Marquette University
College of Business Administration

Theological and Professional Underpinnings of Business as Vocation and Profession presented to Jesuit World Forum

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Introduction

My presentation today will begin with the universal call to holiness for which we are preparing our students, it will then show some data indicating that business people, at least in the United States culture, do not realize this universal call. I will then provide some reasons for the lack of understanding including a "terrible double-mindedness" that permeates our culture. I will then develop some aspects of business education that can make our institutions different from our secular competitors. I shall hypothesize that spirituality demands competence in our secular work. Finally, I shall provide some thoughts on decision making.

Our Call To Holiness

Each of our students, each of our faculty, each of us is called to holiness. We are called to holiness through our entire life and all we do, be it as parent, community member, student, husband or wife, or in any other role in life. Today we focus on the implications for us as educators of the truth that business professionals are called to holiness precisely through their work as business professionals or executives. Today we focus on how we prepare our students for their call to holiness in the profession and vocation as business persons in a global economy. This call to holiness through our work is universal, crisp and very modern in Chapter 5 of "The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" "Lumen Gentium":

"The forms and tasks of life are many but holiness is one - that sanctity which is cultivated by all who act under God's Spirit and, obeying the Father's voice and adoring God the Father in spirit and truth, follow Christ, poor, humble and crossbearing, that they may deserve to be partakers of his glory. Each one, however, according to his own gifts and duties must steadfastly advance along the way of a living faith, which arouses hope and works through love."

This same document goes on to note that the key characteristic of our work must be service to others

"...following in his footsteps and conformed to his image, doing the will of God in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor."
Finally, *Lumen Gentium* develops a very explicit tie between professional competence and the spiritual with the exact words *competence in secular disciplines*. Notice also the call for goods to be more suitably distributed.

"Therefore, by their *competence in secular disciplines* and by their activity, internally raised up by grace, let them work expressly in order that created goods through human labor, technical skill and civil culture may serve the utility of all men according to the plan of the creator and the light of his word. May these goods be more suitably distributed among all men and in their own way may they be conducive to universal progress in human and Christian liberty."

Certainly this call has deep biblical roots. I am certain each one of us has our favorite scriptural quotation leading us to a deep faith that God calls us to his work, to be his instrument, and to be his people as we respond to his love. "Some of my favorites are:

"I call you by name."
"You are my people, I am your God."

**A Great Tragedy Among Very Good Business Persons**

As I work with business persons, I discover that many of them do not see their work as mission and vocation. Too often they view the work of others as far more of a vocation and maybe even of a profession than is true for their own work. I believe we must go to the root causes of the problem. Why do not all of us with Gerard Manly Hopkins proclaim that: "I am what I do, for that I came." We probably have a problem with deep historical roots that must be corrected. St. Augustine lives. He is reported to have said that business people may conduct themselves "without sin, but business cannot be pleasing to God."

Business people do not view their work as vocation. Our great challenge is to help our students to see that it is vocation.

Unfortunately, this lack of belief in work as vocation is very wide spread. Father Thomas McMahon in an article in *Chicago Studies*, reports that only 26 of 1166 business executives he studied view their work as a vocation; that is a summons or feeling of being called to their particular life's work, possibly even that their work has a religious dimension. But as Robert Bellah remarks in his great work *Habits of the Heart*, a person's work is morally inseparable from his or her life.

On the other hand, some people do have a deep understanding of work as vocation. Two business persons were quoted in a pamphlet by William Droel entitled "The Spirituality of Work; Business People" published by the National Center for Laity in Chicago. These two quotes capture well what I believe. "I know that the link between God and work seems lofty," admits William Farley a real estate developer in Hartford Connecticut. "But I believe that life is a seamless garment. In some way all the parts are intertwined."
We are not "partial beings" echoes Mark Zwolski, a product manager in Vernon Hills, Illinois. "Work is part of what it means to be a whole person, whole means to find some transcendent meaning in our work".

One of our greatest challenges as educators is to help this integration to begin to come about in the lives of our students, for this integration is a life-long task. As we do our work I suggest we be humble. For, to quote Norman Maclean, in Young Men Fire "The problem of self-identity is not just a problem for the young. It is a problem all the time. Perhaps the problem. It should haunt old age, and when it no longer does it should tell you that you are dead".

It is this integration of life that I believe should permeate our Jesuit institutions. It should be at the core of our being for it is at the core of Ignatian spirituality. We should allow our students to transform their lives from problematic, disjointed, disorientated and splintered to an integrated focus whereby they see and find God working for them in all things in their lives, including their work. We should hope that they see their work as an integral part of the wholeness of their life.

