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Forum: Crisis in the Church. Tapping Boston's Talent

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TAPPING BOSTON'S TALENT

Jim Keenan

Ethical judgment ends in action as Aristotle tells us. To speak of Jesuit Higher Education's response to the crisis, therefore, I turn to university wide actions that embody, I think, Jesuit educational values.

Living in Boston, inevitably, we live within the crisis. One of its salutary effects has been Voice of the Faithful, which has been well supported by both Weston Jesuit and Boston College faculty, administration, staff, students and alumni. It is hard to imagine VOTF's growth without the support of these two institutions. In turn, these two institutions are certainly indebted to VOTF's leadership, vision and resilience.

Another worthy effect of the crisis is the initiative, The Church in the 21st Century (www.bc.edu/church21) which Boston College president, the Reverend William P. Leahy, S.J., launched two years ago to promote "a forum and resources to assist the Catholic community in transforming the current situation into an opportunity for renewal." Literally, dozens of major events have been provided in each of the program's two years. After its first year of looking back at the crisis, this second year projects possibilities for renewal.

Because we have become so familiar with responding to events around us and because we have in place the initiative, we are accustomed to engaging from multitudinous perspectives a considerable array of topics. For instance, a look at our calendar for only one week in March lists: March 15th, a panel on "The Report on the Crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States" by The National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People; March 16th and 23rd, a two day workshop exploring collaborative leadership in parish life hosted by the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry; March 16th, the Gasson Lecture, "The Rights of Priests"; March 18th, "The Future of Catholic Schools: Survival and Models for Transformation," hosted by the dean of the School of Education with members of the USCCB and NCEA among presenters; March 22nd, "A Seminar on Celibacy" with John O'Malley, Margaret Farley and Columba Stewart speakers.

In the work of the initiative, the theology department is clearly involved. But so are the departments of history, philosophy, psychology, political science, and sociology. Similarly, besides the administration, other regular hosts, coordinators,

program directors, and participants include members from the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, the Institute of Religious Education, the Law School, the School of Nursing, and the School of Education. In a word, it's hard to think of how we can become more involved. (You should see course offerings!)

In the initiative, interdepartmental cooperation has become the norm. In February, for instance, eight of us, having worked over a year in planning, hosted a two day conference of forty participants: Toward an Ecclesial Professional Ethics (www.bc.edu/church21/programs/ethics). Examining the ethical training of lay, priestly and episcopal leadership, we included not only historians, theologians, sociologists, journalists, and ethicists, but also those in organizational management as well. These specialists provided their insights regarding professional ethical training in corporate structures. Episcopal, clerical, and lay leaders, like Archbishop John Quinn, Frank Butler of FADICA, *Commonweal's* editor Paul Baumann, and VOTF President James Post (also a professor of management) were invited to respond to them. It was a conversation of people of diverse but complementary competencies embodying, as Ignatius urges us to be, a contemporary university thinking with and for the Church.

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EXAMINE THE COMPETING CLAIMS

William Madges

Jesuit colleges and universities, in the words of the the 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (1995), are called — as *universities* — to be places of "serene and open search for and discussion of the truth." As *Jesuit* institutions of higher learning, they are required to "act in harmony with the demands of the service of faith and promotion of justice." In light of this mission, how should Jesuit higher education respond to the current church crisis? Our response requires attention to the past, the present, and the future.

First, Jesuit higher education should speak the truth. In appropriate courses in theology and history,