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Dear Father Rule,

This is in response to your letter of December 3, last to Messrs Cousins, Kelley, Kirby and Bosetti. Ned Kirby has already responded and I would like to add some comments.

We appreciate your taking time to give thought and attention, from the inside as it were, to the concerns of an older generation of graduates who have a very deep affection for the college. We have supported the college both materially and otherwise and have tried to apply what we learned there, in our family, spiritual and professional lives, continuously since graduation over fifty years ago.

I am pleased by the esteem in which you hold Cardinal Newman. You quoted (without citation) his thoughts about the limitations of book knowledge in making a person spiritually and religiously better. (In that quote Newman also seems to downplay the force of logic while you allege our lack of logic in stating our concerns.) But Newman, in his Idea of a University, was quite clear on the importance of teaching Catholic theology in a Catholic college. (See, "The Idea of a University" Yale U Press, pp 25 et. seq. Discourses II, III & IV, especially section 10.) Newman, of course, wrote his Apologia which reflected his journey toward the true Faith. One might view your letter as an Apologia for the journey of the college away from its true roots. Your paper tracing the changes in mission statements from 1965 to the present reveals a pattern of reaction to secular societal changes. This is a good example of relativism where truth has no permanence or stability, and fashion controls. You describe these changes, however, as historical efforts to negotiate creative tensions and suggest that these efforts have preserved the beliefs, values and dreams of the founding fathers. You state that you see the college community taking charge of its own destiny. One wonders if this is not the autonomous approach to defining what a Catholic college should be, much as the approach some persons take today in defining themselves, without reference to the divine and supernatural.

You also quote Newman for the need to risk corruption from intercourse with the world in order for a great idea to be understood. Is this not a reference to the Faith in dealing with the secular challenges of the world? And haven't alumni through the years been taking this risk? Likewise, on what basis can it be said

January 19, 2002

Page 2

that the idea has remained the same? What precisely is the continuity between 1845 and 2000? The words atop Dinand library have been continuous for many years but have they been implemented continuously? Between 1965 and 1992 we have, on one hand, a reference to the Christian man and on the other hand rather vague and ambiguous statements of mission.

You suggest in your paper that the tension between faith and reason is front and center among those tensions for Catholic colleges. But Pope John Paul in his encyclical - Faith and Reason, has addressed this explaining that there is really no conflict here.

That there have been changes in the world is clear. The question is what is the college's response to these changes? Where, we wonder, is the constancy of the Faith? Where is the Rock? Where is the man for all seasons? Where is the spirit of the great martyrs, saints, missionaries, philosophers, and theologians? Where are those who spearheaded the counter reformation in loyalty to the Magisterium? How would the graduate of more than thirty years ago have responded to the survey?

A word on diversity. Diversity as the recognition of the individual talents which each of us can contribute to the common good in various ways is wonderful. But diversity which implies that one belief system is as good as another contradicts sound reason, experience and objective reality.

We could discuss your paper on Mission and Creative tension at length, but permit me to respond to some specific statements of your criticism of our message to alumni.

First, you refer to the need for a definition of terms in any argument or debate. Granted. But our one page communication to fellow alumni is not in any sense a debate or argument and hence not an appropriate form for a definition of terms. Moreover, we used the term secularization and not secularism whose meaning you say we seem to be referring to in our letter. I do not understand why you made such a statement. Also you add a fourth meaning to secularization which is not part of the definition. Then you say that secularization need not imply the diminishment of sacred presence and values, but this is one of its meanings. You then say to suggest secularization (handing governance and ownership to a lay board) is secularism is to impugn the moral and religious integrity of lay members of the faculty. You have stated an incorrect premise, namely that we suggest secularization is secularism, and then draw an incorrect conclusion about lay members of the faculty. We did not make such a statement expressly or impliedly. There were many fine lay faculty during our time at the college.

January 19, 2001

Page 3

You go on to state that perhaps there has been no greater effect of Vatican II than the recognition of and promotion of the role of the laity in the Church. But, is not the context here more a reference to the role of the laity in parish life and not to the formulation of Catholic higher education policy? Otherwise, why would we even have *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*? Indeed there are some very strong arguments that the documents of Vatican II have been misapplied and this is a reason for much of the turmoil in the Church. Why, for example, are there so many fewer who believe in the True Presence after Vatican II than before? Is this post hoc propter hoc?

Next you state we use faulty logic by asserting that the examples from the student survey are the result of secularization because they came after secularization. We understand that the mere positioning of facts based on their sequence in time, of itself proves nothing. But the existence of events and facts (changes) over a period can and does produce results. From this one may fairly conclude that there are reasons for these results. Otherwise, we would be saying these results happen by chance of their own accord. This, we submit, is a position without logic. Speaking of logic, a renown jurist once said that a page of history is worth a volume of logic. Here, we have many pages of history, over thirty years, which surely have had an impact on attitudes, beliefs and behavior. Otherwise, words and ideas are meaningless. Your suggestion that most of the points we enumerate would have come about whether or not the college had maintained its core of theology and philosophy is somewhat speculative. We really do not know what would have come about. But, common sense and experience suggest it is sound to continue a course which has worked reasonably well as is evidenced by the overwhelming support of our views by alumni who experienced these courses.

