

# Catholic Social Learning

## Educating the Faith That Does Justice

ROGER BERGMAN

### PREFACE

Many years ago, I asked the students in an introductory Christian ethics course, “Why are there poor people?” After some moments of uncomfortable silence, one student threw caution to the wind, raised his hand, and volunteered, “To clean up after us?” More recently, one of my students acknowledged in a reflection paper that “living in solidarity with the poor is hard, but I can’t imagine not trying.” The distance between those two comments, between moral naïveté and committed moral self-identity,<sup>1</sup> is enormous. How is that distance traversed? What sort of bridge can Catholic higher education provide to facilitate the journey?

This book is an attempt to answer that question. As the title *Catholic Social Learning* suggests, it is not sufficient to name the goal of the journey as commitment to Catholic social teaching (CST). The difference between those two students is not simply that one might have read a social encyclical, and the other probably had not. The difference is not one homework assignment, one courageous homily, one engaging film, or even an entire course on CST. The problem is, in part, to be found within CST itself.

In the approximately 600 pages of the standard collection of documents that represent the canon of CST,<sup>2</sup> only one and one-half pages are devoted explicitly to Catholic social learning or pedagogy. (Those brief comments will be explored in Chapter 1.) This book aims to help correct that gross imbalance. As the articulation of what I have learned

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from 30 years as a faith-that-does-justice educator, for the past 15 years in a Jesuit university, this is a very personal book, but it is also one that attempts to bring some of the best of current scholarship as well as historical authorities to bear on the topic.

Part I lays the “Foundations” of the book. Chapter 1, “Personal Encounter: The Only Way,” includes a faithjustice<sup>3</sup> autobiography and biographical sketches of witnesses more luminary than I. This opening chapter sets the basic theme of the book. How do we move our students from naïveté to solidarity? What makes the crucial difference? In the words of Catholic philosopher of religion Gabriel Marcel, “Through personal encounters. Nothing else ever changes anyone in an important way.” It is personal encounter and relationship with the poor and marginalized that stimulates a hunger and thirst for justice and therefore a commitment to Catholic social teaching.

Chapter 2, “Ignatian Pedagogy and the Faith That Does Justice,” presents the Pedagogical Circle as the appropriate and necessary extension of this insight about the importance of personal encounter. I trace the evolution of the pedagogical circle from the well-known Pastoral Circle of Holland and Henriot, through the “see-judge-act” methodology of Catholic Social Action, to the long-honed practices of Ignatian pedagogy, to the *phronesis* or practical reasoning of Aristotle. The philosophical and ecclesial pedigree of the Pedagogical Circle demonstrates that it need not be thought of as exclusively the property of Jesuit education but is equally at home in all Catholic educational enterprises.

Chapter 3, “Teaching Justice After MacIntyre: Toward a Catholic Philosophy of Moral Education,” puts the Pedagogical Circle into cultural-historical context. The philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre argued that social practices within a community of tradition and moral enquiry are the only context in which genuine virtue can be cultivated because meaningful understandings of virtue must be determinate and demandingly particular. I argue that Catholic social pedagogy must be understood in this perspective, but also that understanding the communitarian roots of Catholic social teaching rebuts MacIntyre’s colorful assertion that universal human rights are no more real than witches or unicorns.

Part II, “Applications,” offers three chapters that examine particular curricular instantiations (social practices) of the foundational insights of Part I. Chapter 4, “Immersion, Empathy, and Perspective Transformation: *Semestre Dominicano, 1998*,” analyzes an example of an intensive form of the Pedagogical Circle, of justice pedagogy. *Semestre Dominicano* offered a small group of undergraduate students a four-month experience of cross-cultural immersion, service among the poor and oppressed, social analysis, theological and normative reflection, and personal discernment. I was accompanying faculty for one such group of 16 students in the spring of 1998. Chapter 4 is my narrative and analysis of their experience, especially of “moral anguish.”

But one need not leave the United States or even one’s hometown to have similar experiences. Chapter 5, “We Make the Road by Stumbling”: Aristotle, Service-Learning, and Justice,” argues for well-integrated service-learning as an effective pedagogy for justice. Students in such programs often report experiencing painful emotions in homeless shelters and other domestic sites where their previously unacknowledged privilege is put in shocking contrast with the hardships faced by the poor. If, as Aristotle contended, we learn virtue by doing virtuous acts, our doing and learning, in a world of stark social disparity, may often require a painful stumbling along the way.

Chapter 6, “Meetings with Remarkable Men and Women: On Teaching Moral Exemplars,” also relies heavily on Aristotelian insights. The philosopher’s analyses of the “semi-virtue” of shame and of the emulous and noble character of the young provide fascinating starting points for a consideration of a classroom pedagogy focused on the study of such emulable moral exemplars as Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King, Jr. Analyses of the role of saints, of the liminal character of college life, of the “higher self,” and of the “developmental imperative” flesh out the central theme.

But, some readers may ask, what does any of this transformative pedagogy properly have to do with the traditional liberal educational mission of the Catholic university? As I demonstrate in Chapter 7, “Education for Justice and the Catholic University: Innovation or Development? An Argument from Tradition,” the first installment of Part

III, “Institution and Program,” John Henry Cardinal Newman’s *The Idea of a University* links the discriminatory oppression of Irish Catholics in his day to their historical exclusion from British higher education. Knowledge for its own sake is knowledge for the sake of the student, especially those historically marginalized, and through them for the world and its justice. Pope John Paul II makes a similar argument in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Chapter 7 also traces Ignatius of Loyola’s educational pilgrimage through the best universities of sixteenth-century Europe and the establishment by the newly founded Society of Jesus of the world’s first school system, making the saint the world’s first “superintendent of schools.” An exploration of the origins and purposes of those schools reveals that Catholic social learning in higher education is nothing new.

Chapter 8, the final installment of Part III and of the book, titled “Aristotle, Ignatius, and the Painful Path to Solidarity: A Pedagogy for Justice in Catholic Higher Education,” has five purposes: (1) I highlight the principle images, arguments, insights, and discoveries of the preceding chapters, in which the legacies of Aristotle and Ignatius play such a prominent role; (2) I bear down more deeply into the question of shame, a perhaps surprising theme in a book on justice education within the academy; (3) I outline how these pedagogical ideas play out and come together in the undergraduate program I have designed and direct; (4) I give some of my students the chance to speak for themselves (the best part of the book!); and (5) I offer theses on young adult vocational development in the context of Catholic higher education. We will look back, we will look deeper, we will look at a model, we will listen, and we will draw some brief conclusions. But first, how do we move from naïveté to solidarity? Personal encounter: the only way.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As the articulation of what I have learned from 30 years as a faith-that-does-justice educator, this is a very personal book. Many friends and colleagues who have contributed in one way or another to that three decades of my own learning are named in the book, especially in the “autobiography” in Chapter 1. I hope they realize how grateful I am to them for the distinctive ways each has made a difference in my life, and no doubt in many others.

I especially owe deep gratitude to two friends in faithjustice concerns for many of those 30 years, Fr. Dennis Hamm, S.J., Ph.D. (holder of the Graff Chair in Catholic Theology at Creighton University), and Sr. Mary Ann Zimmer, N.D., Ph.D. (now of Marywood University), as well as to a more recent friend and colleague, Dr. Jennifer Reed-Bouley (College of St. Mary). All three have read and critiqued all or parts of the book as they were drafted, much to its improvement. Another companion in justice education, Dr. Mark Chmiel (St. Louis University), has taught by example during several visits to Creighton and encouraged this project. Dr. Michael Lawler, Professor Emeritus of Theology at Creighton University, graciously agreed to review the completed manuscript and offered invaluable critique, as did Dr. David McMenamin, Director of the PULSE Program at Boston College and a leader in the Commitment to Justice in Jesuit Higher Education.

Cardoner at Creighton, a program for the exploration of vocation, under the leadership of Dr. Kristina DeNeve and funded by Lilly

Catholic and Jesuit school like Creighton ought to have a Justice and Peace Studies program. He agreed, asked me to design such a program, and hired me to be its director. That was in the years 1993–95. We're still in the same comfortable house, and I'm still in the same (nearly) perfect job. Especially after completing a doctorate in education at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in 2005, it's time to try to organize and articulate what I've learned since 1980.

