

STUDIES IN CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

A POLICY SERIES GUIDED BY THE PRINCIPLES OF EX CORDE ECCLESIAE

Considering Catholic Honors and Platforms

by Patrick J. Reilly

October 2009

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Executive Summary

The selection of individuals, groups and institutions for Catholic honors and platforms has been a matter of some controversy in the Church for many years. Bishops and Catholic entities have responded with expressions of concern and often formal policies to help prevent confusion and scandal. The University of Notre Dame's 2009 commencement honors for President Barack Obama generated widespread interest in practical solutions to maintain Catholic identity and respect for Catholic teaching at Catholic institutions, apostolates, parishes, diocesan offices and other entities.

This paper is intended primarily to assist those who are developing diocesan or institutional policies on Catholic honors and platforms, by identifying key issues and considering the policies and statements of several bishops and the Vatican. Important questions are considered: Should diocesan policies apply to independent Catholic entities? Should policies consider both honors and platforms? Should policies focus only on politics? What are appropriate criteria for selecting honorees and speakers? Acknowledging the potential for reasonable differences over the answers, the paper nonetheless is intended to help foster greater unanimity on how Catholics can provide honors and platforms in ways that best serve God and the Church.

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This paper is available online at The Center for the Study of Catholic Higher Education's website, www.CatholicHigherEd.org

About The Center

The Center for the Study of Catholic Higher Education is the research division of The Cardinal Newman Society. Its mission is to promote the ongoing renewal of Catholic higher education by researching and analyzing critical issues facing Catholic colleges and universities, and sharing best practices. The Center's work is guided by the principles of *Ex corde Ecclesiae* and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

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Considering Catholic Honors and Platforms

There appears to be a growing consensus among American Catholics about the impropriety of Catholic honors and platforms for public opponents of Catholic teaching. Drawing from the example and statements of several American bishops and the Vatican, the following reflections are intended as an aide to bishops, Catholic institutions and other Catholic apostolates as they develop policies to uphold Catholic teaching and Catholic identity.

The unified response of 83 American bishops to the University of Notre Dame's commencement scandal last spring was extraordinary, illuminating the growing concern about inappropriate public platforms and honors. This concern is not limited to the bishops, but also is shared by large numbers of Catholics worldwide, as evidenced by the 367,000 priests, religious and lay people who signed The Cardinal Newman Society's petition urging Notre Dame to comply with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) policy against honors and platforms for pro-abortion leaders. Instead the university's leaders chose to defy the USCCB and especially their local ordinary, Bishop John D'Arcy of Fort-Wayne South Bend, who had publicly requested compliance with the USCCB policy.

The Notre Dame scandal was extraordinary because of the widespread reaction to it, but historically it was not unusual. Each year there are several controversies around the country over honors or platforms awarded by Catholic colleges and universities, parishes, charities, hospitals and other entities to those who publicly oppose the Church on key moral issues including abortion, embryonic stem cell research and the sanctity of marriage. Controversy also often surrounds guests invited to Catholic facilities whose moral judgments on issues like war, the death penalty and social justice are opposed by many bishops and other Catholics.

These controversies give rise to important questions for bishops and Catholic entities committed to preserving Catholic identity and fostering respect for Catholic teaching:

- Who is responsible for preserving the Catholic identity of Catholic institutions and apostolates?
- Should diocesan policies apply only to parishes, offices and other diocesan entities under the bishop's direct supervision, or also to independent Catholic institutions and apostolates within the diocese?
- Should policies consider honors only, or both honors and platforms?
- Should policies focus only on honors and platforms for individuals?
- Should policies focus only on political candidates and public officials?
- Should policies focus only on honors and platforms for Catholics?
- Should bishops approve invitations for honors and platforms?
- By what criteria should Catholics evaluate invitations for honors and platforms?

This paper explores these questions while recognizing that individual dioceses and institutions may come to different conclusions about how best to avoid scandal and pre-

serve Catholic identity. The hope is that these reflections will encourage further discussion in the Catholic community and assist the development of formal policies that will cultivate unity and fidelity in the Church.

Who is responsible for preserving the Catholic identity of Catholic institutions and apostolates?

Following the University of Notre Dame's 2009 commencement ceremony, some observers raised questions about the propriety of the bishops' public response to the scandal and their reliance on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) policy regarding honors and platforms. The board of directors of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities was so bold as to urge "that juridical expressions of bishops' or universities' responsibilities should be kept to a minimum, lest they inhibit the 'mutual trust, close and consistent collaboration, and continuing dialogue' to which *Ex corde Ecclesiae* calls Church and university authorities."

Generally canon law describes Catholic institutions and apostolates as "associations of Christian faithful." "Public" associations are established by the Holy See or the bishops, and "private" associations are established by private agreement among the members. Both enjoy significant "autonomy" in day-to-day affairs, consistent with their own missions and statutes in accord with Catholic identity.

Canon law also recognizes significant authority over Catholic identity that is proper to the bishops. Any association of Christian faithful must receive the consent of the "competent ecclesiastical authority" (usually the local bishop) before assuming the label "Catholic" (Canon 300). The "competent ecclesiastical authority" must approve the statutes of both public and private associations (Canons 299, 314 and 322). In addition:

All associations of the Christian faithful are subject to the vigilance of competent ecclesiastical authority, whose duty it is to take care that integrity of faith and morals is preserved in them and to watch lest abuse creep into ecclesiastical discipline...

Associations of any kind whatever are subject to the vigilance of the Holy See; diocesan associations and also other associations to the extent that they work in the diocese are subject to the vigilance of the local ordinary (Canon 305).

Canon law specifically addresses Catholic schools, assigning to the bishops authority to recognize schools as Catholic and to regulate and "be vigilant over" Catholic religious formation and education (Canons 803 and 804).

Canon law also specifically addresses Catholic universities and other institutes of higher education. The "competent ecclesiastical authority" must approve "the title or name Catholic university," and must be "vigilant" that "the principles of Catholic doctrine are faithfully observed" (Canons 808 and 810).

In recent decades, the Vatican and the U.S. bishops have helped further define these matters beyond the provisions of canon law. Although controversial at times, the development of "juridical" guidelines like those in *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, the 1990 apostolic constitution on Catholic higher education, and the U.S. bishops' *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* have proven helpful to clarifying the Church's expectations for "Catholic identity."

Ex corde Ecclesiae requires that “Catholic ideals, attitudes and principles penetrate and inform university activities in accordance with the proper nature and autonomy of these activities” (Part I, 14). “Any official action or commitment of the university is to be in accord with its Catholic identity” (Part II, Art. 2, Par. 4).

Ex corde Ecclesiae identifies four “essential characteristics” of a university’s Catholic identity (Part I, 13). These include “a Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such” and an “institutional commitment” to serving the Church. Also essential is “fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church.”

In addition to confirming the bishops’ canonical “right and duty to watch over the preservation and strengthening of [universities’] Catholic character,” *Ex corde Ecclesiae* also notes:

The responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic identity of the University rests primarily with the University itself. ...The identity of a Catholic University is essentially linked to the quality of its teachers and to respect for Catholic doctrine. It is the responsibility of the competent Authority to watch over these two fundamental needs in accordance with what is indicated in Canon Law. (Part II, Art. 4, Par. 1)

Because other Catholic institutions and apostolates share several essential characteristics of a university’s Catholic identity—including “institutional autonomy,” fidelity to the Magisterium and communion with the bishops—it seems that certain principles of *Ex corde Ecclesiae* could also be applied broadly. For instance, it follows from the canonical recognition of institutional autonomy that the primary responsibility for preserving Catholic identity rests with any institution or apostolate itself, without neglecting the bishops’ proper authority to remain vigilant over Catholic identity (especially when an institution or apostolate fails in its own responsibilities). Also, the constitution’s emphasis on “institutional commitment” to Catholic identity seems an important insight for any Catholic institution and apostolate. The expectation that all official actions and commitments must be in accord with Catholic identity is especially pertinent to the question of Catholic honors and platforms.

