A Vocation of Space: Race and Ethnicity as a Responsible and Necessary Challenge to U.S. Catholic Education in the 21st Century

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Introduction and Overview

A vocation in Roman Catholicism represents a religious calling to live up to the best examples and teachings from Roman Catholic Christian tradition. It is a divine calling to recognize our common “sacred dignity” that moves us to actively work toward the development of our inherent rights as humans to be full participants in our society. It is inspired and led by the “befriending Spirit of Christ” that epitomizes the foundational beliefs of Roman Catholic social teaching where we are asked to serve one another and to witness to the truth of such teachings. As a result, our particular talents and hopes embedded within our unique racial/ethnic histories and cultural traditions are revealed through this process. As these diverse vocations and representations are brought together within a particular social space we are encouraged to enter into dialogue with them and work collaboratively toward creating and sustaining true community since our human dignity and human rights exist as a result of our relationship with each other. One such social space in the history of the United States is within Roman Catholic institutions of higher learning.

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2 DeBerri and Hug, 18.

The Roman Catholic university represents a site of "challenge and responsibility" that "must assume a greater role in offering a common ground upon which all people can gather to collaborate in building our human family." As one Catholic university president has articulated, the university has carved out a significant social space that "welcomes a diversity of people and ideas" where dialogue and debate is mediated in search of creations, innovations, and solutions on behalf of the human condition.  

The legacy of the Roman Catholic educational tradition in the United States has continually been about creating a public space for the presence, persistence, and change of religious and diverse ethnic expressions since the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were approximately 50,000 Roman Catholics in the United States residing mainly in Maryland and Pennsylvania. By the end of this century, this number swelled to 12,000,000 with over 10,399 Catholic parishes that eighty years earlier numbered a meager 124. These numbers reflected a solid ethnic-working class, and immigrant membership base that comprised 5,000,000 or 30 percent of the 17,000,000 individuals who had immigrated to the United States between 1850 and 1900. The first waves of Catholic immigrants were predominantly Irish and German that by the 1890s would also include immigrants from southern and eastern European nations.

The arrival and presence of an ethnic-immigrant, and working class religious tradition in the United States was greeted by a suspicious host culture that was hostile, anti-Catholic and xenophobic toward what they perceived to be an immigrant-ethnic-Catholic other. The burning down of a Roman Catholic convent and school in cities like Charles-

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3 Mary E. Lyons, "The Public Purpose of this University" Origins 33:27 (Dec. 11, 2003), 462. Mary Lyons is the third president of the University of San Diego. This is drawn from her inaugural speech.

4 Lyons, 462. According to the Delegation of the Holy See at the Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, one of the roots of racism and discrimination is due to faulty and inadequate education and therefore must be seen as a "good practice to be promoted" as embraced by "on the ground" educating and instructing of young people by the Catholic Church. <http://www3.villanova.edu/mission/journal/racism/pchphta.htm>

5 The case of majority women and women of color in the Catholic educational tradition is beyond the scope of this presentation, yet extremely necessary to examine as it presents unique circumstances and critical challenges for understanding the history of Roman Catholic education.

town, Massachusetts or Philadelphia, Pennsylvania was not uncommon in nineteenth century America.\(^7\) With the leadership and guidance from clergy within local parish communities, these Roman Catholics responded by holding-on and preserving those unique religious and ethnic markers that made them different from the White Anglo Saxon Protestant majority that in turn, angrily tolerated an ethnic Catholic identity that persisted and eventually flourished. This was most prevalent in the creation and sustenance of a Roman Catholic educational system.

The “alien status” of Roman Catholics generated and fostered the energy and enthusiasm for separate, protective and supportive educational spaces. For one writer, it represents the single most important reason why the Catholic educational effort in the United States was so successful.\(^8\) Over time, the institutionally guided decision to create a distinctly Catholic school system would eventually lead to significant changes and challenges regarding the maintenance and preservation of religious and ethnic identity for Roman Catholics in the twentieth century and contemporary period.