### From Catholic Social Teaching to Catholic Social Learning

Catholic social teaching, in the highly visible example of Paul VI, perhaps the pope most deeply committed to global social justice, harbors the seeds of a Catholic social pedagogy. But at least at the level of magisterial pronouncements, those seeds have fallen on stony ground. In the 14 documents that make up the CST “canon” in O’Brien and Shannon’s standard collection, there is almost no mention of how this teaching is to be taught—much less, how it is to be learned. Or rather, a default pedagogy is implicit: promulgate the documents, teach the principles, exhort the faithful to put these principles into practice. In fact, one of the pastimes of CST teachers—magisterial, academic, and pastoral—is to propose a list of essential principles, on the undoubtedly correct premise that few of the clergy and even fewer of the faithful will actually read the documents themselves. Scholar Charles Curran is the most elegantly parsimonious, suggesting that the essence of CST can be found in three principles.<sup>23</sup> Dr. James Rurak, my CST professor at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in the mid-’80s, argued persuasively that four principles captured the foundational dynamic of the CST moral vision. Kenneth Himes, O.F.M., in his excellent introduction to CST,<sup>24</sup> invites reflection on six “fundamental themes.” The U.S. bishops promote for pastoral teaching purposes seven basic principles to guide Catholic social action.<sup>25</sup> More expansively, the bishops propose ten principles that constitute “a Catholic framework for economic life.”<sup>26</sup> Fr. William Byron, S.J., former president of Catholic University of America and a highly credible and public

apologist for CST, similarly offers ten principles that encompass CST<sup>27</sup> (and not just its economic vision, although that has tended to dominate other social justice concerns, especially racism, about which the major documents are virtually silent<sup>28</sup>). Finally, Thomas Massaro, S.J., proposes “nine key themes” of CST in his handy textbook.<sup>29</sup>

The default pedagogy of CST is top-down in two ways. First, it is initiated by popes and bishops, and by the time it filters down to the faithful (if it does), it is reduced to principles from which, second, we are supposed to deduce action strategies. I do not exempt myself from blame for practicing this faulty default pedagogy. Despite my aversion to what Paulo Freire famously described as “banking education”—in which the teacher, who possesses knowledge as if from on high, deposits it in the empty accounts (minds) of his passively receptive students<sup>30</sup>—I have given hundreds of talks in parishes and other venues where I have been the one doing the filtering and deducing and exhorting. It has never made sense to turn down such invitations (and I do try to be more dialogical than my self-caricature suggests), but I am not aware that any of those hundreds of talks have made any significant difference to anyone, at least not directly, and certainly not to the poor, however indirectly. As rhetorically persuasive, informed, hopeful, and engaging as I try to be, I have witnessed no transformation of perspective, no deep clarification of moral vision, no galvanizing of the will that would catapult even an already sympathetic Catholic into action that by definition often goes against the culture. Still, I have never turned down an invitation to try it one more time. But there must be a better way.

And there is. CST, as I said earlier, is not completely clueless. That remarkable statement from the 1971 Rome Synod of Bishops, *Justitia in Mundo*, or *Justice in the World* (JW), is the sole CST document to address Catholic social pedagogy, in a brief but pregnant section titled “Educating to Justice.”<sup>31</sup>

### “Educating to Justice” in *Justice in the World*

In the approximately 600 pages of the Catholic social teaching texts in O’Brien and Shannon, we have to settle for a page and a half on

Catholic social pedagogy (pages 296–97; all subsequent quotations are from these pages). But those 11 short paragraphs are packed and, indeed, provide the essential elements of an authentic and effective CSL, one that Paul VI surely could have affirmed from his own experience.

The section begins by encouraging cultural analysis: an example, however cursory, of the “scrutinizing the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the gospel” called for by Vatican II in *Gaudium et Spes* (#4). We face three major cultural obstacles (I presume they are still with us) to an evangelical witness for justice: narrow individualism, materialism and consumerism, and schooling and mass media that are dysformative of the human person as envisioned by Christian anthropology:

The obstacles to the progress which we wish for ourselves and for mankind are obvious. The method of education very frequently still in use today encourages narrow individualism. Part of the human family lives immersed in a mentality which exalts possessions. The school and communications media, which are often obstructed by the established order, allow the formation only of the man desired by that order, that is to say, man in its image, not a new man but a copy of man as he is.<sup>32</sup>

But if education is part of the problem, it is also part of the solution. Persons as they are, deformed and manipulated by the cultural forces of excessive individualism and acquisitiveness, are not a lost cause. But the necessary pedagogy must be holistic and transformative:

But education demands a renewal of heart, a renewal based on the recognition of sin in its individual and social manifestations. It will also inculcate a truly and entirely human way of life in justice, love, and simplicity. It will likewise awaken a critical sense, which will lead us to reflect on the society in which we live and on its values; it will make men ready to renounce these values when they cease to promote justice for all men.

One wonders whether some of the bishops or their *pèriti* (expert advisors) might have been aware of Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,

which theorizes about his pioneering work in literacy education among the poor and marginalized of his native Brazil,<sup>33</sup> when one reads what could almost be a characterization of Freire’s *conscientização* (the Portuguese is usually translated as “conscientization,” meaning both social consciousness-raising and conscience-formation).<sup>34</sup> The bishops write:

In the developing countries, the principal aim of this education for justice consists in an attempt to awaken consciences to a knowledge of the concrete situation and in a call to secure a total improvement; by these means the transformation of the world has already begun. . . . It will . . . enable them to take in hand their own destinies and bring about communities which are truly human.

Compare that with the way that Freire himself describes pedagogy of the oppressed:

In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation. . . . The world—no longer something to be described with deceptive words—becomes the object of that transforming action by men and women which results in their humanization. (*Pedagogy*, pages 64, 67; emphasis in original)

But the transformative education that we are concerned with in this book is not first of all of the poor, however much it is on behalf of the poor. The bishops seem to take this same perspective when they advise that education for justice is “a practical education: it comes through action, participation, and vital contact with the reality of injustice” (emphasis added). Freire’s illiterate and oppressed peasants do not need to seek out contact with injustice; that is their reality. Rather, they need to “awaken,” to recognize their reality for what it is and also that it does not have to be that way.

But for those of us whose reality is defined by individualism, acquisitiveness, and the manipulation of the mass media—by big-box

retail warehouses and not by the city dump, for those of us on the lucky side of the border—educating to justice must be very intentional about discovering other realities, the realities those peasants and the rest of the Two-Thirds World are submerged in every day. It's about discovering a greater truth. As Dan Hartnett, S.J. argues, “by situating ourselves alongside the poor, and by appreciating the hermeneutical lenses that this provides, we achieve a ‘double contact’ with reality that offers a healthy corrective to the limitations of our ‘natural’ involvement in the world. It seems to me that this should mean greater, not less, objectivity.”<sup>35</sup> Educating to justice, then, is all about crossing borders, and not just lines in the sand. The distance from my life to that of the Tijuana father scavenging in the city dump is more than the 250 miles I drove once per month for three years from Santa Barbara. It's a universe, and the “space travel” required to get there is as demanding of courage and intelligence as flying to the moon—and a good deal more Gospel-driven.

So justice in the World gives us an insightful glimpse of what we're up against and the process by which we overcome it, but what's in the syllabus of that pedagogy?

The content of this education necessarily involves respect for the person and for his dignity. Since it is world justice which is in question here, the unity of the human family within which, according to God's plan, a human being is born must first of all be seriously affirmed. Christians find a sign of this solidarity in the fact that all human beings are destined to become in Christ sharers in the divine nature. (JW, p. 296)

Allow me to emphasize that it is only after cultural or social analysis and only after outlining a pedagogy that the bishops enunciate principles. The foregoing sentences are an extremely parsimonious description of the essence of CST: human dignity and solidarity with God as our source and destiny. But what texts might we study?

