

# ALIGNING CONVERSATIONS: FROM SEMINARS TO CURRICULAR REFORM

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*Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education*, authored by Anne Colby, Thomas Erlich, William Sullivan, and Jonathan Dole, presents research sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The authors suggest a “double helix” metaphor for understanding how learning in business and in the arts and sciences can be connected. They write,

When there is more intentional integration of liberal learning approaches with business—double helix style—faculty can help students achieve more advanced educational goals. They can also strengthen students’ sense of professional purpose by showing more effectively how business is interconnected with other dimensions of society and the environment. Implementing this integrative approach will require significant and sometimes difficult reform—that is the nature of innovation. But there is much to build on, historically and in current campus practice.<sup>1</sup>

Over the past decade, we have been engaged with faculty at the University of Dayton, a Catholic university in the Marianist tradition, thinking about ways to more intentionally integrate liberal learning and business education. We have focused on ways in which Catholic Intellectual Tradition can shape the context in which this integration takes place. This paper presents some of the practices we have developed in order to promote curricular reform.

The first section describes the series of seminars that we have facilitated looking particularly at how these seminars have led to a focus on what we call “educating for lives of reasoned action.” The second section sets out several elements that we agree are fundamental for educating for this focus. Section three summarizes some of the collaborative structures and practices that we have developed to further our work together. In the fourth section, we outline some of the insights we have gleaned from this work.

## **I. Faculty Seminars**

Faculty members from the School of Business Administration and the College of Arts and Sciences have been engaged in various seminars and cooperative educational endeavors over the last several years. During this period the University has undertaken a process of revising general requirements for all undergraduate students. The confluence of these two endeavors has

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Colby, et. al., *Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education: Liberal Learning for the Profession* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 7.

provided opportunities for deepening the role that Catholic Intellectual Tradition plays in the education of students while also intentionally integrating liberal learning and business education.

The first seminar took place in the academic year 2008-2009. Bro. Ray called together a group of faculty from business disciplines, humanities, and social sciences to explore aspects of Catholic social teachings.

We learned a great deal from the first seminar that helped us develop a second seminar. We recognized that even though we were concerned about how to incorporate Catholic social tradition and the development of practical reasoning into the curriculum, this could only happen if it emerged from the faculty.

In designing the second seminar, we consulted with the deans to identify participants. Faculty participants were invited from various departments in the School of Business Administration as well as from the departments of Philosophy and Religious Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. We opened the seminar with an off-campus retreat in the Fall of 2010. This allowed us to get to know each other in an informal setting. At the retreat we began with conversations based on some guiding questions:

- What learning outcomes do you hope to accomplish in your teaching? And
- Why is it important for you to teach ethics?

In addition, we began using materials from the Carnegie Foundation. We read and discussed *A New Agenda for Higher Education: Shaping a Life of the Mind for Practice*.<sup>2</sup> We also discussed the agenda that we would like to develop for the rest of the seminar. We asked how we could educate each other on our approaches to teaching ethics. We also asked if there was a role for Catholic social tradition in this curriculum. As this second seminar progressed some agreements began to emerge, agreements which we summarized by saying that we were all educating for “lives of reasoned action.” This seminar also produced two documents that help faculty and students work through cases, thinking about moral issues. These will be described later in this paper.

In order to expand on the outcomes of the second seminar and further explore what it means to educate for lives of reasoned action, we asked the deans of the School of Business Administration and the College of Arts and Sciences for a specific mandate. Both deans agreed that the next seminar should focus on how to incorporate Catholic social tradition and practical reasoning into the curriculum for business students, both in the business curriculum and in the liberal studies classes that support and are included in that curriculum. Members of the third seminar were appointed by the deans with a clear understanding of this charge. In late Fall of 2011, this group began by reading *Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education*. The seminar then began to look at the stages of the curriculum and of student development in intellectual, interpersonal, and intrapersonal aspects of their lives. The participants began asking how both practical reasoning and Catholic social tradition could be introduced and developed throughout the curriculum. This seminar is still in progress and will continue work in the Fall of 2012. We

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<sup>2</sup> William M. Sullivan and Matthew S. Rosin, *A New Agenda for Higher Education: Shaping the Life of the Mind for Practice*. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008).

will read a number of articles,<sup>3</sup> asking how these documents or concepts and ideas from them might be used in courses in the business curriculum as well as in liberal studies classes, especially philosophy and religious studies.

