

# THE UNIVERSITY CONCOURSE

*An Independent Journal of Opinion*

Volume II, Issue I

September 18, 1996

## The horror of polygamy and the persistence of chauvinistic theories in Catholic academia

by **Kathleen van Schaijik**

I cannot let pass without comment the discussion I heard took place the other day at a certain graduate theology institute, which shall remain nameless. Adult students were (without blushing) explaining to a group of fellow students, including several women, that whereas polygamy (one man having several wives) is permissible according to natural law, polyandry (one woman having several husbands) is forbidden.

All the great philosophical and theological developments of the age—on the essence of the human person, on the meaning of the body and human

sexuality, on the dignity of women—all of these notwithstanding, there evidently still exist any number of serious Catholic intellectuals (my guess is they are all men) who can calmly expound such appalling theories. And they are, moreover, surprised that anyone should take offense.

Of course these men would not deny that the positive moral law of the Church forbids polygamy as well as polyandry. Still, they want to say natural law (at least in one sense) has nothing against it. They seem to base their notion on two things: 1) that St. Thomas said it and the Church has endorsed his theory of natural law, and 2) that physically men

are capable of impregnating innumerable women, while women are conspicuously designed to bear the children of only one man. (If any one has a better defense of this position, I wish he would bring it forward, for I have yet to hear it.)

As to the second argument, it is, first of all, in no way clear to me how the physical construction of woman indicates that she was made for only one man. But, suppose we grant it for the moment. Suppose we allow it be true that, biologically speaking, men are ready to serve as husbands to various wives, while women are made for one

*See Polygamy on page 12*

## Sports before studies:

Franciscan University not exempt from the American-college tendency to idolize athletics

by **Joanna K. M. Bratten**

That modern America has made a god of sports is a common charge among Christians and non-Christians alike. However, I shall not take it upon myself to chide the general populace for their preference for lounging languidly before their TV sets, looking rather like glazed puddings, catching every game on ESPN, rather than frequenting St. Paul's, Our Lady of Lourdes, or what have you. I *would* like to examine, though, the fact that this preference and overall mindset has so permeated America's institutions of learning that

we are the proud inventors of the much-coveted "football scholarship."

The idea of the sports scholarship is quite contrary to the overall purpose of a university, particularly if one approaches this issue from a Newmian standpoint. One is, or at least should be, appalled to see the manner in which many schools—high schools *and* uni-

versities—have utilized the sports scholarship. There has been case after case of teachers and administrators refusing to reject or fail below-average students simply for the sake of the school's sports status. Many of these so-called students will receive a Bachelor's degree without having done a lick of work, save on

*See Sports on page 10*

<b>INSIDE:</b>	Up from slavery: our musical roots ..... 3
	Liturgical dancing: legitimate? ..... 9
	Alumni reunion '96 ..... 11



# EDITOR'S PAGE

## Can charismatics and traditionalists peacefully coexist?

No one who has been familiar with Franciscan University for a number of years would deny that cultural “conservatism” is gaining influence in her midst.

Some see this as a clear advance: the University is maturing in her Catholic identity; she is becoming more serious, more respectable—shedding her embarrassing association with the charismatic renewal. Her intellectual emphasis is more pronounced; her religious services more sober. The old hymns are making a comeback; Latin is being introduced.

Others fear she is slipping off the straight and narrow. Her priorities are shifting; she used to “seek first the Kingdom of God,” now she is preoccupied with academic ambition. Where students once rejoiced freely in worship services, now they fret over the rubric and insist rudely on liturgical correctness; they used to be docile, eager to submit to the wisdom of the friars, now they are arrogant, critical, complaining.

Both these views have some merit, but each is incomplete, and if allowed to prevail unchecked and unrefined, will go far toward undermining the unique greatness of this University.

No doubt the old “charismatic” element is sorely tempted to resent the waxing influence of “traditionalists,” and view it as an entirely negative development in the life of our institution. Besides the fact that they are generally new-comers who are out-of-touch with the “salvation history” of Franciscan University, traditionalists are typically articulate and very self-assured; they quickly gain sway over especially a certain type of student—one whose tendency

is to intellectualize his faith and whose temptation is to “lord it over” others—priests, professors and fellow students alike. And by its heavy emphasis on the importance of objective truth (as opposed to religious experience or subjective appropriation of truth) cultural conservatism sometimes encourages people to substitute “traditionalism” or “knowledge of Church teaching” for authentic religious devotion. When this happens, a spirit of pride and contention replaces the one of unity-in-love which is the *sine qua non* of any genuine Christian community. And on our campus, it goes a long way toward undoing the fruitful efforts of the “charismatics” over the last two decades in establishing the priority of personal faith in Jesus Christ and fostering an atmosphere of freedom and joy among the student body.

It is easy for those who have long been devoted to this University and its characteristic way of being to wish the arch-conservatives would go away and leave FUS alone. (Wouldn't they be more at home at Christendom or Thomas Aquinas or Magdalene College? Must they dominate *every* institution which wants to be faithful to the Magisterium?) It is likewise easy for them to begin to identify conservatism with its defects—with everything that is arrogant, rigid and hopelessly ignorant of what really makes this place tick.

But in this, not only do they do an injustice to most individual traditionalists, but they alienate very powerful allies in the ongoing battle to become all that we are called to be. The strengths of Catholic conservatism—its rootedness in the tradition, its commitment to truth, its appreciation of the life of the mind, its love of beauty—provide a marvelous complement to the charismatic emphasis on personal experience and affectivity. The influence of conservatism can ground, deepen, focus and stabilize the mission of the University—keep us from going the sorry way of so many charismatic communities and prayer groups, who in recent years have dissolved to nothingness or drifted into sheer subjectivism and emotivism.

