University Students. These groups foster the culture of evangelization, of outreach, and of welcome for undergraduates to experience a community of love and hospitality.

Another participant said,

We have a good campus ministry program that we have expanded over the years. The staff has doubled and tripled in campus ministry. This is mostly because we have brought into campus the brothers and sisters of Saint John, two brothers and two sisters. We brought in the Fellowship of Catholic University Students. There are either four or five missionaries at any given time. We also brought in Saint Paul Outreach, and there are about eight missionaries at any given time. They are all involved in the work of evangelization among the students.

Participants generally commended the work of campus ministry. They lauded the many initiatives that campus ministry has put in place to reach out to students and other members of the university community. A research participant said, “The institution has a great campus ministry, which has expanded over the years. The staff has doubled and tripled in campus ministry, which has done a lot to encourage staff and students to be involved, and to participate in spiritual and liturgical activities. We have really put our efforts in strengthening the pious, liturgical and prayerful activities of students” Another participant stated, “Catholic culture and ministry are very real in the institution. Campus ministry has contributed to a vibrant Catholic culture on campus. There is a strong sacramental life for the students.” Another participant stated, “The chapels in the various dormitories, with priests living in the dormitories, encourage students to be involved in
spiritual activities. All these are pieces of mosaic that advance the identity and mission of the university, and foster campus ministry.”

Core Curriculum

The core curriculum is one of the policies adopted by American Catholic University. As stated in Ex Corde Ecclesiae, “The education of students is to combine academic and professional development with formation in moral and religious principles and the social teachings of the Church; the program of studies for each of the various professions is to include an appropriate ethical formation in that profession. Courses in Catholic doctrine are to be made available to all students” (John Paul II, p. 43). Following the Holy Father’s call, American Catholic University adopted a core curriculum program as a university policy. Referring to why the core curriculum was introduced and adopted as a university policy, the archbishop of the archdiocese that owns American Catholic University stated, “The core curriculum was introduced to enrich the Catholic presence in the institution, and to teach students about the Catholic Faith. Not all the students are Catholic. For the non-Catholic students, we respect their faith, but we also want them to understand the Catholic Faith and religious practices, since they attend a Catholic institution.”

In 1988, three years after the draft of Ex Corde Ecclesiae was sent to Church and Catholic higher education leaders for study and suggestions, a task force on Catholicity, set up by American Catholic University, recommended that the university undergraduate core curricula be revised to include courses in the intellectual traditions of Catholic Theology and Philosophy. The recommendation states,

We recommend that the University and college undergraduate core curricula be revised to ensure that every American Catholic University student has the
opportunity to learn about the intellectual traditions of Catholic Theology and Philosophy. In consultation with the Departments of Religious studies and Philosophy, the University should require several courses in both Catholic Theology and Philosophy. We realize that this will require additional faculty resources (*American Catholic University: A Catholic University* handbook).

A research participant stated that, although, the proposal by the task force was approved by the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents, it was not really implemented accordingly.

In 2001, after the publications of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*, the President of the university directed that a core curriculum that reflects the Catholicity of American Catholic University be developed. In response, the faculty senate constituted a Core Curriculum Committee in November 2001. After several years of meetings and deliberations, the present core curriculum of the university was adopted in 2006. Consequently, a new general core curriculum was developed, and the schools and colleges of the institution revised their core curricula. The general core curriculum “consists of six common courses, as well as the systematic development of five academic proficiencies through the study of the liberal arts and sciences” (*American Catholic University* website). A research participant said, “It took several years of hard work for the university to develop the core curriculum, which was developed with faculty members across disciplines working together, and suggesting what was important for all students, Catholic and non-Catholic, and what they can benefit from it.” Another participant said, “The core curriculum was put in place about eight years ago so that every undergraduate student would come into contact with Catholicism in three courses. That is a major effort because our faculty members got together to work out those courses. So Catholicism is affecting the curriculum. What we do is, we develop
our faculty for this. Some of the faculty teaching the core courses attend the mission seminars and other seminars that equip them to teach the core courses.” The implementation of the present core curriculum started in September 2006.

Participants discussed the importance of the core curriculum to the students. One participant said, “The core curriculum of the university is meant to give an introduction to the richness of the Catholic Faith and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition to all the students. The core courses highlight Catholic values and principles, which are taught in each of the courses.” Another participant stated, “The aim of the core curriculum is to make students studying various disciplines and courses, and in different departments, have dialogue with the same basic courses. There is the university core curriculum, and there are core courses in various departments that introduce students to some of the great thinkers and their writings.” Another participant said,

All universities have to be committed to seeking the truth, but at a Catholic university, that is more specific because the truth is a person. The truth is not just data, the truth is not just a concept, but the truth is a person. The Catholic university is, like any other university, seeking the truth, but the Catholic university also knows the truth as the risen Jesus Christ. That is the fundamental mission of how its academic work does present people with Christ. That means people have to find him and encounter him somewhere in the curriculum. So in the curriculum, every student should have some encounter with Jesus Christ. No one should come to a Catholic university and remain ignorant about who Christ is. The students should be taught about Jesus Christ in order for them to have a familiarity with Him.

American Catholic University core curriculum involves an education that helps students to acquire the skills for critical thinking, caring, effective communication, morally and ethically responsible leadership, and commitment to serve others and the entire society they live in. The institution stated on its website that the core curriculum is “interdisciplinary” and contains “proficiencies-infused courses.” Here, interdisciplinary
implies that the courses cut across various disciplines, and help students to engage in exploring basic aspects of culture, faith, religion, reason, and science. The interdisciplinary core curriculum consists of six courses, which are listed as: Journey of Transformation, Christianity and Culture in Dialogue, University Life, Engaging the World, Core English I, and Core English II. These core courses are 16 credits in all. The core proficiency courses provide students with the skills for lifelong learning, and prepare them for their future endeavors. The proficiencies are incorporated into all core courses and developed through additional courses throughout the students’ curriculum at the institution. The proficiencies-based courses avail students the opportunity to acquire “systematic and ongoing development of competencies.” The proficiencies are: reading and writing, oral communication, information fluency, numeracy, and critical thinking. The objective of the core proficiencies is to provide an opportunity for students to gain the requisite knowledge in their fields of specialization, and to be proficient in critical thinking, in the articulation of their thoughts, and in wise use of information (American Catholic University website).

Some of the participants teach some of the core courses. The researcher asked them about the core courses they teach. A participant who is a priest said, “I have been involved in the core curriculum which has courses for all the students at the university. One of the courses is ‘The Journey of Transformation,’ a course in which the students read texts from the Bible and works of major Catholic writers. The students are learning about the Catholic Church, and are benefitting a lot from these core courses.” Another participant who teaches this same course to first year students, said, “It is a discussion course in which they read the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, and one of the
Gospels in its entirety each year. Students are exposed to Catholic teachings, and they are learning about the Catholic Faith.”

The researcher asked the participants whether the present core curriculum of the university successfully presents courses in the intellectual tradition of Catholic Theology and Philosophy as recommended by the task force, and approved by the Boards of Trustees and Regents. All the participants agreed that Catholic Theology and Philosophy courses are not included in the present core curriculum. They stated that the courses are a mixture of courses in Catholic studies and secular courses. One participant said, “There are no Catholic Theology and Philosophy courses in the core curriculum, but some of the courses touch on the Catholic Faith, beliefs and practices of the Church, the writings of some great Catholic saints and thinkers, and the history of the Church.” Another participant stated, “While the core courses do not include Catholic Theology courses, the present core curriculum gives a wide dimension of Catholic Tradition, and an integration of faith and reason.” Another participant said, “While the core curriculum is not Catholic Theology per se, it tries to give a wide vision with a strong Catholic dimension of the tradition of faith and reason together.” Another participant said, “The core curriculum is not Catholic Theology. It however includes in each of the three required courses readings in Catholic Theology, together with philosophy. So we have readings from Socrates, Aristotle, and Saint Augustine. So the students are exposed to Catholic Intellectual Tradition.” Another participant said, “In the core curriculum, there are three signature courses. Basically embedded in each of those classes are Catholic values and principles. They are not courses per se in Catholic Theology, but every student is required to take those three core courses. Embedded in those courses are Catholic teachings, Catholic
values, and exposure to Catholic literature and history.” Another participant said, “When the core curriculum was developed, the concern some people had about it was that there was not enough of a Catholic identity in it, but I think it is serving its purpose, since the students are learning about the Catholic Faith.”

There were divergent views among the participants regarding the nature of the courses that should constitute the core curriculum of American Catholic University. Eight participants were of the opinion that the core courses should necessarily and essentially include Catholic Theology and Philosophy courses. They argued that since they attend a Catholic university, all students, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, should learn about Catholic Theology. One of the participants stated, “All the students should learn about theology and the teachings of the Church since they attend a Catholic university. That was part of what the task force recommended, and part of what was approved by the Board of Trustees.” Another participant said, “If it is the core curriculum of a Catholic university, it should include courses in Catholic Theology, and not merely a mixture of Catholic and secular ideas.” Another participant said,

The core curriculum should include Catholic Theology and Philosophy. But the present core curriculum does not, and so, it is not serving its purpose. I was a member of the faculty committee that planned the core curriculum. So I was directly involved in the planning of the core curriculum. A majority of the members of the committee were against including courses in Catholic Theology and Church teaching. They wanted completely secular courses in the core curriculum. Some were in favor of including some Catholic Theology courses, but they were in the minority. Those who were opposed to having Catholic Theology in the core curriculum argued that there are both Catholic and non-Catholic students at the university. Their argument was that it would not be right to impose Catholic teachings on students who are not Catholic. But my view then, and my view now is, since they attend a Catholic university, they should learn about Catholic Theology, the tradition, beliefs, and practices of the Church. No one should attend a Catholic university like this, and learn nothing about the Catholic Faith. The core courses should include Catholic Theology and philosophy.
courses. The students should be taught Catholic teachings, tradition, beliefs, and practices, and not just secular courses as we have presently.

Another participant said,

Many students, even those who are Catholics, do not have background in Catholic Theology and Doctrine. The fact that they did not learn much during their religious education program and so do not have a background in Catholic teachings is one of the reasons why students should be made to learn about the Church. All the students should learn some form of theology and Church teaching on certain topics, since they attend a Catholic university. The goal is not to convert the non-Catholic students to the Catholic faith, but to teach them basic ideas about the Catholic Faith.

Another participant said,

Some people are not in support of having some Catholic Theology courses in the core curriculum. They say, ‘you don’t want to turn this into a kind of a conversion camp.’ That is true. Pope John Paul II famously said ‘the Church cannot impose. The Church can only propose.’ The purpose of a Catholic university is not to turn out a new Catholic with every diploma. Catholic universities are not established for the purpose of converting all the students. But students who attend Catholic universities should be taught and should know about the basic tenets of the faith. So, there should be some theology courses in the core curriculum.

Another participant said,

Students have to take the core. But the specific courses of the core have Catholic-sounding names like Christianity and Culture and Dialogue, which are not really Catholic Theology. It is true that students read some part of the scriptures, but they don’t just read Christian things but all sorts of other materials. It is one thing for me to say I can read ‘Gaudium Et Spes’ or ‘Veritatis Splendor’ one day, and then I am going to read ‘Being and Nothingness’ the next day, and then say I have had a course in Catholicism. It is like what other Catholic universities have as liberal studies programs. We can have courses and programs like that if we want, but we shouldn’t call it Catholicism because it is not. If we claim to be teaching students about Catholicism in the core curriculum, let us teach them Catholicism as it is and not bring in other courses that basically have nothing to do with Catholicism.

Twelve of the participants stated that the core courses should not necessarily include Catholic Theology and Philosophy courses. They asserted that the core courses should include courses in Church teaching and some secular courses. They argued that
there are both Catholic and non-Catholic students at the university, and contended that non-Catholic students should not be made to learn about Catholic Theology. One participant said,

Theology courses should not necessarily be part of the core curriculum. In each of the three core courses, there are readings in Catholic teachings. The students read about Saint Augustine, Socrates, and Aristotle. So, the students are exposed to Catholic intellectual tradition. The university student body is about sixty-five percent Catholic, which does not even mean practicing Catholics, but only self-identified Catholics. If some of the core courses were to be purely Theology courses, it would be too much dose for them, since many of them were not exposed to Theology from the beginning, and even the Catholics among them did not learn much in their religious education programs.

Another participant said,

We are not a parish, and our students are not parishioners. We have students who are Catholic, and students who are non-Catholic, people of all faith, and people of no faith. This is also the case with the faculty. For this reason, it is very difficult to get the entire faculty to agree to what all the students should be learning regarding the core curriculum. The two main courses they came up with – The Journey of Transformation, and Christian Dialogue with the World - ensure that all undergraduates read the same texts. Some of these texts are the Gospel of Luke, the writings of Aristotle, Thomas Merton, Saint Augustine, and Saint Thomas Aquinas, many of which are about the teachings of the Church. For this reason, I think the core curriculum does a fantastic job because all the students are reading the same texts and getting the same ideas.

After the general core curriculum was approved, the colleges and schools at American Catholic University were asked to revise their curricula, and come up with their own core courses. The researcher asked the participants whether the colleges and schools are following through by teaching the core courses that were approved for them by the university. Some participants stated that the colleges and schools are teaching the core courses approved for them by the university. One participant said, “The various schools, colleges and departments have their core courses which were fashioned in accordance with the general university core curriculum. They are making progress in
terms of implementation in line with Catholic identity.” But other participants maintained that, although, the colleges and schools adopted some core courses, they are not following through with implementation. They said some schools and colleges have reduced their core courses, and others have eliminated them completely. One of the participants said,

To this day, no student at all, outside the School of Theology students, has any obligation to take a single course in Catholicism. The present core courses were not designed to be instructions in Catholicism, or to learn about Jesus Christ. They are taking Catholic ideas and subjects, and matching them with secular ideas. That is not really at all what curricular obligation would be at a Catholic University. To this day, no one has to take any course on Catholicism as such. Students are not required to, and are not under any obligation to take these courses. For this reason, some schools, colleges and departments have reduced the number of core courses approved for them by the university. Many have dropped some or all of the religious courses that were approved for them.