The basic principles whereby the influence of the Gospel has made itself felt in contemporary social life are to be found in the body of teaching set

out in a gradual and timely way from the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* [1891] to the letter *Octogesima Adveniens* [earlier in 1971]. (JW, p. 296)

The backbone of the formal curriculum, of course, is Catholic social teaching, the “documentary heritage,” which now also includes the three social encyclicals of Pope John II; Pope Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth); and, for U.S. Catholics, the two major pastoral letters, *The Challenge of Peace* (1983) and *Economic Justice for All* (1986), and other documents such as the quadrennial *Faithful Citizenship*, of the U.S. bishops. And each of those documents, it should be pointed out, does more than enunciate principles and exhort the faithful to live them. They also read the signs of the times (do social analysis), and make recommendations for public policy, “in conformity with circumstances of place and time.” That suggests that not only social ethics but also the social sciences are essential ingredients in the full scope of Catholic social learning. More on that in Chapter 8.

Finally, *Justice in the World* points out that

The liturgy, . . . which is the heart of the Church's life, can greatly serve education for justice. For it is a thanksgiving to the Father in Christ, which through its communitarian form places before our eyes the bonds of our brotherhood and again and again reminds us of the Church's mission. The liturgy of the word, catechesis, and the celebration of the sacraments have the power to help us to discover the teaching of the prophets, the Lord, and the apostles on the subject of justice. (JW, p. 297)

The Church's public prayer life, when done liturgically and not just routinely, forms the justice-oriented and communitarian Christian just as educational systems and mass media, if captive to an individualistic and acquisitive culture, deform the human person. “The Eucharist forms the community and places it at the service of men.” Or at least it should. But not if it, too, is captive, however subtly, to the surrounding culture, not perhaps by acquisitiveness so much as by an excessively privatized spirituality and a fear of the political and prophetic. But that is a story for another book (and by another author).<sup>36</sup>

What this book proposes, then, is not a departure from what can already be gleaned from CST. Rather, it offers a substantial development of what we can learn from reflection on our own experience, the experience of church leaders such as Pope Paul VI, of lay activists such as Mev Puleo, of my own students at Creighton University (see Chapters 4 and 6), of other university students (see Chapter 5), and of the few words that the tradition itself has to say about a pedagogy that would render CST a well-respected resource. A look at Ignatian pedagogy can help with that development.

## 2 Ignatian Pedagogy and the Faith That Does Justice

When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change.

Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.

The Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), the first teaching order in the Church,<sup>1</sup> is known for producing both master teachers and, in the second half of the sixteenth century, the world's first school system, "one of the most successful . . . the Western world has ever seen."<sup>2</sup> Although Ignatius of Loyola had no intention of becoming, in effect, a superintendent of schools when he founded the order in 1540, by the time of his death in 1556, he was overseeing 35 schools still in operation of the 40 he had approved; by the end of the century, when the famous *Ratio Studiorum* (*Plan of Studies for Jesuit schools*) was published, some 245 schools for boys and young men had been founded (p. 224; see note 2). That number had increased to 845 in Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa by 1773 when the Society was suppressed. When Pope Pius VII restored the Society in 1814, he wrote that he did so "so that the Catholic Church could have, once again, the benefit of their [the Jesuits'] educational experience."<sup>3</sup> At the turn of the millennium, some 2,000 schools for both boys and girls, men and women, were operating under Jesuit auspices in 56 countries worldwide, involving 10,000 Jesuits, nearly 100,000 lay collaborators, and more than 1.5 million students (p. 230).

From *Fe y Alegria* primary schools for the poor in Latin America, to the "Nativity" model middle schools and the new *Cristo Rey* high schools for the disadvantaged in the United States, to college preparatory high schools and colleges and universities throughout the Americas, the Jesuits are a formidable force in education.<sup>4</sup> Especially since

marginalized, whether through service-learning courses or immersion programs, or as might arise also in imaginative encounter with moral exemplars in the classroom. It offers a practical example of how the three justice pedagogies examined in Part II have been integrated into the Pedagogical Circle in one undergraduate program. Some of the students who have participated in this program are given the chance to speak for themselves. Finally, I offer some concluding thoughts on young adult vocational development in Catholic higher education.

## 8

# Aristotle, Ignatius, and the Painful Path to Solidarity

A Pedagogy for Justice in Catholic Higher Education

There are truths that can only be discovered through suffering or from the critical vantage point of extreme situations.

*Ignacio Martín-Baro, S.J.<sup>1</sup>*

This final chapter has five purposes: (1) In keeping with the pedagogical practice of repetition, I highlight in narrative fashion the principle images, arguments, insights, and discoveries of the preceding chapters; (2) I bear down more deeply into the question of shame, in both its unhealthy and healthy forms, a perhaps surprising theme in a book on justice education within formal academic settings; (3) I outline how these pedagogical ideas get played out and come together in the undergraduate program I have designed and direct; (4) I offer several especially compelling excerpts from student writing; and (5) I suggest 11 theses on young adult vocational development in the context of Catholic higher education. We will look back, we will look deeper, we will look at a model, we will listen, and we will draw some brief conclusions. First, what have we learned? I answer that question in three subsections: on discovering a pattern of personal encounter with the poor and marginalized, on the crossing of social borders and the discovery of one's privileged social location, and on how Catholic higher education has incorporated some of these themes in two major historical expressions.

## A Narrative and Thematic Review

Discovering a Pattern

The deep origins of this book can be traced to my personal encounter with the poor of Tijuana, Mexico, three decades ago, before I had any



thought of being a professor of Justice and Peace Studies in a Catholic university. For three years in the early 1980s, my monthly trek from the affluence and opulence of Santa Barbara to Tijuana, the tip of the Two-Thirds World (see Chapter 1), was a profoundly unsettling and formative experience. Some years later, I resonated with the not dissimilar experience of Mev Puleo, who, as a young teenager vacationing with her family in Brazil, suffered a crisis of conscience, at least in germ, as their tourist bus made its way toward the magnificent statue of Christ overlooking both the misery and luxury of Rio de Janeiro. I took as my own the “cry of anguish” of the globetrotting Pope Paul VI, in *Populorum Progressio*, as he, not unlike Mev in her young adult years, tried to narrow the gap between the rich North (the developed nations) and the poor South (the underdeveloped or developing nations). Over those early years, I came to see such experiences, both my own and those of others, as forming a pattern of encounter, crisis, and commitment.

So I was not surprised to discover more recently that Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., under whose courageous post-Vatican II leadership, the Society of Jesus made justice an essential dimension of its mission, had experienced his own formative crisis of conscience as a young medical student in Madrid when he encountered the suffering poor, and thereby his own privilege, in a world of sin and injustice. And once again I was consoled to find in Catholic social teaching (CST) a reflection of my own experiences, when I discovered the compact argument in *Justitia in Mundo* (Justice in the World) that education for justice requires “a renewal of the heart, based on the recognition of sin in its individual and social manifestations,” especially “through action, participation, and vital contact with the reality of injustice” (see Chapter 2).

No one has spelled out this insight more succinctly and eloquently than Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Arrupe’s successor as Superior-General of the Society of Jesus at the time of his watershed address at Santa Clara University in 2000: College students need “personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustices others suffer” so that they can “let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so

they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering, and engage it constructively.” Or, as Fr. Kolvenbach summed up the mission of the intellectual apostolate: “The real measure of our Jesuit universities lies in who our students become” (see Chapter 2). I would amend that to include all Catholic higher education. To that essential pattern of encounter, crisis, and commitment, we can add the language and practice of insertion or immersion in marginalized communities, empathy, social analysis, theological and ethical reflection, and vocational discernment—or, as I have called it, the Pedagogical Circle.

### Crossing Borders

I have learned that education for justice is all about the intimately personal risk that accompanies crossing borders—national, geographical, cultural, class—and thereby discovering one’s privileged social location in a world of destitution.<sup>2</sup> As my students say, it’s about getting out of your comfort zone. What some of them also acknowledge, more importantly, is that leaving your comfort zone means getting into a discomfort zone, such as a homeless shelter just blocks from your campus suite, or the site of a massacre of Salvadoran peasants made possible by U.S. tax dollars and U.S. foreign policy. Being formed for justice, undergoing a conversion to the cause of the poor, can be—perhaps must be—if not wholly, still crucially, a painful experience.