Figure 1 summarizes the focus and outcomes of these three seminars.

Figure 1: Interdisciplinary Seminars

|           | Seminar                                       | Focus   | Outcomes   |
|-----------|---|---|--|
| 2008-2009 | Catholic Social Tradition                     | Faculty from SBA and CAS explored the role of the Catholic social tradition in interdisciplinary learning and scholarship                                   | Agreed on the importance of the Catholic social tradition in the undergraduate curriculum<br><br>Contributions to individual teaching and scholarship  |
| 2010-2011 | Ethics and the Business Profession            | Faculty from SBA and CAS explored “What is learning outcomes do you hope to accomplish in your teaching?” and “Why is it important to you to teach ethics?” | Recommended the inclusion of practical reasoning and the Catholic social tradition into the CAP<br><br>Developed <i>Guidelines for Conducting Conversations on Ethical Issues in Business and Lives of Reasoned Action: Concepts, Theories and Principles to Facilitate Conversation</i> |
| 2011-2012 | Ethics and Business Professions Working Group | Faculty from SBA and CAS are exploring ways to incorporate practical reasoning and the Catholic social tradition in to the CAP                              | Specific recommendations on incorporating practical reasoning and the Catholic social tradition across the four years of the undergraduate curriculum  |

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth E. Goodpaster, “Goods That are Truly Good and Services that Truly Serve: Reflections on “*Caritas in Veritate*,”” Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, “Vocation of the Business Leader, A Reflection;” and Robert G. Kennedy, *The Good That Business Does*.

## II. Fundamental Emphases for Educating for Lives of Reasoned Action

It was clear from the beginning of our work together that we needed to focus on the mission of the University and ask how curricular developments can be **mission-based** as they also address the scholarly demands of the twenty-first century. The mission of the University begins with the summary paragraph:

The University of Dayton is a comprehensive, Catholic university, a diverse community, committed in the Marianist tradition, to educating the whole person and to linking learning and scholarship with leadership and service.<sup>4</sup>

As we addressed the question of how to move from this mission statement to concrete curricular development, as noted above, we eventually developed the language of educating for lives of reasoned action.

**The Journey toward Practical Wisdom.** With an agreement that we are educating for lives of reasoned action we further agreed that excellence in the skills of practical reasoning is a key learning outcome. We called this learning outcome the journey toward practical wisdom. Practical reasoning is the capacity to draw on knowledge and intellectual skills to engage concretely in the world. Practical reasoning allows the individual to go beyond reflection to deliberate and decide upon the best course of action within a particular situation.<sup>5</sup> Engaged citizens and leaders of all sectors of society rely on this capacity for practical reasoning to construct the good in all facets of life. Practical reasoning allows one to *see* — to frame a problem or issue so that one understands causes; to *judge* — imagining the good to be realized and designing the appropriate response to realize the good; and to *act* — implementing that response. Practical reasoning also allows one to *reflect* — to untangle the complex web of experience and to draw practical knowledge from this experience.

Any thoughtful exercise of practical reasoning relies on a commitment to a moral tradition and the use of practical knowledge. A commitment to a moral tradition involves 1) knowledge, i.e., principles and beliefs, about the goods of human life and how to realize these goods and 2) a set of habits or virtues that support the realization of the goods of human life. Learning a moral tradition enriches the practical imagination, which proposes what we can make of our lives and the futures that we can hope for, both individually and collectively. Practical knowledge is obtained through critical reflection on past actions and is usually in the form of tacit knowledge about how one rightly connects a particular situation with the goods one would like to realize.

**A Commitment to the Catholic Social Tradition.** Because of the University's institutional commitment to thoughtfully integrate the Catholic intellectual tradition into the learning and scholarship of the University, our seminar groups agreed to explore how the conceptual and moral resources of the Catholic social tradition could assist students and faculty in addressing ethical issues of business. To assist in the exploration we viewed the Catholic social tradition as both 1) the **ongoing practice of faith-based practical reasoning** by the Catholic community, in dialogue with others, to address important social questions and 2) **a set of themes** that have

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<sup>4</sup> Approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2000.

