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## **Virtuous Universities and Virtuous Citizens: The Role of Formation for the Good, Civil Discourse and Its Impact on Diverse Ideas**

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and Matthew Gerlach, PhD<sup>3</sup>

### **Introduction**

There is great concern from many quarters about the state of polarization in the Western World, especially in the United States.<sup>4</sup> This polarization has the effect of pitting sides against each other with little or no interplay of different ideas or viewpoints and tends to have a chilling effect upon even the most casual conversation where parties weigh what to say and what not to say lest they unintentionally offend the other. This can breed suspicion and division in ways unhealthy to democracy but more importantly for the fundamental development of the human community. We see this played out in a particular way on college campuses as it relates to debates about free speech and what is and is not acceptable to discuss. Princeton University President Christopher Eisgruber addressed such concerns in his 2021 State of the University address, encouraging the free expression of ideas lest we become "echo chamber[s] in which viewpoints go unchallenged simply because they are popular amongst groups dominant on the campus . . . ."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Vice Chancellor Richardson of the University of Oxford, recently called for more ideological diversity on college campuses in order to help our students "engage civilly in reasoned debate."<sup>6</sup>

In 2020, Heterodox Academy surveyed over four hundred academics with the question, "Imagine expressing your views about a controversial issue while at work, at a time when faculty, staff, and/or other colleagues were present. To what extent would you worry about the following consequences?" Fifty-nine percent of academics indicated that they were "very" or "extremely" concerned that "My reputation would be tarnished," and 53% were very or extremely concerned that "My career would be hurt."<sup>7</sup> Such a culture puts academic freedom and students' access to diverse viewpoints at risk. John McWhorter, a professor at Columbia University, cautions against the mistaken idea that "social justice must be pursued via attempts to banish from the public sphere, as much as possible, all opinions that they interpret as insufficiently opposed to power differentials."<sup>8</sup> President Obama has similarly shared his skepticism of attempts at social justice that primarily involve being judgmental and publicly calling people out, "That's not activism. That's not bringing about change."<sup>9</sup> Universities can teach students to pursue social change by first understanding the diverse points of view on an issue and then collaboratively seeking just solutions. This requires a campus culture that encourages a pursuit of the truth especially as understood within the Catholic context, which supports intellectual diversity, open dialogue and critical thinking.

The pursuit of truth can be compromised when polarization results in ideological isolation, however. Jonathan Haidt, professor and co-founder of Heterodox Academy, states:

If you actually want to find the truth – if you’re a scientist or if you’re working at, say, the Defense Intelligence Agency, where your job is really to find the truth – you have to overcome each person’s preferred way of thinking, which is, find evidence for why I am right . . . The only way to do it is to have someone who doesn’t share your confirmation bias<sup>10</sup> engage with you.<sup>11</sup>

This trend has particular import for Christian schools. As Archbishop José Gomez has observed, “often what is being canceled and corrected are perspectives rooted in Christian beliefs – about human life and the human person, about marriage, the family and more.”<sup>12</sup> This can happen if religious beliefs on such issues are perceived as being akin to bigotry, and voicing such views as akin to “hate speech” and “microaggression.” This should be of concern for secularists as well as people of faith because Christianity offers a philosophically solid argument for upholding the dignity of all people.

“We all want to build a society that provides equality, freedom, and dignity for every person,” Archbishop Gomez said. “But we can only build a just society on the foundation of the truth about God and human nature . . . Unless we believe that God is our Father, there is no reason for us to treat others as our brothers and sisters.”<sup>13</sup>

Further, silencing the Christian perspective, or any religious perspective, eliminates possible paths to finding truth.<sup>14</sup> The Catholic Church has spoken out about the dangers of blocking *any* tributaries that flow toward truth. For example, the Church officially and publicly advocates for academic freedom. One example is the bishops’ application of *Ex corde Ecclesiae* to the United States:

Academic freedom is an essential component of a Catholic university. The university should take steps to ensure that all professors are accorded “a lawful freedom of inquiry and of thought, and of freedom to express their minds humbly and courageously about those matters in which they enjoy competence.”<sup>15</sup>

Silencing perspectives, whether religious or secular, limits the expression of diversity and is antithetical to the mission of the university. Reasoned argument and respectful dialogue are needed to correct misinformation and bridge misunderstandings.

