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Conclusion: Affection, Concern, and Ethical Principles

Charles M. Shelton, S.J.

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Conclusion

In this article I have examined the role of Jesuit higher education, specifically its moral mission as it pertains to student moral growth, and have noted that human development and moral development are inseparable. I think we can all agree with Robert Coles, who notes that

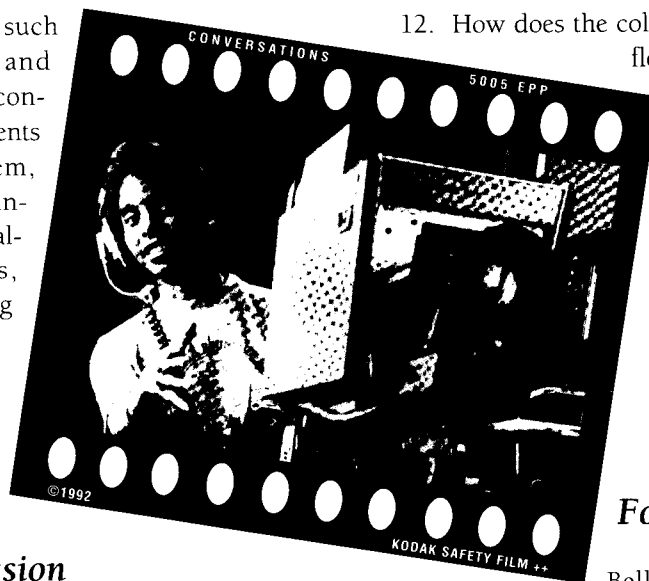
what matters for our young people, finally, is the quality of their home and school life—the origins of the moral character we adults possess or lack. Young Americans . . . sort themselves out the way young people always have. Those who have been lucky not by dint of their parents' money or power, but their continuous affection and concern, their wish to uphold certain ethical principles and then to live them, rather than merely mouthing them—such youths are well able to handle some of the nonsense and craziness this late part of the twentieth century has managed to offer us all.⁶⁵

If each of us can live such “affection,” “concern,” and “ethical principles” and convey these qualities to students as we dialogue with them, then communally as an institution and interpersonally in our relationships, both ourselves and young adults will be well served.

Some Questions for Further Discussion

1. Given the professionalization of faculty today, how realistic is it for a faculty member to mentor students today? Is it realistic to expect those faculty devoted to scholarly research and writing to spend considerable time with students? Is a Jesuit university or college talking out of both sides of its mouth when it expects such care and yet demands scholarly work from its faculty?
2. Given the psychological needs of students today, how does a Jesuit higher-education institution “care” for students and yet avoid becoming a quasi-therapeutic community?
3. How do I envision student moral maturity? What are my expectations of students? Am I realistic about student capacity for moral growth?
4. How do I see the role of the Jesuit community in the context of the “moral mission” of the school?

5. What role does campus ministry exercise in calling the college or university to a value stance?
6. Given student sexual activity, what should be the response of student-health services? campus-life and student-affairs committees? What are the moral reference points for making administrative decisions?
7. How do cultural influences impede or promote the moral development of our students?
8. What opportunities does the school offer for moral insight to occur beyond the classroom?
9. What is the role of the institutional church in helping guide the moral mission of the college or university? What tensions does this produce?
10. What moral reference points are used when policy decisions in the school are set forth?
11. What values do I most want to convey to students? As a department? As a professional staff? As an administrator?
12. How does the college or university enable ethical reflection to take root in the midst of departmental specialization?
13. To what degree can hiring policies, tenure decisions, and academic advancement be based on the faculty member's ability to raise value questions and ethical awareness among students?



For Future Reading

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