<sup>5</sup> The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has been promoting practical reasoning as an important way of integrating liberal education and professional education. Both of the books used in seminars, William Sullivan and Matthew Rosin, *A New Agenda for Higher Education: Shaping a Life of the Mind for Practice* and Anne Colby, et. al., *Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education: Liberal Learning for the Profession*, emphasize practical reasoning.

resulted from this reasoning in the past that can be used to guide and shape contemporary and future reasoning (c.f. Figure 2). Having students use concrete examples from their own lives and fairly complex business cases we developed teaching methods that would demonstrate how the Catholic social tradition could enrich the practical reasoning needed to address specific ethical issues. Yet knowledge and skill in utilizing the Catholic social tradition is not sufficient. One must learn how to bring these skills into conversations in which the participants have pluralistic perspectives.

**Figure 2: The Catholic Social Tradition**

| <b>Faith-based Practical Reasoning</b> | <b>Themes (U.S. Catholic Bishops)</b>                       |
|--|---|
| <b>See</b>                             | <b>Life and Dignity of the Human Person</b>                 |
| <b>Judge</b>                           | <b>The Call to Family and Community and the Common Good</b> |
| <b>Act</b>                             | <b>The Rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person</b>  |
| <b>Reflect</b>                         | <b>The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers</b>        |
|  | <b>The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable</b>               |
|  | <b>Solidarity</b>   |
|  | <b>Care of God’s Creation</b>                               |

**Ethical issues in business are most often resolved through conversations.** In business settings ethical issues are often complex, ambiguous, and uncertain and usually are addressed and resolved through conversations with others. Participants in these conversations almost always bring diverse perspectives to these conversations, shaped by their experiences and the moral traditions that they use in their practical reasoning. Educating for lives of reasoned action must include a basic knowledge of the different moral traditions that can be utilized in addressing ethical issues in business and the skills of dialogue. Traditional textbooks in business ethics can be very helpful in acquainting students with the moral traditions that are most often used in addressing ethical issues in business -- utilitarianism, rights and duties, justice and fairness, ethics of care, and virtue ethics. With this knowledge, students and faculty can bring their appreciation of the Catholic social tradition into dialogue with people from other moral and religious traditions.

Students and faculty need to be skillful in engaging others in constructive conversations, skills which include, for example, framing a good question, listening respectfully to others, and advocating or persuading in ways that can be understood by the others. Without these skills it will be difficult for students and faculty to bring their moral insights and understanding into the effective resolution of ethical issues.

**Mentoring Student in Reasoning and Conversing on Ethical Issues.** Teaching students to address ethical issues in business requires an understanding of practical reasoning, knowledge of moral traditions, and the skills of constructive conversation. Yet the most important part of

learning the skills to address ethical issues in business is to practice the skills of practical reasoning by oneself and in dialogue with others. Here written reflections on ethical issues are helpful for individual exercise of practical reasoning. Group conversations and projects can help students develop the skills needed to engage in constructive conversations on ethical issues. The teacher becomes a mentor in these situations by helping students understand in what ways their practical reasoning is appropriate to the issue, what ways they might improve their practical reasoning, and how they used the different moral traditions in understanding and making judgments about the case.

**Journey to Practical Wisdom is Developmental.** Because growing in practical wisdom is a life-long process, we also began to understand that developmental models need to inform curricular design. If students are to live lives of reasoned action, then they must grow in practical reasoning and develop deeper, richer, more nuanced understandings of the issues and decision that present themselves in the course of life. They need to develop capabilities in reading situations so that they can understand more holistically, view from multiple perspectives, allow emotions and passions to be allies of reason, and so develop a fuller sense of rationality. This rationality needs to be analytical, able to form a well-supported argument, but it should also include the narrative, able to tell the story in a perhaps universally compelling way. We find the model developed by Patricia M. King and Marcia B. Baxter Magolda helpful.<sup>6</sup> They emphasize the importance of intrapersonal development, interpersonal development, and cognitive development.

### III. Collaborations

The seminars also helped us recognize that developing a curriculum that incorporates practical reasoning and Catholic social thought in ways that will help our business students build lives of reasoned action requires strong faculty collaborations.