Researching this book has led me to a heightened appreciation of the role of what St. Ignatius inferred was the *grace* of shame and confusion in the process of personal conversion, which is so central to (if not synonymous with) education for justice. In attending to the experiences of students in *Semestre Dominicano*, I saw tears and heard expressions of moral anguish. “It hurts to be compassionate” when compassion provides no easy fix to oppression in the lives of people who have cared for you as for family. Even worse, as a young and naïve First-Worlder, not only may you be unable to contribute very much if anything to solving the problems of the poor, but in your previously unexamined privilege, you may be part of the problem. “Go

home, you're not needed" (Ian Illich) are "piercing words" (a student's response to Illich; see Chapter 3). Such encounters can lead to the cognitive disequilibrium and personal crisis necessary for the construction of a moral rationality that transcends social convention. When teamed with an openness to personal vulnerability, a radical change of environment—such as what an immersion trip represents, with its accompanying risk—can provoke empathic distress and guilt over affluence, which can present just the disorienting dilemma necessary to provoke a process of personal transformation.

But one need not travel to distant lands to have such an experience with its attendant difficult emotions. The testimonies of students participating in domestic service-learning programs for justice report similar feelings, similar stumblings. As one scholar reported of one such program, "the shock stage of service-learning is important because it provides a sharp emotional and psychological jolt to students' perceptions of reality."<sup>3</sup> That shock may encompass a range of affective states: discomfort, anxiety, sadness, pity, guilt, anger, humiliation, and shame. Such states may go deep and rattle the bones, as one student expressed it, or seem to erupt from one's gut, in another student's language. In some cases at least, the pain of privilege meeting poverty is visceral. It's all about discovering who we are and where we are, relative to the pain of other people's lives, a pain of which we had previously been blissfully unaware, and which now almost mocks us with its stare. It's as if, said one student who had visited a homeless shelter, we were "magnets of resentment." One can almost hear the subtext of this encounter: *But I'm a good person, I'm here to help! Please don't judge me!*

But one need not leave campus to be challenged by the reality of other people's lives. The study of moral exemplars can also expand students' sense of the human condition and what is possible within it. In this case, however, the reality revealed is not the depths to which human misery can sink but the heights to which human virtue can climb in response to that very misery. Drawing on what has been said of saints as liminal figures, we can infer that moral exemplars are also both paradigmatic and prophetic figures. They embody social norms but also transcend them; and in their transcendent loyalties, values,

and integrity, may pose a trenchant critique to and of anyone willing to take them seriously. Emulation of such luminaries, we learn from Aristotle, is a good feeling felt by good persons. But good does not mean pleasant. In fact, emulation is a distressing or painful emotion expressing my realization that I lack some human good that I admire in others. When I falter in my pursuit of such a good or goods, though—when I discover myself not to be as virtuous as I had previously thought—I may experience the semi-virtue of shame, another painful, but potentially motivating, emotion.

According to Aristotle, the "grandfather of service-learning," such experiences of emulation and shame are most likely to happen in the young, whose lofty aspirations and noble dispositions make them vulnerable to emulation but whose fickleness and instability of character also make them vulnerable to shame. Perhaps intuiting such struggles, the young may admire, from a distance, the merciful and heroic deeds of a figure like Dorothy Day but resist her explicit call, echoing Jesus, to go and do likewise, to emulate the saints, especially the saints of a new social order. In the face of the imperative or duty to become better persons, and then even-better persons, doing today what we could not have done yesterday, not just young adults in seminar settings on privileged campuses but their older mentors may dismiss the saints too easily. If Nietzsche is right, it's a deep challenge to love oneself enough to condemn the self we are now and embrace the higher self that we could become. Still, I'm often inspired by the degree to which my own students do indeed acknowledge and accept that challenge, in which case they become moral exemplars to me.

### Social Location and Community Practice

The painful emotions are only where we begin, in education for justice, not where we stay or end although we may never escape them entirely. Certainly Aristotle had much more to say about human flourishing or happiness than that the path to such *eudaimonia* (human flourishing or happiness) is sometimes, even necessarily, painful. Seeing the misery or the nobility of others may prompt a daunting self-examination, but seeing the world as it is constitutes only the first

step in responding authentically to it. We have traced the “see-judge-act” dynamic of Catholic Social Action and of Catholic Social Teaching to Aristotle’s *phronesis*, or practical reason. The well-known Pastoral Circle, as developed by Holland and Henriot from see-judge-act, adds Insertion or awareness of social location to that three-part dynamic. By substituting Vocational Discernment for Pastoral Planning, we transformed the Pastoral Circle into the Pedagogical Circle, and we have seen how that accords with the long and distinguished history of Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy (as encapsulated by Fr. Kolvenbach at Santa Clara), both grounded in intimate personal experience and imagination. In the last few decades, Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy have embraced the promotion of justice as an absolute requirement, explicitly in Jesuit institutions and on their own terms in many other Catholic colleges and universities.

But social location might also mean community practice. We have argued that MacIntyre’s analysis of the possibility of genuine and determinate virtue as requiring communities of ethical tradition, practice, and inquiry points up the inestimable value of Catholic Social Action and Teaching as the obvious and only contexts in which Catholic Social Virtue can be taught. We have demonstrated that such educational practices actually predate the late-nineteenth-century development of the modern teaching of the Church on social issues. The schools of the Society of Jesus, from the earliest instances in the sixteenth century, embodied what we would call today the preferential option for the poor, solidarity beyond class, and practical commitment to the common good. Those schools, bringing together the Medieval university’s search for truth and the Renaissance school’s formation in Christian humanism, practiced education of the poor for their advancement and education of the rich not only for their entry into the professions but also on behalf of the poor, for the good of the community as a whole.

Catholic universities today, when they make similar commitments, far from being innovative or even betraying some vaunted academic ideal of knowledge for its own sake, of a deracinated and elite life of the mind, are simply updating a deep historical tradition. Knowledge for its own sake, we discovered in a close reading of Newman, is

knowledge for the sake of the learner, especially when that learner belongs to a marginalized and exploited class, and thereby knowledge for the sake of the world, for its betterment, for its greater justice. Along with all the necessary paracurricular programs that create a fertile and supportive context on our campuses, justice and peace studies programs in Catholic colleges and universities (by whatever names they are called), when faithful to their heritage (both centuries distant and as contemporary as the most recent social encyclical), may be counted as communities of resistance to injustice (in MacIntyre’s language; see Chapter 3) or as Abrahamic minorities (in the phrase used by Archbishop Dom Helder Camara, one of the prime movers at Vatican II and in the progressive Latin American Church).<sup>4</sup> They are leaven within Catholic institutions of higher education, urging them to live up to their own mission statements, just as Catholic higher education ought to be intellectual leaven within the Church, even as the Church endeavors to leaven society.

But is the experience of shame, as I have contended, really a necessary and even inevitable dimension of that leavening action? I’ll have more to say about that in a moment, but lest there be any resistance to the positive role that shame has to play in personal conversion and education for justice, it is important to acknowledge the ways in which some forms of shame can be negative and opposed to human flourishing and social justice. I presume that similar arguments can be made for the other painful emotions (anger, for example), but I will not attempt to do so here. Psychologist/theologian James W. Fowler, known especially for his theory of faith development,<sup>5</sup> provides an exacting analysis of both good and bad forms of shame.

## Shame as Grace and Disgrace

When Shame Is Not a Grace

Fowler offers a spectrum of shame.<sup>6</sup> At one end of the spectrum, we find healthy shame in two forms. *Discretionary shame* “protects those qualities of personhood that are grounds for esteem in the eyes of

others and for honest confidence and pride in the self," is "premonitory and anticipatory," and depends upon the moral imagination to foresee how possible actions might play out (p. 105). *Disgrace* shame, on the other hand, is not anterior but posterior to a revealing act and "evolves as the painful set of emotions in which one feels exposed as unworthy, as defective, or as having failed to meet some set of standards necessary for the esteem of important others and of the self" (p. 105). *Disgrace* shame is more global than guilt, just as the pattern or trajectory of a life is distinguished from one action within that life. In both of these healthy forms, shame, as "the caretaker of our worthy selves and identities," provides a foundation for conscience (p. 92). In many of the accounts of student experiences that I have examined, *disgrace* shame is clearly at work. One of the primary tasks of Catholic social learning, as for Catholic education generally, is the fostering of healthy shame—or, as we are more likely to say, the formation of conscience.

