

whole without negating its very particularity. We need a metaphysics that grounds not only the capacity but also the necessity of the whole existing in the part.

Building on what I find in the Holy Father's thought, I want to suggest that we can push even farther. By faith we know that in the order of grace the body is not a principle hostile to communion; even more wonderfully, we encounter in the Eucharist a body—the Body of the God-Man—that is the very cause and principle of the most perfect communion possible for man. *A fortiori*, Christian philosophy, then, must discover a metaphysics that allows us to assert this conviction without fear of rational incoherence. And, again on the basis of the relation of nature to grace, I have a not-unreasonable hope that this most Catholic doctrine can point philosophy toward an insight about being, an insight it otherwise might never have imagined, but one which, once gained, can be explicated by the light of reason.

So, our philosophical pedagogy would have to meet this litmus test, if I am correct: a certain friendship for, or at least benignity toward, the Church's teaching on human sexuality and her doctrine on the Holy Eucharist. Establishing this friendship with a view to contributing to the mission of the new evangelization is not of the perennial essence of philosophy, but it is essential to our work as Christian philosophers in the new Christian millennium.

## THE IMPLICATIONS OF *Fides et ratio* FOR CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES

---

DAVID RUEL FOSTER

### Character and Intended Audience

*Fides et ratio* is destined to be seen as the intellectual capstone of this most academic of popes. It is at once provocative in its account of philosophy and theology, harmonious with tradition, and engaging in its style. It is that rare text that will engage faculty across the country in fruitful discussion—not just arguments. Its importance for Catholic higher education, however, has as yet been under-recognized.

The initial interest from the press was significant, and although the encyclical is no longer news, I believe it will attract a growing readership. In fact, *Fides et ratio* will have a major impact on Catholic higher education and higher education in general because it will be widely read, and that because it is so intrinsically interesting and provocative.

For most of the academic community, who are unfamiliar with Church documents, the encyclical will be novel reading. Still, many professors will find its arguments heartening because it expresses

something that they sensed was amiss but had not yet been able to articulate.

*Fides et ratio* reaches out to a broad audience by using the common philosophical nature of the person as a common ground for discussion. It recalls the fundamental questions that we all ask about who we are, where we have come from, and what we can hope for. It frequently uses images from Greek philosophy and invokes Greek poets and playwrights. It even notes St. Paul's similar practice recorded in Acts 19.

As an encyclical letter the document has the traditional salutation from the Pope to his "Venerable Brother Bishops," but the contents indicate that scholars are the primary audience. When the address is explained in section 6 the bishops are mentioned first, then theologians and philosophers, and finally all those who search. It is evident, however, from the text that the pope is speaking directly to scholars. The apostolic constitution *Ex corde Ecclesiae* is addressed "especially to those who conduct Catholic Universities," and then to their respective academic communities, and finally to all those who have interest in them, from bishop to laity.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to *Ex corde*, which is directed to administrators, *Fides et ratio* is directed to faculty. It is helpful to read the documents with this in mind.

The primary dialogue partners are Catholic theologians and philosophers, but included as well are all scholars in both secular and religious schools. Some secular scholars will find in *Fides et ratio* a champion for their convictions; others, a clear statement of a position worthy of consideration.

*Fides et ratio* will ultimately engage the faculties of Catholic universities<sup>2</sup> more than *Ex corde Ecclesiae*. Although *Ex corde* has engendered much discussion among Catholic faculties, it is *Fides et ratio* that will

1. *Ex corde Ecclesiae* #9.

2. All institutions of Catholic higher education are meant to be included.

speak to their heart. The importance of *Ex corde* is that it caused a significant amount of self-examination on the part of Catholic colleges, but its weak affirmation of academic freedom aroused suspicion. In contrast, *Fides et ratio* provides the principles for a robust affirmation of academic freedom.

This essay will consider five important implications of *Fides et ratio* for Catholic universities: (1) the fundamental principle that speaks to the heart; (2) an answer to the question "Can the Church engage in authentic dialogue?" (3) the principles for a defense of academic freedom; (4) the rights of the academic community; (5) a critique of curriculum and the distinction between types of pluralism.

