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Catholic Identity and Mission Statement

I greeted the arrival of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* with great enthusiasm. In my early years as a college student, I saw a need for greater clarity regarding Catholic identity in Catholic institutions. This was especially the case regarding norms for Catholic Universities. This Apostolic Constitution went well beyond general statements on the relevance of an authentic Catholic Education to the modern world and serves as a document of education itself. It does this by reviewing Catholic teaching about doctrine and norms but also by drawing the reader into a kind of dialogue regarding the relevance of these to modern education.

Calling to mind the words of St. Augustine: *"Intellege ut credas; crede ut intellegas"*, we are reminded that the rich heritage of Catholic education flourishes when all forms of intellectual prejudice are dropped in favor of a truly open search for truth. In my view, the professor should be a model for lifelong learning. The student should be able to see evidence of diligent study in the acquisition of knowledge in the professor. I hope to inspire the student to this lifelong pursuit without causing mere imitation.

Through my work I have sought to integrate the Thomist Tradition with the personalist tradition. My area of specialization in research is the philosophy of Karol Wojtyła. That is not to say that I think philosophy should be carried out merely from the perspective of the history of philosophy but in my experience, he offers us a set of keys capable of unlocking lacunae in the history of philosophy and of offering insights regarding the apparently divergent accounts of human experience as expressed in ancient /medieval philosophy on the one hand and the modern philosophies of consciousness on the other.

I fully support Ex Corde Ecclesiae and the Catholic Identity and Mission of UST. I believe the document itself is a useful tool in the education of students and all those who play a role in a Catholic University.

It is my heart's desire to always remain in full communion with the Catholic Church and to teach theology, and any other discipline with that in mind.

In order to enhance a Catholic identity and mission at U.S.T. at the John Paul II Institute I have:

1. Recently secured 500,000 donation to maintain the Master's Program in John Paul II Studies for at least 3.5 years.
2. Brought the department into SACSOC compliance showing the possibility to integrate Catholic Teaching and Graduate Education Accreditation requirements.
3. Recruited multiple Ph.D., Master's degree and high caliber students into the program since coming in 2024.
4. Organized an annual breakout session at the American Catholic Philosophical Association on topics related to the teaching of John Paul II for two years.
5. Written a course on John Paul II's "Love and Responsibility" as a Final Project Classroom version. JPII 5345 A
6. Co-written a course on the History of Philosophy up to Karol Wojtyla. JPII 5302
7. Overseen numerous independent "Final Projects" seeking to integrate Catholic Teaching with the respective students' field of choice.
8. Personally responded to over 600 inquiries about our program on the thought of John Paul II.
9. Given lectures and presentations at the Thomistic Center on campus and at Ss. Simon and Jude Parish in Houston on the topic of the thought of John Paul II.
10. Participated regularly in Graduation Ceremonies, Faculty Senate Meetings, Interdepartmental collaborations, Study abroad Fair and other similar events.
11. Co-Led the 2024 annual Pilgrimage to religious sites and historical sites in Poland between June 6 and June 24th together with our Polish counterpart, Fr. Witold Kania.
12. Coordinated the Annual Mass of John Paul II on October 22 for two years.
13. Co-Coordinated the Annual "Wigilia" Christmas party for two years, personally inviting donors to join us.

Sincerely,



John Corrigan

Director St. John Paul II Institute

University of St. Thomas Houston