The purpose of this essay is to assert that the legacy of the U.S. Roman Catholic educational system has been about creating a vocation of space for working class, racial/ethnic immigrant groups. Unfortunately, due to pressures of assimilation and Anglo-conformity beginning in the mid-twentieth century, this vocation has been abandoned and forgotten. The time has come for Roman Catholic Higher education to revisit this responsible and necessary challenge. Through this essay,

\(^7\) Stephen J. Denig, CM, “Catholic Education in the United States: Meeting the Challenge of Immigration” in Commitment to Diversity, Catholics, and Education in a Changing World. Mary Eaton, Jane Longmore, and Arthur Naylor (eds.). (New York: Cassell Press, 2000), 213. Denig describes the burning of an Ursuline convent and a Catholic school accompanied by riots and resulting in the death of thirteen people. Other scholarship underscores that these anti-Catholic sentiments were compounded by issues of class, ethnic identity, and religion. Consider that Irish Americans of Ulster origin played a central role in the nativist (anti-immigrant) crusade of the antebellum era. The influx of poorer Catholics immigrants from Ireland led these Americans of Ulster origin to distinguish themselves sharply from their compatriots as “Scotch-Irish” and to assert their “Americanness”. Furthermore, the Orange Order, a militant Protestant Organization founded in Ulster clashed repeatedly with Irish Catholic Immigrants in New York City and Philadelphia from the 1820s onward, culminating in the riots and church-burnings of 1844. Kevin Kenny, The American Irish: A History. (Harrow: Pearson, 2000), 80-2.

we call upon Catholic university administrators to instill this *vocation of space* within its institutions of higher learning by supporting curricular programs that foster a healthy dialogue and debate of diverse people and their ideas. The intellectual heritage of academic programs such as Ethnic Studies in Roman Catholic Higher education speak to this legacy and to the best traditions of Roman Catholic social teachings and thought.\(^9\)

**Support for the Argument: the Case of Chicago**

Prescribed as descendents of “commercial marauders,” the poor and ethnic immigrant church of Chicago encountered a public school system where all school children were required despite the official separation of church and state to read from the King James Bible and learn their history from school-adopted texts that offered inaccuracies about the history of Catholicism in the United States. The curriculum, textbooks, and most importantly, the teachers impressed an “English-only” curriculum that was an affront to immigrant ethnic Catholics.\(^{10}\) The response from Roman Catholic leadership was to carve out a supportive social space for religious and ethnic expression by establishing a separate Roman Catholic educational system. From its inception in 1843, the Chicago Roman Catholic diocese committed itself to the parochial school system, and by 1860, dictated that “whenever possible a school is to be set up in each parish.”\(^{11}\) As symbolic opposition to Anglo-

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\(^9\) A study on the history of ethnic studies in Roman Catholic Higher Education is essential to fully understand the significance of this point.

\(^{10}\) Sanders, 26, 46, 48. Another important challenge faced by Roman Catholics in relation to the Chicago public school system were staffing issues as teachers were bigoted towards qualified Catholics employees. The Roman Catholic hierarchy responded by establishing Catholic girls' high schools and academies with the intention of preparing young Catholic women for teaching positions in public schools. By 1890, a high percentage of Irish Catholic women were seeking such appointments in larger numbers. In fact, by the summer of 1902, two-thirds of the candidates who passed the Normal exam for teachers were graduates of Catholic secondary schools. So successful were Catholic students in gaining admission to the Normal School that in 1915 Superintendent Ella Flagg Young attempted to limit the number of students accepted at the teachers' college from a single high school. Roman Catholics were also active in seeking out equal representation on local school boards where issues of taxation and public school education could be addressed. Sanders, 27-30; Ellen Skerrett, “The Catholic Dimension” in *The Irish in Chicago*. Lawrence J. McCaffrey, Ellen Skerrett, Michael F. Funchion, Charles Fanning (eds.). (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 45.

\(^{11}\) Sanders, 14. In the gathering of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, some bishops actively sought to have the Council mandate Catholic schools in every parish and force Catholic parents to send their children to these schools by threatening to
Saxonism, the Roman Catholic Church provided sanctuary to immigrant Catholics and their children from intolerance and bigotry. A parish based school system coupled with the creation and recognition of ethnically-based national parishes provided a space for the persistence of ethnic and religious expression.