### The Principle That Speaks to the Heart

*Fides et ratio's* vision of the person as one who can know the truth, especially the truth about persons, is as refreshing as admitting the emperor has no clothes. This will win it a wide readership because it articulates a position many want to affirm but have difficulty articulating. In fact, I predict that scholars will gradually<sup>\*</sup> begin remarking about the numbers of people who are reading *Fides et ratio*. Given the typical readership for encyclicals this may seem an unwarranted claim; yet, the encyclical is timely, and remarkable even among the many splendid encyclicals of this pontiff.

The essence of *Fides et ratio* is not a defense of the compatibility of science and religion, which is now assumed as part of a well-articulated tradition of the Church. Nor is it an argument that faith and reason are compatible, although this position is eloquently restated. The essence of this encyclical is a defense of objective truth and the ability of human reason to know that truth.

The encyclical challenges the postmodern philosophical critique that defines truth out of existence and denies the possibility of knowing the truth if it did exist. The postmodern philosophical cri-

tique of knowledge and truth has made this the fundamental question in the philosophy of the human and natural sciences. The encyclical is a vigorous defense of both the existence of truth and our ability to know it, at least in part. By its defense of truth the Church tries to stop higher education from being enervated by a virulent philosophy. The effect of the encyclical's argument will not be on the institution or administration directly, but upon the scholars in common discussion of pressing issues.

It may seem ironic to the prevailing academic opinion makers that at the dawn of the third millennium the Church has emerged as the most prominent defender of reason. Still, despite its less than consistent practice, the Church has affirmed for centuries the value of reason and its harmony with faith. In these times of postmodern skepticism, it is hard to overemphasize the importance of this confidence in human reason and its ability to grasp truth as a bedrock principle of education. This confidence is, nonetheless, compatible with a humility that *Fides et ratio* calls for when it rebukes philosophical pride and affirms the need to always question.

### Can the Church Enter an Open Dialogue?

It is not uncommon to hear scholars ask, "How can the Church enter into an authentic dialogue when it claims to have the truth already, and a truth obtained by revelation not reason at that?" Their objection is that the Church is willing to "pontificate" but thinks that she has nothing to learn and therefore no interest in listening.

In *Fides et ratio* the Church explains herself as a fellow pilgrim seeking the truth along the path of life, yet she also claims to know the truth in knowing Jesus Christ. There is a tension caused by competing intentions and a balance that must be kept, yet it is the usual balance between convictions and openness common to human dialogue. The encyclical correctly sees no contradiction here, and its reasoning includes the following four aspects.

#### I. CHURCH AS FELLOW PILGRIM

The reconciliation of how the Church is both a fellow seeker of the truth and confident that in Jesus she knows the truth is addressed early in the encyclical, and the competing intentions are mentioned together in recognition of the supposed conflict (§2). The Church describes herself as a partner with all humanity in a shared struggle to find the truth, a partner who also, in honest dialogue, must share her reasons for belief that Jesus is the Christ. Speaking of the Church, the encyclical says:

It is her duty to serve humanity in different ways, but one way in particular imposes a responsibility of a quite special kind: the diakonia of the truth. (1) This mission on the one hand makes the believing community a partner in humanity's shared struggle to arrive at truth; (2) and on the other hand it obliges the believing community to proclaim the certitudes arrived at, albeit with a sense that every truth attained is but a step towards that fullness of truth which will appear with the final Revelation of God. (§2)

Note the modesty implied by the qualification that "every truth attained is but a step towards that fullness of truth." Yet, there is no retreat from faith in the defining words of Jesus, "before Abraham was, I Am."

#### 2. THE REAL ENEMY OF DIALOGUE

The pope notes that it is not the conviction of knowing the truth but the lack of respect for the dignity of our dialogue partner that is the true enemy of dialogue. The encyclical reaffirms the Church's desire expressed at Vatican II to dialogue with all who seek the truth. Furthermore it is the opposite, i.e., believing that no truth is knowable, that undercuts human dialogue. Why should we seek the truth together if there is no hope of finding it?

To believe it possible to know a universally valid truth is in no way to encourage intolerance; on the contrary, it is the essential condition for sincere and authentic dialogue between persons. On this basis alone is it possible to overcome divisions and to journey together towards full truth . . . (§92)

### 3. MODES OF TRUTH

The mode of truth about natural phenomenon (i.e., natural sciences) is not the only mode of truth; there is also a mode of truth about persons, which is equally important and often humanly richer. For example, there is a truth we can know about our mother, e.g., her love for us, and in which we may be confident even though we have not submitted her to scientific measurement. The encyclical raises the point because the confidence of the Christian community is based on knowledge of a person, Jesus Christ. The answers to the important questions of life, about origin, nature, and destiny are not fully answerable by natural science (§§30–32). This leads to a last point, namely, the attitude of humility and openness that is proper to authentic human dialogue.