The second seminar developed two documents to better facilitate collaboration between courses in the School of Business Administration and ethics courses in the departments of philosophy and religious studies. (See Appendixes A and B) These documents are titled “Guidelines for Conducting Conversations on Ethical Issues in Business”<sup>7</sup> and “Lives of Reasoned Action: Concepts, Theories and Principles to Facilitate Conversations.” The “Guidelines” take students through cases following four steps: understanding the case and its context, assessing the situation, determining the underlying problem or challenge, and crafting recommendations for actions. These guidelines can be used in any class that uses case studies and encourages those involved in the case analysis to identify the moral issues that may be part of the case. The “Lives of Reasoned Action” document provides students and faculty with a process for thinking through the moral aspects of the cases. It takes the analysis through considerations of how actions may serve or diminish common good, develop or minimize caring relationships and issues of vulnerability, strengthen or weaken personal and social virtues, support or inhibit human rights, develop structures of justice or injustice, and lead to helpful or problematic consequences.

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<sup>6</sup> Patricia M. King and Marcia B. Baxter Magolda, “A Developmental Model of Intercultural Maturity,” *Journal of College Student Development* 46.6 (November/December 2005): 571-592.

<sup>7</sup> These guidelines were drafted based on a conversation on *Questions for Class Discussion* from C. Roland Christensen Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard Business School.

The second seminar resulted in pilot courses for one of the new curricular requirements, Practical Ethical Action courses. A business ethics course has been piloted in philosophy using these materials. In addition, the course has developed further collaboration by including guest presentations by several faculty from the School of Business Administration. The business faculty make use of the “Guidelines for Conducting Conversations on Ethical Issues in Business” in their presentations.

The third seminar has begun to develop a schematic chart for identifying where in the curriculum various aspects of both practical reasoning and Catholic social tradition can be introduced and developed. (c.f. Figure 3)

**Figure 3**  
**Integration of Liberal Education and**  
**Professional Education Over Four Years**

|          | <b>Liberal Education<br/>College of Arts and<br/>Sciences</b>  |   | <b>Professional Education<br/>School of Business<br/>Administration</b>                                 | <b>Proposed<br/>Information Commons<br/>Resources</b>   |
|----------|--|---|---|---|
| <b>4</b> | Other Crossing Boundary<br>Courses – Inquiry, Faith<br>Traditions, Integrative<br>Courses<br><br>Business Ethics – Practical<br>Ethical Action | ↔ | Major Requirements<br><br>MGT 490 Managing the<br>Enterprise<br><br>(Could be an Integration<br>Course) | Appropriate Case Studies in<br>Reasoned Action<br><br>Teaching Notes for integrating<br>Catholic social tradition into<br>courses                           |
| <b>3</b> |  | ↔ | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Business Core<br><br>FIN MGT MIS MKT OPS<br>301;<br><br>ECO Elective               | Appropriate Case Studies in<br>Reasoned Action<br><br>Teaching Notes for integrating<br>Catholic social tradition into<br>courses                           |
| <b>2</b> | Math, Science, ENG, COM  | ↔ | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Business Core<br><br>ACC 207 & 208; ECO 203 &<br>204; DSC 210 & 211; MGT<br>201    | Appropriate Case Studies in<br>Reasoned Action<br><br>Teaching Notes for integrating<br>Catholic social tradition into<br>courses                           |
| <b>1</b> | Humanities Commons –<br>REL, PHL, HST, ENG<br><br>Introduction to Social<br>Science  | ↔ | BAI 150 & BA 151  | Introduction to the Catholic<br>Intellectual Tradition<br><br>The Journey to Practical<br>Wisdom<br><br>Social Inquiry and the<br>Catholic Social Tradition |

Finally, it has become apparent that collaboration could be greatly strengthened if we had a repository for curricular resources. We are in the process of thinking about what could be in that repository and consulting more broadly, especially with those working on the first year of the undergraduate program.

#### **IV. What We Have Learned**

In addition to designing actions that embody the good, practical reasoning enables us to reflect upon our past actions and to ask ourselves “What have learned?” Our “lives of reasoned action” never proceed as they are designed. There are always surprises – people respond differently than we anticipated, the situation is more complex than we anticipated, etc. In developing these seminars and writing this paper, we have asked ourselves, “What have we learned that might be helpful to others, especially those in Catholic universities who are working on curricular change?” What we articulate here are a few insights that we have gleaned, knowing that we continue to learn together.