In the national parish/school model, the children of immigrants were provided an affirming and supportive space where they were taught in their mother language and culture by priests and teachers reared in the same tradition. By the beginning of the twentieth century, over 55 percent of all Catholic school children in the diocese of Chicago attended officially recognized ethnic schools comprised of German, Polish, Bohemian, French, Slovak, and Belgian groups. The remaining 45 percent were official territorial schools, but basically, de facto Irish schools. It was a successful model because home and school functioned in harmony within the parochial school setting.

A Chicago newspaper documented that Polish Catholic children attending parochial school were instructed in Polish history and literature in their native tongue, and were also taught in English for four hours a day. Most importantly, students were encouraged to participate in Polish debating societies, clubs, and leagues fostered by local parishes. Cultural maintenance and persistence was an important emphasis for Polish Roman Catholics in Chicago. Consider that Resurrection High School was established in the 1920s as a school for Catholic Polish girls with the aim of developing them into prominent citizens, and managers of families with a Polish soul and religious throughout. All of this would directly impact on Roman Catholic higher education.

withhold absolution. In the end, decree #199 stated that “All Catholic parents are bound to send their children to parochial schools, unless either at home or in other Catholic schools they provide sufficiently and fully for their Christian education, or on account of a good reason approved by the Bishop, and with the appropriate precautions and remedies, they are allowed to send them to other schools. Which Catholic school, however, is to be left to the decision of the Ordinary.” Denig, 225-6.

12 Sanders, 37, 45. These figures remained constant for the next 30 years. As the largest group of English-speaking Catholics in Chicago, the Irish had the most to gain from the proliferation of national parishes. By default, the Irish gained control of English-speaking parishes through Chicago, and in a very real sense they dominated the Catholic Church from below as well as from above. Skerrett, 24-5.

13 Sanders, 46.

14 Sanders, 61.

15 Sanders, 62. This experience was replicated with other Roman Catholic ethnic groups throughout the United States. See Smith’s description of a Ruthenian Greek Catholic congregation in Yonkers, New York in the early twentieth century. Timothy L.
By the end of the 19th century, the largest Catholic university in the United States, DePaul University was established on the north side of Chicago in response to rapid immigration growth.\textsuperscript{16} In 1908, Polish Roman Catholics were inspired to draw up the plans for a Polish National University in Chicago to be affiliated with the Catholic University of America in Washington DC.\textsuperscript{17}

The Pressures of Assimilation

Through church-led initiatives, ethnic-immigrant Catholics would acquire social mobility and access to formal studies at the post-secondary level at the beginning of the 20th century.\textsuperscript{18} Numerous Roman Catholics found solace and support within Roman Catholic universities, while others, due to cost and reputation, found support in non-Catholic institutions.\textsuperscript{19} Ethnic-immigrant Catholics began to steadily enter and navigate a middle class space and lifestyle historically created and controlled by White Anglo Saxon Protestants. As in the case for communities of color in contemporary America, the children of immigrant Catholics found themselves in a borderland where assimilation was

\textsuperscript{16} Denig, 222.

\textsuperscript{17} Sanders, 62. The Polish immigrant experience is multidimensional distinguished by generational differences influenced by characteristics of the migrant group and the sociohistorical contexts of their home and host countries. You have Poles who emigrated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contrasted by second generation Polish Americans. By the mid-twentieth century you have World War II émigrés in contrast to Polish immigrant who arrived post-1960s with the majority arriving during the late 1970s and 1980s. Each generation came under unique sociohistorical circumstance within their home country that shaped their ethnic identity in the United States. The regional identities of the early immigrants described here came from a Poland that did not exist on the map; it was partitioned by Russia, Prussia, and Austria. They were unified under the umbrella of Polishness as a national and cultural identity in the United States. Mary Patrice Erdmans. *Opposite Poles: Immigrants and Ethnicity in Polish Chicago, 1976-1990.* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 8-11.

\textsuperscript{18} This perspective is drawn from existing literature that assumes that only middle class individuals seek higher education. The value of education is also a working class values as in the case of people of color that were educated in large numbers beginning in the 1960s. This is what Catholic Higher Education has forgotten and the type of initiatives it needs to re-establish and support.