These two forms of healthy shame are both nicely demonstrated in this student reflection on her experience volunteering at a nursing home for the elderly as part of a service-learning course:

At the nursing home I feel very uncomfortable every time I go. I get a sick feeling in my stomach that does not leave until I go home. The residents are so sick, both mentally and physically, it scares me. But, at the same time, I am beginning to understand why Jesus taught the message that he taught. The world that I live in has always been filled with love and security. I have my share of problems, but nothing world shattering. Being at the nursing home helps me to realize that not everyone lives the life I do. It also has helped me to realize that maybe I am not as nice, caring, and religious as I have always supposed I am. Jesus taught his message to help the poor get a good night's sleep and to help the rich wake up.

The other day I saw a man in his forties sitting outside the nursing home. He looked shabby and very rough. All I could think was to wonder why this man was standing around bothering the residents. He made me nervous. Then one of the residents called out to him with a big grin, and the man grinned back. I found out that the man is a construction worker in the area who comes to volunteer during his lunch hour and after work.

The only other volunteer I have met at the home is a man named Donny, who I thought was a resident the first time I saw him. Donny does not look older than forty-five but is in a wheelchair and speaks slowly. There is something wrong with him physically. He volunteers more than twenty hours a week, and the residents know him by heart and love him. I am beginning to feel very ashamed of myself. Not only do I judge the residents, but the other volunteers. While I am doing this they are helping each other attempt to live a better, more fulfilled life. As sick as I feel when I think of going, I am beginning to feel even worse at the idea of not going.

This honest and painful self-assessment expresses both *disgrace* shame—"I am beginning to feel very ashamed of myself"—and *discretionary* shame—"I am beginning to feel even worse at the idea of not going." The dynamic is fascinating. Because she is aware of being ashamed of her present attitudes, she can foresee that acting to avoid them in the future, by not returning to the site that provokes those attitudes and that shame, would cause an even more disturbing shame. What kind of person is she? It would be cowardly and negatively and selfish, she seems to imagine, to abandon people who themselves rise above the very impairments that scare her or whose appearance makes her nervous but whose generosity of self seems to accuse her. Whether one thinks of this as semivirtuous or healthy shame, surely it is to be applauded and encouraged, even as one commiserates and even identifies with her in her painful self-revelation.

A very different kind of shame—*perfectionist* shame, often with roots in early childhood—is distorting and unhealthy. In thrall to the approval of important others, who may seem never to be satisfied, *perfectionist* shame limits access to the truth of one's own experience and self-evaluation (p. 114). Whereas healthy shame nurtures or protects a true self-identity, *perfectionist* shame creates a false self-identity, which is "reinforced by the parents, with the sanctions of religious and class ideals of moral superiority" (p. 115). Scruples, to which Ignatius was prone early in his conversion experience,<sup>7</sup> would seem to be a version of *perfectionist* shame in which one becomes one's own

worst enemy. This inflated form of shame lacks humility and compassion toward the self; conviction about the enormity of one's own sins makes forgiveness impossible.

Ascribed shame, or "shame due to enforced minority status," is another story altogether. It can be learned within a family of marginalized social status even before the child is exposed to the wider world. "It has little to do with the personal qualities of the family or their children. It has everything to do with the social environment's disvaluing of some qualities over which they have no control. Most potent among the forms of this type of ascribed shame are the distortions due to socioeconomic class, race, ethnic background, sometimes religion, and—most commonly—gender" (p. 119). Two factors make this shame especially pernicious and difficult: it can exist alongside any of the other forms of shame on the spectrum, and it cannot be fully healed apart from addressing issues of social justice. So the healthy shame that privileged students might feel in a homeless shelter may be complicated by an awareness of the ascribed shame—the socially unjust shame—that they see in the shelter's guests. One such student seems to have been angered, shamed, and motivated by the way her older affluent peers (ladies of the Junior League) condescended to the women of the shelter and thereby reinforced their ascribed shame.<sup>8</sup>

In *Volunteer with the Poor in Peru*, Jeff Thielman reports on his three-year stint as a recent Boston College graduate trying to make a difference in the lives of poor children in the city of Tacna. Soon after arriving at his new residence at a Jesuit high school, where he was to teach and coach, Jeff took his "first undistracted look at where I was":

Somehow I had not noticed how dramatically the barbed wire fence separated our lovely property from the poor neighborhood almost in our backyard which, in my home town, would be considered a slum. A woman who had brought her plastic water bucket to an outdoor spigot suddenly straightened up, cocked her head, put her hands on her hips, and stared at me directly. Her children, in torn, dirty clothing, with dusty hands and feet, stared at me too—as my gold Seiko watch and my gold college ring, in my imagination, took on an enormous weight and proportion on my wrist and finger. Both were gifts; but the ring now became emblematic

not so much of me as a person—as if Boston College had given me my identity—but of the world I had left behind. For a passing second the woman's eyes and mine met. Perhaps she was embarrassed as I.<sup>9</sup>

A student who had participated in *Semestre Dominicano* commented on this passage, read for a course upon her return to Omaha, that both the poor woman and the rich volunteer "feel that there is something shameful in the way they live," and that "there is something about seeing the stark contrast between your own world and somebody else's that is incredibly powerful." We might also say that there is something powerful about the encounter between unjustly ascribed shame for poverty and healthy shame for previously unacknowledged privilege.

Toxic shame arises in children whose families are dysfunctionally organized around a parent's alcoholism or abusiveness. A false self must be constantly on display or at hand, playing by the rules that allow the dysfunction to remain publicly unchallenged and the alcoholic or abuser unaccountable for his behavior. The suppression of the true self's suffering becomes poisonous. As toxic shame may often be present among the poor and marginalized, as both cause and consequence of their plight, our students may often encounter it hidden in the resentment of those they expect to find appreciative of their presence and service.

Finally, at the far end of the spectrum from healthy shame is shamelessness, or *sociopathtology*: the complete lack of empathy, respect, and conscience. Fowler gives as examples the political tyrants Stalin, Hitler, and Saddam Hussein, each of whose biographies reveal childhoods in which abusive or shut-off parents made the development of healthy shame an impossibility.

I conclude that the distance between virtue and vice, between sanctity and villainy, is measured by the kinds of shame active in any particular person. Healthy shame keeps us human and humane and nurtures holiness; unhealthy shame suppresses our own deepest humanity and that of others; the black hole of a life without shame may suck entire peoples into its destructive maw. The stakes could not be

higher. No wonder shame and confusion play an essential role in Christian spirituality.

### The Painful Path to Solidarity: "Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down"

Dr. King pointed out that Sunday at eleven o'clock was the most segregated hour of the week in Christian America. Sunday morning was meant to be a time of revelation or of remembering revelation, but what Dr. King revealed to us was the irony of how that revelation itself was undermined by the social locations in which it was practiced. Sunday morning has a way of being a moment of uncomfortable truth.

One of the classic pop-cultural expressions of that reality is singer/songwriter Kris Kristofferson's lament "Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down."<sup>10</sup> The chorus, even minus the rest of the imagery and the music, gives some idea of the self-revelation the narrator is confronting:

On the Sunday mornin' sidewalk,  
Wishing, Lord, that I was stoned.  
Cause there's somethin' in a Sunday,  
Makes a body feel alone.  
And there's nothin' short of dyin',  
Half as lonesome as the sound,  
On the sleepin' city sidewalks:  
Sunday mornin' comin' down.

In a Christian cultural context, there's nothing like a lonely Sunday morning to reveal the loss of relationship, community, dreams, and faith.