With their *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*, the U.S. bishops likewise look to healthcare institutions to preserve their own Catholic identity—but according to helpful guidance from the bishops. The directives help Catholic healthcare workers ensure that their services are “animated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and guided by the moral tradition of the Church” (Part 1, Directive 1). Presumably the directives help Catholic healthcare officials make right decisions that prevent disputes and scandals before they occur.

Carefully crafted policies regarding Catholic honors and platforms—both diocesan policies and institutional policies—might similarly help prevent future disputes and scandals. The bishops’ essential vigilance over Catholic identity indicates the propriety of diocesan guidelines for honors and platforms, while acknowledging the responsibility of Catholic institutions and apostolates to apply the guidelines to internal operations. Furthermore, this primary responsibility of Catholic institutions and apostolates to preserve their own Catholic identity also indicates the propriety of institutional policies regarding honors and platforms, consistent with any principles identified by the Vatican, the USCCB or the local bishop.

Beyond published directives, the Church expects close cooperation between the bishops and Catholic institutions and apostolates. *Ex corde Ecclesiae* calls for:

...close personal and pastoral relationships... between University and Church authorities, characterized by mutual trust, close and consistent collaboration and continuing dialogue. Even when they do not enter directly into the internal governance of the University, Bishops “should be seen not as external agents but as participants in the life of the Catholic University.” (Part I, 28)

Such communion between the bishops and all Catholic institutions and apostolates suggests that the latter ought to consult with local bishops on decisions impacting their Catholic identity. This is considered in detail below, under the heading “Should bishops approve invitations for honors and platforms?”

Should diocesan policies apply only to parishes, offices and other diocesan entities under the bishop’s direct supervision, or also to independent Catholic institutions and apostolates within the diocese?

Through the centuries, the Catholic Church has insisted that Catholic dioceses, parishes and religious orders and institutes remain faithful to the Magisterium and conform to Catholic tradition and norms. It is generally understood and accepted that the “Catholic identity” of these entities—which comprise what is commonly labeled the “institutional Church”—must not be compromised, whether in fact or in appearance.

Likewise, the Church historically has demonstrated its keen interest in preserving the Catholic identity of institutions and apostolates that are legally owned and controlled by the “institutional Church.” Because these are typically under direct control by the Vatican, dioceses, parishes and religious orders and institutes, it is understood that they too must remain faithful to the Magisterium and conform to Catholic tradition and norms.

Since the Second Vatican Council, however, there has been much discussion about the Catholic identity of independent and often lay-controlled institutions and apostolates, which have multiplied in the United States. Never in the Church’s history have so many Catholic entities operated outside the legal and day-to-day control of the “institutional Church.”

Meanwhile, the increasing secularization of American culture has impacted Catholic institutions and apostolates regardless of their legal ownership and control. They embrace varying degrees of Catholic identity, fidelity to Catholic teaching and respect for the legitimate authority of the bishops and the Vatican.

With regard to the proper authority of the Vatican and the bishops over Catholic institutions and apostolates, canon law makes no distinction based on legal ownership or control. Key provisions related to Catholic identity—requiring a bishop’s consent to use the label “Catholic,” approval of an institution’s statutes and vigilance over Catholic identity and doctrine—apply to all Catholic institutions.

This broad application of Catholic identity was challenged in the 1980s by some American experts, who doubted whether canon law governs American Catholic colleges and universities that are legally independent of the Church. The matter was resolved with *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, which defines Catholic identity for any Catholic college or university, re-

ardless of legal control. The constitution acknowledges the various ways Catholic institutions can be established and organized, but applies to all Catholic institutions of higher education (with the exception of Vatican-recognized “ecclesiastical faculties,” which are regulated by *Sapientia Christiana*).

The U.S. bishops’ *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* reiterate the point that Catholic institutions are not defined by the form of legal control. The directives apply to all Catholic healthcare services, even while noting the increasing involvement of Catholic lay people and “new forms of sponsorship and governance of institutional Catholic health care” (Introduction).

These juridical precedents offer valuable guidance when deciding whether diocesan policies should apply only to entities under the bishop’s direct supervision or also independent Catholic institutions and apostolates within the diocese:

- Policies which govern the particulars of day-to-day operations could potentially interfere with the autonomy proper to independent institutions and apostolates. Such policies will therefore usually apply only to diocese-sponsored offices, entities and parishes.
- Bishops might consider, however, broadening the audience for policies intended to preserve Catholic identity and doctrine—including directives regarding Catholic honors and platforms—to all Catholic institutions and apostolates in the diocese. To do otherwise might suggest a distinction between Catholic identity standards for diocesan and independent entities, a notion that has helped contribute to the secularization of independent Catholic institutions and apostolates. Independent Catholic institutions and apostolates are often among the most visible Catholic entities in many communities, and therefore have great potential for causing public confusion or scandal if not properly guided by Catholic principles.

Although many diocesan policies regarding honors and platforms are focused primarily on diocesan schools and offices, some are stated more broadly. Bishop Donald Trautman’s policies in the Diocese of Erie are binding on “Catholic institutions and those representing them.” The policy in the Diocese of Scranton refers to “church-related properties” and cites the 2004 policy of the USCCB governing “the Catholic community and Catholic institutions.”

Should policies consider honors only, or both honors and platforms?

Both Catholic honors and platforms—particularly when honorees, speakers or event sponsors are publicly opposed to Catholic teaching—have often been a source of controversy in the United States. Despite the wide variety of bishops’ responses to such situations (summarized in the appendix), they reveal a common concern that honors and platforms are often inconsistent with Catholic identity and may even be scandalous.

The USCCB addressed this question in 2004:

The Catholic community and Catholic institutions should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They should not be given awards, honors or platforms which would suggest support for their actions. (USCCB, *Catholics in Political Life*, June 2004)

Of the 83 bishops who publicly criticized Notre Dame in May, most objected particularly to a Catholic institution awarding a pro-abortion leader an honorary degree. Several suggested that a speaking platform allowing for dialogue with President Barack Obama on abortion and other issues would be acceptable in a university setting.

A commencement address, however, is both an honor and a speaking platform—one that allows no exchange of ideas and is not typically academic by nature. Public officials, celebrities and others covet opportunities to deliver commencement addresses. The choice of commencement speaker is typically based on the individual's accomplishments and respectability, not any particular academic expertise.

Bishop Robert McManus of the Diocese of Worcester, former chairman of the USCCB Education Committee, said last year regarding commencement speakers and honorary degree recipients at Catholic colleges and universities:

I call it truth in advertising. Why would you honor a person, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, that has publicly contradicted the positions of the Church? (*The Boston Globe*, 5/12/08)

According to the Diocese of Harrisburg's policy for Catholic schools and religious education programs:

If a person's previous or current personal conduct, voting record or public expression of opinion is contrary to the teachings of the Church, that person should receive no award, honor or endorsement of any kind, nor should that person be given a platform by the Church to speak.

Honors may also include awards, special recognition at public events or in publications, honorary titles, selection for official positions within an institution or apostolate, and other actions which imply reward or special respect for an individual beyond the charity expected of Catholics toward all people. A platform may also be an honor—such as a commencement address, a “distinguished lecture” with special prominence, or a monologue as “master of ceremonies” for a fundraiser or other event. Generally an honor is earned, and it either bestows some level of public recognition or is awarded because an individual is already publicly recognizable.

Bishop James Moynihan, who was Bishop of Syracuse until last April, did not allow individuals who dissent from Catholic teaching on abortion to “be appointed special ministers of the Eucharist, serve as lectors in the Church, nor be otherwise honored by the Church” (*The Post-Standard*, 5/30/04).

Bishop James McHugh of the Diocese of Camden did not permit pro-abortion political candidates “to give celebrated lectures, receive honors or chair a committee” (*The Washington Times*, 8/6/98). The executive director of the New Jersey Catholic Conference has said that all New Jersey dioceses ban public leaders in conflict with Catholic teaching from serving in honorary roles such as ushering (*The Record*, 4/20/04).

To the extent that a policy on Catholic honors defines the term “honors,” the more helpful it may be to prevent problems in the future. Trying to address every nuance, however, does not seem necessary. The term “honors” alone may be sufficient and allows some discretion by decision makers, provided Catholic identity and the proper authority of the local bishop are fully respected.