### 4. ATTITUDE OF OPENNESS

To affirm that in knowing Christ the Church knows the source of truth in a person is not to claim that she knows everything about Him or the world. The knowledge of a person is so rich that it is never exhausted. The encyclical recalls a desire, expressed in *Gaudium et Spes*, to enter into dialogue with everyone, even those who seek to do her harm.

Such a ground for understanding and dialogue is all the more vital nowadays, since the most pressing issues facing humanity—ecology, peace and the co-existence of different races and cultures, for instance—may possibly find a solution if there is a clear and honest collaboration between Christians and the followers of other religions and all those who, while not shar-

ing a religious belief, have at heart the renewal of humanity. The Second Vatican Council said as much: "For our part, the desire for such dialogue, undertaken solely out of love for the truth and with all due prudence, excludes no one, neither those who cultivate the values of the human spirit while not yet acknowledging their Source, nor those who are hostile to the Church and persecute her in various ways".<sup>3</sup>

Another principle for dialogue is a desire to know the truth ever more fully. The Church explains herself as both having a great truth that she wants to share with all humanity, but also ever in need of knowing the truth more completely, and toward that end she is convinced that all humanity can potentially help her.

### III. Academic Freedom

*Fides et ratio* never proposes to defend academic freedom and, in fact, it never mentions the term. But in defending the human person's ability to know by reason, the encyclical provides the principles for academic freedom, as well as a great deal of supporting argumentation. This is particularly important because of the paucity of *Ex corde Ecclesiae's* treatment of academic freedom.

*Ex corde Ecclesiae* has been a timely and influential document both because of its vision of the university in conversation with the culture and because of the discussions it has engendered among Catholic faculties. *Ex corde* called for Catholic higher education to examine how deeply its Catholicity penetrated its life. The most controversial section calls for the local bishop to oversee the theology faculty. To its credit, *Ex corde* has caused a significant self-examination by Catholic colleges, but it is weak in its description and affirmation of academic freedom. *Fides et ratio* can help fill this gap.

There are four references to academic freedom in the text of *Ex corde*: one in section 12 that affirms that a Catholic University by its

3. *Fides et ratio* §104; *Gaudium et spes* §92.

nature guarantees academic freedom, two references in section 29 that affirm academic freedom for scholars in general and for theologians in particular, and one reference in section 37 that asks civil authorities to respect academic freedom. The most complete statement is found in footnote 15, which gives a brief description of what is meant by academic freedom. Each affirmation is notably qualified, so that, while *Ex corde* affirms academic freedom, it is neither robust nor cogent in doing so.

The most frequent criticism of *Ex corde's* call for a closer relationship between college and bishop is that it endangers academic freedom. There is some historical validity to this concern; in the twentieth century alone we can point to several high profile cases. *Ex corde* does little to address these fears. The respected Church historian Msgr. John Tracy Ellis, in a lecture given at Seton Hall in 1986, reminded his listeners that there were several dozen scholars who suffered in the wake of *Humani generis*, only to be vindicated later, three of the best known being Congar, Daniélou, and Murray. Msgr. Ellis also pointed out that there had been strong statements supporting scholarly freedom, such as the one given by John Henry Newman in his 1854 description of a Catholic university:

It is a place . . . in which the intellect may safely range and speculate, sure to find its equal in some antagonist activity, and its judge in the tribunal of truth. It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected, and rashness rendered innocuous, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

Or in a similar vein, we have the words of John Lancaster Spalding, bishop of Peoria and the leading advocate of founding The Catholic

4. John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, cited from Msgr. John Tracy Ellis' lecture "The Catholic Church and Her Universities," the 1986 Archbishop Gerety Lecture at Seton Hall University. Printed by Immaculate Conception Seminary, Seton Hall University, p. 4.

University of America, when he spoke at the Church of the Gesù in Rome in 1902 on the topic "Education and the Future of Religion."