Rev. King suggested that Sunday morning should be a time of stock-taking of their social witness for the Christian churches of America. For Kristofferson, the stock-taking is also spiritual but much more intimate. In both cases, the Sunday morning revelation is bleak, and, of course, ironically so.<sup>11</sup>

In recent years, it has been my wife's and my practice to attend mass at 4:30 Sunday afternoon. That leaves Sunday morning free for a leisurely coffee on the porch while reading *The New York Times* and the local newspaper. Over a period of some weeks, I began to notice that by mid-morning, I was finding myself in a bit of a funk. So much bad news. So much contention, strife, suffering, scandal, betrayal, abuse, injustice, violence, war, even genocide. After a few weeks of this, it finally dawned on me to put my funk in the context not just of Sunday mornin' comin' down, but of the Sabbath, of the Gospel, and more specifically, of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. I remembered how Ignatius, in the first "week" or stage of the retreat, instructs the retreatant to take a God's eye view of the human condition, of its endless cycle of sin and suffering and death. That sin, I knew, was both personal and social. At the very least, I was guilty of the sin of omission. I had done so much that made such little difference. And whatever I did this coming week, the news would be just as bad next Sunday morning. Moreover, I was guilty of the sin of complicity, of refusing to refuse to cooperate with evil—of being, in Thomas Merton's memorable phrase, a guilty bystander. I was very much the human in the human condition. No one can do enough, and no one is pure before the sin of the world. No one of any moral and spiritual sensitivity, I suspect, is immune to this kind of funk.

But I also remembered Ignatius' insistence, in the preliminary Principle and Foundation, that Creation is good, even with its human corruption, and that we ourselves have been created by God out of a love that sustains and redeems. But how do we get in touch with that love and how does that redemption happen? I remembered what has become for me the salient insight of the Exercises: the appropriate human response to all that funk-inducing bad news is "shame and confusion." Indeed, Ignatius writes that the retreatant "must beg for shame and confusion."<sup>12</sup> What could be more counterintuitive? The Sunday-morning-bad-news-blues comin' down on me could be a gift, a grace, even though I have not begged for it and even wished it would go away. If I were to allow myself really to feel and understand<sup>13</sup> this interior movement—rather than fight it or repress it or ignore it—it could become precious interior knowledge, and that knowledge could

go deep, touching into an essential goodness that was, somehow, Jesus himself. Jesus wept over the suffering of his people, especially the poor and oppressed (the bad news of his day), tried to do something about it, called others to do likewise, suffered the resistance of the Powers That Be,<sup>14</sup> was brutally killed, but proved eternally resilient.

My own tears, whether actual or not on any particular Sunday morning, were a kind of baptism into this familiar pattern of the Exercises, and through them into the dynamics of encounter with Jesus and his Gospel. My shame and confusion were an invitation to forgiveness, liberation, empowerment. The news the next Sunday might not be different, but people all over the world—some inspired by Jesus and some not; many of the poor themselves; some of the rich; and not a few middling persons like myself, exemplars and stamp-lickers, organized in all sorts of ways—were going to try to make a difference, and would sometimes succeed, on occasion, magnificently so. It was worth the effort, even if there were no guarantees. It was the call of grace.

So I have come to be neither surprised nor disheartened when students I know or read about report painful emotions when they encounter the sin of the world, and their share in it, whether they call it that or not, and whether or not they identify their response as the grace of shame and confusion. Indeed, my concern would be raised if they did not experience some difficult emotions. The gritty reality of the world is like that. It raises excruciating questions, both personal and social. In the appropriate context of a community of faith and resistance, of an Abrahamic minority, and with proper guidance, such emotions can lead to the kind of self-knowledge and vocational discernment that is an essential dimension of the Catholic university's mission on behalf of its students. It is the context in which all the professions for which we prepare our students make ultimate sense and from which they take their deepest meaning.

Shame in this context can be not only psychologically healthy, but also fundamental to human development (as argued by Fowler), not only a semi-virtue (as named by Aristotle), but also a grace (as prayed for by Ignatius): a path to solidarity and a door to the sacred.

## A Model of Justice Pedagogy in Catholic Higher Education

But what does all this look like in practical terms? How do immersion experiences, service-learning courses, and the study of moral exemplars come together in one curriculum? What else is required to create an academic context in which the insights we have gleaned from personal experience, from Aristotle, Ignatius, Newman, MacIntyre, Hoffman, Kolvenbach, Flescher, and CST itself, can be made concrete in a justice education program at a Catholic university? I have no illusion that there is no other effective way to foster Catholic social learning in higher education, but I am confident that the model I have developed over the past 15 years is one such way. Although the fundamental insight—that personal encounter with victims of social injustice is the indispensable first step in education for justice—antedates this program, many of the others have been developed as I have reflected on my teaching experience and the learning experience of my students.<sup>15</sup>

The Justice and Peace Studies (JPS) minor comprises six requirements totaling 18 credit hours, as do all minors in the Creighton University College of Arts & Sciences. These are generally upper-division undergraduate courses.

1. *A service-learning course.* Many JPS students meet this requirement by completing JPS 361 *Social Justice in the Dominican Republic* as participants in *Encuentro Dominicano*,<sup>16</sup> Creighton's study/immersion/service semester program in that Caribbean nation. Others participate in JPS 341 *Ecclesiology in Context: The Church in El Salvador*, a summer travel course.<sup>17</sup> JPS 470 *Poverty in America* is also a summer travel course, but in this case to an Appalachian community in West Virginia. JPS 465 *Faith and Political Action* is offered as a local service-learning course. Whether local, national, or international, all these courses engage students in marginalized communities and their concerns. (See Chapters 4 and 5 for explorations of these pedagogies.) All are cross-listed from other departments (Theology, Education, Political Science), where the instructors are located.



2. JPS 365 *Faith and Moral Development*. Typically, the three one-credit sections that constitute this course are taken over the two semesters of the junior year and the first semester of the senior year, but accommodations can be made as course schedules demand. Recently, a course modeled on Faith and Moral Development has been established as a dedicated academic component of the Cortina Community, a sophomore residential program named for Fr. Jon Cortina, a Jesuit engineer, professor, and rural pastor who would have been murdered along with his six brother Jesuits of the University of Central America had he not been elsewhere that fateful night in San Salvador. JPS 265 *Cortina Seminar* takes its themes from the four Pillars (values) of the Cortina Community: *community, service, faith, and justice*. JPS 265 may be substituted for one semester of JPS 365 for students who elect to pursue the JPS minor. (See Chapter 6 for an exploration of the pedagogy of studying moral exemplars.)

3. A course teaching skills of social analysis in either *Sociology or Political Science*. The following course titles indicate the subjects covered within the menu of options: *Social Problems: Values, Issues and Public Policy; American Cultural Minorities; Social Change; Social Inequality and Stratification; Politics of the Developing Areas; Public Policy and Poverty in the United States; Global Poverty and Development; Poverty, Development, and Public Policy*. JPS 361, mentioned earlier, is a six-credit course that includes substantial social analysis of the Dominican Republic (DR) reality, and also meets this requirement.

4. JPS 565 *Catholic Social Teaching*. Cross-listed with Theology, this course critically examines the major documents of Catholic social ethics, the teaching of the Popes and bishops from *Rerum Novarum (Of New Things)* in 1891 to the present. As a service-learning or an immersion course is the experiential heart of the program, so is this course its normative core. Every Catholic college and university ought to have such a course, but obviously I do not believe that any single course, no matter how well taught, can fully advance the cause of Catholic social learning.<sup>18</sup>

5. JPS 588 *Christian Ethics of War and Peace*. Also cross-listed with Theology, this course examines Christian ethical perspectives on the use of lethal force from biblical times to the present day. Just war,

pacifism, and nonviolence are considered from both Catholic and Protestant perspectives. The relationships between justice and peace, needless to say, are fraught; that really is the crux of the pedagogical dialectic of the syllabus, in the manner of Abelard's *Sic et Non*.<sup>19</sup> Beginning in 2009, considerably more attention has been given to the application of ethical perspectives to wars of the United States. This case study approach emphasizes the development of practical reasoning or reflective judgment<sup>20</sup> and also awareness of one's social location: that is, critical contextualization of an otherwise abstract theological debate.

