Faith’s Reasons
The Catholic Intellectual Tradition at the University of Dayton
"St. Peter said that we must give a reason for the faith that is in us, and I am trying to give you those reasons..." —Dorothy Day

A Catholic Modernity? Published by Oxford

Oxford University Press has recently published *A Catholic Modernity?* Charles Taylor’s Marianist Award Lecture, edited by James L. Heft, S.M. Philosopher Charles Taylor received the Marianist Award in 1996. This award honors a Catholic scholar who has made a sustained contribution to his or her field. Recipients are invited to give a lecture in which they reflect on how their faith and their scholarly work have influenced each other. In his lecture, Taylor noted that the invitation gave him the opportunity to address questions "which have been at the center of my concern for decades," but which he had felt obliged to address indirectly because of the need to "try to persuade honest thinkers of any and all metaphysical or theological commitments."

Believing that Taylor’s lecture deserved “further comment and evaluation,” Father Heft invited a number of scholars to respond to it in writing. Four of the resulting essays—by William M. Shea, Rosemary Luling Haughton, George Marsden and Jean Bethke Elshtain—along with a response by Taylor and an introduction by Heft comprise *A Catholic Modernity?* Commonweal magazine highlighted the book’s publication in its 75th anniversary issue (November 19, 1999) on the topic of “The Crisis of Liberal Catholicism.” The issue’s editorial notes that Taylor’s wish for Catholics to “gradually find our voice from within the achievements of modernity,” is “precisely the task Commonweal has been committed to for seventy-five years.”

New Faculty

Several faculty new to the University this fall bring expertise in the study of various aspects of Catholicism.

**Sr. Laura Leming, F.M.I.**
Laura Leming, a Marianist sister, has joined the faculty of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work. Sr. Laura was a campus minister at the University from 1981 to 1994, during which time she developed an interest in the position of women in the Church. Encouraged to pursue her interest through doctoral-level study and research, she entered the graduate program in sociology at Boston College, where she is currently completing her dissertation.

Using interviews with women ranging in age from 19 to 89, Sr. Laura’s research investigates how “woman-conscious” Roman Catholic women negotiate their identity as women and as Catholic. The idea of “woman-consciousness” draws on Marx’s notions of class consciousness to identify women aware of their position in the church (not necessarily as self-identified feminists), whose strategies for maintaining and negotiating their dual identities Leming’s research seeks to characterize.

Sr. Laura has begun her career as a faculty member by teaching Introduction to Sociology, which, she says, she likes because it is usually a student’s first encounter with sociology, with “looking at society critically, at how it works—and doesn’t work, for some people.” In the winter term she will also teach Religion and Society, and expects in the longer term to be involved in the Ph.D. program in the Theology of the U.S. Catholic Experience in the Department of Religious Studies.

**Bro. Tom Wendorf, S.M.**
Bro. Tom Wendorf, S.M., joined the English Department this fall, bringing with him a specialization in modern British and American literature. A former English major who graduated from UD in 1986, he taught high school in Kalamazoo, MI, for three years before entering graduate study at Washington University in St. Louis.

His dissertation, entitled “The Devil and Modern Christian Realism: The Representation of Evil in Graham Greene and Flannery O’Connor,” argues that both Greene and O’Connor “hold open a space for supernatural evil in their fiction.” While both authors were very much aware of modern psychology and its explanations for evil, Bro. Tom argues, both refused to reduce evil to psychology; by doing so, both retained an opening for mystery, particularly divine mystery. Bro. Tom this past fall taught Freshman Composition and American liter-
A widely used theological approach, way communion ecclesiology is used. Communion ecclesiology exists in the study of Religious Studies Department. The bishops noted that communion ecclesiology was the key to interpreting Vatican II, and a possible path beyond the right-left dichotomy that afflicts much contemporary church discussion. In order to serve this purpose, though, communion ecclesiology has to express a broad and inclusive vision, while still going to the heart of Catholic faith. Doyle’s book traces the lines of development of communion ecclesiology from the nineteenth through the twentieth century in the works of theologians ranging from Johann Mohler to Elizabeth Johnson, including Journet, Congar, de Lubac, Balthasar, Ratzinger, König, Boff and Roberto Goizueta.

Before coming to UD, Dr. Smith was a Program Associate at the Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life at Trinity College, Hartford, CT. There he tracked research and analyzed contemporary media coverage of religion. A cultural historian with an emphasis in American Catholic studies, Dr. Smith teaches Introduction to Religion, U.S. Catholic Religious Experience, and Religion and Film.

**Anthony Smith**


Visiting Professors Help Inaugurate Doctoral Program

The first semester of the Department of Religious Studies’ Ph.D. program in the Theology of the U.S. Catholic Experience was enriched by the presence of Distinguished Visiting Professors Michael Cuneo of Fordham University and William Portier of Mount St. Mary’s College, Emmitsburg, MD. Both offered doctoral seminars and participated in the Department’s fall colloquium series.

Cuneo, whose works include *The Smoke of Satan* (1997), an ethnographic study of American Catholic fundamentalism, is Associate Professor in Fordham’s Department of Sociology and Anthropology. He offered a doctoral seminar on “The Ethnography of Religious Communities,” and presented in the colloquium an excerpt from the book he is currently writing on exorcism in American culture.

Portier, Henry J. Knott Professor of Theology, is the author of *Tradition and Incarnation: Foundations in Christian Theology* (1994) and co-editor, with Sandra Yocum Mize, of *American Catholic Traditions: Resources for Renewal* (1997). “Americanism and Theology” was the topic of his doctoral seminar; in addition, he presented to the departmental colloquium a paper on the historical context of Americanism, entitled “Americanism and Inculturation.”

The departmental colloquium, organized by Cecilia Moore, also included presentations by Dennis Doyle, William Roberts, Sr. Jody O’Neil, S.P., and Sandra Yocum Mize.

**The Business Professional in a Global Society**

“The Business Professional in a Global Society,” a new General Education thematic cluster, is nearing approval. Brother Victor Forlani, S.M., who is chairing the committee that is proposing the cluster, writes: “The purpose is to help students understand the role of business and commerce in society.
One of the themes is that of business ethics and we plan to treat that from a Catholic viewpoint among others...the concept of the cluster is that of the renaissance, wherein the professional is connected with all of the major roots and sources of thought and inspiration in their culture.”

The project grew out of Bro. Forlani’s participation, along with Ken Rosenzweig and Jim DeConinck (also of the School of Business Administration) in the seminar on ethics and religion in the professions led by Fr. Jim Heft in early 1997. Bro. Forlani continues: “We see it as a way of helping both our students and our faculty to make or deepen contact with the underpinnings of business life as portrayed by the humanities and social sciences.”

Recent Activities of University Professor of Faith and Culture

Fr. Heft’s essay, “Truths and Half Truths About Leadership: Ancient and Contemporary Sources,” appeared as a chapter in a book edited by T. Hunt, T. Oldenski, S.M., and T.J. Wallace, Catholic School Leadership (Falmer Press, 2000). An article co-authored by him and Fred Pestello, “Hiring Practices in Catholic Colleges and Universities,” will appear in the next volume of Issues in Catholic Higher Education. A revised version of his article, “Religion and US Culture” will appear in the next issue of Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice. The editors of The Chronicle of Higher Education invited him to write an essay on the Ex Corde discussion, “Have Catholic Colleges Reached an Impasse?”, which appeared in the November 12th issue. He was invited to participate in early December in a symposium sponsored by the AAUP of New York on the implications of Ex Corde for academic freedom and Catholic higher education; a similar symposium scheduled for the end of March, sponsored by the AAUP, the Society of Biblical Literature, the American Academy of Religion and Baylor University, has invited Heft to speak on the same issue. Holy Cross College in Worcester, Mass has invited him to speak in February on his Charles Taylor volume. The next interdisciplinary seminar, on Science and Religion, will begin in January. He is also leading a team, which received a $50,000 planning grant from Lilly, to write a proposal for the formation of undergraduates as Christian leaders: if successful, the grant could be as large as $2,000,000. Finally, he continues to serve on several national boards, teach each semester, and follow the Flyers!

UD Letter on Ex corde Vote Appears in Commonweal

Commonweal magazine published as an “open letter” to the U.S. bishops an article written by six members of the University’s administration and faculty. Initiated by University President Bro. Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., the article was co-written by Brother Fitz, Una Cadegan (associate professor of history and American Studies and President of the Academic Senate), Dennis Doyle (associate professor of Religious Studies), John Geiger (Provost and Senior Vice President for Academics and professor of Teacher Education), Fr. James Heft (University Professor of Faith and Culture and Chancellor and professor of Religious Studies), and Terrence Tilley (professor and chairperson of Religious Studies and immediate past president of the College Theology Society).

The main point of the article (available on Commonweal’s website [November 5, 1999 issue]: http://commonweal.org) was a request that the bishops delay the vote on the guidelines for implementing Ex corde ecclesiae, the apostolic constitution on Catholic higher education, until unresolved problems could be addressed by the bishops and Catholic college and university presidents working together. Despite the bishop’s vote on November 17 to approve the guidelines, the article’s request for continued collaboration lays out a productive approach for the next steps.

“As faculty and administrators, we accept our responsibility to both Church and academy to maintain the Catholic university as university and as Catholic. We want and need the bishops’ assistance in doing that. It may seem counterintuitive, maybe even evasive, to suggest that this is best accomplished without the mandatum, without even a vote on the current draft. We hope we can demonstrate, though, that we are not evading or temporizing, by pointing to what we are doing on our campuses to enliven Catholic identity.

“The people involved in this work are not the ones, generally, who make it onto “60 Minutes” or into the pages of the New York Times. But there are more of us out here than you might think who marvel at the privilege of encountering our students in classroom and chapel; who have dedicated our scholarly lives to understanding, enhancing, enlivening, recovering, extending the lived reality of Christianity in various times and places—sometimes at the expense of stature and credibility within our own disciplines; who turn instinctively to communal, sacramental prayer to mourn the death of colleagues—and who are moved and strengthened by the presence there with us of colleagues.
whose faith-lives have taken very different paths; who are committed to the slow but crucial process of fostering intellectuals and an intellectual atmosphere steeped in Catholic tradition.

“And we are, we say with a pride we hope is pardonable, having an effect. We have helped reshape curricula — interdisciplinary, integrated, humanistic in the best tradition of the Catholic origin of universities—to include and restore the riches of Catholic life and thought. Our faculty speak in a wide variety of scholarly, educational and pastoral settings on issues crucial to the life of the church. We work enthusiastically with colleagues who are not Catholic, learning from them, hoping they learn from us, reassuring them by our lives and work that a lively Catholic identity supports and enhances an institution’s commitment to academic freedom rather than constricting it.

“We take as our mission the same task Paul urged on the Philippians: “Brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” To do this well—lovingly, responsively, responsibly—requires daily encounter with a world both permeated with the Incarnation and teetering on the brink of nihilism. The Catholic identity of Catholic universities, fully realized, is centrally concerned with making the consequences of the Incarnation ever more apparent. Those of us most deeply engaged with the work necessary if this is to come about have benefitted from the collaboration with the bishops engendered by Ex corde ecclesiae. We ask for more time to deepen and further that collaboration, and to continue the implementation we have begun together.”