### **A Proposed Path Forward: Fostering Civil Discourse as part of Virtue Education**

In the midst of a national breakdown in civil discourse, we find ourselves in need of innovative educational approaches. This is familiar territory for the followers of Saint John Baptist de La Salle (De La Salle) who was an educational innovator and radically revolutionized education in France and beyond.<sup>16</sup> Drawing from our rich Lasallian<sup>17</sup> heritage, one way that a sense of civility and reasoned argumentation can be recaptured is through the engagement of character education and formation in virtue. Higher education holds a privileged place for what should be the interchange of diverse ideas and for influencing society for the common good, properly understood.<sup>18</sup> Because of this, higher education can offer a kind of remedy to these challenging times by helping us to redevelop or refine the way we understand individual (personal) goodness and collective (common) goodness. By theoretically and practically engaging in programs that promote virtue and character strengths we can open the way for healthier scholarly environments that promote a

free and open exchange of ideas and intellectual growth while preparing students, in particular (though by no means exclusively) to undergraduates, to participate effectively in the ever more pluralistic world they enter. Graduate students and students in professional programs also gain greatly from such engagement especially when tailored to their unique disciplines.

What follows in this paper is a discussion of how such an approach to civil discourse and diversity of conscience has been and is being engaged as part of a larger character and virtue effort at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota as a faith-based university (though by extension it may be of interest and application to educators in general). We also explore both the potential this holds and the limitations such a method offers, understanding this effort provides one path forward. The paper concludes by offering practical applications for ways a university can engage in such an approach more fully.

### **De La Salle and Virtue Education**

De La Salle believed that educators should provide innovative educational methods to best meet the needs of students from a position of faith and profound love for the students. He understood academic instruction as one component of educating the whole person. De La Salle took a system-wide approach by forming the character of the teachers as well as the students. As evidenced by the articulation of the Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher,<sup>19</sup> character education has been an essential component of Lasallian education since De La Salle personally undertook the character formation of his first Brother-teachers. The idea that education is about developing good people rather than just good intellects is alive and well in Lasallian schools today. As De La Salle emphasized:

Be convinced that the main conversion is that of the heart, and without it the conversion of the mind is quite sterile.<sup>20</sup>

In 2019, Saint Mary's University instituted a character education initiative believing on the basis of compelling research that virtue is foundational and essential for our students to be flourishing members of society<sup>21</sup> who are able to respond flexibly and creatively to life's challenges and be productive and healthy members of their communities. For example, research has linked virtue education with a variety of positive outcomes<sup>22</sup> including: increased academic performance,<sup>23</sup> work success,<sup>24</sup> general well-being,<sup>25</sup> and desirability to potential employers.<sup>26</sup> "The research evidence is clear: schools that are values-driven have high expectations and demonstrate academic, professional and social success."<sup>27</sup> In fact our university mission highlights similar aspects of flourishing through virtue as we seek to "awaken, nurture, and empower learners to ethical lives of service and leadership."<sup>28</sup> Following De La Salle's example, it became evident that living into this mission requires formation at the level of the institution (creating a culture that both educates about and models virtue) as well as the level of the individual (personal formation). Because of the *institution-wide* implementation, Saint Mary's University has become a vanguard in the character and virtue movement among universities.

Our approach to character education is grounded in our Lasallian Catholic heritage and traditional Christian virtue ethics, which is ultimately an ethic of love. Romanus Cessario notes the early importance of love as the unifying force in Christian thought:

As Saint Augustine understood it, all the requirements of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance easily translate into love. The theology of the virtues aims directly at the Christian commandment that one love God above all things and the neighbor as oneself. Since our happiness depends on how we succeed in this task, we should suffer no compromise in matters of divine love.<sup>29</sup>

At Saint Mary's the focus is on the cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance), theological virtues (faith, hope, and love), and the Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher<sup>30</sup> as the cornerstone of our approach, while appreciating the importance of both civic and performance virtues (as grounded in the moral virtues).