Another participant said, “Since the core curriculum began, some schools and colleges have dropped or eliminated many of the religious requirements and courses that were approved for them.” To back up his claim, he handed me a chart on some colleges, schools and departments, regarding their implementation of the core curriculum. He said, “Those are the individual undergraduate schools, from where they were to where they are now. If you are wandering about the source, that is not me making this up, that is straight out of the undergraduate catalogue.” According to the report, the core curriculum being implemented by some of the schools and colleges differed markedly from what was approved. According to the report, in the 2007/2008 academic year, the College of Arts and Sciences had 3-6 credits in Religious Studies. In the 2015/2016 academic year, it had 3 credits in Religious Studies. The School of Business had 6 elective credits in Religious Studies. In the 2007/2008 academic year, but in the 2015/2016 academic year, it had 3
elective credits in Religious Studies or Theology (B.S. in Business Administration). The College of Communications and the Arts that had 6 credits in Religion in the 2007/2008 academic year, had in the 2015/2016 academic year, 3 credits in Religion. In the 2007/2008 academic year, the School of Diplomacy and International Relations that had 3 credits in World Religions still had 3 credits in World Religions in the 2015/2016 academic year. The College of Education and Human Services/ the Department of Educational Studies that had 3 credits in Religious Studies in the 2007/2008 academic year, in the 2015/2016 academic year, had no credits for its core curriculum. In the 2007/2008 academic year, the College of Nursing that had 3 elective credits in Religious Studies, had, in the 2015/2016 academic year, no credits for its core curriculum. The participants who asserted that the schools, colleges and departments have reduced or eliminated the core courses approved for them, maintained that the core courses should include Catholic Theology courses, and that all the schools, colleges, and departments should teach their students the core courses that were approved for them by the university, and also be made to adhere strictly to the rules guiding the core curriculum.

**Academic Freedom**

Academic freedom is one of the norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*. American Catholic University upholds academic freedom for its faculty. In the faculty guide, the institution states,

All members of faculty, whether tenured or not, are entitled to academic freedom. Academic freedom is essential to the purposes of the university and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in teaching is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher and of the student (American Catholic University website).
The researcher asked the participants whether there is academic freedom for members of faculty at American Catholic University. All the participants agreed that the university upholds academic freedom by creating a culture of freedom on campus. They stated that the members of faculty enjoyed academic freedom. One participant said, “Academic freedom is encouraged by this institution. The professors are allowed to pursue various avenues of their disciplines and fields.” Another participant said, “Of course, our faculty enjoys full academic freedom. They are given academic freedom. It is recognized as their right in the faculty guide.” Another participant said, “Academic freedom is part of the faculty guide of American Catholic University. In the faculty guide, the members of faculty are reminded of their freedom to teach and make research.”

Another participant said, “In the years that I have worked here, I have never heard anybody complain about academic freedom. I am a professor and I have many friends who are professors in various departments. I have never heard anyone say they were shut down in their research, or told that they cannot teach or lecture about a topic. So there is complete freedom to teach and do research.” Another participant said,

There is freedom of inquiry in this university because there is a culture of freedom. When you create a culture in the context of an institution, as we have done in this university, whether it is respect for who we are and what defines us as a Catholic institution, people are able to exercise their freedom in whatever discipline they are, provided they respect and act responsibly with regard to the institution.

*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* emphatically stated that academic freedom at a Catholic university must be for the common good. The exercise of academic freedom should not result in the infringement on the rights of others, but academic freedom should be exercised to uphold their rights
and lead to the common good (Pope John Paul II, 1990; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). Research participants discussed this academic freedom that is exercised for the common good. They stated that the academic freedom encouraged and exercised at American Catholic University is for the good of the individual and the common good. One participant stated,

The way that Pope John Paul II explained academic freedom is very good and direct. The Holy Father stated that any research that Catholic universities pursue must be in conformity with the Truth and the Common Good. The Common Good is a phrase of Catholic Theology. We talk about the Common Good. We explain what is meant by the Common Good. But because the common good is a phrase that others outside the Church also use, they do not necessarily understand what the Church means by the Common Good. The Common Good is that which benefits all people. It is against the Common Good, for example, to permit abortion. That is not for the Common Good because the Right to Life of an individual, the unborn child, is by that act infringed on. Unfortunately, there are those, including some Catholics, who mistakenly believe that abortion is for the common good, since, according to them, it supports the freedom of a woman to do whatever she wishes or chooses. This is not what the Church means by the Common Good and that is not what the Common Good is. Academic freedom assumes that I teach whatever I choose. This is not what academic freedom is. Academic freedom at a Catholic university is the freedom to teach and make research in compliance with the teachings of the Church and for the Common Good. This university supports and upholds academic freedom that leads to the common good. In all we do here, from teaching to research, service, and other activities, we respect the rights of all, and work for the Common Good.

Academic freedom at a Catholic university must be exercised with responsibility. Pope John Paul II and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops maintained that freedom at a Catholic university must be exercised with utmost responsibility, and exercised in accordance with the teachings of the Church (John Paul II, 1990; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). The Holy Father and the bishops of the United States emphasized that true freedom at a Catholic university must be accompanied with responsibility, or else, it will not be true freedom.
American Catholic University prides itself as a Catholic institution that maintains academic freedom with responsibility. As stated on its website,

Academic freedom is not incompatible with such a commitment to moral education, but those who exercise academic freedom must do so with responsibility and for the common good. The university encourages and promotes freedom of enquiry and expression but emphasizes that it must be accompanied with morality and responsibility in order to be complete. The institution encourages an atmosphere of debate and dialogue in order to enlighten, guide, and refine our moral vision, without compromising intellectual integrity or its commitment to Christian values (American Catholic University website).

American Catholic University also affirms that, since it is an autonomous and free institution, “It chooses to commit itself to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Teacher,” and “Embraces the principles eloquently set forth by Pope John Paul II in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*” (American Catholic University website).

Regarding this academic freedom with responsibility, the archbishop of the archdiocese that owns American Catholic University said,

Everyone should be committed to truth, regardless of their discipline, whether scientific, philosophical or theological. We believe theology and the teachings of the Church is what God wants. The empirical sciences have contributed to the lives of people in a great and wonderful way. But in academic freedom, in the area of being committed to truth, truth in the empirical sciences is more limited, and if people try to say the empirical sciences have the basic answers to human existence, they are wrong. That is simply not true. The empirical sciences have made wonderful contributions, but they are also limited. All who work in Catholic universities should be committed to the truth and not push for things that are contradictory to the truth. In a Catholic university, there should be freedom with responsibility, which means upholding or respecting the teachings of the Church in research, teaching, and service.

The participants discussed this academic freedom with responsibility. All the research participants maintained that academic freedom, especially at a Catholic university, must be exercised with responsibility. Sixteen of the participants stated that American Catholic University encourages freedom with responsibility. These participants
also maintained that the members of faculty exercise freedom with responsibility. One participant stated,

In the United States, there is so much emphasis on academic freedom, but nobody talks very much about academic responsibility. Freedom and responsibility should be in tight relationship with each other. Academic freedom has its importance if it is combined and exercised with responsibility. Freedom does not mean one can do what they like, but it means that one should exercise decision-making with the sense that they are going to be sensitive to the principles of faith and the principles of the natural law. If somebody wants to be a professor at American Catholic University, that person should know he or she has a responsibility to accept and work to the best of his or her ability to exercise his or her freedom in line with the teachings of the Church, and not try to undercut the work of the Catholic university that is born from the heart of the Church and is part of the Church. Those who have freedom also have the responsibility to promote right conduct, because with academic freedom comes the responsibility to abide by the right principles of an institution. To a great degree, the faculty members of this university exercise their freedom with responsibility.

Another participant said,

Freedom does not mean people can do what they like, but it means to be sensitive to the principles of the natural law, the rights of others, and the principles of the institution where they work. Some people think freedom means choosing between good and evil. That is not freedom. Freedom means choosing to do what is good. To decide to choose between good and evil, and especially, to choose evil over good is an abuse of freedom. All those who work at a Catholic university and possess freedom, also have a responsibility to abide by or respect the Catholic mission and identity of the university. I think this university places great emphasis on academic freedom that is exercised with responsibility, and I think the faculty members are exercising their freedom in this direction.

Another participant said,

What the Holy Father brought up about academic freedom with responsibility is the fact. Academic freedom is not an absolute. It is always accompanied with responsibility in a Catholic university to uphold the teachings of the Church. Those who have academic freedom do not have the freedom to do bad research and teach students flawed material. If they do, they will not be exercising true freedom. This university emphasizes and promotes freedom that is exercised with responsibility, and encourages its faculty to teach and do research in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.
Four other participants also asserted that American Catholic University upholds academic freedom with responsibility. They also stated that the institution urges all members of faculty to exercise their freedom according to the teachings of the Church. They, however, said some members of faculty still go against this university norm by teaching and doing research in ways that are contrary to the teachings of the Church. One participant said,

Regarding the concept of academic freedom, we must distinguish between academic freedom and license. Academic freedom does not cover anything and everything that a professor wants to say. We devout Roman Catholics have an understanding that academic freedom is within the context of the Truth, the Common Good, and the Revelation of the Church. But for many Americans in general, the whole idea of academic freedom is, ‘I can say whatever I want, whenever I want, and however I want.’ It is kind of a misconception and misunderstanding of what academic freedom is meant to be. When Pope John Paul II wrote about academic freedom in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, what he had in mind was freedom with responsibility, which means to teach according to the mind of the Church. What some faculty members understand by academic freedom is precisely the ability to say anything they want, anytime, anywhere on campus, and not to have anybody tell them they can’t. Some professors who teach in this university still want to say whatever they want, and however they want. They say there is nothing in the faculty guide that says they should not teach what they believe. They think they have academic freedom, and can exercise it the way they want. This kind of attitude should not be displayed at a Catholic university. They should know that freedom at a Catholic university should be exercised according to the teachings of the Church.

The participants maintained that academic freedom at a Catholic university means teaching and doing research with responsibility and for the common good. According to them, this means exercising freedom in compliance with the teachings, beliefs, and practices of the Church. While sixteen participants stated that there is complete freedom with responsibility at American Catholic University, four participants maintained that, although the institution emphasizes, upholds, promotes, and encourages academic freedom with responsibility, some faculty members still want to teach and do
research the way they want, even if it is contrary to the ways and teachings of the Catholic Church.

**The Mandatum**

One of the norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* is the mandatum. All those who teach the theological disciplines at Catholic institutions of higher education are required to have the mandatum (John Paul II, 1990; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014). According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “The mandatum is fundamentally an acknowledgement by Church authority that a Catholic professor of a theological discipline is a teacher within the full communion of the Catholic Church” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014, pp. 228-229). The mandatum is to be given by the competent ecclesiastical authority. According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “The competent ecclesiastical authority to grant the mandatum is the bishop of the diocese in which the Catholic university is located” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014, p. 229).

American Catholic University has on its webpage on Undergraduate Bachelor of Arts in Catholic Theology, a statement that all those in the program will “experience an education rooted in the teaching mission of the Catholic Church, guided by professors who possess the mandatum to teach from the local Archbishop” (American Catholic University website).

The requirement for obtaining the mandatum is posted on the webpage of the School of Theology. It states that all professors who are given appointment to teach Theology in the school must request and receive a mandatum from the archbishop. The
notice is also part of the job advertisement of the School of Theology. One participant who is an administrator at the School of Theology and who also teaches Theology said,

When we advertise for new positions, it is part of the advertisement that the applicants, if hired, would request and receive the mandatum from the archbishop to teach in the School of Theology. During job interviews, we also make it clear to them that one of the requirements to teach in the School of Theology is to request and obtain a mandatum from the archbishop. It is not an option, but very compulsory. All the members of our faculty have the mandatum.

Another participant, an administrator who also teaches Theology said,

It is part of the contract of every person that teaches in the School of Theology to have a mandatum. They are required to get the mandatum from the archbishop. So anyone teaching in this School of Theology, whether it is Church History or Philosophical Theology, or any other course, whatever it might be, is required to get the mandatum. It is part of their contract and part of their agreement of being hired because of the nature of what is taught here, which is Catholic Theology.

Another participant said,

All the professors who are Catholic and teach the theological disciplines on campus have all requested and received the mandatum. The Vicar General’s Office of the local archdiocese that sponsors this university has a list of all the professors who received the mandatum. It is not optional, but very compulsory in this university, although, I am not sure that all the adjunct professors have the mandatum. The document does not distinguish between fulltime and adjunct professors, but all the professors that are fulltime certainly have the mandatum.

The researcher asked the participants whether they have the mandatum. All the participants stated that they have the mandatum to teach Catholic Theology at the institution. One participant said, “Yes, I have the mandatum. I requested and received it from the archbishop to teach in the School of Theology.” Another participant said, “Of course, I have the mandatum. Without it, I wouldn’t have been allowed to remain as a professor in the School of Theology, and I wouldn’t be here today.”
There is a process involved in requesting and granting the *mandatum*. The local archbishop, who grants the *mandatum* to the professors who teach the theological disciplines at American Catholic University, explained the process. He said,

The *mandatum* means making clear to the professors who teach the theological disciplines that they teach in accordance with the teachings of the Church. Before I grant the *mandatum*, the professor seeking the *mandatum* writes me a letter requesting the *mandatum*. They also present their curriculum vitae and a list of their publications. After reviewing the documents, I consult with the rector/dean of the Seminary School of Theology. After the review and evaluation of the documents and consultation with the dean, once I am satisfied with their application and the documents presented, and based on the fact that they made a commitment to teach in accordance with the teachings and doctrines of the Church during their job interview, and when they were hired to teach theology, I grant the *mandatum* to the applicant.

The participants explained the process involved in obtaining the *mandatum*. The *mandatum* is not given automatically to the professors after they are hired to teach. It has to be requested personally by each professor before it is given. Each professor who is hired to teach Catholic Theology and any of the theological disciplines, requests the *mandatum* from the archbishop before the archbishop grants the *mandatum* to the professor. The request is made to show the willingness of the professor to receive the *mandatum*. According to them, once a professor is given appointment to teach in the School of Theology, he or she writes a letter to the archbishop formally requesting the *mandatum*. The professor also sends his or her resume and curriculum vitae to the archbishop. The archbishop studies the documents submitted by the professor. Once he is satisfied, he grants the *mandatum* to the professor. The professor then makes a profession of faith before the archbishop or the rector/dean of the Seminary School of Theology. The profession of faith is a pledge and commitment to be faithful to the teachings of the
Church, and to teach in accordance with the teachings, beliefs, and practices of the Church.

One of the participants said,

Each individual has to request the mandate from the archbishop before receiving it. The professor sends the archbishop his or her curriculum vitae, and a list of his or her publications. The archbishop reviews them, and once he is satisfied, he grants the mandate to the professor.