Similarly, let conservatives not be so quick to suppose that they improve the University by dissociating it from the charismatic renewal. It is in large measure the renewal that has made her the extraordinary thing that she is—a place teeming with young adults on fire for God and eager to give their lives in service of the Church.

A few years back I heard an eminent, erudite bishop (whom conservatives would immediately recognize as one of their own) say—what I have often mulled over since— “The charismatic renewal saved me from intellectual pride.”

Let us stop contending with one another; be humbly grateful for the gifts others have to offer, and thank God that His wisdom surpasses ours.

Kathleen van Schaijik

# THE UNIVERSITY CONCOURSE

An Independent Journal of Opinion

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### Editorial Policy

*The University Concourse* is a bi-weekly, independent journal of opinion, published by alumni and students of Franciscan University, but not formally affiliated with the University. It is designed to encourage fruitful discourse among members of the University community. The views expressed in this journal do not necessarily reflect those of the editors, nor those of the Franciscan TORs or other University officials.

We welcome submissions from faculty, students, administrators, staff, alumni, parents, trustees, benefactors and friends of the University, on any topic of interest to a general university readership, provided they are courteously expressed and framed with a view to advancing the welfare of the University and/or Catholic culture at large.

We recommend opinions be kept to fewer than 1,500 words. Articles must be in no later than 5:00 pm Tuesday of the week prior to publication.

Contributions should be submitted on a 3.5" disk, either to *The University Concourse*, Box 27, University Boulevard, Steubenville, OH 43952, or sent to e-mail address: “UConcourse@aol.com”

Please include your full name, phone-number and relation to the University.

We will consider printing submissions anonymously or under a pen-name, however, in general we wish to encourage open, “face to face” discussion. In either case, the editors require the full name and phone-number of the author of each opinion.

# *Ride on, King Jesus*

## The blessing of “black” music

by Mark Schultz

**H**AVING JUST GOTTEN CAUGHT UP WITH THE BACK ISSUES OF THIS VERY INTERESTING NEW JOURNAL, I FIND MYSELF BELATEDLY GOADED INTO JOINING THE debate over the sources and value of contemporary music.

Andy Minto has argued that “the misery and alienation of slavery” in America adversely influenced the moral quality of African American music, which became, ultimately, the poisoned field from which all modern music sprouted. I strongly suggest a closer reading of the rich literature on slave religion, which speaks vividly of the life-giving, hope-sustaining quality of their religious music. Indeed, I find in the slave spirituals a sense of wonder, solemnity, joy, and humility at being in the presence of God unmatched by the music of any other tradition. Remember, all they had to sustain them was God; and those of us who know God should not be at all surprised that a people reduced to utter brokenness cried out to God and found Him there. It has happened before. They themselves recognized their spiritual kinship with the children of Israel. Slave narratives and slave

spirituals describe God in an intense, loving and personal way that I find deeply evocative of the writings of another captive, Isaiah.

Historians—an unusually contentious lot—are unanimous in their assessment of the community-building and life-sustaining character of slave religion in America. There is, however, some disagreement over the extent of the influence of the spirituals in African American culture after the abolition of slavery. My opinion is that the heritage of the spirituals still deeply influences black culture. This godly inheritance is direct and clear within the black churches, where the spirituals and their lively descendants, gospel songs, fill at least an hour of every Sunday service. Anyone who has not heard the triumphant gospel masterpiece “Ride On, King Jesus” sung in six part harmony by a full choir dressed in resplendent robes has simply missed one of the aesthetic wonders and great spiritual treasures of the world. I personally join African American communities in worship every chance I get. I believe that God is speaking a powerful and authentic word through them to all Americans.

The other music traditions that were strongly influenced by the culture of sla-

very—blues, jazz rock, even modern country—descend a bit more from the slave work songs than from the spirituals. Yet even these secular music styles owe much to their family ties to the spirituals.

Over the past century, many artists who began in church music crossed over into these other styles, bringing along much they had learned before. I see the secular styles as a kind of gumbo; they are made up of many diverse strands and reflect many diverse experiences and philosophies—some wholesome, some less so. My approach is: if you don’t like the chicken bones, just pick them out. I love, and draw sustenance from, all kinds of music, but somehow, I have yet to find the need to purchase a Black Sabbath album. Although the blues do express a sense of isolation and alienation, within this style there was a great Christian music tradition: the gospel blues artist. His call—and he would describe it as such—was to break the

hearts of men and women with song, and to help them repent and return to God. When you read Psalm 51, you know that that ol’ harp strummin’ hound dog King David would have understood these blues perfectly.

Ultimately, I would like to commend Mark Fisher for his thoughtful remarks

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*N.B. This article was received by the Concourse too late for our final issue last year. But we thought it too worthwhile to be lost altogether. We therefore print it here, thinking it can be enjoyed even independently of its proper context, and hoping it will serve to renew an important discussion in our pages.*

*It is written in response to a debate initiated by Mark Fischer in our Vol.I., issue 3, and carried on in subsequent issues last Spring.*

in the February 27 issue of the *Concourse*. I join him in arguing that much of the historical source of contemporary music is life-affirming, although its present manifestation—like everything else—is eaten by the “acids of modernity.” (Anyone listened to modern classical music lately?) Consequently, it must be appraised song by song, artist by artist.

It may, additionally, be worthwhile to place these aesthetic debates within the context of the traditional commitment of the Church to the philosophy of catholicity. We are Catholics after all, neither fundamentalists nor provincialists. The Church has tended through the millennia (more than any other missionary faith) to embrace, incorporate and redeem the vast and various indigenous expressions of art and music around the world. (I recommend, as a wonderful example, the

Missa Luba, the Latin mass sung in Congolese style with log drums and gourds.)