6. JPS 499 *Senior Seminar*. This course is the capstone for the program and poses two questions: How is social justice actually pursued, and how does one discern a vocation within the wide range of professional options? The first question is addressed through visits to an inner-city school, a community health center, a shelter for the homeless, and a legal clinic serving low-income clients. Guest speakers in the classroom also address professional social work, the social contributions of business, community organizing, church programs of service and immersion, public office, and philanthropy.<sup>21</sup> Vocational discernment is addressed in part through the reading of *The Book of Mev*, Mark Chmiel's remarkable memoir of his late wife Mev Puleo and her own struggles and insights in discovering her calling. This narrative is complemented by the study and personal appropriation of Dean Brackley's *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times: New Perspectives on the Transformative Wisdom of Ignatius of Loyola*, and by a closing conversation with a well-known Jesuit spiritual director.<sup>22</sup> The students prepare a portfolio of their writings and other materials as testimony to the state of their own vocational discernment as they prepare to graduate from college and enter the gritty reality of the world.

The Justice and Peace Studies minor can be combined with almost any major,<sup>23</sup> which emphasizes that social concern is not limited to full-time activists but can be an integral dimension of any profession. The Justice and Society major, on the other hand, co-sponsored by the Justice and Peace Studies Program and the Sociology and Anthropology Department, was designed for students preparing for careers in social change. It combines the six courses of the JPS minor with the



minor in Sociology, which includes an introductory course, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, *Statistics for the Social Sciences*, and *Social and Cultural Theory*. The 37-credit major also included three electives: two from Sociology or Anthropology and one of thematic relevance to the major from another department.

Because simply listing and describing these courses may not tell the whole story, Figure 8.1 shows how the courses are placed on the Pedagogical Circle as presented in Chapter 2. This diagram might serve as a template for the design or redesign of programs at other schools.

### Curricular and Paracurricular Contexts

Of course, these six courses do not exist in isolation from the rest of the undergraduate curriculum and each student's major. The Creighton University College of Arts & Sciences Core Curriculum, in addition to required courses in composition, literature, foreign language, art or communication, history (both Western and non-Western) natural science, and mathematics, also requires courses that at least indirectly support the themes of the Pedagogical Circle: two courses in the human sciences, three in theology, two in philosophy,

one in ethics, one in global studies, and one on a contemporary ethical concern taught from an interdisciplinary perspective. Majors in any of the social sciences and theology obviously complement the objectives of the JPS minor, but students have also found ways to integrate the minor with, for example, a chemistry or English major.

Nor does the curriculum as a whole exist in isolation from the rest of the students' lives in organizations, clubs, and residence halls, many of which promote leadership and service. In particular, the Creighton Center for Service and Justice (CCSJ) has led the way in creating a culture of community engagement on campus. Many of the students in the Justice and Peace Studies Program are active through the CCSJ in weekly service opportunities in Omaha, fall and spring break service trips throughout the country, the annual Ignatian Family Teach-In, summer internships, and other related events and programs. To suggest just some of the symbiosis at play here, a Justice and Society graduate is now the Assistant Director of the CCSJ and offers a section of Faith and Moral Development especially designed for the core team of CCSJ student leaders. Finally, to give one last example of campus culture, the Institute for Latin American Concern (now directed by another Justice and Society graduate) has offered summer health clinics in remote areas of the Dominican Republic for three decades. The clinics are staffed by Creighton health professionals and students but also by undergraduate *ayudantes* (helpers), all of whom live with Dominican families of low income and limited opportunity. This provides yet another powerful insertion or immersion experience for a small number of students each year.

The Justice and Peace Studies Program has been effective in no small part because it has been so well supported by these surrounding curricular and para-curricular opportunities. I am deeply grateful to all my colleagues who make them possible.

### Listening to Student Voices

That is the story of Catholic social learning at one university. But how is that story told by the students themselves? Because so many of my

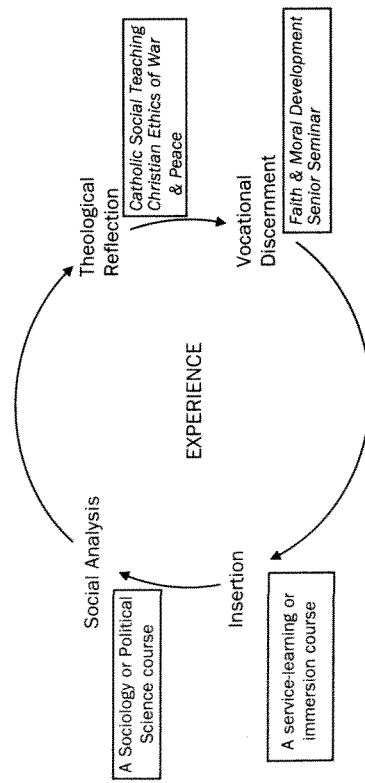


Figure 8.1. The Justice and Peace Studies Minor on the Pedagogical Circle

students have studied in either the Dominican Republic or El Salvador (or both), and because those have been profoundly formative experiences for them and thereby produce their most compelling writing, almost all of these anonymous selections speak of those experiences and what they have meant to the students.<sup>24</sup> I assemble them (very lightly edited) not to make any new argument, but to illustrate some of the arguments already made in the previous pages. And to humble and inspire the adult readers of this book.

#### Confused and Feeling Ashamed

As a freshman, even before participating in Encuentro Dominicano as a sophomore, this student was beginning to ask the big questions: “I have found a new interest in figuring out what I am called to do with my life and how I can use my education for that.” In response to a new awareness of the meaning of compassion (“to suffer with”) and its centrality to Christian faith, as proposed in her introductory theology course, she found herself “*confused and feeling ashamed* of thinking of actually pursuing becoming a doctor, when I should just pack up and leave for a third-world country and be a servant to them” (emphasis added). But she also comes to realize that her newfound sense of Christian vocation “could mean pursuing a medical degree but not necessarily using the degree for personal benefits such as a nice car or house, but to help other people in different communities who lack medical technologies.”

#### God as an Alarm Clock

A graduate of a Catholic high school had already traveled to a Third World country before starting college. In a paper written for Faith and Moral Development, he reported that through this experience he “was awakened physically and spiritually to the injustices of the world. . . . It was like an enormous alarm clock for my life going off but I didn’t want to get up. I didn’t want to be burdened with these problems. I wanted to go back to dreamland and pretend nothing happened, but

I knew I couldn’t bury it. The feeling was so real, so God-like that after while I felt blessed to have received it.”

#### Ineffable and Noetic

Inspired by the language of a text we were reading for class, a student reflected on the “ineffable” and “noetic” quality of his experiences in the DR. In particular he found those qualities in his relationships with poor Dominicans: “Coming from a society that values material goods and holds one’s social status in high regard, it was very humbling, and defied the reasoning I inherited from my own culture, to learn and grow from the example and wisdom of the *campesinos*.”

#### The Poorest, Weakest Person

A student was inspired by Gandhi’s “*talisman*,” discovered while studying the Mahatma in a section of Faith and Moral Development. Gandhi advocates making decisions in times of doubt or self-absorption so as to benefit the poorest and weakest person you have ever encountered.<sup>25</sup> The student reported that “the weakest, poorest person I have ever seen was a young boy, not more than 10 years old, on the International Highway between the DR and Haiti. He sat outside his hut and waited for trucks to pass on the road. The traffic was sparse, but when a truck came bouncing over the treacherous road (his front yard), he would start running alongside the truck begging for change in a language I could not understand. This young boy was naked, with a belly bloated by hunger, and had large tumors on his stomach and back. . . . He is out there today begging for handouts from passing trucks. Is there any vocation potential for him? I think about him every day. I do not know his name, but I saw his face and his pain and there was nothing I could do about it. How can my actions, now as a student in Omaha, empower this young boy? This is Gandhi’s talisman, and it keeps me grounded whenever I am faced with decisions that impact the lives of others.”