Implementing character education university-wide is progressing in stages. First, in close consultation with the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues,<sup>31</sup> we produced a position statement for the university community<sup>32</sup> and constructed a teaching rubric<sup>33</sup> to encourage and measure implementation throughout the academic curriculum. Second, we expanded our initial advisory committee to include representatives from across the university to formulate plans for assessment, to educate the university community, and to disseminate promising approaches (research and marketing). Critical hires took the initiative to the next level by developing and leading Faculty Learning Communities,<sup>34</sup> creating a Character and Virtue website, and planning a summer conference. Saint Mary's University received a grant from the Kern Family Foundation to the School of Education to embed a virtue-based approach to professional ethics in a graduate program for aspiring principals, superintendents, and directors of special education. This graduate program provides an even richer environment for future school leaders to ground their own work with their teachers and students with a character-focus. Saint Mary's now has a university-wide, cabinet-level office led by a vice president of character, virtue, and ethics. This position oversees and coordinates all of the various expressions of character education throughout our graduate and undergraduate courses on each of our three campuses and online, thus ensuring an integrated and consistent approach that also allows for a diversity of disciplinary and departmental expressions.

One specific aspect of the Saint Mary's Character Initiative addresses the aforementioned societal problems in civil discourse. This particular focus emanated from the larger university-wide character initiative and its Lasallian roots.

### **Applying the Lasallian Charism and Virtue Education to Improve Civil Discourse**

Lasallian schools are vibrant examples of charity (love) at work in the world, in eighty countries and in nearly one thousand schools,<sup>35</sup> welcoming all students – often in areas where education would not otherwise be available to certain populations (for example: Papua New Guinea and the Amazon borderlands). The mission of the De La Salle Christian Brothers encourages the encounter with and the embrace of diversity in its many forms, even operating in areas where teaching Christianity is frowned upon. As such, Lasallians have long practiced something that perplexes our society today: *how to hold onto one's beliefs while respectfully dialoguing and lovingly entering into the experience of other people who may have core beliefs that are very different or even opposed to one's own beliefs.*<sup>36</sup> The Brothers of the Christian Schools do this even regarding the faith beliefs that are central to their mission and that guide their very lives. Thus, one might well ask, how can Lasallian schools help others learn this vital life-skill? How can we “bring to

practice” respectful, loving discourse even between people with fundamental differences in core values? In answer to this there is an opportunity for Lasallians to teach and model respectful and meaningful dialogue between diverse and increasingly polarized groups of people on our university campuses and in our schools. One such opportunity can be found further in this paper where we discuss a pilot study that Saint Mary’s conducted to assess whether civil discourse could be improved by first helping participants to understand the virtue of tolerance of diversity of conscience.

### ***What Is Tolerance of Diversity of Conscience?***

Tolerance of diversity of conscience is practicing the virtue of tolerance in a way that respects another’s *diversity of conscience* – defined as “legitimate differences of moral and religious conscience.”<sup>37</sup> In other words, it involves approaching conversations with the assumption that your interlocutor has searched their conscience and arrived at their position earnestly, and that every person not only has the right but also the responsibility to do this.<sup>38</sup> We can respect every person’s *right* to follow their own conscience,<sup>39</sup> and we can respect their *process* of discernment via consulting their own conscience – even if we never agree with the person’s conclusion. This is not a simple issue. For example, we are obligated to take responsibility to form our conscience well,<sup>40</sup> yet even when we earnestly attempt to form our conscience well, our conscience can be misguided.<sup>41</sup> John Henry Newman reminds us that, “conscience has rights because it has duties” and it should not be mistaken for the “right of self-will.”<sup>42</sup> However, in sincerely undertaking this obligation, one comes to appreciate that there is humility in understanding that we are all incomplete in our work to fully form our conscience, thus allowing for the fact that we can extend to one another the respect and patience that are deserved in this process.

One approach to developing tolerance of diversity of conscience is through civil discourse. It can certainly help us form our own consciences; but it can also help us develop respect for others as they strive to do the same, and in two ways. First, it insists on respecting a person’s right to follow the dictates of their own conscience. Second, it respects people’s ability to experience and listen to viewpoints that differ from their own without requiring either party to abandon his or her views. Educational institutions flourish when diverse viewpoints are available, shared, and discussed. Students benefit from learning to see different perspectives and evaluate each on its merits. This is the foundation of critical thinking, and one of the conditions necessary for a climate of intellectual diversity and intellectual integrity in our schools.