Another participant said,

During my job interview, I was told that if I were hired to teach in the School of Theology, I would be required to request and receive the mandate from the archbishop. After I was hired, the dean explained the process of requesting the mandate to me. I applied and presented my credentials to the archbishop. The archbishop granted me the mandate. I then made a profession of faith before the dean.

Another participant who is a layperson said,

After I was accepted to teach Theology here, I requested the mandate from the archbishop. I presented a letter of request and my resume to the archbishop. Days later, the dean informed me that the archbishop has granted me the mandate. He handed me the Letter of Mandatum, and I then made a profession of faith before the dean in the chapel.

The researcher asked the participants whether they had difficulty obtaining the mandate. All the participants stated that they had no difficulty getting the mandate from the archbishop. They stated that they ensured that they fulfilled all the requirements when they applied, and that they received the mandate without delay. One of the participants said,

No. I did not have any difficulty getting the mandate from the archbishop. I already knew what was expected of me, and all the documents I was required to submit along with the letter. I submitted all the documents to the archbishop, and within a few days, I got the mandate from the archbishop through the dean.

Another participant said,
There is no red tape or bureaucracy involved in obtaining the *mandatum*. Remember that before professors apply for the *mandatum*, they must have already been hired to teach theology. During the hiring process, they are told that they must teach theology in accordance with the teachings of the Church. They must make this commitment before they are hired. So once they apply for the *mandatum*, based on the fact that they already made a commitment to teach theology in accordance with the teachings and beliefs of the Church, and based on the fact that they renewed that commitment when they applied for the *mandatum*, the archbishop grants the *mandatum*. When I applied for the *mandatum*, I got it without any problem or difficulty.

One of the reasons why *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* were not accepted by some in the academia, in both Catholic and non-Catholic institutions, was the inclusion of the *mandatum* in the documents. They are totally opposed to the *mandatum* because they see it as a violation of the academic freedom of the professors who teach the theological disciplines (Henkin, Dee, & Manzo, 2001; Leibrecht, 2001; Nilson, 2001; O’Connell, 2001; Rausch, 2010; Russo & Gregory, 2001). The researcher asked the participants during the interviews if they saw the *mandatum* as a violation of their academic freedom. The participants were unanimous in stating that they don’t see the *mandatum* as a violation of their right to academic freedom. They stated that the *mandatum* is necessary, since it encourages those who teach the theological disciplines to focus on teaching Theology according to the mind and teachings of the Church. One of the participants who is a layperson stated, “The *mandatum* does not in any way compromise or constrain my freedom to teach and do research. Although it is a requirement to teach Theology in this university, I was not forced or compelled to request it. I requested it willingly, and it has never been a negative thing for me.” Another participant said, “I have freedom of inquiry. Even after requesting and receiving the *mandatum*, I don’t find my academic freedom limited. I have the freedom to do my research.”
Another participant who is a priest said,

I don’t see the *mandatum* as an infringement on my freedom of conscience or freedom to teach. I know that every discipline has an outside accrediting agency. For example, the business school has an outside accrediting agency that ensures that they are doing a good job in business. I think the Church is sort of the outside accrediting agency for people at a Catholic university, especially professors who teach Catholic Theology. The *mandatum* is not an infringement on academic freedom, just like the assessment or accreditation by an accrediting agency or organization for the school of business is not an infringement on the freedom of the professors of the school of business to teach.

Another participant who is a priest, an administrator who also teaches some theology courses in the School of Theology said,

Every ten years we undergo reaccreditation by the Association of Theological Schools. During the reaccreditation process, we poll our faculty regarding various issues, including academic freedom. During the last reaccreditation process, in an anonymous survey, our faculty answered one hundred percent, that they had academic freedom, that they can address issues that they felt necessary in the classroom, and in their research. Some people say of the professors who teach in the School of Theology, ‘they have the *mandatum*, they are just teaching catechism, there is no thought, there is no creativity, and there is no freedom.’ That is not the experience of our faculty. In an anonymous survey, that unanimity was striking to us and to the Association of Theological Schools.

The members of faculty of the School of Theology who are required to have the *mandatum*, and who were the participants in this research, all said they have the *mandatum*. They requested and received the *mandatum* from the local Archbishop to teach the theological disciplines at American Catholic University.

**Synopsis of Findings for Subsidiary Question 2**

The second subsidiary research question explored some of the principles and norms that American Catholic University is putting into practice to maintain Catholic identity. The discussion with participants centered on campus ministry, the core curriculum, academic freedom, and the *mandatum* that professors who teach the theological disciplines are required to have. The participants discussed these policies and
programs based on their personal observation of how they are being implemented at the institution.

The participants believed that American Catholic University has made a lot of improvement regarding its campus ministry. They maintained that there is an active campus ministry that reaches out, and caters to the spiritual needs of administrators, faculty, staff, and students. They mentioned spiritual activities such as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. They referenced some groups within campus ministry, such as the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), and Saint Paul Outreach (SPO), that are involved in the work of evangelization, and involved in facilitating spiritual programs like retreats and other faith-based programs that encourage students, especially those that are Catholic, to practice the faith. They asserted that the Office of Mission and Ministry is doing a good job of reaching out to the members of the university community, and maintained that more people are involved in spiritual and liturgical activities on campus now than in the past. They also praised the dedicated priests on campus who facilitate many of the spiritual, liturgical, and pastoral activities on campus.

The participants discussed the core curriculum. All the participants stated that American Catholic University has a core curriculum approved and adopted by the university. They all agreed that Catholic theology courses are not included in the core courses. Participants had divergent views about the core courses that should be taught in the core curriculum. Twelve of the participants argued that the core courses should not necessarily include Catholic Theology courses. They stated that they were satisfied with the present core courses that are being taught at the institution. These participants stated
that, although, the students are not being taught pure Catholic Theology courses, they are being taught courses in Catholic Tradition, and so, are learning about the Catholic Faith. But eight participants raised concerns, and argued that the present core curriculum is not serving its purpose. They argued that the core curriculum should include courses in Catholic Theology and Christian Philosophy. These participants believed the students are not learning much about the Catholic Faith in the present curriculum. They maintained that the core courses should include Catholic Theology and Philosophy courses, as recommended by the task force on Catholicity, and as approved by the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents. They argued that it is only then that the students would have the opportunity to learn about the Catholic Faith. They also maintained that the core courses should be a requirement for all the students, Catholic and non-Catholic.

Participants also discussed academic freedom for the faculty of the institution. The participants were unanimous in asserting that American Catholic University allows and encourages academic freedom for its faculty. They all stated that they enjoyed academic freedom, and that they teach without any interference at the institution. Participants also discussed the type of academic freedom that should be allowed in a Catholic university. A majority of the participants argued that a Catholic university should not just encourage freedom, but should have a policy of academic freedom with responsibility. This type of academic freedom, they maintained, is one that is exercised according to the teachings of the Church, and one that leads to the common good. They explained that academic freedom means doing research and teaching according to the mind of the Church, and teaching and doing research about what leads to the common good and the benefit of others. The participants stated that American Catholic University
maintains academic freedom with responsibility. Sixteen participants believed the
members of faculty are exercising their freedom with responsibility by teaching and
doing research according to the teachings of the Church, and for the common good. But
four participants maintained that some professors are still teaching and doing research in
ways contrary to the teachings of the Church, and therefore, are not exercising their
freedom with responsibility for the common good.

Participants discussed the mandatum that professors who teach the theological
disciplines are required to have. The research participants teach the theological
disciplines at the institution, and so, are required to have the mandatum. All the
participants stated that they requested and received the mandatum to teach Catholic
Theology at the institution. They explained the process involved in requesting and
receiving the mandatum. They all followed the process before receiving the mandatum.
The researcher asked the participants about the position of some in the academia that the
mandatum is an infringement on the academic freedom and right of professors who teach
the theological disciplines. The participants all stated that the mandatum is not an
infringement on their academic rights and freedom. They maintained that they have their
full academic freedom and rights. They asserted that they were not forced to request the
mandatum. They requested it of their own free will, and freely went through the process.
They supported the norm in Ex Corde Ecclesiae, which states that all professors who
teach the theological disciplines at Catholic colleges and universities are required to have
the mandatum. In their view, the mandatum encourages professors who teach the
theological disciplines to focus on what is required and expected of them, which is to
teach and do research according to the teachings and beliefs of the Church.
Subsidiary Research Question 3

The third subsidiary question examined the effort American Catholic University is making to explain Catholic identity and mission to the members of faculty. The participants discussed the hiring for mission policy, orientation for new faculty members, and mission seminars for members of faculty. The participants discussed the extent to which American Catholic University is implementing these policies and programs. They also discussed the response of faculty members to the programs.

Hiring for Mission

American Catholic University has a program called ‘hiring for mission,’ or ‘mission-centered hiring.’ The program is designed to inform job applicants and prospective employees about the fact that the institution is a Catholic University with Catholic identity, and to inform that about their obligation and responsibility to support, promote, or respect the identity if hired to work at the institution. The program is a fulfillment of the call in Ex Corde Ecclesiae that, “The responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic identity of the University rests primarily with the University itself. While this responsibility is entrusted principally to university authorities, it is shared in varying degrees by all members of the university community, and therefore calls for the recruitment of adequate university personnel, especially teachers and administrators, who are both willing and able to promote that identity. The identity of a Catholic University is essentially linked to the quality of its teachers and to respect for Catholic doctrine” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 41).

American Catholic University has on its website, a section for recruitment and hiring, termed, ‘Recruitment for Mission.’ It states,
Recruiting employees for mission is important to American Catholic University. To foster the effectiveness of its mission, the university recruits, hires, and develops its employees for mission. To ensure mission-effectiveness, American Catholic University recruits and develops its employees for mission. The program of recruiting employees for mission aims to inform prospective employees of the University’s Catholic identity and mission, and to help them and hiring personnel determine how they will support and contribute to the University’s goals (American Catholic University website).

Participants discussed the hiring for mission program and its importance. A research participant stated,

American Catholic University recruits and hires its employees for mission. The purpose of recruiting employees for mission is to inform those seeking employment about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution, and to encourage them to determine how they will support the Catholic identity and mission.

Another participant said,

This university has a hiring for mission program, which is available so that the different schools, colleges and departments are able to hire people for mission, and not just to fill a particular line in a budget. I think this is extremely important in a Catholic university like ours, since it helps prospective employees to be familiar with the Catholic identity and mission of the university, and prepares them to foster that identity and mission.

Another participant said,

The hiring for mission applies to faculty and staff hiring. This means the secretary to the university President is hired according to a policy, and that policy is that they be informed of the Catholic mission, that they attend certain workshops on what Catholic mission is, so that they know what is expected of them, and also that they know about some of the parameters of the Catholic mission. They don’t have to be Catholics, but they have to respect the Catholic mission in everything they say and do.

Another participant said,

The hiring for mission is not just for Catholics. It does not imply that only Catholics must be hired to work at this university. Catholics and non-Catholics are hired to work here. The hiring for mission policy ensures that all those hired, Catholic and non-Catholic, know about the mission, and are ready and willing to support it.
Job descriptions at American Catholic University state clearly that employees are “responsible for supporting and contributing to the Catholic educational mission of the university.” Referring to this, one participant said,

We have the hiring for mission program as it relates to administrators, faculty and staff. The program is a great initiative, and I think it is working in the sense that when people apply to teach or work in this institution, they have to say why they want to work in a Catholic university. That is important and it helps to know, not whether the applicant is Catholic or not, but whether the prospective employee is going to help to advance the mission. It doesn’t matter whether applicants are Catholic or not. Regardless of their religions, they have to say they are willing and ready to support the mission.

Position announcements and advertisements are posted on the institution’s website and on other media, and those interested are asked to apply for the open positions. The announcement and advertisement of positions are contained in this statement:

American Catholic University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. It honors diversity and respects the religious commitments of all employees. In turn, its employees respect Catholic beliefs and values, and they support its mission as a Catholic institution of higher education (American Catholic University website).

The statement means that all employees at the institution should not be forced to practice the Catholic Faith, but that even as they are free to practice their faith, they must abide by the Catholic identity and mission of the institution, and work to promote, support, or at least, respect it.

American Catholic University website has a section that urges applicants to read about the university before applying for a job or position. The section is titled Job Seekers Start Here. It states, “Recruiting employees for mission is important to American Catholic University. Before filing an application, please read American Catholic
University: A Catholic University.” A link to the document is provided on the website. It contains information about the Catholicity of the institution. It refers to the institution as a Catholic university with Catholic identity and mission. It also states the values of the institution, and the current initiatives of the university that reflect its Catholic identity. This is also printed in pamphlet form, and is part of the packet given to new employees. Regarding this, one of the research participants said, “I read about the Catholicity of this university on the website before I applied to teach here. After I was hired, I was given the document that is about the Catholic identity of this university.”

Regarding the recruitment for mission program, the archbishop of the local archdiocese said,

The hiring for mission is one of the big things we have introduced. During job advertisements, job applicants are referred to the Catholic identity and mission of the institution, and during job interviews, prospective employees are told about the Catholic mission of the institution, and of the obligation of all employees to respect and foster it in their various positions at the university. This is great because it is focusing employees on the mission and identity, and also informing them about how to play their part to support and foster it.

During job interviews, the applicants are informed or reminded about the Catholic Identity and mission of the institution by the hiring personnel. They are also told that if they were hired, they would be required to support the Catholic mission and identity. The applicants are then asked about their willingness to support the Catholic identity and mission of the institution. This process, which is posted on the university website, states,

In accordance with the Recruitment Guide, hiring personnel engage applicants in a conversation about American Catholic University mission: their understanding of the mission and their willingness and ability to support it. The conversation is guided by these sample questions:

a) Having read American Catholic University’s Mission Statement and the document American Catholic University: A Catholic University, what are your thoughts on what you have read?
b) What aspects of American Catholic University’s Catholic educational mission appeal to your career interests, past experience, and professional goals?

c) If you were selected for the position for which you are now interviewing, how would you envision your work at American Catholic University being influenced by its Catholic educational mission?

d) What opportunities and challenges do you see American Catholic University mission affording you in your future work here?

e) Do you have any questions about American Catholic University Catholic educational mission, especially as it might impact on your work? (American Catholic University website).