To forbid a man to think along whatever line is to place oneself in opposition to the deepest and most invincible tendency of the civilized world. Were it possible to compel obedience from Catholics in matters of this kind, the result would be a hardening and sinking of our whole religious life. We should more and more drift away from the vital movements of the age, and find ourselves at the last immured in a spiritual ghetto, where no man can breathe pure air, or be joyful or strong or free.<sup>5</sup>

The contemporary academy, wrongly I think, views the Church as antithetical to academic freedom. But if the Church has in the past both abridged due freedoms and hesitated to champion academic freedom, two matters of historical context help us understand why. First, that those arguing for academic freedom have focused exclusively on individual academic freedom and left the Church feeling compelled to defend a communal academic freedom (which is discussed in the next section). Second, that the Church was in the midst of moving from a more paternal model of relating to the scholarly community to a more fraternal one.

The Church's relationship to European culture stretches back centuries to a time when the culture was young and education rare. Particularly during chaotic times, it fell to Church leaders to assume a more authoritative role for an emerging civilization. The role was not unlike that of a parent who must give explicit direction and who rightfully expects obedience from a child. But time passed and the community matured; the last several centuries compare to the awkward years of transition wherein young adults emerge from rebellious teenagers, and parents must be willing to allow the teenager greater freedom in order to exercise increased responsibility. In like

5. John Lancaster Spalding, *Religion, Agnosticism and Education* (Chicago: A. G. McClure Company, 1902), 175.

manner, Church leaders have had to adjust to a society that no longer accepts Christian principles, a more educated laity that is anxious to exercise a more responsible role, and a more educated and independent clergy. It should be remembered that not so many years ago the whole society reflected a more paternal mode, from our schools to our network television censors. Colleges had a policy of acting *in loco parentis*, including dress codes, parietal hours, and "lights out" time—and those were the state colleges.

That the bishops were quite consciously making this transition is one of the great stories of Vatican II. It was particularly evident in *Gaudium et spes* that the Church wanted to speak to all mankind as brothers and sisters (fellow pilgrims) and to persuade them to examine for themselves the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Academic freedom is important both because it is in accord with the dignity of the individual person and because it is the best way to aid and safeguard the discovery of truth. Karol Wojtyła is a man who knows firsthand the severe repression of human freedom, including academic freedom. He also knows academic life, having served for many years on a University faculty and having directed his last dissertation from the Vatican.

An important contribution of *Fides et ratio* will be to supply what is missing in *Ex corde*. Although *Fides et ratio* never mentions academic freedom, it does provide clear principles for its defense, notably these four:

1. That there is a dignity of the individual person that requires that the individual's rights be respected; first among these is freedom of conscience.

2. That the distinct academic disciplines have a right to the autonomy of their principles.

3. That reason claims its own rights, and the Church defends the rights of reason.

4. That a scholar must be free to search for the truth because without truth there is no freedom.

The first principle, the dignity of the individual, is a recurring theme in the encyclicals of Pope John Paul II and evident in such Vatican II documents as *Gaudium et spes*, *Nostra aetate*, and *Dignitatis humanae*. In *Fides et ratio* the reflection on the dignity of the individual is filled out by specific descriptions of the natural orientation of the person toward truth (§28), the ability of the person (by intellect) to seek and find the truth (§§29, 82), the ability of the person (by will) to affirm the truth and choose the good (§33), and in *Gaudium et spes* (§§16, 17, 73) by statements on the duty of the individual to act according to conscience, and the expectation of political freedom to exercise the inner freedom of the will.

The second principle, the autonomy of disciplines, is, according to the encyclical, rooted in reason's orientation to the truth. A philosophy that did not follow reason would be of little use to the Christian community or to anyone else. Thus philosophy must be free to follow its own principles. The fundamental place where the autonomy of the discipline is realized is the individual scholar. Because philosophy must follow its own principles, the Church does not canonize any one philosophy (§49).

The third principle, the intrinsic rights of reason, is based on the existence of an objective truth independent of any human authority, which, in itself, demands respect. This principle, along with the human person's ability to know the truth, is part of the foundation for the Church's recognition of a natural moral law. In making a case for reason, *Fides et ratio* gives a number of arguments that naturally support academic freedom as well, such as, that there is no morality without freedom and no freedom without truth (§§25 and 90).