### **Tolerance of Diversity of Conscience as a Lasallian Virtue**

The virtue of tolerance, as it relates to diversity of conscience, can be understood as inherently Lasallian because Lasallians have successfully encountered and embraced diversity in their schools the world over. They are shining examples of how institutions and individuals can be fully committed to and express their culture and faith, while offering profound respect and hospitality to people of other cultures and faith traditions. They understand that it is the coming together of *differences* that produces synergy to understand more deeply the complexity and needs of humanity and that it is through our experiences of differences that we gain a firsthand understanding of diversity. These mutually beneficial and reciprocal relationships between diverse people can be seen within and between all segments of the vast international Lasallian community,

in the many kinds of diversity represented among the Brothers of the Christian Schools themselves, among all educators who have embraced De La Salle's mission, and among the students whom they serve. Specifically, the virtue of tolerance, as it relates to diversity of conscience, is far from a new idea for Lasallian educators. It simply puts words to something that Lasallians have long been doing all over the world. Drawing from the Lasallian charism helps us to highlight this important virtue in innovative ways that meet the current needs of our students and society.

### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted to assess whether teaching the concept of tolerance of diversity of conscience might be a first step in facilitating deeper dialogue and understanding between persons. Health related restrictions necessitated that the study move fully online rather than the original plan to conduct in-person student workshops to practice the civil dialogue skills. Instead we created an engaging three-minute illustrated video<sup>43</sup> to teach the concept of tolerance of diversity of conscience and embedded it in an online workshop<sup>44</sup> that also introduced the cardinal virtues as parameters for civil discourse with the hypothesis that character and virtue education foster civil discourse and that there's a reciprocal influence in which civil discourse strengthens and supports virtue education. This was administered to a sample of student leaders with accompanying online pre- and post-workshop questionnaires to assess workshop efficacy.<sup>45</sup> Results indicated that students were able to learn the concepts effectively in an online format.<sup>46</sup> This is encouraging as it suggests that the concepts can be efficiently disseminated and effectively taught on a large scale. Further, students demonstrated the ability to apply the concepts to real-life vignettes in a post-workshop questionnaire, which may suggest some generalizability to real world situations.

### **Future Directions**

Universities can help to foster the kinds of intellectual, moral, civic and performance virtues that inspire students to participate in open and respectful dialogue inside and outside of the classroom.<sup>47</sup> Leadership must ensure that the efforts are highly visible and build a culture that supports virtuous civil discourse.

First, the core purposes of faith-based university education (i.e, promoting the impartial search for truth, the integration of multidisciplinary learning, and the dialogue between faith and reason)<sup>48</sup> should be widely and well communicated. This provides a rich mission-rooted framework for all learning and discussion on campus and in other university learning environments (online, service learning, field work, etc.). This can be accomplished in a number of ways. For example, an official position statement that the university values the impartial search for truth and tolerance of diversity of conscience could be institutionally adopted and regularly referenced.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, a white paper on "Virtue and Knowledge: A Framework for Integrating Character Education in a Catholic University" could be collaboratively written and would then serve to provide the university community with a deep and clear understanding of the university's approach to character and virtue education. Further, to ensure a common basis for the university community to speak about character and virtue, a lexicon of terms could be published and shared with faculty, students, staff, and administration, as well as with external constituents like benefactors, alumni, and community partners.

One way that we have already begun the process of establishing a framework for civil discourse is through Faculty Learning Communities (FLC). In these communities, small numbers of faculty gather for a semester for a facilitated discussion on how character and virtue might be more strategically embedded in their course work and pedagogical practices. Following a stepwise program in which they are introduced to the literature related to virtue education, they engage in conversations throughout the semester as they rework a course to focus on embedding aspects of character and virtue. While not specifically focused on teaching civil discourse, the interactions with one another throughout the semester (discussing the engagement of character and virtue in the classroom among other topics) offers new understandings that allows for robust and thought provoking discussions. Often these are expressed through diverse opinions that are shared and received with respect and civility. Future FLC's focused directly on the topic of civil discourse and diversity of conscience may highlight the effects of such work even more. The overriding idea is that if faculty learn and can concept together various approaches on how to embed character and virtue in their courses through the FLCs, they will be better prepared for students to learn it.