It is proper to our identity to value breadth and heterogeneity over narrowness and homogeneity. While Europe and classical European culture have contributed greatly to beauty in music, art, and architecture, we must remain open to recognizing the power of the Holy Spirit working through artists of other traditions. It is our way, as Catholics, to do so.

Yet, if any insist on judging, I suggest that one might plausibly judge the moral value of a style of music by evaluating the response that it evokes in human listeners. This might allow for a manner of criticism that cuts a surprising swath across different musical boundaries, calling equally into question the din blasting in the violent grunge pits and the Wagnerian music which Hitler and the Nazi re-

cism that cuts a surprising swath across different musical boundaries, calling equally into question the din blasting in the violent grunge pits and the Wagnerian music which Hitler and the Nazi re-

gime found so inspiring on the road to genocide.

A final note. I am puzzled by Minto’s appeal to Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger as a politically neutral arbiter of musical values. Minto seems to think it difficult to characterize him as a “social conservative.” Whatever does he mean? Cardinal Ratzinger has long held exactly such a reputation among the many who admire him and the many who do not. His position as “a churchman, a theologian and a trusted teacher of the Church” does not exempt him from the human condition of having personal leanings. While many people’s political positions are diverse and difficult to classify, Cardinal Ratzinger’s are distinctly conservative, just as those of Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago, another trusted teacher of the Church, are distinctly liberal. I thought we liberals were the only ones embarrassed over our political identity these days. When did you conservatives start getting shy? ■

*Mark Schultz is an alumnus of the class of '87, and an Instructor of History at Lewis University in Illinois.*

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### Subscription renewal

Enclosed is the renewal of our subscription to *the University Concourse*. Thanks for your commitment to seeking truth through lively Christian discourse. It is refreshing to know that people can discuss passionately while remaining reverent toward the person with the opposing view. When you know that intelligent, opposing views are on their way to converging on the one truth, it makes the debate so much more exciting!

Daniel Ellis  
Class of '88

### God and grunge revisited

In the May 7 issue of the *Concourse*, Nicholas J. Healy, Jr. pointed out that there is a sharp discrepancy between the inward beliefs and outward manners of our student body, and he eloquently urged us to establish an authentically Christian culture on our campus.

I would like to add an historical perspective to his argument. One might well ask what history has to do with God and grunge at Franciscan University. The answer is, I think, translucent in its simplicity. History is a cultural tradition enduring and progressing through time. When an ancient Roman acted, Ortega y Gasset once wrote, he clothed himself, not only in the virtues, but in the garb of his ancestors. The so-called grunge-culture, on the other hand, represents a radical break with tradition, a severing

of our roots.

Throughout the successive phases of the development of medieval culture, we can see a continuing historical movement towards a realization, however imperfect, of the ideal of St. Augustine's City of God. The medieval world sacramentalized culture. As Christopher Dawson has pointed out, in the Middle Ages the Catholic religion and European culture were in a state of communion. Religion found its expression in every aspect of medieval culture, not only in its institutions and literature and philosophy, but also in its architecture and art and dress and music, in its manners and moral teachings. All these modes of expression—whether *The Divine Comedy* of Dante, the Gothic cathedral at Chartres, the Gregorian chant, the habits of the religious orders, the holy chivalry of St. Francis of Assisi, or the intellectual synthesis of St. Thomas Aquinas—taught the same lesson and expressed the same truth. This multimedia evangelization was nothing else than the source of a dynamic religious and cultural unity in the High Middle Ages.

G. K. Chesterton, Eric Voegelin and Christopher Dawson all point to a gnostic spirit of revolution as a major contributing factor in the break-up of the medieval unity. This revolutionary ethos produces a desacralized culture. It results in a dualism and a hostility between religion and culture that precludes any possibility of cooperation and collaboration between them. Gnosticism finds its expression in every aspect of revolutionary culture, in its institutions, its literature and philosophy, its architecture, art, music and dress, as well as in its manners and moral teachings. All these modes of expression—whether influenced by the thought of Voltaire, Robespierre, Marx, Stalin, Nietzsche, Hitler, Freud or Timothy Leary—teach a large number of widely varying doctrines, yet they express the same deep rooted error—philosophical and religious pessimism; that is, a belief in the essential evil of this present existence. The theme is always the same; destruc-

tion of the old world and passage to the new. This is the source of the great religious and cultural fragmentation of the revolutionary age.

This is why we find ourselves living in the era of the collective split personality, a phenomenon which is analogous to what T.S. Eliot called the dissociation of sensibilities. While our religion may be Catholic, our culture is gnostic. We believe in the truths of the Faith, but our young wear the uniform of the revolution, all unknowing. We accept the teachings of the Magisterium, yet, embarrassingly, our dress and manners and music are those of the cultural revolution of the sixties, which was nothing other than the latest phase of the larger revolution.

A restoration of standards in dress and manners is thinkable only in terms of a general restoration of the union of religion and culture. It must become fashionable to love the good, the true and the beautiful. Mr. Healy's insight penetrates to the heart of the matter when he reminds us that the Holy Father has urged us to form a civilization of love. And what better place could there be to begin taking seriously the wild possibility of such a thing, with the help of grace transforming nature, in total abandonment to divine providence, than the Franciscan University of Steubenville?