**Relationships and Conversations:** We started our work with the modest hypothesis: If we can develop a interdisciplinary faculty seminar that would introduce Catholic social teaching to the challenges of business and business education, then this would lead to further productive work on Catholic social teaching as one of the sources of integration in the business curriculum. As we carried out these seminars we began to see the importance of relationships and conversations in supporting interdisciplinary inquiry. Having the opportunity to understand and appreciate each other’s disciplinary concerns and our common concern of educating for lives of reasoned action allowed us to develop respect for one another and an appreciation of the gifts each member brought to the conversation. This common concern of educating for lives of reasoned action allowed us to develop a professional friendship which supported and sustained our conversations. As these conversations progressed we began to develop a mutual understanding of the different languages that each of us use in exploring ethical issues and in educating students.

**Both Mission and Excellence:** These faculty seminars were designed to enhance the Catholic dimensions of business education at the University of Dayton. As the seminars progressed it was important to recognize the excellence of scholarship and learning. No matter what we are doing, we must recognize the importance of intellectual integrity and academic excellence. We want faculty, programs, and curricula that enable us to think well and explore the most important questions for our lives. Catholic Intellectual Tradition embraces this commitment. As we develop curricular reform, this must remain central, vitalizing the work.

**Conversation Guides:** Given the press on faculty time and their concerns for the individual scholarship it is often difficult to gather faculty for interdisciplinary conversations. Conversation Guides are necessary to organize and sustain these interdisciplinary discussions. The authors are privileged to have endowed faculty positions, one focuses on the humanities in the curriculum and the other focuses on the Catholic social tradition in the curriculum. These positions and our previous working together gave us the opportunity to guide and sustain a sequence of conversations important to the mission of the University. Conversation Guides must keep the

questions of the conversation focused and must make sure that conclusions of the conversations are periodically summarized so that they can be the basis of further conversation and can be shared with others.

The Conversation Guides must be aware of the dynamics of introducing new members into the conversation. It has been very helpful that as new members join the conversation that the Guides help them appreciate the history of the conversation and what are some of the working conclusions that have been developed so far. This introduction helps new members move more quickly to full participation in the conversations.

**Administrative Support for the Conversations:** If Conversation Guides are to have credibility then they must have the explicit support from the University administration. In the case of our conversations at University of Dayton, this support comes from the collaboration of the Deans of College of Arts and Sciences and Business Administration. Both of these individuals saw these seminars and the Working Group as important resources for faculty development and curricular change. The Conversation Guides presented ideas for individual seminars to the Deans. After working to clarify the mandate of the seminar, the Deans asked faculty members to participate in the seminar and indicate why they believe their participation is important. The Deans and the Conversation Guides must make sure that there are modest resources to support the conversation, e.g. resources for common readings and creating hospitable spaces for conversations.

**Exploring a Different Approach to Interdisciplinary Learning:** Interdisciplinary learning can be developed and sustained in a number of ways. The model where faculty from different disciplines teach a common course that explores interdisciplinary issues can be effective and yet it is very expensive and demanding of faculty time. During our work in the Seminar of Ethics and the Business Profession we explored and implemented a model that professors from the School of Business Administration would teach modules in a philosophy class of business ethics. In the philosophy class the lead teacher would introduce the practical reasoning approach to framing and deliberating on ethical cases. Later in the class different business professors would come and present a business case and lead the students in a conversation on the case. This approach allows students to see faculty from different units of the University collaborating in ethical inquiry. In continuing work we will explore bringing Arts and Science faculty into business classes to present a module around an important business issue.

**Aligning Conversations around a Comprehensive Curricular Framework:** University-wide Mission-oriented curricular reform is very difficult. Universities tend to develop “silos” where groups talk with each other within the silos, but not between them. If a curriculum is to be developed that truly integrates business education and liberal learning, this silo mentality needs to be overcome. At the University of Dayton we were in the situation of designing the courses for a new curricular program, the Common Academic Program, and so had a framework that would allow us to align conversations around mission-oriented learning outcomes. From earlier seminars and conversations the participants in the Working Group knew that they wanted to utilize excellence in practical reasoning (practical wisdom) and the ideas and resources from the Catholic social tradition to integrate the education of business students. The framework of the Common Academic Program gave the Working Group an opportunity to design appropriate curricular interventions that would integrate liberal and business education at each level of the curriculum. We are presently designing appropriate intervention for the four years of the Common Academic Program as it applies to the education of business students.