Another area that we plan to build upon as part of this initiative is our research program. Since we began our study of this area exploring the role of tolerance of diversity of conscience, multiple people have called for a renewed understanding and exploration of this topic, as was stated earlier in this paper. Therefore, an additional goal of this work will be to move forward with studies on tolerance of diversity of conscience. Not only will it be important to reach a wider and more diverse population of students and faculty but also expand our methodology, assessment measures and interventions. It will be important to determine whether or not the virtues work together to enhance civil discourse and, if so, how. Another goal will be to refine the interventions to determine which elements are effective and how best to reach all constituents within the university community. Finally, understanding how tolerance of diversity of conscience and respectful conversations relate to other virtues and topics in the field of character and virtue studies (e.g., civic virtues, performance virtues) will be important. All of these ideas provide excellent research opportunities for graduate students and faculty – especially, though not limited to, the social sciences, education and business.

Ideally this work will allow us to partner with other institutions and industries that share a concern for this kind of intervention. For industries, this can take the form of employee development, micro-credentials and certification, and for other academic institutions this could take the form of collaborative research efforts, symposia and conferences along with faculty engagement, interchange and exchanges. These areas offer us additional directions to take in our efforts to enrich civil dialogue and character education.

Faculty and administration might want to sponsor regular (e.g., quarterly) moderated, panel presentations that model the virtues of a good teacher including intellectual seriousness, emotional calmness (reserve and quiet), etc. with robust and nuanced discussions of controversial topics. Here it is not only the *substance* of what is discussed but equally the *manner* in which the discourse occurs and is modeled. To that end, such panels could be co-sponsored and planned by multiple faculty, departmental, and even student organizations. Ideally, panelists would be well-versed in the topic and able to articulate arguments with equanimity and logic. Since the aim would be to draw students into the dialogue, the panelists or moderator could invite students into the conversation and give them the opportunity to continue the conversation afterward. In this way,

students can practice discussing ideas in the same spirit with which the panelists exhibited the intellectual and moral virtues. Ideally, humility, charity and good will would characterize all panelist exchanges. A well prepared and skilled moderator can help to pull together insights and nuances from the contributions of all who participated. Additionally, feedback from students and all participants will help to ensure continued improvement and refinement of this approach.

With an intellectual and community culture that offers opportunities to engage different perspectives on controversial and complex matters, and to learn how to exercise tolerance of diversity of conscience, members of the university community may grow in the virtues of public discourse. There would also need to be intentional and widespread efforts across the whole university, especially inside the classroom. However, for efforts to guide the university in a healthy, character-based direction to truly flourish, there would also need to be other opportunities for civil discourse outside the classroom.

As with any new initiative there will be challenges and limitations. In the case of this work, we noted that our previous study<sup>50</sup> was limited by the sample population and size. The lack of previous research on this topic was an additional limitation, thus constraining our ability to inform our current methodology and inhibiting our understanding of the variables of interest. These limitations also appeared in our efforts to move this initiative forward as the number of faculty, staff and students that can be exposed to this initiative are limited due to time constraints and resources available. Furthermore, as with any new initiative, some skepticism and/ or disinterest may be expected and can inhibit the success of such initiatives. Determining ways to overcome these particular limitations will require deep listening for themes of concern with a commitment to open engagement, transparency and dialogue about the process of our overall efforts.

## **Conclusion**

All of this initial work suggests that the environment and scaffolding necessary to encourage civil discourse, respect for and engagement with tolerance of diversity of conscience, and application to real world experience can be and is possible. That this can build healthier, more caring and thoughtful communities appears self-evident. At universities like Saint Mary's, this work relates to the heart of Lasallian education since it reflects its Catholic identity and the Church's mission and teaching – valuing the dignity of every human being. The Lasallian charism gives life to this, in a profound way, through education, justice in action and the lived expression of the social teachings of the Church.