If we are to help our students to understand the wholeness of their life, the spirituality of their work, the concept of vocation, I think we must first understand why this type of thinking does not permeate our current business culture. The first reason I see is the perceived corruption in and therefore cynicism about not only business, but all of the professions - political, law, medicine, university work, and the others. I say perceived for, although I realize there is much corruption, I am not sure that it is greater, or as great, as it has been historically, but it is presented as a constant pervading presence in our news programs, novels, and all of the entertainment media. One can seldom watch any show on TV where business or a business person is not the villain. This pervasiveness of business persons as "bad guys", by the way, is the world of experience for our undergraduates. I find them far more cynical than graduate students who are in business and who are, for the most part, struggling to do the right thing on a day-by-day basis and to make sense out of their own work.

Second, many who are my age come out of the 1950's and early 1960's era when many of us were trained for and highly motivated by the "lay apostolate" often mistakenly identified as action other than through our jobs and family. Tied to this is what Marciniak calls an emphasis on service to the Church, with a capital C rather than service to church with a lower case c. That is, the focus on serving the institutional church rather than people of God in the marketplace.

Third, and maybe the greatest problem facing us is that our Catholic universities have simply not taught Catholic social thought and have allowed our students to leave our institutions without a thorough exposure to what is Catholic theology and the core of Catholic belief.

Fourth, we have allowed a dualism to develop. Let me analyze this a bit for I consider it to be quite pervasive among some very good business people that I meet.
Two Worlds - A Terrible Double-Mindedness

We live with what Emily Griffen calls, "The terrible double-mindedness that is always with us. Double-mindedness that says some things are holy and pure, but other things unholy and impure. For these matters are matters of faith and those matters are matters for the world." She calls for the integration of our lives.

She quoted from Tad Dunne in his book Lonergan and Spirituality. "From the point of view of the religious mind, the secular mind appears materialist. Even though the secular mind is rooted in highly analytical techniques, it is not satisfied with ideas. The secular mind wants tangible results and it wants them now. It relies on quantitative measures rather than qualitative. It regards the material surroundings of living rather than the spiritual core. It regards human conflicts as them-over-there against us-over-here. But the religious mind can equally be criticized by the secular mind. The religious meaning of knowledge, rooted as it is in a penchant for absolutes, tends to be idealist. So the religious mind speculates on what could be and it overlooks what is. It gets lost in grand theories in the sky while ignoring the plight of real people on the ground. It may be more qualitative and spiritual than the materialist approach, but it is besieged by material evidence that belies its lofty visions."

Dunne was not speaking to two different groups of individuals warring with each other, but of two mentalities warring within themselves:

"We are not speaking to two groups of people each with its own single-mindedness. We are speaking of single individuals with two minds at odds with one another - a spiritual mind that clings to truth and a secular mind that seeks explanations for change. We are speaking of people who have to live in a culture that differentiates the secular and the sacred, but lacks the power to integrate them. We are speaking of ourselves."

Griffin concluded: "The twoness of me is not so much a real duality as it is my way of expressing the inadequate humanity of who I am. I have learned to believe that the drive to perfection, the yearning for goodness that I feel, is the human condition, the longing for integration that will never be fully resolved here and now."

Let me make a key distinction between "spirituality" and "spiritualize". The spirituality of work is not an attempt to spiritualize work. It is not an attempt to carry God into the workplace for that is to spiritualize work. As Droeil puts it, "The spirituality of work is a tool which helps Christians find a God who is already present in the work place. In the process of finding this God we need the reminder that we and our work are transformed as we begin to see our work in the light of God's plans."

I find the spirituality of work beautifully unfolded by one of America's great story tellers, Garrison Keillor, through his rendition of the Christmas
Story. He notes that after the shepherds saw the Christ child that they went back to tending sheep, but they, the shepherds, still drank too much, they still smelled and swore, and the nights were still cold and the summers hot; meanwhile the sheep were still sheep - obnoxious creatures. But everything had changed, nothing was the same, there was meaning. Yes, spirituality is meaning, it is integration.

Aspects of Business Education That Can Make Catholic Business Schools Different

As we focus on the aspects of an education that should flow out of our theology and our specific differences in Catholic business schools, I wish to focus on five points, but then supplement them with "seven moral themes" developed by Michael Novak in his most recent book, The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

Business as Professional

The first character we must develop a sense of professionalism. I recognize that this should be developed in any good business school on any campus, but I think it can have a special purpose in a business school on a Catholic campus. Yes, I recognize that leadership in executive behavior is as much an art as a science - maybe more so. I also recognize that much of what is done in business is for personal gain. But the responsibilities of a business professional call for extensive preparation, a moral and ethical code and set of guidelines, a deep sense of "servant leadership", one of the current buzz words in management, and all else we identify with professionals. Possibly the impact and influence of the business professional is actually greater than that in any other field.