May I now respond to the comments starting at the bottom of page two of your letter.

1. You state secularization of the faculty is inevitable and that there is nothing wrong with it. We do not say this is wrong. We had fine lay faculty in our years at the college. But again, isn't there a relationship between the paucity of good religious faculty and the process of secularization following Vatican II? And, why is it necessary for a non-catholic minister (no doubt very able in his field) to hold a position of high authority (dean)? Further we understand that there is a non-catholic on the staff of the Chaplain's office. We assume this is for the limited purpose of ministering to students of that particular denomination. Moreover, there seems little comparison between lay persons following established practices and forms at church services and college faculty influencing young minds in the exercise of what faculty may call academic freedom.

January 19, 2002

Page 4

2. That you have personally heard few vocal complaints for change in curriculum does not prove that opposition is not more substantial. Given the trends of the past thirty years and the power of political correctness, the expectations for change by faculty would not appear high.
3. The work of the JVC and home building for the poor are laudable. But these are activities which purely social and governmental agencies perform. I dare say that alumni before 1970 perform much volunteer work. Given the lack of good catechesis among the students you get, coupled with the absence of class instruction in the areas we are discussing, can we assume that those who volunteer have as their motivation the spiritual and moral values of their Faith? In short the evidence of volunteerism hardly negates the secularization which concerns us.
4. We are familiar with the official teaching on homosexuality. But, what is the evidence of a pervasive and cruelly homophobic campus? And where does one's sexual orientation come from? There is no sound scientific evidence for a genetic orientation. There is, however, a strong cultural basis at work. Witness the growth of homosexuality in this country and the damage it has done. See "The Broken Hearth: Reversing the Moral Collapse of the American Family", by William J. Bennett. Even if you disagree, why lend support to one's orientation toward disordered behavior? If there are problems, why not handle them on an individual basis? There is a record of success in changing sexual orientation.
5. I think Ned Kirby has responded to this. Also, I have no comment about Professor Berman's remarks because I am not familiar with them.
6. I am somewhat sanguine that you find the survey sobering. Hopefully this suggests a realization that something is truly wrong. Of course the college inherits the problems the students bring. But, if they come to you uncatechized why must they leave you uncatechized? What a marvelous opportunity for the college (true to its roots and the values and beliefs of the founding fathers) to impart in the classroom and otherwise the great spiritual and intellectual truths of the Faith to these young people. The fact that the problem is not exclusively a Holy Cross problem is not an answer or excuse for failing to take remedial action. The college is part of the problem. How can one self-discover what they do not know? You cite another Newman quote (without reference or context) about the limitations of book knowledge in making a person spiritually and religiously better. We do not disagree. But prayer and action alone cannot do this either. What prayer? What action? The mind and heart must have some basis on which to operate. They need

January 19, 2002

- the support which knowledge gives them. If I understand Newman correctly, he was a strong advocate for teaching Catholic theology and philosophy in the catholic university.
- A) A word on co-education. This can be seen to have raised academic standards. The top one-half of young women replace the bottom half of young men applicants. But why put these young people, at the height of their sexual urges, in the same building with little or no rules and just after they have left home for the first time in their lives. This is a sure recipe for problems. More, it is an abrogation of the principle of in loco parentis and an endangerment of their spiritual well being. Other colleges have handled this successfully with separate facilities and sensible rules.
- B) A word on Father Peter Hans Kolvenbach. You say we rely on innuendo. We take his words at face value and take no comfort in the fact that they do not specifically mention Holy Cross. At the very least his words signify the existence of a serious problem and require an open self-evaluation of what has been happening at Jesuit as well as other Catholic colleges and universities.

I hope you will sense the heartfelt anguish we feel as we observe in our old age, the erosion and disdain for the Faith we have been raised in and have tried to follow. We are saddened and distressed by the scandals connected with the actions of some clergy both at the personal level and the intellectual level. There is strident dissent from the Magisterium. There is disrespect for the sacred. In the midst of all this, to see what was once a bulwark of the Faith affected and seemingly influenced by this process of secularization is very upsetting. Would that the college stem the tide with the best instruction and the best materials in the area of scripture, apologetics, ethics, philosophy and theology to support the other activities of prayer, retreats, etc.

Let us have charity in all things especially in our dialogue so that we may be led to a right course of action. As you prepare for the new term may it be successful for you and your students.

Respectfully yours,

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Guy C. Bosetti

P.S. May I suggest you rread Cardinal Avery Dulles speech at the Cardinal Newman Society this past December, in which he said that that Newman would have enthusiastically embraced the efforts of Pope John Paul II to restore close unity between Catholic colleges and universities and the Church. It may be found at [www.CardinalNewmanSociety.org](http://www.CardinalNewmanSociety.org). Also, you may wish to read the article, "Academics Have Crossed the Church's Rubicon: Do they contemplate the Fall of Rome?" by Monsignor George A. Kelly, at [www.JesuitsExCordeEcclesiae.com](http://www.JesuitsExCordeEcclesiae.com). GCB