In the final analysis, universities must cultivate an atmosphere of open discussion in the pursuit of truth in order to fully live out their mission. In particular Catholic universities must do so, perhaps leading the way within the tradition, as a way of promoting and engaging in finding the truth in all things, and thereby contributing to the health and vitality of the citizenry and society. Not to do so puts the ability to form one's conscience, one's true identity and the common good in peril.

## **Endnotes**

1. James P. Burns, IVD, who serves as the 14<sup>th</sup> president of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, earned his doctorate in counseling psychology at Northeastern University.

2. Marcy Van Fossen is a clinical psychologist in Winona, MN, and a member of the board of trustees of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

3. Matthew Gerlach, who earned his doctorate in religious studies at Marquette University, serves as the vice president for character, virtue, and ethics and core professor of ethics and leadership at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

4. "Political Polarization in the American Public," Pew Research Center - U.S. Politics & Policy, April 9, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>.

5. Christopher Eisgruber, "The University's Role in a Time of Crisis," Princeton University State of the University Letter, February 2021, [https://president.princeton.edu/sites/president/files/state\\_of\\_the\\_university\\_letter\\_2021.pdf?utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_source=ExactTarget&utm\\_campaign=CLE+Annual+Letter+to+Community+02-04-21](https://president.princeton.edu/sites/president/files/state_of_the_university_letter_2021.pdf?utm_medium=Email&utm_source=ExactTarget&utm_campaign=CLE+Annual+Letter+to+Community+02-04-21).

6. Simon Baker, "Oxford Vice Chancellor Seeks More Ideological Diversity," *Inside Higher Ed*, September 10, 2021, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/09/10/oxford-vice-chancellor-calls-more-ideological-diversity>.

7. Cited in John McWhorter, "Academics Are Really, Really Worried about Their Freedom," *The Atlantic*, September 1, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/09/academics-are-really-really-worried-about-their-freedom/615724/> and Heterodox Academy's assessment of the climate for *students* on university campuses yielded similar results. For the report, see: M. Stikma, "Understanding the Campus Expression Climate: Fall 2020," Heterodox Academy, 2021, <https://heterodoxacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Campus-Expression-Survey-Report-2020.pdf>.

8. McWhorter, 1.

9. Emily Rueb and Derrick Taylor, "Obama on Call-Out Culture: 'That's Not Activism,'" *The New York Times*, October 31, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/31/us/politics/obama-woke-cancel-culture.html>.

10. Confirmation bias is "the tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with one's existing beliefs. This biased approach to decision making is largely unintentional and often results in ignoring inconsistent information." From, Bettina Casad, "Confirmation Bias," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, October 9, 2019, accessed December 6, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/science/confirmation-bias>.

11. Peter Wehner, "Jonathan Haidt Is Trying to Heal America's Divisions: The Psychologist Shares His Thoughts on the Pandemic, Polarization and Politics," *The Atlantic*, May 24, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/05/jonathan-haidt-pandemic-and-americas-polarization/612025>.

12. Catholic News Service, "Archbishop Gomez: The Church Must Confront 'Woke' Social Justice Movements that Aim to 'Cancel' Christian Beliefs," *America*, November 5, 2021,

<https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2021/11/05/archbishop-gomez-social-justice-woke-241785>.

13. Catholic News Service, “Archbishop Gomez,” 3.

14. Taken a step further, G. K. Chesterton (and others) have argued that, logically speaking, even trust in human *reason* requires faith. "Reason is itself a matter of faith. It is an act of faith to assert that our thoughts have any relation to reality at all. If you are merely a skeptic, you must sooner or later ask yourself the question, "Why should anything go right; even observation and deduction? Why should not good logic be as misleading as bad logic? They are both movements in the brain of a bewildered ape?" The young skeptic says, "I have a right to think for myself." But the old sceptic, the complete sceptic, says, "I have no right to think for myself. I have no right to think at all." G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1908), <https://www3.nd.edu/~afreddos/courses/439/orthodoxy2-3.htm>.