The researcher asked the participants about their job interview process, whether the identity and mission of the university were explained to them, and whether they were asked these questions during their job interviews. Six of the participants stated that the hiring for mission policy was not in place at the time they were hired. One participant said, “There was no hiring for mission policy when I did my job interview, and when I was employed to teach here. I was not asked these questions, but I know that presently there is mission-centered hiring in this university. So applicants are probably asked these questions now.” Another participant said,

When I was hired, I was given university policies to study. That was it. I have been here for thirty years. Now I think it is much different. During the orientation process, or even the interview process, before you are hired and go through an orientation as a new employee, it is already explained to you that the Catholic identity and mission is an important part of being here. You don’t have to be a Catholic. In fact, I know many employees who are not Catholic. All employees, Catholics and non-Catholics, must understand and be able to adhere to and support the Catholic principles and identity of the faith. That is an important part of working here.

Among those who were hired after the hiring for mission policy was adopted, some said they were informed about the Catholic identity and mission of the university, and were told they would be expected to support it if they are hired. One participant said, “Yes, when I did my job interview, I was told by the hiring personnel about the Catholic
mission, and that I would need to support it as a member of faculty of the institution.”

Some other participants said they were not informed about the Catholic identity and mission. One of them said, “I had a job interview, but I was not asked questions about Catholic identity, and I was not told I would be expected to support the Catholic mission as an employee of the university.”

A research participant stated that, although there is hiring for mission at American Catholic University, it is a program and not a policy. He said the hiring for mission initiative is not very effective, and not being fully implemented or practiced because it is a mere program and not a policy of the university. He noted that if it were made a policy, all the schools, colleges, and departments at the university would abide by it, and therefore, it would be fully practiced, implemented, and become very effective. He said the key to its full implementation would be to turn it from a program to a policy. He said,

We need a policy for hiring faculty for mission. It is the case that when new faculty members arrive, we do an orientation for them. But only few of the new professors attend the orientation seminars. What we need to have is a policy that states that when faculty members apply here, they need to be informed that this is a Catholic university, and they need to be able to say in a convincing way that they want to work in an institution that is related to the Church, and is part of the mission of the Church, as opposed to working in another institution that is not affiliated to the Church and is not part of the mission of the Church. Faculty members come here and they think that they can disregard Catholicism, not disrespect it, but simply be indifferent to it. This is because there is no policy on hiring for mission. I wish there was a policy on this. There is no policy because the faculty members are resistant to having such a policy. They are resistant to having such a policy because they figure out that such a policy means that we would not have really quality scholars here, and that we would be limiting different voices. We are not asking people to come here and agree with Catholicism or embrace Catholicism. We are asking for people to come here who are knowledgeable about Catholicism, and therefore can say something about Catholicism in the classroom, in the political science classroom, in the sociology classroom, in the psychology classroom, in the biology classroom. Catholicism is not simply something that people can be convinced about, but something that they can be knowledgeable about. Knowledge is a competency. So when you get faculty members here who know nothing about Catholicism, this is not good. If
they came here and they were applying for a political science position, and knew very little about political science, they would not be hired for the position. Anybody who comes here should be knowledgeable about Catholicism, not committed to it, not necessarily agree with it, but they should know about it. This is why we need policies for hiring for mission, orientation for new faculty, and development on mission or mission seminars for faculty. Having these initiatives, not as mere programs, but as policies, would make them compulsory or mandatory, and not optional for faculty, and would make faculty members know a lot about Catholicism.

Margaret Smolin (2009) did a similar study of the same institution. She interviewed administrators for her dissertation titled *The Incorporation of the Norms Set Forth in Ex Corde Ecclesiae into the Administrative Practices at Mid-Atlantic University – A Case Study*. She explored the extent to which the Catholic identity and mission of the institution were being explained to job applicants. She noted in her findings that, “A great majority of deans and chairs stated that they do speak with applicants about the Catholic identity.” Smolin also asked her research participants about the response of the institution to a norm in *Ex Corde ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* which states that majority of faculty members employed at Catholic institutions of higher education should be Catholic. She found that the norm was not being implemented at the university. The participants stated that, although the former provost made an attempt to introduce it as a university policy, many administrators and faculty members were opposed to it, and so, it was never adopted as a university policy, and it was not a practice at the university.

**Orientation for New Faculty and Staff**

American Catholic University organizes orientation programs for new members of faculty and other employees. This practice is largely a response to a norm in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* which states that at Catholic institutions of higher education, “All teachers and
all administrators, at the time of their appointment, are to be informed about the Catholic identity of the Institution and its implications, and about their responsibility to promote, or at least to respect, that identity” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 41). Three research participants who were hired before the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* said the orientation program was not in place when they were hired. One participant said, “At the time I was hired, there was no formal orientation program for new employees, but the university President at the time welcomed us, and spoke to us about the university.” Another participant said, “When I was hired, I was given university policies to study. But now, things are different. During job interviews, the Catholic identity is explained to the applicants, and once they are employed, the new employees go through an orientation process, which is about Catholic identity and mission. New faculty and staff, whether Catholic and non-Catholic, are encouraged to support the Catholic mission and identity of the institution.”

After applicants are hired, the institution follows up with training the new faculty and other employees on the Catholic identity and mission of the university. The purpose of the orientation is to explain Catholic identity and mission to them, and to inform or remind them about their responsibility to support it. The policy handbook of American Catholic University states that the institution is Catholic, and that all applicants and employees must have a basic understanding of the Catholic mission, and must be willing to support the mission. Prior to the orientation, they are required to complete the employee compliance tutorials within thirty days of their orientation. Upon their employment, the new faculty and staff are given a document titled *American Catholic University: A Catholic University*. It contains information about the institution as a
Catholic university, including its mission and some of the initiatives of the institution. It is given to new employees in order for them to read about the institution’s Catholic mission and commitment, and their role to support and promote it. During the orientation, the attendees are also given other written materials to read. These are to help them better understand what is expected of them in their positions as employees of the institution. They are given lectures about the identity, mission, policies, and programs of the university (Administrator and Staff Employee handbook).

The orientation sessions for new employees are facilitated by the Human Resource Department. The new employees are encouraged to attend one of the sessions, which usually lasts about four hours. The presentation about Catholic identity and mission are by senior administrators. (American Catholic University). A research participant who facilitates some of the orientation programs said, “Every year, during the orientation for new faculty, I give about a half hour talk to new employees about what it means to be a Catholic university, and their responsibility to respect the identity and mission. The orientation seminars are not just for faculty, but for other staff as well.”

The participants discussed the orientation program. They all stated that there is orientation for new faculty and staff at the university. Regarding their attendance and participation at an orientation seminar when they were hired, Eight of the participants stated that they attended an orientation program when they were hired. According to them, two hiring personnel spoke to them about the Catholic mission, and how they are to support it. They also said they were given the handbook *American Catholic University: A Catholic University* for further information about the Catholic identity of the institution. A participant said,
I participated in the orientation program for new faculty. The Vice President for Mission and Ministry had one of the signature talks, and explained what becoming a faculty member at a Catholic university is about. He told us that we have to articulate our identity and mission, and that our job as faculty is to advance Catholic identity, to respect and abide by it, and not to oppose it in any way. This was important because, as a Catholic institution, our Catholicism is not just stained glass and statues, but more of a lived ethos. The Vice President did a very effective job. The orientation was done in a way that was attractive to those who were Catholic, but not off-putting for anyone who was not Catholic.

Another participant said,

Yes, I participated in the training for mission program meant to help employees understand the Catholic mission of the university. We, the new employees at the time, were told about the mission. Some administrators spoke to us about the Catholic mission and identity, and our obligation to support it.

Another participant said,

After I was hired, I attended a workshop where I, and other participants were given orientation about the Catholic identity and mission of the university, and what was expected of us. We were made to understand that we have to respect the Catholic culture of the university, whether we are Catholic or not. It was very informative and enriching.

Twelve of the participants stated that they did not have any orientation on mission, and did not attend any mission seminar or workshop after they were hired. One participant said, “No, I did not attend any orientation on mission. I was told briefly about the Catholic identity during the job interview, but that was it. I was not told about the orientation program, and I did not attend any orientation on Catholic identity and mission.”

Another participant said,

I was not invited to participate in any orientation program, and I did not have any orientation on Catholic identity and the mission of the institution. But, I don’t think it was a mistake on the part of the university. The organizers and facilitators probably thought that, as a priest, I already knew about Catholic identity, and so, did not need an orientation on that. But, I am aware there is orientation for new faculty and staff of the university.
According to Margaret Smolin (2009), who performed a similar research of the same institution, the administrators she interviewed stated that there is orientation for new faculty and staff. From her findings, only a small part of the orientation sessions (thirty minutes of the half-day session sponsored by the university, and one-third of the six-hour orientation organized by the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services), are devoted to presentations and lectures on the Catholic identity and mission of the institution. She also noted that only about half of the administrators she interviewed stated that they “routinely” distribute the pamphlet *American Catholic University: A Catholic University* to new employees during orientation sessions.

American Catholic University has an Administrator and Staff Employee Handbook. The handbook applies to all full-time and administrative employees at the university, and contains information about policies, programs, and benefits for the employees. The handbook contains a statement of the Catholic tradition of the institution, and its mission statement, which refers to the institution as a major Catholic university. These two statements, which are part of the introduction in the document, serve to remind the employees about the Catholic identity of the institution in which they have been employed to work. As stated in the handbook, employees play vital and indispensable roles in their various positions. They also have a positive impact on the students, by assisting them to succeed. Their services are invaluable in affecting the educational lives of the students. The first step in performing their role is to understand how their work fits into the university’s identity, mission, and vision. This is why the university has a program of orientation for new faculty and other employees.
The handbook contains the strategic plan of the university up to the year 2020. The opening statement of the strategic plan states, “American Catholic University is a community of individuals committed to the transformation and molding of our future servant leaders through Catholic ideals, principles, and values.” The handbook also reflects its Catholic identity, and its commitment to fulfill its Catholic mission. It contains some words of encouragement to the employees to do their work, and play their part to promote the Catholic vision of the institution. The strategic plan has twelve basic goals, all of which reflect Catholic identity. These goals include, celebrating and integrating Catholic character into the life of the university, creating a conducive atmosphere that attracts, motivates, and retains students to make full use of the opportunity provided by the Catholic and academic mission of the institution, fostering academic excellence, identifying, admitting, and graduating well educated students, creating opportunities for student success, strengthening the institution’s Catholic and academic identity, and fostering and encouraging an environment of engagement and service (American Catholic University Administrator and Staff Employee Handbook). These goals in the strategic plan, inserted into the handbook, serve to remind the employees about the vision of the university, how their work fit into the vision of the university, and the importance of their collaboration in achieving it. The strategic plan emphasizes the indispensable role of employees in promoting Catholic identity by working to realize the mission and vision of the institution.

The Administrator and Staff Employee Handbook contains some information about campus ministry. It states, “Campus Ministry provides a pastoral presence on campus and seeks to evangelize and empower all by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, to
become dedicated members of God’s family. Campus Ministry seeks to bring to higher education the Church’s general mission; namely, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ by creating an environment that allows for spiritual, moral, liturgical, and sacramental development, as well as intellectual, social and physical development” (American Catholic University Administrator and Staff Employee Handbook). The handbook also makes reference to the chapel as a place where most of the spiritual activities take place on campus. There is a link in the handbook to the Mass schedule. By having information about campus ministry in the handbook, the university showcases an important aspect of the Catholic university to the employees, and encourages them, especially those who are Catholics, to participate in these spiritual and liturgical activities available on campus.

**Mission Development Seminars for Faculty**

One of the norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is a directive to Catholic institutions of higher education to provide mission seminars for the members of faculty. Pope John Paul II encouraged Catholic colleges and universities to organize programs of continuing education on Catholic identity and mission for the members of faculty and other staff. These programs are to be aimed at reminding members of faculty and staff about Catholic identity and mission, and their role to support and promote it (John Paul II, 1990). In fulfillment of this, American Catholic University sponsors regular seminars on Catholic identity and mission for its faculty. These regular and continuous seminars are meant to remind faculty and staff who, supposedly were already told about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution during their hiring process, and who, supposedly, had attended the orientation on Catholic identity and mission, about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution and their responsibility to respect and support it.
The Center for Catholic Studies, founded in 1997, sponsors seminars on Catholic identity and mission for members of faculty. Explaining how the center started sponsoring seminars for faculty, a research participant said,

The priest who started the Center for Catholic Studies initiated a program of Catholic mission development for our faculty. He did a wonderful job with little support or funding. He began by having meetings with groups of professors. The university was encouraged by this initiative, and started sponsoring regular one-day discussion retreats for faculty. There was funding and the lay professors were paid to write papers on Catholic mission. This was one way of bringing them in, and this is one way they continue to encourage them to participate in mission programs and activities. Eventually, the university started sponsoring many of the programs of the center. This initiative has flourished and taken root in this university.

The priest who initiated the Center for Catholic Studies was a research participant. He said, “I am very much involved in working with the faculty. I am involved in the training of faculty regarding how their work or disciplines relate to the mission of the university.” Another participant stated, “The Center for Catholic Studies is one of the avenues through which American Catholic University promotes its Catholic identity. The center explains the relationship between faith and the various disciplines.”

The Center for Catholic Studies promotes the Catholic identity and mission of American Catholic University by facilitating programs for members of faculty. The various seminars and programs for faculty are geared towards reminding them about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution, and encouraging them to play their part to foster it (American Catholic University website). A research participant stated, “There are the faculty seminars on Catholic identity and mission which take place here on campus. I think it is particularly very helpful to explain Catholic identity to the faculty and encourage them to abide by it.”
There are three stages of the mission seminars. A research participant explained these three stages. He stated,

The first is the University Seminar on Mission, offered through the Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership. This has been done for fifteen consecutive semesters since its inception. The second is the Advanced Seminar on Mission, which is taken by those who have already participated in the first seminar, as a follow-up to it. It is about the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. The third is the Praxis of the Advanced Seminar on Mission. The praxis means that we take what we have received from the mission seminars and apply it to our own work. The aim of the praxis is to bring together faculty who have learned about the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, and explain to them or make them understand how they can implement it in the courses they teach. As a follow up, members of faculty who have participated in the advanced seminar, continue to meet every semester in support groups, where they talk about how to apply all they have learned about the Catholic Intellectual tradition to their syllabi and courses.

The first stage of the seminars is the annul fall, spring, and summer seminars. The Center for Catholic Studies and the Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership sponsor these seminars for faculty. The purpose is to remind the professors about the Catholic identity of the institution, and about their obligation to promote it in their teaching and research. A research participant who teaches faculty during the mission seminars said,

I review the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* with faculty members and administrators every semester in a course and seminar that I teach on the Catholic identity and mission of the university. The course is called the University Seminar on Mission. Every semester we have two hours when we review *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* with the faculty members and administrators.

