

St. Thomas More Society

Some Reflections on the Law School

Rev. Robert A. Wild, S.J., President of Marquette University, spoke at the dinner following the 51st Annual Red Mass of the St. Thomas More Society of Wisconsin on October 15, 2009. This is an excerpt from his remarks.

When I came to Marquette in 1996 as president, the Law School was a proud entity but also aloof, present but somehow separate from the rest of campus. It wasn't flashy, but the facilities and its faculty did provide its students with a solid legal education. For nearly a century, the school had turned out lawyers who were welcomed into positions at law firms or in public service or, as is the case with many of you, who chose to hang shingles of their own in private practice. Such at least was my impression of the school when I first began as president.

Yet it didn't take me long after arriving at Marquette to recognize that the Law School was actually connected in a very profound way to our Jesuit mission. And the person who helped me see this was Howard Eisenberg, then starting his second year as dean. Unknowingly, Howard began building the case for the Law School by ghostwriting for me an articulation of the school's Jesuit mission that I found so powerful, so well done, that I called Howard and asked him if he had written it himself. Very forcefully he assured me that he most certainly had! It was Howard who convinced me of the Law School's potential as a national model for excellence in legal education and its powerful connection to the University's Catholic, Jesuit identity. He also opened my eyes to the fact that this academic unit had been made to shuffle along in a state of benign neglect, with the University making little investment in its future over the years. I decided then that this is not the way to run the railroad, and I made a commitment to support the Law School's development in every possible way—a decision I've never regretted.

When Howard died in 2002, Interim Dean Janine Geske stepped into the office and generously helped us carry forward. And then Dean Kearney, with great commitment and skill, took up the mantle of leadership and continues the work with alumni, faculty, and colleagues in legal circles to discover new ways to make Marquette Law School an unrivaled legal asset and resource for the community and the state. Through symposia, conferences, speakers, an expanded curriculum, and more, Marquette Law School is successfully chiseling a substantial profile as a regional resource for both members of the bar and citizens of this area to participate

in thought-provoking discussions of even the most complex of legal and public policy issues.

This commitment does not come without enormous investment. Eckstein Hall, the Law School's new home as of next fall, is only the most visible evidence of the University's invigorated financial commitment to the Law School, a commitment

that has allowed the school to hire and retain truly top-flight faculty members and to provide much better scholarship support to its students.

True, there are some who question the "fit" of a law school at a Catholic, Jesuit university. In my mind, there could not be a better or more logical partnership.

Throughout much of the 1980s, an international group of Jesuits and laypeople gathered to discuss the evolution of Jesuit education since Ignatius Loyola first set forth the Ratio Studiorum, the foundational educational philosophy that would guide all Jesuit schools. But of course as the centuries passed, the needs of our students and the constitutive elements of an excellent education gradually changed as well. The document this international group produced, "The Characteristics of Jesuit Education," reaffirmed the most fundamental aspects of a Jesuit education in language appropriate to our present age. I think that much of that document would resonate positively with you, especially today when you are reigniting your own connection to the Holy Spirit in your work. I'll mention just two statements affirmed in this document for having stood the test of time. One is this: "The mission of the Society of Jesus is the service of faith, of which the



promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. . . .” And the second: “Jesuit education encourages the building of solidarity with others that transcends race, culture, and religion since every program can be a means to discover God, to worship God present and at work in creation.”

Our first-year law classes comprise students from 90 different schools, each of them choosing to come to Marquette for what he or she expects of an excellent legal education. Some arrive not fully aware of how our Catholic, Jesuit tradition will be reflected. When they leave us three years later, they have learned first and foremost how to be excellent practitioners of the law (for the constant search for excellence which is at the core of Jesuit education has been inculcated), but also to be able and committed in the search for justice and to ask the deeper questions that best lead to that goal; to model a certain reflectiveness in the practice of the law, mindful that every interaction with a

client or a colleague has an impact on other individuals; and to pay special attention to the poor and the marginalized in order that their needs, too, be dealt with justly and equitably. To be sure, some go well beyond this in terms of beginning to integrate their faith—in many instances, their Catholic faith—into their professional lives.

Perhaps our most important contribution in this regard is to provide models for these students. And we do, not only in the form of particular faculty but also in the alumni and other lawyers who come through our building and interact with our students. We are doing more than educating lawyers at Marquette, and we are even doing more than building, in Eckstein Hall, the finest law school building in the nation. In the end, we are attending to the call of God, who invites servants into his vineyard—servants whose rigorously honed legal skills will be expended and poured out on behalf of others. ■

Heartland Delta Gathering

Jesuit Educational Values

Christine Wiseman, L’73—formerly professor of law at Marquette and vice president for academic affairs at Creighton University, most recently provost of Loyola University Chicago, and, now, president at Saint Xavier University in Chicago—spoke at the 2009 Heartland Delta gathering at Marquette University of individuals from Jesuit colleges and universities. This is an excerpt from her remarks.

Jesuit education has been both a personal and professional journey that has occupied most of my life. I stand before you a woman educator and administrator in the Jesuit system for over 30 years—and a mother who has sent three children to be educated at three different Jesuit institutions. I tell people that I am the woman the Jesuits educated me to be.

So what is it that distinguishes our learning as “Jesuit Catholic”—and why is the integration of “faith” and “justice” so distinctive in this intellectual paradigm by which we define Jesuit education? Perhaps a bit of historical context is in order.

The Jesuits are, of course, members of a religious order of the Roman Catholic Church. The order was founded in 1540 by St. Ignatius of Loyola, who termed it *Companiã de Jess*

(the “Company of Jesus”) in Spanish and *Societas Jesu* (the “Society of Jesus”) in Latin. In his article on the Jesuits and their impact in Europe from 1450 to 1789, author Michael W. Maher recounts that the Jesuits moved into education because Ignatius realized the educational mission as an opportunity “to aid our fellowmen to the knowledge and love of God and to the