At this point, the role of Conversation Guides becomes a bit more complicated. In the curricular reform at the University of Dayton there are a multitude of conversations taking place. There is the conversation of about the humanities commons, i.e., the role of religion, philosophy, English, and history in the first year experience. There are conversations about the introductory social science courses as well as on the upper level crossing boundary courses on religious traditions, inquiry, diversity and social justice, and practical ethical action. If there is to be true mission oriented curricular reform, then these conversations must be aligned around mission oriented learning outcomes. Presently the Working Group is exploring this alignment and sees that a major focus of the Working Group during the 2012 Fall Semester is to integrate excellence in practical reasoning (practical wisdom) and the ideas and resources from the Catholic social tradition into all four years of the liberal and professional education of business students.

**Emerging Framework for Curricular Change:** The experiences of these seminars and the Working Group have provided us with a preliminary framework for thinking about an organic approach to curricular change in a Catholic university. The framework would have three overlapping phases:

- Organize interdisciplinary seminars where faculty jointly explore themes that are critical to the mission of the Catholic university
- Authorize Conversation Guides to organize, sequence, and align these conversations so that they promoted curricular innovations related to the mission of the University. Support the Conversation Guides with the necessary resources to organize and sustain these conversations.
- Align conversations, with academic leaders and Conversation Guides in regular communication, so that mission oriented innovations are embedded in all levels of both liberal education and professional education.

This change process, in its simplest form, is the sequential application of practical reasoning and disciplined conversations to bring about mission focused curricular reform.

# Appendix A

## Guidelines for Conducting Conversations on Ethical Issues in Business<sup>8</sup>

Revised: 16 April 2011

These guidelines provide a method for conducting class discussions with undergraduates on ethical issues in business cases. Conducting a constructive conversation on ethical issues is an exercise in practical reasoning; it relies on the dynamics of the basic triad of questioning, listening, and responding. Practical reasoning helps us develop lives of reasoned action.

Conversations on ethical issues in business can be conducted with the following method:

### 1. Understanding the Case and its Context

- a. What is the context of the case, i.e., the history of the issue, the stakeholders in the situation, their key roles and responsibilities?
- b. Describe the context from different perspectives. (e.g. different stakeholders or different cultures)
- c. Is the issue about more than what is legal or what is most efficient?
- d. What is at stake in this case?

### 2. Assessing the Situation

- a. What are the important facts of the case? What facts are not known? Do I need to learn more?
- b. Could this situation be damaging to someone or to some group?
- c. How do the stakeholders see the situation? Are some of these concerns more important than others?
- d. Is there any history of previous events or relevant relationships that must be considered if there is to be an adequate solution?
- e. Are there hidden agendas or biases that should be surfaced so as to get all of the facts and feelings out in the open?

### 3. Determining the Underlying Problem or Challenge

- a. What is the presenting problem or challenge? Why does this problem have to be addressed?
- b. Who or what is responsible for the problem/challenge that has to be addressed?
- c. Is there an underlying problem that if addressed would give us leverage on the other problems/issues in this case?

### 4. Crafting Recommendations/Actions

- a. What good or goods might be realized in this situation? From whose perspective?
- b. What options for action do those involved have? Have all of the relevant groups been consulted?
- c. How do we see the strengths and weaknesses of the most likely options for actions? (In evaluating the options for action, the information on *Lives of Reasoned Action: Concepts, Principles, and Themes to Facilitate Conversation* will be helpful.)
- d. Taking into account these judgments of strengths and weaknesses, which options best address the situation?
- e. How can the recommendation be implemented with the greatest care and attention to the concerns of all of the stakeholders?

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<sup>8</sup> These guidelines were drafted based on a conversation on *Questions for Class Discussion* from the C. Roland Christensen Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard Business School.

## Appendix B

### **Lives of Reasoned Action: Concepts, Theories and Principles to Facilitate Conversations** (This is in the process of review and revision.)