One of the participants interviewed for this research, presents papers twice every year at the mission seminars. He said,

The seminars are based on the topic, ‘What makes a university Catholic?’ This means the seminars focus, not on what the university is, but what it does to maintain Catholic identity. All colleges and universities serve two publics: the society and the academy, but Catholic institutions of higher education serve three publics: the society, the academy, and the Church. This is in line with what Pope John Paul II said in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* that the Catholic university serves both Church and society.
This participant provided me with a list of questions, which he gives to mission seminar participants at the beginning of the seminars. The list contains 21 questions categorized into three sets. The first set of questions fall under Catholic higher education in service to the society, the second set of questions relate to Catholic higher education in service to the Church, while the third set of questions fall under Catholic higher education in service to the academy. There are three columns for the participants to check either ‘strength,’ ‘weakness,’ or ‘I don’t know,’ to indicate their understanding of how the institution is fulfilling its mission of service. He said that the answers provided by the participants help the university and seminar organizers to determine what the members of faculty think about how the university is maintaining Catholic identity and fulfilling its mission.

Seven of the research participants have attended these seminars at least once. A participant said, “I attended the summer seminar once. The speakers spoke about different topics. The seminars are not compulsory, but voluntary, and people are not forced to attend.” Another participant said, “The summer mission seminars are very helpful to faculty in understanding and keeping in mind the identity and mission of the institution.”

The second stage of the seminars is the faculty retreat. The Center for Catholic Studies organizes a follow-up seminar, called Faculty Retreat, for the faculty and administrators in Rome, Italy. This follow-up seminar is for those who had already participated in the fall, spring, or summer seminars. A research participant who runs the center stated that every year, the Center for Catholic Studies takes some members of faculty to Rome to experience Catholicism in practice. As stated in the university
website, in the year 2015, for example, sixteen professors travelled to Rome for an academic retreat. The annual retreat, which is sponsored by the Center for Catholic Studies and the Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership, provides the participants the opportunity to more deeply reflect on selected topics and themes on Catholic identity, the mission of the university, and their life and work at the university (American Catholic University website). Two research participants have travelled to Rome to participate in the faculty retreat. One of the participants said, “I travelled to Rome with other professors two years ago for the faculty retreat. It was a nice experience. We saw firsthand, the things we hear about the Catholic Church and the things we are taught during the mission seminars. It was not just we hearing from the mission seminar facilitators but seeing things as they are. I am very glad I went to Rome for the faculty retreat. I encourage professors who have not travelled to Rome for the faculty retreat to make effort to participate in the retreat at least once. It is worth travelling to Rome for and worth all the time and effort.”

The third stage of the seminars is called “Praxis Program of the Advanced Seminar on Mission.” They are organized every semester for those who had already participated in the first and second stages of the seminars. They are also open to faculty members who have not attended the first two stages of the seminars but wish to participate. They are continuous mission seminars designed to remind faculty members about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution. This third stage of the mission seminars was initiated in 2013 by the Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership, and co-sponsored by the Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership and the Center for Catholic Studies. The aim of the program is to foster personal, professional,
organizational, and institutional development for administrators and faculty. The aim is also to help them apply the skills gained at the seminar to their disciplines, professions, and positions, as they relate to the mission of the university.

The priest who started the Center for Catholic Studies said,

Every semester, some faculty members participate in the praxis program. The aim is to deepen their commitment to the mission of the university. About sixty faculty members have so far participated in the praxis program, and many more have participated in the regular seminars on mission. During the seminar, administrators and faculty are engaged in topics that help them apply the mission of the university to their departments, disciplines, and positions, by helping them see a connection among the disciplines, in order for them to have an integrated understanding of knowledge and the Catholic intellectual tradition. In the first year of the program, thirteen administrators and faculty members participated in the program, and over sixty faculty members, several deans and senior administrators have participated so far in its three-year history.

Twelve of the research participants have attended at least one of the praxis seminars. One of the participants said, “I am applying the experience from the praxis seminar to my work in the university. I know other participants who are doing the same in their departments.” Another research participant said, “I took part in one of the yearly seminars. It was such a privilege to be part of the conversation with people of different departments of the university, both administrators and faculty. The seminar was very rich with key readings and discussion. I was fascinated by how Catholics and non-Catholics talked about the need to be faithful to the identity and mission of the university.”

The university, in collaboration with a foundation that supports the program, gives a stipend to faculty who participate in the seminars. This incentive given to them is a gesture of appreciation and encouragement to them. It is also aimed at encouraging others to participate in the program. (American Catholic University website). Eight of the
participants lauded the university for the incentive given to faculty members who attend the seminars. One participant said,

Faculty members are actually paid to go to the faculty seminars on mission. You can’t get more of an advocacy than that, inviting people, and providing a very concrete incentive for them to participate. As each cohort moves through, you have between ten and fifteen new faculty members who have a much richer understanding of what it means to be a Catholic university. Over the years that these seminars have been offered, they have had a great level of effect on the schools and colleges.

Another participant stated,

The faculty seminars and retreats stress the mission and identity of this university, and help faculty understand Catholic identity and their obligation to promote and respect it. The fact that they are given some financial compensation as an incentive shows the commitment of the university to Catholic identity and mission. This gesture encourages and motivates more faculty members to participate in the seminars.

Another participant observed that the stipend is not the only factor that is motivating faculty members to attend the seminars. She stated,

The stipend is not the only thing drawing members of faculty to the seminars. Even some who are not eligible for the stipend also attend the seminars. Only full time faculty members are given stipend, but when I attended, there were some part-time faculty who also attended. These part-time members of faculty stated during the seminar that they were there to learn about the Catholic Faith and how they are to support the mission of the university.

The research participants discussed their participation in the university mission seminars. Twelve participants told the researcher that they have attended some of the mission seminars for faculty. They acknowledged that the seminars are about Catholic identity and mission, and serve to remind faculty members about their responsibility to support the mission of the university. They praised the university administration for having such initiatives that help to remind faculty members about the
Catholic identity of the university, and their obligation to promote it in their various departments and positions. A research participant said, “I have attended some of the faculty seminars. They are enlightening and very rich in Catholic identity and mission. Members of faculty are told during the seminars to support the Catholic identity and mission of the university.”

Eight participants said they have not attended any of the seminars. But they acknowledged that they get regular emails inviting them to attend and participate in the mission seminars for faculty. One of these participants said,

I have not actually attended any of the seminars, but I do get updated emails and invites from the departments that organize the seminars on mission for faculty. I am aware, and I will say, to my understanding, there are mission seminars at least once a month, and that speakers are invited to speak to faculty to affirm, to explain, and to inspire them about the Catholic identity and mission of the university.

Another participant said, “I regularly get emails regarding seminars on mission and identity, but I have not attended any of the seminars.”

The Department of Catholic Studies also sponsors and organizes lectures and seminars for faculty, the other members of the university community, and the general public. Participants discussed the seminars organized by the Department of Catholic Studies. The department sponsors seminars regularly and invites the entire members of the university community and even people outside the university community to attend. The seminars are on a whole range of disciplines and topics, such as Catholic Theology and Philosophy, spirituality, liturgy, the traditions, beliefs, and practices of the Church, the relationship or dialogue between the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations and religions, and topics on various Church documents. The department also teaches students about the Catholic Faith through the courses it offers. Students take
some elective courses from the department, which are based on the traditions, beliefs, and practices of the Church. Research participants commended the Department of Catholic Studies for the initiative, and lauded the richness of the seminars, which, according to them, are benefitting the seminar attendees, especially the faculty and students who are learning a lot about the Catholic Faith, the traditions, teachings, beliefs and practices of the Church. One of the participants said,

With the addition of the Department of Catholic Studies in the last four years, there are professors engaged from the Business School, from the School of Nursing, and other professional schools and colleges in the university. I think that is a great positive. The fact that the department sponsors lectures on Catholic identity and mission for the university community on a regular bases to teach them about the Catholic Faith, helps to keep them informed about the teachings of the Church on different topics. The department also teaches students about the Catholic Faith. I think those who are going to be the future of medical care, those who are going to be business professionals, that they have this opportunity to discuss spirituality, to encounter Jesus, to not just go through the program, but an opportunity to, as much as they can, meet the living Lord.

One of the concerns participants who have attended some of the seminars raised about the seminars was the low participation rate of faculty. They observed that only few faculty members attend the seminars and retreats. As stated on the webpage of the Center for Catholic Studies, about fifteen to eighteen professors attend these seminars each time. One of the research participants who facilitates the seminars on mission, said,

The seminars on mission are not well attended. The level of participation is not encouraging. I think it is because the seminars are not compulsory but voluntary. Members of faculty are not, and cannot be forced to attend these seminars on mission, just as they cannot be forced to develop themselves professionally. So this problem of poor attendance is likely to continue.

But another participant said, “The seminars and retreats should be made compulsory for faculty members. They should be made to attend the seminars and retreats, at least once every year, in the course of their careers as members of faculty of
the university. If the seminars were made compulsory at least once every year, the participation rate would be very high.” Another participant argued, “I believe the reason why there is low attendance and participation at the mission seminars is that faculty members are busy with teaching, advising, grading, doing research, and publishing. Also, some faculty members live far from campus. Travelling to campus, especially for extra activities, is not an easy thing for a lot of faculty members. All these would have to be put into consideration.” All the research participants agreed that the university should find a way of encouraging members of faculty to attend the seminars on mission.

Smolin (2009) found, in her research, that there are mission seminars and retreats during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. She noted that several of her research participants stated that they had attended one of the mission seminars. She also found that there is low participation rate in the seminars. For example, she referenced the 2008 annual report of the institution, which states that only twenty-four faculty members from eleven departments attended the seminars during the 2006-2007 academic year.

**Synopsis of Findings for Subsidiary Question 3**

American Catholic University has a hiring for mission program. The university states in its job advertisement section on the website that it is a Catholic university with Catholic mission and identity. There is an inscription for those seeking employment at the institution that, if hired, they would be required to support the Catholic identity and mission. The hiring for mission program of the university is designed to inform job applicants and prospective employees about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution. A majority of the participants stated that there was hiring for mission at the university. Participants confirmed that the description of the university as Catholic is in
job advertisements on the website and on other job advertisement avenues. They also confirmed that the inscription that job seekers would be required to support the Catholic identity and mission of the institution is also written on job advertisements. Eight of the participants stated that they read about the university as a Catholic institution before they applied to teach at the university. They already knew about the Catholic identity, and their obligation to abide by it, even before they applied for a job at the university. One participant said, “I read about the Catholicity of this university on the website before I applied to teach here.”

During job interviews, prospective employees are told about the Catholic mission and identity, and about their responsibility to support it. After explaining the Catholic mission and identity to the prospective employees, they are asked questions about their willingness to support the mission of the institution. While some participants stated that they were told about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution, and were asked questions about their willingness to support the mission, other participants asserted that during their job interviews, the Catholic identity and mission of the institution were not explained to them, and that they were not told they would be required to support it as university employees.

After they are hired to work at the university, the new faculty and other employees are given orientation about Catholic identity and mission. The purpose of the orientation is to explain to them the Catholic identity and mission, and their responsibility to support it in their positions at the university. The orientation sessions are facilitated by the Human Resource Department. The sessions usually last about four hours, with presentations by senior administrators. During the orientation, the participants are given
written materials and the handbook *American Catholic University: A Catholic University*, which contains the Catholic identity, the mission statement, the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities, and the current initiatives of the university. The participants discussed the orientation program. Eight participants said they attended an orientation seminar on Catholic identity and mission after they were hired, and acknowledged that they were given the handbook and other materials on Catholic mission. But twelve participants said they did not attend any orientation program at the university. They, however, acknowledged that there is orientation for new faculty and other employees at the university.

American Catholic University organizes mission seminars for its faculty. The institution sponsors regular mission seminars and retreats for members of faculty. The purpose is to constantly remind them about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution, and their obligation to support it. The seminars and retreats are sponsored and facilitated by the Center for Catholic Studies and the Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership.

There are three stages of the mission seminars. The first is the University Seminar on Mission, which is for first time mission seminar attendees, and is sponsored by the Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership. The second is the Advanced Seminar on Mission, which is for those who had already participated in the first seminar. It is held in Rome, Italy. The third is the Praxis of the Advanced Seminar on Mission, which is held every semester for university professors. The aim is to have a continuous discussion with faculty members about how they can apply all they are learning at the seminars to their
positions at the university, to the courses they teach, and in their interaction with students.

The researcher asked the participants whether they attend the seminars. Twelve participants told the researcher that they have attended some of the mission seminars. While eight of these participants do not attend regularly, four of them are frequent attendees of the seminars. They stated that the seminars are about Catholic identity and mission, and are geared towards reminding faculty members of their responsibility to support the identity and mission of the university. Eight participants said they have not attended any of the mission seminars. They, however, said that they get regular invites to the seminars. All the participants acknowledged that there are mission seminars for faculty members of the institution.

A major concern raised by participants who attend the seminars was the poor attendance of the mission seminars. They observed that only few members of faculty attend the seminars on mission. These participants unanimously stated that the university should encourage all members of faculty to attend the seminars on mission, so that they would be aware and constantly reminded of their responsibility to support and foster the Catholic identity and mission of the university. According to these participants, the full and active participation of a majority or all the faculty members would help to strengthen the Catholic identity and mission of the institution.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This research explored the extent to which American Catholic University is incorporating the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* into its functions, policies, programs, and activities, to maintain Catholic identity. The study explored how the members of faculty of the School of Theology understand the institution to be applying these principles and norms to maintain Catholic identity. This chapter contains the summary of the problem, the methodology and limitation of the methodology, the summary of the study, the summary of the findings, the implications of the study for Catholic higher education, the recommendations for policy and practice, the recommendations for future research, and the conclusion.

Summary of the Problem

Catholic institutions of higher education have their distinctive identity, which should reflect in every aspect of their existence. Catholic colleges and universities in the United States successfully maintained this identity until the late 1960s, when they started having an identity crisis (O’Brien, 1994). In the late 1960s, people started asking serious questions about the meaning and implications of a distinctive identity for Catholic institutions of higher education. Since then, Catholic institutions have contended and struggled with this issue.