Richard Fougerousse

*Mr. Fougerousse is the Assistant Director of the Austrian Program, Vice-President of the Pro-Life Association of Lower Austria, and Instructor of History on the Gaming Campus.*

### A thank-you note

To the esteemed editors of *the University Concourse*:

How utterly flabbergasted I was to discover, upon reading through all those bracing and beguiling pages of your final blockbuster edition, that I'd been selected to receive the first annual *Concourse Grand Prize!!!* It quite unhinged

me. Oh, what delicious shock waves it sent straight through to my head! And, yes, descending below to a few less sublime appetites as well. (Man may not live by bread alone, but, clearly, he cannot live without it.) But, oh, how droolingly delightful the prospect of dinner for two in Pittsburgh! Really, I cannot thank you enough.

And not just for the honor of being chosen, mind you—which honor I treasure more than I quite know how to say. (Although, it perhaps raises some doubt about the soundness of your judgment. Were there really no specimens more congruent with the aims of your exacting journal than my miserable couple hundred words?) Because the real distinction here is not so much the one you confer, however pleased I am to receive it, but the enterprise itself which you publish, whose standard of excellence and enjoyment genuinely endears it to so many of us intent on serious and civil conversation about things that matter.

Again, thank you all so much for the prize, which Roseanne and I so look forward to sharing (you may be sure that we'll be toasting your wonderful generosity between courses of the most copious and sumptuous grub at the Grand Concourse Restaurant). But, above all, thanks for the *Concourse* itself, which has helped to elevate the level of



discourse in Steubenville. God bless you all.

Regis Martin  
Associate Professor of Theology

*The editors were happy to have imparted such distinct pleasure to our deserving Grand Prize recipient, though they were sorry to hear they had been party to the unhinging of so great a mind as Dr. Martin's! Still, the lucidity and cogency of his thank-you note happily persuade us that the unfortunate phenomenon was a temporary one. We therefore hope no one will be dissuaded from competing with him for this year's prize.*

## Capitalism

**Though Franciscan University** is known for its theological emphasis, I was pleased to find alumni and affiliates of the University with various backgrounds contributing ideas to the *Concourse*. Of particular interest to me were Michael Welker's article, "God and Caesar" and Julio Demasi's follow up piece, "Keeping Caesar under God."

I found Welker's article most refreshing in a country where academia seems to be dominated by Keynesian economics. While I have not read David Schindler's journal *Communio*, I have read Michael Novak's book, *The Catholic Ethic in the Spirit of Capitalism*, which I admire greatly. As for Demasi's ideas on economics, I must take issue with his apparent sense of a dichotomy between economic freedom and Christian morality.

An understanding of what works economically should start with the study of man. Pope John Paul II's use of the personalist norm is the best framework for understanding how morality proceeds. In his book *Love and Responsibility*, he writes of the "incommunicability" and "unsubstitutability" of the person as the foundation for all human relations:

"No one can substitute his act of will for mine. It does sometimes happen that

someone very much wants me to want what he wants. This is the moment when the impassable frontier between him and me, which is drawn by free will, becomes most obvious. I may not want that which he wants me to want—and in this precisely I am *incommunicabilis*. I am, and I must be, independent in my actions. All human relationships are posited on this fact. All true conceptions about education and culture begin from and return to this point."

It seems to me that an environment that would most respect the nature of man, a person's inner self, and the power of self-determination and free will is one that ensures his liberty. The only economic system offering such freedom to man is *laissez-faire* capitalism.

In his article, Demasi does not offer an alternative to capitalism; but he seems to hint that, whatever his ideal economic system might be, it would include certain controls, or "limits of social obligations." My question is, who decides what my social obligations are? More importantly, who decides how my social obligations will be enforced? In practice, the answer is always: "the State." And the consequence of governments setting the "limits of social obligations" is the unfortunate state of affairs in which we find ourselves today, where observance of and conformity to legal regulations forms a counterfeit to an authentic, internalized system of values.

Welker's quote from *Centesimus Annus*, "It would appear that on the level of individual nations and of international relations, the free market is the most efficient instrument for utilizing resources and effectively responding to needs...But there are many human needs which find no place on the market," indicates that capitalism is a means toward another and higher end, and is not the end in itself. In this sense, I agree with Demasi that meeting all human needs is not the role of the free market. The free market is simply the vehicle that ensures that our liberty will be protected. Given that liberty, the more fundamental questions of how to order our lives, what values to

seek, and which virtues to practice take on greater significance. Indeed, liberty is the only context within which these questions of the higher order can be addressed.

Welker offered a definition of capitalism; I can understand his feeling a need to do so. I find that most people have a very confused, if not completely wrong, idea of what capitalism is. Perhaps this is because pure capitalism has not existed in this country, especially since the turn of the century, but continues to be blamed for the consequences of a mixed economy, i.e. welfare statism (both corporate and social welfare) that does not allow the “invisible hand,” as Adam Smith describes it, to operate the market justly. Despite good intentions, proponents of the welfare-state, managed-economy way of life have ended up bringing about results opposite to what they intended.

As a part of his definition, Welker states that capitalism is an economic system that protects the right of private ownership. It is also the one economic system that allows man to enter into trade by mutual consent only. The importance of such mutual consent cannot be over-emphasized, since it protects the individual from harmful “use” by another. Again, the Pope states: “When two different people consciously choose a common aim this puts them on a footing of equality, and precludes the possibility that one of them might be subordinated to the other. Both...are as it were in the same measure and to the same extent subordinated to that good which constitutes their common end.”

Having said all this regarding capitalism, I understand that sin will still occur within individuals of the system; but that was the risk that God was willing to take in creating man with a free nature and equipping him with the faculty of reason. The impossibility of legislating morality and the higher virtues means that government regulations of social relations result in conformity at best, while morality and virtue call for something much deeper, and can only result from conversion, not coercion.

Because the role of government is to insure justice—not to instill virtue—in society, whether a person is reasonable, bigoted, saintly, or a sinner is not of prime importance in a political sense. These things are, of course, important to me as a believer, and indeed, in the light of faith they are eternally important. But salvation is precisely something which cannot be achieved by enforced conformity.

Martha L. Blandford  
Class of '89

*Martha (Cotton) and Scott Blandford live in Northern Kentucky.*

## In reply to Mark Fischer's defense of the present core curriculum

*N.B.: In our maiden issue last February, Dr. Crosby wrote an article arguing that the University ought to establish a unified core curriculum. The subject was taken up by various others throughout last semester. In our Vol. I, issue 7/8 Mark Fischer wrote a piece defending our present requirements.*

**I was glad to see that Mark Fischer** agrees with one of the main core curriculum reforms that I and others have proposed. We have proposed to limit the core to fundamental human knowledge and to eliminate all that is specialized. He says he agrees with this reform, and his agreement is significant:

precisely because he has so much to say in behalf of the existing core, it is significant that he favors this reform of it that I have advocated.

Mark Fischer disagrees with a core consisting entirely of “great books”; but in this he does not disagree with me, for I have never proposed such a core.

And yet we are not in complete agreement. He claims that students in the professional programs do not really need any acquaintance with Homer or Shakespeare, or even with St. Augustine or St. Thomas. He goes so far as to say that “the great philosophical and theological questions of western civilization” should be optional for them. Some of the courses that he thinks appropriate for the core of these students are not even liberal arts courses in any sense of the term, courses such as sacraments, or accounting. It seems to me that these ideas of his, once put into practice, would go far towards deconstructing any kind of coherent core; they would undermine even such unity as we have in our existing core.

Notice how Mark Fischer works with caricature in ruling out of the core curriculum “the great philosophical and theological questions.” He implies that the question of the difference between Thomism and phenomenology is one of these questions. This is of course a fine point of philosophy that is hardly a necessary part of anyone's general education. What he obscures with this rhetorical trick is that among “the great philosophical and theological questions” are the questions of the existence of God, the nature of the soul, the embodiment



“Do small things with love.”

—Mother Theresa of Calcutta



looks the importance of some modest knowledge of a few classic works of western civilization. It is hard to see how a person can be considered liberally educated if he or she has never read a dialogue of Plato or the Confessions of St. Augustine or a tragedy of Shakespeare. These are minds of an incomparable stature

sional major program and well catechized in their theology courses, they have received everything a liberal arts education could possibly be. In reality their liberal arts education may have slipped right between the cracks. There is no guarantee that, knowing the catechism and knowing their major, they will have that “vision of the whole” which, according to Newman, distinguishes such education. The imparting of a liberal arts formation of mind is a task of its own, above and beyond catechesis and professional programs. The true sign of it will be not just reading encyclicals, but knowing how to interpret them with balance and with a sense of proportion that expresses an awareness of the whole of truth.

Mark Fischer says he speaks for “several” others in pleading for our existing core curriculum. I do not think that he speaks for many; all of the students and alumni who have declared a position in the *Concourse* or in the *Troubadour* on the core curriculum—with the one exception of Mark Fischer himself—have agreed that the University can do better by its students in the core, that we need to unify the core in various ways. I have also received some letters from students that were not published. The following is taken from a letter written to me last spring by a student who has since graduated with a major in political science.

“A lack of a common core curriculum lies at the crux of the frustration with my own academic life. I am convinced that I would have extracted much more out of my earlier courses if I had an understanding that each course contributes to an overall picture... I do not stand alone in this regard. In my two years as a university Resident Assistant...I have seen that same void in many, many other students.”

Dr. John F. Crosby  
Professor and Chair of Franciscan  
University’s Philosophy Department

of the human person, freedom and responsibility. He does a serious injustice to the students in the professional programs when he says in effect that these questions are beyond them, or are of no possible interest to them, and should only be electives for them. He thus condescends to the professional students in a way that reminds me of those who speak as if certain minorities are not capable of living up to the moral code that the rest of us practice. Mark Fischer fails to take our professional students seriously as intellectually awakened human beings. If there is anywhere within the domain of human knowledge a knowledge that can be called fundamental, surely it is the knowledge at which these questions aim. If there is anywhere a knowledge that all educated human beings should have, surely it is just such knowledge. It is incomprehensible to me that anyone should think that a core curriculum in a Catholic liberal arts college can dispense with “the great philosophical and theological questions of western civilization.” I doubt that there is a single member of our faculty who agrees with him on this.

I think that Mr. Fischer also over-

and profundity; there is simply no educational substitute for encountering them through their own words. Furthermore, we can never get to know the western Christian tradition that we inherit if we avoid all direct contact with the greatest minds of that tradition. Without some reading of their works our students will display that historical obliviousness which is the mark of a half-educated mind. We will certainly do our students—our professional students no less than our humanities students—a favor if we can reorganize the core so that they are sure to study at least a few of the greatest classics of western civilization.

Mark Fischer thinks that it is a sign of a liberally educated student to “spend free time reading encyclicals and the new catechism” and to “form bible studies.” This gives me the opportunity to make a point—I do not say that Mark Fischer disagrees—that seems to me of particular importance in our Steubenville discussions on the curriculum. Some think that receiving a liberal education means being thoroughly catechized in the faith. They think that if they are well formed in some profes-



# Dance has no place in Liturgical Context

by Amanda Glass

**A**MONG THE EVENTS ADVERTISED FOR THE RECENT OPENING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR CONFERENCE HERE ON CAMPUS WAS A

LITURGICAL DANCE, PERFORMED before Mass in the tent by a woman who holds a degree in “interpretive sacred dance.” That this was allowed to take place at all is hardly more fantastic than the fact that it was touted as one of the attractions of the weekend—especially considering that the weekend was supposed to set the tone for the whole semester. This is not a hyper-conservative or “traditional” reaction to a novel form of worship. Even if the performance does not occur during the actual Mass—i.e., between the Sign of the Cross which begins the Mass and that which ends it—liturgical dancing has no place in any type of formal service, and it is most out of place in the context of the Mass. The truth of this can be demonstrated on two levels, both of which are related to the purpose of the Mass.

Speaking generally, it cannot be said that art has no place in the Mass; this was evident in past ages at least, in the architecture and decoration of churches. A great deal of the glory of the Baroque period, when the Church was recovering from the Protestant Revolt, was derived from the soaring design and splendid ornamentation in the churches of the time. The same can be said of music; it could never be asserted that Mozart’s *Ave Verum*, for example, is not art. However, it is equally indefensible to say that any art is permissible in the Mass.

To allude to an illustration used in the debate over sacred music, Beethoven’s Third Symphony, while undoubtedly a masterpiece, would not make a suitable Communion hymn; and it would be shocking to make a theatri-

cal presentation out of the Eucharistic prayers. Yet music and drama are both legitimate forms of art. The difference between the *Ave Verum* and Beethoven’s Third is one of purpose. The former is art for God; it gives glory to God through art by concentrating attention on Him. This is not to say that Mozart kept this in mind when he composed it, or even that he thought of it at all. Regardless of his mental attitude, however, the piece is superbly suited to the Mass; the words of the prayer combined with the harmonies of voice and instrument lift the soul and seem to permit a murmur of the divine to reach us. In contrast, while Beethoven’s Third might conceivably inspire thoughts of God through the genius and sublimity of the composition, and could be said to reflect the divine by virtue of those attributes, nevertheless it is not art for God’s sake. Hence, it does not belong in the context of the Mass. Not only does it not specifically seek to focus on God, but it could, by the thoughts and emotions it produces, very easily distract one from the rituals and the moment for which they prepare. The purpose of music during the Mass is the same as the purpose of everything

else concerned with the liturgy, whether architecture, stained glass, statuary, or formal prayers: it helps the congregation to concentrate on God. This is why Gregorian Chant, for instance, is re-

garded as supremely appropriate for the Mass: it aids prayer by inspiring thoughts proper to the Mass, and does not intrude or get in the way of the desired frame of mind.

I do not mean by these examples to equate liturgical dancing with Beethoven’s Third in any way except by analogy. Neither ought to be performed at Mass, because neither is art for God’s sake; neither is focused primarily on God. Dance is a legitimate form of art, but it is by its nature very restricted in its scope. Music can be either religious or secular and should be included in or omitted from the Mass accordingly; the same is true of the visual arts. But dance is intrinsically unsuited to formal liturgy. It is not art for God’s sake, even if that is the intention of the performer, because dance is meant to exhibit the grace and discipline of

the human body. Dance can be a very good thing; Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake* is a lovely thing to see performed, yet its focus is the body. Therefore,

Liturgical dance not only has the negative effect of distracting from the attention due to the sacred mysteries and to God, but it demands notice of something which, in the circumstances, ought not to be in the spotlight at all.

liturgical dance not only has the negative effect of distracting from the attention due to the sacred mysteries and to God, but it demands notice of something which, in the circumstances, ought not to be in the spotlight at all. This is a positive intrusion into the Mass. The priest's action in the lifting of the Host at the Consecration is meant to draw attention to the mystery taking place. The dancer's action is meant primarily to

draw attention to her movements. This is enough; once this is true of any action, then its liturgical value is lost, regardless of the motives with which it is performed.

No disrespect is meant to the art of dance. On the contrary, it ought to be kept separate from the liturgy, and enjoyed for its own sake. Its introduction into churches around the country has had the unfortunate consequence of cheap-

ening it by placing it where it does not belong and where, intentionally or not, it distracts the congregation from the proper focus of the Mass.

To retain the dignity of dance as an art form, and even more to safeguard the dignity of the Mass, the two should not be combined. ■

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## Sports

*Continued from page 1*

the athletic field. The damage that this has done to the quality of education is apparent to all of us who have spent any amount of time with the "average" American teenager. This problem is, of course, part of a larger problem: namely, that knowledge and learning are no longer seen as ends in themselves. Such a manner of thinking makes football scholarships and the like quite permissible because, after all, these "students" are making themselves not only useful, but successful—to be a sports hero is part of the "American dream."

We at Franciscan University can be thankful that since our University does not offer sports scholarships we need not fear that our fellow students in the desks behind us are passing their courses by the grace of their speed on the football field or their batting average, while the rest of us wrestle with Aristotle in the library until 11 o'clock every night—figuratively speaking at least. We are fortunate enough to be studying at a university which, for the most part, values knowledge for its own sake and encourages its students to seek truth above all else—even above success. Our University acknowledges the fact that when success becomes the end of education, the process of learning is viewed as a mere means and quickly falls to the wayside.

However, this golden calf, if you will, has nevertheless crept stealthily onto our campus, unnoticed by many of us until it has interfered with our studies. There are always those things that

try to sway the student from his course and take precedence over academics. Of all these things, sports has become the most insidious, in spite of the fact that it is, objectively, the least important.