\textsuperscript{19} A survey published in 1898 revealed that most Catholic collegians were enrolled in non-Catholic institutions. See: Kathleen A. Mahoney. *Catholic Higher Education in Protestant America: The Jesuits and Harvard in the Age of the University* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 7.
and remains a requirement. In a borderland, the core cultural space and its related institutions are controlled by a homogenous hegemonic group. Assimilation is the only path through which one acquires entrée and status. In the best case scenario, the outsider becomes skilled at signifying or “getting over” on the dominant culture. In the worst case scenario, the marginal group is forced to relinquish those racial, ethnic, and religious markers that identify them as outsiders.\(^{20}\) Of course, linguistic and racial characteristics such as skin color function to identify and mark differences that maintain outsiders within a marginal status. The path of least resistance where differences are masked and redefined tends to be the road most traveled by ethnic groups in America as was the case for ethnic Catholic immigrants in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The pressures of assimilation in the borderlands are captured in the perspectives offered by contemporary prominent Roman Catholic scholars who underscore full-assimilation as the solution to the religious, class, and ethnic baggage that Catholic immigrants possessed. Philip Gleason asserts that by the twentieth century the “old immigrants” of Irish and German Catholics represented a more assimilated middle class and were setting the tone for the Catholic population as a whole. The “new immigrants” of Italian and Slavic descent, as defined by Gleason, were not as significant.\(^{21}\) The imminent Catholic scholar, John Tracy Ellis, links the immigrant experience to cultural factors and behavior that overemphasized moral as opposed to intellectual development and the reason why an intellectual tradition among American Catholics is absent. Ellis describes the “timidity” produced by a “self-imposed ghetto mentality a lack of industry, and good work habits” in connection with defects within the American Catholic educational system.\(^{22}\) The solution to these “deficiencies” is to abandon and forget those cultural and ethnic traits that maintain Roman Catholics outside the core culture in order for them to immerse themselves fully into the American mainstream. This period would mark the systematic abandonment of a vocation of space on which Roman Catholic social teachings and the history of U.S. Catholic educational system was built on.

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Demystifying the Problem: Toward Re-Establishing the Legacy

Identical to the collective desire to preserve religious and ethnic identity by working class immigrant groups throughout the 19th and 20th century, we have similar issues occurring for racial and ethnic groups towards the latter part of the twentieth century. These communities of color are awakened to the reality of their identity and their traditions, which like earlier groups described here, had historically been under siege. They enter into a process of unearthing and redefining their identity in an attempt to preserve their unique sacred stories.

Unfortunately, these "latter-day ethnics" were not subjected to the same treatment that "traditional Roman Catholics" had received some seventy years earlier. They did not have the institutional leadership or the support that the church had bestowed upon earlier groups. There exist a host of reasons for these differences, but probably the most important being that these "latter day ethnics" became racialized and unmeltable within the dominant core culture. These groups could not shed markers such as language and skin-color that permanently defined them as outsiders where custom and statute regulated the history of inter-group relations in the United States.

Consider that in 1917, the same year the Chicago Real Estate Board endorsed new steps to preserve racial segregation; African Americans were forbidden access to the majority of white parishes in the diocese of Chicago. The solution for Bishop Mundelein was to designate St. Monica's parish an exclusively "Negro parish". African Americans had the right to attend services at any other church but only as marginal members. Roman Catholic sacraments such as baptisms and marriages for African Americans could only be solemnized at St. Monica's. Furthermore, "Negro children" had no legal claim on attendance at parochial schools beside St. Monica's.23 Similar examples of racism and ethnocentrism can be found in the contact histories of Native American and

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23 Sanders, 207-8. A very important question for future research is to explore why ethnic solidarity within local parishes for European immigrants was so successful, but not so for African Americans Catholics and other Roman Catholics of color. Also see: "Dwell in My Love: A Pastoral Letter on Racism". Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago. April 4, 2001; Adam Cohen and Elizabeth Taylor. American Pharaoh (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 2000), 34.
Latinas/os within the history of the Roman Catholic Church in the Americas.24