In response, Church and Catholic higher education leaders made effort to address the issue and find solutions in order to ensure that institutions of higher education
maintain their identity as they did in the past. The Church leadership at the Vatican saw this identity crisis as a major concern, and was determined to find a solution, so that Catholic institutions would maintain a strong Catholic identity. To address the problem, find a solution, and encourage Catholic institutions of higher education to maintain their identity, Pope John Paul II issued the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* on August 15, 1990. In the document, the Supreme Pontiff defined Catholic identity, enumerated the essential characteristics of Catholic institutions of higher education, and stated the principles, directives, guidelines, and norms that Catholic colleges and universities are to follow and incorporate into their functions, policies and programs, in order to maintain a vibrant Catholic identity. According to Rebore (2003), the document serves as a major guide for Catholic institutions of higher education in their efforts to understand and live their identity.

In response to the directive of Pope John Paul II that bishop conferences of countries adopt and apply the principles and norms for Catholic institutions of higher education in their countries, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* in the year 2000. In the document, the bishops of the United States spelled out the principles, guidelines, directives, and norms that Catholic colleges and universities in the United States were to adopt and incorporate into their functions, policies, programs, and activities, in order to maintain a strong Catholic identity.

The purpose of this research was to achieve an understanding of how American Catholic University has complied with the principles, guidelines, directives, and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* to
maintain Catholic identity. The research explored the policies and programs that the institution has adopted since the publication of both documents, in order to determine the extent to which they conform to Catholic identity, and the extent to which the institution is employing them to maintain Catholic identity. At a time when many Catholic institutions of higher education have lost their Catholic identity, and when identity crisis is threatening to derail others from maintaining their identity, it was important to explore to what extent American Catholic University is applying the principles and norms in both documents, and to what extent it is staying true to its Catholic identity.

**Methodology and Limitation of the Methodology**

The method used for this research was a qualitative case study of American Catholic University. This method allowed for a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the extent to which the institution has incorporated the principles, guidelines, directives, and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* into its functions, policies, and programs, to maintain Catholic identity. To achieve this, the researcher interviewed twenty members of faculty of the School of Theology at the institution. Twelve Semi-structured interview questions were drawn from the research questions. The participants answered the questions based on their experience and observation of how the institution is implementing the policies and executing the programs. The researcher also used recent documents and policy statements of the institution to determine the extent to which it is professing Catholic identity. With the responses from the participants and the information gathered from the documents, the researcher was able to determine how the institution is responding to the
principles and norms in both documents, and how it is implementing its policies and programs to maintain Catholic identity.

The methodology used for this research had one major limitation. The study explored the extent to which American Catholic University is incorporating the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* into its functions, policies, and programs, to maintain Catholic identity. For the study, the researcher interviewed faculty members from only one school, which is the School of Theology. Although the researcher interviewed only the faculty members of the School of Theology chiefly because the *mandatum*, which only professors who teach the theological disciplines at Catholic institutions of higher education are required to have to teach the theological disciplines, was part of the research, studies of this nature would be better explored, and the findings would be better determined and more comprehensive, if faculty members from several or all departments, colleges and schools of the institution being studied, are interviewed. The interviews with professors drawn from multiple or all the schools, colleges or departments of the institution under study, would offer insights and better understanding into how the institution is maintaining Catholic identity and fulfilling its mission.

**Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which American Catholic University is incorporating the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* into its functions, policies, and programs, to maintain Catholic identity. The views of the faculty of the School of Theology at the institution were used to determine how the institution is applying the
principles and norms in both documents to maintain Catholic identity. The main topics covered and researched were Catholic identity, the essential characteristics of Catholic institutions of higher education, institutional mission, as well as the following policies and programs for implementing the vision of Pope John Paul II: campus ministry, the core curriculum, academic freedom for faculty, the required *mandatum* for faculty who teach the theological disciplines, the hiring for mission program, orientation for new faculty, and mission seminars for faculty. The researcher explored the participants’ personal characterization of the policies and programs of the institution.

To determining how American Catholic University has responded to, and complied with the principles and norms in both documents, primary and subsidiary research questions were generated. These questions are:

1) How is American Catholic University responding, in the view of the faculty of the School of Theology, to the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*, to maintain Catholic identity?

2) How do the faculty of the School of Theology at American Catholic University understand the Catholic identity and mission of the institution?

3) What efforts have been made by American Catholic University to incorporate the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* into its policies and programs?

4) What efforts, according to the faculty of the School of Theology, are being made by American Catholic University to explain Catholic identity and its mission to the members of faculty?

The researcher drew twelve semi-structured interview questions from the research questions. The researcher asked participants these questions during the interviews, to
determine their understanding of how the institution is maintaining Catholic identity. In addition, the researcher consulted the institutional documents containing the policies and programs that the institution had adopted since the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*, in response to, and in line with both documents. These interviews and documents helped the researcher to understand and determine the extent to which the institution is maintaining Catholic identity.

**Summary of the Findings**

The research offered insight into how American Catholic University is incorporating the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* into its functions, policies, and programs. To answer each of the subsidiary questions, the researcher asked the participants a series of interview questions. The first subsidiary question, which sought to determine the participants’ understanding of Catholic identity as practiced in the institution, included Catholic identity, the essential characteristics of Catholic institutions of higher education, and the mission statement of the institution. For the second subsidiary research question, which sought to ascertain the specific policies and programs of the university that relate to Catholic identity, the themes that emerged were campus ministry, the core curriculum, academic freedom, and the *mandatum*. The third subsidiary research question, which explored the policies and programs adopted by the institution to explain Catholic identity and mission to the members of faculty, examined the hiring for mission program, orientation for new faculty and staff, and mission seminars for members of faculty. Many of these initiatives, which were adopted after the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and
The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States, were in response to the principles and norms in both documents. With the responses from the participants, the researcher understood the extent to which American Catholic University has responded to Ex Corde Ecclesiae and The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States to maintain Catholic identity.

The first result from the research was the extent to which American Catholic University is maintaining Catholic identity and fulfilling the essential characteristics of Catholic institutions of higher education. American Catholic University prides itself as an institution that maintains Catholic identity and fulfills the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities. In maintaining Catholic identity, it endeavors to incorporate Catholic principles, values, and norms into its policies and programs. Several of the participants believed that, to a large extent, the institution is presently maintaining Catholic identity. But some participants asserted that, although the institution has made progress in the area of maintaining Catholic identity, not all in the university community are supporting the identity and mission. For example, they pointed out that not all faculty members are participating in university mission programs. They maintained that the institution should encourage all to be actively involved in supporting and promoting the identity and mission. According to these participants, it is by the collaborative efforts of all the members of the university community that the institution would maintain a strong identity. As a major step to maintaining Catholic identity, all Catholic institutions are enjoined by Pope John Paul II to have a relationship with the Church. The participants noted that American Catholic University has a relationship with the local archdiocese. Many of the participants described the relationship as strong, robust, and cordial. They
noted that this relationship is helping the institution to live Catholic ideals and maintain a Catholic culture.

Research participants believed that American Catholic University possesses and lives the essential characteristics of Catholic institutions of higher education. According to the participants, this is reflected in its policies and programs through which it inspires individuals and the entire university community, reflects the Catholic faith, shows fidelity to the Christian message, and stays true to its commitment to service. In their responses to its commitment to service, a majority of the participants referred to the university model, which is, “Servant leadership for a global community.” They asserted that the university serves in various ways. Some of the services the university provides are healthcare for the members of the university community, and scholarship or need-based financial aid for students from economically disadvantaged homes. Some participants noted that a Catholic university should not just provide services, but serve according to the mind of Christ. This means that the service they provide must flow from Catholic identity and be modeled after Christ who came, not to be served, but to serve, and who laid down his life for all people. These participants asserted that American Catholic University is providing this Christ-centered service. The participants noted that, in addition to providing service, the university encourages students to be involved in service. The students are taught service, and, as a course requirement, they put it into practice by participating in community service. The aim is to encourage them to be involved in service as students, and to prepare them to be involved in service in their future professions and careers.
A major feature that emerged from the findings is the mission statement of American Catholic University. The mission statement is displayed on the university website and in major documents of the institution. The mission statement has the word ‘Catholic,’ with a reference to the institution as “a major Catholic university.” The mission statement emphasizes that the education the institution gives to students is not just intellectual, but also moral education, and an education centered on Catholic values. It provides a complete education that equips students to face future challenges, and an education that prepares them to, in the present and the future, contribute to the good of their immediate society and the world at large. The participants maintained that the university provides this complete education to students. One participant, however, pointed out that the word ‘values’ in the mission statement is vague and ambiguous. This participant noted that the institution should clarify what the word ‘values’ in the mission statement means, and what types of values it is inculcating in the students. This, he said, would help people understand what the institution stands for, and how it is using its values to maintain Catholic identity.

A major area of the university life that featured prominently during the research was campus ministry. American Catholic University provides spiritual and liturgical activities on campus. To underscore the importance of ministry and spiritual activities on campus, the university created the Office of the Vice President of Mission and Ministry. The Office of Mission and Ministry coordinates the spiritual, liturgical, and pastoral activities on campus. Such activities include daily Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the celebration and conferral of the sacraments, and other spiritual activities. The groups formed by the Office of Mission and Ministry, such as the Fellowship of Catholic
University Students (FOCUS), Saint Paul Outreach (SPO), the Community of Saint John (CSJ), and the Division of Volunteer Efforts (DOVE), are involved in catechesis, bible study, evangelization, retreats, seminars, and other services to students. These groups reach out to both Catholic and non-Catholic students. Participants were unanimous in stating the richness of campus ministry through its programs and activities. They noted that the campus ministry of American Catholic University has been expanded and has grown tremendously over the years.

The core curriculum was another university policy that featured prominently during the interviews. Participants generally knew about the core curriculum, and gave their take on the policy. A task force on Catholicity recommended that the university undergraduate core curricula be revised to include courses in Theology and Philosophy, so that all students would have the opportunity to learn about the intellectual traditions of Catholic Theology and Philosophy. It recommended that undergraduate students be required to take courses in Catholic Theology and Christian Philosophy. Based on this, the researcher asked the participants whether Catholic Theology and Christian Philosophy courses are included in the present core curriculum, and whether they think the core courses should include Theology and Christian Philosophy courses. The participants agreed that Catholic Theology and Philosophy courses are not included in the present core curriculum, but while some participants argued that Theology and Christian Philosophy courses should necessarily be included in the university core curriculum, other participants asserted that Theology and Christian Philosophy courses should not necessarily be part of the core courses. The participants who argued that the core curriculum should necessarily include Theology and Christian Philosophy courses, stated
that the students are not learning much about the Catholic Faith in the present core curriculum. One participant noted that the students are not even required to take any course on Catholicism. They advocated a revision of the core curriculum courses to include Catholic Theology and Philosophy as recommended by the task force on Catholicism. They agreed that the purpose of the core curriculum is not, and should not be to convert non-Catholic students. But they argued that since they attend a Catholic institution, they should learn about the Catholic Faith. The participants who argued in favor of the present core curriculum that does not include Catholic Theology and Philosophy courses, argued that it is difficult to teach Theology to all the students, since not all the students are Catholics, and not all the professors are Catholics. According to them, it is difficult to include theology courses in the core curriculum, since there are diverse students of various faiths and no faith. It is also difficult to get professors who are both Catholic and non-Catholic to agree to the same core courses. They expressed satisfaction at the present core curriculum, and argued that it is serving its purpose, since, according to them, there are some courses about the Catholic Faith and traditions in the present core curriculum, even though they are not pure theology courses. They asserted that students are learning about the Catholic Faith and the traditions of the Church in these courses on Catholic Faith and teachings.

Academic freedom was addressed with one of the interview questions. The researcher asked the participants whether they thought there is academic freedom at American Catholic University. The participants were unanimous in stating that there is academic freedom at the institution. They asserted that the institution creates and encourages an atmosphere of freedom. Many of the participants said they have not
personally experienced any constraint, and have not seen or heard any professor complain that they don’t have academic freedom, or that the university has limited their freedom in any way.

Many of the participants talked about academic freedom with responsibility. They said some people understand academic freedom as license to do what they want, when they want it, and how they want it. They stated that this is not academic freedom. They contended that academic freedom does not mean freedom to do or teach what one likes. They referred to the freedom Pope John Paul II wrote about in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, which is freedom that is exercised in conformity to the truth, and for the common good. This means that all teaching, research, and service at a Catholic university must lead to the common good. To achieve this, freedom must be exercised in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church. The participants stated that freedom in a Catholic university should be exercised with responsibility. All who exercise freedom must do so with responsibility to uphold the truth and work for the common good. Majority of the participants noted that the university created the culture of freedom with responsibility, and so, the faculty members are working and acting in that direction. They asserted that the university itself encourages and promotes freedom of inquiry and expression that is accompanied with responsibility. But while the other participants agreed the university encourages freedom with responsibility, they however maintained that some professors are still not exercising freedom with responsibility, since they are still teaching in ways contrary to the teachings and beliefs of the Church.

The participants discussed the *mandatum* that professors who teach the theological disciplines are required to have to teach Catholic Theology at a Catholic
university. All the participants stated that they requested and received the *mandatum* from the local archbishop to teach theology at the institution. They stated that they did not have difficulty receiving the *mandatum*, but received it once they applied and met all the requirements. They explained the process involved in requesting and receiving the *mandatum*. They stated that the process involves writing an application of request of the *mandatum* along with the applicant’s curriculum vitae, resume, and publications, to the archbishop. The archbishop reviews and examines the documents. Once the archbishop is satisfied, he grants the *mandatum* to the professor. The professor subsequently makes a profession of faith before the archbishop or the dean of the School of Theology.

Some in the academia see the *mandatum* as an infringement or violation of the academic rights of professors who are required to have the *mandatum*. Such people who are opposed to the *mandatum* argue that all those who are required to have, and all who actually requested and received the *mandatum* are, by that very fact, no longer free to teach as they please, but are under compulsion to teach against their will. But research participants did not see the *mandatum* as limiting freedom. All the participants said they have the *mandatum*, and did not see the *mandatum* as a violation of their academic rights or as limiting their academic freedom. According to them, even with the *mandatum*, they still have full academic rights. They contended that theology is a discipline that should not be taught according to peoples’ personal beliefs or whims, but a discipline that must be taught according to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church. They all stated that professors who teach the theological disciplines must teach in line with the beliefs of the Church. They stated that the *mandatum* encourages professors who teach the theological disciplines to focus on teaching according to the mind of the Church. All the participants
said they were not forced to request and receive the *mandatum*, rather, they requested it of their own free will. They were satisfied with the requirement for professors who teach the theological disciplines to have the *mandatum* to teach theology at the institution and at other Catholic institutions of higher education.