What about platforms that do not constitute honors? These will typically be speaking platforms with the primary purpose of education—lectures on topics on which the speaker claims some expertise—or advocacy. Other types of platforms, especially when sponsored by outside groups or institutions, include meetings, conferences, rallies and similar events. Here there are two primary concerns:

- There is a danger of scandal if a platform, hosted or sponsored by a Catholic entity, is used to advocate a position contrary to Catholic teaching.

Some have argued that a Catholic audience can benefit from exposure to contrary views, even dissent from Catholic teaching, especially in an academic setting. There is, however, a distinction between carefully considering opposing arguments by reading and guided discussion, as opposed to inviting a speaker or an outside group or institution to persuasively advocate against Catholic teaching. A personal, rhetorical treatment of a serious moral issue by a passionate advocate of known falsehood has significant potential for confusing an audience and distracting them verbally and visually from the truth.

Regarding political candidates and public officials whose voting record or conduct is a concern, the Diocese of Erie policy states:

Nor is such a person to be given a platform of any kind at a Catholic event or in a Catholic institution, lest such a platform be used even indirectly to advocate for public policies or values which are contrary to the Gospel.

When platforms are permitted in special cases to individuals and groups that are expected to oppose Catholic teaching during their presentations, certain conditions might be required to help minimize the potential for scandal:

- public acknowledgment of dissent by the speaker or event sponsor, and a clear statement of the hosting Catholic entity’s support for Catholic teaching;
- sufficient maturity and moral formation of the audience, so that it is prepared to dissect the dissenting argument and identify falsehood;
- a clear presentation of Catholic teaching to all participants by another qualified speaker; and
- opportunity for dialogue with the audience.

Even under these conditions, the potential for scandal is significant. There is also the danger that a Catholic entity will appear to be unfaithful to Catholic teaching because it knowingly hosts or sponsors a platform for the purpose of advocating dissenting views. It therefore seems appropriate to discourage or forbid Catholic entities from providing platforms on topics about which the presenters publicly dissent from Catholic teaching.

- More frequently, public opponents of Catholic teaching are invited by Catholic entities to address topics unrelated to their points of dissent.

Here the potential for scandal is much less, although there is always the danger that a speaker or event sponsor will take the opportunity to challenge Catholic teaching before a Catholic audience, regardless of the assigned topic. Instead the concern centers on Catholic identity and the danger of public perception that a Catholic entity is not serious about Catholic teaching—or worse, in fact agrees with the invitee’s opposition to Catholic teaching.

Here it is less a matter of whether a particular speaker or outside group or institution is inappropriate before a Catholic audience, and more a question of why a Catholic entity that is committed to the truth of Catholic teaching would not strongly prefer to invite good role models who conform to Catholic teaching. It is difficult to imagine a topic for which a suitable speaker or representative, without public opposition to Catholic teaching, cannot be identified. If unique situations arise when the value of a dissenting presenter is extraordinary and the potential for scandal minimal, such invitations should be rare. When questions arise about the propriety of an invitation, it should not be a significant burden on Catholic entities to consult with local bishops.

According to the policy of the Diocese of Harrisburg:

Speakers and honorees should be drawn from among the many who will edify the listeners and provide examples of courageous and authentic Catholic witness. ...Speakers and honorees are to be persons to whom parishioners of all ages and states in life can both hold in esteem and seek to emulate.

In May 1991, Archbishop Jose Gonzalez (then an auxiliary bishop in Boston) issued a public statement raising concerns about Catholic entities compromising their fidelity to Catholic teaching:

For a school to invite as a speaker a Catholic who has been publicly and consistently in favor of abortion is to run the risk of seeming to endorse the view that the teaching of the Church on abortion is not binding.

The Diocese of Erie policy asks Catholic entities to exercise due caution:

Before inviting experts to address specific issues, Catholic institutions should have some reasonable assurance that the presence of these experts will not cause scandal. ... if individuals are publicly known to oppose Catholic moral or social teaching, it is reasonable to presume that inviting them is likely to produce scandal and should be avoided.

The Archdiocese of New York has requested that archdiocesan offices and parishes not “invite individuals to speak at... events whose public opposition is contrary to and in opposition to the clear, unambiguous teaching of the Church” (*The New York Times*, 9/7/86). Likewise policies in several other dioceses—including the dioceses of Harrisburg, LaCrosse, Pittsburgh, Rockford and Syracuse—are particularly concerned with regulating speakers at Catholic functions or facilities.

The Knights of Columbus prohibits speakers as well as a variety of honors, according to a 2009 resolution:

... we reaffirm our long-standing policy of not inviting to any Knights of Columbus event, persons, especially public officials or candidates for public office, who do not support the protection of unborn children against abortion or who advocate the legalization of assisted suicide, euthanasia or other violations of the right to life, and of not allowing such persons to rent or otherwise use facilities over which we have control, and of not bestowing on them honors or privileges of our Order of any kind, inviting them to serve as honorary chairpersons of events, celebrations or committees, speak at Knights of Columbus events, or hold any office in the Knights of Columbus.

Should policies focus only on honors and platforms for individuals?

Most existing diocesan and institutional policies regarding Catholic honors and platforms are concerned only with invitations to individuals. But Catholic entities will occasionally seek to honor groups, organizations and institutions that are in conflict with Catholic teaching. They may also host platforms for political campaigns and other groups, such as rallies, meetings, conferences, lectures, etc.

Since the concerns about honoring or hosting platforms for outside entities are no different than concerns about individual speakers and honorees, it seems reasonable to state policies in such a way that they apply to both individuals and groups or institutions. The reflections in this paper consider both without distinction.

The Diocese of Erie policy forbids Catholic entities from hosting or renting out facilities to political groups for “partisan gatherings or activities.” The Dioceses of Pittsburgh and Scranton have similar policies on the use of parish and diocesan facilities.

In October 2007, the College of the Holy Cross rented meeting space to the Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy for a conference that included representatives of Planned Parenthood and NARAL. Bishop Robert McManus of the Diocese of Worcester issued a public statement opposing the event:

As bishop of Worcester, it is my pastoral and canonical responsibility to determine what institutions can properly call themselves Catholic. This is a duty that I do not take lightly, since to be a Catholic institution means that such an institution conducts its mission and ministry in accord with Catholic Church teaching, especially in cases of faith and morals.

He said that Holy Cross should recognize that any association with Planned Parenthood and NARAL “can create the situation of offering scandal understood in its proper theological sense” (*Telegram & Gazette*, 10/11/07). Afterward a diocesan spokesman said the college’s refusal to cancel the event would be taken into account when evaluating its Catholic identity (*Telegram & Gazette*, 10/25/07).

Should policies focus only on political candidates and public officials?

Trying to remain a principled voice above the fray of partisan politics, the U.S. bishops have long avoided support of a particular candidate or political party:

As bishops, we do not endorse or oppose candidates. Rather, we seek to form the consciences of our people so that they can examine the positions of candidates and make choices based on Catholic moral and social teaching. (USCCB, *Catholics in Political Life*, June 2004)

The bishops also have generally forbidden the use of Catholic facilities, resources, honors and platforms for political purposes:

The Church is involved in the political process but is not partisan. The Church cannot champion any candidate or party. Our cause is the defense of human life and dignity and the protection of the weak and vulnerable.