Business as Vocation in a Global Economy

It appears to me that the challenge of today’s world calls for a fundamental reorientation of the way most people think about business, the role of the manager, and, therefore, the preparation of persons to be professional managers. The needs of this world calls first for multinational corporations that are highly conscious of their teleological purpose, their final causality. It is that of serving the economic needs of people, not just in one culture or society, but across boundaries, in the sense of the spanning models developed by Tavis and Crum. The model of the corporation that I perceive moves beyond the simplicity of profit maximization to the complexity of concepts such as stakeholder trade-offs, negotiation, and optimization and satisficing as formal causality. But more important, the model is built on the need to understand a multinational business firm where the final causality is that of meeting the legitimate needs of persons, of transforming resources into goods and services. This sort of model, obviously, calls for a new type of manager.

The manager of the multinational to be educated by our business schools must be a highly motivated individual capable of visioning the role of business person or manager not just as professional service, but as a calling, be it a
calling from a higher authority (God) or an inner drive (for instance, Maslow's concept of self-actualization) or both. (I recognize that at this point I will have already turned off many of my fellow management educators who perceive of their role as only that of the creator and purveyor of objective knowledge.) As academics, our academic freedom must remain crystal pure. Yes, we must design institutions for management education that somehow permit both the free pursuit of truth and rigorous teaching of all that is required to be professionally competent in the technical sense, with the motivation born of formation.

**Spirituality**

In today's society there is a need, as a matter of fact there is a very deep hunger, for a spirituality for the business executive. Vocation is just part of it, there is more. There is a hunger for values and relationships that transcend the natural that help to give purpose. Our colleges and universities must find vehicles to help the spirituality evolve.

As our Catholic universities have developed models that emulate our secular institutions and strong scholarship and professional standards we have lost some of our ability to work in other aspects in the formation of the individual that existed in the 1940's and the 1950's. I believe that these activities can co-exist together and that we need to seek fresh new approaches. And in doing this I think we can draw on a long heritage.

A sense of formation has certainly developed in other most respectable educational systems. The sense of public service that was taught in the English public schools contributed to the building of an empire. A deep sense of noblesse oblige certainly permeates the best of the great private schools in the United States. I see inklings of the models I envision in two of the great documents of the Second Vatican Council, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (Gaudium Et Spes) and *The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* (Apostolicam Actuam Sitatem). This vision is being actualized in organizations such as Opus Dei. It is certainly envisioned in "The General Principles" of the World Christian Life Communities, an organization which grows out of the historical Sodality movement as based in the prophetic document *Bis Secularis* (Pope Pius XII), and is founded in the spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola. This vision certainly exists in many of the great spiritual themes of the various orders within the Catholic Church.

Preparation of managers of the future calls for the development of great technical competence - which U.S. business schools do very well. It also calls for the development of people skills, broad cultural, scientific, political, historical, and communications backgrounds, much of which we do poorly. The intellectual base for a deep philosophy of action and of service must be provided. Finally, competence in the all-important personal skills and characteristics must be developed and honed if the multinational executive is to be successful. I fear we do not do this well.
Stewardship

The fourth characteristic is a sense of stewardship. In this era of many environmental concerns this characteristic may be more important than ever before. Yes, just as we humbly recognize that we are all instruments who can only place ourselves at the disposal of God, so the world around us, all of the resources with which we work, is finite to be used as we do his will and passed on to future generations.

Covenant

Recently John Murray suggested a fifth characteristic to me - the covenant concept. I am intrigued by this for two reasons. A just society is not going to be created through laws. They are only minimums and boundaries. A contractual relationship although necessary for many reasons will seldom be a real growth relationship. But another fascinating reason to think through the covenant relationship is that I think it gives us a concept in which to build bridges to our friends in the Jewish traditions. I suggest this characteristic for more work and further thought.

Novak’s Seven Moral Themes

I was very impressed and intrigued by the seven moral themes presented by Novak. They capture, I believe, most of the core values of the heritage of Catholic social thought.

♦ Recognition of the social nature of the human person exercised in the family, in friendship, in civil society, and in universal solidarity.

♦ The principle of subsidiarity, put in practice by the virtue of social justice.