Hiring for mission is one of the programs at American Catholic University that reflects its Catholic identity. The program involves the hiring of administrators, faculty, and staff who would support and foster the Catholic identity and mission of the university. The university recruits, hires, and develops its employees for mission. In job advertisements and on the university website, job applicants are informed about the Catholic identity and mission of the university. During job interviews, candidates and prospective employees are informed about the Catholic identity and mission, and also told they would be required to promote, or at least, respect it, if they are hired to work at the institution.

Participants knew about the hiring for mission program. Many of the participants stated that the program has helped to strengthen the Catholic identity of the institution. They believed this is so because employees are informed from the beginning about the identity and mission of the institution, and also told that they would be required to support it if hired. But other participants asserted that, although hiring for mission is a program of the university, the Catholic identity and mission of the institution are not being adequately explained to prospective employees during job interviews. They argued that the initiative is not being enforced, since, according to them, the hiring personnel are not following through to explain the Catholic identity and mission to the applicants.
These participants also stated that applicants are not informed about the responsibility of all employees of the institution to support the Catholic mission.

After they are hired, the new employees are given orientation about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution, and their role and responsibility to support it. Regarding orientation for new faculty and other employees, all the participants agreed that there is orientation for new faculty and staff of the university. The participants who were hired at the university before the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and before the program was adopted, said they did not have a formal orientation on Catholic identity and mission. But some participants, who were hired after the policy took effect, stated that they attended an orientation program after they were hired. Most participants noted that the orientation program is a good program for the university, since faculty and staff are told from the beginning about Catholic identity and the mission of the institution, along with their obligation to promote or respect it. They stated that this initiative is helping faculty and staff focus on their work in relation to Catholic identity and mission. However, some participants were concerned that the program is not serving its purpose, since new faculty and staff are not required to attend. They stated that not all new faculty and staff attend the orientation seminars, and that not much about Catholic identity and mission is explained to them during orientation seminars. These participants recommended that the university make the orientation program mandatory for all new faculty members and staff, and also make Catholic identity and mission a major part of the orientation seminars. According to these participants, this would ensure that all new professors are taught about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution, and their duties to support, promote, or at least, respect it.
The mission seminars for faculty also featured during the research. American Catholic University organizes mission seminars for its members of faculty to remind them about Catholic identity, and to explain to them or remind them about how they are to support and foster it. The participants knew about the seminars. Most participants said the programs are helping faculty to have a better understanding of Catholic identity and mission, and also encouraging them to support and foster it. Few of the participants said only few professors attend the seminars, and that not all who attend are applying what they learn at the seminars to what they teach in the classroom. Regarding their attendance and participation at the seminars, while twelve participants stated that they had attended some of the seminars on mission, eight participants stated that they have not attended any of the mission seminars, but they acknowledged that they get regular invitation by email to attend.

The issue of low attendance and participation in the seminars on mission by faculty members was discussed. The participants who attend the seminars noted that only very few professors attend the mission seminars. Some participants noted that the reason for the low attendance rate was due to the fact that professors are busy with teaching, research, and various other programs. Some participants stated that some professors live very far from campus, and so, do not feel like coming to campus for anything outside of their main responsibilities. But some other participants argued that the major reason for the low participation was the fact that the seminars are not compulsory, but voluntary. They argued that when programs of that nature are optional, people do not see the need to attend. Based on this, some participants suggested that the university mandate professors
to attend the seminars at least once every year. They believed this strategy would encourage them to attend and participate.

**Implications for Catholic Higher Education**

This study of the identity and mission of American Catholic University has some implications for Catholic higher education. The researcher identified some of the implications of this study for other Catholic colleges and universities in the United States. American Catholic University has adopted and implemented some strategies to strengthen Catholic identity. Other Catholic institutions of higher education in the United States can also adopt and execute these same strategies to maintain a strong and vibrant Catholic identity.

One of the marks of a Catholic university is its relationship with the Church. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* literary translates ‘from the heart of the Church.’ His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, gave the document this title to emphasize the fact that Catholic institutions of higher education are born from the Church, they are part of the Church, and therefore, should function and operate according to the teachings, beliefs, and practices of the Church. In the document, the Supreme Pontiff maintained that every Catholic university must have a strong relationship with the local Church where it is located. This relationship with the Church is pivotal, as Catholic institutions of higher education strive to maintain their identity.

This research revealed that American Catholic University has a strong relationship with the Church. It enjoys a robust relationship with the archdiocese that sponsors it. The archbishop is the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and the President of the Board of Regents. He chairs board meetings, and spearheads the formulation and setting
of policies. He also meets regularly with the President and Provost of the institution to get update about the implementation of policies, and about the programs and activities taking place at the university. The archbishop also gives his input, ideas and suggestions. Also, many of the priests of the archdiocese play different roles, some as Members of the Board of Trustees or the Board of Regents, some as university administrators, and some as members of faculty. All the priests of the archdiocese who live and work at the university are very much involved in spiritual and liturgical activities, and pastoral work at the university. This relationship has put the institution on a path of maintaining Catholic identity and culture. Many Catholic colleges and universities in the United States lost their Catholic identity in the past, and some are struggling at present to maintain their identity as Catholic institutions, partly because they severed their ties with the dioceses or religious orders that sponsored them, and ended their relationships with the local Churches in which they are located. The implication of this study to Catholic institutions of higher education is the importance of maintaining strong ties with the Church. This demonstrably gives them strong support and encouragement in living their Catholic identity and culture, as is evident in American Catholic University. Catholic institutions that were founded and are being sponsored by dioceses should maintain strong ties with the dioceses. Those institutions that were founded and are being sponsored by religious congregations should remain tied to their sponsoring religious orders, and also have a relationship with the dioceses in which the institutions are located. Most importantly, all Catholic institutions should abide by the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*. They should have a strong relationship with the universal Church by functioning and operating in accordance with
the laws and teachings of the Church. By following the teachings of the Church, and by maintaining strong relationships with the Church, both at the universal, national, and local levels, Catholic institutions of higher education will maintain a strong Catholic identity and culture.

American Catholic University has a Mission and Identity Committee at the governance level. This committee was formed to discuss matters of the institution’s Catholic identity and mission that are referred to the Board of Regents by the Board of Trustees. The committee meets regularly, and makes policy recommendations regarding Catholic identity and mission to the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents. The recommendations of the committee have helped the Boards of Trustees and Regents to formulate and approve policies that have strengthened Catholic identity and culture at the institution. Catholic colleges and universities that do not have mission and identity committees at the governance level should borrow a page from American Catholic University, and consider constituting such committees. The committees should be charged with the responsibility of evaluating the Catholic culture and practices in the institutions, and charged with making policy recommendations to the Boards of Trustees and Regents. Such committees would be helpful in making key policy recommendations that would assist the Boards of Trustees and Regents to set policies that would be useful to the Catholic universities, in their efforts to maintain Catholic identity.

American Catholic University has a hiring for mission initiative, orientation for new faculty and staff, and mission seminars for members of faculty. The hiring for mission initiative is geared towards informing job applicants about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution. The information about the Catholic identity of the
institution is on the university website and on job advertisements. The Catholic identity is also explained to applicants during job interviews. They are informed that they would be required to respect and support the Catholic identity of the institution if they are hired. After they are hired, new employees are given an orientation about Catholic identity and mission, and they are informed about their role in supporting and fostering it. The institution organizes regular mission seminars and retreats for faculty and staff, to remind them about its Catholic identity and mission, and their role to support and foster it. These initiatives and practices have served the university well in terms of encouraging the faculty and staff to focus their minds and attention on the Catholic identity of the institution, and on their responsibility to support and foster it. Such initiatives and practices, when adopted by other Catholic institutions, would serve to inform or remind their faculty and staff about the Catholic identity of the institutions, and their responsibility to support and foster it. The support of the identity and mission by the faculty and staff of Catholic institutions would go a long way to help them maintain Catholic identity.

**Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

Based on the research findings regarding how American Catholic University is applying the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* to maintain Catholic identity, the researcher made some recommendations to the institution for improvement on its effort to maintain a strong Catholic identity and culture.

This research revealed that American Catholic University has a strong relationship with the archdiocese that sponsors it. The research revealed that this
relationship has affected the institution in a positive way, and has been vital in helping
the institution maintain a stronger Catholic identity. The participants posited that for the
institution to maintain a strong and vibrant Catholic identity, this relationship between the
archdiocese and the institution must be maintained and sustained. The Church authority
of the archdiocese must continue to be involved in the life of the university, and continue
to support its effort of strengthening its Catholic identity. The archdiocesan and
university authorities must continue to play their various parts and work together. This
collaboration will be vital as the institution continues to make efforts to maintain a strong
Catholic identity in the future and meet its objectives.

The Mission and Identity Committee constituted by the Boards of Trustees and
Regents to make policy recommendations to the Boards is a big step in helping them
formulate policies that are in line with Catholic identity and mission. This committee
functions at the governance level. For effective practice, there would be need for the
administration of the institution to set up a campus committee on Catholic identity and
mission. The responsibility of this committee would be to evaluate the activities of the
institution on a regular basis, make assessment of the progress the institution is making in
terms of maintaining Catholic identity and fulfilling its mission, and also make
recommendations to the institution regarding better strategies to be adopted, and better
ways of implementation of policies and programs to maintain Catholic identity. The
regular assessment by the committee would identify the progress the institution is
making, and also identify the areas in which it is falling short. Based on the evaluation,
assessment and recommendations, the institution will be able to make improvement and
plan new strategies to maintain a strong Catholic identity.
American Catholic University has an initiative called hiring for mission. This initiative is geared towards giving information about the Catholic identity of the institution to those seeking employment at the institution. This is great and laudable because, applicants know from the beginning that the institution they are applying to, or intending to apply to, is Catholic. Also, the orientation for new faculty and staff, and the mission seminars for faculty and staff are commendable initiatives and programs, because they are focusing the employees on the Catholic identity and mission of the institution and their responsibility to support it. There were concerns by some research participants that these programs are not being fully implemented. Some participants were concerned that during job interviews, the prospective employees are not adequately informed about the Catholic identity and mission of the institution, and the obligation of all employees to support it. Some participants raised concerns that during orientation, the new faculty and staff are not given adequate information about Catholic identity and mission and how they are to support it. Also, there were concerns by some participants that only a few members of faculty and staff participate in the mission seminars. The researcher recommends that, for the hiring for mission initiative, the institution should publicize adequately, the Catholic identity of the institution, and explain it in detail to applicants during job interviews. They should be made to fully understand that they would be required to support it as employees of the institution. For the orientation seminars, the institution should ensure that all new employees attend the seminars. The institution should also ensure that the mission and identity of the institution, and their responsibility to support and promote it, are adequately explained to the new employees. Regarding the mission seminars, the institution should publicize and popularize the seminars and
retreats for faculty and staff, and encourage them to attend the seminars. During the seminars, a good amount of time should be devoted to explaining the mission and identity of the institution to the faculty and other employees. Attendance of and full participation of faculty and staff at mission seminars would give them the opportunity to be adequately informed and reminded about their duty to support and foster the institution’s identity and mission.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This research explored the extent to which American Catholic University is incorporating the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* into its functions, policies and programs to maintain Catholic identity. American Catholic University is a diocesan university located in the United States. The researcher recommends that future research on a similar topic should focus on a case study of another diocesan Catholic university in the United States, to explore how the institution is maintaining Catholic identity. The researcher also recommends that future research on this or similar topic study a Catholic university sponsored by a religious congregation, to determine how that institution is maintaining Catholic identity and fulfilling its mission.

This study was a case study of one Catholic institution. For future research, the researcher recommends a comparative study of two or more Catholic universities. Future comparative studies could focus on two or more diocesan universities, two or more Catholic universities sponsored by the same congregation, two or more institutions sponsored by different congregations, or a diocesan institution and an institution sponsored by a religious congregation. Future researchers can also consider comparative
studies of a Catholic university in the United States and a Catholic university in another country. A comparative study would offer great insight into how various Catholic institutions are applying similar or different initiatives and strategies to maintain Catholic identity.

This research focused on the understanding of Catholic identity by the faculty of American Catholic University, and their thoughts regarding how the institution is maintaining Catholic identity in response to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*. The research participants were drawn from the School of Theology. Only the members of faculty of the School of Theology participated in the research. The rationale for this selection was that, the *mandatum*, which is a requirement for only professors who teach the theological disciplines at Catholic universities, was a major part of the research, and a designated focus of some interview questions. Only professors who teach the theological disciplines can be asked questions about whether they have the *mandatum*, since they are the only group of faculty required to have the *mandatum*. Also, previous research on the Catholic identity and mission of the institution focused mainly on administration. So the focus of this research on faculty represents a new direction, which is, exploring the thoughts and understanding of faculty regarding the Catholic identity and mission of the institution. The researcher recommends that future researchers study more about the understanding of faculty members regarding how the institution is maintaining Catholic identity. Future qualitative research in a Catholic university, on this or similar topics, should focus on interviewing members of faculty of other schools, colleges and departments in the institution being studied. Future research can draw and select participants from different schools, colleges, or departments.
of the institution, or do inter-departmental study, which means comparing the thoughts and perceptions of faculty of two or more schools, colleges, or departments. The views of faculty of multiple departments, as against just one department, would help in understanding the views of a wide range of faculty members, and help to better understand how the institution is maintaining Catholic identity.

The participants for this research had divergent views about the core courses that should make up the core curriculum. While some participants opined that the core courses should necessarily include Catholic Theology and Christian Philosophy courses, other participants were of the view that the core courses should not necessarily include Catholic Theology and Philosophy courses, but should include both courses in Catholic tradition and secular courses. Participants who argued that the core courses should necessarily include Theology and Christian Philosophy courses noted that students are not learning about the Church in the present curriculum, since, according to them, there are no Catholic Theology courses in which students can learn about the teachings, beliefs, and practices of the Church. They argued that since the students, both Catholic and non-Catholic, attend a Catholic university, they must be taught, and they must learn about Catholic Theology, which is about the tradition, beliefs, and practices of the Church. But the participants who argued that Catholic Theology and Christian Philosophy courses should not necessarily be part of the core courses, opined that students are learning a lot about the traditions, teachings, beliefs and practices of the Church in the present core curriculum, since it contains some courses about Catholic tradition. These participants also argued that there are both Catholic and non-Catholic students studying at the institution. In their view, it would not be right to impose theology courses on non-
Catholic students, since it is not their religion. Since the members of faculty of the School of Theology had divergent views about what should constitute the core courses, the researcher recommends that future researchers ask members of faculty of other departments questions about the core curriculum, and about the nature of the courses that should constitute the core curriculum. This will help in understanding the thoughts of faculty members from other departments regarding the core curriculum, and the courses that should constitute the core curriculum.