...The Church is engaged in the political process but should not be used. We welcome dialogue with political leaders and candidates; we seek to engage and persuade public officials. Events and “photo-ops” cannot substitute for serious dialogue. (USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States*, November 2007)

The Vatican has raised similar concerns about Catholic institutions that compromise their Catholic identity by appearing to support political opponents of Catholic teaching:

In recent years, there have been cases within some organizations founded on Catholic principles, in which support has been given to political forces or movements with positions contrary to the moral and social teaching of the Church on fundamental ethical questions. Such activities, in contradiction to basic principles of Christian conscience, are not compatible with membership in organizations or associations which define themselves as Catholic. Similarly, some Catholic periodicals in certain countries have expressed perspectives on political choices that have been ambiguous or incorrect, by misinterpreting the idea of the political autonomy enjoyed by Catholics and by not taking into consideration the principles mentioned above. (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life*, November 2002)

While refraining from partisanship, the U.S. bishops have embraced a particular duty to challenge politicians and other public leaders who oppose Catholic teaching:

...As bishops, we have the responsibility to call Americans to conversion, including political leaders, and especially those publicly identified as Catholic. As the Holy Father reminds us in *The Splendor of the Truth (Veritatis Splendor)*: “...[It] is part of our pastoral ministry to see to it that [the Church’s] moral teaching is faithfully handed down, and to have recourse to appropriate measures to ensure that the faithful are guarded from every doctrine and theory contrary to it” (116). As chief teachers in the Church, we must therefore explain, persuade, correct and admonish those in leadership positions who contradict the Gospel of life through their actions and policies. (USCCB, *Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics*, November 1998)

Clearly the Church has particular concern about public officials—in part because of the great influence that they have over government and society, but also because it is public

officials who most often take public positions on key moral issues like abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, embryonic stem cell research, war, poverty and other issues of great concern to Catholics. This concern extends to Catholic honors and platforms.

The Diocese of Erie, as part of its policy which also addresses honors and platforms more broadly, states:

Catholic institutions and those representing them, when acting in an official capacity, may not participate in partisan events of any type. It is not permissible, for example, to rent out a Catholic facility for a dinner for a political party or for a candidate for office.

...Catholic institutions and those representing them, when acting in an official capacity, are never permitted to endorse or even to appear to endorse any partisan activities or persons. Catholic institutions and those representing them are not to... provide a forum for any candidate for office.

According to the policy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh:

A public official or figure may be invited to speak at a parish facility or diocesan forum as an expert or consultant on a particular issue in the interest of the common good, but not for political purposes.

If a person's conduct, voting record, or public comments are contrary to the teachings of the Church, he or she should not be given any Church award or honor.

Policies such as these that address political activity offer valuable guidance to Catholic entities, especially during an election season, but it could help ensure clarity if policies also address non-political honors and platforms according to the same principles. With regard to honors and platforms, there is nothing in Catholic teaching that recommends holding politicians to higher moral standards than other public figures. In recent years, controversies over Catholic honors and platforms have involved prominent journalists, actors, singers, scientists, educators and others.

Policies addressing both political and non-political honors and platforms could prevent the impression that politicians are held to different standards from other public figures. Such broadly stated policies could also avoid accusations that invitations are withheld because of political considerations and not because of a consistent dedication to Catholic identity.

Should policies focus only on honors and platforms for Catholics?

Because the USCCB policy on honors and platforms was included in the document *Catholics in Political Life*, some have argued that it should apply only to Catholics who are invited for honors and platforms.

Not only does the policy's language not support such a restriction, but dissenting Catholics and dissenting Catholic groups are not the only inappropriate honorees, speakers and event sponsors. Certain non-Catholics can equally cause scandal or otherwise compromise Catholic identity.

Although the Church has special pastoral concern for Catholics whose faith is compromised, it would be prudent to avoid policy distinctions between Catholics and non-

Catholics with regard to Catholic honors and platforms. What is pertinent to honors and platforms is whether the individual or group under consideration—Catholic or non-Catholic—opposes Catholic teaching.

In statements to the media, some bishops have emphasized their heightened concern over dissenting Catholics being honored or granted platforms by Catholic entities. Nevertheless, we could find no current diocesan policies on honors and platforms that distinguish between Catholic and non-Catholic honorees, speakers or event sponsors.

Should bishops approve invitations for honors and platforms?

If the purpose for establishing policies on honors and platforms is to help prevent future disputes or problems, then prescribed procedures for evaluating possible invitees can be a helpful addition, including the input or approval of the local bishop.

Recognizing that independent Catholic institutions and apostolates have the primary responsibility for preserving their Catholic identity, diocesan policies could direct Catholic entities to evaluate individuals and groups prior to issuing invitations. Internal policies of Catholic institutions might identify individuals who are responsible for approving honors and platforms in accord with Catholic identity.

The Diocese of Erie policy expects Catholic entities to conform to general principles on their own accord, but allows the bishop final oversight and discretion:

...For a just cause and in individual cases, the Bishop may dispense a Catholic institution from any of the norms listed above. In such a case, the Bishop for his part will exercise due vigilance that the values of the Gospel and the Catholic nature of the institution be protected.

The Diocese of Scranton policy prohibits Catholic honors and platforms for opponents of Catholic teaching, pointedly noting the primary responsibility of the Catholic entities that issue invitations:

The purpose of this notice is: that the Faithful might know the position of the Diocese; that all who are responsible for implementing these norms may know their obligations; and that reports of the transgression of these norms be brought to the attention of those responsible for allowing such violations.

It may, however, more fully acknowledge the local bishop's duty of vigilance over Catholic identity and doctrine if policies also require consultation with the local bishop on honors and platforms—especially when Catholic identity and the potential for scandal must be weighed against other concerns and interests. In any case the bishop's approval of honors and platforms seems appropriate for parishes, diocesan offices and other entities under his direct supervision.

Following this year's invitation by the University of Notre Dame to President Barack Obama to be honored as commencement speaker and honorary degree recipient, Bishop John D'Arcy of Fort Wayne-South Bend expressed concern in a public statement that he was not consulted about the invitation or the application of the USCCB's 2004 policy on honors and platforms:

The failure to consult the local bishop who, whatever his unworthiness, is the teacher and lawgiver in the diocese, is a serious mistake. Proper consultation could have prevented an action, which has caused such painful division between Notre Dame and many bishops — and a large number of the faithful.

The USCCB has requested such consultation in its *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*:

Decisions that may lead to serious consequences for the identity or reputation of Catholic health care services, or entail the high risk of scandal, should be made in consultation with the diocesan bishop or his health care liaison. (Part 6, Directive 67)

The Diocese of Harrisburg’s policy for diocesan events requires office directors and parish pastors to make decisions on speakers according to stated principles, but invites them to consult with diocesan officials: the Vicar General/Moderator of the Curia for parishes and diocesan offices, the Secretary of Education for Catholic schools and parish programs of religious education, and the Secretary for Catholic Life and Evangelization for college and university campus ministers.

The Diocese of LaCrosse policy insists upon consultation with the bishop:

Speakers who are being considered to give a presentation on faith and morals on Church property must be approved by the Diocesan Bishop before an invitation is extended.

Catholic parishes and schools cannot promote or sponsor a speaker unless he or she is approved (even if the presentation is not being given on Church property).

Likewise in the Diocese of Rockford; its policy states:

The use of the form titled “Request for Authorization for Out-of-Diocese Speakers” is meant to be a help to our parishes and agencies as they strive to provide for the education and enrichment needs of parishioners, staff and others. The Chancery does have access to information about individuals and groups that may not be readily available to a parish or agency and can assist in certifying that a person or group is reputable and will not be problematic for a pastor or agency head due to what is said or done by a speaker.

Bishops who require diocesan approval tell us that the procedures are not burdensome, in part because there is rarely a need to refuse approval of an honor or platform. The very fact of requiring approval tends to discourage Catholic entities from inviting individuals or groups that may be rejected for public opposition to Catholic teaching.

By what criteria should Catholics evaluate invitations for honors and platforms?

The primary purposes for a policy on honors and platforms are, presumably, to preserve Catholic identity and to avoid confusion about the truth and seriousness of Catholic teaching. The policy is not, therefore, intended to publicly challenge or embarrass opponents of Catholic teaching—even though the Church may have cause to do so by other means.

Bishop John D'Arcy of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend made this point in *America* magazine, responding to the Jesuit editors' complaints that the opposition to Notre Dame's honors to President Barack Obama were politically motivated or otherwise insensitive to the President. Instead, argued Bishop D'Arcy, the honors to President Obama were opposed on the basis of Notre Dame's obligations as a Catholic university:

Rather, the response of the faithful derives directly from the Gospel. In Matthew's words, "Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Heavenly Father" (5:13). (*America*, 8/31/09)

Pastoral outreach to individuals requires insight into their personal views, beliefs and behaviors; by contrast, it is only their public statements and actions that may cause scandal or compromise the Catholic identity of an entity that bestows an honor or platform. Policies regarding Catholic honors and platforms, therefore, need focus only on public statements and actions.