♦ The liberty and responsibility (hence the dignity) of persons.

♦ The virtues necessary for exercising personal responsibility.

♦ Creative subjectivity.

♦ Unity amid diversity.

♦ Emphasis on being rather than having; on character; and on grace.

I should note, as Novak notes, that these themes “point to an ethic accessible to all” of humankind. Remember, Centesimus Annus is addressed to the world. I wish to expand on some of these themes.
Social Nature of the Human Person

Most ideological discussions focused on economic organization and systems tend to be a bore, and they seldom address the real question, which is, simply put, does the system work? An economic system or institution should be judged on the particular basis of the definition of "to work." It is also proper to judge the multinational corporation by asking, "Does it work?" It seems to me that man needs the MNC in today's complex world. It also appears, however, that most business persons and our business schools confuse both causality and membership when discussing the corporation. The final end or purpose of the corporation is simply to transform resources into goods and services that meet needs and desires. Only insofar as this is done efficiently and effectively does the corporation deserve to exist.

It is difficult to define efficient and effective, especially since most hold that the corporation itself is owned by the owners of residual equity capital, and that their gain or loss alone is the one criterion of success. However, such a definition both excludes those most directly affected by the corporation and fails to recognize many costs imposed on a society by the economic activity of a corporation.

To analyze the corporation we must first separate final from formal causality. The final cause, the end, the purpose, of the corporation is to transform resources into goods and services that meet needs. The formal or motivating causality is profit or what other gain the various stakeholders articulate.

The only model of the corporation that makes sense to me is one that develops it as an association of many stakeholders, all with legitimate claims upon it. Yes, the stockholders are vitally important, but they are the owners of the residual capital. As such, they do deserve a handsome and legitimate return. Of equal importance are the rights of labor suppliers, bankers, customers, and the various communities and countries within which the corporation operates.

There is an evolving body of literature today that considers the business firm as a community and I think it is. I believe executives have a tremendous obligation to form community first and foremost, of course, within and among the employees and managers. But it is now through this. It goes to the heart of the purpose of a corporation. We should teach the role of business, especially a conceptual basis for a corporation.

Dignity of the Person

We must see the human being as person, not as self-sufficient individual as in traditional capitalism or a worker as in collectivism. Properly, man (generic sense) is a person engaged in a life-task, which is realized in community, to become a personality, that is to realize all of his or her potential. Therefore, each of us as person is to become "the subject of work." As a person each of us performs various actions belonging to the work process; independently of their content. These actions must all serve to realize
Our humanity, to fulfill the calling to be a person that is ours by reason of our very humanity. "The primary basis of the value of work is man himself, which is its subject." "In the final analysis, it is always man who is the purpose of work." Most of these words are taken from John Paul's encyclical "On Human Work."

A Note on Being Rather Than Having

A small part of this idea is the appropriate distribution of wealth in a society. One of the greatest sources of confusion in the literature concerning economic progress, change, technology, and similar topics is a lack of distinction between economic development and economic growth. Economic growth, like technological change, is not necessarily either progress or economic development. Economic growth only means that the amount of output, however measured, has increased, possibly per some measure of input. It can be more maldistributed than ever before. It can have replaced many traditional values, or have caused the disintegration of the structures and institutions that have held the society together. This may be economic growth. It is not economic development. It is a maximization of the economic variable in a society at the expense of all others. Economic performance must be balanced with the accomplishment of all other values in a society. That is true economic development. It is economic development when the economic resources available to any given society are used more effectively and efficiently to bring about not only economic growth, but also distribution, equity, investment, and an undergirding of all other values in a society.

Competence - A Base for A True Profession and Spirituality

Spirituality demands competence. Education is the basis of competence. I wish to focus on defining what competence is for an undergraduate education and then for graduate education. Unless professional competence is present, there is no such thing as authentic holiness in the workplace. Nevertheless, there are motivations and drives that go well beyond competence. These flow out of a truly Ignatian education, an education preparing men and women not only for service but with the motivation to serve. Let me return to these in a moment. For now, let us focus on the education of the undergraduate student in a Jesuit institution.