The fourth principle is the scholar's right to search for the truth. Philosophical and theological studies, indeed the whole of the intel-

lectual life, involve a type of searching. By the very nature of a search, one looks in many wrong places before finding the right place. The encyclical recognizes the importance of this intellectual search and the primacy of philosophical inquiry over any claim to have a complete view of the truth. The ability to speculate is proper to the human intellect. In section 92, the document states that the belief in the objective nature of truth is far from a cause of intolerance but in fact is the essential condition for authentic dialogue. This implies the complementary point that proper tolerance is also a condition for authentic dialogue. When it criticizes "philosophical pride" that presents its own partial and imperfect view as if complete, the Church cannot help but recognize a parallel in theology (with due allowance for the distinct nature of theology). In a similar way, priests recognize in Jesus' sharp criticism of the Pharisees, who mistakenly thought that man was made for the Sabbath, the very sins to which those in religious authority are tempted, and which they must be vigilant to avoid (§4).

#### iv. The Rights of the Community: Second-Level Academic Freedom

Personalist themes, which are prominent among both theistic and atheistic philosophers of this century (and with the present pope), are evident in the encyclical. For example, *Fides et ratio* says that a person does not understand himself fully except as a person in relation. The first relation he understands is that with other people and especially family. The pope teaches that the richest knowledge we have is about persons and he emphasizes the importance of friendship. One implication is that our search for truth, though personal, is done best in conversation. Another implication is that we have the right to seek the truth together, a right rooted in the freedom of the individual and the natural good we see in community (§§21 and 32).

This insight leads to a practical characteristic of Catholic education—an appreciation for the communal aspect of the search for truth. This in turn leads to an added dimension of academic freedom. The prevalent contemporary view stresses the individual control of one's search for the truth; *Fides et ratio* implies a second level of academic freedom which involves the communal search for truth and the right of the community to speak for itself. The communal aspect of academic freedom does not preclude the individual's right but rather is based on it. It is the individual's right to seek the truth, and with others to form a community that speaks with a common voice according to its principles, while giving due regard to the rights of the individual and the wider society, and within the confines of the truth and the common good.<sup>6</sup>

The first level of academic freedom is that of the individual. It is the foundation for second level or communal academic freedom, which stems from the right of individuals to join together in a community that acts according to its own principles. A metaphor for the two levels is the difference between a one-person sailboat and a tall-ship. The first allows an individual maximum personal control, the ability to maneuver quickly and to go where one pleases; the larger ship does not steer easily and takes a great deal of cooperation to sail (which is where the authority of the captain comes in), but is safer and faster on long voyages.

The common understanding of academic freedom today emphasizes that freedom of each individual to seek the truth about things and to publish his findings. The individual scholar is the solo sailor, operating with maximum flexibility. Less recognized today is the second or communal level of academic freedom. The Church and Church-related colleges are examples of communities that operate on

6. See *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, fn. 15.

this level. Compared to the individual level the communal pursuit of knowledge seems slow and cumbersome. But there are advantages to the communal level of academic research, just as there are to the large ship versus the small boat. Once under way and beyond the reefs it can go faster and more safely over the vast oceans. A community of scholars can share work among many individuals and can extend over many generations. Furthermore, the principles that the community shares can serve as added tools with which to work. What some might consider an undue constraint, others consider a head start. Much of today's scientific research, for example, is carried out by large teams with clear lines of authority.

The two levels of academic freedom are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary. To be sure there is a tension between them that must be kept in balance. Much of the debate over academic freedom has lacked an awareness of the rights of communal academic freedom. The debate would be advanced if the parties involved thought of the situation not as an "either . . . or" but as one of finding the proper balance.

Taking political freedom as a parallel, it seems right that individual academic freedom is more fundamental and that communal academic freedom is built upon that of the individuals that belong to it. It is clear that tension can arise between the two levels. Neither level of freedom is absolute; both freedoms can be abused. The main means of preventing excess on either level is the healthy functioning of the other level. Ways can be found to relieve the tension without eliminating the freedom of either level. A community of scholars must make provision for someone who wants to get off the boat, but not be cast into the sea.

The contemporary academy should recognize that there is another level of academic freedom. Catholics should appreciate how vital academic freedom is to the vision of *Ex corde Ecclesiae*. Since there are

communities within communities, such as a university community within the larger Catholic community, there are levels within the level of communal academic freedom. And what has been said about the individual in relation to the community can be applied to the relation of the university that stands as a sort of individual in relation to the whole Church.

Keeping with the tallship metaphor, everyone can contribute to the progress of the ship, but not everyone can expect to choose a course any more than a citizen expects to set foreign policy for a nation. Both individuals and community need certain protections. The individual needs to be protected from the arbitrary and excessive exercise of authority, and the community needs to be protected from individuals who, whether maliciously or not, subvert the will of the community.