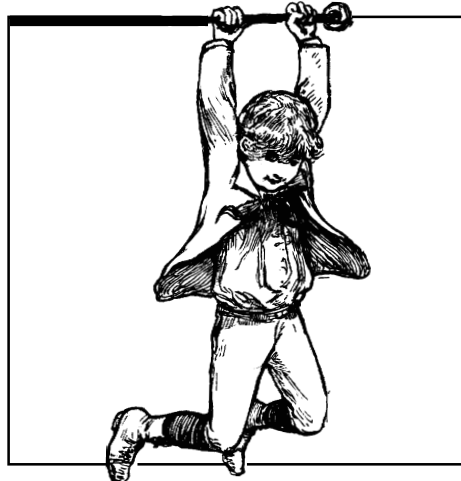
This past semester I was coordinating the annual Honors Symposium and was annoyed and even dismayed when a number of the other students involved in the symposium consistently skipped planning and rehearsal sessions, nonchalantly informing me that they could not put time into the symposium because of—what?—Frisbee. Of all the ridiculous excuses, Frisbee games take the cake. When intramural Frisbee games take priority over a serious academic project, we can be assured "something is rotten" in Steubenville.

I am sure that many will shrug their shoulders and smile, saying that I am taking this far too seriously. I will remind these individuals that being a university student is a serious thing and necessitates commitment. If Franciscan University, a bastion of the truth and a proponent of intellectual integrity, allows its students to be distracted from their scholarly pursuits by athletic pursuits, the caliber of our intellectual environment will decline very sharply. The responsibility lies primarily with the student body. If we are the mature adults we assume ourselves to be, we should be capable of taking the initiative and making academics our primary concern during these four years of our lives. Father Michael made a comment during orientation when I was a freshman that I will not forget: "You are in college now; it is your first vocation to be a student." We are no longer in high

school; we have chosen to further our education, and—out of respect for ourselves if nothing else—we should not be distracted by lesser goods, such as intramural Frisbee games.

Before the larger portion of the University community think me entirely rigid, I will cede that athletics do have a legitimate place in a university setting. Oxford students, after all, have their rowing competitions, but you will not find a "Rowing Scholarship" in the Oxford handbook. It remains that we must care for mind and body alike, but when flag football or Frisbee games become more important to a student than his classes, problems are bound to arise. I am not suggesting that campus athletics be obliterated, but that those students who find themselves in the fieldhouse or on the soccer field more frequently than in the library should be careful they are not following in the footsteps of a good portion of our nation in selling out to the sports-god. ■

*Joanna Bratten is a senior English major and Contributing Editor of the Concourse.*



# Alumni reunion inspires gratitude

by Susan Fischer

**T**HE SECOND WEEKEND IN AUGUST OF THIS YEAR BROUGHT MY HUSBAND AND ME ALONG WITH SEVERAL HUNDRED OTHER

FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY alumni to Steubenville. We gathered from all parts of the continental United States and Europe; we came in resplendent diversity with our common bond as alumni to this Franciscan institution in the Ohio Valley, which began fifty years ago in complete poverty and humility. So much has happened to the school over the course of fifty years! What a weekend of celebrating!

At the initial gathering on Friday evening John and I quickly found “our people” from the early '80s, and settled in for some good old-fashioned story telling and reminiscing. Trying to show we still ‘had it,’ we stayed up long past our current ten o’clock curfew and perhaps drank a little bit more alcohol than our thirty-something systems were accustomed to. It was so much fun!

The next day Mary Kay Mortimer told me that the nursing instructors were wondering why I hadn’t shown up for the 9 a.m. nurses gathering, and suggested that perhaps I might have had a hangover. But I explained that, in truth, I was so keyed up from seeing everyone the night before that I just couldn’t sleep! I had stayed up nearly the entire night contemplating my life in college and in the years hence. And I experienced the whole array of emotions that are generally elicited from such reunions; the primary one being gratitude.

First, I felt grateful toward my parents who had sent me to school here. As an adult now I see clearly the sacrifices they made for my education. Thank you, Mom and Dad! Secondly, I felt thankful toward our beloved friars who had served us all and on whose backs this institution was built. How they labored in my day! Lastly, I simply felt gratitude to Franciscan University for being what it is—for having provided me not



only with a solid education, but with a gloriously good time, and with innumerable beloved friends.

Saturday evening brought us to the alumni awards banquet where several alumni were recognized for their contributions to society. The Finnegan Fieldhouse was transformed into a lovely banquet hall, complete with white linen tablecloths and alumni in their best attire. It was a delight to be present as two members of my graduating class received honors (Wendy Wilmowski, a Hollywood filmmaker, and Margaret Moore, a captain in the US Army.) I was proud when I heard of the good being done in our world by people who had studied with me. From the seeds of their college education they are truly impacting the world. This demonstrates the beauty of education. It never dies. It continues through the minds it has transformed. I feel like shouting: “Hail to a worthy education!”

I suppose that’s kind of funny coming from a stay-at-home mother of four, who some might say is ‘wasting’ her education by not practicing in her field. Okay, so I’m not a glamorous transplant nurse. In fact, I’m an ordinary woman whose life consists in caring for the

needs of her family, and eking out some time for writing on the side. Really quite boring. Doesn’t exactly make for enthralling conversation material at a reunion! However, I must say that during the course of the weekend I never once felt ashamed of my current life. On the contrary, I was ever congratulated for my present vocation—which says something about the character of the people who have been educated here. They seem to know what is important in life, and when one has children, the caring for them is never demeaned.

Meanwhile, though I have chosen to be a full-time mother, I continue to state my regard for a worthy education. True, it looks like I will never be a recipient of an alumni award (unless one is started for people who make no money and change diapers all day), but I am an educated mother who is raising her children with dignity and love and with a willing sacrifice.