Because the Church identifies certain actions as gravely sinful and intrinsically evil, it seems appropriate that emphasis be given to scrutinizing individuals' and groups' support for such activity—including legal protections and public funding for such activity, as prohibited by Catholic teaching—when evaluating possible honors and platforms. It is helpful for policies to explicitly forbid honors for those who oppose Catholic teaching on such serious moral concerns. It may also be appropriate to refuse platforms for these individuals and groups, given the serious consequences of scandal or sowing confusion about moral behavior.

Here there must be a clear understanding of the differences between serious moral concerns and what constitutes dissent from Catholic teaching. For instance, abortion is intrinsically evil in every circumstance. With regard to the death penalty, war and social justice, it does not diminish the Church's serious concern about these issues to acknowledge legitimate disagreement about the application of Catholic moral principles; such disagreement may not indicate dissent from Catholic teaching.

It would be unjust to assume that an individual dissents on war, for instance, without pointed opposition to Catholic just war principles. A Catholic entity might respect its Catholic identity by choosing not to invite an individual whose moral judgments are troubling, if not clearly opposed to Catholic teaching. It is doubtful, however, that a choice to invite such an individual to speak or receive an honor is a clear violation of Catholic identity.

When asked about his policy against speaking platforms for Pennsylvania's pro-abortion governor, Bishop Trautman of the Diocese of Erie told reporters:

Life is basic, the fundamental teaching, the truth, the keyhole through which we look to see all other values. Yes, we can be pleased with those who agree with us on social justice issues. But on life there can be no compromise. That's the point. (*Buffalo News*, 7/23/00)

Also responding to concerns that the policies of the Archdiocese of New Orleans are, in effect, more stringent on dissent about abortion and "life issues" than about other Catholic teachings, Archbishop Alfred Hughes issued a statement in April 2009:

It is important to distinguish an absolute moral principle from one that is subject to different applications according to varying conditions or circumstances. ...Hence the Church teaches that direct abortion is

always wrong. The Church recommends that we move away from capital punishment, which is not in itself wrong, as we develop ways of handling punishment with an effective and acceptable alternative.

And again, according to the USCCB:

...[I]t is essential for Catholics to be guided by a well-formed conscience that recognizes that all issues do not carry the same moral weight and that the moral obligation to oppose intrinsically evil acts has a special claim on our consciences and our actions. (USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States*, November 2007)

In addition to placing emphasis on individuals' support for gravely sinful and intrinsically evil acts, policies might also encourage a presumption against honoring or offering platforms to individuals and groups that publicly oppose other Catholic teaching, especially Catholic dogma. Here there might be allowed some discretion, whether exercised by Catholic entities or by the local bishop, if the potential for scandal seems minimal.

For instance, it may be reasonable to invite non-Catholic religious leaders to speak at Catholic facilities for the purpose of interreligious dialogue. Still one could expect some regulation of the frequency of non-Catholic speakers, and efforts to prevent proselytizing and advocacy of views that are in opposition to Catholic teaching.

Rather than attempt to address each of these nuances in a written policy on honors and platforms, the policy might focus on expected outcomes rather than the nature of the individual's dissent—e.g., the Diocese of Erie's request for "reasonable assurance that the presence of these experts will not cause scandal," or the Diocese of Harrisburg's mandatory background review to ensure that the guest's "public life displays gospel values in harmony with the moral and social teaching of the Catholic Church."

A procedure requiring officials' prior approval for honors and platforms can allow the officials appropriate discretion, with final authority resting with the local bishop.

A prayer for unity

Despite growing consensus in the Church about the need to preserve and strengthen Catholic identity and uphold Catholic teachings when providing Catholic honors or platforms, the above considerations allow for an expected disparity among diocesan and institutional policies. No doubt there are valuable insights not considered here.

Together we may pray, however, that the conversation about honors and platforms continues in the direction of a more unified and consistent response, reflecting the unity of the Church. Pressure from certain institutions to refrain from implementing formal policies is not helpful and only allows the problem to continue without clear guidance. The danger of scandal is too real, and the decline of Catholic identity in America too apparent, to fail to respond.

In his 2008 address to American Catholic educators, Pope Benedict XVI said that Catholic identity requires:

...public witness to the way of Christ, as found in the Gospel and upheld by the Church's Magisterium, shapes all aspects of an institution's life, both inside and outside the classroom. Divergence from this vision weakens

Catholic identity and, far from advancing freedom, inevitably leads to confusion, whether moral, intellectual or spiritual. (*Address to Catholic Educators, The Catholic University of America, 4/17/08*)

Ensuring that all Catholic entities—whether schools or other apostolates, parishes or independent institutions—share a common dedication to leading people to Jesus Christ is a project of special importance today. That project's success will require the resolution of controversies like the commencement scandal at Notre Dame this year, by clarifying expectations and encouraging Catholic entities to renew their commitment to fidelity and Catholic identity.

Appendix

Responses by U.S. Catholic Bishops to Honors & Platforms for Opponents of Catholic Moral Teaching

Diocese of Austin, TX

October 2007

Bishop Gregory Aymond publicly **criticized the selection of Rev. Charles Curran by St. Edward's University for the Most Reverend Bishop John McCarthy Lecture Series on the Catholic Church in the 21st Century**. Curran was removed from the theology department of The Catholic University of America for his dissent on *Humanae Vitae* and other Catholic teachings. Bishop Aymond said, "I believe that it does not foster the Catholic identity of a university to present him as a guest lecturer." The bishop also indicated that he would like to collaborate with St. Edward's officials on the selection of future speakers.

SOURCE: *Austin American-Statesman*, 10/15/07

Archdiocese of Baltimore, MD

May 2005

Cardinal William Keeler **refused to attend Loyola College of Maryland's commencement ceremony because the speaker and honoree was pro-abortion politician Rudolph Giuliani**. Cardinal Keeler said:

There will be not representative of the Archdiocese participating in any event honoring former Mayor Giuliani. I am confident that, by now, you understand many of the consequences that spring from an invitation having been extended to former Mayor Giuliani to receive an honorary degree at Loyola. May the Lord make of this event a teaching moment for many.

A spokesperson for Cardinal Keeler said that his absence was meant to convey "his disappointment in the decision to honor Mr. Giuliani."

SOURCES: *The Baltimore Sun*, 5/20/05; *The Washington Post*, 5/20/05

Archdiocese of Boston, MA

May 1991

Auxiliary Bishop Roberto Gonzalez Nieves, O.F.M., (now Archbishop of San Juan) with approval from Cardinal Bernard Law, **intervened to withdraw an invitation to Mass. Lt. Gov. Paul Cellucci (a pro-abortion Catholic) to speak at the graduation** of Hudson Catholic High School, which Cellucci had attended as a student. A public statement issued by Bishop Gonzalez cited an April 26, 1991, column by Cardinal Law in the archdiocesan newspaper, *The Pilot*:

A Catholic institution... asserts truths... about God, about the human person, and about our relationship to God, to one another, and to all of creation which we affirm as life-giving and as binding on our consciences.... At the level of teaching and at the level of student activities, a Catholic [school] should celebrate life.

Bishop Gonzalez continued in his own statement:

A Catholic school shares in the teaching mission of the Archdiocese of Boston. **For a school to invite as a speaker a Catholic who has been publicly and consistently in favor of abortion is to run the risk of seeming to endorse the view that the teaching of the Church on abortion is not binding.** ...I believe this decision to be consistent with the policy of my brother bishops who have dealt publicly with similar difficult situations and with the reaffirmation of the Church's teaching on abortion which was made by the recent consistory of Cardinals in Rome with the Holy Father.

SOURCE: Statement by Bishop Roberto Gonzalez, 5/2/91

Diocese of Erie, PA

November 1998

Bishop Donald Trautman **told Penn. Gov. Tom Ridge (a pro-abortion Catholic) that he is not welcome to speak at Catholic events**, in light of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops statement "Living the Gospel of Life," approved in November 1998. Ridge agreed to abide by Bishop Trautman's request, acknowledging that his appearance at some Catholic functions had "caused a great deal of tension and problems."