Some wit might suggest that if the Catholic view were compared to a tallship, that the apt illustration is more the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria than a modern ship—their point being that the methods and terms are dated, and perhaps this is so. A large community with traditions is often slower to adopt new things. Further, the Church has recently shown that it stands ready to confess its human failings. Yet, at same time, it must be admitted that, even though the ship is old, successful voyages can be completed, as such thoughtful documents as *Gaudium et Spes* and the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* testify.

It is instructive to recall that the Chinese Communist Party has used a similar sounding argument to explain their lack of individual freedoms. They argue that the Western criticism of a lack of political freedom in China stems from the West's overindulgence of individual rights, whereas the Communist Party emphasizes the rights of the community. In order for the Church's arguments not to have the hollow ring of those of the Chinese Communist Party, the Church must



honor in practice the foundational role of the rights of the individual.

#### v. Implications for Curriculum

The encyclical's most pointed criticisms (e.g. §61) have several implications for the curriculum at Catholic universities. The discussion about the shortcomings of contemporary philosophy is forthright but polite; the sharpest criticism is reserved for Catholic philosophy and theology faculties. This is not surprising since greater intimacy allows greater frankness. The pope expresses frank disappointment about three matters: that theologians and philosophers have been swayed by the current fad to dismiss metaphysics, that they have neglected to pass on the intellectual treasures of Thomas Aquinas, and that they have perpetuated a false sense of pluralism. The first two issues are fairly clear in their meaning and resolution; the third, which takes issue with a common understanding of pluralism, is less so.

A distinction between pluralisms is alluded to several times by the encyclical. It originates in the defense of the proposition that humans have a capacity to know the truth about things, against the attack of certain contemporary philosophies. *Fides et ratio* warns that the contemporary advocacy of pluralism in philosophy (and therefore also in theology) often contains a trap. On the one hand, the pluralism that is appropriate to philosophy and that finds support in the documents of Vatican II is not based on the impossibility of truth but on the impossible richness of truth. A healthy pluralism stems from the depth of being that is never exhausted by our researches. We will never say all there is about love or friendship, but it is true to say that we need friends. The richness of being always leaves us with something more to explore. Our human nature makes misunderstanding possible but does not make understanding impossible.

There is a false pluralism, however, based on a postmodern philosophical critique. Postmoderns call naive any claim for transhistorical truth, as in professing the same faith as our ancestors did. And this is, so they say, because there is no "foundation" upon which such knowledge can be based. Those who seek a foundation are naive or frightened or scheming to keep others in subjection. Philosophy and theology should critically incorporate the valuable insights of the Postmoderns regarding the effect of historical context, the impact of culture and language, and the subjective aspect of all our knowing. Yet, the hidden premises of the postmodern philosophers, about God and man, lead them to extreme conclusions and show them to be not postmodern but ultra-modern. They felt themselves postmodern because they no longer sought a foundation for knowledge as had Descartes, Locke, Kant, etc. They show themselves, however, the children of modern thought by accepting the modern reductions of God to man, of man to beast, and of knowledge to sensation. Given these assumptions, their denial of objective truth and consequent pluralism of "non-truths" is an inevitable outcome of modern philosophy. The essence of *Fides et ratio* is to defend against just such a destructive pluralism.

To conclude, then, the Church, in *Fides et ratio*, expresses her faith in reason and reasons about her faith. This encyclical will ultimately have a greater impact on Catholic Universities than *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, for at least these five reasons:

1. It defends the most basic principle of education by defending the ability of human reason to discover the truth and to recognize it as such.
2. It affirms an openness to authentic dialogue and the Church's belief that through this dialogue the Church comes to deeper knowledge of God.

3. It contains the principles for a robust defense of academic freedom and thus provides an important complement to *Ex corde Ecclesiae*.

4. It provides a living example of a second or communal level of academic freedom, which concerns the right of a community to speak according to its own principles with due regard for the rights of the individual and the wider society, and within the confines of the truth and the common good.

5. Finally, in a frank and personal way, it challenges Catholic faculties to provide a metaphysics open to the full range of reality; to pass on the wealth of wisdom in St. Thomas; and to recognize the difference between a healthy pluralism based on the richness of being and a virulent pluralism based on despair of knowing the truth.

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE