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Evangelical Debate

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Evangelical Debate

03.05.2008 | Catholic, Culture and Society, Campus and Community

The panel will feature John Allen, senior correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter; William Portier, Mary Ann Spearin Chair in Catholic Theology at the University of Dayton; and David J. O'Brien, Loyola Professor of Roman Catholic Studies, the College of the Holy Cross.

According to Portier, Catholicism in general and American Catholicism in particular have taken on a greater and greater evangelical character, which is likely to affect politics and culture in the U.S. in the future.

"Evangelical Christianity has become the default religious condition of American culture. In a pluralistic society such as the U.S., evangelical forms of religion fit in with the style of politics, which is voluntary. In an environment of religious liberty and pluralism, if churches fail to engage in forms of public witness that attract people, those churches will simply wither away," Portier said.

Allen wrote in the Aug. 31, 2007 issue of the National Catholic Reporter that "Catholicism has become a steadily more evangelical church – uncompromisedly and unabashedly itself" over the past 30 years.

As a prelude to the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United States in April, the panel discussion will explore the rise of a more evangelical Catholic church, examine how the evangelical character may develop in the future and the cultural and political implications of that rise.

The discussion is free and open to the public.

Una Cadegan, director of UD's American Studies program, at 937-229-3468.