

The Catholic Intellectual Tradition:

Academic Freedom and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition at SNC

In the fall of 2007, we explored the Catholic intellectual tradition in general terms. From this foundation, we continue to examine specific topics through the lens of the Catholic intellectual tradition. These conversations are meant to help educate faculty and staff about the tradition, demonstrate how a specific topic relates to the tradition, and model how to raise these topics for discussion in the classroom.

Patrick McCormick received a doctorate in Moral Theology from the Gregorian University, a post doctoral fellowship in Bioethics at the Cleveland Clinic, and has taught Christian Ethics at Gonzaga University since 1994. He is the author of *A Banqueter's Guide to the All Night Soup Kitchen of the Kingdom of God* (Liturgical Press, 2003), and the co-author of *Facing Ethical Issues: Dimensions of Character, Choice and Community* (Paulist, 2002). He has also published over three dozen essays and chapters on Christian Ethics and Catholic Social Thought and written a monthly column on Christianity and Culture for *U.S. Catholic* for over 15 years.



Fr. Charles Curran. The Vagina Monologues. President Barack Obama. Mention academic freedom at Catholic colleges and many think of troubles associated with dissenting theologians, controversial performances, or pro-choice politicians. But although a full-throated commitment to academic freedom and a rigorous defense of Catholic identity can sometimes conflict with one another, no institution of higher learning (or research) that fails to preserve and protect real academic freedom deserves to be called either Catholic or a college. Whatever its problems and resulting controversies, true academic freedom is essential to the Catholic university; because it is a university and because it is Catholic. In the long, unfinished, and often argumentative conversation that is the Catholic intellectual tradition, the freedom (and duty) to investigate, examine, reflect, critique, argue, disagree, and posit and test fresh insights and hypotheses is the vocation of that living community that calls itself a Catholic college.

This talk explores how the Catholic intellectual tradition depends on and is enriched by the practice of academic freedom, suggests how key elements of Catholic doctrine require a full-throated defense of academic freedom to produce a vibrant, participatory, and productive dialogue between faith and reason, and argues that the messy work of protecting academic freedom and Catholic identity is not a matter of simple resolutions or policies, but requires a commitment to sustained, serious and respectful conversation by a community of believers and scholars.

The Division of Mission & Heritage and the Office of Faculty Development
cordially invite faculty and staff to join us for one of two discussions
(the same presentation will be offered twice)

Tuesday, October 13, 2009

11:15 a.m. ~ 12:45 p.m.

Union Lounge

lunch provided

RSVP to Julie Friedman,

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by October 7

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

12:00 p.m. ~ 1:30 p.m.

Union Lounge

lunch provided