This is not to say that each day I am completely inspired by what I am doing. In fact, I find that I have to pray often and read supportive material on the value and meaning of motherhood, in order not to become discouraged. Also I have found several women within my local community who are likewise full-time mothers, and in whose friendship and example I find encouragement for my vocation. And my priest friends are an endless source of help. Above all, I wish to urge all mothers to have recourse to and confidence in Mary, our Mother in Heaven. I have benefited so greatly from her care; she is the kindest of all mothers and ever respects our individual personalities and uniqueness. She does not advocate one mold into which all mothers should be poured. She doesn’t say one must never work outside of the

home. Her only request is love.

The closing of this weekend included Sunday liturgy. The liturgy contained music that was deeply spiritual and well-prepared. I'm not sure if the "traditionalists" would have liked it, but the congregation present seemed profoundly blessed by it. (I suppose the music debate begun in the *Concourse* is

destined to continue. Here's to good healthy discourse and alumni involvement in the course and direction of the school!) Nourished by the communal reception of the Eucharist, we left refreshed and full of hope.

Fifty years deserves to have such a fine celebration! And now, to the many alumni and friends that I was fortunate

enough to see that weekend, I wish you well. I love you all, and our memories will always link us far beyond years and occupation. To my alma mater I say quite simply—Thank you and Hail. ■

*Susan (Creel) Fischer is a member of the class of '84.*

## Polygamy

*Continued from page 1*

husband. Let us grant it. What then? Is the moral law to be derived from biological facts? Are we beasts? Or are we *persons* whose deepest nature is to be "the image and likeness of God," whose law is inscribed not in our anatomy but, so to speak, in our hearts. Of course the moral law is *reflected* in our anatomy (see, for instance, the Pope's profound essays on what he calls "the nuptial meaning of the body"), but it cannot be *derived* from our anatomy.

We can understand the true meaning and purpose of our physical nature only when we look at it in the light of our deeper nature as human persons. When we consider the natural law this way—as the law proper to our being as embodied persons—we see the perfect equality and complementarity of men and women and the horror of polygamy becomes immediately apparent.

Polygamy degrades woman unspeakably because, rather than treating her as man's companion, equal in dignity and therefore worthy of his entire self, it subordinates her to him, making her one among the many objects of his pleasure and subjects of his domination. Such an arrangement can never be a marriage in the true sense, which always entails the absolute and exclusive self-donation of both spouses, whereby "the two become one flesh," and each lives, so to say, *in* the other and *for* the other. In polygamy, the man lives for himself—only agreeing to meet certain needs of the women who (willingly or not) are entirely in his hands.

This is why any self-respecting woman today is so horrified to hear

Catholic men being so blasé about polygamy. We may expect it of hedonists, who live explicitly for their own pleasure, or of Muslims, who are kept in the dark by their strict traditions. But how is it possible for Catholics, living in the light of the 20th century and under the leadership of our present Pope, to entertain ideas that are such an affront to feminine dignity? To us, it is just as if they were saying it is only natural for women to be subordinated to men; that there is nothing shocking and frightful about our being reduced to sexual slavery. We had thought the Church had long ago put such chauvinism decisively behind her.

Which brings me to the other argument urged by these men, namely, that St. Thomas approved it and the Church approves St. Thomas. Now, I do not know St. Thomas well enough to know what he really says on this subject. Perhaps his theory allows polygamy to be in accordance with the natural law; I couldn't say (though I'd hate to think it of him). But I know enough of the habits of the Church and the nature of the intellectual life to know that she would not bind us to follow Thomas' ideas in all their particulars; that she is more than open to the fact that the developments of history and the reflection of the Church over time leads to an ever-deeper penetration of the mysteries of philosophy and theology, which in turn necessitates our completing and in some cases correcting the previous understanding. And to my mind, the mysteries of the meaning of human sexuality and of the dignity of women are cases in point; we (as a people) have not understood them fully until very recently.

And now that we *have* understood them (at least with far more depth and

completeness than before) it is our duty to cherish them. And cherishing them means, in part, not allowing theories about the naturalness of polygamy to stand uncorrected. ■

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<sup>1</sup> The practical importance of this distinction can hardly be exaggerated. If we examine the facts of our sexuality from a biological perspective, then what we notice is the striking similarity between human reproduction and animal reproduction. We mark, for example, that man—much like a stallion or a bull—is capable of fecundating a whole herd of females. From this we may conclude that polygamy is perfectly natural. But if we examine the same facts from a *personalist* perspective, we are immediately and forcefully struck by the abyss of difference between human and animal sexuality. For instance, we notice that the human body is so designed that sexual contact takes place, "face to face," that our sexuality is pervaded with rationality and that our natural drives and instincts are under the dominion of a free and intelligent will.

<sup>2</sup> It is important to point out that, to a woman, this is much more than a mere academic question of natural law theory; it is a very intimate, existential concern. For us to hear polygamy defended is almost to be personally insulted. Imagine, for a comparison, how a black person would feel to have a white person serenely expound his notion that, since the white race is on the whole more intelligent than the black race, we can say that whites were made to dominate, and that therefore, according to natural law, there is nothing wrong with slavery. Would we be surprised to find him indignant? Could we blame him for "taking it personally"?

<sup>3</sup> Not that no one who lived prior to the 20th century had an adequate appreciation of women, or that we understand these mysteries fully in the sense of having no more to learn; I mean rather that until this century, women had not really, so to say, "come into their own" in the self-understanding and cultural practices of the Church. Indeed, many (including our Pope) have remarked that the unfolding of the mysteries of human sexuality and the personal dignity of women are some of the greatest developments in the Church of our day.