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**PART I:
CATHOLIC IMAGINATION, CATHOLIC IDENTITY
AND THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY**

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In her essay entitled "What Can the Roman Catholic Tradition Contribute to Christian Higher Education?" theologian Monika Hellwig identifies five elements of what she called "A Catholic Way of Being Christian." As this identification implies, before one considers what it means to be a specifically Catholic university, one must first understand the implications of being Christian. According to Hellwig, to be a Christian venture or community means to affirm our relationship with God as creator and redeemer, to profess faith in and discipleship of Jesus Christ, and to acknowledge the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in human life and initiatives. As an outgrowth of these fundamental affirmations, the Catholic way of being Christian, referred to as both the "Catholic imagination" and as "Catholic identity," describes what, within the broader purview of Christianity, has been recognized as the particularly Catholic worldview. While it encompasses such things as faith, belief, doctrine, and ritual, it is a broader expression of the ways in which Roman Catholicism envisions itself, approaches human experience, and interprets each. The five elements of the Catholic imagination that Hellwig discusses are (1) an emphasis on the dynamic of faith and reason, (2) a respect for the tradition's cumulative wisdom, (3) an inclusivity in membership and values, (4) the communal nature of redemption, and (5) an appreciation of the sacramental principle. This section examines each of these elements through a fourfold method: (1) a brief theological or Christological reflection tied to the

Christian tradition described by Hellwig, (2) the insights of Monika Hellwig herself, (3) the assertions of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities, and (4) the salient portion of the Barry University Mission Statement and Core Commitments that relate to each element.

INCLUSIVITY IN MEMBERSHIP AND VALUES

In his discussion of the Eucharist in *Real Presence: Worship, Sacrament, and Commitment*, theologian Regis Duffy characterized Jesus as someone “on account of others,” one with God and one with the marginalized of his time. In his ministry with the sinner and outcast, Jesus proclaimed the inbreaking of the kingdom of God and embodied its reality in his actions. Particularly through his table-sharing with the marginalized of his time, Jesus transgressed social barriers and extended an offer of intimate participation to those who were ordinarily excluded by social, cultural, or religious convention. By “inviting the outsider and the underdog to the table,” Jesus constituted a new community, “a community of equals within the richness of diversity.” In this community, barriers were abolished, class distinctions were eradicated, and role expectations were reversed. Through the Eucharistic meal, Jesus’ disciples – past, present, and future – are nourished for such subversive living. For this reason, David N. Power asserts, “In times of social and cultural crisis and oppression, the Body of Christ is called to portray the life of an alternative community in which God’s Spirit works, overcoming death-dealing forces abroad in the world.”

For Hellwig as well, the emphasis on inclusivity cuts across economic, social, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and denominational borders and presents specific challenges to the Catholic university in terms of identity and structures. However, by its very nature and foundation, it is incumbent upon the Catholic university “to develop an open-mindedness and discernment that can transcend popular prejudices” and that “such openness be recognized as an obligation of believers before God.” This extends to respect and celebration not only of cultural differences, but also of religious difference, spurred on by the appreciation of the traditions and values of other Christian and non-Christian religions found in such Vatican II documents as *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate*. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* also affirms the element of inclusivity as an essential characteristic of every Catholic university, calling for “an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life” (*ECE*, § 13.4). It recognizes that, through the faithful fulfillment of its mission, a Catholic university “enables the Church to institute an incomparably fertile dialogue with people of every culture” (*ECE*, § 6). Moreover, “they are one among the variety of different types of institution that are necessary for the free expression of cultural diversity, and they are committed to the promotion of solidarity and its meaning in society and in the world” (*ECE*, § 37).

It is most evident that Barry University recognizes our matchless opportunity and responsibility for effecting the inclusivity envisioned by the Catholic imagination and is exemplary in doing so. This realization is emphasized in our Core Commitments.

Barry is a global, inclusive community characterized by interdependence, dignity and equality, compassion and respect for self and others. Embracing a global world view, the University nurtures and values cultural, social and intellectual diversity, and welcomes faculty, staff, and students of all faith traditions.

Moreover, we recognize the necessity of doing so not only in a theoretical way, but in a practical one. Therefore, "In the pursuit of truth, the University advances development of solutions that promote the common good and a more humane and just society." In this task, we do not venture alone, but collaboratively and mutually as we "engage with communities to pursue systemic, self-sustaining solutions to human, social, economic and environmental problems.

FOR REFLECTION

What is your **personal response** to the call to inclusivity in community and values given by Catholic identity and the Catholic imagination?

In your area of the University, in what specific ways do you

...**clearly embody** inclusivity of membership and values?

...**tend to** embody inclusivity of membership and values?

...**require growth** to embody inclusivity of membership and values?

The call to inclusivity can serve as the paradigm through which Barry University structures all of its programs and activities and the criteria on which it can evaluate its effectiveness. In its personnel, its programs, and its activities how does **your area of the University respond** to the call to:

- Act "on account of others," one with God and one with the marginalized of his time?
- Proclaim and advance the inbreaking of the kingdom of God and embody its reality?

- Choose to transgress social barriers and extend an offer of intimate participation to those ordinarily excluded by social, cultural, or religious convention?
- Treat others as a community of equals in the richness of their diversity?
- Abolish barriers, eradicate class distinctions, and reverse stereotypical role expectations?
- Act to make Barry an alternative community in which God's Spirit works, overcoming death-dealing forces abroad in the world?
- Nurture and value cultural, social and intellectual diversity?

In what areas does Barry University **excel** in these characteristics?

In what areas is Barry University **making strides** toward these characteristics?

In what areas can Barry University **improve** these characteristics?