

## THE PURPOSE OF A CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY

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In many Universities throughout the world,  
a change in focus has excessively emphasized  
the technical and professional training of specialists.

In such situations, many students finish their University career  
without achieving a human formation that would help them  
towards the necessary discernment about the meaning of life,  
and about the basis and development of values and ideals.  
They live in a paralytic state of uncertainty,  
with the added burden of anxiety for the future.

University students have questions that go beyond data, scientific or historical.  
They need an environment where those questions,  
and possible answers to them,  
can be investigated.

Universities are a central source of cultural development in society.  
The trends they initiate or deepen  
are closely linked to the great questions confronting humanity:  
the value of the human person:  
the meaning of human existence and action,  
and especially the meaning of conscience, and of freedom.  
We must foster a renewed and vital synthesis between faith and culture.

There is a further need:  
to help Catholics living in a University environment to bring together  
their faith and their intellectual pursuits.  
Too many, teachers and students, consider their faith a strictly private affair,  
or do not perceive the impact their university life has on their Christian existence.  
All Catholics are called, by virtue of their Baptism,  
to live a life that witnesses to the truth of their faith.  
At a time when many students feel painfully the lack of genuine mentors,  
whose constant presence and availability would offer a companionship of high quality,  
we must give priority to respect for, and service of, individual students.

This certainly does not consist in filling disciplines that are being taught  
with religious subject-matter.  
Rather it means opening up the horizon  
to the ultimate, and fundamental, questions,  
with the stimulating generosity of an active presence  
for the (often inarticulate) demands of young minds,  
who are looking for points of reference,  
for trustworthy certainties,  
for guidance,  
and purpose.