## A Sad Vision, a New Passion

Another student had a similar experience in El Salvador. “The grandmother of my Salvadoran family once told me through the three or four teeth she had left in her mouth: ‘It’s not easy being poor. It is such a hard life. The difficulties never cease.’ Her sad eyes and wrinkles told the story of her suffering every day, but for the first time, she expressed the pain of poverty to me in words. She then resumed her fit of coughing due to the lung problems she had accrued from a life of cooking over an open fire and receiving inadequate health care. In the background, I caught a glimpse of the nine-year-old I had come to know as my *hermana*, or sister, making tortillas crouched over the smoking fire. I saw a sad vision of what Ana’s future would hold if she lived the same life as her grandmother. At that moment I knew the trajectory of my life had to change. I decided I must live my life in a way that honors my Salvadoran family and the struggle of so many people in similar circumstances. When I left the little town of Guarjila, El Salvador, I did not know how I would do it, but I knew that working to improve the lives of impoverished people would be my life’s work. A passion for social justice entered my world.”

## What Is the Point of This?

Despite the commonality of themes in these encounters, each student processes her experience in her own unique and life-giving way. The following was written as a Daily Reflection for Creighton’s internationally known Collaborative Ministry Web site. “I’m studying in the Dominican Republic this semester. I spend time each week at a nursing home called Hospicio for people who have nowhere else to live and can no longer live on their own. Every morning, the women who live there organize themselves and pray the Rosary in the chapel. The woman I generally visit, Sarita, doesn’t like to go into the chapel to pray, but she says the prayers from the hallway while we sit together. While she prays, I’m left with time to think—I sometimes say the prayers with her but I’m at a point where I feel very insincere doing so, so I generally choose to sit quietly. Most of the time, my thoughts

wander to the question, ‘What is the point of this?’ Why are these people, most of them abandoned by their families, here? Why do they suffer? What is it that they’re praying for? And how is it that they keep praying in the face of it all?

“I read a lot about how being a Christian demands that I be counter-cultural. I’m learning that being ‘counter-cultural’ is a lot more complicated than I ever imagined it to be. It means seeing the old woman, whose Spanish I do not have a prayer of understanding, as completely my equal in God’s eyes—and more importantly, acting in a way that realizes that equality. It means doing the same with my classmates. But it also means understanding that prayer isn’t just another manner of purchasing an item from God.com with the option for express, overnight delivery. The women at Hospicio pray. They just pray. Of course, I don’t know all of their thoughts and maybe the truth is that they are fed up with it sometimes. However, I do know that they pray every morning. And when they come out of the chapel, they greet me with smiles and embraces and not a trace of weariness—women who, in my mind, have every reason to be irritated and weary. I’m reminded of how my values—the world’s standards—can be so horribly off.”

## Washing Feet

For this student, it didn’t take a magnificent church, beautiful music, or an inspiring homily to experience the Gospel message during Holy Week. During her semester in the Dominican Republic, she volunteered at Caritas, an international organization that feeds children one meal a day during the school week. “I don’t know if Jesus had four rich college kids, a bar of Irish Spring soap, the bathroom sponge, the mopping bucket, and a borrowed towel in mind when he ordered his disciples to wash the feet of others, but nonetheless, we thought this was a pretty decent interpretation of the gospel. We picked twelve of our beloved Caritas kids, read the Holy Thursday Gospel to them, and each one of us washed three pairs of tiny feet. Feet cracked and broken from gravel roads and no shoes. Feet with scabs and open

wounds from lack of medical access. Feet covered in dirt and other unclean substances. Feet of third world children who do not have enough to eat. And so we washed their feet. We soaped up the sponge and scrubbed as hard as we could. I know I was trying to scrub away my sin that manifests itself in the broken feet of innocent children. I was trying to apologize for wearing my sixty dollar sandals when they rarely had shoes that fit. I was trying to help them which is something I realized I may never be able to do. The only thing I could do was love them. And as little children always do, they eagerly loved me right back.”

#### Geography and Faith

Especially in El Salvador, the tension students experience because of their new awareness can be “almost unbearable,” as another student put it. On the one hand, she met or learned of many moral exemplars: “[I]t was through the stories of such figures as Oscar Romero, Jean Donovan, Jon Cortina, Ignacio Ellacuría, Dean Brackley, Ita Ford, Rutilio Grande, and many, many more that I began to understand and feel my faith for the first time in a very long time. . . . It was in El Salvador that I began to understand the Gospel message of Jesus and the way in which one’s faith can really serve the oppressed people of the world. . . . The more I learned about the religious movement in El Salvador [before, during, and after the civil war of the 1980s], the more I fell in love with my faith and the power of Liberation Theology. Yet, the more I learned about the war in El Salvador, the suffering of the people, and the intentionality of it all, the more disgusted I became with my connection to the oppressor. . . . It is a fact; I am connected to both the injustice and justice, the oppressor and the oppressed, the crucifixion and the resurrection.”

Reflecting on that tension for a writing assignment helped her “to understand my place in a world where by geography I have been born into kinship with a government I find at times very unjust, but where by faith I have been born into kinship with the People of God.”

And that, dear reader, is proximate to where this book began for me many years ago, on the U.S. border with the Two-Thirds World.

Today, thanks in particular to my students, I feel less alone straddling that divide and a good deal more hopeful. The Spirit lives.

#### Eleven Theses on Student Vocational Development in the Catholic University

The following theses may be helpful in thematizing these student reflections and summarizing the major ideas of this book.

1. To be called or to have a vocation is to have one’s imagination captured by an experience, story, vision, or symbol larger than oneself.
2. Young adults are particularly ripe for the experience of vocation because they have begun to think of themselves as responsible for their own moral and spiritual lives, and because what they will be when they grow up is no longer a fantasy question.
3. Young adults are capable of a more mature self-consciousness than they were as adolescents, and so are better able to enter into healthy, probing reflection on fundamental issues such as identity, vocation, faith, and commitment.
4. Just as young adults are capable of a probing self-reflection, so are they capable of a critical engagement with their world. Community service, service-learning courses, and cross-cultural immersion experiences are indispensable opportunities where self and world enter into new relationships.
5. Narratives and exemplars of faithful, reflective commitment to an authentic self and a more just and peaceful world can mentor young adults in their own quests for similar commitments.
6. Young adults need communities of peers who share commitment to the quest.
7. Faith traditions, mediated by sympathetic mentors, can provide a larger framework of meaning and wisdom to nourish and guide young adults’ development of integrity and purpose.
8. The dominant culture of the United States is, at least, a distraction: at worst, an enemy to the young adult quest for a sense of

vocation. Careerism, the cult of sex and personality, conspicuous consumption, the mirage of power and control, the numbness of media glut, the pressure to conform, and the denial of death all conspire to deprive young adults of the challenges of wrestling with “big questions” and shaping “worthy dreams.”<sup>26</sup>

9. Universities have enormous opportunities and responsibilities to foster young adult vocational development, and Catholic universities have privileged resources with which to meet these opportunities and responsibilities, but they, too, are challenged by their cultural context.
10. To the extent that such universities bring their resources into critical dialogue with the dominant culture and contemporary world, a world of massive suffering and injustice, they provide a mentoring model and context for their young adult students. To the extent they do not, they have no *Catholic* reason to exist.
11. The distinctive educational mission of the Catholic university is recapitulated in the preceding theses I–10.

#### NOTES

#### Preface

1. See Daniel K. Lapsley and Darcia Narvaez, eds., *Moral Development, Self, and Identity* (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004), which includes my “Identity as Motivation: Toward a Theory of the Moral Self,” 21–46.
2. A standard collection is David J. O’Brien & Thomas A. Shannon, eds. *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1992).
3. “Faithjustice” is shorthand for “the faith that does justice” and social Catholicism generally. See, for example, the excellent book by Fred Kammer, S.J., with its double *entendre* title, *Doing Faithjustice: An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 2004).

#### 1. Personal Encounter: The Only Way

1. Carolyn Forché, *The Country Between Us* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 16. Used with the gracious permission of the author.
2. The Atlacatl Battalion, which was responsible for the murders of the six Jesuits and two women at the University of Central America in San Salvador on November 16, 1989, was “an elite group organized by U.S. trainers in the early 1980s as a crack