All the participants interviewed for this research stated that American Catholic University creates a culture of freedom at the institution, guarantees academic freedom for its faculty, and upholds academic freedom with responsibility, and for the common good. Although some participants asserted that some are not exercising their freedom in accordance with the teachings of the Church, they all agreed that the institution upholds and encourages academic freedom that is exercised in accordance with the teachings of the Church. The participants also stated that they all enjoy full academic freedom at the institution. For future research, the researcher recommends that future researchers ask faculty members of other departments, questions about academic freedom. Such questions should include, whether they think the university allows academic freedom for faculty, the kind of freedom the university upholds and encourages, whether they enjoy academic freedom, and the kind of freedom the members of faculty of the institution enjoy. This will offer insight into the thoughts of majority or all the faculty members of the institution, regarding the nature of the academic freedom that is encouraged and practiced at the institution.
The research participants all stated that they requested the mandatum freely, and also stated that they all have the mandatum. They also unanimously stated that, contrary to the opinion of some in academia that the mandatum is a violation of the academic freedom of professors who are required to request and receive the mandatum, the mandatum does not limit academic freedom. They asserted that even with the mandatum that they have, they still enjoy full academic freedom. Although only professors who teach the theological disciplines at Catholic universities are required to have the mandatum, and should be asked whether they have the mandatum, the researcher does not think it will be out of place to ask professors from other departments at Catholic universities what they think about the mandatum, and whether they would request the mandatum if it were made compulsory for all professors who teach at Catholic universities, as a requirement to teach any courses at Catholic universities. This would help to understand the thoughts of professors from other departments regarding the mandatum.

**Conclusion**

This study explored the extent to which American Catholic University is incorporating the principles and norms in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* into its policies and programs to maintain Catholic identity. To achieve this, some of the major policies and programs of the institution, which were adopted after the publication of the documents, were examined to determine whether they conform to Catholic identity, and whether they are being implemented according to the guidelines and stipulations in the documents. The researcher sought the thoughts of the faculty of the School of Theology to understand the extent to which the
institution is maintaining Catholic identity. Past qualitative research on Catholic identity and the mission of Catholic colleges and universities focused mainly on interviews with Catholic institution administrators to get their thoughts and understanding regarding Catholic identity and mission. The views and experiences of administrators of Catholic institutions of higher education have been used to measure how Catholic institutions are adhering to or deviating from the principles and norms of Catholic identity. This research sought the views of members of faculty of the School of Theology of American Catholic University. Their views, understanding, and experiences were used to ascertain how the institution is adhering to the principles of Catholic identity. The research participants largely stated that the institution is making progress in the area of strengthening Catholic identity through its functions, policies and programs. But they also agreed that the institution should make more effort to strengthen its policies and programs, and do more in terms of implementation in order to maintain a vibrant Catholic identity. In this light, participants made some suggestions about how the institution can improve on maintaining Catholic identity and culture. Participants suggested that the institution should improve on its mission-centered programs, and encourage all the members of the university community to be involved in, and to participate in mission-centered programs and activities. The institution should consider these suggestions and incorporate them as it continues to seek ways to improve on its present record, and maintain a strong Catholic identity.

Collaboration is critically important in any organization or enterprise. The progress and growth of an organization depends, to a large extent, on the cooperation and collaboration of all the members of the organization. American Catholic University needs
the collaborative efforts of all the members of the university community, and indeed, all
associated with the institution. To achieve its goals and objectives, all the members must
know, understand, and play their respective parts. In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, His Holiness,
Pope John Paul II stated the roles of diocesan bishops, religious congregations, boards of
trustees, administrators of Catholic institutions, faculty, staff, and students. The Supreme
Pontiff encouraged all participants to perform their roles and do their work in order to
perpetuate Catholic identity and culture at the institutions. American Catholic University
and all its members must heed this call and put it into practice. This collaboration and
cooperation, with all the members of the university community playing their parts, will
make the institution be, in the words of Pope John Paul II, “An academic institution in
which Catholicism is vitally present and operative” (John Paul II, 1990), a Catholic
institution that maintains a vibrant Catholic identity and culture.
REFERENCES


Appendices
Appendix A
Pre-IRB Approval Letter

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION OR RELATED ACTIVITIES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

All material must be typed.

PROJECT TITLE: The Identity and Mission of an American Catholic University, in Light of Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution Ex Corde Ecclesiae

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:

In making this application, I/we certify that I/we have read and understand the University's policies and procedures governing research, development, and related activities involving human subjects. I/we shall comply with the letter and spirit of those policies. I/we further acknowledge my/our obligation to (1) obtain written approval of significant deviations from the originally-approved protocol BEFORE making those deviations, and (2) report immediately all adverse effects of the study to the subjects to the Director of the Institutional Review Board, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079.

RESEARCHER(S) Ireneus Ikhame 2/23/2016

**Please print or type out names of all researchers below signature. Use separate sheet of paper, if necessary.**

My signature indicates that I have reviewed the attached materials of my student advisee and consider them to meet IRB standards.

RESEARCHER'S FACULTY ADVISOR: Joseph Stefrar, Ph.D. 2/23/16

**Please print or type out name below signature**

The request for approval submitted by the above researcher(s) was considered by the IRB for Research Involving Human Subjects Research at the March 2016 meeting.

The application was approved / not approved by the Committee. Special conditions were / were not set by the IRB. (Any special conditions are described on the reverse side.)

DIRECTOR, SETON HALL UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

4/30/16

Seton Hall University
3/2009
April 20, 2016

Rev. Irenaeus Ikhanie
2 Oak Street
Beacon, NY 12508

Dear Fr. Ikhanie,

The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board has reviewed the information you have submitted addressing the concerns for your proposal entitled "The Identity and Mission of an American Catholic University, in Light of Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution, Ex Corde Ecclesiae." Your research protocol is hereby approved as revised through expedited review. The IRB reserves the right to recall the proposal at any time for full review.

Enclosed for your records are the signed Request for Approval form and the stamped original Consent Form. Make copies only of this stamped document.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

According to federal regulations, continuing review of already approved research is mandated to take place at least 12 months after this initial approval. You will receive communication from the IRB Office for this several months before the anniversary date of your initial approval.

Thank you for your cooperation.

In harmony with federal regulations, none of the investigators or research staff involved in the study took part in the final decision.

Sincerely,

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.
Professor
Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Joseph Stetar
Appendix C

Letter of Solicitation

Dear Participant,

My name is Irenaeus Ikhane, a doctoral student in the Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy, College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University, New Jersey.

I would like to interview you for a research on the identity and mission of Seton Hall University. The purpose of the research is to explore how Seton Hall University is trying to maintain Catholic identity, and to explore how the members of faculty of the School of Theology understand Catholic identity and perceive the institution to be fulfilling its mission.

The expected duration of your participation in the research is one hour. It will be a one-hour, one-on-one, sit-down interview with you. I would like to ask you the following questions:

1. Kindly explain what you know about the document, Ex Corde Ecclesiae.
2. Briefly explain the identity of a Catholic university.
3. How, in your view, are the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities: Christian inspiration of individuals and the university community, reflection of the Catholic faith, fidelity to the Christian message, and service, contained in Ex Corde Ecclesiae being implemented in the School of Theology?
4. What efforts do you think this institution is making to maintain Catholic identity?
5. Can you explain the programs and policies of this university, if any, that are promoting Catholic identity?
6. Briefly enlighten me on how the mission of the University is fostered and enhanced in the School of Theology, and how you think the School of Theology is promoting Catholic identity.
7. What motivated you to seek employment in this institution?
8. Were Catholic identity and the mission of statement of this university explained to you when you were hired? If they were, kindly narrate how they were explained to you.

9. What professional development programs are available that help faculty understand and foster Catholic identity and the mission of this university?

10. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* urges Catholic institutions to allow academic freedom for faculty members. Explain how you think this university is encouraging and fostering academic freedom for its faculty.

11. Do you think this university is fully maintaining Catholic identity or is falling short in any way to maintain its identity as a Catholic university?

12. Did you request and receive the *mandatum* to teach theology in this institution? If you did, kindly explain why you did and the process involved. If you did not, kindly explain why you did not request and receive the *mandatum*.

There will be follow-up questions and probes based on the answers given, for clarification, and detailed answers. The requirement for the interview will be audio-recording, with the use of the iPhone 6. The interview will be transcribed and analyzed.

Your participation in the research will be voluntary. You are free to participate or not participate. If you decline to participate, you will not be forced to do otherwise.

Confidentiality will be maintained for the research.

The researcher will ensure that the interview data are stored in a CD and kept in a locked and secure location where unauthorized persons will not have access to the tapes, a place known and available only to the researcher. The CD containing the data will be kept for three years after the research and then will be destroyed.

I will give you my email with which to contact me. Kindly send me an email and let me know if you agree to be interviewed. The due date for this is April 29, 2016.
Appendix D
Informed Consent Form

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent Form

Researcher's Affiliation

The researcher is a doctoral student in the Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy, College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University, New Jersey.

Purpose

The research is about the identity and mission of Seton Hall University in regard to how it is fulfilling its identity and mission as a Catholic institution.

Procedure

The procedure will be a one-on-one, sit-down interview in which the subject will be asked questions concerning Catholic identity and mission in reference to Ex Corde Ecclesiae. The duration of the interview will be approximately one hour. The subject will be asked these questions.

1. Kindly explain what you know about the document, Ex Corde Ecclesiae.
2. Briefly explain what you know about Catholic identity.
3. How, in your view, are the essential characteristics of Catholic colleges and universities being implemented in the School of Theology?
4. What efforts do you think this institution is making to maintain Catholic identity?
5. Kindly explain the programs and policies, if any, that are promoting Catholic identity.
6. Briefly enlighten me on how the mission of the university is fostered and enhanced in the School of theology, and how you think the School of Theology is promoting Catholic identity.
7. What motivated you to seek employment in this institution?
8. Were Catholic identity and the mission statement of this university explained to you when you were hired? If they were, briefly narrate how they were explained to you.

9. What professional development programs are available that help faculty understand and foster Catholic identity and the mission of this institution?

10. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* urges Catholic institutions to allow academic freedom for faculty members. Explain how you think this university is encouraging and fostering academic freedom for its faculty.

11. Do you think this university is fully maintaining Catholic identity or falling short in any way? Why do you think so?

12. Did you request and receive the *mandatum* to teach theology in this institution? If you did, kindly explain why you did and the process involved. If you did not, kindly explain why you did not request and receive the *mandatum*.

There will be follow-up questions and probes to give room for detailed and comprehensive answers. It is a requirement to use audio-recording for the interview.

Voluntary Nature of Participation

The participation of the subject will be voluntary. If the subject agrees to participate and decides at any point to discontinue participating, there will be no penalty in any way.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the data will be maintained. The researcher will ensure that the data are stored in a CD and kept in a locked and secure location where unauthorized persons will not have access to the data, a location that will be known and available only to the researcher.
Records

The records will be kept secure and locked in an undisclosed location known only to the researcher who alone will have access to them. The records will be kept for three years and destroyed afterwards.

Risks or Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts to the subjects during the research.

A Description of Direct Benefits to Subject

The subjects are not expected to receive any direct benefits for participating in the research.

Contact information:

1. Contact of Advisor/Mentor:
   Joseph Stetar, Ph.D.
   Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy, College of Education and Human Services, Seton Hall University, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, New Jersey, 07079.
   Phone: 973-275-2730.
3. IRB Office Contact:

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board Office, President's Hall, Room 325, Seton Hall University, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, New Jersey, 07079.
Phone: 973-313-6314.

Permission to use Audio Recording

The interviews with the subjects will be audio-taped. You will not be identified with your real name on the tape, but will be identified as 'participant.' Only the researcher, and the mentor and committee members, if they ask for it, will have access to and listen to the tape. The tape will be transcribed by the researcher, and will be transferred into a CD and locked in a secure location known only to the researcher.

A copy of the signed and dated Informed Consent Form will be given to the subjects participating in the research.

______________________________    __________________________
Subject                                      Date

Seton Hall University
Institutional Review Board
APR 20 2016
Approval Date

Expiration Date
APR 20 2017

Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy
Jubilee Hall • 400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, NJ 07079 • Tel: 973.761.9397 • Fax: 973.275.3047 • setonhall.edu
Appendix E

Interview Protocol

1. Kindly explain briefly your understanding of Catholic identity. Do you think American Catholic University is maintaining Catholic identity? If you think so, why do you think so? If you don’t think so, why do you think it is not maintaining Catholic identity?

2. What efforts do you think this university is making to maintain Catholic identity?

3. Do you think American Catholic University has a relationship with the local Church? If you think so, what do you think is the nature of the relationship?

4. How do you think this university is fulfilling the essential characteristics of Catholic institutions of higher education?

5. How do you think this university is fulfilling its Catholic mission?

6. Can you explain the policies and programs of this university, if any, that are fostering Catholic identity?

7. Do you think this university encourages academic freedom? Do you think there is academic freedom in this university? If yes, kindly explain the nature of the academic freedom that exists, and is encouraged in this university.

8. Did you request and receive the mandatum to teach theology in this institution? If you did, kindly explain why you did, and the process involved. If you did not, kindly explain why you did not request and receive the mandatum.

9. Did you know about the Catholic identity and mission of this university before you applied to work here? If yes, how and where did you get the information?
10. Were the Catholic identity and mission of this university explained to you during your job interview and the entire hiring process? If yes, briefly explain how they were explained to you.

11. Did you have an orientation about the Catholic identity and mission of this university after you were hired to teach at this university? If yes, briefly explain the nature, and what you were told during the orientation.

12. Are you aware of the mission seminars for the faculty of this university? Do you attend the mission seminars? If you do, briefly explain the nature and what you are told during the seminars. If you don’t attend, kindly explain why you don’t attend the mission seminars for faculty.

13. Do you think this university is falling short in any way or failing to maintain Catholic identity? If you think so, kindly identify the areas you think it is falling short. If you don’t think so, kindly explain why you think the university is maintaining Catholic identity.