15. “The Application of Ex corde Ecclesiae for the United States,” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), May 3, 2001, <https://www.usccb.org/committees/doctrine/application-ex-corde-ecclesiae-united-states>. *Ex corde Ecclesiae* itself clarifies the conditions for academic freedom, “so long as the rights of the individual person and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good.” [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_constitutions/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apc\\_15081990\\_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html).

16. For an insightful and informative perspective on Saint John Baptist de La Salle, see: Luke Salm, *The Work Is Yours: The Life of Saint John Baptist De La Salle* (Landover, MD: Christian Brothers Publications, 1996).

17. The followers of Saint John Baptist de La Salle are commonly referred to in the United States as “Lasallians.” In addition to the Brothers of the Christian Schools, this includes people of other religious orders, clerics, and lay people who have adopted the mission of De La Salle and work to bring life to his vision through education. It also applies to the students formed under the Founder’s charism in these schools.

18. “Character Education in Universities: A Framework for Flourishing,” The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2020, <https://oxfordcharacter.org/uploads/files/Character-Education-in-Universities.pdf>.

19. Brother Agathon, “The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher,” 2000, <https://www.napcis.org/12VirtuesGoodTeacher.pdf>. The first two instances in which a listing by De La Salle of these twelve virtues were found in *Collection of Various Short Treatises* (1711) and in *The Conduct of the Christian Schools* (1720).

20. John Baptist de La Salle, “Meditation 175.2 (Feast of St. Denis),” 327, <https://lasallian.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Meditations-2007.pdf>.

21. Kristján Kristjánsson, “Flourishing as the Aim of Education: Towards an Extended, ‘Enchanted’ Aristotelian Account,” *Oxford Review of Education* 42, no. 6 (2016): 707-720, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2016.1226791>.

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23. William Jeynes, "A Meta-Analysis on the Relationship Between Character Education and Student Achievement and Behavioral Outcomes," *Education and Urban Society*, 51, no. 1 (January 2019): 33-71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124517747681>.

24. "Policy Brief: Character and Social Mobility," The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, October 13, 2016, <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/media/news/article/5448/Policy-Brief-Character-and-Social-Mobility>.

25. Kristján Kristjánsson, *Virtues and Vices in Positive Psychology: A Philosophical Critique* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139177818>.

26. James Arthur, Kenneth Wilson and Ben Gray, "Graduates of Character—Values and Character: Higher Education and Graduate Employment," 2009, [http://pure-oai.bham.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/2920390/Graduates\\_of\\_Character.pdf](http://pure-oai.bham.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/2920390/Graduates_of_Character.pdf).

27. James Arthur, Kristján Kristjánsson, Tom Harrison, Wouter Sanderse and Daniel Wright, *Teaching Character and Virtue in Schools* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2017), 182, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781315695013>.

28. "Mission Statement," Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, accessed December 6, 2021, <https://www.smumn.edu/about/mission-vision#:~:text=Enriched%20by%20the%20Lasallian%20Catholic,lives%20of%20service%20and%20leadership>.

29. Romanus Cessario, *The Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 178, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvpj74h4.8>.

30. The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher identified by De La Salle are: gravity, silence, humility, prudence, wisdom, patience, reserve, gentleness, zeal, vigilance, piety, and generosity.

31. The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues is an internationally recognized leader in the promotion of character and virtue Education, see: <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/>.

32. "Position Statement," Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, accessed December 7, 2021, <https://character.smumn.edu/position-paper/>.

33. "Teaching Rubric," Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, accessed December 7, 2021, <https://character.smumn.edu/teaching-rubric/>.

34. Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) initiated in fall of 2020 are semester-long professional learning communities of about 8-10 faculty to take time to read about and discuss how character education might be implemented in their courses.

35. “About Us: The Midwest District at a Glance,” Brothers of the Christian Schools, Midwest District Website, accessed December 2, 2021, <https://www.cbmidwest.org/>.