Many philosophers and theologians have developed concepts, principles, and theories to help think about how we can best live moral lives. As we conduct conversations around ethical issues in business, it is helpful to review some of these in order to enrich and expand our conversations. This short summary is especially intended to guide conversations at the University of Dayton, a Catholic university in the Marianist tradition.

As a Catholic university, we particularly note the Catholic Social Tradition, which in brief is the view that humans, having been created in the image of God, have the responsibility to *be* fully that image by caring for other people and for the environment. Of particular concern is ensuring that our political and economic structures serve people (rather than the other way around). For more, see the companion piece that specifically discusses the Catholic Social Tradition.

- I. Think about how actions may serve or diminish the **common good**.
  - A. Humans are social, interconnected beings. Social relationships are not simply individual to individual, but individual to larger communities. Actions take place in and help construct communal life. Understanding the moral practices of a community and critiquing those practices help us develop more equitable and flourishing communal and individual lives.
  - B. *Related concepts*: **equality, sustainability, globalization, cosmopolitanism**
  - C. *CST connections*:
    1. The **CST's specific version of the common good** is: "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily." (*Compendium of Social Doctrine*) Social life is not a burden, but the site in which humans realize their callings, their happiness.
    2. **Principle of the Universal Destination of Goods**: the goods of the earth are intended to meet the needs of all. Whatever economic arrangements we make, they must fulfill that function. God has given us the earth so that we can share it fairly and equitably with others, especially with the poor and others deprived of the means to be fully human.
    3. **Preferential Option for the Poor**: A society is judged by how it affects those in the most vulnerable position. Governments have a particular responsibility to protect those who are more vulnerable. Christians should stand with those who live in poverty as they work to change their situation.
- II. Think about how actions may help develop or minimize **caring relationships**.
  - A. An ethic that emphasizes care focuses on human relationships in which people are dependent on each other. Caring relationships develop in specific contexts and are attentive to the particularities of the context. Healthy and ethical relationships require attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness.
  - B. *Related concepts*: **reciprocity, human flourishing, compassion, love, friendship, hospitality**

C. *CST Connections*:

1. **Principle of Solidarity**: “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. That is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are *all* really responsible *for all*.” (*Compendium of Social Doctrine*)
2. **Principle of Subsidiarity**: “It is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern for the family, groups, associations, local territorial realities; in short, for that aggregate of economic, social, cultural, sports-oriented, recreational, professional and political expressions to which people spontaneously give life and which make it possible for them to achieve effective social growth” (*Compendium of Social Doctrine*)

III. Think about issues of **rights** in relationship to actions.

A. In ethics, the language of rights is primarily concerned with whether or not an action respects individual rights. In contemporary use, “rights” indicate those things to which people are entitled. Documents have been developed to articulate rights, for example, The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights. Some rights place limits on how a person may be treated or used (**negative rights**), while other rights entitle a person to certain goods or resources (**positive rights**).

B. *Related concepts*: **Freedom; distributive justice, duties and responsibilities**

C. *CST Connections*:

1. In CST, human rights name “the minimum conditions for life in community.” (*Economic Justice for All*)
2. Rights are also intrinsically connected to **duties**, both in the sense that rights for one person implies duties in others and in the sense that people have rights in order to fulfill their own duties to others. Private property, for example is a right insofar as it helps people fulfill their duties to themselves, their family, to other persons, and to God. “[I]t is important to call for a renewed reflection on how *rights presuppose duties, if they are not to become mere licence.*” (*Caritas in Veritate* 43)
3. Rights are therefore inextricably related to upholding **human dignity**: “*In fact, the roots of human rights are to be found in the dignity that belongs to each human being. This dignity, inherent in human life and equal in every person, is perceived and understood first of all by reason.*” (*Compendium of Social Doctrine*)

IV. Think about how actions arise from or develop specific **virtues** or character traits

A. A **virtue** is a desired character trait or a habitual way of being. Virtue ethics presumes that decision-making both relies on a person’s good character and is aimed at further developing that good character. For example, a loving person acts in loving ways but also wants to become more loving. What counts as a virtue depends on a person’s context. The virtues necessary for being a good doctor, for example, are not necessarily the same as the virtues necessary for being a good thief. When considering what is the most virtuous course of action, therefore, it is necessary to have in mind what the final goal is (**telos**).