SOURCES: Associated Press, 11/20/98; *Times-Picayune*, 11/21/98

July 2000

In an interview, Bishop Donald Trautman said that **pro-abortion Gov. Tom Ridge may not speak at parish events and may not speak at a Catholic institution like Gannon University**. Regarding abortion vs. other issues:

Life is basic, the fundamental teaching, the truth, the keyhole through which we look to see all other values. Yes, we can be pleased with those who agree with us on social justice issues. But on life there can be no compromise. That's the point.

SOURCE: *Buffalo News*, 7/23/00

April 2008

Bishop Donald Trautman **rejected an invitation to attend Mercyhurst College's commencement ceremony in protest against the college's decision to allow an on-campus political rally for pro-abortion presidential candidate Hillary Clinton**. Bishop Trautman issued a public statement:

I am disappointed in Mercyhurst College for not reflecting the pro-life stance of the Catholic Church regarding abortion. As tangible expression of my

disappointment, I have notified [Mercyhurst President Tom] Gamble that I will not be present for Mercyhurst's graduation. I am open to meeting with Dr. Gamble in the future to ascertain how the Catholic identity of Mercyhurst can be better clarified.

SOURCE: *Erie Times*, 4/1/08

Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, IN

May 1992

Bishop John D'Arcy **refused to attend the University of Notre Dame's commencement ceremony at which pro-abortion U.S. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan was presented Notre Dame's Laetare Medal.** Cardinal John O'Connor of New York and Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston reportedly also protested the honor in letters to Notre Dame.

SOURCE: *Wisconsin State Journal*, 5/9/92

April 2004

St. Joseph High School **withdrew its invitation to pro-abortion alumnus Gov. Joe Kernan to deliver its commencement address,** at the direction of Bishop John D'Arcy and at the urging of theology teachers at the school.

SOURCE: *South Bend Tribune*, 5/1/04

April 2004

Bishop John D'Arcy **refused to accept an honorary degree and to attend the commencement ceremony at the University of St. Francis, because the commencement speaker Dr. Nancy Snyderman was pro-abortion.** The university withdrew its invitation.

SOURCE: *South Bend Tribune*, 5/1/04

March 2009

Bishop John D'Arcy refused to attend the commencement ceremony of the University of Notre Dame, because the speaker and honoree was pro-abortion President Barack Obama. Citing the USCCB's 2004 policy against giving platforms or honors to "those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles," Bishop D'Arcy advised that "as a Catholic university, Notre Dame must ask itself, if by this decision it has chosen prestige over truth."

Bishop D'Arcy again issued a statement when Father John Jenkins, CSC, president of Notre Dame, suggested that the USCCB's 2004 policy restricts only honorees who are Catholic, and that a commencement address and honorary degree did not suggest support for President Obama's actions. Bishop D'Arcy responded, noting that Father Jenkins had not consulted him on the matter:

1. The meaning of the sentence in the USCCB document relative to Catholic institutions is clear. It places the responsibility on those institutions, and indeed, on the Catholic community itself.

...2. When there is a doubt concerning the meaning of a document of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, where does one find the authentic interpretation? A fundamental, canonical and theological principle states that it is found in the local bishop, who is the teacher and lawgiver in his diocese. — Canon 330, 375 §§ 1 & 2; 380; 381 § 1; 391 § 1; 392, & 394 §1.

3. I informed Father Jenkins that if there was any genuine questions or doubt about the meaning of the relevant sentence in the conference's document, any competent canonist with knowledge of the tradition and love for Christ's church had the responsibility to inform Father Jenkins of the fundamental principle that the diocesan bishop alone bears the responsibility to provide an authoritative interpretation.

...5. Another key point. In his letter to Bishop Olmsted and in the widespread publicity, which has taken place as the points in the letter have been made public, Father Jenkins declared the invitation to President Obama does not "suggest support" for his actions, because he has expressed and continues to express disagreement with him on issues surrounding protection of life. I wrote that the outpouring of hundreds of thousands who are shocked by the invitation clearly demonstrates, that this invitation has, in fact, scandalized many Catholics and other people of goodwill. In my office alone, there have been over 3,300 messages of shock, dismay and outrage, and they are still coming in. It seems that the action in itself speaks so loudly that people have not been able to hear the words of Father Jenkins, and indeed, the action has suggested approval to many.

...6. As I have said in a recent interview and which I have said to Father Jenkins, it would be one thing to bring the president here for a discussion on healthcare or immigration, and no person of goodwill could rightly oppose this. We have here, however, the granting of an honorary degree of law to someone whose activities both as president and previously, have been altogether supportive of laws against the dignity of the human person yet to be born.

...I consider it now settled — that the USCCB document, "Catholics in Public Life," does indeed apply in this matter. The failure to consult the local bishop who, whatever his unworthiness, is the teacher and lawgiver in the diocese, is a serious mistake. Proper consultation could have prevented an action, which has caused such painful division between Notre Dame and many bishops — and a large number of the faithful.

SOURCES: Statements of Bishop John D'Arcy, 3/29/09, 4/21/09

Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas

February 2004

According to the archdiocesan newspaper *The Leaven*, Archbishop James Keleher issued an archdiocesan policy one day after pro-abortion Gov. Kathleen Sebelius spoke at the University of St. Mary in Leavenworth about education and economic development. The article stated:

Considering the importance of the legal issue of abortion in our country, which has resulted in the killing of over 40 million babies in the last 31 years since the Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*, it is imperative that our Catholic churches, schools and institutions make every effort not only to support the pro-life movement, but especially to ensure that the public understand our unequivocal stand on this issue.

Because of this, Archbishop James P. Keleher has **requested that none of our Catholic institutions invite any person in the pro-choice movement, or any politician who espouses the pro-choice movement or has a voting record endorsing pro-choice legislation, to address, give workshops, or otherwise make any presentations at these institutions.** We must stand solidly behind the Gospel of Life.

SOURCES: *The Leaven*, 2/13/04; *Kansas City Star*, 2/18/04

Diocese of Madison, WI

May 1989

Bishop Cletus O'Donnell protested Edgewood College's decision to present an honorary degree to pro-abortion activist Kathryn Clarenbach, a founder of the National Organization for Women. He told media that **a Catholic college should not honor someone who supports abortion:**

While colleges have every right to grant honorary degrees, Edgewood also has an obligation to the faith community that sustained it over these many years.

SOURCE: *Wisconsin State Journal*, 5/9/92

Archdiocese of New Orleans

May 2005

Archbishop Alfred Hughes **refused to attend the commencement ceremony of Loyola University New Orleans**, "lest my presence confuse the faithful and give the impression that it is appropriate to include in an honor anyone who dissents publicly from Church teaching." Loyola University honored the Landrieu family, some of whom are "pro-choice" on abortion including Sen. Mary Landrieu.

SOURCE: Associated Press State & Local Wire, 5/05/05; *Times-Picayune*, 5/13/05

April 2009

Archbishop Alfred Hughes **refused to attend Xavier University's commencement ceremony because the university selected pro-abortion political adviser Donna Brazile as commencement speaker and recipient of an honorary degree.** In a public statement, Archbishop Hughes cited the USCCB policy regarding the provision of "an award, honor or platform by a Catholic institution." He dismissed criticism that the policy is applied primarily with regard to abortion and embryonic stem cell research, but not other "life issues":

It is important to distinguish an absolute moral principle from one that is subject to different applications according to varying conditions or circumstances. ...Hence the Church teaches that direct abortion is always wrong. The Church recommends that we move away from capital punishments, which is not in itself wrong, as we develop ways of handling punishment with an effective and acceptable alternative.

SOURCE: Statement by Archbishop Alfred Hughes, 4/23/09

Archdiocese of New York, NY

June 1986

After hosting N.Y. Assemblyman John Dearie (a Catholic who said he opposed abortions but voted to use Medicaid funding for abortions) as speaker at a communion breakfast at St. Raymond's Catholic Church, the pastor Msgr. Henry Vier was instructed by an aide to Cardinal John O'Connor to announce that the parish would **no longer allow pro-abortion public officials to speak at parish events**. In 1989, Dearie changed his vote and opposed Medicaid funding of abortions.