Another very important point to underscore is that these movements for racial and ethnic identity and empowerment for communities of color occurred post-Vatican II where the institutional church for some was going through an “identity crisis” and found itself in a season of “demoralization and collapse rather than renewal or revitalization.” What in the past was seen as a cohesive institution that fostered ethnic and class collectivity, after 1965, the American Catholic Church had experienced some critical changes in relation to racial and ethnic identity and solidarity. According to Philip Gleason, the “collapse” of the Catholic Church was heightened as a result of the stress placed on expressions of “unity and integral Catholicism” between the 1920s through the 1950s. 25

Ethnic Studies: Instilling a Vocation of Space

The history of Ethnic Studies in higher education takes us back approximately forty years when for the first time in American history cohorts of students of color gained entree into universities. Students were seeking answers to questions having to do with racial and ethnic identity that university faculty and administrators were unwilling and/or unable to answer. It revolutionized higher education for students of color, especially African American and Chicana/Chicano students, who sought to systematically document and analyze their individual and collective histories that were absent in existing university textbooks or archival holdings. In response, numerous ethnic studies programs and departments began to spring up throughout the academy with the finest doctoral programs located in the University of California system at San Diego and Berkeley, and the University of Southern California.

The history of Ethnic Studies in Catholic Higher education has yet to be written; yet one thing is for certain, Ethnic Studies is necessary for Roman Catholic higher education in order for it to continue in its historic mission. The Catholic university must create a vocation of space

for those “latter-day ethnics” that include the outsiders and the throwaways in the eyes of the dominant culture, but who now comprise the majority of the church. Ethnic Studies provides us with a useful model for universities to follow. It includes: 1) the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty. 2) The creation and institutionalization of curriculum that focuses on diversity issues; and 3) recruitment and retention of a diverse student body. What follows is a discussion as to how ethnic studies strive to live by these mandates and how this work is in concert with the vision and practices of Catholic social teaching.

Ethnic Studies, Catholic Social Teaching and Inherent Dignity

Catholic social teaching (CST) represents a body of teaching on social, economic, political, and cultural matters. It is driven by the conviction that God is at work in human history. It requires a great deal of discernment seeking to read the “signs of the times” at work to heal and redeem human history through our active participation. In relation to the systematic and intellectual analysis of race and difference, CST, grounded in biblical revelation, evokes the belief that an inherent dignity exists in the human person because all people are created in God’s image and likeness.26 Our human dignity and unique social worth in each person exist as a result of our existence and is not dependent upon social conditions of race, class, gender, or sexuality. It is our responsibility as committed Catholics and Christians to strive toward the support and respect of full and authentic human development as we collectively strive toward the common-good.27 The Pontifical Commission “Iustitia et Pax” instructs us that all forms of social and cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion is deemed incompatible with God’s design and must be eradicated.28 As plainly stated in the U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Racism, racism is a sin that “violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father . . . and makes racial characteristics the determining factor for the exercise of human rights.”29 It requires us to work toward establishing structures of justice and grace that supports and facilitates

27 DeBerri and Hug, 19-21.
28 Iustitia et Pax, 25.
authentic human development and to challenge and work toward transforming those structures, institutions, policies and patterns of sin that deny the liberation of people and obstruct authentic human development. This perspective is critical since our foundational beliefs emphasize and insist upon the full participation of every person toward the common good in our communities and society. It correlates with the objectives and mission of ethnic studies in Catholic higher education.

Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Faculty

The first mandate in the development and conception of Ethnic Studies requires the recruitment and retention of faculty of color. Faculty of color can provide students with an experientially-grounded education that permeates their course offerings together with a systematic knowledge base that focuses on issues of marginality and exclusion. Faculty of color can directly address the issues of under-representation with regards to people of color in our society since they themselves represent the newly arrived in the academy. In this way the histories and struggles of the disenfranchised can be connected to the perspectives and paradigms brought to the classroom by faculty from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Central to the mission of Ethnic Studies has been to advocate for a diverse faculty along with a diversified university administration, faculty, staff, and curriculum. This is essential in order for the work to be fully effective.