36. Bishop Robert Barron addressed this issue in a 2020 interview when asked “What does it mean to be in dialogue while still holding onto the entire Catholic tradition?” I don’t think it’s a matter of ever compromising what you hold. I think it is reaching out in good faith and with intelligence and answering questions. I like the terminology “steelmanning” someone’s argument. So, we strawman when we make a caricature of it and we knock it down. When you enter dialogue with someone, present their point of view as strongly as you can and say: “Here’s what I hear you saying, is that right? And here’s the rather persuasive case you’re making, am I right about that?” And then take it from there. I don’t see any contradiction there, that you’re somehow compromising your own viewpoint. I’m with [St. John Henry] Newman. The church moves out confidently to a culture—assimilating what it can, resisting what it must. From, Ashley McKinless and Zac Davis, “Q&A with Bishop Robert Barron: Catholics Can Dialogue Without Compromising Our Beliefs,” *America*, Sept 23, 2020, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/09/23/bishop-robert-barron-dialogue-catholics-athiests-racism>.

37. Thomas Lickona, “Tolerance, Diversity, and Respect for Conscience: The Neglected Issue,” State University of New York at Cortland, April 6, 2006, [https://www2.cortland.edu/centers/character/images/sex\\_character/Tolerance%20Diversity%20and%20Respect%20for%20Conscience%20april%2006.pdf](https://www2.cortland.edu/centers/character/images/sex_character/Tolerance%20Diversity%20and%20Respect%20for%20Conscience%20april%2006.pdf).

38. For a fuller explanation of this concept, see: Marcy Van Fossen, James P. Burns, Thomas Lickona and Larry Schatz, “Teaching Virtue Virtually: Can the Virtue of Tolerance of Diversity of Conscience Be Taught Online?” *Journal of Moral Education* (August 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2021.1964452>.

39. For discussions on this topic, see: Peter Kreeft, *Ethics: A History of Moral Thought* (Recorded Books, 2004) Lecture 2. Nicole Winfield, “Pope Francis Reaffirms the Primacy of Conscience Amid Criticism of *Amoris Laetitia*,” *America*, November 11, 2017, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/11/11/pope-francis-reaffirms-primacy-conscience-amid-criticism-amoris-laetitia>. Robert J. Smith, “Conscience and Catholicism: The Nature and Function of Conscience in Contemporary Roman Catholic Moral Theology,” (PhD diss., Lanham, MD. University Press of America, 1998).

40. For a discussion on how to form one’s conscience, see: “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), No. 17, 2015, <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship.pdf>.

41. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q.19, aa.5-6, [https://www.ccel.org/a/aquinas/summa/FS/FS019.html#FSQ\\_19A5\\_THEP1](https://www.ccel.org/a/aquinas/summa/FS/FS019.html#FSQ_19A5_THEP1). See also: Joseph

Dolan, “Conscience in the Catholic Theological Tradition,” in *Conscience Its Freedom and Limitations*, ed. William Bier (New York: Fordham University Press, 1971), 18.

42. Ryan Marr, “Newman Contra Liberalism: Conscience, Authority, and the Infidelity of the Future,” *Public Discourse*, July 22, 2019, 3, <https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2019/07/54164/>.

43. For the three-minute video, see: <https://www2.cortland.edu/centers/character/video/ClosedcaptionedToleranceofDiversityofConscienceVideo.mp4>

44. For the workshop, see: [https://www2.cortland.edu/centers/character/video/workshop-on-tolerance-of-diversity-of-conscience-smumn%20\(with%20CC\).mp4](https://www2.cortland.edu/centers/character/video/workshop-on-tolerance-of-diversity-of-conscience-smumn%20(with%20CC).mp4)

45. The published research includes the questionnaires. See: Van Fossen, Burns, Lickona, and Schatz, “Teaching Virtue Virtually: Can the Virtue of Tolerance of Diversity of Conscience Be Taught Online?”

46. Ibid.

47. The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, “Character Education in Universities: A Framework for Flourishing.”

48. Don Briel, Kenneth Goodpaster and Michael Naughton, *What We Hold in Trust: Rediscovering the Purpose of Catholic Higher Education* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1ks0csr>.

49. For an example of an official statement by a non-Catholic university, see: “University of Richmond Statement on Free Expression,” University of Richmond, December 2020, <https://president.richmond.edu/common/pdf/statement-on-free-expression.pdf>.

50. Van Fossen, Burns, Lickona, and Schatz, “Teaching Virtue Virtually: Can the Virtue of Tolerance of Diversity of Conscience Be Taught Online?”