SOURCES: *The New York Times*, 9/9/86; Associated Press, 12/6/89

August 1986

Vicar General and Auxiliary Bishop Joseph O'Keefe (later Bishop of Syracuse) sent a memo to pastors:

Great care and prudence must be exercised in extending invitations to individuals to speak at **parish-sponsored events**, e.g. Communion breakfasts, graduations, meetings of parish societies, etc. **It is not only inappropriate, it is unacceptable and inconsistent with diocesan policy to invite individuals to speak at such events whose public opposition is contrary to and in opposition to the clear, unambiguous teaching of the Church. This policy applies as well, to all Archdiocesan owned or sponsored institutions and organizations.**

Archdiocesan spokesman Joseph Zwilling told the media, "The Church should not provide a forum to those who would attack the Church."

In a subsequent exchange with N.Y. Gov. Mario Cuomo (a pro-abortion Catholic), Bishop O'Keefe banned Cuomo from speaking to students at St. John the Evangelist School in Manhattan, where Bishop O'Keefe served as pastor.

SOURCES: *The New York Times*, 9/5/86, 9/6/86, 9/7/86, 12/6/86; Associated Press, 9/5/86, 9/9/86; *The Post-Standard*, 6/21/88

Diocese of Omaha, NE

May 2007

The College of St. Mary **rescinded its commencement speaker invitation to Roberta Wilhelm**,

executive director of the pro-abortion organization Girls Inc., following public opposition from Fr. Damien Cook, director of the Bishops' Plan for Pro-Life Activities for the Archdiocese of Omaha.

August 2007

Creighton University rescinded a speaking invitation to author Anne Lamott, an advocate of assisted suicide and abortion rights who publicly declared that she actually helped a person commit suicide, following concerns expressed by archdiocesan officials. Archbishop Elden Curtiss praised Creighton's decision as "keeping with the mission of the university and supportive of the teaching mission of the Church." Creighton later announced that it would consider changes to its campus speaker policy.

SOURCES: *Orange County Register*, 7/9/98; *The Washington Times*, 8/6/98

Diocese of Orange, CA

March 1998

Bishop Norman McFarland sent a letter to **pro-abortion U.S. Rep. Loretta Sanchez chastising her for visits to Catholic churches, often receiving special recognition, which "appear to be motivated by partisan and personal ambitions."** The letter was printed in the Diocese of Orange newspaper, stating in part:

While recognizing some of your earnest and worthwhile efforts to improve the quality of life in the 46th District, I am disheartened that you would deliberately choose to leave the unborn on the margins of society.

SOURCES: *Orange County Register*, 7/9/98; *The Washington Times*, 8/6/98

Archdiocese of Philadelphia, PA

April 1998

According to a 1998 column by Bishop Joseph Adamec of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown in his diocesan newspaper *The Catholic Register*:

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia recently responded to criticism of Cardinal [Anthony] Bevilacqua for allowing the Governor [Tom Ridge, a pro-abortion Catholic,] to speak on Archdiocesan property. A written policy of the Archdiocese states that **if the "voting record or public expression is contrary to the teachings of the Church, he or she should receive no award, honor, or endorsement of any kind." But, the person may be invited to speak.**

SOURCE: *The Catholic Register*, 4/13/98

November 1998

Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua reiterated the Archdiocese's written policy **excluding those whose**

views differ with Church teachings from receiving awards, honors or endorsements from the Church.

Penn. State Sen. Vincent Fumo said the policy had caused the cancellation of a fundraiser for St. John Neumann High School, which Fumo helped promote. A spokesman for the Archdiocese said the cancellation resulted because of scheduling conflicts, but Fumo said he was told that his pro-abortion views were the reason.

SOURCE: Associated Press, 11/21/98

Diocese of Portland, ME

October 2004

The Diocese of Portland blocked pro-abortion State Rep. Arthur Lemam from speaking about prescription drug programs at St. Mary of the Assumption Church. A diocesan spokeswoman explained that the diocese has had a **policy for more than 20 years against all political candidates speaking at Catholic parishes while campaigning for office.** She said Bishop Richard Malone supports the USCCB's 2004 policy on honors and platforms, but the policy was not applied because of the diocesan policy already in force.

SOURCE: *Portland Press Herald*, 10/8/04

Archdiocese of St. Louis, MO

April 1999

At the request of Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Naumann (now Archbishop of Kansas City, Kansas), the St. Louis Catholic Youth Council **cancelled plans to honor pro-abortion Mayor Vincent Schoemehl at a fundraiser** with its Community Achievement Award "for many programs he pushed for the youth as mayor."

Prior to that, Chaminade College Preparatory School withdrew its invitation to pro-abortion Claire McCaskill (then state auditor of Missouri, later U.S. Senator) to speak at commencement.

Accused by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* editors of bias against Democrats, Naumann wrote in a May 15, 1999, letter to the newspaper that the Church's position is "principled and not political," and **Catholic institutions inviting pro-abortion speakers or honorees "would undermine the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person."**

SOURCES: *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 4/30/99, 5/15/99; *Topeka Capital-Journal*, 5/25/08

April 2007

The SSM Cardinal Glennon Children's Foundation held a **benefit concert featuring singer Cheryl Crow, despite her abortion and stem cell advocacy.** Archbishop Raymond Burke (now Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura) issued a statement including:

Her appearance at a fundraising event for Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center is an **affront to the identity and mission of the medical center,** dedicated

as it is to the service of life and Christ's healing mission. ...When, for economic gain, a Catholic institution associates itself with such a high profile proponent of the destruction of innocent lives, members of the Church and other people of good will have the right to be confirmed in their commitment to the Gospel of Life.

Archbishop Burke said he tried to settle the matter quietly with the foundation's board, but they refused. He resigned as Chairman of the foundation's board and asked that his name be removed from promotional materials. Archbishop Burke released a Q&A and video to explain his position.

SOURCE: Catholic News Agency, 4/26/07

May 2007

St. Joseph's Academy (high school) withdrew an invitation to U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill to deliver the school's commencement address because of McCaskill's positions on abortion and embryonic stem cell research. McCaskill's daughter was one of the graduates.

McCaskill said the decision was made by Archbishop Raymond Burke; the archdiocesan spokeswoman denied that Archbishop Burke was involved. The school's president said that she received a call from the archdiocese education office reminding her of **archdiocesan policy that forbids providing a public forum for speakers who oppose Catholic teachings.**

SOURCE: Associated Press, 5/2/07

January 2008

The Aquinas Institute of Theology **canceled its annual Aquinas Lecture for 2008 after a meeting with Archbishop Raymond Burke, who opposed the choice of speaker, Rev. Peter Phan.** One of the Georgetown University professor's books on interreligious dialogue had been publicly questioned by the USCCB in December 2007 and was under investigation by the Vatican for theological errors. After Archbishop Burke's own review of the book, he determined that "Father Phan is not a reliable teacher of the Catholic faith."

SOURCES: *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 12/22/07, 1/10/08

Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis, MN

May 2008

The archdiocese **prevented medical ethicist Steven Miles from speaking to an adult education class at St. Joan of Arc Church** on the topic of torture, **because of his "public advocacy of abortion,** which is fundamentally contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church."

SOURCE: Associated Press, 5/10/08

Archdiocese of San Antonio, TX

February 2008

Archbishop Jose Gomez **publicly opposed an on-campus rally at St. Mary's University for pro-**

abortion Sen. Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign, featuring an address by Clinton before several thousand supporters. In a statement supported by Auxiliary Bishop Patrick Zurek (now Bishop of Amarillo) and retired Bishop Thomas Flanagan, Archbishop Gomez referred to the USCCB’s 2004 policy in “Catholics in Political Life” as the basis of his position:

I was neither advised nor consulted by the university before the decision was made to have Senator Clinton speak at the university. Catholic institutions are obliged to teach and promote Catholic values in all instances. This is especially important when people look to our Catholic universities and colleges to provide leadership and clarity to the often complicated and conflicting political discourse.

He also said the university:

...doesn’t have to [consult with me], but it seems to me that it would be nice to do it. Because there were so many venues in the city of San Antonio that she could speak at, it was surprising to me why [it would be] a Catholic university, especially taking into consideration her record.

St. Mary’s University refused to cancel the event, claiming no political endorsement of candidates or their positions.