Such a vision is in line with the important Land O'Lakes Statement on the nature of the contemporary church that identifies interdisciplinary dialogue within a community of scholars and learners as central to the mission of Catholic higher education. A racially and ethnically diverse faculty will foster an intellectual space where scholars have a personal interest in the cross-disciplinary confrontation of creative dialogue involving the entire university community as reflected in curriculum and academic programs. CST calls for full and authentic dialogue where differences and conflicts are addressed. The belief is that it is only through the agency of dialogue that women and men will get in touch with their humanity because they will strive to achieve new levels of understanding and appreciation for the human community and the common good.\(^{30}\) Furthermore, the diversity vision of Ethnic Studies represents the vehicle through which the Catholic University can articulate its prophetic voice where it serves as the critical and reflective

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\(^{30}\) DeBerri and Hug, 21.
intellectual base of the society within which it exists. It chooses to focus on problems of greater “human urgency” sensitive to the Christian message that are simultaneously concrete and local.

Institutionalizing a Curriculum of Diversity

The second mandate in Ethnic Studies is to institutionalize and diversify academic instruction and curriculum at all levels. The focus is on analysis and reflection upon epistemological questions rooted in the construction of truth and knowledge in the academy.31 The key curricular and intellectual challenges posed by Ethnic Studies are the following:

- How is it that we know the knowledge that is known?
- How is the knowledge that is known tied to political, economic, cultural, issues related to power relations?
- Who and what forms of knowledge should we include in the pedagogy and curriculum?

The responses to such questions requires faculty to partake in a subjective and reflexive self-analysis about privilege and identity. They must be willing to explore how their personal and professional identity reinforces existing canons of intellectual privilege and knowledge through their curriculum, pedagogy, and perspectives.32 This exercise in diversity represents a moral necessity as we are challenged to be inclusive of all perspectives regardless of social, political, or economic status. We must recognize that the Pontifical Commission “Iustitia et Pax” in 1988 instructs us that “it may be necessary to revise scholastic texts which falsify history, pass over the historical misdeeds of racism

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32 See: Nana Osei-Kofi, Sandra L. Richards, and Daryl G. Smith, “Inclusion, Reflection and the Politics of Knowledge: On Working Toward the Realization and Inclusive Classroom Environment” in *Transforming the First Year of College for Students of Color.* Laura I Rendón, Mildred Garcia, Dawn Person (eds.). (Monograph No. 38) (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2004), 55-67. This also includes a subjective and reflexive analysis and acknowledgment in terms of how our intellectual work seeks to challenge existing intellectual privilege and knowledge.
in silence or justify the principles behind it.\textsuperscript{33} Fifteen years later, the Delegation of the Holy See at the Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, reinforces this belief by instructing us that the roots of racist sentiment and how the history of peoples is read and interpreted must be examined and challenged:

The fight against racial discrimination can be helped by a purification of the historical memory of peoples. Special attention should be given to the manner in which educational textbooks examine history and the relations between peoples. Determined efforts should be made to eliminate from school textbooks any direct or indirect incitement to racial intolerance.\textsuperscript{34}

The Ethnic Studies curricular agenda provides us with a \textit{lived pedagogy} for Catholic higher education where education allows students to come to a basic understanding of the actual world in which they live including issues of inequality, power relations, and racism. It is guided by a curriculum that situates our students within the community through internships, community service learning, survey, and/or ethnographic research. This explains why historically, Ethnic Studies emerged as an inductively-influenced type of scholarship where the methods and paradigms emerge from the research. At its inception, Ethnic Studies scholars were driven by a research problematic or questions and not by meta-theories that sought to promote taxonomies in search of similarities and commonalities.

This perspective enables us to meet God in and through people of every color, ethnic background, religion, class and gender.\textsuperscript{35} It represents a pedagogy that challenges standardized and normative epistemologies where no “boundaries or barriers” exist. Its point of departure begins where the oppressed and marginalized are situated and we build from there. Consider students who come from a working class household where parents work to live and live to work. It is critical that we provide them with a pedagogy that validates their experiences. In line with CST, we must provide our students with a pedagogical vision that teaches that work is honorable and instills in workers their sense of humanity for themselves and for the common good of their families. As such, we recognize and honor workers’ rights to organize and form