B. *Related concepts*: **vices; practical wisdom, moral exemplars**

C. *CST Connections*: Rules are not enough; Christians are called to live lives of virtue. Catholic social teaching is itself a long-standing tradition of the practical wisdom involved in learning how to be a person who loves God and neighbor. Many non-Christians described the benefits of virtues (i.e. the **cardinal virtues** of temperance, prudence, courage and justice); Christians use

these virtues as well as the **theological virtues** of faith, hope and love. Of these three, love is primary, for love enables genuine interaction with and promotion of human beings. To be truly loving requires all the other virtues, including justice and solidarity.

V. Think about issues of **justice** in relationship to groups, institutions, and societies.

A. **Justice** involves relationships between humans, at several levels. The relationship between boss and employee requires justice, but so does the relationship between a corporation and the cities with which it engages, or between a government and its citizens. In contemporary discussions, justice especially means establishing relationships with people in such a way that each person is treated as a person of worth. One way to think about worth is the concept of **equality**, the idea that every person should have access to the same basic opportunities. Racism, sexism and other “isms” often prevent equality. Another way to think about worth is to presume that each human being is a rational being and needs to be treated as such. Immanuel Kant’s **Categorical Imperative** most famously deals with justice in this way: “Act only on a principle all rational agents could act on.”

B. *Related concepts:* **laws, privilege, oppression, discrimination**

C. *CST Connections:*

1. Justice gives what is owed to both neighbor and to God. Human worth comes from being creatures made by God, with dignity and rights.
2. Ultimately, justice is not enough – it must be grounded in the virtue of love. “In all knowledge and in every act of love the human soul experiences something ‘over and above,’ which seems very much like a gift that we receive, or a height to which we are raised.” (*Caritas in Veritate* 77)
3. **Sin** disrupts our relationships with both God and humanity and therefore relates directly to injustice. Sins are both personal and social, meaning that sins affect us individually, but are also the cause of **structural sin** in our societies, which includes oppression and discrimination. “The consequences of sin perpetuate the structures of sin. These are rooted in personal sin and, therefore, are always connected to concrete acts of the individuals who commit them, consolidate them and make it difficult to remove them.” (*Compendium*, 119).

VI. Think about actions in terms of their **consequences**.

A. One of the primary ways to think about actions is in terms of their consequences, or the effects they have on people and their environment. By considering the effects one hopes to bring about (also known as **intentions**), a person forms reasons for choosing to do one thing over another. One particular ethical theory, **utilitarianism**, makes considering consequences for a whole group of people the primary basis for decision making. In utilitarianism, **utility** is a measure of the greatest number of positive consequences (sometimes popularly shorthanded as “the greatest good for the greatest number”), weighed against the negative consequences (or harms). First, however, one has to determine which consequences are being sought. Pleasure is one kind of consequence; happiness is another; justice is still another. Another important question in utilitarianism is which people or things are being considered. (I.e. Are some groups being left out? Should future generations be included? Should the environment or other non-human entity be considered?)

B. *Related concepts:* **unintended consequences, circumstances, pleasure, pain**

C. *CST Connections:*

1. CST affirms that good intentions are necessary for an action to be good. Considering consequences is a necessary part of thinking through how we are to be moral people.

Similarly, corporations, governments, unions and other agencies involved in economic policy are called upon to consider consequences in particular ways: “It is necessary moreover that ‘in evaluating the *consequences* of their decisions, these agencies always give sufficient consideration to peoples and countries which have little weight in the international market, but which are burdened by the most acute and desperate needs, and are thus more dependent on support for their development’.” (*Compendium* 371)

2. CST rejects utilitarianism due to the worry that individuals will be seen in terms of their usefulness toward helping a whole group achieve a particular consequence, which has the potential to devalue the individual’s full dignity, worth and gifts. Utilitarianism should not be confused with promotion of the common good. In Catholic thought the common good is not “the greatest good for the greatest number” or maximization of utility. It cannot be achieved by damaging the dignity of any members.
3. CST also rejects utilitarianism because there are good things one might need or want that are unrelated to utility; likewise, in Catholic thought there are things that are evil and should not be considered regardless of whether they appear to increase pleasure or happiness (for example).