SOURCES: Statement by Archbishop Jose Gomez, 2/12/08; *San Antonio Express-News*, 2/14/08

Diocese of San Diego, CA

August 1985

Bishop Leo Maher **banned Jane Via, former religious studies professor at the University of San Diego, from “any public Roman Catholic forum in San Diego” – from speaking to “any Catholic group in San Diego” – (this is varied language in media articles, not direct quotes from bishop) until she signs a statement confirming that she fully agrees with Catholic teaching on abortion.** Via had signed a *New York Times* advertisement supporting abortion rights. Fr. John Proctor Jr., a canon lawyer for the diocese, told the media:

Because Dr. Via has taken a public stance in opposition to a substantive Church teaching, Bishop Maher has stated she may not speak at any diocesan function until she clarifies her position.

St. Therese’s Parish and the St. Thomas More Society canceled talks by Via.

SOURCE: *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 7/27/85, 8/8/85

Diocese of Scranton, PA

March 1985

Bishop James Timlin refused to attend the commencement ceremony of the University of Scranton because the speaker and honoree was pro-abortion House of Representatives Speaker Tip O’Neill. Bishop Timlin said he “cannot even appear to be supportive of a congressman who has on occasion failed to support

legislation which could have halted legal abortions.” He added: “I meet with people who are pro-abortion all the time. I just don’t want to go around giving them honorary degrees. That’s the problem.”

SOURCE: Associated Press, 3/14/85

June 2000

Mercy Hospital in Scranton **canceled an address by pro-abortion Vice President Al Gore** on health care after opposition by Bishop James Timlin, a board member of Catholic Health Partners which oversaw the hospital. He said to the media:

It’s our policy around here that **we don’t give a platform to anyone that would allow people to think that we agree with their position.** If they allowed [Gore] to come it would be contrary to what I expect from all our Catholic institutions. ...The Mercy Hospital has decided not to give Vice President Gore a platform, lest there be any misunderstanding about the hospital’s Catholic identity and its commitment to the sanctity of life.

SOURCE: *Wilkes Barre Times Leader*, 6/15/00

May 2003

Bishop James Timlin **refused to attend the commencement ceremony of the University of Scranton because the speaker and honoree was pro-abortion talk show host Chris Matthews.** Bishop Timlin said he would not attend because Matthews “espoused a viewpoint on abortion which Catholics believe to be contrary to the moral law.”

Auxiliary Bishop John Dougherty also **refused to attend the commencement ceremony of College Misericordia because the speakers were journalists Steve and Cokie Roberts, whose columns had espoused a “pro-choice” viewpoint.**

Bishop Timlin said:

I am certain that the University of Scranton and College Misericordia acted in good faith in this instance, and that they do not see themselves lending support to any pro-abortion or pro-choice position, however, my long-standing public position is that I will not appear when my presence could possibly be seen as supportive of pro-choice or pro-abortion views.

SOURCE: Associated Press State and Local Wire, 5/22/03

February 2009

Bishop Joseph Martino publicly **criticized Misericordia University for hosting a lecture by homosexual marriage advocate Keith Boykin.** The diocese issued a statement including:

Bishop Martino wants Catholics of the Diocese of Scranton to know of his absolute disapproval of Misericordia University’s hosting Mr. Boykin. By honoring this speaker through allowing his positions, so antithetical to Catholic Church teaching, to be broadcast on its campus, the University has rejected all four essential characteristics of a Catholic institution of higher learning. These

are: its Christian inspiration, its obligation to reflect on knowledge in light of the Catholic faith, its fidelity to Catholic Church teaching and its commitment to serve the people of God.

The faithful of the Diocese of Scranton, the Bishop observed, should be in no doubt that Misericordia University in this instance is seriously failing in maintaining its Catholic identity.

Bishop Martino later asked Misericordia to publicly explain “its efforts to teach Catholic morality regarding sexuality and homosexuality.” He asked the university to consider closing its Diversity Institute, which hosted Boykin.

The Bishop’s rationale is that students should learn respect for all races and cultures, but that viewpoints that are in direct opposition to Catholic teaching should not be presented under the guise of “diversity.” Doing so within a formal structure sanctioned by the institution gives the impression that these viewpoints are acceptable, or that all morality is relative.

SOURCES: Diocese of Scranton statements, 2/16/09, 2/24/09, 3/18/09

May 2009

Bishop Joseph Martino criticized the choice of U.S. Sen. Bob Casey to be the commencement speaker and honoree at King’s College. Bishop Martino said the choice of Casey was “an affront to all who value the sanctity of life,” because Casey — who had claimed to be pro-life — had proven to be “a reliable vote for President Barack Obama’s aggressive pro-abortion agenda” including his vote to confirm pro-abortion politician Kathleen Sebelius as Secretary of Health and Human Services. Bishop Martino said that Casey lacks “the moral stature” to address young graduates. “It is truly unfortunate that this Catholic institution will be seen as providing a forum for a politician who is steadily distancing himself from pro-life principles,” Bishop Martino said.

SOURCE: Associated Press State & Local Wire, 5/3/09

Diocese of Syracuse, NY

February 2007

The Syracuse Diocese **cancelled a talk to alumni of Bishop Ludden Junior-Senior High School by pro-abortion Terry McAuliffe (then chairman of Sen. Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign)** about his memoir, *What a Party!*, because the talk violated the diocese’s 2003 policy according to a diocesan spokeswoman. Bishop James Moynihan had approved the Bishop Ludden talk on January 21, but at the time was unaware of McAuliffe’s public position on abortion. On January 29, McAuliffe declared himself “pro-choice” on a national radio show.

The diocesan spokeswoman **distinguished between pro-abortion speakers and those who support the death penalty; the Church “does not exclude recourse to the death penalty”**

SOURCES: *The Post-Standard*, 2/22/07; *Syracuse New Times*, 3/7/07

Diocese of Wilmington, DE

July 2004

Bishop Michael Saltarelli issued a statement including:

Our Catholic institutions will not honor Catholic politicians who take pro-abortion legislative positions or invite them to speak at our functions and schools. While they are to be treated civilly, respectfully and with gospel charity, they should never be put forward as a model of a Catholic in public life.

Following the statement, Archmere Academy (Catholic prep school in Claymont) dropped plans to name a new student center after U.S. Sen. Joe Biden—a pro-abortion Catholic, graduate of Archmere, and native to the Wilmington diocese.

SOURCES: Associated Press, 7/2/04; *The Christian Century*, 9/23/08

Diocese of Worcester, MA

May 1999

Bishop Daniel Reilly **refused to attend the commencement ceremony of Assumption College, because pro-abortion Lt. Gov. Jane Swift was the commencement speaker and received an honorary degree.** Bishop Reilly was a trustee of the college at the time.

SOURCE: *Telegram & Gazette*, 5/19/99

May 2003

Bishop Daniel Reilly **refused to attend the commencement ceremony of the College of the Holy Cross, because pro-abortion MSNBC host Chris Matthews was the commencement speaker and received an honorary degree.** In March 2004, incoming successor Bishop Robert McManus agreed with Bishop Reilly's action, stating:

I wouldn't go either. **I'm not honoring those who flaunt the lack of protection of human life. They shouldn't be honored by a Catholic institution.**

SOURCE: *Telegram & Gazette*, 3/10/04

October 2007

The College of the Holy Cross **rented meeting space and hosted a teen pregnancy conference including representatives of Planned Parenthood and NARAL.** Bishop Robert McManus **publicly opposed the event,** stating:

As bishop of Worcester, it is my pastoral and canonical responsibility to determine what institutions can properly call themselves Catholic. This is a duty that I do not take lightly, since to be a Catholic institution means that such an institution conducts its mission and ministry in accord with Catholic Church teaching, especially in cases of faith and morals.

He said that Holy Cross should recognize that **any association with Planned Parenthood and NARAL “can create the situation of offering scandal understood in its proper theological sense.”** Holy Cross refused to cancel its contract with the Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy. After the event, a diocesan spokesman said **the college’s refusal to cancel the event would be taken into account when evaluating its Catholic identity.**

SOURCE: *Telegram & Gazette*, 10/11/07, 10/25/07