As undergraduate educators, our primary work must focus on a broad liberalizing experience. I know this belief goes counter to the education being structured in other parts of the world, including countries where secondary education, high school in the United States, is much more rigorous than what we find in the United States. Nevertheless, I see a rapidly changing society where all of the values of a traditional Jesuit liberal arts education are needed more than ever before. More than anything else education is the development of deeply rooted "habits of the mind" that lead the person evermore to seek knowledge and truth, perfect communication, live with a historical perspective, and understand complex institutions. Education enables one to strive for a deep self-understanding, including a realization of one's own values, and to understand the technology and the science of the day needed to ensure one is its master rather than its servant.
But above all, the newest dimension, a reason for this meeting, there is no such thing as an adequate undergraduate education in the world of the 21st century if our students are not prepared to deal in a complex and changing global society. Our grads must be vitally interested in and able to learn quickly about other cultures, societies, and nations. If there is one outcome I desire from this meeting it is that all of our institutions begin to work as a network to enable each other to prepare our students for a global economy.

In other words, the need for a broad based liberal arts education is greater than ever before. A liberal arts education must not only be for a utilitarian purpose, it must go beyond. For a business student:

"It must be concerned with creating within complex organizations social systems which enhance genuine community, mutual interaction, and dialogue among all levels aimed at assuring the dignity of the individual within an organization as well as constructive dialogue within the organization and its society." ("The Context of our Ministries working papers, Jesuit Conference, 1981, p. 17.")

We must also, however, begin to lay the foundation for responsible and professional action. Integral to a real liberal education is the ability to do and to contribute. Finally, we need to create in each of our students a burning desire for justice. Let me suggest an interesting thought which I steal from America Magazine. They note that Pope Pius XII had as his motto "Opus Justitiae Pax" that is peace is the fruit of justice. John Paul in his encyclical "On Social Concerns" says "Opus Solidaritatis Pax" that is, peace is the fruit of solidarity. Since things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, America suggests that justice is equivalent to solidarity. As John Paul points out, "Nor is solidarity a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortune of so many people, both far and near." (Nos. 38-40) Rather, solidarity is specific action for good. The desire to use corporate power responsibly must be a fruit of undergraduate education. It is interesting that Lenin realized "That in a world of action as contrasted with contemplation, the question is always "What is to be done?"" When our students leave the hot bed of the university-protected environment they must be motivated to ask, "What is to be done by me?"

To be a student is not and should not be easy in a modern university, especially if these students are appropriately motivated. The cross carried by our students if they are truly Ignatian persons, is the requirement for more intense and longer preparation than ever before in order to be prepared to exercise the power available to the human race in an evermore specialized manner. Further if this power is to be exercised for Christ, for good, the intensity of spiritual formation as well as the theological, philosophical, and other aspects of liberal education must be in proportion to professional preparation. But there is more! Our work in an Ignatian university must focus on formation of students fully in love with their God, Christ, and thereby motivated to direct all their power to Christ in the 21st-Century. In particular, they must be motivated to help solve the problems of social, economic, and international justice in our world today.
Some Practical Thoughts on Teaching Our Students to Make Decisions

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, Ignatian spirituality, provide us with many basic criteria for making decisions based on the reality that is each of us is called by God. I believe we should attempt to help our students to make decisions that are spiritually as well as secularly sound. For instance, possibly we should suggest the following basic decision criteria to our students and help them to integrate them into their lives:

♦ A decision is good if it leads to greater focus.
♦ God’s speaks through obligations no one else can meet.
♦ The spirit speaks first through the what of commitment and secondly through the how of implementation.
♦ God’s will calls for patience.
♦ We serve our fellow men and women through competence, therefore, God usually speaks through growing competence.
♦ We are with Christ when we opt for the poor.
♦ We are discerning God’s will if we are thinking with the Church.
♦ All things being equal, God speaks to those needs that are more universal.
♦ Indifference (openness rather than not caring) usually precedes commitment and enthusiasm.
♦ God’s call is to be a pilgrim people.

Although the above principles are close to 500 years of age, straight out of a spiritual heritage, I find rather fascinating the parallels between them and the natural and very practical principles being developed in management literature today. To speak of focus is nothing more than Tom Peters suggesting that you stick to your knitting. To suggest that God speaks through obligations is quite similar to companies that follow a strategy of developing niche markets where they are better than anyone else. The focus on commitment rather implementation is the basic principle of strategic planning whereby you create your vision, mission, and goals and objectives first. To be with Christ when we opt for the poor is similar to the concept of servant leader found in today’s literature.
Conclusion

I thank all of you for listening. I hope I have provided some material that will stimulate your thinking as you build your business programs in the context of our Catholic understanding of work, especially the work of the business professional. All of us are faced with a wonderful challenge and privilege, that is, educating the professionals of tomorrow. We are privileged because we can do this in the context of institutions that stand for something and that allows us the freedom to teach our students in a moral, religious and spiritual context. Thank you. Copies of my paper are available.