\textsuperscript{33} “Justitia Et Pax”, 37.
\textsuperscript{34} Intervention by the Permanent Observer of the Holy See Delegation at the 59\textsuperscript{th} Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. 25 March 2003. See <http://www3.villanova.edu/mission/journal/hoonhumanrights03.htm>
\textsuperscript{35} George.
unions to achieve such goals and is something reflected in our pedagogy. It is a pedagogy that recognizes that the poor are the most exploited and marginalized of our society informed by CST that the moral test of any society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. An option for the poor and exploited is critical in our work because it acknowledges the need for marginalized communities to be self-reliant and not to be dependent on outsider's assumptions and perspectives. In its teaching for the option of the poor, CST directs us to the experiences, insights and concerns of the poor providing us with the evidence necessary for more just systems of social life. It creates and fosters a liberated zone where knowledge and understanding are drawn from all traditions and perspectives and where the whole world of knowledge and ideas must be open to students. It explores the insights and achievements of all great thinkers of every age. It embraces current frontiers of advancing knowledge. Through this process our students should be actively engaged in Christian living, Christian witness, and Christian service. Christian service in particular undertakes the activities embodying the Christian interest in all human problems by valuing the human dignity and social worth of the individual as reflected in CST.

Recruitment and Retention of Students of Color

The third and final mandate focuses on Students of Color. Since its inception in higher education, Ethnic Studies has always been about the recruitment and retention of students of color. Working class, immigrant, and women and men of color represent the heart and soul of our work. Their stories and histories inform and guide the intellectual inquiry and curriculum of Ethnic Studies. For the first time in their educational journey, they encounter the stories of their families, communities and cultures within the pages of the books they are reading in Ethnic Studies and/or diversity courses that provide their lives with meaning and purpose. It provides them with a space that they can call their own within the university setting. This represents only part of an agenda where recruiters, students support staff and administrators work collectively to provide support toward this vision. In sum, the creation of curriculum, the hiring of faculty and administration, the support of programs and departments that foster, promote, and insti-

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tutionalize diversity goals is inseparable from the vision and significance of Ethnic Studies for Catholic higher education. It speaks to the vision and promise of CST.

**Conclusion**

An “authentic” vocation of space for working class, racial/ethnic, and immigrant groups within a Roman Catholic university must be reflected in how it embraces and actualizes Catholic social teaching and its work on behalf of God’s creation. Catholic social teachings celebrate persons in community; dignifies work; struggles for the poor; and acknowledges and respects differences between communities and individuals. It must represent the core of American Catholic higher education if it is going to reconnect with its original legacy and vocation. The *Land O’Lakes Statement* claims that a “Catholic University has no boundaries or barriers [that] draw knowledge and understanding from all traditions of humankind” and appreciates the diversity of one another’s cultural riches and moral qualities. This allows for different groups and their perspectives to touch and even overlap if necessary. This represents an evolving and complex borderland America where marginalized groups signify the new knowledge base of exploration and wonder. This represents the future of the Roman Catholic higher educational vision and curricula that is offered through the curriculum, scholarship, and service that is being done in Ethnic Studies program and departments throughout the country.

In conclusion, I borrow from Archbishop Francis Cardinal George of Chicago visionary pastoral letter: “Dwell in My Love,” and adapt it to underscore this vision of necessity for ethnic studies in Roman Catholic higher education. Under the discussion regarding Catholic Colleges and Universities he calls for:

- The diversifying of faculties and the search for administrators and teachers that will serve as role models for students of color.
- The implementation of multicultural learning materials.
- The offering of educational events that deal with racial justices, not only with the principles of our faith but with the history of our country and the contributions of various ethnic groups.

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38 Lyons.
39 McCluskey, S.J.; *Iustitia et Pax*, 32.
• The integration of Latino, Asian, Native and African American peoples contributions into art, music, literature, history, science, and religion courses.

• Continue to work for justice in funding Catholic schools in order to give all students the education necessary to experience personal success and contribute to the common good.

• Offer adults the opportunity to enter into a tutor-mentor relationship with underprivileged and at-risk students.\textsuperscript{40}

Consequently, the vision and intent of Ethnic Studies represents the future of the American Catholic Church and Catholic higher education in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. It is time for Catholic administrators and educators to collectively and systematically respond to this responsible and necessary challenge. The future of Roman Catholic higher education depends on it.

\textsuperscript{40} George.